Literacy as a Source for Critical Consciousness
Thought, Language, and Concept of Self

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LITERACY AS A SOURCE FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
THOUGHT, LANGUAGE, AND CONCEPT OF SELF

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by

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This thesis is a study of the complex interrelation between thought and language and the relevance of social and cultural influences on a mature critical consciousness of self. This study represents an effort to propose a curriculum for literacy that facilitates the restructuring of consciousness in the adult learner. The intent is to promote transformation of student apperception from that of internalized reactive powerlessness to proactive self-empowerment. It is an emancipatory theory of literacy with a corresponding transformative pedagogy that promotes the ability to name and define the relationship of self and environment, and one that engages learners to transform their world.

Calling on the work of Paulo Freire, the idea of education as liberation is proposed. Freire's model is examined for its use of literacy as a vehicle to facilitate consciousness of self within a particular context of social, political, and economic structures. Such a model is in contrast to the "banking" concept of education, which involves teacher-transmitted information deposited in the minds of students in much the same way money is deposited in a bank. The claim made here is that the "banking" concept is symptomatic of the failure of American education to meet the needs of students. As a result, hundreds of thousands of functionally illiterate students have dropped out, or worse
yet, graduated from American high schools. Many of these students will seek out their right to an education in adult literacy classes. What is crucial now is that this same injustice perpetrated by the educational process not be committed again. What is urgently needed is a different relationship between teacher and student and a new methodology that effectively facilitates literacy. Education as the exercise of domination results in indoctrination. Education as liberation involves an investigation of the thought-language with which students refer to their reality, the level at which they perceive that reality, and their views of the world in which generative themes are found. A liberating education consists in acts of cognition, not transferrals of information.

Two recurring themes in cognitive psychology are brought into focus that are of particular interest to adult literacy instructors: 1) the nature of the relationship between thought and language, and 2) the degree of relevance of social and cultural influences on language acquisition. Models used to define cognition have varied widely—from those of the historical grandfathers of cognitive psychology like Jean Piaget in Europe and Lev Vygotsky in the Soviet Union, to the recent computer-simulation models like the one used by Darlene Howard in college textbooks in the United States, to the more contemporary trend of a multiple intelligences model offered by Howard Gardner at Harvard University. Every cognitive psychologist seems to have his or her own model of thought and language processes, which may
or may not be inclusive of socio-cultural elements. This does not mean to imply that all cognitive psychologists are at odds with one another. Rather, there is a reserve of views and models that help us to look at the processes of human cognition that occur in memory, thought, and language. Discovering how these theories relate to adult literacy involves analyzing current curriculum in terms of these theoretical constructs and finding a model which offers the broadest interpretation of the cognition processes of the adult learner. Drawing on these models this study argues that, inherent in the language (excluding grammatical structures) we receive as young children from our family and community, are cultural patterns that play a significant role in our primary socialization. These patterns affect not only the way we talk but the way we think, act, and the way we learn.

An inquiry into the effect of language on cognitive patterns logically leads to a discussion of the role language plays in determining a concept of self. Martin Heidegger claims that language has that propensity to bring forth the complexities of reality and the possibilities for change. He believes that we become subjects of our own lives only when we are proactively directing our lives, as opposed to reactively responding to the whims of society. Then and only then can our lives become meaningful and effective. But this true (authentic) subjectivity is often concealed in social transactions. Like Freire, Heidegger believes that to live humanly is to name the world. In
this way, both attribute considerable power to the word and see a
mission to call us back from a nihilistic future.

We will continue to miss the point of our existence, says
Heidegger, as long as the powerful are preoccupied with the
gadgetry of technology, and the powerless, according to Freire,
are submerged in a day-to-day struggle of biological survival.
In this sense, both the powerful and the powerless are oppressed
and will remain so until education becomes a process of dialogue
between the two in which these existential questions are
addressed. Education must become the practice of freedom in
which men and women are able to deal critically and creatively
with their realities in order to lay claim to an authentic
existence and to participate in transformation of the world.
Many adult learners live reactive lives because of their
illiteracy. Through literacy training, adult learners can become
conscious of their social, political, and economic position in
society, and, with this awareness, can begin to proactively
direct their own lives.

This is the idea of Freire's conscientizacao which involves
three levels of consciousness: (1) Magical consciousness is the
stage in which individuals adapt or conform fatalistically to the
system; (2) Naive consciousness is the level in which a person
over-simplifies and romanticizes reality—trying to reform unjust
individuals, assuming that the system will then work properly;
and (3) Critical consciousness is the level in which individuals
are able to see the social system, to understand the resultant
contradictions in their own lives, to articulate those contradictions to others around them, and to act to transform society creatively with others.

The life of Anne Moody, which is examined here in *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, is a case in point of actual experience of the maturation of a critical concept of self. We can see, in Moody, Freire's three levels of consciousness at work.

Finally, one approach for teaching literacy as a source for critical consciousness is articulated in a 1986 case study in an inner city community college. We can see the power of developing literacy in the representative writings of Althea Johnston, a Black woman at Roxbury Community College in Boston. Over the course of one semester, we will trace the development of consciousness that occurred for her in a class in which literacy was used as a vehicle for facilitating critical consciousness.
EDUCATION AS LIBERATION

The Problem and the Approach
A pedagogy for critical consciousness is one that ceases to be an instrument used by teachers to manipulate students to accept established ideas. It is, rather, a method of liberation, one that facilitates expression of the consciousness of students themselves. It calls students forth to explore their very being in the world, to apprehend it by means of ideational capacity, and to act to transform it. Paulo Freire uses the term conscientizacao to refer to a method of learning that involves perceiving "social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality."² The awakening of critical consciousness necessarily leads to articulation of and dialogue about those social, economic, and political forces that dominate the student's life. "Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication."³

Until a critical consciousness is developed, students remain submerged in a reality that makes choices for them; one that predicts stereotypes and forces them on the least socially, politically, or economically advantaged. Examples of these stereotypes grow like weeds in our society. Boys are expected to do better than girls in mathematical and scientific studies; students who speak "standard" English are presumed to be smarter.

¹ Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, English ed., (New York: Continuum, 1985), 19. Henceforth all references will be to this edition denoted as PO.

² Ibid., 64.
than those students who do not; students from middle-class backgrounds are known to excel on standardized tests that ultimately track them, but not others, toward college preparatory courses. The student explored here, however, is the one who is not expected to do well in math, who does not speak standard English, and who is not tracked for future college courses or, for that matter, for any kind of literate future.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defined the word "literate" more than twenty years ago as referring to persons who have "acquired the essential knowledge and skills which enable them to engage in all activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning within their group and community." Those who are unable to do so are called "functional illiterates" and number over sixty million people in the United States. It is not surprising that a disproportionate number of Blacks and Hispanics are included in this number. In the United States as in other countries illiteracy correlates with the oppressive elements of poverty and powerlessness.

A pedagogy of the oppressed, as articulated by Paulo Freire, is one that is of, not for, those people who struggle with situations of oppression. An internationally acclaimed educator,


Robinson, 2.
Freire is renowned for his work as Coordinator of the Adult Education Project of the Movement Popular Culture in Recife, Brazil. His philosophy of education asserts that literacy is a vehicle to facilitate consciousness of self within particular historical themes of social, political, and economic context when these themes are generated by the students themselves. To Freire, the oppressed are those who are dehumanized; those who live in "any situation in which 'A' objectively exploits 'B' or hinders [their] pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person...."

Freire believes that the goal of education ought to be liberation from situations of oppression. That is, one in which learners emerge from the day-to-day routine dominated by outside forces of a society to lay claim to an authentic existence. An authentic existence is one in which they are conscious of these dominating forces while active in asserting their own choices. Treating the oppressed as unfortunates and presenting models from among their oppressor for their emulation, as is done in the banking system of education, is antithetical to such a pedagogy. "The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption."

Yet, from the outset, those in situations of oppression most often struggle not to be free of but to like those who oppress them. Their thoughts have been structured in such a way that the

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6 Freire, PO, 28.
7 Ibid., 39.
contradictions of the concrete, existential situations which hold them in situations of oppression elude them. Their idea of being free is to imitate their oppressor, who represents their model of humanity. This does not mean that the disadvantaged do not know they are oppressed; they do. But, development of any kind of concept of self free from an internalized emulation of the oppressor is stunted by submersion in their reality of day-to-day survival. Caught up in the struggle to obtain food, shelter, and employment, they are unable to perceive the "order" that serves the interests of the oppressor. Thus, violence perpetrated in rebellion is often done so horizontally, striking out at socio-economic peers for little or no reason at all. Their ideal is to become fully human, full-fledged citizens, but to do so requires that they follow the "order" of power and become like their oppressor.

The central problem is this: 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 oppressors 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.

Only by discovering themselves as playing host to their oppressor, can those in situations of oppression begin to liberate themselves. However, as long as they live in the

* Ibid., 48.

† Ibid., 33.
duality in which to be is to be like and to be like is to be like
the oppressor, this transformation is impossible.

Freire presents the pedagogy of the oppressed as an
instrument of critical discovery, so that the disadvantaged might
understand the order of power and the manifestations of
dehumanization. This critical intervention means 1) the
oppressed must confront reality critically; 2) simultaneously
objectifying through reflection; and 3) acting upon reality.¹⁰
In other words, they must unveil reality in which they are seen
and used as mere objects to be exploited. They must confront
their own self-deprecation, characteristic of the oppressed and
transform their internalized emulation of the oppressors. They
have been told that they are not capable of learning, that they
know nothing from their experience of value, that they are sick,
lazy, and unproductive, and have been convinced of their own
unfitness.¹¹ They lack trust in themselves because of the
circumstances that have produced their duality. And they will
continue to be fearful, disheartened, and beaten, until they are
exposed to the vulnerability of their oppressor so that a
conviction contrary to their situations of oppression can begin
to grow inside them. Until then, they will continue to
fatalistically accept their fate.

As a result of having internalized the oppressor as model,
people in situations of oppression are fearful of freedom.

¹⁰ Ibid., 37.
¹¹ Ibid., 49.
Freedom would require them to reject such a model and to become autonomous and responsible for their own fate. It requires a shaking-up of their sense of reality and a confrontation with the oppressor. It appears easier to simply acquiesce rather than take those necessary risks that will surely cause trouble for them.

Indeed, the oppressors' interests lie in "changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them." From the outset, children of the poor are tracked for failure in the public education. The "banking" concept of education involves a system in which students are containers to be filled by their teachers. Education thus becomes an act of depositing, as if depositing money in the bank, with students the depositaries and the teacher the depositor. Students listen, take notes, memorize, and regurgitate. For the poor, especially, all information deposited in them is alien. Such a system is not designed to teach them how to act in and upon their world and transform it to meet their needs. Rather, it is designed to indoctrinate them into adapting to the world of oppression.

This system is well designed for the oppressors whose security rests on how well the disenfranchised accept these conditions and how little they dare question them. That is why


13 For a thorough discussion of the banking concept of education, see Freire, PO, Chapter Two.
there is a movement of people in this country organized to keep critical thinking courses out of public schools.

The oppressor equates economic disadvantage with weakness. "To be is to have," so the weak are regarded as objects to be manipulated. Acts of false generosity are carried out, like the welfare system, for example, to project a facade of benevolence and to relieve any guilt for economic privilege; a privilege that does not remain at the door of the classroom.

Students who reject an alien education, by voicing a lack of interest in what is being taught, are often silenced by teachers and/or school administrators. Or they silence themselves by daydreaming or engaging in other anesthetizing activity. Thus the banking approach operates in education. It rarely proposes that children of the poor critically consider their reality. Instead, it serves the purpose of exercising domination over these students.

The banking system involves two stages: first, the teacher prepares a lesson plan on what is to be taught, as decided by the teacher and/or the administration; then the teacher lectures students on this prepared topic. Students are not expected to know about the topic, but to take notes and memorize what is being said. Little if any critical reflection or connections to the students' realities are required. The result (often to the chagrin of teachers) is a kind of cultural indoctrination that prepares students to take their place in the scheme of things.

Conversely, the problem-posing educator develops what it is
to be studied while in dialogue with the students. They become co-investigators developing generative themes relevant to the students' lives and casting critical reflection on problems and their relationship to the students' lives. A banking education takes students' creative power hostage and anesthetizes, while problem-posing is a liberating education involved with unveiling reality. It, thus, calls the student forth to emerge as a visible conscious being and, in so doing, requires a critical inventory and intervention into student reality. As students are increasingly presented with problems related to their own lives, they become more challenged and motivated to respond. With answers that bring meaning to their lives, they are challenged to seek out a new understanding.

Gradually, students become committed to education because they can see it working for them in their lives, by explaining their relationship to their environment and by articulating an affirming concept of self. That which was previously inconspicuous phenomena—"that which had existed objectively but had not been perceived in its deeper implications...begins to stand out."14 Students begin to single out issues that directly affect their lives, to reflect on these issues, and to take

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14 In Freire, PO, Chapter 3, it is pointed out that animals are unable to distinguish between themselves and the surrounding world. Because they are unable to separate from and objectify their world, they are incapable of acting upon it to transform it. Freire therefore refers to animals as ahistorical while humans are historical because they do possess this capacity to separate, objectify, and transform their world. See page 90 for fuller discussion of this argument.
Problem-posing education sets as its goal to demythologize. Banking education inhibits creative thinking, opposes dialogue, and denies students their ontological and historical pursuit of becoming empowered intentional beings. Problem-posing sets the stage for critical thinking, dialogue, investigation, and deliberate action. Problem posing engages students to look at the past as "a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future."15

Those committed to liberation as an end in education cannot accept the banking concept, since it undermines empowerment.

A liberating education consists of acts of cognition not transferrals of information.... Authentic liberation... is a praxis: the action and reflections of [people] upon their world in order to transform it.16

To accomplish such an end, we must believe in the oppressed and their ability to be critical thinkers. Without this we cannot educate for a critical consciousness, but will fall back on the transferral of information. The job of the educator, then, is to "explain to the masses their own action."17 That is, to help students clarify and illuminate the reasons for their own action, "both regarding its relationship to the objective facts by which

15 Ibid., 72.
16 Ibid., 66.
it was prompted and regarding its purpose." The more people are able to unveil and articulate their reality, the more critically they enter that reality able to transform it. The teacher is facilitator of this process, providing materials and tools necessary for the student to demystify reality; viz., through development of a critical consciousness and articulation of an affirming concept of self.

10 Ibid.
DIALOGUE AS EXISTENTIAL NECESSITY

Vygotsky, Freire, Heidegger
The power of the word lies in the ability to transform one's world through language. Within the word there are two dimensions: reflection and action. An "inauthentic" word is one which lacks the ability to transform the world. It is "idle chatter." Idle chatter lacks reflection and/or action and becomes instead an "alienating blah." Another way of saying this is that using words that lack the dimension of action reduces language to "verbalism," and using words that lack reflection results in "action for action's sake" or "activism."¹ Neither sustains authentic dialogue, which possesses the propensity to transform one's world; "world" here meaning both individual and environment.

But how does the word transform a world? If we are to accept the French philosopher Rene Descartes' famous statement "I think therefore I am," then we are agreeing that thought is proof of the existence of self. Moreover, because language is symbolic representation of thought, we can then deduce that thought, language, and concept of self are inextricable. Descartes proved his existence by symbolically representing himself as "I" and reflecting upon it to articulate consciousness of his being in the world.

A concept of self can exist only by articulating one's interaction with the external world. It is language that acts as the vehicle to facilitate this dialogue between the individual

¹ Freire, P.Q., 75-76.
and the external environment, and it is only through articulation of this relationship that one becomes conscious of self.

