



## A Conceptualization of True Liberator Pedagogy: Foundations of a Transformative Educational Approach

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### To cite this article:

Takona, J.P. (2024). A conceptualization of true liberator pedagogy: Foundations of a transformative educational approach. *International Journal of Studies in Education and Science (IJSES)*, 5(3), 327-353. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijses.118>

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# A Conceptualization of True Liberator Pedagogy: Foundations of a Transformative Educational Approach

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## Article Info

### Article History

Received:

21 January 2024

Accepted:

15 June 2024

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### Keywords

Pedagogy of the oppressed

True liberator pedagogy

Transformative education

Teaching models

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## Abstract

The integration of *True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP) to blending of critical pedagogy, Design Thinking (DT), and transformative learning theories offer a strategy to tackle the changing demands of contemporary education. This educational approach is influenced by Freire, Vygotsky, Dewey, and other modern educational theorists, advocating for a move away from traditional teaching methods towards 'action-oriented learning' as a different approach to traditional didactic methods. TLP focuses on fostering critical awareness, compassion, and interactive learning to transform education beyond academic pursuits, aiming for societal empowerment and creativity. This approach boosts academic achievement and promotes the growth of socially conscious, compassionate, and creative individuals. TLP's approach to curriculum design promotes active engagement, practical implementation, and deep contemplation, in accordance with the needs of a world that is increasingly integrated and interconnected. The practical application of TLP is discussed, suggesting that it has the potential to revolutionize education and promote a fairer society.

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## Introduction

*True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP), as presented in this paper, is a synthesis of teacher praxis that intertwines the principles of critical pedagogy with the methodologies of Design Thinking (DT), further enriched by psychological insights. This pedagogical approach emphasizes critical consciousness, empathy, and active participation in the learning environment, addressing the dynamic challenges of education in a globalized society. TLP's theoretical foundation draws from the transformative ideas of notable educational thinkers, prominently including Paulo Freire (1970). Freire asserted that the educational process is never neutral; people can be passive recipients of knowledge or engage in a 'problem-posing' approach where they become active participants. Linking knowledge to action is essential for societal change, a principle that TLP embodies by fostering critical consciousness and active engagement in students, thus preparing them to be agents of change. TLP's approach is augmented by the participatory engagement strategies of DT (Brown, 2008; Brown & Wyatt, 2010), valuing every participant's voice. The philosophy also integrates the insights of Maria Montessori (1948) and Lev Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory, along with an exploration of John Dewey's (1938) enduring experiential education framework. Montessori's child-centered approach, Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction, and Dewey's focus on experiential learning all contribute to creating a holistic and dynamic educational environment.

Expanding its theoretical framework, TLP also includes Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1950), which highlight the critical influence of environment and experience on forming personal identity and the learning process. The constructivist theory of Jerome Bruner (1960), particularly his concept of the spiral curriculum, supports TLP's strategy of embedding students and existing knowledge through continuously expanding research. In addition, Albert Bandura's social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) provides an essential framework for understanding the roles of observation, imitation, and modeling in learning within TLP, reinforcing the interconnectedness of social contexts and individual development.

With the rise of standardization, Common Core, test-based curricula, and low-risk ways to meet educational goals, the current Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) has pushed schools and teachers toward traditionalist methods of teaching and learning (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Adolescence is the most pivotal period of a child's life; in schooling, students transition from concrete to abstract thinking (Wilke & Hopkins, 2024; Wattad & Chen, 2023). In the optimum constructivist classroom, the teacher serves as a guide and facilitator more than an information dispenser. Constructivism in twentieth-century America stemmed from intellectuals in other countries, notably Jean Piaget, a Swiss biologist and psychologist who significantly influenced constructivist theories.

By embracing the reflective and emancipatory action emphasized by Schön (2017) and the transformative learning theory of Mezirow (1997), TLP encourages reflective practice in educational activities. This principle aligns with the constructivist view that learning is an active, participatory process, preparing students to apply their knowledge to effect meaningful change in their communities and beyond. Thus, this article explores the definition, application, and practical implications of TLP and its contributions to educational innovation and reform discourse. *True Liberator Pedagogy* offers a nuanced framework for effective and transformative learning in contemporary education by integrating critical, creative, and developmental dimensions.

## **The Need for a New Paradigm in Transformative Education**

Today's society is characterized by increased technological progress, global interconnectedness, and complex social issues. Conversely, traditional education that is expected to focus on information dissemination falls short in preparing students to effectively navigate their environment. Today's challenges call on schools to boost students' acquisition of critical thinking skills, creativity, and adaptability (Akpur, 2020; Gube & Lajoie, 2020; Henriksen, Richardson, & Shack, 2020), which conventional teaching methods often fail to address. Critics argue that education prioritizes memorization over analytical thinking, hindering students' ability to engage actively with complex issues (Robinson, 2011). As society faces increasing social and environmental problems, there is an expectation for education to promote not only academic success but also social responsibility and ethical behavior (Noddings, 2005). While critical pedagogy challenges social injustices, it may lack practical implementation skills (Giroux, 1983). Similarly, Design Thinking offers innovative problem-solving but may not sufficiently address power structures and societal transformation (Kolko, 2012).

In this envisioned strategy, there is a clear difference from various existing educational models, providing a

comprehensive, flexible, and critically aware structure that equips students to successfully engage with and contribute to a more intricate and interconnected global community. This envisioned framework aims to develop students who can think critically and act innovatively, tackling real-life problems with empathy, creativity, and a dedication to social justice.

## **Theoretical Underpinnings of True Liberator Pedagogy**

In the context of *True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP), creative principles emphasize fostering creativity and innovation, as well as encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving. TLP is an educational theory that integrates multiple fundamental theories into its core theoretical framework, each of which significantly impacts the principles and practices of education. Not only does this framework outline the pedagogical underpinnings of TLP, but it also summarizes its revolutionary approach to solving current educational problems. Three thematic areas of TLP, namely Critical Consciousness and Empowerment, Human-Centered Design and Creative Problem-Solving, and Collaborative Learning and Social Interaction, are established by leading educational theorists and philosophies. These areas focus on collaborative learning and social interaction. The framework also addresses the potential effects of implementing TLP, considering both practical challenges and transformative possibilities across different educational settings.

Integrating Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy and Albert Bandura's (1977) behavioral insights are key to *True Liberator Pedagogy*, which significantly emphasizes socio-political contexts' critical understanding and transformation. Deviating from traditional educational methods, TLP as a teaching approach empowers students to challenge and analyze social structures, cultivating a critical mindset necessary for positive change. Additionally, creative principles in TLP promote a mindset that values the generation of innovative ideas and the ability to approach challenges with fresh perspectives, further encouraging creativity and innovation as well as critical thinking and problem-solving.

- *Human-Centered Design and Creative Problem-Solving*: This facet of TLP embodies the essence of Design Thinking (DT) as conceptualized by Brown (2008). It represents a fusion of practical innovation and human-centric approaches in education. Brown's methodology, emphasizing empathy, iterative design, and collaborative innovation, aligns seamlessly with the empathetic and child-centered philosophies of Donald Norman (2013) and Maria Montessori (1948). TLP seeks to promote a learning process that is both creative and responsive to human needs through integration. This approach is called *True Liberator Pedagogy*. Challenging learners to consider real-life problems fosters a sense of purpose and encourages their involvement in inquiry. This approach combines innovative thinking with emotional intelligence, as highlighted by Donald Norman's (2004) emotional design principles and Maria Montessori's child-centered philosophy. These components form an intellectually stimulating and emotionally moving environment that fosters practical skills training and student independence. The integration within *True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP) advocates for a learning process that is both creatively stimulating and deeply attuned to human needs. It encourages learners to engage with real-world challenges, fostering creative freedom, creative principles, and a deep understanding of human

experiences.

