Liberation Philosophy and the Development of Communities of Inquiry: A Critical Evaluation

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to offer a critical evaluation of the role of liberation philosophy in developing communities of inquiry. The article is divided into three sections. In the first, we examine the relationship between liberation philosophy and liberation pedagogy. The second section focuses on a discussion of relationships between liberation pedagogy, communities of inquiry and the teaching of philosophical thinking. Finally, we discuss what we regard as some of the challenges of liberation pedagogy and outline future directions for research and practice. While a number of scholars have offered radical critiques of education and schooling (Latta, 1989), this article considers the work of Paulo Freire as expressed in what is perhaps his best-known book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1996).

Liberation Philosophy and the Development of Liberation Pedagogy

According to Dussel (1985, p.9), while the concept of "liberation philosophy" has been articulated only comparatively recently, "its antecedents are older than modern European philosophy." With this in mind, it is interesting that the Call for Papers for this special issue of *Analytic Teaching and Philosophical Praxis* was made in the context of a conference on Bartolomé de Las Casas, which was held at Viterbo University in October, 2012. Bartolomé de Las Casas, who lived from 1484 to 1566, was a Spanish social reformer and Dominican friar. Perhaps the best known of his writings, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, discusses the colonization of the West Indies, to which he was opposed. Dussel (p.9) refers to his work as follows:

> Bartolomé de Las Casas ... wrote that 'they have used two ways to extirpate these pitiable nations from the face of the earth,' referring to the two ways Europeans used to dominate the periphery. 'One is by unjust, cruel, bloody, and tyrannical wars' - that is, the Europeans assassinated the inhabitants of the periphery. 'The other way is that after they have assassinated all those, such as adult males, who can yearn for freedom - usually they do not leave any survivors of war except children and women - they then oppress survivors with the most violent, horrible, and hateful slavery.' They assassinated the Amerindians; if they left any alive, they debased them, oppressing them with servitude. They spared women, to live in concubinage (sexual domination) and children, to be educated in European culture (pedagogical domination). And thus in the name

> of the 'new god' (gold, silver, money, pounds sterling, or the dollar) there have been immolated to the god of nascent mercantilism, the god of economic imperialism, and the contemporary imperialism of the multinational corporations, millions more human beings of the periphery than those the Aztecs immolated to their god Huitzilopochtli - to the horror of civilized, religious-minded Europeans!

The notion of "pedagogical domination," to which Bartolomé de Las Casas refers, is a familiar one in the context of liberation philosophy and, more particularly, "liberation pedagogy" (also referred to as "critical pedagogy" - see Giroux, 1988, 2011; McLaren, 1999; McLaren, Macrine and Hill (2010); and Nocella, Best and McLaren (2010)). One of the foremost scholars of liberation pedagogy is Paulo Freire, who has written extensively in this area (Freire, 1996, 2004, 2005, 2008; see also Irwin (2012), Schugurensky (2011), and Glass (2001)). In what follows, we will focus on his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1996: hereinafter referred to as 'PO') to make explicit connections between his liberation pedagogy, communities of inquiry and the development of philosophical thinking.

Liberation Pedagogy, Communities of Inquiry and the Development of Philosophical Thinking

The concept of a "community of inquiry" is well-known within the field of Philosophy for Children/philosophy with children. Indeed, a number of papers have been published in this journal on the nature and development of such communities (see, for example, Costello, 2007a, 2010a; Morehouse, 2010). For the purposes of this article, a brief summary of the concept and its application would be useful (see Costello, 2007b for an expanded account). Matthew Lipman, founder of the Philosophy for Children programme, and his colleagues, have argued as follows:

> When children are encouraged to think philosophically, the classroom is converted into a community of inquiry. Such a community is committed to procedures of inquiry, to responsible search techniques that presuppose openness to evidence and to reason. It is assumed that these procedures of the community, when internalized, become the reflective habits of the individual (Lipman *et al.*, 1980, p.45).