But first, let us consider what language is. Language is a social institution with which we testify to our experiences with the objects and events in our world. It is articulation of how, as humans, we make sense of the world. At the same time inductive reasoning is being used to acquaint ourselves with the pleasures and dangers of our world, we are concurrently acquiring language. We learn that something referred to as "hot" means that if we put our hand on it, we will get a burning sensation. The word "hot" symbolically represents that experience between the individual and an object in the external environment. In this way, language is "the actualization of our tendency to see reality symbolically."

Language enables us to apprehend reality as it is given to us in perceptions. It stabilizes and represents so that we can recognize. When a bowl of soup is set before the child and referred to as "hot," that child remembers a former experience and knows not to touch it. In essence, this is how we work out our relationship with our environment. The history of language is the elaborate development of verbal symbols, which has vastly altered the behavior patterns of humanity. Suzanne Langer compares the human mind to a telephone-

words are the plugs in this super-switchboard; they connect

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impressions and let them function together; sometimes they cause lines to become crossed in funny or disastrous ways.  

Words differ from the signals used by animals to communicate, because words are used to talk about things not simply to direct our sense toward some stimuli. Words help us develop a memory of objects so that, in their absence, we can "think" about them or "refer to" that which is not here. In addition to helping develop a memory of objects, Lev Vygotsky believed words collectively establish cognitive patterns. These patterns are internalized and determine our ways of relating to the environment. Cultural orientation and social relations are thus largely passed on through language.

**VYGOTSKY'S CONCEPT OF INNER SPEECH**

Vygotsky studied at the University of Moscow early this century and read avidly in the fields of linguistics, social science, psychology, philosophy, and the arts. He believed that language and thought originate in separate genetic roots, develop along different lines, and converge only at various developmental points. Although there are no constant correlations between language and thought development, according to Vygotsky, the two are engaged in a dialectical relationship—a model bringing to mind the structure of the double helix. Moreover, Vygotsky put forth the theory that thought development is determined by

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The simile of the telephone-exchange was originally used by Leonard Troland in *The Mystery of the Mind* (1926), 100ff, and is quoted in Langer, 31.
language; that is, by the linguistic tools of thought and by the socio-cultural experience of the child.

Essentially, the development of inner speech depends on outside factors, and the development of logic in the child is a direct function of social speech. Intellectual growth, then, is contingent upon mastering the social means of thought, that is, upon mastering language.

Pre-intellectual roots of speech in child development, the child's babbling, crying, even the first words, are initial stages of speech development and yet, according to Vygotsky, have little if anything to do with the development of thinking. Vygotsky believed that language and thought have genetic roots that are quite separate. It is not until the child makes an important discovery—that each thing has a name—that they are thought to meet and initiate a new form of behavior, one in which the child associates language with action. It is at this time that the developmental lines of thought and language meet. Vygotsky, of course, did not believe children acknowledge this complex relationship between thought and language—that they are actually conscious that their thought and language have met—but he does believe that it is at a certain point whereupon thought becomes verbal and language (speech) becomes rational.

Much of Vygotsky’s theories on language development emerged


— Ibid., 83.
in response to the work of the French scholar Jean Piaget, a contemporary. Piaget described a child's intellect in terms of a polarity between autistic and directed thought. Directed thought is conscious and pursues aims that are present in the mind of the thinker. It is intelligent, adapted to reality and strives to influence it. It is susceptible to truth and error and it can be communicated through language. Conversely, autistic thought is subconscious; that is, the goals it pursues and the problems it sets itself are not present in consciousness. Its intent is not the establishment of truth but gratification, and it is strictly individual and incommunicable by means of language operating primarily in images.

To be communicated, autistic thought must resort to roundabout methods "...evoking, by means of symbols and myths, the feelings by which it is led." In addition, Piaget places, between these two contrasting modes of thought, an intermediate variety which he calls "egocentric thought" and which obeys a logic that is intermediate between autism and directed. Play, according to Piaget, is the "supreme law of egocentric thought," where directed and autistic thought converge. This is where children act out their social reality in an imaginary world.

The language of the child, claims Piaget, falls into two


groups: the egocentric (individual) and the directed (social). In the egocentric, children carry on a monologue with themselves making no effort to communicate with others. At this stage, they appear not to care if anyone is listening to them. Everyone has seen children at play busy talking to themselves. In socialized speech, they attempt an exchange by making commands, asking questions, and so on. Piaget found that the greater part of a pre-school child's language is egocentric and that it is not until after seven or eight that directed speech begins to take over. Even then, there is still a great deal of egocentric speech.

Up to the age of seven or eight, play dominates in the child's thought to such an extent that it is very hard for the child to distinguish deliberate invention from fantasy that the child believes to be the truth. To sum up, autism is seen as the original, earliest form of thought; logic appears relatively late; and egocentric thought is the genetic link between them.  

The logic Piaget refers to here, he calls direct, social speech. What happens to the egocentric features of speech, once social speech takes over, is of special interest to Vygotsky. While Piaget believes that egocentric speech serves no useful purpose after age seven and simply gives in to socialized speech, atrophies, and gradually vanishes, Vygotsky believes that egocentric speech assumes a definite and important role in the activity of the child; it becomes the verbal thought which directs the behavior of the child. Vygotsky demonstrated the use

* Ibid., 18.
of egocentric speech in a study of pre-schoolers: a child was faced with the problem of not having the right color of pencil to draw with, and, as a result, egocentric speech almost doubled. From this, he assumed that the disruption in the smooth flow of activity is an important stimulus for egocentric speech. This discovery agrees with what Piaget himself refers to as "the so-called law of awareness," which states that an impediment or disturbance in an automatic activity makes the actor aware of that activity; in other words, "speech is an expression of that process of becoming aware."

This was demonstrated by observing a child who broke a pencil while drawing a streetcar. The child muttered to himself "It's broken," then took watercolors instead and proceeded to paint a broken streetcar. This observation shows high correlation between egocentric speech and activity. In another study, the child's developmental stages in drawing were analyzed. At an early age, the child was given crayons to draw. When finished, the child named the picture. A year or so later, the child drew and halfway through he named the drawing. Finally, between five and seven years old, he announced what his picture would be and then drew. At first, egocentric talk marked the result in an activity, then shifted toward the middle, and finally to the beginning of the activity, "taking on a planning, directing function and raising the child's acts to the level of

Vygotsky, 30-34.
Piaget believed that egocentric speech was unaffected by experience and served no real purpose, gradually withering away as the child became more social. Vygotsky, conversely, believed that egocentric speech was a result of assimilation of cultural and social relations. He believed egocentric speech did not atrophy, but became internalized, as inner speech, representing the ability to think to oneself. Vygotsky believed that the drive for the satisfaction of needs, which Piaget claims occurs in the autistic stage, and the drive for adaptation to reality, occurring in the social stage, are not separate from and opposed to each other. Vygotsky claimed that needs are satisfied only through adaptation to reality, social involvement. Moreover, there is no such thing as adaptation for the sake of adaptation; it is always directed by needs. Early language is motivated by individual thought to satisfy needs and requires social involvement.

If the development of thought and language is social as Vygotsky argues and not separate from reality, and if inner speech becomes a tool of thought, then the world in which the child deals must be of concern here, as it plays a crucial role in shaping that child's inner speech and thought processes. Vygotsky criticizes Piaget for his failure to take sufficiently into account the importance of the social situation and milieu.

American cognitive psychologists often ignore Vygotsky's

10 Ibid., 31.
claim that inner speech is the tool of thought, internalized from social relations, and used to plan and direct behavior. Others regard his works as classic studies in psychology. He has been included here because he presents an interesting view of the relationship of thought and language; one that does not occur separate from but intricately involved with and affected by experience. In contrast, Western models of thought development and linguistic production, especially the popular computer simulation models, tend to be much less, if at all, concerned with the effects of acculturation and socialization. Vygotsky's work provides an insightful perspective to keep in mind when approaching Western models.

COMPUTER SIMULATION MODELS

Howard's Overview Theory

More than a decade of indifference to the analysis of the mind followed the early research of Vygotsky and Piaget. It was not until 1950 that linguist Noam Chomsky published several works that had a major impact on the future direction experimental.

This is a very general information-processing theory of human cognition, which encompasses memory, language, and thought. This theory contains components of the seminal memory model Atkinson and Shiffrin proposed in 1968 and modified in 1971, but it also draws heavily on more recent formulations (including those of Bjork, 1975; Bower, 1975; Craik & Jacoby, 1975; Craik & Levy, 1976; Hunt, 1974; Hunt & Poltrock, 1974; Shiffrin, 1975; Shiffrin, 1976).
psychology would take.\textsuperscript{12} What Chomsky did, in essence, was to highlight the inadequacies of behaviorism, the path psychology had chosen. Chomsky, like Piaget and Vygotsky, viewed the individual as being active, constructive, and planful, rather than a passive recipient of environmental stimulation. However, stimulus-response analysis, espoused by the behaviorist movement, dominated the field of psychology during this time, led by such notables as B.F. Skinner and John B. Watson. They believed that...

...moral development involves nothing more than the learning of the additional moral behaviors and viewed such moral development as the result of reinforcement and punishment to which the individual has been subjected.\textsuperscript{13}

Cognitive theorists focused on the thought process involved when people make decisions between right and wrong, the organized and complex rules for that decision-making process, and on the view that the construction of the individual is active and determines those rules. In addition, computer science in the mid-1940s offered a contribution to cognitive psychology that has played a significant role in current analysis of thought processes. Computers have provided an analogy—a metaphor—for human cognition, as well as a new means of stating and testing theories.\textsuperscript{14} Computer simulation has provided insight while, at


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 8.
the same time, leading cognitive psychology down a rather radical path of departure from its past.

The computer simulation model consists of three major components: the sensory registers, long-term memory, and working memory. As we perceive the world around us through our five senses, it is routed first through a selection system (as we cannot possibly absorb all that is going on around us at one time) and then enters long-term memory. It is said that in long-term memory a system of complex propositional structures linked together by what is referred to as "nodes" takes place. Each node represents a concept. A node's attachment to other nodes represents the relationship between concepts. Retrieving information from long-term memory involves a search along the pathways of a complex network of nodes. In reading, for example, a search is activated by visual and/or auditory sensory registers, and calls on both a mental and conceptual dictionary for retrieving information from the memory network.

This memory network is believed to consist of two primary components: long-term memory and working memory. Distinct from long-term memory, William James once described working memory as "the rearward portion of the present space of time." Sigmund Freud described it as a "mystic writing pad." He likened it to a child's toy writing pad with a wax substance covered by a

Howard's diagram of the overview theory. She proposes that remembering, thinking, and comprehending and producing language take place in such an information-processing system.
transparent sheet. The child can draw and then, by lifting the sheet, erase whatever was drawn, although the impression is left on the wax beneath. Freud argued that we have a memory like the wax substance, where everything is recorded which is referred to as long-term memory, and a memory like the transparent sheet, referred to as working memory. It is believed that articulatory-acoustic coding predominates in working memory; that is, people tend to label the stimulus and it is representation of this label that is held in working memory.

Both visual-spatial and semantic codes are used in working memory as well. It is a limited-capacity working space for thinking and comprehending language, in the respect that it is not only a station for new information on its way to permanent storage, in long-term memory, but a working space for information processing.

NETWORK THEORIES: TLC and ACT

What happens in working memory is explained by network theories, including R. Quillian’s “Teachable Language Comprehender” (TLC) and John Anderson’s ACT theory. Quillian set out to build a theory that would explain how people

comprehend language. He proposed that each concept is defined by
two major kinds of relations: 1) a superset relation with a
specified class membership in which, for example, "woman" is a
subset of "person," and 2) one or more property relations which
define the characteristics of a concept, say, "That woman is my
mother." TLC assumes that semantic memory is organized in this
logical and hierarchical fashion: a superset with a property
relation. Thus the statement "That woman is my mother" is not
stored by one relation, but rather is stored indirectly by two
relations, one between "woman" and the superset "person," and the
other between "woman" and the property relation "my mother."
These are believed to be joined by a predicate link, in this
case, "is."

Anderson's ACT theory was developed later in an attempt to
explain the structure and processes that underlie memory,
inferential reasoning, language comprehension, and language
acquisition in long-term memory. The primary distinction of ACT
lies in the difference between declarative and procedural
knowledge. "Declarative" here refers to knowing that; and
"procedural" knowledge refers to knowing how. Declarative
knowledge, according to Anderson, is a "conceptual network of
nodes interconnected by labeled, directed links." A
proposition, the central structure, stands for an idea rather
than a specific set of words or images; it is constructed

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18 Howard, 204.
For the sentence, "That woman is my mother," the notion of "woman" is connected with a subject link to "is" which is connected with a predicate link to "mother." The node stands for the whole proposition (i.e., concept) and indicates the relationship between the two.

In a second sentence, the first proposition might become the subject of a new proposition, say "friend," which points to a new predicate, say, "is." The new proposition becomes "My mother is my friend." With each new proposition, concepts become more complex and interrelated until elaborate constructions of nodes and propositions become enmeshed in a thick network. Activation by external stimulation sends signals that spread out along the routes of these complex networks. Such a model demonstrates how long-term memory might be represented.

Retrieving information from memory involves searching through these pathways. Words and sentences are recognized through the sensory registers activating particular nodes. This limited-capacity activation spreads with a kind of domino effect from active to passive nodes capable of retrieving anything from a single simple concept like pointing out that a particular woman is my mother, to a lengthy and involved explanation of nuclear physics. The stronger the link between nodes, the more likely activation will spread along that link.

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19 Here Anderson is taking a position held, much earlier, by Wittgenstein and Russell in their Logical Atomism period.
Procedural knowledge, as defined in the ACT theory, is a
production system which assesses the condition on the basis of
what is true of memory and decides what action—what sequence of
changes—should be made to memory if the condition has been met.
This is an if-then or condition-action model, where the moral
judgment of a particular situation is made. It is in these
production sets where rules that underlie human language
comprehension and problem-solving can be analyzed. The form of
problem-solving in which we attempt to determine whether or not
one proposition follows logically from another, referred to as
conditional reasoning, involves determining what follows
logically from if-then statements.

Language comprehension, then, is the task of taking strings
of words and using them to construct a set of underlying
propositions. Although words and sentences for the most part are
ambiguous, this ambiguity is readily dealt with. A bottom-up,
stimulus-driven process involves the task of identifying each
word first and then looking up its various meanings and syntactic
roles. Here, the stimulus is the sole determinant of what will
be identified; the question, "Now what could this be?" is asked,
as it were. When some appropriate set of words has been
identified, these words are assigned to particular grammatical
categories and a set of underlying propositions is constructed.

Top-down processing is guided by expectations about the
incoming stimulus and asks "Could this be ________?" Both
processes are believed by Howard to be used in language
comprehension. In the ambiguous statement like "Everyday I go to the bank," where bank here could mean Baybank or the bank of the Charles River, both meanings are believed to be looked up and activated briefly. But the appropriate meaning contextually is quickly determined by semantic and syntactic context. It is assumed that we possess a set of heuristics that serve as semantic and syntactic processing strategies. In addition, language comprehension requires that a person is able to follow a typical conversation and assimilate the new information of the speaker into their general knowledge of the physical and social world. Until this assimilation happens one has not fully comprehended.

The remarkable thing about language comprehension is the speed with which we take in stimuli and assimilate it. The average person processes around four words per second.

CLASSROOM APPLICATIONS

By considering the process in which the individual comprehends language, implications emerge for teaching those thinking skills inherent in the language acquisition process. Reading and comprehending literature that is socially and culturally relevant to their lives, and writing essays reflective of critical connections between readings and personal experiences, students can become aware of how they think and how to think. Keeping a journal can reveal to students how they perceive their world through patterns and what they infer from
those patterns. An exercise in journal writing might involve choosing an unfamiliar object from a collection of "things" (preferably organic, like a sea shell, rock, or dried vegetation, and preferably unusual), observing this object for about twenty minutes for five days, and recording these observations. Students ask both "What could this be?" and "Could this be ____?"

