CULTURE OF SILENCE IN ACADEMIA OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN: A STUDY INTO DIALOGICAL EDUCATION AND PRAXIS THROUGH CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND CRITICAL THINKING

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Professors' Students for Students' Services (**PASS**): An independent, self-funded and non-partisan association aiming to promote critical thinking and scientific research in academia. https://www.facebook.com/people/PASS-Professors-Association-for-Students-Services/100057091434498/

Abstract

This research paper attempts to concisely describe the existence of culture of silence in academia and see how it proves to be detrimental to both teachers and learners. This research focuses on pedagogical practices through critical consciousness and critical thinking in academia, whereas, the objective of this research is to justify education as the practice of emancipation where students deal with the reality through critical lens in order to discover participatory ways to transform and humanize their world. Data were collected, arranged and executed through qualitative and analytical methods to create logical coherence in the argument. The study was conducted on the basis of mostly primary data from personal observations and first hand experiences of researchers and interviews through the platform of PASS conferences and webinars that provided the prospects to generate an engaging conversation about the topic at hand and, however, secondary sources were also used to corroborate the central argument emphasizing on identifying an issue, analyzing the argument by discovering the facts, and challenging the established socio-cultural assumptions and biases in academia of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and thus integrate the findings prior to draw a synthesized conclusion.

Introduction

Culture is the product of human society with meaningful creations by integrating class structure, cultural stereotype, knowledge, social norms, folk wisdom, customs, values and its own intrinsic logic. Furthermore, it embodies the kernel of social life and patterns of thought and, by all means, it tends to gradually condition in order to shape and reshape human cognition including memory, thinking, knowing, attention, creativity, and problem-solving skills (Von Eckardt, 1995). For instance, pedagogy is a post-colonial product of culture that results in depriving the students of how to express their own thoughts in any language, resorting them to rote learning, students' lacking to understand the basic concepts, students' forgetfulness of their own language, and thus making them speechless towards the end. As a result, they *internalize* and *naturalize* the loss of their self-esteem they suffer (Mustafa, 2023).

According to Professor Pervaiz Hoodbhoy, "*it is the cultural structure and value system that shapes modern education and a modern mindset built upon critical thinking. Pakistan's educational system, shaped by deeply conservative social and cultural values, discourages questioning and stresses obedience. Progress demands that ultimately the dead hand of tradition be cast aside in seeking change of values, it will be important to break the absolute tyranny of the teacher, a relic of pre-modern social values*"(Hoodbhoy, 2009, p. 592). Furthermore, he argued that the poor state of learning culture in Pakistan where "*students memorize an arbitrary set of rules and an endless number of facts and say that X is true and Y is false because that's what the textbook says. To develop thinking minds, change must begin at the school level. Good pedagogy requires encouraging the spirit of healthy questioning in the classroom*". (Ibid)

Since, human knowledge is also the outcome of the cultural environment and the use of which is being conditioned through reflexes on the patterns of the cultural structure. Moreover, the work of Henry A. Giroux "Popular Culture as a Pedagogy of Pleasure and Meaning" also states that: *"knowledge is produced, mediated, refused, and re-presented within relations of culture both in and outside of academia'* (Giroux, 1989).

On the other, _silence_ is used in several ways to downplay the public voices especially the voice of students in the classroom through the construction of socio-cultural environment. For instance, in most of our rural areas, teachers keep their students silent in schools and, similarly, their parents and elders also keep them silent outside of their schools because they think that elders alone seem to have a monopoly on knowledge and wisdom (Naqvi, 2023). Furthermore, she also argued that "*lack of professional training, textbooks and exam-oriented teaching add to the authority of teachers and they are seen as the only source of knowledge. In our schools and in society in general silence is usually equated with obedience and submission*" (Ibid).

According to the assertion of Iris Marion Young, _silence_ is also manifested in the form of exploitation, harassment, persecution, marginalization, dis-empowerment, cultural imperialism, threats and violence. She further lamented that "*the institutional constraint on self- development is the product of oppression, whilst, domination appears in the form of institutional constraint on self-determination*" (Rebolledo, 2023). Simliarly, Paulo Freire also asserted that: "*powerlessness is the strongest form of oppression because it does not allow people to speak up for themselves and others*" (Freire, 1970).

