

CHAPTER 2

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING SETTING AND RESISTING NEOLIBERAL POLICIES: AN EXPERIENTIAL CASE STUDY

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CRITICISM OF NEOLIBERAL POLICIES IN EDUCATION

The overwhelming spread of neoliberal policies across the globe has led to significant concerns among educators, intellectuals and critical social scientists. A few intellectual researchers in the discipline of critical pedagogy have been determined to oppose and resist the implementation of neoliberalism and capitalism since 1940s and 1950s when IMF, the World Bank, the United Nations and European Economic Community were established (Apple, 1996; Au, 2018; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 1988; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). Critical pedagogy intends to emancipate learners and cultural workers from dogma, fixed ideologies and neoliberal practices (Apple, 2011; Giroux, 2002; McLaren, 1988). Its objective is to create a social and political change in a given society (Fairclough, 1992; Freire, 2000). Unless radical decisions are made in an established system of ideologies and corporations, it remains unlikely to produce transformation in the community we live in and work with. Neoliberalism has plagued educational institutions by accessing all spheres of school to gain more profits (Giroux, 2002; Harvey, 2007). Supporters of neoliberalism create a specific discourse for the benefits of individuals, students, teachers and schools to increase their profits (Olssen & Peters, 2005). School administrators, governments and global publishers fulfill their satisfaction and hedonist feelings by making commercial agreements between each other. If globalization, capitalism and neoliberalism are omnipresent, it is a hard task for critical pedagogy thinkers to find room in this system because they are marginalized, excluded or ignored just as Marxism has found little room for itself in the USA and the countries that the USA has supported such as Turkey based on neoliberal policies. Thus, omnipresence and omnipotence of neoliberalism and hegemonic power of political parties, ministry of education, councils of higher education and schools impose their political economies on subjects of education and harden

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This experiential process taught me several things that I could recommend pedagogically for future studies. First, an action plan to create a social transformation even in a small community entails a detailed planning. In addition, a wider social and sociological perspective can be adopted because I forgot the collectivistic nature of Turkey on a sociological basis. Third, even if students may agree with teachers on a theoretical basis, they may not take action when required, which means that they have not been convinced sufficiently or negotiated topics elaborately as a consequence of theoretical and practical discussions as well as debates in classroom settings. Therefore, additional sources such as inspiring movies, documentaries, books, drama activities, literary production such as short stories and poems, publishing own local newspapers, individual experiences, experts in law and critical pedagogy, intellectuals, personal interviews with activists, strong associations and unions can be used to empower learners if we as teachers really aim to produce a social change in our school community because those in power in universities and schools, be it chancellors of universities or the board of schools, never desire to abandon their power and are always ready to make profits collaborating with neoliberal agencies such as global textbook publishers in our case. Student representatives can also be members of school boards so that they can voice their rights and concerns. Besides, they should be given platforms where they can express them freely and have the right to protest neoliberal policies or violated rights in universities. Lastly, I believe that if we are to create social changes and transform our small communities in our schools, we need to take different dimensions into consideration. Without lawyers' guidance in this process, we would never be able to create this small social change in our university.

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