What happens is that students become aware of how they dialogue with their world in order to make sense of it. They become aware that they call on a set of heuristics in identifying objects and assimilating them into their knowledge of the physical and social world. When asked to write up their observations at the end of the fifth day, they describe the thought processes they used in making sense of their objects. One useful aspect of this lesson is that what commences to happen after the second or third day of observation is that what seemed to be one color, now takes on another, or what seemed to be a triad is really a sextet. Students become aware of their expectations and inferences. A piece of wheat is expected to be golden yellow, but upon closer observation, it is actually greenish yellow. This lesson puts students in touch with how they make meaning and provides basic clues as to how they think.80

Once in touch with how they observe and make meaning, students can be asked to pick out twenty crucial clues in

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80 For more on this exercise, see Ann E. Berthoff, Forming, Thinking, Writing: The Composing Imagination (NJ: Boynton/Cook, 1982), 10.
understanding a short story. Ask them to cluster the clues into categories of words that seem related to each other. They can have as many groups or as few as they deem necessary and are asked to name each group either with a word from the group or a new word that seems to embody the general meaning of the category. The cognitive process here correlates to Quillan's TLC network theory, in that the superset relation would be the title of the group of related words, with each word in the group being a subset of the title and defining the properties of the concept.

In a similar vein, students are able to ferret out basic concepts in a story and are able to write a thesis statement using the titles (superset) of their categories (subset), explaining the relationship between the two. This process recalls Anderson's ACT network theory in which a proposition is formed by a subject link and predicate link between category titles forming a concept (root node) which indicates the relationship between the two.

Another, simpler way of making this point is to have students make out their grocery lists or Christmas shopping lists and then look at the natural patterns that emerge. Meats, dairy products, and produce are supersets here with items listed under each subset. The pattern that emerges in the Christmas shopping list is that the subset of names can usually be identified as clusters with superset words like family, friends, and

Ibid., 28.
acquaintances. Itemizing, grouping, and finding subset/superset relations serves two purposes here: students can discover the basic concepts of a story and become aware of a natural thinking pattern.\textsuperscript{22}

Learning to sequence categories of crucial clues, or significant facts, helps students prepare a mental outline for the body of their writings. Category titles used in the thesis statement are expounded upon and used as the basic concept for a topic sentence of each of their following paragraphs.

When we image this kind of structure forming in the student's mind, we could conceive of a vast network of nodes interconnected by links forming propositional structures, a model similar to an electronic schematic board on which a complicated network of resistors and conductors are interconnected by wires. An electronic charge flows along the wires with limited capacity and along those pathways that are most closely linked. These are the pathways of previously constructed knowledge. If the new material does not fit in, then attempts will be made to alter the new material to fit the already existing knowledge. Remembering a short story, then, becomes constructive for the student. She fills in the "lowlands of (her) memory with the highlands of (her) imagination."\textsuperscript{23} The student is not simply recalling facts, but also calling upon logical construction and inference.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23} Howard, 186. For a fuller discussion on long-term memory, the structure of knowledge, and language comprehension, see Chapter 6 and Chapter 9.
What happens to the main protagonist in the story will be reconstructed (recognized) based on facts in the story and the student's own particular experience registered in her long-term memory. As a result, her reconstruction can become skewed, as it is not always easy to distinguish between what is remembered and what is constructed. The student can be misled into thinking that an event in the story happened when, in fact, this was an inference based on her own experience and expectations.

Four different newspapers report four different stories of the same event. Students learn to ask: "What is fact?" "What is inferred?" Examining cause and effect relationships helps students sort out the value of inference. By diagramming possible causes, they can infer what happened. Diagramming what might have happened they can infer what might be the results (see Chapter 4). "What difference will it make in our lives that this happened?" is one question students use to dialogue with this problem in deciding the effects.

This constructive method of cause/effect relationships can also be used to diagram events that we reconstruct from a short story. Such information becomes supporting evidence for expounding on categorical titles in the student's writings. This lesson helps students understand the constructive qualities of memory.

Finally, drawing conclusions requires logical reasoning, the condition (if-then) model described as procedural knowledge in long-term memory, which is a production system where moral
judgments are made. Students determine what proposition follows logically after conditional statements. Moral judgments of a particular short story, for example, based on what rings true in memory, helps decide what action might be taken—what sequence of changes—if any, in consciousness and in the behavior will be the result of having read this story. This is an area in which both Vygotsky and Freire concerned themselves, where consciousness facilitated through literacy has the potential to change the individual’s life.

When literacy is used to facilitate critical thinking, we need to analyze what goes on in our heads when we think and speak, as well as when we read and write. Grammar and syntax can be learned by collectively looking at copies of students’ writings, but this part of the writing process, for the most part, is one that we spend a good part of our literate lives perfecting. What is of greater significance here is the moral judgments we make based on the literature we read and write about, as well as the resulting changes we make in our thinking and in our behavior. Literacy then becomes a course of study that engages students to dialogue with literature and the world in making these changes.

The relationship between thought and language is dialectical, and therefore cannot be treated separate in the language acquisition process. Reading is useless without the

Although, as traditionally conceived in the information processing model, no links to moral judgments are made. What is proposed here is that such links do exist.
skills to analyze and assimilate information. Writing anything of meaning is improbable without skills to reason logically and evaluate. Such a course assumes that these thinking skills can be taught and can be learned, and that they are best taught within a socially and culturally relevant context.

Howard has presented a reasonable model for the information processing of the individual mind and has explained how adjustments must be made in assimilating new information. Based on the work of Quillian and Anderson, either new information is altered to fit within the confines of already existing propositional structures—a process that makes us vulnerable to lying, leading questions, and misleading advertising—or new propositional organization, relation-argument structures, are formed that enable concepts to be defined relationally and our values and ways of dealing with the world to change. Yet, what is missing here, is the relationships between thought/language production and the individual's experience with the external world. Howard fails to point out that no individual act of cognition is one apart from the social sphere.

What Howard has neglected is how the social and cultural aspects of our world influence the initial construction of basic propositional network. This is an area which has tremendous influence on the skills and attitudes that we bring with us to the education process. Howard's analysis is disconnected, as if there were value-free space in which one establishes knowledge. Vygotsky, on the other hand, takes a more holistic approach.
When considering the social milieu in which Vygotsky lived—the advent of socialism in the newly formed Soviet States—we can understand his concern with consciousness and the effects of socialization. Such socio-cultural background information sheds light on his research, in the same way understanding the social milieu and cultural background of Third World students sheds light on how they think and how they learn.

Before examining relevance of social and cultural influence on language acquisition, however, let us first consider the most recent trend in cognitive theory—that of multiple intelligences as put forth by Howard Gardner.

**Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences**

Gardner's model, radically different from those of Piaget, Vygotsky, or Howard, can be envisioned as a set of autonomous intelligences, including linguistic, musical, logico-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and the personal intelligences (inter- and intra-personal).

The structures of these six intelligences are separate and vertical, in the sense that, to a large extent, they may develop independently of each other. What this means is that one intelligence, like logico-mathematical, may become highly developed at an early age, far exceeding the development of the other intelligences. This may happen in the case of the math whiz kid who enters Princeton at fourteen years old and has a Ph.D. in mathematics from Harvard by twenty-one years old. At
the same time, this person may or may not possess the personal intelligence to carry on a conversation with colleagues outside of work. Conversely, a successful writing career may not take off for another individual until a full decade or even two later, and the writer's logico-mathematical intelligence may never reach the level of balancing a checkbook.

These separate intelligences, whose boundaries are vaguely defined by Gardner, nevertheless share a horizontal relationship with each other when tasks employ the use of more than one intelligence at the same time. For example, an audience at the opera or at a movie calls on linguistic, musical, as well as personal intelligence in perceiving and understanding the performance/film.

The most striking difference between Gardner's and Howard's models is that in the MI theory, no central memory bank or working space exists. This is in contrast with the computer simulation model, where long-term memory and working memory make up a component in which incoming information from the sensory registers is processed. No such central processing components exist in the Gardner model and, as a result, we are led to wonder what happened to thought. Where and when does thought take place?

According to Gardner, it is within the individual intelligences, themselves, that thought common to a particular intelligence is processed. Moreover, each intelligence maintains its own symbolic representation. Linguistic intelligence refers
The author's vision of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory, where each intelligence is autonomous and development is separate and uneven.
to the acquisition of language per se; like English, French, German, etc. The purpose of the linguistic intelligence in MI theory is to serve as a vehicle for communicating the particular symbolic representation of that intelligence, like numeration in logico-mathematical.

Gardner does not, however, make the link between theory and practice of his MI theory a viable one for use in the classroom or in establishing educational policy. More than "scattered notes" on MI's practical application at end of Frames of Mind (for which Gardner himself apologizes) is needed to understand how he proposes to use his theory. We are left to speculate. For example, suppose a particular child, when tested with other students, excels in musical intelligence but scores low in linguistic intelligence. Are we to assume that that child has a high musical intelligence and a low linguistic intelligence? Based on the MI theory we might want to track that student for a career in music.

But what if we find out that the parents of that child are both professional musicians and the child has been surrounded by music in the home since birth? Wouldn't we then expect that child to have a higher intelligence in music? How would we know about musical intelligence in a child who has had exposure to music from only a radio? What chance would the latter have in being tracked for a musical career?

In fact, a child from a home in which the parents were musicians was targeted as a student with high musical
intelligence and tracked for music classes, based on Gardner's work in that school. The parents, however, were outraged. Of course their son was musical but, they related to the teacher, we send him to school to learn to read and write; he gets the music exposure at home. From this example, a broader implication of Gardner's work is that it may serve only to support the stereotypes based on race, gender, and economic class that are already operative in public education.

MI theory, nevertheless, ought not be totally dismissed. It does present us with a very interesting and radically different model in thinking about thinking. Moreover, Gardner does elude to the importance of historical, social, and cultural influences on the individual's intellectual growth and direction, for example in his critique of the Suzuki method. And he does point out that Paulo Freire may be onto something, as well as giving credit to the Soviet school of psychology, including Vygotsky. However, he does not explore the critical connections between them.

Vygotsky's work in psychology began in 1924 and ten years later he was dead from tuberculosis. What he left us is still, some fifty years later, impressive. Vygotsky stressed the centrality of the proposition that mental activity is highly influenced by social relations. We learn to relate to ourselves as people relate to us. In short, the mechanism that underlies higher mental functions is internalized social relations.

Vygotsky is not just making the claim that social interaction leads to the child's intellectual direction and
growth, but that the very means, namely language and especially speech, used in social interaction are taken over by the individual and internalized. Vygotsky sees the child’s social and cultural world as the blueprint on which the child’s cognitive structures are built, and that child’s thoughts as following those same patterns as the speech and attitudes of the people in his or her world. This is a crucial point to consider in a multi-cultural setting like that which is found in many adult literacy classes, and in any school, as we all experience social and cultural influences on the way we think and the way we use language.

Freire takes this a premise a step further and states it in terms of the oppressed: If a child grows up in a world where racism and sexism are prevalent, where there is poverty juxtaposed to great wealth, where there is high crime rates and drug addiction, and the parent’s self-contempt is passed on from generation to generation, these children internalize these degrading social interactions in their cognitive processes. Then, there is not only a dearth of opportunity in the external social sphere for intellectual development, but also an internalized system of verbal thought that resists positive development, either by missing it because it doesn’t compute or misconstruing it to fit a set of propositional structures that are detrimental to the individual.

Today, the traditional Western view of psychology continues to treat human awareness as if it were a phenomenon primarily
closed off from the world and in relations with the outside world only in terms of the physical senses. "Self" is assumed to be interior, basically isolated. For this reason, Martin Heidegger, who wrote around the same time as Vygotsky, believed the field of psychology remained fallow in determining how we are in the world in relation to other people and to ourselves.

**HEIDEGGER'S REFLECTIONS ON STATE-OF-MIND**

In his classic study *Being and Time* (1926), Heidegger points out that "what we indicate ontologically by the term state-of-mind is ontically the most familiar and everyday thing; our mood, our Being-attuned." At the center of teaching for critical consciousness is understanding being in the world and the consequences of the denial of that being. To Freire, being in the world is articulated in terms of naming, reflection, and action, where action is not dichotomized from reflection. In other words, it is the naming of reality and conscious reflection upon it that activates the development of experience.

Paulo Freire, Lev Vygotsky, and Martin Heidegger are all concerned with fulfillment and denial of being in the world. Heidegger's reflections on beingness, especially his articulation of a dialectical relationship between language and authenticity

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**Footnotes**

- Freire, PO, 38.
illuminate the relationship between thought, language, and concept of self.

Being is defined here as what human beings ought rightfully to be. Theologically, this involves affirming in a feeling, thinking, and willing way that which has been divinely ordained. Philosophically, it might be defined as the capacity of an individual to decide, plan, remember, and relate to others in terms of what is "really real."

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger is concerned with the quest for being. To Heidegger, this means an existence which concerns itself primarily with the question "What is it to be?" Yet human beings are so often imbedded in inauthentic everyday life that this essential question alludes them. Heidegger believes that this question concerning the essence of being is of utmost concern; that the future of the earth and the future of the human race hinges on it.

Inauthentic existence, according to Heidegger, consists of three aspects: facticity, existentiality, and forfeiture. Essentially, "facticity" means that human beings are born into a world not of their own making. Yet it is one to appropriate and assimilate because human beings are makers. So, although we are cast into a world we did not choose or make, we are free, within the limits of possibilities within that world, to act upon it.

Existentiality or transcendence, according to Heidegger, means that human beings exist as anticipation of their own possibilities. As humans, we are always reaching out beyond
ourselves in anticipation of the future. Our very nature is to aim at what is not yet. We grasp new situations as challenges toward becoming that which we are potentially capable of becoming given the boundaries of our world. Yet, the world which is our source for creative energy is also that which seduces us from our essential drive to create and understand. In this sense, we forfeit our beingness to the world.

Forfeiture, a fundamental aspect of Heidegger's description of a human being's inauthentic existence, means that we forget our very being in the world, dispersing of our life energies, which drive our creative nature, by giving attention to the nuances of everyday life and the people and things that constantly envelope and drain us. Life becomes a life with and for others and alienates itself from its central task of becoming itself. Therefore, as human beings we are determined yet free, free yet enslaved.

Freedom, according to Heidegger, exists in the double tension of history; that is, in the challenge of a particular situation—my family, my community, my country. But it lives equally in the tension of the ahistorical, the present moment in which one attends to biological survival—eating, sleeping, reproducing—or escape—riding a bicycle, watching television, etc. This double tension is that which constitutes the freedom/bondage situation of what it means to be.

It is only through a mood of dread (angst), specifically dread of death, says Heidegger, that lifts human vision out of
the drudgery and escape of day-to-day life and begs the question: "What does it all mean?" "Who the hell am I and what the hell am I doing here?" or "What does it mean to be?" Only dread of death can solicit such a vision, in Heidegger's words an "ontological possibility," that transcends daily life because it is only death that is unique to the individual--only in dread do we forget the "they," that which distracts us from discovering our true being, and experience the reflection required for authentic existence. 27

Likewise, Freire points out that it is those human beings who are oppressed, in whose lives dread plays a major role, who are in the best position to articulate that which oppresses them, if only their energies were not constantly drained in the struggle for survival. The dread of their own miserable condition forces reflection upon death and thus their own finitude. Thus oppressed individuals, who are forced into confrontation with their own existence, possess the propensity to engage in an authentic existence; a propensity their oppressors are shielded from.

Yet, if the oppressed possess the ability to liberate themselves, why do they remain imprisoned in situations of oppression? What is it that happens when one develops the consciousness necessary to free oneself?

