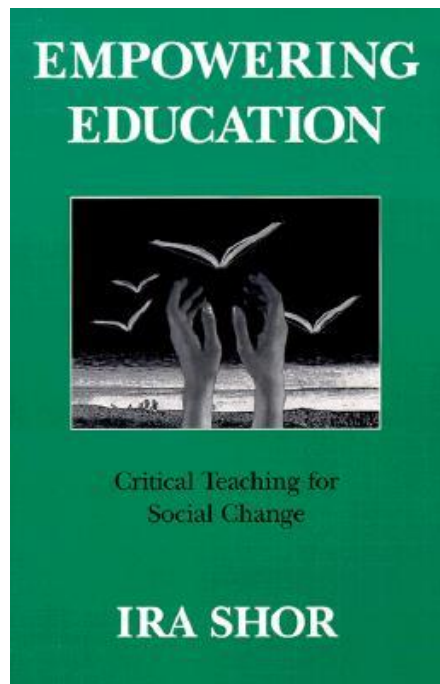




Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change

Ira Shor

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Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change Ira Shor

Ira Shor is a pioneer in the field of critical education who for over twenty years has been experimenting with learning methods. His work creatively adapts the ideas of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire for North American classrooms. In *Empowering Education* Shor offers a comprehensive theory and practice for critical pedagogy.

For Shor, empowering education is a student-centered, critical and democratic pedagogy for studying any subject matter and for self and social change. It takes shape as a dialogue in which teachers and students mutually investigate everyday themes, social issues, and academic knowledge. Through dialogue and problem-posing, students become active agents of their learning. This book shows how students can develop as critical thinkers, inspired learners, skilled workers, and involved citizens.

Shor carefully analyzes obstacles to and resources for empowering education, suggesting ways for teachers to transform traditional approaches into critical and democratic ones. He offers many examples and applications for the elementary grades through college and adult education.

Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change Details

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Brent says

A solid book for describing Shor's method of contextualizing Freire's pedagogy in an American context. Like other Shor books I have read, it offers a good balance of both big picture and detail oriented material.

Maughn Gregory says

It's been too many years since I read Ira Shor and once again his writing has changed my teaching.

Kat Hanna says

Echoing the critical work of Paulo Freire, Ira Shor in this book offers a critique and practical guide to teaching outside of the banking method of education. More importantly though is his focus on the concept of empowerment. As enacted and practiced within the classroom, empowerment for Shor "helps make the people who make society" (p. 15). In other words, empowerment occurs through the interconnected relationship between the self and society. As a teacher, I found much value in Shor's practical guidance through his approach to a critical, empowered education. Since knowledge is derived from action, our classrooms should open the space for our students to experience knowledge and help shape it. Therefore, by experiencing knowledge through dialogic classroom processes, students will have the skills to upon or with knowledge.

Ultimately, if you are looking for a practical guide to an empowering education for your students, pick up this book. Shor's detailed accounts of his experiences provide a road-map for good practices. I often find myself referring back to this book as I begin a new semester.

Exavidreader says

What I love most about this book compared to other books on empowerment is how practical the ideas and suggestions are. Being an educator himself, Shor understands the huge challenges that educators face in trying to empower their students. Rather than brushing those challenges aside, Shor highlights these problems that he himself faced and offered solutions that he has tried in the face of these challenges. Some have succeeded, some have failed but that's ok. The important thing is we keep trying. Other books keep telling us the importance of empowering our students but sometimes its hard to do so when we keep failing. We then wonder what is wrong with us. Shor, however, reminds us that yes, it is a difficult process but there are people out there who are still trying (like himself) so we shouldn't give up either.

Carol Leibiger says

For anyone who wants to learn how to operationalize Freire's critical pedagogy in American higher education, this is the book for you!

Si Lee says

This was a very engrossing read. Still feels relevant today, and worth reading, particularly for educators who teach or lecture.

Kristin says

incredibly detailed description of applying freire's ideas to a US classroom - while many of his examples apply to a college classroom, he also offers lots of suggestions for all teachers, including subject-area specific ideas. it gets a little repetitive at times, especially for someone who read it mostly for the over-arching philosophy/theory.

Sarah says

Learning so much from this book already!!

This is a great introduction to democratic education and Freire's pedagogical approach from a working teacher, for working teachers.

Rebeccamn says

The book has good suggestions for engaging students, and goes into the reasons why they are effective. But it was a slog to get through. Our work book group quit just over half-way through.

Also, personally, I think it's both hypocritical and annoying to talk about the importance of language in your class, and not alienating students by using elitist "academic" language in that very elitist academic language and writing style.

Lori says

This book is a good stand-alone, or a great follow-up to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed. It gives lots of ideas and very clearly articulated examples for how to implement critical education into classrooms in the U.S., as it's honestly a bit difficult to transfer Freire's tactics with illiterate Brazilians to classrooms of a bunch of literate white kids. While I work in an EFL setting, it still gave valuable tips on how to handle resistance to critical and democratic education, and suggestions for topics (as younger, less poor learners are not necessarily as good at generating their own topics as are poor adults who experience injustice on a daily basis), and also a model for keeping that topic going throughout the term.