- *Collaborative Learning and Social Interaction (CLSI)*: Collaborative Learning and Social Interaction (CLSI) is a cornerstone of TLP, emphasizing social constructivist methods. Vygotsky's (1978) social development theory highlights the significance of social interaction in learning, where collaborative environments facilitate knowledge co-construction through shared experiences and dialogues. Jerome Bruner's spiral curriculum (1960) and constructivist learning theories enhance this by promoting exploration and hands-on experiences, which encourage active learning and knowledge building. Piaget's cognitive development philosophy (1954) further supports CLSI by emphasizing the participatory nature of learning, where students engage in interaction and investigation to develop their understanding. CLSI in TLP involves structuring activities that require cooperation, such as group projects, peer teaching, and role-playing, thereby fostering an interactive, inclusive, and engaging learning process that builds critical thinking and social skills.
- *Challenges in Implementation*: Integrating *True Liberator Pedagogy* into diverse educational landscapes necessitates acknowledging and addressing a spectrum of challenges associated with its implementation. These challenges are likely to encompass institutional resistance to change, resource constraints, and the necessity for alignment with existing educational policies and standards, which present critical hurdles that require thoughtful navigation. Recognizing and anticipating these obstacles ensures the effective adoption and impact of TLP's innovative educational framework.
- *Potential for Educational Innovation and Transformation*: The focus would be identifying opportunities that TLP presents for transforming educational practices. These opportunities include discussions on fostering greater learner engagement, promoting critical thinking and creativity, and developing more inclusive and collaborative learning environments.
- *Impact on Stakeholders*: This part will examine the potential implications of TLP on various stakeholders, including students, educators, administrators, and the broader community. It could address how TLP might influence teaching approaches, student learning outcomes, and the overall culture of educational institutions.
- *Long-Term Educational and Societal Transformations*: Finally, this study speculates on the long-term implications of TLP for the educational landscape and society at large. Further consideration will be given to how TLP will create more informed, empathetic, and socially responsible citizens and how it might address contemporary global challenges.

Careful consideration and research would be necessary for understanding and articulating the implications of adopting *True Liberator Pedagogy* in every area. By investigating these elements, the TLP theoretical framework serves as a roadmap for educational innovation and a tool for maneuvering through the intricate challenges of educational change. Hence, the theoretical basis of *True Liberator Pedagogy* involves a sophisticated and ever-changing approach to education, rooted in current educational theories yet original in its execution. TLP is a

unique educational practice that integrates the key concepts of Freire (1970), Bandura (1977), Brown (2008), Norman (2013), Montessori (1948), Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1960), and Piaget (1954) to stand out as a creative guiding light. TLP acknowledges the intricacies of current learning environments and seeks to address them with a thorough and transformative approach. As TLP evolves, it provides fresh methods for educators and learners, leading them towards a more inclusive, empathetic, and efficient education system that equips learners for present-day challenges.

Collectively, these theoretical influences converge to create a learning environment within TLP that prioritizes collaboration, social interaction, and active participation. This environment is conducive to intellectual growth and essential for developing social skills and fostering a sense of community among learners. By emphasizing collaborative and interactive learning, TLP prepares learners to effectively engage in and contribute to an increasingly interconnected global community.

Besides the foundational thematic areas discussed, it is essential to consider the prospecting implications of implementing TLP. This study anticipates and will seek to point out potential challenges, opportunities, and impacts that may arise from applying TLP principles in diverse educational contexts.

- *Challenges in Implementation:* Integrating *True Liberator Pedagogy* into diverse educational landscapes necessitates acknowledging and addressing a spectrum of challenges associated with its implementation. These challenges are likely to encompass institutional resistance to change, resource constraints, and the necessity for alignment with existing educational policies and standards, which present critical hurdles that require thoughtful navigation. Recognizing and anticipating these obstacles is crucial in ensuring the effective adoption and impact of TLP's innovative educational framework.
- *Opportunities for Innovation and Growth:* The focus would be identifying opportunities that TLP presents for transforming educational practices. These opportunities include discussions on fostering greater learner engagement, promoting critical thinking and creativity, and developing more inclusive and collaborative learning environments.
- *Impact on Stakeholders:* This part will examine the potential implications of TLP on various stakeholders, including students, educators, administrators, and the broader community. It could address how TLP might influence teaching approaches, student learning outcomes, and the overall culture of educational institutions.
- *Long-Term Educational and Societal Transformations:* Finally, this study speculates on the long-term implications of TLP for the educational landscape and society at large. Further consideration will be given to how TLP will create more informed, empathetic, and socially responsible citizens and how it might address contemporary global challenges.

Each area would require careful consideration and research to fully understand and articulate the implications of

adopting *True Liberator Pedagogy*. By exploring these aspects, the TLP theoretical framework becomes a guide for educational innovation and a roadmap for navigating the complex realities of educational transformation.

Thus, the theoretical foundation of *True Liberator Pedagogy* encompasses a complex and evolving strategy for education, firmly based on existing educational theories but innovative in its implementation. TLP stands out as a creative beacon in educational practice by combining the important ideas of Freire (1970), Bandura (1977), Brown (2008), Norman (2013), Montessori (1948), Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1960), and Piaget (1954). TLP is a framework that recognizes the complexities of present-day learning settings and aims to tackle them through a comprehensive and transformative method. As TLP progresses, it offers new ways for both educators and learners, guiding them toward a more inclusive, empathetic, and effective education system that prepares learners for today's challenges.

## **Conceptual Framework of True Liberator Pedagogy**

*True Liberator Pedagogy*, a confluence of pioneering educational theories, weaves the essential tenets of critical pedagogy, Design Thinking (Brown 2008), and transformative learning theory to construct a robust and adaptive educational framework. This synthesis forms the bedrock of the pedagogy, making it uniquely suited to addressing the complexities of contemporary education. *True Liberator Pedagogy* establishes a solid theoretical foundation by interlacing these diverse theoretical strands. It aligns closely with modern learners' evolving needs and challenges, ensuring its practical efficacy and enduring relevance.

### **Domain I: Critical Consciousness and Empowerment**

- *Conscientização (Critical Consciousness)*: Rooted in Paulo Freire's philosophy, 'conscientização' refers to the deepening of awareness about one's social and cultural context. This component emphasizes understanding power dynamics and societal structures, fostering a critical perspective toward personal and societal realities. It involves learners becoming aware of the forces shaping their lives and learning to engage with the world critically.
- *Critical Pedagogy*: Also derived from Freire's work, Critical Pedagogy extends the concept of conscientização. Like Dewey, Freire share the idea that education is not a neutral process. TLP posits that education is inherently political and should actively foster Critical Consciousness.
- *Empowerment Student-Teacher Relations*: This component encourages learners, without reservation, to question dominant ideologies and understand the power dynamics within society and education. It advocates for an educational approach that empowers learners to recognize and challenge societal injustices and inequalities. Thus, it is not merely about conveying knowledge or showcasing life to students; rather, it is about engaging students in a process that brings them to life. This approach prioritizes the active participation of learners, encouraging them to speak for themselves and engage critically with their world. Critical Pedagogy builds on this foundation, advocating for an educational

approach that empowers learners to challenge and reshape societal norms and structures.

