

A 10-point plan for making the classroom more Freirean

Introduction

In this teacher development activity, participants explore a 10-point plan for integrating the practices and beliefs of Paulo Freire into their school and classroom. They assess the 10 points and decide how much each one has to offer them and their students. They finish by creating an action plan outlining the different aspects they would like to integrate and how they plan to integrate them.



This activity draws on materials and ideas presented by Chris Sowton in his presentation 'What Paulo Freire can teach us about the ELT classroom.'

Webinar time reference: 33:40 – 47:30

Time: 40 – 60 minutes

Aim: To encourage teachers to think about how they could introduce some of Freire's principles into the way their school works.

Preparation:

- Make copies of the discussion worksheet from the materials section.

Procedure

- Ask the participants what they know about the thoughts and ideas of Paulo Freire.
- Put them into small groups of 4 – 5 to share and compare their knowledge.

- Next, give the participants the discussion sheet on integrating Freirean principles into schools.
- Ask the participants to read through the recommendation in the plan and decide which points they:
 - Agree with
 - Would like to try in their school
 - Think could work
- After giving them time to read through, put the participants into groups of 4 – 5 and ask them to share and compare their reflections.
- Next, open the discussion to the whole group and see which points all teachers agree that they would like to try, and think could work in their school.
- Instigate a discussion on how to start implementing the points and how they can measure the impact on students' learning.
- Finish the session by asking everyone to write some action points about things they will do to try to implement these changes.

Materials:

A 10-point plan for integrating Freirean principles into schools

1. Genuinely critical pedagogy

- We should use a more learner-centred pedagogy, with learners genuinely and actively engaged in their own learning.
- There should be more time for student talking and discussion, student analysis and student reflections time.

2. Socially active learning

- We should use a more learner-centred pedagogy, with learners genuinely and actively engaged in their own learning.
- The classroom should be integrated with the community.

3. Participatory language policy

- Student's own language(s) should be used more to help disseminate knowledge and to support and guide during the assessment process.

4. Pro-learner content

- Course books and course materials should reflect more closely the experiences and culture of the learners.
- The syllabus should be designed around skills and competencies rather than lexical and grammatical items.
- Learning should be based around problem-solving and discovery.

5. Differently measured progress

- We should be measuring progress rather than attainment and also measuring a wider range of factors including confidence, attitude, social skills and self-esteem.
- Assessment should be continuous and based on what students can do with the language rather than what they know about it.

6. Gap-bridging technology

- Open-source platforms and open access educational tools and resources should be used to empower the students and provide them access to information.

7. Empowering physical learning space

- Students should have a positive and enjoyable learning space that students should be involved in decorating with their own work rather than generically created

8. Impactful professional development

- All teachers should be involved in their own professional development
- professional development should be guided and measured by its impact on learning in the classroom

9. Reimagined rationale for learning English

- Language learning should be framed from the perspective of giving students the power to participate in a global conversation about social change.
- There should be wider recognition and engagement with non-native forms of English.

10. Revise nomenclature

- We should rename aspects of the language learning process to focus on learning rather than teaching, support rather than feedback, and try to move away from hierarchical structures and more towards collaborative relationships within our learning institutions.

Additional resources

Developing teachers and enabling reform and internationalisation in higher education

- This talk looks at factors involved in creating institutional change and effective teacher development programmes at HE level. This talk draws on findings from research studying the impact of the five-year 'English for Universities' project, delivered in 32 universities.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/developing-teachers-and-enabling-reform-and-internationalisation-higher-education>

Girls' education and empowerment: Exploring the potential of English language and digital skills

- This report presents summaries of 11 scoping studies conducted in 2021 to inform programmes designed for adolescent girls in communities that are remote and/or socio-economically marginalised. The studies provide a unique insight into the lives and opinions of over 900 adolescent girls across 11 diverse countries.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/girls-education-and-empowerment-exploring-potential-english-language-and-digital-skills>

On language teachers as agents of cultural relations

- In this article, the theoretical concepts related to cultural relations and teacher agency are introduced. Empirical evidence is presented from ODA (official development assistance) contexts which shows how teacher agency can be manifested, and further reflections and implications are discussed by the author.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/language-teachers-agents-cultural-relations>