

# Freirean-Based Critical Pedagogy: The Challenges of Limit-Situations and Critical Transitivity

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## Abstract

For many, Paulo Freire is alluring, demanding and difficult. Yet, for others, Freire is maddening. He is certainly not without his critics. Critics included, few would doubt that Freire's work is indispensable to an understanding of critical pedagogy. Though not the first or the last, Freire links together our existential situations in life with conditions of consciousness and provides a possible explanation for how both become what they are—education. This linkage is, as this article argues, necessary for creating and enacting a critical pedagogy of one's own. The purpose of this article, then, is to provide a conceptual framework to help others think through an understanding and enacting of a Freirean-based critical pedagogy. The framework as we conceive of it is an axis-like framework mined from a few of Freire's foundational texts and is comprised of two poles—limit-situations, critical transitivity—and is connected by the axis, or the conduit, of education.

## Keywords

Paulo Freire, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Educational Theory, Dialogue, Critical Transitivity, Critical Consciousness, Philosophy of Education, Democratic Education, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Limit-Situation, Teacher Education, Banking Education, Liberatory Education

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## 1. Introduction

Whatever teaching is, at the very least, it is relational (Palmer, 1998; Passmore, 2012; Shudak, 2013). Wherever teaching is found, so is the familiar triad of students, subjects, and teachers. In light of this triad, Adkins (2006) would have us consider teaching as a moral and sacred endeavor that should never be taken lightly. Borrowing from Adkins, students, subjects, and teachers come together in compulsory ways that usually involve asymme-

tries of power, thus privileging some groups over others. Because of the potential harm that asymmetrical distributions of power can cause, it is imperative that the processes and practices within educational enterprises be subjected to scrutiny of purpose. Ideally, anyone privileged to step foot into a classroom “messing with minds” (Adkins, 2006: p. 24) and teaching other people’s children (Delpit, 1996) should have been given ample opportunities to scrutinize processes, practices, and purposes of schooling and education.

Over the past thirty years, a few unique discourses have developed with the goal of scrutinizing schooling and educational practices, and doing so from critical, sociological, and philosophical perspectives. One of those discourses is critical pedagogy. It is a discourse partaken in by educators of all sorts who are concerned with the processes and practices of systems of education and schooling that seemingly claim one thing—equal access and opportunities—but actually lead to others—systemic inequality, discrimination, and disfranchisement. This article develops two key conceptual features from one of critical pedagogy’s founders—Paulo Freire—in an attempt to help critically disposed educators think through their own pedagogy and practice, and how they fit into larger purposes of education. This is an essential task.

Few will doubt that the works of Paulo Freire have been instrumental for producing ideas and inspiration to various fields of study regarding the politics of education. As alluded to above, one such field within the larger enterprise of education that is particularly indebted to Freire’s work is critical pedagogy. And though “[c]ritical pedagogy does not however constitute a homogeneous set of ideas”, those practicing critical pedagogy “are united in their objectives: to empower the powerless and transform existing social inequalities and injustices” (McLaren, 1998: pp. 163-164). Similarly, Shudak (2014) informs that even though critical pedagogy is comprised of contested intellectual terrain, critical pedagogists are aligned regarding their educational commitments and the philosophical positions they take to make life in schools humane and just. In continuing the conversation within this recent re-emergence of critical pedagogy, this article develops two Freirean-based concepts necessary to an understanding of critical pedagogy as a way of being in classrooms and society.

For many, Freire is very alluring, demanding and difficult. Yet, and for others, Freire is maddening. He is not without his critics (Brookfield, 2005). His several critics have focused on his utopian ideas and his method. He has been criticized, for instance, for his sharp and seemingly simple division of oppressor and oppressed. It is argued that his “ideas are utopian”; they do not make much sense in developed settings (Avoseh, 2009: p. 129) where he has been imported with great fanfare within the realms of academia. Freire’s use of language has also been criticized for being clumsy and gender insensitive. Feminists (Ellsworth, 1989; Gore, 1992; Weiler, 2001; Lather, 2001) have criticized him for his “lack of serious engagement with feminist perspectives” (Brookfield, 2005: p. 322). Macedo (2004: p. 15) adds that Freire’s central tenets are not “central to the curricula of most schools of education whose major responsibility is to prepare the next generation of teachers”. To this point, Stern (2009: p. 1) comments that “another reason why U.S. ed schools are so awful” is in part because of the predominance of Freirean ideas”.