Existence of _silence_ in the academic culture of KP is also manifested from the lived experiences of students and teachers. For instance, feedback forms and

personal in-depth interviews of the Two-Day conference proceedings of Professors'
Association for Students' Services (PASS) on "Intolerance Among Students:
Impediments to Reasonable Judgement" held at Government Postgraduate College
(GPGC), Swat, KP on March 16-17, 2018 manifested that students strictly followed
the curricula without requiring to critically read, review and analyze of
unconventional works. They were found *alienated* to the results or products of their
own activity and to the cultural environment where they lived in. Their frustration and
annoyance to out of the box questions were evident of their immersion into the
cultural environment (Conference proceeding, 2018). Some of the questions, for
instance, were asked from students during interviews of PASS conference for
understanding including: *who usually takes questions in classroom?; what happens*
when a student asks frequent questions from teacher?; does teacher teach the subject
or teach the students according to the context?; does teacher focus all the students or
some of you?; is argumentation encouraged in the classroom or not?; and what
happens when you disagree with your teacher?; and son on.

PASS found them lacking of requisite conditions for epistemological
curiosity, which is *prerequisite for the acquisition of knowledge in order to motivate*
individuals to learn new ideas, eliminate gaps in information and solve intellectual
problems" (Litman, 2008), and also a certain type of social traits requiring to obtain
the object of knowledge. Since, academia itself is the product of culture and, hence, it
becomes difficult for it to create conditions for the enhancement of students'
epistemological curiosity and intellectual tools that would enable them to comprehend
the object of knowledge.

With their immersion into the cultural context, the cognitive abilities of
students and teachers are hindered failing to transform their lived experiences into

new knowledge. Moreover, revealing of new knowledge is possible only through the process of *dialogue* for learning and knowing by doing. This state of consciousness, wherein, students fail to connect with the world in a critical way and apprehend the objective reality through reflection, not by reflexes signals the creation of the culture of silence in academia (Mughal, 2023).

The phrase "*culture of silence*" was firstly introduced by Paulo Freire (1970) in his work entitled: "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed", wherein, the absolute majority of the students is overwhelmed and thus conditioned with norms, values, customs and traditions of the dominant class living in the same society. Freire argued that "*this conditioning becomes internalized-naturalized disregarding the lived experiences of the students, creating a hierarchy of knowledge, truth, experiences and persons. His conceptualization of silence has been applied to explain the silences within academia*" (Chenoweth 1995 & 1996).

Consciousness: Transformation from Mythical to Critical State of Consciousness

Consciousness represents students' perspective and sense perception, however, it is ascertained by the objective realities, wherein, the conscious subject is substantial, real and living being. Consciousness is being shaped and re-shaped by interaction with the objective world, which is interpretable only through interconnection. It keeps on constantly developing, mediating and transforming by the evolution of relationship between the students, teachers and their social and cultural environment, hence, it is the product of society through socialization into the practices and, not of the nature (Leontiev, 1981, 56-7). Since, the influence of the external world determines the content of consciousness upon the subject and the direct connection to the objective world constitutes sense perception and consciousness (Goldstick, 1980, p. 3). According to Vygotsky, "*consciousness is a factual totality*

comprising of internal parts by inter-functional relationship of mutual determination"
(Blunden, 2011).

According to VG. Afanasyev, _reflection_ is the component of consciousness
that is always attached with the interaction of two different bodies: *the acting one and
the one subjected to the action*. He further argued that "*the disposition of reflection
depends both on external influences and on the internal state of the body reacting to
the influence. A qualitative and higher form of reflection in human beings is the
ability to consciously reflect reality. They not only adapt themselves to the
environment but act upon it, transform it on the basis of the knowledge they have
obtained*" (Afanasyev, 1963).

Consciousness of human being is a moveable totality of views, thoughts,
psycho-emotional qualities and interests. It reflects the complex interplay of socio-
cultural environment of the given society and the given individual. Individual
consciousness contains self-awareness, awareness of the world around, class
formation, society and other collective manifestation. Whilst, the social consciousness
is the collective representation of individuals' ideas, views, values, social feelings,
attitudes, habits, and morals reflecting the social reality (Ibid).

The conscious existence of a student is person as *subject* is the basic
condition for the acquisition of human knowledge or *consciousness* and, moreover, it
will also take part in various creative works with regard to the existing cultural
environment. The notion of culture is at the heart of the constructing consciousness as
conscious existence, wherein, consciousness is witnessed both as enchained up with
an existing world and as a condition to bring change in the world around (Freire,
1974). However, our academia is engaged in producing and authorizing particular
forms of meaning as well as implement pedagogical practices concordant with the

conditioned realities owing to the dominant culture and, since, academia is also the implied segment of the productive culture thus "*it is difficult for it to enable to actively empower a student in the construction of the categories of meaning and response to classroom knowledge'* (Giroux, 1999).