Domain I of *True Liberator Pedagogy*, focusing on *Critical Consciousness and Empowerment*, builds on this foundation, advocating for an educational approach that empowers learners to challenge and reshape societal norms and structures. This domain lays the groundwork for an intellectually enriching, socially responsible pedagogy, cultivating learners equipped to engage with and impact their world critically.

### **Domain II: Human-Centered Design and Creative Problem-Solving**

Domain II of *True Liberator Pedagogy*, encompassing Human-Centered Design and Creative Problem-Solving, delves into the empathetic and innovative aspects of learning. Central to this domain is the integration of Design Thinking principles, as Brown (2008) and others championed, which advocate for a learning approach rooted in empathy, iterative design, and innovative solutions tailored to human needs.

- *Design Thinking (Human-Centered Innovation)*: Inspired by the principles articulated by Tim Brown (2008) and practiced at institutions like Stanford's d.school and IDEO, DT emphasizes an empathetic approach to problem-solving that centers on human experiences and needs. This component stresses the importance of understanding the end-user's perspective and fostering an innovative solution that is effective and empathetically aligned with human requirements. It advocates for an iterative ideation, prototyping, and testing process, encouraging creativity and adaptability in addressing complex challenges.
- *Emotional and Social Intelligence in Learning*: Drawing upon the insights of Norman (2013) and other scholars in emotional design, this component underscores the significance of emotional and social intelligence in learning. It advocates for intellectually exciting and emotionally engaging learning experiences, recognizing the importance of emotions in cognitive processes and decision-making. The technique encourages learners to comprehend and analyze the emotional components of their own and others' experiences. These insights appear to have raised interest in field of emotional design theories (Mudhar, Ertesvåg, & Pakarinen, 2023) whereby learners are encouraged to develop a deep understanding of and connection to the human experiences that shape problem-solving processes. The emphasis on creativity, empathy, and human-centric innovation prepares learners to address complex challenges effectively and do so with compassion and insight, making them adept at navigating and contributing positively to an interconnected and rapidly evolving world.

### **Domain III: Collaborative Learning and Social Interaction**

Domain III places emphasis on the significance of participatory and dialogic methods alongside social development theories.

- *Participatory and Dialogic Learning*: This component draws inspiration from Paulo Freire's dialogic methods (Freire, 1970), emphasizing the importance of active participation and open dialogue in the



learning process. It advocates for an educational environment where learners engage in collaborative learning activities, facilitating knowledge co-creation and a shared understanding. This approach promotes teacher pre-disposition to inclusivity, encouraging learners to contribute diverse perspectives and engage in meaningful discussions that enhance collective learning experiences.

- *Social Development and Interaction in Learning:* Influenced by Lev Vygotsky's social development theory (Vygotsky, 1978), this aspect of TLP highlights the crucial role of social interaction in cognitive development. Vygotsky's theory posits that learning is inherently a social process, where interaction with peers and educators plays a key role in the construction of knowledge. This component fosters a learning environment that values collaborative projects, group activities, and social engagement as fundamental to the learning experience, enhancing understanding and critical thinking skills.

This domain underscores the importance of participatory learning and the role of dialogue and collaboration in cognitive and social development. It emphasizes that learning is a social process of co-creating knowledge through interaction, discussion, and shared experiences. The focus on participatory and dialogic learning nurtures an educational environment that is inclusive and collaborative, encouraging learners to engage with diverse perspectives and work collectively towards common goals. In addition, this domain recognizes the significance of social interaction in learning, advocating for educational practices that foster group activities, collaborative projects, and community engagement. By valuing and facilitating social interaction and collaboration, TLP ensures that learners are not only acquiring knowledge but are also developing essential social skills and a sense of community, crucial for their success in an interconnected and collaborative world.

Thus, the theoretical foundations of TLP domains represent a harmonious integration of critical pedagogy, DT, and transformative learning theory. This fusion of progressive educational philosophies provides a comprehensive and versatile framework, equipping TLP with the depth and flexibility needed to navigate the complexities of modern education. As we shift our focus from theoretical underpinnings to practical applications, these intertwined theories continue to serve as the bedrock, guiding the pedagogy's development and implementation in diverse learning contexts.

### **Key Influencers**

*True Liberator Pedagogy*, deeply rooted in transformative education, systematically incorporates the methodologies of Design Thinking (Brown, 2008; Cross, 2011), fostering a participatory learning environment that transcends traditional classroom hierarchies. This approach, reflecting Montessori's (1948/1967) vision of the teacher as a facilitator, dissolves the age-long dichotomy of the teacher's throne, embracing a collaborative, partnership-driven model. It emphasizes empathy, iterative design, and collaborative innovation (Brown & Wyatt, 2010), democratizing the educational process and nurturing a culture of shared responsibility and creative engagement. In TLP, the teacher transitions from an authoritative figure to a facilitator of learning, echoing Freire's (1970) advocacy for dialogic education and Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism. Educators guide and assist in discussions, enhancing students' critical thinking and participation. This facilitative approach is also

supported by Bruner's concept of the spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960), emphasizing discovery and revisiting concepts with increasing complexity.

Further, the pedagogy integrates the constructivist learning principles of Piaget (2013), promoting an environment where learners actively construct their knowledge. This mirrors Dewey's (1938) emphasis on "experiential learning" and aligns with Ladson-Billings' (1995) "culturally relevant pedagogy," fostering a participatory, dialogic environment that values collaborative and co-creative relationships. The teacher, as a Liberator, advocates for an educational experience that is reflective, emancipatory, and action oriented. Inspired by Freire's critical pedagogy and contemporary educational theorists, it encourages students to apply their learning to effect real-world social change (hooks, 1996; Mezirow, 1997). Combining these diverse educational philosophies, TLP aims to create a more just, inclusive, and liberated society.

### **Foundational Pillars of True Liberator Pedagogy**

An organized and structured educational system fosters a positive and active interaction between teachers, students, and the learning environment. Key areas include empowering learners, fostering critical consciousness, cultivating creativity and innovation, and encouraging reflective practice. This model offers a comprehensive and dynamic approach to learning by combining critical thinking with practical innovation (Ananda 2023). TLP seeks to instill a sense of empowerment and critical thinking among its members while being creative. What does this mean? According to the pledge, we should create an educational atmosphere in which everyone can participate and benefit from the learning process regardless of their background so that they can adapt and influence the challenges of a constantly changing global community. The educational model of TLP merges Freirean education's critical and reflective elements with the creative and practical techniques of design thinking (DT), demonstrating its commitment to a multidisciplinary approach that emphasizes active participation in learning. TLP aims to promote an educational environment fostering active learning by encouraging students to contribute to their learning. According to Piaget's (1954) constructivist perspective, this aligns with the idea that learning is a process that involves the active accumulation of knowledge through experience and interaction.

Rather than teachers remaining only within the tradition of dispensing knowledge, they become facilitators responsible for guiding students in exploring and understanding concepts in this environment. This is different from traditional lecturers who provide instruction on curriculums or topics. This change from the teacher to the student focus allows students to dive deeper into their studies, encouraging them to question, explore, and connect meaningfully with the material. Deci and Ryan (2008) highlighted the significance of learner autonomy and personalized learning through this approach. The main pillars are Empowering learners, Fostering Critical Consciousness, Cultivating Creativity, and Innovation, and Encouraging reflective practice. This model surpasses the status quo by merging critical reflection with practical innovation, resulting in a comprehensive and dynamic approach to learning. Members of TLP are expected to possess a sense of empowerment and creative thinking. This commitment is focused on creating an educational environment where all students and teachers are involved in the learning process, equipping them to navigate and influence the complexities of an ever-changing global society.