Conscience exemplifies that voice with which human beings awake themselves from self-forgetfulness to the responsibility of being. According to Heidegger, we feel guilty that we are not 

27 Heidegger, 442-4.
becoming what which we believe ourselves capable. This is a
guilt that can be devastating, forcing us to examine our lives.
It is conscience that calls to the person and challenges the
individual to escape from enslavement into freedom and, thereby,
transform historical necessity into resolution.

Heidegger asserts that human beings are historical; that is,
a thing is as it happens, as it occurs. Time is at the
ontological foundation of being in the world. As human beings,
we are when we happen, and our very being takes on the
characteristics of the way we occur. Time is what the human
being most essentially is. We move toward the future by looking
at the past to explain the present. And by moving toward the
future, we move toward a finite future, the mere span of a
lifetime. But by moving toward the future, we turn back to
examine and understand the past. In doing so, we face a history
not of our own making but one that we must nevertheless take
responsibility for.

Freire's mission is to lead those who are disengaged from
their existence, due to their struggle to survive, to almost
total engagement. One in which existence becomes a dynamic
concept through dialogue, because it is through dialogue, the
ability of humans to use language to reflect upon their
existence, that make them historical. Through the use of
language, we can reflect on the past to understand the present in
preparation for the future.

Heidegger's mission is to recall us from a nihilistic
destiny. The essence of *Being and Time* is a theme of a lonely will driven to face its own finitude and thus that which is authentic; and the struggle not to allow life to inflict itself upon the individual who forgets the self in this or that nuance of daily life.

The essence of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a theme that defines for the educator a method for dealing with such a dichotomy:

The radical, committed to human liberation, does not become the prisoner of a "circle of certainty" within which he also imprisons reality. On the contrary, the more radical he is, the more fully he enters into reality so that, knowing it better, he can better transform it. He is not afraid to confront, to listen, to see the world unveiled.

Conscientização, critical consciousness, enables the individual to see reality. Freire believes that literacy is a vehicle which has the propensity to facilitate this consciousness of self. Likewise, Heidegger believes that language is not simply one tool which we possess among many others; it is only language that makes possible our standing within openness to what is.

For Freire, the role of the educator is to dialogue with the masses reflecting on their own action; to clarify and illuminate reality. The more people are able to unveil and articulate reality, the more critically they enter that reality to transform it. Furthermore, it is through language that one enters into dialogue with their world to demystify reality, develop a

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Freire, PO, 23-4.
critical consciousness, and articulate an affirming concept of self, in Heideggerian terms, to fulfill our being in the world.

But what happens to a people when they remain submerged in day-to-day survival, when they are rendered invisible in history and literature, when their very being in the world is denied? W.E.B. DuBois was the first Black American to publish a history of slavery in the United States. He did so around the turn of the century, and it was to be 75 years before another history of slavery by a Black person was published. During this time, while the work of the few Black scholars was virtually ignored, historians relied on the journals of slavemasters and on plantation records. Perhaps here the historian felt more comfortable working with the white man's account of history because it fell within his field of comparison--his experience--and his criterion of historical truth. As a result, slave narratives which contradicted accounts documented by slavemasters were thought inaccurate and for the most part useless, rendering the Black voice silent.

Freire believes exclusion of groups of people from history facilitates a lack of consciousness that limits perceptions and represents a near disengagement between those persons and their existence. This disengagement between individuals and

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consciousness of those forces that dominate their lives causes them to be impervious to the challenges of the outside world and encourages belief in the magical and superstitious to explain what is happening to them. Most often, they blame themselves for their suffering. The power inherent in taking an active role in naming those forces that determine the fate of the earth and its inhabitants is then left in the hands of others.

Heidegger also makes claims about fulfillment and injury of being in the world. At the center of his thought, being in the world means standing open to the world uncovered, as opposed to being in the world only for the sake of survival or standing closed to the world, in the environment of an animal, unable to objectify personal experience, reflect upon it, or engage with other beings.

Being in the world involves making claims. When one backs off from the claims made by the very nature of their existence—that they are black, that they are female, that they are poor, for example—and from the inevitable answers they must give in accordance with their own being—they literally refuse their own beingness. This contradiction is lived as injury and misery.

Denying one's own being in the world becomes an ontological disorder that results from an encroachment on a person's openness to the world, where encroachment means to "to enter by stealth into the possessions or rights of another," "to trespass," "to

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30 Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, English ed., (NY: Continuum, 1973), 17. Henceforth all references will be to this edition denoted as ECC.
advance beyond desirable or normal limits." It is the way in which a person experiences the encroachment of the immediate claims of beings vis-à-vis the weakness of response of the claims of their own beingness. 31

In such situations individuals feel the threat of total annihilation in the presence of that denying power, given the collapse of their world-relation. Instead of being able to allow things to occur as they are, people who experience an encroachment of their beingness may seek to flee the uncertainty of existence, particularly its quality of change. They become confused as they feel more and more insignificant, even to the point of invisibility.

As a phenomenon, schizophrenia shows us at once how we may stand open in the presence of beings, falling utterly prey to them and suffering misery in a denial of our being...Madness occurs as the deprivation of human being...32

Freire points out:

To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it...Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world...Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression...If it is in speaking their word that men, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which men achieve significance


32 Ibid., 139.
as men. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity. It is through dialogue—through language—that the oppressed can begin to transcend the day-to-day struggle to survive to reclaim their beingness. By articulating those historical themes responsible for the present era and the contradictions within it, they emerge as conscious beings with a critical perspective. They are then capable of naming those themes of the future and anticipating their role in it.

Along with this new consciousness emerges a new language. Kwanza, for example, became an Afro-American ritual celebrated around the time of Christmas during the late sixties when Black consciousness in this country had reached an historical peak. It is the story of Khneumu and Sati, mythical leaders in Egypt, who celebrated the first Kwanza in the land of Chem, a great Black nation in "Afrika." They practiced the seven principles of Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (working together), Ujaama (sharing), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). Here the language of a new consciousness emerges. Even the name of the race becomes "Black" or "Afro-American" instead of "Negro." Kwanza, meaning harvest, is not a ritual any African from that continent celebrates but belongs to those Afro-Americans whose perspective was reshaped by the transcendence of Black consciousness during that era. It is the story of a people's struggle with nature to produce a culture,

—Freire, PO, 76.
one that is uniquely that of Black people in this country, and as such Kwanza is a celebration of a people becoming aware of themselves, of their world, and their ability to transform that world.
LANGUAGE AS CONSCIOUSNESS OF SELF

The Autobiography of Anne Moody
When Heidegger uses the terms "being in the world" and "being one's self" the question of the subject of Heidegger's sentences arises; the who of being. This question is answered by defining who in terms of the "I," the "subject," the "self." Self is that which maintains its identity throughout various experiences and ways of behavior and yet is able to relate to this multiplicity of change in doing so.

Self is, ontologically, that which is "present at hand" and is the very fundamental element of the subject and of others. Self, according to Heidegger, is the "Thinghood" of consciousness. Thus, Rene Descartes' statement "I think, therefore I am," means I know I exist because I am conscious of my selfhood. Moreover, nothing is more certain than the "I" of my existence. And it is the reflective awareness of the "I" that provides the basic framework for the "phenomenology of consciousness."

The self is the thing that is closest at hand in our environment. Everything else close to us is that which the self is involved with in seeking usability. That which is used in the environment by the self is done so in an effort to achieve potential of the self. Understanding pertains to our potential for being in the world. In fact, Heidegger claims that "Being is understanding." That is, our potential for being lies in our understanding our relations with others, the world at large, and

1 Heidegger, 150-1.
2 Ibid., 182.
the self. When these are discovered, we say they have meaning.

Meaning is directly dependent upon our interpretation, which is not the mere acquiring of information about what is understood. It is more than that. Interpretation is the "working out of possibilities projected in understanding."

Interpreting means we understand something "as." That is, when dealing with the environment, we interpret it as the desk, the door, the window, etc. This is seeing with both understanding and interpretation. But there are two kinds of interpretation here: authentic and unauthentic. Understanding is the mere seeing a thing within the totality of its involvements with the environment. Such seeing can conceal the explicit relations between the thing and the rest of the environment. That which is understood is articulated when the entity is expressed as something. But interpretation is the appropriation of something that is understood through a particular point-of-view.

When we communicate, we are sharing with someone else what we have pointed out from the backdrop of our environment, what it is we are predicting about the character of the object of our attention. In the act of communicating, some preconception is always implied; although, it is for the most part concealed because language has that propensity to hide in itself our way of conceiving the world.

The object of a transformative pedagogy is to facilitate a

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process in which individuals are free to be open in the world. They are then free to articulate their situations of oppression that deny their being and begin to transcend them.

...[D]ehumanization, although a concrete historical fact, is not a given destiny, but the result of an unjust order that engenders violence in the oppressors, which in turn dehumanizes the oppressed."

Freire writes of restructuring through dialogue the way in which individuals in situations of oppression interact with a dehumanizing environment to creatively transform the society socially, politically, and economically. He names three levels of consciousness that indicate an individual's relation to their being in the world. These are magical consciousness, naive consciousness, and critical consciousness.

Freire describes those individuals with "semi-intransitive" or magical consciousness as those who are caught in the 'myth of natural inferiority.' These individuals react passively, conforming to the demands of their oppressors because they feel impotent as agents of change.

Their interests center almost totally around survival, and they lack a sense of life on a more historical plane. "[their] sphere of perception is limited...[they are] impermeable to challenges situated outside the sphere of biological necessity."

Magical consciousness represents a near disengagement between individuals and their environment, causing confusion and 

" Freire, PO, 28.

" Freire, ECC, 17."
self-denigration. Discernment of the individual’s relationship with the outside world is difficult and explanations of true causality fall prey to magical interpretations. An individual with a magical consciousness will apprehend facts and simply attribute them to a supreme power. In this way, magical consciousness is characterized by fatalism—“If God willed it this way then there is nothing we can do about it.”

Two specific characteristics of magical consciousness are problem-denial and survival problems. When asked about their situations of oppression, a typical response of Ecuadorian farmers, for example, was “Things used to be this way when authorities did not bother to look for progress.” Or, “We do not have haciendas (plantations) here, these problems do not apply to us.” Likewise, in an adult literacy class in Boston, some Black students when reading literature that deals with the oppression of Blacks in this country will shake their heads and lament how terrible those old days were, and how glad they are that Blacks are not oppressed today. In both cases, the individual tries to locate the problem in another time. Even though the tradition maintains the problem in the present, individuals with magical consciousness try to make it seem that the problem belongs to a former era and no longer applies to their reality.

Another typical response is that of biological survival.

Those who must struggle with the devastation of severe poverty see all their problems as a matter of money. If only they had the money, they could deal with their problems. But since they have no money with little hope of acquiring money, they have no hope for any real change. They become little more than spectators of their own lives. Magical consciousness is the stage in which individuals fatalistically conform to a system of oppression. This leads to people folding their arms, shaking their heads, and resigning themselves to the impossibility of resistance. "It ain't no use to vote," explained a white cotton mill worker in North Carolina, "Them what runs the country will run it just the same without me a-tellin' them about it."\(^7\)

A transitional phase might occur between magical and naive which can be defined as "distortion." It is a period when the oppressed "plays host to the oppressor," that is, a stage that does not fully constitute a level of consciousness, rather it is a period in which the individual gets bogged down in between one stage and the next. This period of distortion is characterized by waiting for good luck or for the oppressor to save the oppressed.

Naive consciousness is one in which individuals oversimplify and romanticize reality, trying to reform unjust persons, believing that, once these people are reformed, the system will

\(^7\) Lois McDonald, *Southern Mill Hills* (New York: Alex Hillman, Pub., 1928), 17.

\(^8\) Smith, 45.
work properly. Freire calls this stage "naive transitivity" and defines it further as the state of consciousness which is characterized by nostalgia for the past, by underestimation of the common people, 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, and, finally, by magical explanations. This is a stage in which individuals have developed their insight to some extent becoming more open to reason, but still resort to explaining the unknown in magical ways when the going gets really tough. Their ability to dialogue is still limited and they are capable of distorting meaning to fit available explanations. Freire points out that "If this consciousness does not progress to the stage of critical transitivity, it may be deflected by sectarian irrationality into fanaticism." In other words, naive consciousness superimposes itself on reality and tries to force solutions to the point of irrationality, sometimes even to the point of a fanatical consciousness.

Fanaticism is a transitional phase which can occur between naive and critical consciousness. This stage is characterized by the individual trading one situation of oppression for another. These individuals become tools manipulated by a small group of charismatic leaders who teach a philosophy of the "mythical individual or the super ethnic,"—one who embodies all the

"Freire, ECC, 18."
stereotypes of the oppressed group. Nevertheless, these individuals remain oppressed, because, even though they believe themselves to be free, they fear real freedom and they follow the dictates of their leaders as if they were their own. "They are directed; they do not direct themselves." Rather than accommodate the oppressor, they accommodate a distorted superhero image of themselves.

They become illogical, irrational, and rely on polemics and emotional rhetoric. Leaders of such fanatic groups serve the people little if at all because they manipulate rather than lead an authentic popular organization. The 'system' is naively understood as a deliberate instrument of the oppressor class, rather than the result of historical processes which hold both oppressor and oppressed captive. The fanatic leader teaches hate of the oppressor and calls for immediate action on the part of followers. They are not required to think and, indeed, are not allowed to, rather they must act now and await liberation to participate in any thinking activities. The goal is to destroy the oppressor, but the end result most likely involves replacing one oppressor with another.

Critical consciousness—conscientizacao—is "a degree of

10 Smith, 68.
11 Freire, PO, 20.
12 Ibid., 147.
13 Ibid., 70.
14 Ibid.
consciousness in which individuals are able to see the social system critically, "... and is the goal of the pedagogy of Freire. That is, they are able to see the contradictions in their own lives; name the social, economic, and political themes that dominate their lives; and are able to work critically and creatively with others for social change. A critical consciousness is one which has emerged from the struggle of day-to-day survival to name those forces which hold in place an individual's situation of oppression; to reflect on how this situation exists for others as well as the individual and why it exists at all; and to act in ways that transform the situation."

In summary, magical consciousness seeks to conform; naive consciousness seeks to reform; and critical consciousness seeks to transform.

Coming of Age in Mississippi: A Case Study

The following case study was taken from the life of Anne Moody, as she has documented it in The Coming of Age in Mississippi. The purpose here is not so much to give the reader a biographical account of her life, as she has already done that, but to extract passages which indicate thought patterns at different stages of her life. Her transformation from a child of severe poverty in a sharecropping family and a

15 Freire, ECC, 2.
16 Smith, 2-3.
victim of southern segregation and random racist attacks, to the degrading life of a domestic in the homes of white racists, to a student committed to the value of education, and a civil rights activist committed to the liberation of her culture, is an example of actual experience of what Freire describes as the growth from magical to naive to critical consciousness.

Childhood

Anne Moody was born in 1940 in Mississippi. She and her family lived in a run-down wooden shack on the Carter Plantation where her mother and father worked in the fields picking cotton.

Defeated by racism and segregation, her mother and stepfather resented the optimism that prompted her ambitions for education and autonomy. Her early struggle against race and gender oppression took place in the field of aloneness.

When the crops failed to produce enough for the family to live on, her family's response was to blame themselves.

...[E]very little thing began to get on Daddy's nerves. Now he was always yelling at me and snapping at Mama. The crop wasn't coming along as he had expected. Every evening when he came from the field he was terribly depressed. He was running around the house grumbling all the time. "Shit, it was just a waste of time. Didn't getta nuff rain for nuthin'. We ain't gonna even get two bales o' cotton this year. That corn ain't no good and them sweet potatoes jus' burning up in that hard-ass ground. Goddamn, ah'd a did better on a job than this. Ain't gonna have nuthin' left when Mr. Carter take out his share." We had to hear this sermon almost every night and he was always snapping at

Mama like it was her fault. 18

Anne Moody’s family was a typical sharecropping family; when dreams of a profitable crop vanished, as they did on a regular basis, they blamed themselves, not racism, as the primary source for their economic exploitation. Like Anne Moody’s folks, many sharecroppers focused most of their energies on survival problems related to poverty and just plain trying to stay alive.