As shared earlier that knowledge is an active and purposive contemplation of social reality instead it is based on the recognition of the social reality along-with its objects, such as perception, mental imagery and emotions and, phenomenon that is arisen from interaction within sensory cortex. Moreover, it bases the process of cognition on praxis, concrete and activities of the production. Whilst, praxis is the active work of individuals in transforming human consciousness from mythical to critical consciousness because praxis is social in disposition (Freire, 1970).

The personal observation and lived experience of students need to be acknowledged in defining and constructing their sense of cultural environment around. It is not simply that students must be encouraged to only learn but also there must be an established condition of learning through causality. It is, *therefore, the more knowledge a person has to understand causal relationships, the more critical consciousness he will have about the social reality"* (Afanasyev, 1980).

In PASS Two-Day National Conference conducted on "Transforming Cognitive Abilities of Students in the Context of Objective Realities" held at GPGC, Mandian, Abbottabad, KP on September 17-18, 2024, it was observed that students' observation and experience did not take into account as the central component of curriculum and of scheme of studies in academia because *critical thinking* was considered as a *taboo* in the educational institutions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Furthermore, the consciousness of the students living in the 21st century is so *naive* that they normally witness the causal relationships and the results arising from their

interaction in a static, undynamic and mythical forms and, therefore, this formation will always remain the same thus they were easily deceived in apprehending it. The reality of *culture of silence,* growing in educational institutions, is examined through the context of socio-political structure, power dynamics and market logic. Many progressive academic theorists argue that the purpose of cultivating "*culture of silence*" in academia is to maintain and strengthen the power of the dominant and ruling class. These are the obstacles and conundrums in the way of promoting students' critical thinking and academic freedom.

It has been observed that bulk of the students in the classroom usually memorize the lectures of teachers by rote learning and, therefore, they are reluctant to ask questions due to fear, boredom or confusion. However, learning is not meant for memorizing sentences, words or lectures because these are inanimate objects and have thus nothing to do with the current social, political and cultural environment. Instead, the *meaning and purpose of education* is to awaken the tendency of creation and regeneration within the students with regard to their social, political and cultural conditions. It is to awaken the consciousness of discovery and research. According to Henry Giroux, "*we often witness pedagogies that teach to the text, simply about accountability, objective standards, that are designed to undermine the possibility for students to be critical thinkers*".

To deliberately perpetuate "*culture of silence*" in academia is to serve the cause of market logic and forces by keeping both the teachers and students unconfident failing to think in an unconventional way by concentrating entirely on methods and thus turn blind eyes to the fundamental question of education such as power dynamics, ideological formation, authority and cultural dimensions. It is also evident from the classroom experience that who is allowed to speak and whose views

are prioritized, whereas, whose questions are to be suppressed. Consequently, Giroux added that these pedagogies only incorporate: "*a kind of silence on the side of the worst forms of repression because they deny the very notion that students are alive.*

According to Article 25 (A) of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan that: "*education is the right of every individual and it is the responsibility of the State of Pakistan to provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 05 to 16 without discrimination of class, race, religion, gender and residence*".

The students are being taught through usually silent or passive characters during lectures instilling in them a mythical consciousness and, not explained in the curriculum. According Giroux, "*when you put children into a series of rows and tell them that they cannot talk and that they have to listen to you as teacher, the <u>hidden curriculum</u> that is being transmitted is that they do not have the right to talk, that they do not have the right to be part of the way of educating. When a teacher gets up and says that they have the authority in class and that nobody can question that, they are not saying that they are teaching them to be passive and not demand responsibilities of the powers, but that the hidden curriculum is very clear. If you examine what is really being taught there, you see that education is a way of <u>silencing</u>*".

Along these lines, human knowledge constitutes a <u>*superstructure*</u> within the diverse and conflicting social relationships that individuals found with each other and with the world during the process of achieving their physical and mythical conditions of existence. Within this orientation, knowledge provides an abstract representation of the social realities of the world and expresses the two dimensions of social praxis of human beings. (Marx, 1980, p.25)

According to Antonio Gramsci, "*there is a close interplay between knowledge and the relationships of material production that is historically developed*

by socio-economic formations. However, once knowledge has been created, it has relative liberty with regard to the historical context that molded it. Moreover, it only becomes an essential part of the universal heritage of humanity when it is capable of providing summarized understanding and explanation for the contradictory and complex historical movement of its time". (Gramcsi, 1999, p.141)

To practically observe, identify and experience the visual reality and explain the temporal relationships of a cause and effect, then it can help students' consciousness enabling them to find contradictions in the social reality through causality alone and, as a result, this insight transform their naivety into critical thinking and make them as active agents. According to Hannah Arendt that: "*critical thinking is dangerous to market forces because they want us to be a passive subject in this technocratic society where the only thing that matters is that you earn money*" (Hanna Arendt, 1965).