### **Foundational Pillar 1: Empowering Learners**

The idea of learner empowerment in TLP is based on Dewey's (1938) progressive education theories and Piaget's (1954) constructivist approach. To Dewey, students should actively engage in the educational system and partake in activities that encourage independence and analytical thinking. TLP's teaching philosophy highlights the significance of assuming responsibility for one's education, which in turn nurtures a learning environment where individuals are actively engaged and passively involved in the process. Piaget suggested that the constructivist theory proposes that learners enhance empowerment by constructing knowledge through experiences and interactions.

Educators help students explore and grasp concepts without imposing a specific curriculum. This change enables students to investigate, inquire, and interact with material that is connected to their own experiences and views (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Recent research in education has emphasized the advantages of empowering students. Studies have shown that students who are given the freedom to participate in their learning are more motivated, involved, and successful (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Black and Determine, 2000; Reeve, 2006; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Freeman et al. 2014). Additionally, empowering learners aspires them in developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for success in different fields in the 21st century (Deci and Ryan, 2008).

### **Foundational Pillar 2: Fostering Critical Consciousness**

This pillar emphasizes the critical examination of these broader contexts by facilitating Critical Awareness in comprehending the intricate social, political, and cultural contexts that shape the educational journey while drawing inspiration from Freire's (Freire 1970) seminal concept of 'conscientização.' Rather than solely emphasizing educational content, it calls for a greater exploration of the social structures and power dynamics that shape learning. This principle has been further developed by critical theorists such as Giroux (2001), who argue that education should prepare students for their critical thinking to be effective at challenging established norms and practices. The goal is to encourage students to be more involved in their sociopolitical milieu, acknowledging their role in shaping and modifying it.

In line with present educational research, Critical Consciousness incorporates teaching practices and encourages learners to question and analyze the status quo. This approach supports the essential concept of awareness. In alignment with current educational research, fostering Critical Consciousness involves integrating teaching practices and encouraging learners to question and analyze the status quo. This could involve critical discussions on current events, debates on historical narratives, and exploration of diverse cultural perspectives. The objective of *True Liberator Pedagogy*, which is the main focus of this pillar, is to produce academically capable individuals and socially aware and politically knowledgeable citizens. This approach acknowledges that education is a powerful force for social change, even when it is not neutral. This program equips students to navigate, comprehend, and positively impact the intricate web of society in which they reside and acquire knowledge. TLP's ultimate purpose is to provide a transformative educational experience by providing students with unbiased

insights into their social, political, and cultural circumstances and equipping them with the skills necessary to engage with these realities. However, its dynamic process is deeply connected to the real world, fostering a generation of learners who are informed, critical, and ready to contribute to the betterment of society and making sure that learning is not a static academic pursuit.

### **Foundational Pillar 3: Cultivating Creativity and Innovation**

The third pillar of TLP is integral to fostering a learning environment that values and actively nurtures creative and innovative problem-solving. The pillar is founded on the ideas of DT, which were popularized by thinkers at Stanford's d.school and IDEO (Brown, 2008), and emphasizes creative, human-centered teaching methods. This part of TLP is in line with the cognitive theories of Vygotsky (1978), who emphasized the role of creativity in cognitive development, and Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences, which suggests that creativity is an essential component of human intelligence. The theory suggests creativity is not a natural aptitude but cultivated through education and practice.

In line with recent educational research, this pillar places emphasis on innovative teaching methods, project-based learning, design challenges, and collaborative ideation sessions. Moreover, this pillar advocates for students to foster a classroom culture of experimentation and innovation that promotes creativity and problem-solving. *True Liberator Pedagogy* emphasizes using creative inquiry in education to prepare students for their professional roles in an increasingly competitive global workforce. The emphasis of TLP is not limited to teaching creativity and innovation; it is also a commitment to creating students capable of innovating and leading change in an ever-evolving world. By using this method, students not only prepare for the future but also become capable of driving innovative and imaginative solutions.

### **Foundational Pillar 4: Encouraging Reflective Practice**

Embedding continuous reflection throughout the learning process enables students to critically evaluate their beliefs and actions and their impact on the world. TLP's fourth aspect involves cultivating a keen sense of self-worth and reflection on oneself. According to Schön (2017), this principle is founded on reflection in professional development and learning. Schön argues that reflection is crucial for professional and educational progress and encourages continuous self-reflection through self-assessment and adaptation. Schön's concept of the "reflective practitioner" is central to this pillar. It demonstrates individuals' need to maintain a continuous process of self-examination and learning. Engaging in critical and active reflection on one's practice is not limited to passive reflection upon past actions. The questioner consistently reevaluates and questions their performance, methods, decisions (or the output of others), seeking ways to improve and adapt in response to new challenges and experiences. This reflective process is not limited to post-action contemplation; it also involves thinking in action, a dynamic form of problem-solving and understanding that occurs amid the teaching and learning activity (Budnyk et al. 2023). Introspection and self-awareness are not limited to academic study in the context of TLP. It is about building a sense of self-consciousness regarding the material learned and their role in an overall socio-political context. This reflective practice is essential for personal development, professional excellence, and social

responsibility. The outcome is that learners can make better decisions, adapt to change, and demonstrate empathy toward their surroundings.

In encouraging reflective practice, Mezirow (1997) outlines the transformative learning theory while highlighting the importance of critical thinking in fostering personal development and social transformation. Mezirow believes people can uncover surprising information about themselves and the world by analyzing their assumptions and beliefs. The significance of reflective practice in education is further supported by contemporary research (Campoy, 2010; Machost & Stains, 2023), suggesting that reflective practices enhance learners' critical thinking skills, self-awareness, and ability to apply knowledge in practical contexts. By fostering a reflective mindset, learners are better equipped to understand their learning experiences, make informed decisions, and engage responsibly in their communities and professions. *True Liberator Pedagogy*, through this pillar, aims to develop learners who are knowledgeable but also thoughtful and self-aware, capable of critically assessing their actions and their impact on the world. This pillar is known as *True Liberator Pedagogy*. The pillar is purposed to develop knowledgeable yet reflective and self-aware learners who can critically evaluate their behavior and contribution to society. In this way, students are motivated to develop a continuous learning journey that leads them to strive for self-improvement and contribute to society. Reflection is a fundamental aspect of TLP. It fosters and encourages reflection, personal development, and responsible citizenship in students to prepare them for their roles in an ever-changing and multifaceted world.

The four fundamental pillars create a compelling and dynamic framework for transformative learning by working together. In addition, these pillars are crucial in creating an educational atmosphere that offers knowledge and actively engages students in intellectual and personal growth. Fostering Critical Consciousness promotes learners' active engagement with societal structures and their roles, while Empowering Learners ensures education is a participatory process. Enhancing Creativity and Innovation emphasizes innovative and empathetic problem-solving methods while Encouraging Reflective Practice fosters a culture of reflection and flexibility. TLP is a comprehensive approach incorporating these pillars, providing students with the necessary skills, mindset, and awareness to navigate and impact an increasingly interconnected world. The approach goes beyond academic disciplines and aims to equip students for future success, lifelong learning opportunities, active social involvement during crises, and responsible global citizenship.