The authors also tell us that in order to create a community of inquiry, certain prerequisites are necessary. There should be a "readiness to reason, mutual respect (of children towards one other, and of children and teachers towards one another) and an absence of indoctrination" (1980, p.45). Following the work of Lipman and other scholars at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), the term "community of inquiry" is now widely used by educators, whose aim is to enable their students to develop and demonstrate an ability to think, reason and argue effectively, both orally and in writing.

As is well known, the Philosophy for Children programme utilises novels and teachers' manuals to engage learners in philosophical thinking. In *Philosophy in the Classroom*, the following rationale for the novels, which have been written specifically to develop reasoning skills, is given:

> The books are works of fiction in which the characters eke out for themselves the laws of reasoning and the discovery of alternative philosophical views that have been presented through the centuries. The method of discovery for each of the children in the novels is dialogue coupled with reflection. This dialogue with peers, with teachers, with parents, grandparents and relatives, alternating with reflections upon what has been said, is the basic vehicle by which the characters in the stories come to learn. And it is how real students likewise come to learn - by talking and thinking things out (Lipman *et al.*, 1980, p.82).

The *modus operandi* advocated by the IAPC for undertaking philosophical discussion in the classroom will also be familiar, both to teachers utilizing the programme, as well as to those undertaking research in this field. A typical session would take place as follows. First of all, children are asked to read aloud an episode or chapter from one of the novels. A key pedagogical component of the program is that poor readers or those who do not wish to read are permitted to "Pass" (Fisher, 2003). In preparing teachers to teach philosophy, Lipman argues it is necessary that they should be introduced to the novels by reading them aloud in the same way that children are asked to do. As he suggests:

> This gives them experience in hearing the language of the text as well as in listening to one another. Taking turns is an exercise in moral reciprocity, and the collective effect of the ensuing discussion is a sharing of the meanings of the text through their appropriation by the group as a whole. Thus, even in the very first stage of exploring the curriculum, the members of the seminar begin to experience themselves as members of a community of shared experience and shared meanings, the first step toward becoming members of a community of inquiry (Lipman, 1988, p.156).

When the designated episode or chapter has been read, children are asked for their comments on it and they have an opportunity to determine which issues are then discussed (Costello, 2007b).

Hannan and Echeverria (2009, p.7) suggest that what they refer to as a "community of philosophical inquiry" has the following characteristics:

- Safe environment.
- Expressing disagreement.
- Cooperative endeavour.
- Practice and development of thinking skills.
- Topics for discussion are based on student interest.
- Topics discussed are philosophical.

- Knowledge is understood as evolving constantly.
- Knowledge is co-constructed.
- Teachers and students are co-enquirers in the search for meaning.
- A space for the development of a personal and social project.

With this summary in mind, we would argue that the theory and practice of developing communities of inquiry have a close affinity with Freire's conception of "liberation pedagogy" and, in particular with his discussion of several key terms and themes, including "narrative," "banking education," "indoctrination," "problem-posing education," "dialogue," "critical thinking," "reflection" and "action." We will discuss these in the context of extracts from PO.

The Teacher as "Narrator"

In PO, Freire sets out a distinctive view of the teacher-student relationship. Central to this perspective is his view of the teacher as "narrator":

> A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character. The relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students)... The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized and predictable. Or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His task is to 'fill' the students with the contents of his narration - contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated, and alienating verbosity. (PO p.52)

> Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into 'containers' into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher. The more completely she fills the receptacles, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the receptacles permit themselves to be filled, the better students they are. (PO, pp.52-53).