To get out of the house from the road you entered a big wooden gate. A little dirt road ran from the gate through the Cooks’ cattle pasture and continued past our house to a big cornfield. The Cooks planted the corn for their cattle. But often when Mama didn’t have enough money for food she would sneak out at night and take enough to last us a week... She had a way of stealing the corn that made it look just like the crows had taken it. 19

Although the sharecroppers outnumbered the Carters by a large number, no effort was made to organize and demand fair wages.

When Anne Moody came in contact with white people, she began to realize there was a difference between the way they lived and they way her own family lived.

Now all of a sudden they were white, and their whiteness made them better than me. I now realized that not only were they better than me because they were white, but everything they owned and everything connected with them was better than what was available to me....Now that I was thinking about it, their schools, homes and streets were better than mine. They had a large red brick school with nice sidewalks connecting the buildings. Their homes were large and beautiful with indoor toilets and every other convenience that I knew of at the time. Every house I had ever lived in was a one-or two-room shack with an outdoor toilet. It really bothered me that they had all these nice things and we had nothing. “There is a secret to it besides being

19 Ibid., 20.
"white," I thought. Then my mind got all wrapped up in trying to uncover that secret...[But] every time I tried to talk to Mama about white people she got mad. Now I was more confused than before.\textsuperscript{50}

High School

In this section, Anne Moody begins to deviate from the role of the passively oppressed with magical consciousness. Several incidents occur which shake up her world in such a violent way that she is propelled toward a higher level of consciousness. Yet she is paralyzed by fear and hatred and unable to violate any laws or mores of the community. She chooses gregariousness as psychological consolation from her now nightmarish life, throwing herself into activities so that she does not have to think about what is going on around her. Her consciousness has not quite made the transition from magical to naive consciousness, but has become distorted, she "plays host to the oppressor"; that is, she waits for good luck or for times to change, while remaining dependent on the oppressor. Anne Moody begins this section with

I entered high school... with a completely new insight into the life of Negroes in Mississippi. I was now working for one of the meanest white women in town, and a week before school started Emmett Till was killed.\textsuperscript{51}

She explains that before this event she had heard of "Negroes floating in a river or dead somewhere with their bodies

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 36-40.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 121.
riddled with bullets, but she had not known the "mystery" behind these deaths. Once she had asked her mother about a conversation she had overheard about a Black man being beaten to death. When she asked her who killed the man, her mother had answered, "An Evil Spirit killed him. You gotta be a good girl or it will kill you too." Since that time she had lived in fear of that "Evil Spirit," and it was not until she was in High School did she begin to learn what that "Spirit" really was. 

When she learned about the death of fourteen-year-old Emmett Till, she recalled

I felt so stupid. It was then that I realized I really didn't know what was going on all around me. It wasn't that I was dumb. It was just that ever since I was nine, I'd had to work after school and do my lessons on lunch hour. I never had time to learn anything....

Anne Moody begins here to realize that there is something very different between Black and white people. In the home where she works, she overhears a conversation in which she hears about the NAACP for the first time. Also, she learns that the woman she is working for has organized a group closely aligned with the Klan who terrorizes Blacks in her community, burning down houses and killing Black families, forcing people to flee for their lives.

Within that time...I accumulated a whole new pool of knowledge about Negroes being butchered and slaughtered by whites in the South. After Mrs. Rice had told me all this,
I felt like the lowest animal on earth...

Due to poverty, however, she was forced to continue working for this same white employer, even though

Before...I had known the fear of hunger, hell, and the Devil. But now there was a new fear known to me—the fear of being killed just because I was Black. This was the worst of my fears. I knew once I got food the fear of starving to death would leave. I was also told that if I was a good girl, I wouldn't have to fear the Devil or hell. But I didn't know what one had to do or not do as a Negro not to be killed. Probably just being a Negro was enough, I thought.

This fatalistic resignation—accepting the fate of Blacks in a violently racist society and passively awaiting Divine intervention—characteristic of magical consciousness, was her inheritance. Finally, she demands

Why can't I ask about...them? They are kin to us, ain't they? Negroes are being killed, beaten up, run out of town by these white folks and everything. But Negroes can't even talk about it...

By the time she was fifteen, she writes

...I began to hate people. I hated the white men who murdered Emmett Till and I hated all the other whites who were responsible for the countless murders....But I also hated Negroes. I hated them for not standing up and doing something about the murders. In fact, I think I had a stronger resentment toward Negroes for letting the whites kill them than toward the whites. Anyway, it was at this stage in my life that I began to look upon Negro men as cowards.

Here she has also inherited a repressed anger, one that turns on

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., 128.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 129-6.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 145.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 129.
itself, as Freire puts it, "a horizontal aggression...intrapunitive anger." She goes to bed sick feeling her self-pity. Finally, she decides "to keep busy from sunup to sundown...[so] I won't have to think ...." And, because of her poverty, she continues to work for her racist employer, even taking on the job of tutoring their son.

Other examples of Anne Moody inadvertently playing host to her oppressor included her public work in Baton Rouge, where she would escape in the summers seeking emotional reprieve from the racist violence of Mississippi. There she eventually found a job working for the Oursos, a white family who owned the local hardware store, a restaurant, gas station, grocery, and a Tastee Freeze.

The lady working with me had been considered the Ourso's favorite Negro before me. Within two weeks she was almost completely out of the picture. I was now getting all their attention.

The next summer in Baton Rouge, desperate for a job, Anne Moody becomes a scab at a chicken factory.

I stood there reaching up and snatching out those boiling hot guts with my bare hands as fast as I could. But I just wasn't fast enough. The faster the chickens moved, the sicker I got. My face, arms, and clothes were splattered with blood and chicken shit...As soon as the assembly line stopped for the fifteen minute break, I headed outside. I was with a group of new workers. We all ran out suffocating as though we were running from death....We stopped dead in our tracks. A few feet outside the factory a long line of men and women walking up and down the sidewalk with signs on their backs began to yell at us. "Scabs! Strikebreakers!

Ibid., 145.

Ibid., 142.
Hicks! Country niggers! Go back to Mississippi! I had never seen such an angry bunch of Negroes in all my life.31

The power to perceive authentic causality is obliterated in the magical state. People submerged in magical consciousness are predominantly illogical, irrational. They are defeated and dominated, yet believe themselves to be free. They follow the way made for them as if it were their own. They are directed; they do not direct themselves. Thus, their creative power is obstructed. They are objects, in the sense that they are reacting to their environment rather than being subjects proactively directing their lives.32 To emerge from such a state requires transforming the reality which has been created and holds in place their situation of oppression. Such a notion is an act of subversion, because it requires a dismantling of the power structure, and that requires risking one's life.

In this chapter, Anne Moody begins to reject white ideology. She no longer expends her energy hating herself. Transferring from Natchez College to Tougaloo College, Anne Moody finally meets up with the NAACP and decides to join.

All that night I didn't sleep. Everything started coming back to me. I thought of Samuel O'Quinn. I thought of how he had been shot in the back with a shotgun because they suspected him of being a member. I thought of Reverend Dupree and his family who had been run out of Woodville when I was a senior in high school, and all he had done was to

31 Ibid., 165.

32 Freire, ECC, 20.
get up and mention NAACP in a sermon. The more I remembered the killings, beatings, and intimidations, the more I worried what might possibly happen to me or my family if I joined the NAACP. But I knew I was going to join, anyway. I had wanted to for a long time. 33

The NAACP organized and led a demonstration at a state fair at which two Tougaloo students and friends of Anne Moody's were arrested. When they were released and returned to campus

Students came running from every building. Within minutes the police cars were completely surrounded, blocked in from every direction. ...When the students got out of the cars, they were hugged, kissed, and congratulated for well over an hour. ...Finally some started singing "We Shall Overcome," and everyone joined in. ...The rally ended at twelve-thirty and by this time, all the students were ready to tear Jackson to pieces. 34

Here Anne Moody begins to move from a naive consciousness—one which tries to reform society—to a critical consciousness—one which tries to transform society. She begins to respond to the challenges of her environment in such a way that she confronts her oppressor. Yet she is still moving from a place of naivete. When she and a friend spontaneously decide to stage a two-woman sit-in at a local bus station she runs into trouble.

The drunk walked up behind her and held the bottle up as though he was going to hit her in the head. ...we got up and walked backward to the door. The crowd followed. ..."Get in this car," a Negro voice said. "You girls just can't go around doing things on your own," he said. 35

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33 Moody, 248.
34 Ibid., 249-50.
In this chapter, Anne Moody continues to move from a state of naive consciousness, in which she had attempted to reform individual oppressors and the existing system, to a critical consciousness in which she joins a movement to transform the existing system in one that included new norms, procedures, and more equitable policies and laws.

That summer I could feel myself beginning to change. For the first time I began to think something would be done about whites killing, beating, and misusing Negroes. I knew I was going to be a part of whatever happened.86

She began to develop a new perspective on blacks and seek out black role models. At an NAACP convention she remembers I was enjoying the convention so much that I went back for the night session. Before the night was over, I had gotten autographs from every one of the Negro celebrities. 37

Also, Anne was beginning to feel an important change in herself. She was paying a very high price for college emotionally because her family could not and would not support her education emotionally or financially. Many days she went hungry, and although she admits that at first her anger fueled her determination to prove to folks back home that she could make it in college, finally

[I]t no longer seemed important to prove anything. I had found something outside myself that gave meaning to my

86 Ibid., 254.
37 Ibid., 263.
life.  

In addition to her studies at Tougaloo, Anne also took part in the historical Woolworth sit-ins in which she was called slanderous names, humiliated, beaten, and dragged out by her hair while the police watched. She writes:

After the sit-in, all I could think of was how sick Mississippi whites were. They believed so much in the segregated Southern way of life, they would kill to preserve it...."Many more will die before it is over with," I thought. Before the sit-in, I had always hated the whites in Mississippi. Now I knew it was impossible for me to hate sickness. The whites had a disease, an incurable disease in its final stage.

Anne Moody stayed with the Movement even though her family pleaded for her to come home before she or members of her family were murdered in retaliation for her participation. Proof that she and others in the Movement wanted to transform the system is documented in their demands presented to the Mayor of Jackson, Mississippi. These included:

1. Hiring of Negro policemen and school crossing guards
2. Removal of segregation signs from public facilities
3. Improvement of job opportunities for Negroes on city payrolls--Negro drivers of city garbage trucks, etc.
4. Encouraging public eating establishments to serve both whites and Negroes
5. Integration of public parks and libraries
6. The naming of a Negro to the City Parks and Recreation Committee
7. Integration of public schools
8. Forcing service stations to integrate rest rooms

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38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 267.
40 Ibid., 269.
For her participation in demonstrations for these demands, she was jailed along with hundreds of others. In the course of her struggle, she realized

Negroes would come to town on Saturday night just to pick a fight with another Negro. Once the fight was over, they were satisfied. They beat their frustrations and discontent out on each other. I had often thought that if some of that Saturday night energy was used constructively or even directed at the right objects, it would make a tremendous difference in the life of Negroes in Mississippi. 41

Working for CORE, Anne Moody began to organize high school kids to use of their energy to demonstrate. She is there for the famous march on Washington in which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I have a Dream" sermon. And finally, she struggles with her spirituality in a talk with God.

As long as I live, I'll never be beaten by a white man again. Not like in Woolworth's. Not any more. That's out. I have a good idea Martin Luther King is talking to you, too. If he is, tell him that nonviolence has served its purpose. Tell him that for me, God, and for a lot of other Negroes who must be thinking it today. If you don't believe that, then I know you must be white, too. And if I ever find out you are black, I'll try my best to kill you when I get to heaven. 42

Pray!...Why in the hell should we be praying all the time?...that's what's wrong now. We've been praying too long. Yes, as a race all we've got is a lot of religion. And the white man's got everything else... 43

Finally, Anne along with other CORE workers start carrying guns in defense of the constant harassment which begins to start

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41 Ibid., 291.
42 Ibid., 318-9.
43 Ibid.
wearing her down. She gets back to school in time for her graduation, for which none of her family shows up. Overworked, underweight, and yet still in the thick of violent resistance, she ends her autobiography with a scene in which she is on a bus to Washington, DC, for another march. She is severely depressed nearly to the point of despondency, overwhelmed by her struggle, wondering if blacks alone were going to be able to win their freedom. She remembers a friends saying "We ain't big enough to do it by ourselves." From such an ending, it seems Anne Moody has come to a conclusion that a vast power structure has to be dismantled before she as a black woman would truly gain freedom.

No doubt, Anne Moody suffered tremendous psychological trauma from the denial of her being in a segregated South. Yet her autobiography is proof that she was able to stand firm in the face of the encroachment on her being. Perhaps, for her, healing began when she wrote *Coming of Age in Mississippi*. Through the experience of language, in this case autobiography, she articulated the disclosures of her being as a poor southern Black woman of the Civil Rights Era. Language gave her a way of laying claim to an authentic existence, one which was consistent with her world relation and the claims and disclosures of her being, and one which called into question the unauthentic claims of those who forced encroachments upon her and who were responsible ultimately for her situation of oppression.
LITERACY AS A SOURCE FOR CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Althea Johnston: A Case Study
Both Heidegger and Freire write about the transformative quality of language. Heidegger claims that language is the "House of Being." To him we do not merely speak a language, we speak by way of it. Language says and shows all regions of presences.

And whenever we listen to language we are letting something be said to us and all perception and conception is contained in that act.

For Heidegger language is a "way," a "path."

Saying sets all present beings free into their given presence, and brings what is absent into their absence. Saying pervades and structures the openness of that clearing which every appearance must seek out and every disappearance must leave behind, and in which every present must show, say, announce itself.

Language is the House of Being, the foundation of Being; it is the "way" toward Being. Freire defines consciousness as a "way," a "path" towards becoming fully human, and sees language acquisition for adults as a "way" toward laying claim to, and consciousness of, one's own being. The following is an attempt to use language as a vehicle for facilitating consciousness in an adult literacy class.

The basic premise is that students who exist in situations of oppression suffer the consequences of encroachment upon their being in the world from other beings. Their situations of

* Heidegger, 120.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid., 126.
oppression as defined by Freire is one in which they are exploited economically, politically, and socially.

Defined in Heideggerian terms, their very being has been denied by way of the language to which they have been exposed. They have been neglected, if not omitted outright, from the annals of history. Their very being makes claims and disclosures that limit their ability to secure adequate housing, employment, health care, or nourishment. They are drained of their creative resources in the nuances of daily life, submerged in the historical process by their time-consuming struggle for survival. Yet it is their position that puts them closest to that which oppresses them as they shield their oppressors. Their view of themselves is one of almost brute objects, and, as a result, they develop contempt for their own being, because, to their oppressor, they are expendable. And this view is passed on to them through the language of the dominate mainstream culture of the oppressor. This is done through all forms of the media—literature, history, television, social policy, and especially in the educational policy. For it is through the latter that they have been tracked for a destiny according to their fluency (or lack of fluency) in the mainstream language of the dominate class.

The goal of the following pedagogy was designed to be transformative, in the sense of using language as a way to restructure consciousness so that the student's own being is not denied but allowed fulfillment.
During the Spring of 1986, as Instructor of Developmental Reading and Writing in the English Department at Roxbury Community College, I taught a course in basic reading and writing with infused critical thinking skills.

Roxbury Community College is a two-year, urban, community-focused institution, and part of the Massachusetts' public higher education system. The college was established by the Massachusetts Board of Regional Community Colleges in 1970 and opened its doors to the public in 1973. Its primary service area includes Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Mission Hill, the South End, Jamaica Plain, Boston, Cambridge, Brighton, and Allston. The school was originally housed in a building that had served as a car dealership, later moved to a former nursing home, and now temporarily resides on the campus of the former Boston State College.