In spite of his several critics, and acknowledging along with Weiler (2001: p. 73) that there “are obviously many ways to read Freire and there are many Freires to call forth from his texts”, Freire’s work is indispensable to an understanding of critical pedagogy. Though not the first or the last, Freire links together our existential situations in life with conditions of consciousness, and provides a possible explanation for how both become what they are. In other words, Freire helps think through that many of our existential situations are in part the result of a consciousness that has been shaped by a particular process—education. All three—existential situations, consciousness, and education—are inextricably bound. Though there may be several others within the realms of critical educational theory and critical pedagogy who can help think through this connection, this article focuses on two particular conceptual underpinnings from key Freirean texts.

The purpose of this article, then, is to develop a conceptual framework to help others think through the connectivity of existential situations, consciousness, and education. It is also an attempt to help others understand and enact a Freirean-based critical pedagogy. The framework as we conceive of it is an axis-like framework mined from a few of Freire’s foundational texts. It is a framework around which interested educators can build their own critical pedagogy, which is just what Freire would have wanted. In this regard, one end of the intellectual axis is occupied by Freire’s concept of *limit-situation*. The concept of *critical transitivity* is positioned at the other end. The axis itself, and what connects the poles, is education. What follows is the development of each conceptual pole and their linkage, and a case for why understanding these features is essential for those interested in practicing critical pedagogics. Before doing so, it seems necessary to clarify a few assumptions guid-

ing the work.

## 2. Guiding Assumptions of Critical Pedagogy

Freire's ideas that developed into his critical pedagogy were influenced by the social, political, and economic realities of his native Brazil. Freire's contention is that no educational issue or practice is free from the influences or the realities of its context. Freire's context was a situation where the ineptitude and corruption at the larger society level had made incursion into the educational system. He reasoned that just as politicians imposed dictatorial rule and a culture of silence on the populace, educators too were imposing intellectual silence on students. He described the educational system using words such as "domesticating" and "banking." He contrasts banking education with what he calls "liberating or problem-posing education" (Freire, 2002: pp. 72-86). Problem-posing education is thus the original framework of his critical pedagogy. He describes it as one in which "people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves..." (p. 83). Problem-posing education puts those engaged in it in the process of *becoming*, striving towards *conscientization* (p. 84). The pursuit of conscientization requires educators and learners to learn to read reality with critical lenses.

The guiding assumptions and Freire's contributions to critical pedagogy, then, dovetail in his bid to use education to interpret the world critically. Carrillo (2007) gives a good summary of the assumptions and dimensions of Freire's contribution to critical pedagogy. He lists the following four dimensions:

- 1) Education means critical understanding of reality;
- 2) Education means making a commitment to utopia and changing reality;
- 3) Education means training those who will make this change;
- 4) Education means dialogue (p. 30).

These assumptions are couched in his argument that the purpose of any education that "fosters critical thinking is to equip individuals with the intellectual and moral powers to confront and dismantle the structures of inequity and dehumanization" (Avoseh, 2009: p. 128) that exist in many of our schools. These structures, we believe, go untouched and even unnoticed because too few of our teachers and administrators experience professional programming that can in fact equip them with the aforesaid intellectual and moral powers. These assumptions and dimensions form the basis of the core arguments in this paper.

## 3. Limit-Situations: The Negative Pole

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2002), Freire argues that the consciousness of the oppressed is not really theirs, it is in fact that of what he refers to as the oppressor. This is analogous to Socrates' shadows on the wall as being a mere representation of reality, but not reality itself. In other words, Freire is making the case that in an oppressed people, their consciousness is merely the shadow. And similarly to the prisoners in the cave, Freire suggests that oppressed peoples internalize the shadow—image—of the oppressor, their mythic munificence and superiority at their own expense. The image becomes the standard, the norm, to which they can never fully measure up, though they try. This internalization—housing—and the constant measuring is what prevents—limits—one from becoming what it is they were meant, or want, to become. A critical pedagogy in the Freirean sense incorporates an understanding of those things in a person's life that limits the fullness of their cognitive, social, emotional, etc. development. The language he uses to help foster dialogue around this point involves the term: limit-situation.