Similarly, John Dewy was of the opinion that "*the purpose of education is to cultivate students' thoughts, to enable them to critically reflect, to socially engage them instead of making them passive recipients of established knowledge. Moreover, he also denounced the rote-learning approach driven by predetermined curriculum which was the standard teaching method at the time. He further said that when students only passively perceive a problem and do not experience the consequences in a meaningful, emotional and reflective way, then they are unlikely to adapt and revise their habits or construct new habits, or will do so only superficially* " (Dewey, 1930).

On the other, the state of mythical consciousness in students leads to condition them to be kept passive to the expectations of the reality: they would not be able to think of the falsifications and contradictions of their socio-economic and cultural realities. In a panel discussion of international conference of PASS on

"Education, Critical Thinking & Democratization of Pakistan" held at Hakim Abdus Salam Library, Haripur, KP on October, 2018, apathy, undemocratic tendencies and authoritarianism were found among the students under the prevailing conventional teaching, learning system and the method of imparting knowledge in the classrooms and, as a result, the students developed the dispositions of intolerance, aggression and felt alienated from socio-political and cultural environment.

One of the dimensions of the "*culture of silence*" is the teacher's authoritative behaviour in the classroom because of which most of the students are sitting in the classroom like *speechless cocoon.* Due to this authoritative behaviour, students' built-in fear discourage them to raise questions from teacher and, in the same way, their role become as non-living object. It is thus resulted in negative resistance, though, it is clearly stated in Article 3.6 of Interweaving Goals of Curriculum for Pakistan of the National Curriculum Framework that: "*to equip children, youth, and adults with abilities of critical thinking, problem solving skills, and foster amongst them an aptitude for scientific inquiry, leading to creation of new learning and knowledge*".

Similarly, article IX of the aims & objectives of the curriculum states that: "*to raise individuals committed to democratic and moral values, aware of fundamental human rights, open to new ideas, having a sense of personal responsibility and participation in the productive activities in society for the common good*".

It involves inculcating a sense of responsibility and contributing people and promoting productive activities for the public good. Distance from democratic values, prevalence of longly established assumptions, conformism, taboos and prohibition to channelize new ideas in academia make them victims of *alienation* that is useful in

awakening aggressive anxiety in them. According to Paulo Frerie, "*unequal social relations awaken a general culture of silence"*. Impediments to critical thinking instill a negative, passive and damaged psychology in students and, as a result, this culture helps in perpetuating the oppression.

According to Fredrick Engels, "*no one can talk on education without taking into account the socio-economic realities and contradictions otherwise it will lose all forms of idealism and impartiality*" (Engels, 1944). As culture is the product of society and an ongoing social process, wherein, diverse social experiences and identities are constructed and as McLaughline pointed out that "*the cultural environment of students has a profound effect on their ability to learn and perform because it affects their ability to perceive and remember*" (McLaughline, 1990).

Thinking pattern is currently caught in a web, spun round in the socio-economic and cultural contexts and orchestrated culture have entirely conditioned the ability of human thinking, faculty of wonder and longing. Consequently, students' capacity to think critically and rationally has slowly been disappearing. According Laurence Harris et al, thinking faculty is a concrete and total reified product of socio-economic and cultural context, with the appearance of natural objects and the status of specified and monotonous forms. This mythical and conditioned form of human thinking fails to provide a concrete analysis of socio-economic and cultural realities (Harris, 2023).

Furthermore, this mythical thinking tends to serve as an opium, solace, transient and ephemeral boost to the students and, hence, serve the cause of <u>hidden curriculum</u>. As a result, this mythical consciousness leads students through false consciousness, superstitions or mythological explanations of the social reality (Ahmad, 2022). This mythological explanation is considered as an opium to keep the students

in consonance with thralldom of silence and monologue on one hand and, it also obstructs the transformation into a new line of thinking on the other.