Black Americans, Hispanics, Africans, Caribbeans, White Americans, Native Americans, Middle Easterners, and Asians all attend Roxbury Community College from Roxbury, Alabama, Jamaica Plain, China, Ethiopia, Mattapan, Puerto Rico, New York, Nigeria, Dorchester, Allston, The Dominican Republic, the Cape Verde Islands, Cambridge, Haiti, Liberia, Boston, Florida, Thailand,
Mission Hill, among other places. The multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural community at RCC is its most valuable and most exciting asset.

In the Spring of 1986, two foreign governments to collapsed and an African country was invaded by the United States. Groups of Haitian students gathered on the front stairs every morning exchanging bits of news from home where their relatives danced in the streets celebrating the final defeat of Claude Duvalier's dictatorship. There was a sense of tension and excitement felt just in observing the energy of these bands of students huddled with heads together and ears keen to the Creole interpretation of the latest news.

Likewise, Filipino students shared the latest news from home while the rest of us listened in and discussed the implications of the revolution there and the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos.

African students wrote essays and articles for the school paper and led their own hallway groups in explaining the position of the Islamic Libyan government and their indignation of the US invasion.

Such was the flavor and atmosphere of RCC upon entering the double doors of the old Boston State College in the Spring of 1986; the sounds of many tongues distinct from the Romance languages, the mingled scents of curry, coriander, and patchouli, and an unmistakable Black presence.

Programs for Academic Support (PAS)

Due to the cultural diversity of the student population, RCC established the Office of the Programs for Academic Support (PAS) to provide one-on-one tutoring to any student and especially to non-native English speakers. Because of RCC's open-admissions policy, PAS also administered placement tests in 1986 to all incoming students to determine which students' reading and writing skills in English were in need of melliorative support.

Working in conjunction with the English Department, PAS provided these students with a three-tiered developmental reading and writing program, in addition to group and one-on-one support services. Developmental Reading I was taught as entry to this program, Developmental Reading II and Developmental Writing I together made up the intermediate level, and Developmental Reading III and Developmental Writing II made up the advanced level. I taught the advanced level.

This advanced developmental level of reading and writing was one semester long and the subsequent course was, hopefully, freshman English. However, students could assess into any of the three levels of the developmental reading and writing program or assess directly into freshman English, depending on their scores on standardized placement tests.

For those non-native students whose command of English was below the entry level for developmental reading and writing, PAS provided appropriate ESL programs and one-on-one tutoring until
they were capable of entering the three-tiered developmental reading and writing program or proceeding directly to Freshman English.

The Teaching From Strengths Project

In addition to the PAS program, developmental reading and writing courses during the Spring of 1986 were also supported by Teaching From Strengths, a project to research and improve teaching and learning in a multi-cultural post-secondary institution.

The Teaching From Strengths Project was funded by a two-year grant from FIPSE, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education. The objective of the Teaching From Strengths Project was to train educators at RCC to understand and utilize the strengths that students bring to learning. It was predicated on the conviction that mainstream American education is culturally inappropriate for most minority groups. For that reason, there is widespread educational underachievement and failure among those groups.\(^5\)

Consultants/Trainers for the Project were Dr. Shirley Brice Heath, Stanford University; Margaret Kent Bass, University of

Louisiana; Leonard Brown, Wesleyan University; Dr. Boyd Davis, UNC/Charlotte; Dixie Goswami, Clemson University; Nancy Martin, London Institute of Education; and Dr. Ana Celia Zentella, Hunter College.

The Teaching From Strengths Project was based on the work of Dr. Shirley Brice Heath, cultural anthropologist and linguist, and her ethnography of three American communities, entitled *Ways with Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classrooms* (Cambridge University Press, 1983). Heath's ethnographic work concerns the different ways in which three southern communities in the Piedmont region of North Carolina acquired and used language, and that only one of those groups—the mainstream culture—generally achieved academic success.

This experience helped her to understand that there is no one "right" or "good" way of communicating...that all ways are equally effective, but that "mainstream" ways are the most valued because they are those of the most socially and economically dominant group. From Heath's work we can see that the mainstream ways with words are neither neutral nor universal nor in anyway superior, but those of the largest, most powerful social group and reflective of their ways of valuing. According to Heath, they are to be added to, not to replace, our primary way of communicating and learning.

The implications of Heath's work led to innovations in

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teaching members of groups that typically underachieve in American schools, in an attempt to help them fare as well as the more successful mainstream students. Heath's work details how those innovations were unusually successful.  

Heath's work was considered a milestone at institutions like RCC, since it explained why so many students at a culturally diverse community college underachieve in mainstream society. Dr. Heath was asked to come to RCC to help the faculty improve learning and, thus, promote greater academic success for RCC students. The desire was to improve learning for students, ninety percent of whom are not adequately skilled for college-level work on entrance.

The attrition rate has traditionally been around eighty percent, in a student body of roughly sixty-five percent Black Americans, twenty-five percent Hispanics, and ten percent Africans, Haitians and other non-Hispanic Caribbeans. The faculty is a typical college faculty: subject area experts with doctorates and Master's degrees, some with training in teaching, and others without. We were also a culturally diverse faculty, and in this way atypical of the faculty of many higher education institutions. Dr. Heath accepted RCC's invitation and the project began in January 1985.


Proceedings from the Teaching From Strengths Conference, S.
Over the next two years, the focus of the Teaching From Strengths Project became basically an inquiry model allowing educators and students to begin to solve some of the mystique of language, culture, and cognition, especially as they impact on learning in the culturally diverse community college setting. The reasons for this are that “nothing is more universal than language—oral and written; and nothing promotes learning more than the questions and probings of the learners themselves, in the language forms they know best.”

The Developmental Reading and Writing Class

As an English Instructor who worked under the supervision of Programs for Academic Support, as a trainee in the Teaching From Strengths Project, and as a graduate student in the Critical and Creative Thinking Program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, my objective for this class of new students was to provide a supportive environment in which the relationship between language and cognition could be explored in a culturally relevant context.

Fifteen of the students in this class were Black with diverse cultural backgrounds—Boston inner city, Alabama, Mississippi, Haiti, Jamaica, as well as Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cape Verde. Six of the Black students were women and nine were men. In addition, one European male student was from a

"Teaching from Strengths Training Manual, 1."
small village outside Madrid, Spain and the only white American male student was from Berkeley, California. Ages ran from nineteen to thirty-nine. As their white teacher from Greensboro, North Carolina (only a few miles from where Heath did her research) I was thirty-six years old at the time.

Although most of the students in this class had been awarded a high school diploma, their reading and writing skills that were demonstrated on the placement test administered by PAS indicated that they were unable to function independently in a literate English-speaking society. For most, filling out a job application or writing a note for their children's school was an intimidating and even overwhelming task. On which side of the paper one begins to write, how to indent a paragraph, or even what is a sentence, were appropriate points of departure for our opening classes. Although some proficiency in reading and writing skills were apparent and these entering students were by no means the lowest scoring on assessment tests, they were in need of considerable improvement in both reading and writing if they were to continue their education at Roxbury Community College and if they were to function at a literate level in this society.

What the syllabus of this Spring 1986 Developmental Reading and Writing course proposed was that, along with language skills, was the need for the ability to think critically. The relationship between thought and language was proposed to be dialectical; in a sort of double helix fashion, thought and
language were believed to emerge from separate genetic roots, maintain no constant correlations, but converge continuously at different developmental points. It was believed that thought—critical thinking—ought not be treated as separate from, or ignored as part of, the language acquisition process. What good is reading if we lack skills in analyzing and assimilating information? How can we write anything of meaning without the skills to reason logically and evaluate? The goals of this course assumed that these thinking skills could be taught and could be learned, and that they would best be taught within a socially and culturally relevant context.

Selection of reading material was based on the general make-up of the class: Afro-American, Caribbean, and African. It was believed that by reading literature that used both dialect—the native language of those from a particular area—and mainstream English, native-English speaking students could have a chance to experience two things: an appreciation of their native English dialect juxtaposed to standard mainstream English emphasizing the difference in the two, and the opportunity to interpret the meaning of the story in their first language (dialect).

In addition, students were assigned a family history. They were asked to go at least as far back as their grandparents in documenting the work, family, community, and political history of their closest kin. They were provided with a set of questions concerning each of these areas to use as guidelines in writing about who their family was, where they came from, what they did
for a living, what life for the women, men, children was like, etc. Here it was believed that talking about one’s family allowed the writer to get in touch with the claims and disclosure of their own being in the world.

Another source of materials for the class was newspaper articles. The issues making headlines during this semester were the Haitian and Filipino revolutions, the invasion of Libya by the U.S., and the nuclear fire at Chernobyl in the Soviet Union.

Althea Johnston¹⁰: The Student

Althea Johnston identified herself as a 30-year-old Black woman. She chose to sit in the front of the class but rarely if ever volunteered to speak. The following is an account of her life as she documented it in her family history.

My mother told me stories about where I was born. The house I lived in and how long I lived there. I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. The house I lived in was a white one family house. My mother and I moved to Boston, Massachusetts. We lived in this apartment for about a year. She also had three more children a year apart. We had to move to a bigger apartment. She stayed there with her children for about four years. We moved two or three different times to a bigger apartments. My mother never owned her own house. While we were little. She had left father when the children got a little older. I was the oldest of

¹⁰ A pseudonym.
the four children. I had most of the responsibility to take care of my sister and brothers. My mother had to work hard to take care of us. She worked at night, while we went to school during the day. We lived on one particular street where we were playing in front of the house. We found a man lying dead on the sidewalk with three bullet holes in his chest. So all the children ran and told their parents about the incident that happened. I was about twelve years old. I was assaulted by a man with a knife. This took place in the back yard one night. I was taking clothes off the clothes line. We called the police about the incident. The police said, "He killed this woman that lived on the street from me yesterday." I had been very frightened about this incident that happened to me. I was unable to get my Life back together for a long time. I had lots of fear in my heart, and even when I walk down the street and pass a man I feel very frighten. It took me about five years to get back on the right track. The incident took a toll on my Life. I did not go to see a doctor about this incident. I had one more incident, when I walked down the street with a girlfriend of mine. A man just came by and picked me up off the sidewalk. He did not want to put me down. Until, my girlfriend demanded him to do so. He did not speak a word to us. I did not understand why this happened to me. There were other incidents where my brother and I got in a fight and he called the police. My brother and I still love each other after all that. My mother and my brothers and sister have a good relationship. The meals were well prepared with four basic food groups everyday. It consisted of steak, chicken fish, pork, and different vegetables, also different breads. There was different types of drink for every meal to. We also had variety of deserts for each meal. My mother had to raise us on her own. It was hard at first but she managed very well. She also had two jobs, that I know about which were the Sweetheart Cup Company and Colonial Provision. Colonial Provision had closed down this year. A lot of people were very upset about this shutdown. Some people worked there for over twenty years. The families Christmas, Fourth of July, and Sunday were good to us. We always had plenty of gifts at Christmas time, Large barbecues on the Fourth of July, and big meals every Sunday. We were some spoiled children while growing up. We all feel very fortunate about that anyway. We had to take care of ourselves when we got older. We were well mannered children. We never been in any trouble with the police or any other authority. I have had several different jobs. One was working at a Jordan Marsh part time, the second one was at University Hospital, there was a full time job at Honeywell company, and the last one was at Analog Devices. The last two jobs I had to go to school to get knowledge of this field of electronics. I had encounter lots of trouble at the last two companies I had worked for. The women working in this field had to prove themselves. We find that the women
had to do better than the men. I felt good about this electronic field, but it was not for me. I started dating at the age of sixteen year old. My mother was not to strick about me seeing boys. She always told me about those fast talking boys My mother would say, "They will get you in trouble." I got older and dated some men that acted like babies. I would like to me that nice guy and get married one day also have children some day. My mother told me stories about my grandparents. She explain to me that my grandmother was a white woman and my grandfather a full blooded Indian. She did not have much to say about my grandmother. She died when my mother was five year old. My grandfather was a barber and a very reasonable man. He would give beating unless they were very bad. My grandparents were born in Morrilton Arkansas. It was a small town. My mother had told me stories about herself when she was a child. She said, "She was a very bad child." She was always in trouble for fighting at school and at home. She would always start fights, because she was the youngest in the family. She also thought because she was the youngest that her sister would not fight her back. There was an incident were her and her sister had switch candy and her sister ate hers candy up first and wanted her candy back. She started a fight with my mother over the candy. She also had other problems to. She went to high school, where there were several racial incidents where some white students called my mother a nigger. She over looked that and kept going to school anyway. She faced more incidents where others walk by and called her a nigger. She went to Little Rock Arkansas high school which was mostly white students. She was also riding on a bus and a white person spit in her face. She did not say anything, but she was very angry about that. I had lots of contact with white children. I have a few good friends that are white and visit them as often as I can. I have no problems having white people for my friends. My plans for retirement are to retire in Florida and soak up the sun. I hope to have a pension Plan if the system allow it. The present time I have no nieces or nephews I always wanted to own property. I was always able to save money but something always got in the way for me to spend it.

I was laid off from my last job so, I decided to go back to school, to get my degree in Hotel Restaurant Management.

From this information which Althea provided in her family history assignment I learned of her cultural orientation--including her racial identity, her socio-economic class, and gender-related experience—all of which provided me with
direction in selection of relevant and meaningful reading materials.

In this class, she was present every day that the class met (Developmental Reading and Writing met five days a week for three hours a day including one class in the computer lab), and she was on time nearly every day always with her assignments completed. In this way, Althea was a typical developmental student.

Although when writing about her family history, she showed a rather high degree of proficiency with standard English, the results of her first writing assignment shows that she was cautious in her telling about herself, when asked to do so in a more formal way.

My self

I am very quiet person I like to keep to my self most of the time and when there is trouble I alway try to stay away from it. I love have a good time, such as party or movies or activies, but when it come to my school I will go all the way if is something that keep me interested in. I also like to Sew or cook.

It was unclear from this assignment whether or not Althea was a slow learner, perhaps even learning disabled. That was always a possibility with adults who had failed in traditional educational systems, although many students who were labeled learning disabled found in their adult lives that they were quite capable of learning "normally" within their own accustomed environment. In the case of Althea Johnston, she had not been diagnosed as having a learning disability; in fact, she had a high school diploma. Generally, however, one expects better writing skills from a high school graduate than what Althea has
demonstrated.

The Course of Study

What I tried to do in Althea's class was to get students to read and comprehend literature that was relevant to their lives. Then, I asked that they write essays reflective of the critical connections between the readings and their personal experiences. What I learned to do was to design lesson plans that helped students become aware of how they think and how to think. I began the semester by getting students to keep a journal about how they perceived their world through patterns and what they inferred from those patterns. I began by asking students to choose an unfamiliar object from my collection of "things," observing this object for about twenty minutes each day for five days, and recording their observations.

Once in touch with how we observe and make meaning, I asked students in another lesson to pick out twenty crucial clues to understanding a newspaper article we had just read, cluster them into categories, and to name each group either with a word from the group or a new word that embodied the general meaning of the group. In this way, students learned to tease out basic concepts in the story and were able to write a thesis statement using the titles of their categories and explaining the relationships between them. Althea's next essay entitled "The Haiti Problem" looked like this:
The problems that the people in Haiti have with the government, such as hunger, unemployment, lack of education. The people of Haiti have been going through hunger problems with the government.

The unemployment has been one of the major issues in Haiti, with the lower class people from Haiti finding themselves without work, and as a result, they may feel angry and frustrated. This has led to many of them joining in the lower class areas to fight for better rights and freedoms.