On Freire's terms, a *limit-situation* impedes or prevents one's pursuit of becoming more fully human as a result of "hosting" or "housing" the oppressor consciousness, however defined. For individuals to become more fully human, something quite open to interpretation and which Freire argues is our ontological vocation, he asserts that we must become aware of the fact that we exist as dual beings "housing" an oppressive consciousness within, and because so, we cannot be truly human at all (Freire, 2002: p. 95). A truly human being, as Freire sees it, is one who is authentic and undivided in consciousness and in their humanity. In other words, the consciousness is their own, their humanity and their identity is of their choosing.

Though some might argue that in culturally-bound contexts, nothing is truly our own. For Freire, ownership of consciousness, and thus identity, is the only way toward freedom and liberation of a person or of a people. Freire posits that in order to "surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pur-

suit of a fuller humanity” (p. 47). For Freire, becoming more fully human through ownership of consciousness should be the vocation to which we are constantly and continuously devoted, and, it is this kind of purposeful devotion that critical pedagogists should bring to their classrooms, wherever they might be, and to their students, whomever they might be. How this happens cannot be scripted or prescribed.

With that being said, two fundamental passages from Freire suggest a possible cause leading to a situation of oppression—limit-situation—and the hopeful outlook that can accompany such a realization, and thus something to look toward as a practice. To do this, Freire asks, then answers, the question to the central problem in devising a critical pedagogy:

How can the oppressed, as divided, unauthentic beings, participate in developing the pedagogy of their liberation? Only as they discover themselves to be ‘hosts’ of the oppressor can they contribute to the midwifery of their liberating pedagogy. As long as they live in the duality in which *to be is to be like*, and *to be like is to be like the oppressor*, this contribution is impossible. The pedagogy of the oppressed is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization (p. 48).

What is significant in this passage is that though he problematically dichotomizes people into oppressors and the oppressed, both are really different sides of the same coin. Both are oppressed. Neither is in a situation leading toward the realization of a fuller humanity. The hopeful outlook is followed a few lines later.

In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform. This perception is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for liberation; it must become the motivating force for liberating action (p. 49).

The motivating force, then, is twofold: first, it is the recognition that as oppressed beings people, through their internal conformity with the consciousness of the oppressor, regardless of how one might want to define “oppressor”, host an oppressive worldview, and because so, are complicit in their own dehumanization. Toward such an end, people must “become aware of the fact that as dual beings, [they are] ‘housing’ the oppressors within themselves, [and because so] they cannot be truly human” (p. 95). And secondly, the limit-situation is not a permanent condition, but something that can be overcome through critical reflection and subsequent action. Any pedagogy claiming to be critical must have this Freirean component: liberation through a shift in consciousness and action, but a shift and subsequent action that is the result of realizing the oppressiveness and existence of limit-situations.

The begging question is if housing the oppressor consciousness limits one’s pursuit toward full humanity, then how and why would one become the host body housing an oppressive consciousness? An answer toward which we might look is the phenomenon of what Freire calls banking education. “Banking” education is the primary instrument leading to oppressive limit-situations, a phenomenon that can and must be overcome.

### Banking Education

Freire’s critical pedagogy was developed in response to what he saw as the disempowering education in Brazil that mirrored the corrupt political system. He saw the educational system as a politically-laden and oppressive process. It was a process that viewed students as depositories. He uses the analogy of banking to describe the process.

In the banking process individuals deposit their money in the bank and use appropriate forms to withdraw their money as needed. The bank only keeps the deposit in trust and gives back when needed because the money belongs to the depositor. Freire compares what happens in education to this banking process where the educator “deposits knowledge” in students and uses questions to “withdraw” such knowledge through examination. The knowledge does not belong to students hence the metaphor of banking. He sums up banking education as one in which “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those they consider to know nothing” (Freire, 2002: p. 72). He further describes it in the *Pedagogy of Hope* (Freire, 1997b) as one that “establishes a relation in which the educator transfers knowledge about *a orb* or *c* objects or elements of content to an educand considered as pure recipient” (p. 118). On Freire’s terms, this is dehumanizing in that it treats students as inanimate objects: “the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving,

filing, and storing the deposits” (Freire, 2002: p. 72). Freire continues to state that “in the last analysis, it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system” (p. 72).