### **Essential Components and Principles of True Liberator Pedagogy**

*True Liberator Pedagogy* is not only defined by its foundational theories and the associated pillars, but it further identifies a set of essential components and principles that guide its application in educational settings. These elements make TLP a unique and powerful approach to learning and teaching. Each component intertwines to create an environment that nurtures critical, empathetic, and active learners equipped to engage with and transform their world. The following Components and principles are central to the Implementation of TLP:

#### *Critical Consciousness*

*Conscientização*, or critical Consciousness, is the basis of TLP's component, Critical Consciousness (Freire, 1970). Freire foresaw education as a means of value change rather than just facilitating knowledge. In that regard, Critical Consciousness (CC) includes an intimate comprehension and awareness of the socio-political environment in which individuals and communities exist. The goal is to view reality not as static objects but as ongoing and evolving. CC aims to motivate students to analyze social structures and their roles in them critically. It is based on Freire's idea of 'conscientização,' or critical Consciousness, where education is seen as a means of social transformation (Freire 1970).

#### *Integrative and Adaptive Learning*

Montessori (1948) and Bruner (1960) are educators who have drawn on their work to promote integrative and adaptive learning environments. The spiral curriculum concept created by Bruner and Montessori emphasizes the importance of education tailored to each student's developmental stage. Additionally, Montessori believes in child-centered education as a system that prioritizes exploration, curiosity, and personal development while catering to individual needs and abilities. Her work proposes a comprehensive education system that considers emotional, social, and cognitive growth as equally essential in preparing students for the challenges they confront in modern society.

#### *Empathy-Driven Creative Problem Solving*

This component of TLP, based on the work of Brown (2008) emphasizes the importance of empathy in learning and utilizes a holistic approach to problem-solving that considers human needs and experiences. This principle promotes creative and critical thinking processes influenced by empathy, leading learners to develop empathetic practices and cultivate interdisciplinary relationships.

#### *Participatory and Dialogic Learning*

Paulo Freire believed that education is never neutral. People can either be passive recipients of knowledge or engage in a 'problem-posing' approach, becoming active participants. This approach emphasizes linking knowledge to action, enabling individuals to work towards societal change at local and broader levels. *True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP) embodies Freire's philosophy by transforming passive learning into active engagement. TLP encourages teachers to support students in critically engaging with content, fostering critical consciousness, and inspiring them to address societal issues. By linking knowledge to action, TLP empowers students to become agents of change, aligning educational goals with broader social and cultural development.

TLP integrates Freire's concepts to create an educational environment where learning is Drawing heavily from Paulo Freire's dialogic methods emphasizes the role of dialogue and collaboration in the learning process. Freire's concept of dialogue goes beyond mere conversation; this principle involves a deep exchange of ideas where learners critically engage with content, question prevailing norms, and collectively construct knowledge. This approach challenges traditional didactic teaching methods and positions learners as active co-creators of their

educational journey.

*Reflective and Emancipatory Action*

Reflective and Emancipatory Action combines deep reflection with active engagement to bring about personal and societal transformation. Built on critical pedagogy and transformative learning, this method enables students to deeply examine their experiences and the societal settings they are part of. By doing this, students acquire the abilities to question and challenge current power systems, encouraging freedom and important societal transformation. In addition, reflective practice, according to Schön (2017), involves ongoing self-assessment and contemplation of individual experiences and actions. This procedure motivates educators and learners to carefully assess their beliefs, practices, and the impact of their actions on their surroundings. This kind of self-evaluation assists in recognizing areas that need improvement and encourages a better grasp of the educational experience, supporting personal development and boosting learning results.

Guided by Freire, critical pedagogy's Emancipatory Action highlights the importance of connecting knowledge and action. Freire supported an education approach known as 'problem-posing', where students are involved in recognizing, examining, and solving real-life issues. This approach promotes students to become catalysts for societal transformation, highlighting the importance of justice and equal opportunities. By linking theoretical understanding to real-world situations, students are encouraged to question and change societal systems, promoting social equity (Freire, 1970). Furthermore, Mezirow's (theory of transformative learning highlights the act of critical reflection in sparking personal and societal transformation. This method motivates people to rethink their presuppositions and convictions, resulting in fresh outlooks and actions. He further, suggests that education should go beyond just sharing information, motivating students to actively participate in improving their communities and society. In that regard, transformative learning promotes critical consciousness, enabling learners to participate in meaningful societal interventions (Mezirow, 1997).

By integrating these elements, Reflective and Emancipatory Action creates an educational setting where learning is actively participatory. This method equips students to use their knowledge to drive meaningful change in both personal and broader social contexts. It aligns with *True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP) goals, fostering a holistic and dynamic learning experience that encourages critical thinking, empathy, and active involvement.

Collectively, these elements, deeply rooted in the intellectual traditions of Freire (1970), Montessori (1948), Bruner (1960), Brown (2008), Norman (2013), Vygotsky (1978), Schön (2017), and Mezirow (1978), collectively forge a pedagogical approach that transcends mere knowledge transfer. Critical Consciousness fosters an acute awareness of societal structures, enabling learners to become more insightful and active community participants. Drawing from the philosophies of Montessori and Bruner, Integrative and Adaptive Learning advocates for education that is responsive to each learner's developmental stages and personal learning styles. This approach cultivates a learning environment where individual exploration and growth are paramount, ensuring education is informative, transformative, and tailored to foster the holistic development of every learner. Empathy and human-centered innovation ensure that learning is deeply connected to the human experience, promoting innovative and compassionate solutions. Participatory and dialogic learning encourage collaborative and inclusive educational

environments, while reflective and emancipatory action embeds a continuous process of introspection and transformation in learning.

Including "Reflective and Emancipatory Action" in TLP enhances the pedagogical approach through the incorporation of critical reflective practices and transformational learning concepts. The idea of "Reflective and Emancipatory Action" merges reflective practice and emancipatory pedagogy within one framework. According to Schön (2017), reflection practice involves continuously evaluating and reflecting on subjective experiences and actions. The main focus of liberatory pedagogy, advocated by Paulo Freire, is to link knowledge with action to challenge and transform social structures. In this way, it guarantees that students have the cognitive resources to comprehend and scrutinize their experiences and the social systems surrounding them, promoting a heightened sense of involvement and empowerment. Reflective and Emancipatory Action is an educational method that involves deep reflection and active engagement to encourage personal and societal change. This idea is based on critical pedagogy and transformative learning, with the goal of enabling learners to carefully analyze their experiences and the societal environments they inhabit. This process helps learners build the capacity to question and challenge current power systems, resulting in liberation and significant societal transformation.

- *Reflective Practice:* Inspired by Donald Schön's (2017) concept, reflective practice involves continuous self-assessment and contemplation of one's experiences and actions. Educators and learners are encouraged to think critically about their own beliefs, practices, and the impact of their actions on their surroundings. This reflection helps in identifying areas for improvement and growth, fostering a deeper understanding of the learning process.
- *Emancipatory Action:* Drawn from Paulo Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy, emancipatory action emphasizes the importance of linking knowledge to action. Learners are encouraged to engage in 'problem-posing' education, where they actively participate in identifying, analyzing, and addressing real-world issues. This approach aims to transform learners into agents of change who work towards social justice and equity.
- *Transformative Learning:* Jack Mezirow's (1997) transformative learning theory highlights the role of critical reflection in bringing about profound personal and collective change. It involves a shift in perspective, where individuals reassess their assumptions and beliefs, leading to new ways of thinking and acting. This theory supports the idea that education should not only impart knowledge but also inspire learners to act towards improving their communities and societies.