According to Roberts (1996, pp.52-53), in Freire's view "...the relationship between teacher and students tends to be overwhelmingly monological: the teacher narrates the subject matter to students who are expected to receive passively, memorize and (if requested) repeat the content of the narration." Freire's view is made explicit in the following schema:

- the teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- the teacher talks and the students listen - meekly;
- the teachers discipline and the students are disciplined;
- the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- the teacher chooses the programme content, and students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the students are mere objects. (PO, p.54)

The 'Banking' Concept of Education

Freire's conception of the teacher as "narrator" leads him to discuss the notion of "banking education," in which students are regarded as mere "containers" or "receptacles," whose role involves being "filled" with the knowledge, skills, attitudes etc. that teachers possess. According to Freire (PO, p.53):

> In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing... The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposite; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence... The raison d'être of libertarian education, on the other hand, lies in its drive towards reconciliation. Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students.
>
> Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat. This is the 'banking'

concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.

Problem-posing Education

At the heart of Freire's liberation pedagogy lies the idea of "problem-posing education." According to Freire (PO, pp.60-61):

> Accordingly, the practice of problem-posing education entails at the outset that the teacher-student contradiction be resolved… Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (pp.60-61)

> … the problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students. The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher'. (PO, pp.61-62)

> Whereas banking education anaesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the *submersion* of consciousness; the latter strives for the *emergence* of consciousness and *critical intervention* in reality. (p.62)

Dialogue and Critical Thinking

Dialogue and critical thinking are essential both to Freire's liberation pedagogy. Consider the following:

> Banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Banking education treats students as objects of assistance; problem-posing education makes them critical thinkers. (PO, p.64)
> Dialogue is thus an existential necessity… this dialogue cannot be reduced to the act of one person's 'depositing' ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be

'consumed' by the discussants. (pp.69-70)

> Only dialogue, which requires critical thinking, is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education. (PO, pp.73-74)

The above extracts from PO offer a concise summary of the key aspects of Freire's liberation pedagogy. We will discuss these with particular reference to communities of inquiry and the development of philosophical thinking. Let us begin with Freire's view of the teacher-student relationship. In evaluating this, we would argue first of all that it offers a very fixed and rigid representation of the educational process. Writing in 2012, we are bound to ask to what extent this conception represents the very rich and varied ways in which teaching and learning currently take place in schools, both in a national and international context. Nevertheless, it is always very instructive to discuss the above extracts with students who are undertaking teacher education programmes, either at undergraduate or postgraduate level, as this enables them to share their own previous (and current) experiences as learners within the educational system and then to reflect critically on their own pedagogical practice.

We would wish to express similar reservations about Freire's conceptions of "banking education" and "problem-posing education," at least to the extent to which, as in his view of the teacher-student relationship, these terms represent a fixed, unambiguous, "all or nothing," view of the educational process. Again, writing from the vantage point of twenty-first century schooling, we need to ask whether and to what extent Freire's dichotomous account of education as either "liberation" or "oppression" represents the current state of thinking and practice in schools today. Of course, it is possible to argue that one of the reasons why so many schools have moved away from the forms of pedagogy epitomised by "banking education" is because of the widespread influence of liberation pedagogy and the writings of scholars such as Freire, and we would agree with this view. Indeed the praxis involved in teaching philosophy in schools has strongly underpinned a liberation education perspective. The shift from the kind of traditional education epitomised by Mr Gradgrind in Dicken's novel *Hard Times* (2003) to the more progressive forms of schooling evident today is to be welcomed and Freire's notion of "banking education" offers us a stark warning about how the teaching-learning relationship should *not* be enacted in the classroom.

The relationship between "banking education" and indoctrination is a strong one and Freire refers to the latter in PO (p.59): "Education as the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students with the ideological intent (often not perceived by educators) of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression." As we saw above, Lipman *et al.* (1980) argue that a prerequisite of developing communities of inquiry is that there should be an absence of indoctrination. Indeed the IAPC is well aware of the problems posed by indoctrination:

> There is no study that can more effectively prepare the child to combat indoctrination than philosophy (Lipman *et al.*, 1980, p.85).