The main precept guiding this oppressive educational apparatus is not to think. For a pedagogy to be critical in this Freirean tradition, then, requires serious, systematic, and consequently, critical forms of thinking. How this looks and occurs is entirely up to the critical pedagogue. What is key, however, is the understanding that thinking is one-half of the praxis leading to humanization. Critical thinking within critical pedagogy requires the “word” as the basis for the naming and identification of the world. “Words” in oppressive forms of education “are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity” that lifelessly settle into the receptive, passive, and non-critical minds of the unassuming and objectified students (Freire, 2002: p. 71). In this regard, education absent of a critical use of words to identify the limit-situations in one’s life turns students “into ‘containers’, into ‘receptacles’ to be ‘filled’ by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles,” according to Freire, “the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are” (p. 72).

Paraphrasing Freire, then, banking education is an instrument of dehumanization in that students’ power to identify limiting situations and to define and name the world is stultified through the control of thought and language. Using the metaphor of language, and for those who find themselves in class-based societies, Freire concludes that in the conflict of interests between classes, the dominant class has the upper hand. Accordingly, then, “the dominant class, which has to define, profile, and describe the world, begins to pronounce that the speech habits of the subordinate groups are a corruption, a bastardization of dominant discourse” (Freire & Macedo, 1987: p. 53). What results is a phenomenon wherein the effects of limit-situations translate into hegemony. It is in the sense above that the limiting situations of banking education negate all the fundamentals of critical pedagogy because it aims at changing less-privileged human beings into “objects” (Freire, 2002: p. 84). Fundamental to a pedagogy claiming to be critical is the incorporation of language that helps people look critically at themselves, the world in which they are enmeshed, and their ability to choose identity and humanity. In other words, what is fundamental to a critical pedagogy is the ability to think critically.

#### 4. Critical Transitivity: The Positive Pole

The previous section developed the pole of limit-situation as being those existential situations in one’s life that inhibit, prevent, or impede one’s attempt to be more fully human. Implicated was something Freire calls banking education, an apparatus that affects one’s consciousness and ability to think, reflect, and act. Keeping in mind that education is the axis to a Freirean-based framework for critical pedagogy, what has been evidenced is how education can act as an instrument for domination. This section speaks more specifically toward consciousness, and transitions into the form of education that in fact facilitates becoming more fully human.

Pedagogy can hardly be considered critical if it does not somehow focus on the transformation of consciousness or discuss a shift in perception. What is being argued is that the ultimate goal of a critical pedagogy should be the transformation of consciousness and the subsequent action as a result of the shift. Education in this sense requires everybody to be different—somehow better—than when they started. The concept of critical transitivity is integral to Paulo Freire’s pedagogics, and is essential to the framework herein developed. It is integral because of its transformative connotation and is thus deemed as the positive pole toward which education can help us travel. Critical transitivity used in this article is a psychological phenomenon leading to a liberated state of consciousness, a critically transitive consciousness.

An understanding of the phenomenon acknowledges the existence of a spectrum of consciousness. In order for a consciousness to become critically transitive, the consciousness must have experienced a paradigm shift from a state other than that of critically transitive. As a spectrum, we can visualize a continuum moving from left to right. Not every effort to shift from housing an oppressive consciousness to one that is liberated, or critically transitive, is successful. What follows is the development of that spectrum.

##### 4.1. Intransitivity

On the left is the starting point in the shift toward critical transitivity, and it is here where the immobilizing state of an intransitive consciousness, or *intransitivity*, sits. Freire has us consider intransitivity as “noncritical (in)action” in that one’s inability to perceive critically the various social issues at hand renders that individual

inactive due to the perceived non-existence of an issue worthy of acting, or that there simply is no issue. The state of intransitivity preserves the limit-situations of oppression though the individual is somewhat aware of the objective reality of oppression. A person, for whatever reason, chooses not to run the risks of freedom due to their non-critical reflection on what might be perceived as a mutually beneficial relationship with things as they are. Such a person has not had the chance to experience him/herself as a being of transformative power. In accordance, Boyles (1998) interprets intransitiveness as being a state of consciousness that “repudiates the power of individuals to change their existences...” (Boyles, 1998: p. xvi).

#### 4.2. Semitransitivity

From the state of intransitivity, a consciousness can move toward *semitransitivity*. This state of consciousness is marked by the individual’s inability to “apprehend problems situated outside their sphere of biological necessity... They lack a sense of life on a more historic plane... [The person’s] sphere of perception is limited...” (Freire, 1997: p. 17). Boyles characterizes semitransitiveness by stating that individuals “see the world as changeable, but see the world in unrelated segments such that semitransitiveness is two-dimensional and short term” (Boyles, 1998: p. xvi).

