

Reconstruction of Freire's idea of critical consciousness and the study of its practice in Taiwan's community university

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Abstract

This study is aiming at the reconstruction of Freire's idea of critical consciousness. There have been four parts and six steps in this reconstruction. In the first part, some fundamental limitations of Freire's thought have been identified, and the need of this reconstruction work and its orientation are thereby clarified. In the next, Freire's idea of critical consciousness is reconstructed as three basic dimensions based on the framework of human-world relation as follows: 1. presupposed with critical self-awareness. 2. reflection of the totality of the existing situations. 3. limit-actions to transcend the limit-situations in order toward humanization. In the third part, there are two steps to discuss contemporary philosophical, political and social thought, such as the phenomenology of world, philosophical hermeneutics, critical theory and feminism, for the clarification of the meaning involved in this reconstructed framework of critical consciousness. The last part also has two steps. At first, the dispute regarding the fundamental spirit of Taiwan's community university movement--emancipation of knowledge, is reviewed and settled via the reconstructed framework of critical consciousness. Based on this review, the practice of a curriculum--"Taiwan's colonial experiences during Japan period", is analyzed to demonstrate the principle and method for the design of curriculum, the selection and organization of teaching material, and the teaching method for the learner to develop critical consciousness. At last, the three basic dimensions of critical consciousness are combined into a critical way of human-world interaction—listening, as a general guideline for the practice in the community university. According to this general guideline, there are some learning experiences which are helpful to foster learner's critical consciousness and can be created in all curriculum and learning activity. Therefore, it is possible for the community university to develop the critical consciousness in all their practices and this reconstruction work has provided clear elucidation.

Keywords: Paulo Freire, critical consciousness, self-awareness, totality, limit-situations, limit-acts, community university, emancipation of knowledge