Critical Thinking: Roots & Purpose

This new way of thinking that was rooted in the era of natural philosophers of Miletus (colony of Greece in Asia Minor) about 600 BC and handed down to Socratic era from generation to generation. Natural philosophers, such Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, observed the things with their own eyes and argued that nature was in a constant state of transformation, however, they wanted to solve the problem by finding out the _truth_ and logical conclusion that how these transformation occurred. They believed that there must be a basic substance that was the hidden cause of all changes in nature and that was how critical thinking was hatched.

Critical thinking is an ability to observe and experience before making a skillful judgment. To make a judgment, it requires the transformed cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions. It enables us how to formulate an unbiased and reasonable argument and thus new line of thinking is a disciplined, precise, accurate and logically correct thinking (Mughal, 2023).

Critical thinking stems from the very course of development of social reality and the best of all quickly integrates and adapts with the ground realities. For instance, it corresponds to the requirements of socio-economic and cultural context as well as concrete productions. Moreover, it meets the requirements and interests of progressive and advanced thinking order that is why it struggles to get victory over the conventional thinking. The invincibility of critical thinking does not mean that it becomes victorious by itself, nevertheless, it prepares and doggedly fights for its

victory over conventional thinking (Gunarwardena, July 30, 2021). The best way of getting rid off the situation is to question the social reality.

The social reality is not only developing, however, it is well-connected and integrated in entirety. In this changing world, critical thinking does neither emerge itself nor in isolation but in connection and unity with the changes and development of the world and is thus subjected to reciprocal influence. Critical thinking is proved to be effective and instrumental in solving problems and issues by means of inter-connectivity and interdependence of human thinking with contextual and material development of the social reality. For instance, it helps to gain real knowledge of the social reality alongside all the aspects and connections.

Thus, important task of critical thinking is to solve the issue by examining the reality as an integral connected whole and their inherent contradictions and universal connections. Since, aspects of the social reality are diverse alongside their interactions and interconnections, therefore critical thinking does not study all but only the most general connections that usually exist in all sphere of the material world. Moreover, an open-minded, free, unbiased and critical thinker can alone be able to understand these connections that could be reflected in human consciousness (Ali, July 24, 2021; Hitchcock, July 13, 2021).

Since, social reality is not a frozen thing or else it is a continuous flux and, similarly, there must be a continuous process of development in the educational curriculum, which is always required to change itself in the light of new knowledge and new situations. The aim of curriculum must be the freedom to speak, think and act genuinely. Similarly, the aim of education must be to create critical consciousness in students and teachers who practice humanism, who can work to free themselves

and the world from oppression, injustice and, hence, this process leads to bring change into social reality.

In a workshop of PASS on "Capacity Building for Quality Education" conducted, in collaboration with Workers' Welfare Board, KP, held at Working Folks Grammar School, Hayatabad, Peshawar on June 12-13, 2024, it was analyzed that teachers felt hesitant to solve their problems even through collaboration. Most of the faculty members (male) as compared to female staff were least interested even in attending the workshop. It is an established fact that human beings acquire knowledge practically by solving problems of their lives. Both students and teachers must have opportunities to gain a variety of experiences and engage in problem-posing and solving activities. Academic freedom also emphasizes the inculcation and promotion of critical thinking and, in that way, individuals independently can solve their problems by creating new situations, they will not only learn how to solve a specific problem, but also develop confidence and interest in solving problems themselves. Hence, education is learning by doing instead of memorizing. In this process, task of the teacher must be to work with the students and help them to achieve their goals in the light of their lived experience.

Clause No. VI of the National Curriculum Framework of Pakistan states "*To equip children, youth, and adults with abilities of critical thinking, problem solving skills, and foster amongst them an aptitude for scientific inquiry, leading to creation of new learning and knowledge*". According to John Dewey, "*The role of teacher in the educational process must not be to direct the students but to give advice. The educational institution itself must be a democratic system, where in, students may be guided and taken part in educational activities through the mutual thinking and cooperation of the teaching and the students*".

According to Paulo Freire, "*Educational institutions are required to facilitate students enabling them to become free from the clutches of mythical consciousness to critical consciousness in order to understand the reality. There is need to avoid students falling victim to mythical explanations*". Skills of critical thinking help students to transform their mythical consciousness into *naive* consciousness and enables them to understand that their current life condition is the outcome of family upbringing and culture. In PASS online conference on "Critical Thinking, Science & Politics of Commonsense" on August 10, 2020, it was concluded that "*educational institutions are required to facilitate the students to acknowledge them as subject and create a horizontal relationship between teachers and students so that dialogue may be conducted on an equal level and where they both can learn from each other through means of proper communication*". As a result, this new cultural and academic environment can be instrumental in creating love, hope, trust and critical attitude.