> [A philosophical] education is the antithesis of indoctrination as it aims to give children the intellectual tools that they need to think autonomously about moral issues, to explore the metaphysical, logical and aesthetic dimensions of these issues and eventually move toward the

formation of their own answers (Sharp, 1984, p.3).

We would argue that the notion of "problem-posing education," with its emphasis on dialogue and critical thinking, has a close affinity both with communities of inquiry and the development of philosophical thinking in schools. For example, in the context of such education, Freire suggests that students are no longer "docile listeners" but rather "critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher." This approach is essential to any viable conception of a community of inquiry and, indeed, to the teaching of philosophy itself. Freire's view of "banking education" as involving the "submersion" of consciousness also reminds us of indoctrination and, in particular, of the indoctrinated state of mind. The emphasis of "problem-posing education" is on the "emergence" of consciousness, and again, this is key to the development of successful communities of inquiry.

Curriculum Content

In discussing curriculum content, Freire (PO, p.103) offers an example that is reminiscent of the Philosophy for Children program, with its emphasis on novels that have been written for use in schools: "Another didactic resource - as long as it is carried out within a problem-posing rather than a banking approach to education - is the reading and discussion of magazine articles, newspapers, and book chapters (beginning with passages)." Of course, a broad range of alternative approaches to the teaching of philosophy in schools (which may be grouped under the heading 'philosophy with children') is now available. For example, Morris (2009) outlines a number of classroom activities to encourage the development of philosophical thinking, and Hannan and Echeverria (2009) discuss how the community of inquiry can be developed within individual subject areas.

We referred above to what we consider to be Freire's very fixed view of the teacher-student relationship and the educational process. In our view, this has led him to propose an unrealistic account both of the nature and implementation of school curricula. Why do we argue this? Consider the following statement (PO, p.90): "In contrast with the antidialogical and non-communicative 'deposits' of the banking method of education, the program content of the problem-posing method - dialogical par excellence - is constituted and organised by the students' view of the world, where their own generative themes are found."

It is clear that the view espoused by Freire does not pertain in most schools; the curriculum is neither constituted nor organised primarily by reference to how students see the world. This is not to say that what Freire refers to as "problem -posing education" does not (or should not) take place in schools; indeed, it should and it does. Rather, we are arguing that the concept of "education" is rather broader than Freire conceives of it, involving as it does *introducing* learners to a broad range of knowledge, skills, world views, academic disciplines etc. about which currently they may know very little. As Richard Peters (1981, p.52) has argued, in the context of moral development and moral education, children "can and must enter the Palace of Reason through the courtyard of Habit and Tradition." Similarly with the other disciplines that make up the school curriculum. For example, on the *Ask a Mathematician, Ask a Physicist* website (2012) and in response to the question, "How can we prove that 2 + 2 always equals 4?" a number of answers is given, including this one:

> In science, theories are often not proven, but disproven. Perhaps the same concept would have to be applied here. If the numbers 0 through 4 are set quantities (so that I can't just turn around and say, oh let's make 2=3 (artificially, as in a linguistic change, not a mathematical one)), then by definition a physical total of two 2s would yield four. It may be impossible to prove that 2+2

> always yields four, but perhaps it is impossible to disprove 2+2 equalling four ever. Because the physical evidence is overwhelmingly in 2+2=4's favour, perhaps it is a postulate or observing type of thing, like right angles are always equal, not a proof type of thing.

It is important to note that, although participants in such discussions are clearly engaging in high-level inquiry and debate, they do so having initially being taught (and having successfully learned), in the elementary school classroom or elsewhere, that two plus two *does* equal four.

Unfortunately, Freire's perspective has been embraced much too readily by some advocates of the teaching of philosophy in schools. In a review of Hand and Winstanley's (2009) book, *Philosophy in Schools*, Costello (2010b) considers three quotations from one of the chapters:

> ...adults' psychological need to be in control has contributed to a curriculum that is focused on subject and knowledge content and to the questionable but popular conception of knowledge as infallible, as an ever-expanding body of facts that can be readily transmitted... (p.115).