Semitransitivity is the nascent emergence of one’s consciousness away from a prescribed consciousness toward something more independent though not yet critical. This struggling and nascent state still renders the individual helpless regarding any critical form of analysis and interpretation of the historical processes that exist outside the individual’s immediate sphere of influence. The individual is able to perceive problems, dislocations, or contradictions; however, s/he is yet unable to critically perceive true causality and falls prey to superficial explanations. Thus, the individual is unable to critically transform his/her situation due to the belief that change is out of his/her sphere of control. “For example”, states Boyles, “groups may feed the hungry but never ask why hungry people exist in a society with yearly food surpluses” (Boyles, 1998: p. xvi). In this state, awareness is building.

#### 4.3. Naïve Transitivity

Before realizing a critically transitive consciousness, there is a state of *naïve transitivity* that perhaps prevents an individual from total engagement with his/her existence, others, and the world. Freire characterizes naïve transitivity as a state of consciousness marked by:

An over-simplification of problems; by a nostalgia for the past; by underestimation of the common man; by a strong tendency to gregariousness; by a lack of interest in investigation, accompanied by an accentuated taste for fanciful explanations; by fragility of argument; by a strongly emotional style; by the practice of polemics rather than dialogue; by magical explanations (Freire, 1997: p. 18).

Naïve transitivity is a very delicate stage wherein the reliance on the simple, emotional, and argumentative prevents true critical thinking, analysis and dialogue with others. Channel surfing through cable and late night news provides many examples of this form of consciousness.

Frustration experienced in this state is ostensibly due to an idyllic almost religious belief that good things will come to good people simply because they are the “good”. Such a belief leads people to think that they are right in their arguments against oppression and perhaps even leads individuals to assume a stance of domination against others. If results are not evidenced, or not evidenced in accordance with one’s ideals while in this stage, disillusionment might occur, relegating an individual back to hopelessness and intransitivity. “If this consciousness does not progress to the stage of *critical transitivity*”, asserts Freire, “it may be deflected by sectarian irrationality into fanaticism” (Freire, 1997: p. 18).

The danger of a *fanaticized consciousness* is its reliance on emotion and sectarianism as proxies of critical thought and under the guise of truth. If an individual falls into this state of consciousness, his/her ability to perceive, analyze critically situations and conditions, and to act is impaired by the lenses of emotion and irrationality. Ostensibly, the fanaticized consciousness is a debilitated consciousness, as critical intervention through dialogue has given way to proselytizing through diatribe and invective. A fanaticized consciousness relies on the sectarian method of depositing information into the consciousness of another until that person’s consciousness has been subordinated to sectarian ideals, similarly to banking education. Freire tells us that those who have fallen into such a dire state “are defeated and dominated, though they don’t know it; they fear freedom, though they

believe themselves to be free. They follow general formulas and prescriptions as if by their own choice” (Freire, 1997: p. 18). Becoming aware of the dangers of sectarianism through a fanaticized consciousness is important for critical pedagogues to acknowledge as a possibility. As passionate as we might be about our content and pedagogy, a critical pedagogue avoids fanaticism and avoids teaching in ways that lead to fanaticism.

#### 4.4. Critical Transitivity

Progressing to the *critically transitive* state of consciousness is of course the ultimate aim. It is a state of consciousness characterized by realizing the transformative power of an individual. A critically transitive consciousness is integrated with reality, despises the imposition of one’s reality over another, and is open, receptive, and loving. A person who has assumed such a consciousness is neither oppressed nor an oppressor but simply *is* as s/he assumes his/her ontological vocation of *becoming* more fully human, and recognizes the necessity to struggle for the humanization of others through dialogue. Not only does a critically transitive consciousness seek justice through egalitarian and popular transformative social action through dialogue—democracy—it seeks a revolution in consciousness whereby all structures of oppression, should they exist, will not only experience amelioration, but elimination. Thus an environment will open, making possible full humanization for all. This speaks directly to the criticism of Freire as being a utopianist.

Freire, offering an in depth characterization of a critically transitive consciousness, states:

The critically transitive consciousness is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanation; by the testing of one’s ‘findings’ and by openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old—by accepting what is valid in both old and new (Freire, 1997: p. 18).

