



What is Critical Pedagogy?

In the Introduction to the SAGE Handbook of Critical Pedagogies, Steinberg and Down (2020) recognize that creating a single definition of critical pedagogy would go against Freire's philosophical intent. Instead, they describe how this handbook brought together scholars and practitioners with diverse perspectives to continue developing Freire's ideas. Based on one of these perspectives, the authors shared a list of what critical pedagogy is:

- Grounded on a social and educational vision of justice and equality
- Constructed on the belief that education is inherently political
- Dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering
- Concerned that schools don't hurt students – good schools don't blame students for their failures or strip students of the knowledges they bring to the classroom
- Enacted through the use of generative themes to read the word and the world and the process of problem posing – generative themes involve the educational use of issues that are central to students' lives as a grounding for the curriculum
- Centered on the notion that teachers should be researchers – here teachers learn to produce knowledge and teach students to produce their own knowledges
- Grounded on the notion that teachers become researchers of their own students – as researchers, teachers study their students, their backgrounds, and the forces that shape them
- Interested in maintaining a delicate balance between social change and cultivating the intellect – this requires a rigorous pedagogy that accomplishes both goals
- Concerned with the 'margins' of society, the experiences and needs of individuals faced with oppression and subjugation
- Constructed on the awareness that science can be used as a force to regulate and control
- Dedicated to understanding the context in which educational activity takes place
- Committed to resisting the harmful effects of dominant power
- Attuned to the importance of complexity – understands complexity theory—in constructing a rigorous and transformative education
- Focused on understanding the profound impact of neo-colonial structures in shaping education and knowledge.

References

- Steinberg, S. R., & Down, B. (2020). The SAGE handbook of critical pedagogies. (Vols. 1-3). SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526486455>