> The emphasis on closed questioning in schools gives a false picture of what knowledge is. Whatever the discipline, 'facts' should always be tentative... Meanings cannot be given or handed out: they need to be *acquired* (p.116).

> Political correctness in Britain can be a barrier to authentic enquiries in class. There is an assumption that children should not question their faith... talk about taboo subjects, or be exposed to literature that gives the 'wrong message'... It is crucial that the integrity of philosophical enquiries is not compromised by subtle manipulation (steering enquiries into 'safer' territory)... by avoidance (of what may upset children or parents) or by projection (of a need for answers and certainty). Teachers' urge to protect must not be allowed to stifle independence of thought and autonomy (p.117).

The notion of "control" in education has been much discussed. However, it is evident that teachers are (and should be) "in control" in classrooms and schools. This does not mean that, *ipso facto*, such control will stunt pupils' intellectual growth and ability to reflect critically on ideas and subject content. An argument could just as easily have been presented to suggest that effective control by teachers is essential to developing a classroom environment that is conducive to philosophical thinking taking place (ensuring that children listen to others, have an opportunity to speak etc.). The acquisition of facts is a necessary (and unavoidable) part of the educational system. Again, this does not (nor should it) preclude the development of a reflective disposition in children. As regards the third quotation, we need to remember that schools are social institutions into which, as it were,

philosophy enters as a welcome guest at a party, rather than the host.

When teachers enable and encourage children to discuss philosophical ideas, to express points of view, to offer reasons to support their arguments and so on, all of which are entirely desirable, this does not (nor should it be taken to) imply equality in the domain of teaching and learning. This is not to say that teachers have nothing to learn from the arguments which their students advance. In the spirit of Freire's conception of the "teacher-student with students-teachers," we agree that they certainly do. Rather, it is simply to acknowledge that society has given teachers a role which, if denied or ignored, will lead to students' educational impoverishment. Teaching philosophical reasoning constitutes an important addition to the school curriculum. To increase the likelihood of its successful introduction, we need to ensure that we do not claim more for it than it is able to deliver (Costello, 2010b).

The Challenges of Liberation Pedagogy: Future Directions for Research and Practice

The above examination of some of Freire's key themes and arguments leads us to conclude that liberation pedagogy offers a number of challenges to teachers. In this final section, we outline what we consider to be some of these challenges, beginning within the field of teaching philosophy and then moving on to the broader educational context in schools.

We would argue that there is a need to expand programs of education that focus on the teaching and learning of philosophy in schools. We are all indebted to Matthew Lipman and his colleagues at Montclair State University for developing and implementing the Philosophy for Children program so successfully. Their work has acted as a catalyst for reflective thinking and practice, and has led to the emergence of a broad range of alternative approaches. One way to convince teachers that such programs should be introduced into schools is to focus on the contribution they make to developing communities of inquiry and to improving thinking and learning more broadly in the classroom.

Allied to this, proponents of teaching philosophy in schools need to convince practitioners that, in implementing programs in the classroom, they will be fully involved as participants who are able and willing to develop their pedagogical practice and to reflect carefully on it. In short, in order to be successful, teaching philosophy in schools is an initiative that must be undertaken *by* and *with* teachers; it should never be imposed on them. This notion of active teacher participation in programs for teaching philosophy can be expanded in two ways. First, it is important for teachers to engage in research on their own professional practice, with a view to improving it. The authors would argue that action research is ideally placed as a vehicle to assist in this task (Costello, 2011). Furthermore, action research is concerned principally with the relationship between "reflection" and "action" and this resonates strongly with Freire's own view: "But human activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis, it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action" (PO, p.106).

Within the UK, for example, teachers have undertaken funded, small-scale action research projects that focus on the teaching and learning of thinking skills (including philosophy). We suggest that this work should increasingly incorporate projects undertaken for academic qualifications such as taught Master's degrees in Education, both in the UK and elsewhere.