Furthermore, the incorporation of Critical Consciousness, Integrative and Adaptive Learning, Empathy-Driven Creative Problem Solving, Participatory and Dialogic Learning, and Reflective and Emancipatory Action solidifies TLP as a comprehensive approach. TLP goes above and beyond traditional education, nurturing insightful, imaginative, empathetic, and well-equipped learners to create a beneficial influence in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Furthermore, the connections among these components in TLP not only educate but also empower students to initiate essential changes, equipping them with the ability to address



challenges in a complex world with a thoughtful, caring, and practical approach.

### **Differentiation from Existing Theories**

While drawing foundational inspiration from critical pedagogy and DT, TLP carves out its unique niche in the educational landscape through its harmonious essential integration of reflection and practical, empathetic problem-solving. This pedagogical approach diverges markedly from traditional models centered around content delivery. In contrast, TLP strongly emphasizes active participation and real-world application, fostering a learning environment that is dynamic, interactive, and deeply connected to the complex realities of the contemporary world. At the heart of this differentiation is how TLP incorporates critical pedagogy's focus on social justice and empowerment, a concept pioneered by Freire (1970). Unlike conventional educational models that often reinforce existing societal structures, TLP encourages learners to analyze and question these structures critically. This involves a transformative learning process that extends beyond knowledge acquisition to include the development of critical Consciousness. This awareness empowers students to recognize and challenge societal injustices.

Simultaneously, TLP embraces the core tenets of DT, as articulated by Brown (2008), and practiced by leading innovative organizations like IDEO (Brown 2008). This includes an empathetic approach to problem-solving that prioritizes human needs and experiences. In TLP, this aspect of DT is not just about creating user-centric solutions. However, it is expanded to foster a deep understanding of the social and emotional dimensions of the addressed challenges. Implementing DT into TLP aims to cultivate technically proficient, emotionally intelligent, and socially conscious problem-solvers.

Furthermore, TLP extends the scope beyond conventional pedagogical methods by emphasizing practical implementation. The emphasis is on the practical application of knowledge and skills, thus enabling learners to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical implementation. By making learners feel involved and engaged in their learning process, the pedagogy ensures they can use these insights to make positive community changes. The progressive educational paradigm of TLP merges the introspective and analytical depth of critical pedagogy with DT's human-centered and solution-oriented approach.

### *Integration with Related Educational Concepts*

*True Liberator Pedagogy* marks a change in educational methods, connecting with and building upon various influential ideas, especially those based on constructivist theories. This teaching approach aligns with the beliefs of Bruner (1960) and Vygotsky (1978), who argue that students should actively build their knowledge instead of simply receiving information passively during learning. Bruner's focus on discovery learning is online with TLP's method, where students are encouraged to actively participate in exploration and inquiry to develop their comprehension, leading to a stronger and more individualized relationship with the topic.

Moreover, TLP incorporates David Kolb's (1984) theories of experiential learning, highlighting the significance of experience in the learning process. By implementing Kolb's cyclical model of experiencing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimenting, TLP guarantees that learning is an engaging and interactive journey, where

experiences are both absorbed and applied actively to enhance understanding and develop skills. TLP adopts Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism along with these theories. This method sees the development of knowledge as a collaborative social activity. It is in line with the collaborative and dialogic essence of TLP, which highlights communal learning and the significance of cultural contexts in influencing educational experiences and challenges the traditional educational system's dominance with teachers as the only source of knowledge while simultaneously leaving students to contribute and question education through participation. It also aims to promote active, democratic learning by challenging the teacher-centric model and promoting student involvement within the classroom environment. This approach fosters equity and participatory learning often associated with academic institutions.

Furthermore, the approach to teaching aligns with current trends in inclusive and cultural education, which acknowledges and values diversity among learners and their cultural surroundings, resulting in an educational experience that is relevant and meaningful to all students. By integrating the constructivist principles of Bruner (1960) and Vygotsky (1978), along with Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, TLP offers a comprehensive framework that not only challenges traditional educational paradigms but also prepares learners to be actively engaged critically reflective, and empowered participants in a diverse and evolving world.

### **True Liberator Pedagogy Implications for Practice**

Educational policymakers' adoption of TLP highlights the importance of evolving educational systems, focusing on improving academic performance and cultivating compassionate, socially responsible, and innovative individuals. This paradigm shift could yield noteworthy results by altering the dynamics of classrooms, creating a more inclusive and collaborative learning environment, or at least spurring some pedagogical innovation. These modifications established the basis for a more just and equitable society, highlighting the profound social consequences of reimagining education.

#### *Potential Impact on Teaching and Learning*

Implementing TLP can profoundly impact teaching and learning practices, significantly departing from traditional educational models towards a more holistic and interactive approach. This pedagogical shift encourages educators to transition from mere dispensers of knowledge through lecturing to adopting more facilitative roles, as emphasized by hooks (1994). In this new role, educators function as mentors and partners, resulting in an active learning environment that's both collaborative and participatory. The alteration is not solely in the teaching approach but also in a radical shift towards reshaping the power dynamics in academia to promote an increasingly equitable and inclusive learning environment.

#### *Fostering Creativity and Critical Thinking*

By fostering creativist attitudes, both students and teachers are liberated to explore new dimensions in education and personal growth. Students are liberated to express their creativity, allowing them to freely share unique ideas

and perspectives, which leads to innovative thinking and problem-solving. They engage in critical thinking, enabling them to analyze and evaluate information critically, make informed decisions and solve complex problems. Furthermore, they are encouraged to become lifelong learners, constantly seeking new knowledge and skills to adapt to an ever-changing world. Teachers are liberated to facilitate learning rather than merely transmitting knowledge, experimenting with new pedagogical approaches, and integrating interdisciplinary and experiential learning into their curriculum. By embracing TLP and promoting critical thinking and creative attitudes, the educational process becomes more dynamic and transformative, benefiting both educators and learners.

#### *Enhancing Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes*

This shift to focus on students has a profound influence on the quality of student engagement and learning outcomes. Darling-Hammond and colleagues (2015) asserts that transitioning to facilitated learning improves student involvement, deepens knowledge, and fosters critical thinking and empathy (empathetic responsibility). These skills are essential for academic success and preparing students to navigate and contribute positively to a complex and rapidly changing world. *True Liberator Pedagogy*, focusing on critical Consciousness and empathetic problem-solving, aligns perfectly with these goals, fostering knowledgeable, emotionally intelligent, and socially aware learners. TLP's emphasis on active, experiential learning aligns with contemporary educational research that underscores the benefits of this approach.

#### *Problem-Solving through Empathy and Collaboration*

In the context of *True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP), the approach to problem-solving involves identifying and defining problems within real-world contexts. This process includes empathizing with individuals from the target beneficiary group to thoroughly understand and articulate the problem. Collaborative teamwork is essential to broaden the empathetic perspective, recognizing the importance of deep exploration during the empathetic process to accurately define the problem. By integrating these principles, TLP encourages a comprehensive and empathetic approach to problem-solving that aligns with its core values of critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility. Freeman et al. (2014) conducted a significant study that revealed how active learning can enhance student outcomes, especially in STEM fields. This research is considered groundbreaking. This study demonstrates that students who engage in active learning, rather than passively transmitting information, have more significant comprehension and retention of latest ideas.

