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Courses to be offered in French

Introductory courses in Economics, Canadian History, Sociology and Creative Dance will be offered in French to students on the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton campus this Fall.

For further information contact:

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Professor Vigod does not expect huge initial enrolments in the new subjects taught in French. There are only two Grade XII immersion classes in New Brunswick this year -- "the real bilingual wave is still two or three years away. We look upon these as pilot courses, and will be content with a dozen to fifteen students in each".

Political Perspectives

By R. HUTCHINS

Well its almost deadlines Equinox, that perennial season where one's educational future hangs in limbo, and time seems forever against you. We all suffer from final-phobia, a tropical disease that infects your nervous system and stimulates one's innermost passions to consume caffeine. I thought this time period would be perfect to discuss the ever stimulating question; "Is it all worth it"?

Last week I delivered a seminar on a book written by Paolo Friere entitled "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed". The book dealt with a pedagogical theory that supplied convincing arguments toward understanding the importance of education. Although he dealt specifically with oppressed people and their "culture of silence," I feel much of his theory could give "us" a better understanding of our own educational system and our place within it.

Friere poses a model of the oppressors educational system entitled the "Banking Concept". This system explains education as a device to submerge people into a "culture of silence". The teacher deposits information into the student who stores it in his account. There is no "dialogue", and the student is taught to perceive himself as ignorant and the teacher, all knowledgeable. What Friere points out is that the student is not conscious of his own world because he is conditioned to accept all he is taught. Only with critical consciousness can the student learn to see the real world and break out of the "culture of silence".

I think our educational system is often perceived as a "banking" process. All through kindergarden, grade school, highschool and university we are fed "deposits" into our account, the key to education however, is to understand "why" these deposits are "given" and of what value they are to us.

I think many students at university are submerged in "a culture of silence", how often do you question the theories, values and hypothesis put forward by the teacher? I agree wholeheartedly with Friere that "critical consciousness" is only developed through "dialogue." I don't feel there is enough dialogue within the educational system, and am extremely critical of that one aspect. I do think however, there is room for all of us to develop more critical consciousness within our university system. If we are critical of our world and question the inputs offered us by university we will see the value of education more in a "real" sense than strictly a material sense. So many people perceive education only as a "process" to attain future prosperity, a stepping stone to status and security. Although it offers the necessary tools to achieve ultimate prosperity, if only viewed in this sense it can also submerge the individual into "false consciousness". If one does not understand the real value of education it is easy to justify all you are thought as being "true".

If we ask ourselves "It is really worth it", we are being "critically conscious" of our education in a very basic way. It is good to be critical of the value of education, by doing so we are questioning our existence and not merely acception a "false reality". There is real value in education, the key is to learn of what value it has to yourself. The more we question "I need it to succeed don't I?" Then be as critical in searching as you possibly can. Because, it is only in this search that we realize our "raison d'etre" and we strive to overcome ignorance for the sake of true liberating education.

Friere said in his text:

"The more active an attitude men take in regard to the exploration of their thematics, the more they deepen their critical awareness of reality and in spelling out those thematics, take possession of that reality."

Thematics means producing and action upon our own ideas, not consuming those of others. Dialogue is the encounter amongst people, this dialogue cannot be reduced to one persons "depositing" ideas in another, nor can it become a simple exchange of ideas to be "consumed" by the discussants. Without dialogue there is no communication, without communication there is no education.

As a final note, I think we must all be critical of the world we live in and especially the systemic education all around us. There is true value in education especially if we take into account the restraints placed upon oppressed people who never even given the opportunity to ask themselves "Is it really worth it?"

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