Second, active teacher participation should be encouraged in publications about the teaching of philosophy in schools. For example, while the increase in books being published on what might be generally termed "critical

thinking" is to be welcomed, it is of vital importance that these should reflect teachers' "voices." Not all texts are successful in achieving this (Costello, 2010b).

Moving on to the broader context of education, we would argue that it is in the spirit of Freire's liberation pedagogy that all classrooms should become communities of inquiry. This is an idea that has become increasingly popular in the literature on school improvement. Indeed, although the term is rarely used in this context, the essential characteristics of a community of inquiry are evident. For example, Lucas and Claxton (2010, p. 116) refer to Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of "communities of practice," which is used to describe social learning, and argue that "Members of a community pursue a common interest and help each other as they do so. And as they work and solve problems together, so their learning habits and attitudes rub off on each other." Gerver (2010, p.123) supports this view and refers to the practice of "Learn Share," which he introduced into his school:

> This was developed from the need to help our children communicate and empathize with others. In most schools children tend to work and play with the children of their own age, in their own class. We wanted to ensure that our children began to see themselves as a whole-school community and to be able to develop skills that allowed them to empathize and interact with other children outside the usual grouping. Learn Share evolved out of a weekly session where children throughout the school were paired with a child from another class and year group and would work with them to share reading. The system proved so successful that we expanded it to allow children to share all aspects of their learning and, indeed, their interests.

Krovetz (2008, p.111) argues that the following are characteristics of a "resilient learning community":

- Students are working in the library, computer lab, laboratories, and hallways, individually and collaboratively with peers.
- Students are engaged in required helpfulness.
- Older students are seen working with younger students.
- Students are engaged with peers as peer helpers, conflict resolvers, and tutors.
- Students spend time each week in service learning projects on and off campus.
- Class meetings and school-wide forums are held regularly to gather student input regarding meaningful school issues. These meetings are often facilitated by students.
- An effort is being made to include all student groups in the daily life of the school; students are not seen on the fringes of the school campus, alienated and voicing displeasure with the school, staff, and peers.
- A large percentage of the students participate in and lead a wide range of school activities.
- Signs on campus encourage students to join activities and do not indicate hurdles to complete; the words 'students must' do not appear on school postings.
- Time is provided at least weekly for teachers to work together on curriculum, instruction, and assess-

ment.

- Most students, faculty, and staff are known and welcomed by name, and many parents and community members are known and welcomed by name.
- Drug, alcohol, smoking and fighting infractions are statistically small and show an annual decrease.

Similarly, Peters (2008, p.72) outlines "goals for creating a #1 classroom" and suggests that students:

- Become partners in learning.
- Learn in a respectful, productive, positive atmosphere.
- Are encouraged to share their thoughts, difficulties, successes and dreams.
- Recognize and respect their own culture and those of others.
- Have opportunities to explain, clarify, expand on, or question.
- Receive honest, timely, and respectful feedback about their work.
- Recognize their own areas of strength in thinking and learning.
- Identify their dreams, aspirations, and natural gifts.
- Receive direction and vehicles for future success.
- Receive instruction from amazing teachers.

In conclusion, we would agree with Gilbert (2011, p.45) who suggests that "The 'guess my thought and I'll throw you a fish' approach to teaching and learning has got to change if we want confident creative thinkers capable of both convergent *and* divergent thinking according to what each individual situation merits. And part of that thinking skill set needs to be the ability to confidently and without malice throw out an old idea and come up with a new one." The Call for Papers for this special issue of *Analytic Teaching and Philosophical Praxis* is entitled "The Promise of Liberation Philosophy." We would argue that such philosophy, when translated into a viable liberation pedagogy, has much to offer education systems internationally. Again it is in the spirit of Freire's philosophy of education that, while his readers may not always agree with everything he says, yet through studying his arguments carefully they may gain valuable insights that will enable them to clarify and enrich their own thinking and practice.

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