The lack of communication between the government and the people has also been a major issue. The Duvalier Family is in power, and this has put the people in Haiti in a very hostile mood towards the government. It has led to many of them wanting to overthrow the government and fight for their freedom and right to speak out for what every problem comes out.

From this assignment, to write an essay on the revolution in Haiti from a newspaper article, we can see that Althea identified three main issues of the "Haiti Problem": hunger, unemployment, and lack of education. This was a big improvement over her first essay in which she had been unable to articulate her central issue or identify relationships between her ideas. Furthermore, she attempted to develop her ideas. She apparently tried to categorize her significant facts under hunger, unemployment, and lack of education, addressing the issue of hunger in the sentence immediately after the thesis statement and unemployment and lack of education in the next.

Although it was clear she had yet to understand fully how to categorize relationships into paragraphs, here she made an attempt to do so, at least, which was an improvement over the "My Self" essay. In addition, there was some evidence that she had learned to read critically, looking for significant and relevant words from the news article, which she then categorized, based on what she discerned as the relationships between significant facts and generalizing them under the supersets hunger, unemployment, and lack of education.
In this case, however, it was easy for the student's reconstruction of what she had read to become skewed. The article she was assigned to write about did not mention rioting and looting although both had been widely reported in other accounts. As a result, Althea confused what she had read with what was already stored in her memory, and in the process of memory reconstruction—the writing of the essay—she wrote about what she had expected the article to say instead of what she had actually read. The results of her confusion were not so damaging here, but it is this kind of confusion—resulting from the integration of new information with old and then perceiving what is expected rather than what is actually there—that can be very damaging on standardized reading tests where the student is required to answer questions about what she has just read separate from any prior knowledge on the subject.

In an attempt to help students further develop significant information reconstructed from memory, what we came to call mind mapping proved to be very helpful. In addition to naming the significant facts from memory, categorizing them based on relationships and patterns, and then generalizing the categories, learning to sequence these categories of crucial clues helped Althea to prepare a logical outline and develop her writing.

Category titles, used in the thesis statement, were expounded upon and used as the basic concept for each topic sentence of each of the following paragraphs in the body of an essay. Here the student needed to be able to integrate her own
knowledge of the subject with the new information she had just read. The student was not simply recalling facts, but also relying upon logical construction and inference.

What happened in the reading will be reconstructed—recognized—based on facts in the reading and the student's own particular experience registered in her long-term memory. The student can, however, be misled into thinking that an event must have happened based on her own experience and expectations, which was what happened to Althea. Although this part of her data was not accurate in the Haiti essay, we can still see that she was beginning to organize her information into categories of ideas based on patterns and relationships, recognize the central issue, and develop supporting evidence classified in paragraphs.

A lesson using articles from several different newspapers that had reported on the same event but with very different stories, in this case the report of the nuclear fire in the Soviet Union, helped students to realize further the role of expectations in misconstruing information. In light of the different versions of the same story, the question was what was fact and what was inferred?

In addition, to help students sort out the importance of inference, we looked at cause and effect relationships. We diagrammed the causes of the nuclear fire. What could we infer happened to cause the fire? We diagrammed what might have happened. What could we infer would be the results of the nuclear fire? What difference would it make in our lives that
This disaster happened? We diagrammed the results. This constructive method of cause/effect relationships, another critical thinking skill, was diagrammed for events that we reconstructed from a short story which became supporting evidence in the essay's body.

This lesson's intent was to help students understand the constructive qualities of memory. The assignment was to read the short story "Frankie Mae" by Jean Wheeler Smith and write an essay on it. The following is what Althea did with this assignment. Her mind map, the crucial clues she identified from the text, looked like this:

STEP 1

Frankie Mae, freedom, hatred, cotton, death, school bus, school, smart, cotton mill, speaking, sun, feeling hospital, Mississippi, white man, Black man, South, Love, Plantation,

"Frankie Mae's Struggle to Survive in Mississippi" was Althea Johnston's mid-term essay. Here she still exhibited significant problems with the mechanics of the language, especially in the areas of verb agreement, punctuation, and
In the short story *Frankie Mae*, the author Jean Wheeler Smith, writes about the struggle of a young girl growing up in Mississippi.
In the short story "Frankie Mae," the author Jean Wheeler Smith writes about the struggle of a young girl living in Mississippi. Frankie Mae was always the favorite of the family. Growing up was not an easy task for her. She had lots of problems to face living in the south. One was that she was a black child, so this told her that she had a lot to learn. She showed a lot of love for her self and her family. It was said that she was a very sensitive child and quick to get her feelings hurt, she would always bounce right back. One of her loves was going to school and riding the school bus everyday. This love was taken away from her do to the fact she lived on a plantation, and go by the rules. As long as you live on this plantation, and is able body person you will work in the fields. Her father had told her that she had to go to work the next day. He had made her the record bookkeeper. The year had went by, and the cotton had been all sick. This was the time to get there pay. They were very pleased about that, so the plantation owner check his books to see how much he bid them. He stated that it was $130.00 dollars, so Frankie Mae said, look at my books I have something different in my records. He got very angry about her speaking out about the amount of money that was owed to them. He put his hand on the gun, and said she was right you are wrong. She looked at her father as if to see if he was going say anything but nothing was said by him.
They took the money and left the room with angry eyes. She could not understand why he lied about how much he owed us. So as time went on she felt more depressed about what happened. She never picked herself up again. After all this she had a child at the age of fourteen. The years went by and she had more children later, she had one more child which put her through so much that she bled to death on the way to hospital.

The problem they have living in Mississippi, and what they went through living there. The story took place in 1950. Most of the people who live there were sharecroppers and very poor. There were no rights for the black people living in Mississippi. The blacks lived on a white man's plantation. They had been very hostile to the white plantation owners. There was always problems about long hours and low wages. This was very hard to deal with, but they seemed to manage very well.

There has been little or no change, but we still have a long way to go to come to a better understanding of fair housing, jobs, and education.
spelling. What she achieved, however, was a good introduction that was the result of recalling and listing significant facts from the reading and organizing her data into a thesis statement that showed she had recognized patterns and relationships, i.e., the struggle of Frankie Mae and the situation in Mississippi.

Also, she showed that she comprehended the meaning of the story by summarizing it’s essence in the first paragraph. She seemed to be clear that Mr. White Jr.’s statement to Frankie Mae—that as long as she lived, he would always be right and she would always be wrong—caused Frankie Mae to give up on school and the effects were that she became depressed and at fourteen began having one child after another, until her death at nineteen. Her summary of the story was told in a logical progression allowing her main idea—a young girl struggling to survive—to unfold.

In the second paragraph, she addressed the second category of related ideas that were subsets of the generalized title, Mississippi. Here she made inferences based on the plot and outcome of the story to generalize that “There were no rights for the black people living in Mississippi.”

Finally, she attempted a conclusion in which she applied this new information to the way she viewed the present situation for poor Blacks (assuming “we” means Blacks).

As an essay, Althea Johnston’s mid-term attempt was inadequate. Her writing indicated that she still had significant problems. Besides the mechanical, spelling, and vocabulary
errors, she demonstrated very little comparison or contrasting of her information, failed to restate or explain in any depth her ideas about what happened in the story, and drew no analogies. Her last sentence in the next to the last paragraph was logically inconsistent with what she had written in her first paragraph and with the story, and her conclusion was a weak attempt to judge and evaluate Frankie Mae’s struggle to survive.

Yet, it was clear that Althea had made much progress in her writing by beginning to understand how to organize her thoughts, how to detect and diagram causal/effect relationships, and how to reconstruct the meaning of this short story.

That part of the writing process we are most concerned with here involves the ability to draw conclusions. A good conclusion requires logical reasoning, the if-then, condition-action model described in cognitive psychology as procedural knowledge in long-term memory, which is a production system where the moral judgement of a particular situation is made. To draw a conclusion means to determine what proposition follows logically after if-then statements.

Unlike her conclusion in her mid-term essay, her judgement of the moral issue at hand in her final essay, based on what rang true in her memory, helped Althea to decide what action she might take—what sequence of changes—if any, in her consciousness and in her behavior would be the result of having read this story. This is the area of cognition that Lev Vygotsky, Paulo Freire, and Heidegger concern themselves—where language has the
potential to change the individual’s life. It is here that education becomes self-confrontational—at this intersection of cultural values, cognition, and language acquisition; the process of articulating self-awareness within the context of a broader society.

To teach language acquisition, we must be aware of the connections between the values of the student and the values represented in the course materials. By facilitating a process in which the students make the critical connections between what they value and the moral dilemma posed in the reading material, they become conscious of themselves and able to actively take an ethical position that they had heretofore been unaware of or unable to articulate.

Learning to articulate a position is the first step in this process. Learning to reason logically helps students discern fact from opinion, bias, and/or propaganda that might be obvious once pointed out or might be inundating their consciousness on a subliminal level. In addition, it helps students discover logical inconsistencies in information they may have taken for granted, and calls them forth to look at old problems from a new perspective and apply new information to new situations.

A final assignment for Althea’s class was: Choose one of the short stories or newspaper articles we have read in class. Reread your selection carefully. Then, using your family history assignment, write an essay articulating the critical connections between the reading and some aspect of your own life. In your
conclusion offer a plan of action that addresses the central issues of your essay.
In the short story "Frankie Mae," the author Jean Wheeler Smith writes about work and racism. This story relates to my mother's life growing up in the South just a few years before this story took place.

My mother's maiden name was Catherine Campbell. She was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, and was one of eleven children. She was faced with racism as a child. Frankie Mae was born a few years before my mother was and also was faced with racism. She was born in Mississippi in a small town and was the oldest of four children. They both had housework to do before they attended school each day. Their daily chores consisted of cleaning the kitchen and feeding the chickens. My mother loved to go to school everyday, so did Frankie enjoy going to school. They were both sensitive children and were easily upset by different things they did not understand. Frankie would usually bounce right back, and my mother would also bounce back. But racism stopped both of them from achieving their goals. Racial statements were thrown at my mother. Frankie also had racial statements thrown at her. Both my mother and Frankie Mae were two people who did not understand racism.
Frankie Mae had to stop going to school. She was told by her father, that she had to go to work in the cotton fields. This broke her heart because she wanted to make something of herself. So did my mother run into a similar experience. They were both determined not to let work spoil their future dreams. One day Frankie and her father finished picking all the cotton from the fields. It was time to receive their money for all that hard work they had done. She spoke up and said that the boss' books were wrong. He got very angry about what was said by her. So the amount of money they received was lower than what they had earned. She did not understand what had happened. Mr. White Jr., the plantation owner, said, "As long as you are alive you will always be wrong, and I will always be right." This broke Frankie Mae, so that she never came back to herself again. My mother had a similar experience while she was going to work. She also worked in the cotton fields and was not paid for the amount of work that was done. My mother was also broken.
My mother and Frankie Mae are examples of how people can change your life around you. People can destroy you because of your color. This relates how people broke Frankie down from a bright, happy child to a child who lost her sense of reality. This also relates to my mother and how people broke her down until she could not dream any more. My mother was broken by people’s insults about her color. She was broken down by trusting people to pay for the amount of work she did. My mother also spoke up for what was right. She also could not understand the rules that she had to live under. Frankie was brought to her death because of the way people had treated her because she was a black child with no rights. My mother’s dreams were destroyed because white people did not give her a chance to make it.

My mother was a black child growing up in the South a few years before Frankie Mae’s story took place. Frankie and my mother faced similar experiences in the South. The experiences they faced were racism, lack of education, and freedom of speech. My mother and Frankie could not get their lives back together. These were a few things that contributed to Frankie Mae’s death. My mother also lost self-respect and trust in others.
What I would like to see happen for areas where racism is prevalent in employment, housing, education and for people of color is to set up offices in each area and send out pamphlets to every house. We will let people know that people of color have rights too. The parents would teach their children that every man, woman, and child of color are equal as one. We could also have talk shows for better education, better housing and better jobs. We would also prepare our child for the future ahead to make this a better world to live in.
Althea's final paper showed marked improvement, especially when compared to her first try, the "My Self" essay. She demonstrated that she could recall and list significant facts from the reading material and from observation, and that she understood the assignment. She stated in her introduction that the central issues were work and racism in her mother's life compared to work and racism in Frankie Mae's life.

The first paragraph in the body of her essay indicated that she would first talk about her mother—a superset of her two categories—under which was organized the subsets of work and racism. She developed this paragraph by comparing—pointing out the similarities in her mother's work and experiences with racism in the South with that of Frankie Mae's.

In the next paragraph, she was primarily concerned with Frankie Mae's experience with work and racism, which she compared with her mother's life. In both these paragraphs she identified racism as a cause that affected both her mother and Frankie Mae in similar ways. Her third paragraph explained further the significance of the comparison between the life of her mother and the life of Frankie Mae. Here Althea was especially concerned with the devastating effects that racism had on both women. In the next paragraph, the beginning of her conclusion, she restated her thesis and summed up her inferences, which were based on the effects of work and racism on the lives of the two women. Althea made an effort here to further analyze and synthesize the general conditions suffered by the two women. She attempted a plan for
action in which she addressed the issue of how to help people separate fact from bias and propaganda when she wrote that "We will let people know that people of color have rights too."

Here she identified the problem as the racism that is prevalent in employment, housing, and education. In her resistance to racist reasoning, she demonstrated that she detected the inferred logical inconsistencies in Mr. White Jr.'s racist perspective—when she stated that "... parents would teach their children that every man, woman, and child of color are equal as one." Her plan of action was predicated on new information—the critical connections between the short story "Frankie Mae" and her mother's life—and suggested a way of confronting the problems of racism.

When Althea made this connection, she became conscious of and able to articulate how racism has played a significant role in her mother's life and a number of ways in which she can experiment with being the subject of anti-racist action, as opposed to being the object of racist action. It is believed that because she has articulated the moral dilemma of the main protagonist in the short story "Frankie Mae" in terms of how it has affected her life and because she has thought out a plan of action, she is now more conscious of her ability to be proactive, instead of re-active, in determining her fate around the issue of racism in terms of laying claim to her own being.
In adult literacy, a transformative pedagogy facilitates a process in which language brings forth the complexities of reality and brings to bear the possibilities of changing that reality. The educator, then, operates on the premise that language is our means of making meaning, and that language is a critical and creative act that does not just happen, but is a conscious act.

Language reveals how we think. It is not only an indicator of reasoning and literacy skills but also of culture and social relations. Through language people disclose aspects of their being. It is this freedom to stand open to the world, and to anticipate the world to respond with the same kind of openness, that is essential to the learning process. Moreover, it is through language that we make sense of reality and develop a concept of self. The role of the educator is to determine how students think and how to enable students to think more critically about themselves, their reality, and their role in it.

Recent trends in teaching for critical thinking that attempt to address these issues take an interdisciplinary approach involving psychological and philosophical perspectives. To begin with, metacognition requires some model of thinking if we are to agree, at least in some general way, on a perspective to take in talking about thinking. Current research in cognitive psychology provides us with a variety of models like the one Darlene Howard
uses in Cognitive Psychology: Memory, Language, and Thought, which is a conglomerate of recent computer-simulation models. In Frames of Mind, Howard Gardner offers a radical departure from these models with his multiple intelligences theory. Both perspectives give us some concrete representation to hold onto while attempting to apprehend the abstraction of linguistic and intellectual development. Both, however, in accordance with the general mode of the American school of psychology, are concerned with the activity of the individual mind. Little if any concern for the individual’s interaction with the outside world is expressed in the American models for mental activity; as if the mind were insular, isolated from the external world and unaffected by it, like a computer. Most of us, however, probably feel confident that some interaction does take place between thought and the external world that qualitatively affects our thinking.