#### *Addressing Diverse Educational Needs*

Implementing TLP addresses an expanding education system landscape increasingly shaped by students' diverse needs and backgrounds. The classroom environment created by this pedagogy is inclusive and culturally responsive, providing equal opportunities for students to learn and perform at their best, regardless of their economic, social, or cultural background. This lies in educational institutions' growing diversity and globalization today. Moreover, the Implementation of TLP represents a transformative shift in educational practices. Adopting

this pedagogical approach can lead to a redefinition of educator roles, increased student engagement, the development of critical thinking and empathy, and the integration of emerging educational research toward more inclusive learning environments.

### **True Liberator Pedagogy in Action**

Educators, within *the True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP) framework, are empowered to promote learning instead of simply passing on knowledge. The teacher assists students as they learn, test different teaching methods, and includes interdisciplinary and hands-on learning in their lessons. Moreover, TLP helps teachers create inclusive, collaborative, and supportive learning atmospheres where all students feel important and confident to participate. By adopting TLP and encouraging critical thinking and creative attitudes, education becomes more dynamic and transformative, positively impacting both teachers and students and enhancing the overall social and cultural progress of communities.

In TLP, teaching for understanding involves students having many chances to make inferences and generalizations with the support of the teacher. Comprehension cannot just be taught; students must engage in creating meaning, or else misunderstandings and memory loss will occur. Teaching for transfer involves providing learners with chances to use their knowledge in different contexts and giving them feedback promptly to enhance their skills (Klemenčič & Hoidn 2020). Therefore, the teacher's responsibilities evolve from being an authoritative figure in the classroom to guiding students (Schön, 2017; Perry & Booth, 2021) in creating meaning and offering guidance on effectively utilizing the course material. By adopting TLP, teachers enable students to build knowledge, utilize learning in different situations, and deeply interact with material, promoting critical thinking and creative mindsets.

Teachers, in turn, are liberated to facilitate learning rather than merely transmit knowledge. They can guide and support students in their learning journeys, experiment with new pedagogical approaches, and integrate interdisciplinary and experiential learning into their curriculum. Additionally, teachers can foster inclusive, collaborative, and supportive learning environments where every student feels valued and empowered to contribute. By embracing *True Liberator Pedagogy* and promoting critical thinking and creativist attitudes, the educational process becomes more dynamic and transformative. This approach benefits not only educators and learners but also contributes to the broader social and cultural development of learning communities (Bielaczyc & Collins 2013).

### **Application in Diverse Educational Settings**

In K-12 education, True Liberator Pedagogy (TLP) aligns with Ladson-Billings' (1995) emphasis on collaborative learning and empathy. By fostering collaboration and empathy, TLP helps young learners develop entrepreneurship skills and a lifelong love of learning. Early educational experiences significantly influence students' attitudes toward learning, social interaction, and collaboration.

At the higher education level, TLP enhances advanced problem-solving and critical thinking abilities, preparing students for practical challenges. This approach supports the educational reforms advocated by Raikou and Karalis (2020), which stress the importance of equipping students to tackle complex real-world issues. By integrating practical problem-solving and critical thinking, TLP ensures that higher education encompasses both theoretical and practical knowledge applications.

For adult education, TLP is equally relevant and practical, reflecting Malcolm Knowles' (1980) andragogical principles that prioritize learner autonomy and the practical application of knowledge. TLP allows adult learners to bring their diverse life and work experiences into the classroom, enhancing the learning process. This approach values the independence of adult learners and ensures that learning is immediately relevant and applicable to their lives and work.

The versatility of TLP makes it an effective approach across all educational levels. From fostering empathy and collaboration in K-12 settings to developing advanced critical thinking and problem-solving skills in higher education, and promoting autonomy and practical application in adult education, TLP offers a comprehensive framework adaptable to the diverse needs of learners at various educational stages.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

TLP implementation poses challenges that demand careful consideration and strategic planning. One of the primary obstacles to this work is teacher preparation, which necessitates proficiency in facilitative teaching techniques and a willingness to transition to less traditional, more interactive classroom settings. This requires reorientation in teaching practices and professional approaches, emphasizing continuous professional development. (Giroux, 1988).

Moreover, the challenge of redesigning the curriculum to align with TLP principles is significant. This can be a time-consuming and challenging endeavor that requires educators to rethink and reconstruct curriculum frameworks to promote critical thinking, empathy, and active engagement. This redesign involves revising content and transforming educational goals/program parameters and assessment approaches to reflect their values. Additionally, institutional resistance to change poses a significant barrier. As Tyack and Cuban (1995) discuss, educational institutions often prefer maintaining established practices, making the adoption of innovative pedagogies like TLP challenging. Navigating these institutional dynamics requires advocacy, perseverance, and, frequently, a phased approach to implementing change.

Furthermore, implementing TLP requires a balance between adapting to the unique needs of learners, which includes considering diverse learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and ability levels, while maintaining an inclusive pedagogy accessible to all students. This is particularly challenging as student populations often require specialized knowledge of diversity and inclusivity in educational settings. Despite the potential transformative effects of TLP in educational settings, its implementation is fraught with significant challenges. These include the need for educators to undergo professional development to align with TLP principles, redesign existing curricula

to conform to TLF guidelines, face institutional inertia, and reach out to all students regardless of their background or ethnicity.

### **Implications for Educational Practice**

By embracing Freire's principles of thematic investigation, thematization, and problematization, we provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing academic oppressions as a fundamental step in the quest for social change. This approach offers valuable insights for future research and interventions in critical management education and beyond. Implementing TLP to foster empathy and inclusivity aligns with hooks' (1994) belief in an engaged pedagogy, which prioritizes education grounded in freedom and diversity. Additionally, TLP extends these principles into a broader societal context. McLaren (2000) stated that education involves personal awakening and social change.

Further, the concept of *True Liberator Pedagogy* exemplifies how education and empowerment are deeply embedded in Freirean ideals, emphasizing the need for greater social justice. By incorporating social justice practices that include critical consciousness and empathy into educational methods, TLP empowers teachers to become facilitators of change, guiding students to lead productive lives locally and globally. Conversely, it equips teachers with the tools to foster a collaborative and inclusive teaching and learning environment, promoting lifelong learning and continuous personal growth for both educators and students, and encouraging them to become proactive agents of change within and beyond the classroom.

As an approach, TLP has promised to transform classrooms and educational practices by altering traditional learning environments as suggested by Klemenčič and Hoidn (2020). It promotes critical thinking, active listening, and collaborative learning, encouraging students to explore their learning experiences through inquiry and participation. This approach is crucial for the empowerment of educators and students alike.

Teacher preparation programs should consider the implications of TLP, particularly as they relate to subject matter expertise and the skills required for teaching future educators how to create learning environments that reflect TLP. This includes developing techniques such as critical thinking, empathy training, and creating inclusive and participative educational spaces; adding these principles to teacher preparation can help prepare future teachers to implement TLP effectively in their profession.

### **Curriculum Development and Policy Influence**

The inclusion of *True Liberator Pedagogy* (TLP) in educational curricula represents a significant departure from traditional instructional methods, which often emphasize rote memorization and passive learning through lectures and standardized curricula. These conventional methods involve assessment techniques like multiple-choice tests, emphasizing individualized learning and exploration rather than emphasizing flipped corners and individualistic tendencies. Montessori, as an inspiration for TLP, differs significantly from her beliefs. According to Montessori (1947), standardized assessments, such as multiple-choice tests, were inadequate in measuring the breadth and

depth of a child's abilities and learning process. Instead, she recommended that children develop an educational environment that encourages independent thinking, creativity, or capability for learning, assessed through observation and individual progress. This approach necessitates individualized instruction that is not solely content-rich but also designed to foster critical thinking/creativist attitudes, empathy, and social awareness (similar to those promoted by Dewey). This approach necessitates a curriculum that is not only content-rich but also designed to foster critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and social awareness, echoing the educational philosophies of Dewey (1938) on experiential learning and Freire (1970) on critical pedagogy. Active engagement with learning materials is central, positioning students as active participants in their learning, a concept supported by Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism theory.