PASS conducted One-Day International Conference on "Promoting Culture of Critical Dialogue & Its Importance in Research" held at Government Girls Degree College, Nowshera Cantonment on February 2020, it was observed that through dialogue students and teachers were connected in a relationship of mutual trust, then they could come together in search of something new, creative and authentic.

Results & Discussion

This study finds out the root causes of such pathetic condition of education in conventional pedagogic approaches and cultural stereotypes, which usually demand individual students to offer compliance silently to teachers and stand back from developing of any kind of reasoning. Furthermore, following cultural patterns and

norms ostensibly confines the opportunities for the birth of critical thinking. The system largely forces the students to submit before the haughtiness of the teachers.

Whilst, the state of critical consciousness engages the students to go beyond the preceding phase without renouncing it and also enables them to break the culture of silence by raising critical questions. It not only keeps the students aware of the world but also makes them understand the changing situation along with the world. It _problematizes_ students with their cultural reality in the course of which they are submerged. Through problematizing students, it associates them with codification of total reality into symbolic representation which can produce critical consciousness that enabling them to _emerge from time-immersion_ and modify their relationship with social reality. This reflective thinking rescues them from ego-centrism, self-love, metaphysical or mythological thoughts only through the _process of dialogue_ with others for becoming transformed agents of their social reality. This would break the habit of rote and mechanical learning and enable them learn to read and write independently, to _interact with the reality_ with a view to change it.

Dialogical education would enable students to freely produce, reproduce and _integrate_ them into their cultural environment in order to discern and change it. It further creates the critical capacity to _adapt_ students to the reality and empowers them to make their own choices in order to ultimately transform the reality. An integrated students are considered as _subjects_, and not an object and, therefore, they could be able to _respond the challenges_ of the culturally conditioned environment, take in-depth understanding of the world, expose to socio-cultural contradictions, and also attempt to overcome these challenges for creating a meaningfully _humanized_ cultural reality.

Further more, dialogical education creates an environment of *collaborative* work, generalized attitudes, friendly behaviour, common values, concerns and aspirations. This collaborative environment further generates its own *themes* employing more of intellectual instincts to intervene the reality. Themes generation is a continuous process and, hence, education becomes a extremely significant project at time of this transitional change, which engages students in a rapid movement for the search of new themes and tasks. Because this phase of transition involves confusion of flux and re-flux, upward and backward, to-and-fro and, those who are lacking the ability to comprehend the perplexity of time, they would fall prey to *generalized fea*r and *anxiety*. Subsequently, they would bent upon following the *prescribed curriculum* that make them *domesticated* and adjusted within the the reality and, as a result, they carry along the spirit of time.

Synthesis

The practical approach to teaching is *praxis* that gives students a conscious awareness of their social, political and cultural environment and their situation as active individuals, so critical awareness becomes a tool through which they can choose the items they are needed. According to Paulo Freire, "*The most important value of critical thinking is that it destroys the mythological concept that society is natural, eternal and unchangeable, and its only means is democratic dialogue, which is used in educational institutions for critical consciousness*".

Praxis is the active work of both teachers and students in transforming their conditioned cultural environment. Praxis is social in disposition and it not only transforms the objective realities but also creates new object that is not available in ready-made form in the environment. It is not only the basis of knowledge but also it possesses aim of the knowledge. In turn, it sets and advances knowledge and in a

collaborative learning, both students and teachers study the surroundings that enable them to learn the developmental laws as well as utilize their obtained knowledge into immeasurable activities of praxis. This generates critical consciousness that is one of the dispositions of praxis that will lead them to be emancipated from academic enslavement and conformism.

The *democratization of academic culture* through dialogue is a driving force that creates dynamism and clarification of consciousness of both students and teachers. Only through democratic dialogue, students could be able to reflect themselves about their own capacity to transform the world and, hence, they would be meant to in and with the world. Moreover, critical thinking is an important skill that empowers students through democratic dialogue how to find the *truth* in their claims and enable them to learn not just a collection of facts or figures, but also learn how to discover facts and solve problems scientifically for themselves. Critical thinking equips students with the skills to move beyond *mythological* and *naive* consciousness into *critical* consciousness in order to understand the reality through the principles of *causality*; identify biases; and evaluate the validity of information. Thus, critical thinking is the intellectual discipline of examining reality through observation, experience, and reasoning.

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