A critically transitive consciousness seeks inquiry and solidarity. “This movement of inquiry”, states Freire, “must be directed towards humanization—the people’s historical vocation” (p. 18). He continues to state, “the pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be carried out in isolation or through individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity; therefore it cannot unfold in the antagonistic relations between oppressors and oppressed” (p. 18). In other words, critical transitivity is predicated on the act of dialogue between people, “with” people, so as to move toward full humanity in fellowship with like others or in solidarity with those who have already experienced the transformation.

For those interested in creating a Freirean-based critical pedagogy of their own, and on our terms, must incorporate a shift in consciousness leading toward critical transitivity. And almost as important, the shift must avoid fanaticism. As has just been developed, and on Freire’s terms, critical transitivity is a process as well as a state. Anything short of the state of critical transitivity is still oppression, especially fanaticism. To help move a consciousness along the spectrum requires a special form of education, again, the axis around which a Freirean-based critical pedagogy revolves.

### 5. Education: The Axis for Liberation through Critical Pedagogy

As noted earlier, Freire’s ideas were influenced by the socio-political situation of the Brazil of his time. The Brazilian situation then was one in which there was endemic corruption and authoritarianism that imposed the “culture of silence” on Brazilians. The culture of silence was a negation of the democratic process. The picture was that of a paternalistic nature of the state where dictators in power determine the daily life of citizens, including thinking for them. The pervasive nature of the situation filtered into education where educators behaved like the political leaders. Educators arrogated the power of knowledge creation to themselves and stiffened dialogue. In seeking to behave like political dictators, educators became oppressors and students as recipients became the oppressed. The whole essence of Freire’s education efforts was the reconciliation of the oppressor/ oppressed contradiction in education. He describes his educational ideals as empowering and liberating.

For Freire, liberating education, which is the only true form of education in a democratic society, is aimed at reconciliation of the contradictions that exist within oneself and society. This reconciliation is a critical process for both the oppressed and the oppressor. They both need power of critical education to be liberated. The op-

pressors, however defined, need to be liberated from their entrapment that they have a monopoly of knowledge and that only they can “name the world”. The oppressed, however defined, too need to be liberated from the imposed silence that constructs them as mere objects in the world. Liberating education is a transformational process in which there is “respect for the autonomy of the student” (Freire, 1998, p. 59). Education as the quest for liberation establishes the oppressors and oppressed as unfinished products, as partners in search of knowledge and in a joint journey towards conscientization—the highest level of critical self-awareness. He establishes the methodology of horizontal dialogue that flows equally between both parties as an imperative for this process of liberation through the critical unveiling of reality; a methodology consonant to almost any grade and any setting.

In order to ensure that the educational process of liberation, and thus *becoming* more fully human, is meaningful and transformational, Freire (2002: p. 88-92) establishes dialogue as an “existential necessity” (p. 88) amongst many other necessary conditions. Dialogue is necessary in that it is the means by which the ways in which people have come to know the world through their existential realities collide. Furthermore, dialogue—the power of the word—allows people to lay bare the construction of their consciousness for critical reflection, which is necessary should critical transitivity become a reality.

Other educational conditions that help make dialogue possible include love. Freire describes love as an “act of courage, not of fear, love is a commitment to others” (p. 89) for the sake of helping each other become what it is we feel we were meant to be. Other conditions include humility, which presupposes the avoidance of intellectual self-sufficiency, faith in humanity and people’s ability to be co-creators of knowledge. Hope is another important condition because hope is essential for restoring justice and fairness hence dialogue cannot be carried out in a situation of hopelessness. And finally, “true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking...thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation...” (p. 92). For these reasons, education is the axis or the core of the process of authentic education. It is liberating, then, and opposite banking education in the sense that it confronts limit-situations rather than creates them, and unfolds the benefits of critical transitivity.

## 6. Conclusion

Developed in this article was a framework for understanding and even creating a Freirean-based critical pedagogy of one’s own. The framework is comprised of two poles—limit-situations and critical transitivity—connected by the axis, by the conduit, of education. This framework was largely created by mining a few of Freire’s foundational texts. In other words, should one decide to create their own critical pedagogy, or even desire to evaluate the criticality of another’s pedagogy, the framework herein created provides conceptual underpinnings for such an endeavor.

A Freirean-based critical pedagogy indispensably involves acknowledging the existence of debilitating existential situations in life that are in part the result of consciousness that has been developed out of those situations and because of those situations. Thus, a critical pedagogy indebted to Freire acknowledges the existence of limit-situations, shifts in consciousness, and the role of education in the possibility of both oppression and liberation.

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