The role of state agencies, educational accreditation bodies, and other influential organizations is crucial in this transformative curriculum development. Fullan (2007) noted in discussions on educational change that these entities have the authority and capability to set educational standards and policies that encourage or mandate the integration of principles. Moreover, integrating TLP into the curriculum requires collaborative efforts, aligning with Wenger's (1998) communities of practice theory, emphasizing the importance of collaboration among educators, curriculum developers, policymakers, and community stakeholders. These collaborations ensure that the curriculum is academically robust, culturally sensitive, and responsive to diverse student needs. The potential of TLP to reshape educational policy and curriculum extends beyond individual institutions. Banks (2004) contends that multicultural education provides a blueprint for an inclusive and dynamic educational system that addresses the challenges of modern society. We seek a teaching approach that empowers and prepares students to impact a rapidly changing world.

### **Promoting Social Justice and Equity**

In addition to its educational applications, TLP has a transformative impact beyond education and is firmly in line with Paulo Freire's ideas of critical pedagogy. Freire outlines how education can affect social change in his seminal works. Freire (1970) asserts that education is crucial for awakening Critical Consciousness, a concept that TLP adds to its repertoire. Freire's ideas are integrated with education in *True Liberator Pedagogy*, which seeks to promote critical inquiry into social injustices and fosters students' capacity to question and modify these injustices. According to Giroux (1983), educators encouraging students to engage in critical thinking and social inquiry can significantly aid this process.

Beyond the educational aspect, TLP has transformative potential that aligns with what Paulo Freire refers to as critical pedagogy. Freire (1970) outlines in his seminal works how education can be used to effect social change. According to Freire, TLP combines and expands on the idea that education is crucial for awakening critical Consciousness. In schools, *True Liberator Pedagogy* is what works in Freire's vision by encouraging students to question and change social injustices through critical thinking. As Giroux (1983), educators are crucial in this process: they want students to participate in critical debates and ask questions about society. In addition, TLP can be used to promote empathy and inclusivity in line with hooks's (1994) belief that education should prioritize freedom and diversity.

Educators must understand that establishing a new moral order in their classrooms is essential before hoping to achieve a “new world order”. Utilizing TLP to promote understanding and inclusiveness is in line with hooks' (1994) support for a participatory teaching method focused on liberty and variety. Furthermore, TLP applies these principles to a wider social setting. McLaren (2000) affirms that education includes individual enlightenment and societal transformation.

The idea of *True Liberator Pedagogy* shows how education and empowerment are strongly rooted in Freirean principles, highlighting the importance of increased social justice. By integrating social justice practices such as critical consciousness and empathy in educational approaches, TLP enables teachers to act as agents of change, helping students to lead successful lives both in their communities and worldwide (Larios & Zetlin, 2023). Moreover, it provides teachers with the resources needed to cultivate a collaborative and inclusive teaching and learning space, supporting lifelong learning and continual personal development for educators and students alike, motivating them to be proactive catalysts for change both in and out of the classroom (Holmqvist & Lelinge, 2020).

*True Liberator Pedagogy*, embedded in the concept of education and empowerment as part of the Freirean philosophy, highlights the importance of social justice. Through integrating critical consciousness, empathy, and social justice practices into educational practices, TLP empowers individuals to work toward positive change locally and globally.

### **Global and Local Challenges**

TLP principles aim to recognize and address challenges the world faces, such as environmental sustainability, social justice, global health, and technological innovation ethics, while also acknowledging local issues like community development, educational inequality, cultural conservatism, or environmental concerns. They encourage the adoption of sustainable and ethical approaches to problem-solving. Furthermore, the participatory approach of Design Thinking (DT) that involves all parties involved in solving problems aligns with TLP's collaborative and democratic values. IDEO's approach to DT, as outlined in “The Field Guide to Human-Centered Design” (IDEO, 2015), exemplifies how participatory methods lead to more inclusive and practical solutions. The central principle of TLP is to address challenges through empathy-driven and responsive solutions that address real-world needs.

DT's interdisciplinary nature is one reason TLP seeks to address these issues. Cross (2011) notes that DT transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries by merging diverse perspectives and methods. This approach is crucial for TLP, as it addresses intricate social issues that necessitate a multifaceted understanding and approach. TLP utilizes empathetic, participatory, and interdisciplinary thinking principles to extend the impact of DT thinking concepts beyond product and service design to educational and social innovation. The inclusion of TLP in this extension highlights its potential to tackle educational challenges and significantly impact at global and local levels. Through its integration into curriculum development, policy influence on learning, and broader



societal impact over time, TLP has been integrated into educational practice as a comprehensive and transformative educational approach. Its role in redefining the roles of educators and learners also highlights the importance of creating inclusive education that builds capacity for collaboration and teamwork across all levels. Additionally, social implications highlight its function as an instrument of progressive societal change. Thus, TLP proposes a comprehensive and progressive educational approach, emphasizing education as advancing knowledge and creating opportunities for self-realization, social responsibility, and global awareness.

## **Conclusion**

*True Liberator Pedagogy*, as conceptualized in this exploration, stands at the forefront of educational innovation, blending critical pedagogy with DT principles that will have a pivotal emphasis on creativity. It represents a paradigm shift in education, focusing on critical Consciousness, empathy, and participatory learning. These elements coalesce into a transformative educational experience that transcends traditional didactic methods and fosters a more engaged, inclusive, and action-oriented learning journey. And thus, by fostering creativist attitudes, both students and teachers are liberated to explore new dimensions in education and personal growth. Students are liberated to express their creativity, allowing them to freely share unique ideas and perspectives, which leads to innovative thinking and problem-solving. They engage in critical thinking, enabling them to analyze and evaluate information critically, make informed decisions and solve complex problems. Furthermore, they are encouraged to become lifelong learners, constantly seeking new knowledge and skills to adapt to an ever-changing world.

In this study, the theoretical foundations of TLP have been thoroughly reviewed, drawing insights from an array of scholarly works. Its foundation helps to define TLP precisely, underscoring its importance and critical relevance to today's educational and social challenges. Integrating critical pedagogy and design thinking, TLP is strategically positioned to respond to the complexity and interconnectedness of our modern world. As a distinctive framework, it promotes an educational atmosphere that prioritizes empathy, inclusion, and social responsibility and responds to today's society's urgent needs and global challenges.

This article and its research confirm the transformative potential of TLP and its role as more than just a theoretical construct. The TLP calls educators, policymakers, and academic leaders to adopt a holistic and responsive approach to education. This paradigm supports practices that impart knowledge and actively engage students in their educational journey, empowering them to be agents of change. Therefore, the TLP is a blueprint for educational reform and a guiding philosophy for promoting a fairer, more just, and informed society. An authentic emancipatory pedagogy embodies what modern education should strive for—preparing students for academic achievement, lifelong learning, and meaningful participation in an ever-evolving global community.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to individually thank Dr. Jerry Parkman, Dr. Tracey Agnew-Dodge, and Dr. George LaBoskey for their friendship and constructive feedback on previous versions of this article. Any opinions, findings, and

conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of my associations.

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