The Soviet school of psychology, of which Lev Vygotsky was a part, fills in this gap. In Thought and Language, Vygotsky was particularly concerned with the effects of socialization upon thinking and offers insightful theories concerning the developmental and dialectical nature of thought and language between individuals and their world, the appropriation and internalization of social relations, and the capacity to restructure consciousness. Soviet and American schools of psychology are helpful in grounding the abstractions we are working with when it comes to thinking about thinking. The fact
remains, however, that little is known about information processing, reasoning, or language production. Although these models do give us something to hold onto, they are not to be taken as literal models. We must keep in mind that knowledge of mental activity, for the most part, remains speculative.

For this reason many scholars believe that metacognition ought to be left to the philosopher, whose business it is to speculate. Our point of departure here was Rene Descartes, who observed that “Cogito Ergo Sum” from which he deduced that if he was able to think—to have any thoughts at all—then he must exist. One can assume from such a revelation, which became a bedrock for modern philosophical thought in the Western Hemisphere, that the question of thinking must then be inextricably fused to the question of existence. The work of philosopher Martin Heidegger, a central figure in contemporary existential thought, is concerned specifically with the question, “What does it mean to be?” To him, the essence of critical consciousness is concerned with this question. For Heidegger, it is the world question of thought.

Both Paulo Freire and Heidegger believed that it is the answer to this question that will determine our future individually and collectively as inhabitants on the earth. Being able to stand open in the world revealing without humiliation all that your being brings to your presence, all that your language bespeaks of your culture and prior social relations, is the appropriate point of departure in facing yourself and your
interactions with the external world. You become reflective of reality, unveiling it, in a way that is not given but in a way in which you are able to orient yourself with your environment, not passively adapting to conditions of the environment, but restructuring consciousness to transform reality. This is a process that necessarily takes place through open discourse, not prepared frontal lectures in which the teacher is the authority figure to which students must submit. It is the opposite of the banking concept. It is dialectical dialogue—a process of naming reality, finding the contradictions, reflecting on and defining those contradictions, and naming a model of action to be taken to transform reality. This kind of information processing is what is referred to here as "restructuring consciousness," and it is what is meant here by the term "education." To deny any group of people their right to stand open to their beingness without humiliation is to deny that person the right to a meaningful education. Denial of education that is meaningful is a justice issue because it dehumanizes. It constitutes a form of oppression that renders the groups of people powerless; invisible to the mainstream culture.

Autobiographical writings were singled out in this thesis because they require this kind of reflection on reality and articulation of a particular orientation with the environment. Personal writings by students are effective tools, when they are used in conjunction with culturally relevant reading materials, to do this kind of self-confrontative work. Using Freire's three
levels of consciousness—magical, naive, and critical—as a grid superimposed upon the life of Anne Moody in *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, we can see how, through articulating awareness of reality, consciousness can be restructured to transform that reality.

Obviously, language is an essential part of this process; especially writing, as it is through writing that our thoughts about reality are stabilized. By writing, something more happens than what takes place in speech. Once our thoughts are stabilized, we begin to dialogue with our own thoughts. We can "see" our thinking. We become aware of a dialectical relationship taking place between our internal thinking and our external environment. Through our own writing, we can observe our thought patterns which in speech can vanish before we are aware of what has been said. Looking at how we think helps us to understand why we act in certain ways or why we don't act but choose passively to conform.

Articulating our reality through writing can help to understand how we inherit thought patterns from our family and communities. It is a way of bringing to light the nuances of daily life that we otherwise take for granted and demands of us to question rote behavior. Writing can inform us of our conditioning, especially when we share our writings with others and engage others in reflection on the conditions of our reality. Then we have made the educational process directly applicable to our own needs. Then a concept of self can emerge in light of the
broader society. One that is affirming and one that can empower us to act to transform reality to meet our needs. The writings of Althea Johnson is one example of how writing can call the individual forth to reflect on reality, to name it, to define it, and articulate a model of action to transform it.

Conversely, students in American public high schools are not engaged in self-reflection or directed toward articulating a world view. Rather, they are required to do inordinate amounts of memorization of established ideas and facts that support the mainstream culture, of which many are not a part. Based on my own experience, teachers in public high schools are often required by school officials to act as prison wardens whose main duty it is to keep control of the inmates, rather than as educators in a school teaching students. Many inner-city schools even look like prisons. This kind of approach to public education on the part of school administrators and teachers denies students the right to think. Furthermore, it is largely responsible for the miseducation of the adults who show up in my adult literacy classes. As a public school teacher, my reflections on such malpractice of public education became, for me, a justice issue; a miscarriage of a basic human right.

As a teacher, I felt that I had become part of the same system which had failed me during my high school years by taking my mind hostage and, as a student, making it illegal for me to leave or demand change. As a teacher I felt I still had no real power to demand change, but at least I could leave. It was a
decade after I resigned my first teaching position that I began teaching literacy to adults at WEAVE in Roxbury. There I found the freedom to engage students in thinking for themselves using autobiographical writings and culturally relevant materials. At that time, I had read neither Vygotsky nor Heidegger and had not even heard of Freire. I approached teaching literacy as I would want to be taught if I were the student. There was little if any real need to delineate between teachers and students at WEAVE. We were all women trying to make our way in the world.

Conversation focused on housing, childcare, marriage, work, and race relations. So this is what we read about in anthologies of short works by and about Black women, like Mary Helen Washington's *Black-eyed Susans*. We read out loud in class followed by dialogue in which the main contradictions in each story would emerge. Then we would write. I didn't care if everyone was sure how to write a complete sentence, or if they knew how to punctuate or spell or even on which side of the paper to write—*just write* was all that was required. I expected people to name and address the issues that emerged, to define those issues in terms of the broader society, to contrast and compare those issues with their own experience, and to evaluate the conflict of the story assessing what the main protagonist ought to do to transform the situation, as well as how one might act in a similar way to transform their own reality. We took these objectives one at a time.

Likewise at Roxbury Community College in a developmental
reading and writing class, I gradually built up the courage to toss the required textbook aside and, through culturally relevant reading and writing, to concentrate on articulating a consciousness of mental activity, unmasking and disentangling reality, and developing an affirming concept of self. Classes primarily concerned with grammar and spelling diminished, as students' work proved that articulation of metacognitive skills and self-reflection were more effective and expeditious routes to language acquisition.

What I attempted to do here in this thesis is articulate what happened at WEAVE and Roxbury Community College that convinced me that students in the adult literacy classes I taught had not failed school but that school had failed them. And that the acquisition of literacy skills is an appropriate place to address the issue of critical consciousness.

In the Black community and other non-mainstream communities there is an urgent need for literacy to be taught as a source for critical consciousness. There can be found the extremes among the economically exploited—the ranks of which women and children constitute the majority—and the highest rate of functional illiteracy. There can be found strong evidence that illiteracy goes hand in hand with economic injustice.

For this reason, literacy is a political issue because it has the propensity to unveil reality to those who have been left in the void. Inherent in the ability to read and write is analytical, evaluative, and transformative potential—
consciousness—which can empower the oppressed to transcend the day-to-day struggle for biological survival, to take note of and question the nuances of daily life, to decode the realities of their environment with a social analysis that helps them articulate who they are, where they are going, and how they are getting there. The transformative pedagogy proposed here requires the speaker/reader/writer/thinker to reflect on her direction and actively decide if her current direction is her choice, or if she is acquiescing, passively living out a stereotype.

In this respect, literacy can become a viable threat to a power structure in which there are those who have vast amounts of money and those who struggle to keep a roof over their heads. If a person can articulate an accurate social analysis that reflects an affirming concept of self, they can then reflect on their condition to articulate a model of action for transforming that situation. This is what critical thinking is about and why there is a movement in this country that adamantly opposes thinking being taught in public schools. Because critical thinking, on the part of the economically exploited, would result in their transforming their situation; a threat to a power structure that needs the poor in order to manipulate profits from their labor.

It has been legal for Black people to read and write in this country for only 120 years. Slave owners, supported by the United States federal government, knew that once Blacks were allowed to read and write they would be empowered to demand the
right to human dignity. This proved to be an accurate prediction. A literacy campaign played a crucial role in voter registration and desegregation of public schools was a main issue of the civil rights movement.

But illiteracy is not the domain of the Black Community or the Hispanic community, although, like the ranks of the poor, Blacks and Hispanics are disproportionately represented among the illiterate. My grandmother, a white woman born in the United States in this century, is illiterate. When she should have been in school, she was standing on a crate working a machine in the cotton mill—a machine she worked for over seventy years. She felt fortunate to do it, because it kept her and four of her five children alive. Meanwhile, profits made by the mill owner were so enormous that, when his daughter married, he gave her the mill village my grandmother lived in as a wedding gift. Teaching literacy as a source for critical consciousness became a part of my life journey because I knew education was the only thing that stood between me and this same struggle to survive that submerges people in history, rendering them nameless faces either on the assembly line or in the welfare line. I worked in the Black community of Roxbury because there is where I found a job, but I could have just as well worked in the white working-class community of South Boston or in the old Amazon mill village where my grandmother lives in Thomasville, North Carolina. Although women, especially Black women, are the target of most economic exploitation, oppression of the disempowered—the poor and the
A nationwide crisis in public education has been acknowledged in only the last few years, but it has been with us at least as far back as 1955 when I started school. The answer is not patrolling the halls with ball bats as Principal Joe Clark of Eastside High School in Paterson, New Jersey insists. Mr. Clark is only a blatant example of the policy public school administrators have been promulgating for decades. Sooner or later, hopefully real soon, educators must wake up to the fact that the system is failing miserably; not the students. Education must meet the needs of the students; not vice versa. This doesn’t, by any means, imply that standards have to drop or that teachers will have to put up with unacceptable behavior on the part of students. On the contrary, if students are convinced that there is something in education for them that meets their immediate needs and prepares them for the future of their choosing, there will be no need for force.

This is especially true for adults. Literacy classes are, for the most part, full of mature minds eager to learn. Most adult learners are willing to make great efforts to do whatever the teacher assigns. Probably for many of them, they know that this could be their last chance at an education. Still, sometimes, just getting to the classroom is a triumph. All too often, however, many adult literacy teachers hold their positions temporarily while waiting for the job they really want. These teachers often lack the commitment it takes to give students good
direction. Others find the kind of self-confrontative method of education proposed here too hard to face themselves, therefore impossible to teach.

Still, the task of adult literacy teachers demands that education address the issues of the student's reality for it to be meaningful in directing that student's development of a critical consciousness. Otherwise, as teachers, we will continue to be a part of the problem, instead of part of the solution.

The following are a few suggestions for the practice of literacy as a source for critical consciousness:

1. Share the power of being the teacher with students. This will take much of the pressure off of you, first of all, and give students ownership in the learning process. For example, encourage students to decide on issues like class attendance and tardiness at the start of a class. Then it will not be on just the teacher to see that everyone abides by what was decided. Sit in a circle with students instead of insisting that all students sit in rows facing the teacher who is the only one standing. Expect students to participate in the teaching process.

2. Develop the course around generative themes. This can happen in a number of ways. Here are three examples: (1) Ask students to list those people, places, or things that are most important to them, then group them under categorical headings. Discuss these headings as a group and find the commonalities; (2) Ask students to list the most significant moral dilemmas that they
are currently facing; and/or (3) Distribute a list of questions concerning family history that would encourage students to write autobiographical pieces and from these writings determine the themes that emerge. If you must have a syllabus, leave space for generative themes; for example, assign reading and writing assignments without making specific references. Later, develop the reading list from culturally relevant materials that address generative themes.

3. Create a "safe" environment in the classroom. "Safe" here means an open-minded environment in which students feel comfortable talking about their values and personal experiences.

4. Don't rely on a textbook. Textbooks are good for exercises in grammar once students' trouble areas are targeted, but teaching by an English grammar textbook is deadly for learning.

5. Share something about yourself. If you are interested in students doing the self-confrontative work that is suggested here, you must first show them that you are willing to do it too. There is no need to reveal information that feels uncomfortable for you, but addressing some of the same issues that you expect them to address makes the process feel less risky.

6. Read and Write in class. Don't make all reading and writing assignments homework. Both reading and writing in class provide students a chance to get immediate feedback and develop confidence. No one should be forced into sharing their work, however. It takes some students longer to warm up to the class and, given that time, they will join in voluntarily when they
feel ready.

7. **Don't concentrate on grammar, punctuation, and spelling.** At least not in the beginning. First, encourage students to write just as it comes to them. Then ask them to go back later and correct their mistakes. Writing block is easy enough to get if you know all the rules, and almost certain if you are trying to juggle five or six rules while trying to compose. Ask individual students if they would be willing to share their papers with the class. Make copies for everyone and teach the class how to copy edit for grammar, punctuation, and spelling from these papers. Then references can be assigned from a textbook for exercises on those problems that emerge both among the group and individually.

8. **Maintain high expectations.** From my experience, if you expect a lot from adult learners they are capable of making a tremendous effort to meet those expectations. Likewise, if you expect them to produce poorly, they will do so because you will be confirming what many, who suffer from low self-esteem, already think of themselves and their abilities.

9. **Strongly encourage peer support.** Usually the number nine makes a good group size. Allow students the opportunity to seek out academic and emotional support from each other. Group projects like debates, skits, and student publications encourage the use of the language both written and oral. Observation of how students learn from each other clue the teacher in on specific ways class members learn. These patterns of learning need to be taken in consideration in preparing for the class.
10. **Encourage students to think in their first language.** This may be a language other than English or it may be a dialect. Students need not regard a dialect as something incorrect to feel shame about and to be rid of as soon as possible, but as a native tongue. Standard English can be learned as a second language.

11. **Use the media to develop a social analysis of the environment.** The media is a reflection of our society's values. Newspapers, television programs, plays, and other cultural events can inform the group about the issues of our times. Discussion of the media—learning to read between the lines, looking for the portrayal of stereotypes, considering reliable and unreliable sources—all help sharpen students' awareness. What role the issues or ramifications of the media play in the lives of students is a major concern to be considered in class.

12. **Keep students in touch with their process.** Process writing involves writing a piece and then writing again describing how you wrote that piece. Students and teachers alike can share their processes with each other.

13. **Write along with students.** Share your own writings on specific short stories or issues that you wrote along with them. Don't hold your writing up as a shining example of how it ought to be done. If you are open to criticism, they can learn to be too. Be open to and encourage criticism of your own work. This will encourage students to take similar risks in sharing their work, and keeps you in touch with the difficulties of the task assigned.
14. When correcting papers don't always show students how to do it right. Rather, let them figure it out. Simply indicate that there is a problem in vocabulary, verb tense, or organization, for example, and let them do another draft of the same paper.

15. Require students to keep all of their writings. Provide folders and a filing system for students to keep their work at school. Mid-term and final grades, if grades are used, can be determined not only by final competency, but also by evidence of the progress accomplished during the course of the term.

16. Most importantly, make sure students make the critical connections between what they are reading or writing about and their own lives. Making critical connections between the environment and the self is the essence of restructuring consciousness. Once these connections are named and defined between a particular reading material and a student's life, a model of action should be articulated for transforming the situation. Then this new transformed situation will be the starting point for the next reading and writing assignment which will be named, defined, and a new transformative model of action articulated.

17. Encourage students to follow through with their own model of action. Efforts on the part of class groups sharing similar models of action can attempt to carry their ideas to the community. For example, in Althea's model for action, she suggested that pamphlets be sent out in her community addressing the issues of racism in employment, housing, and education. A
group with similar interests could work on the pamphlet with her while another group plans a follow-up model of action, like a neighborhood meeting, that would publicly address these issues. Althea also suggested the use of talk shows, both local radio and television, to which the group could bring these issues to an even wider audience.

18. Use the classroom as a research laboratory, collecting copies of student writings (with their permission) that documents what worked in your classroom.

19. Network with other adult literacy teachers to exchange ideas about teaching and curriculum development, and for moral support.

20. Assume professional responsibility. Make a commitment to teaching. Adult literacy teachers, like other professionals, must be held accountable to the ethical claims of the profession.
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