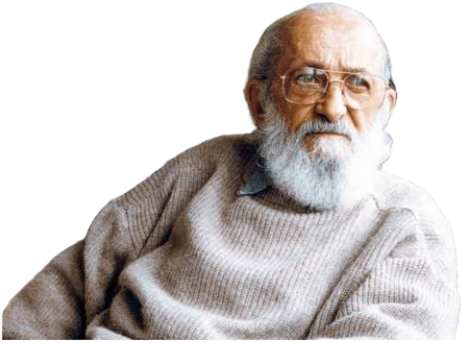




My Educational Theorist - Paulo Freire

Shaun Searle - Digital Team Leader - Cadi-Digital

Who was Paulo Freire?

- Brazilian educator and philosopher (1921–1997)
- Focused on education for **poor and marginalised communities**
- Founder of **critical pedagogy**
- Reframed education as a **political and transformative practice**

Timeline

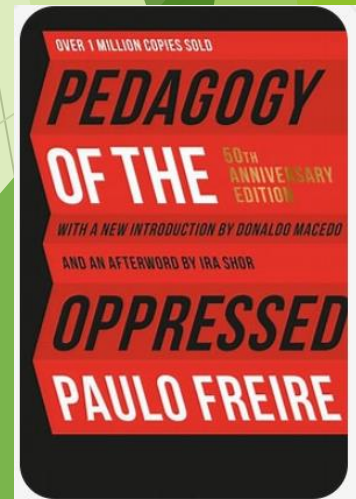
- **1940s-50s** → Literacy work in Northeast Brazil
- **1964** → Imprisoned and exiled after Brazilian military coup
- **Late 1960s** → Writes *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (in exile)
- **1970s-80s** → Global influence across education and development
- **1989-1991** → Secretary of Education in São Paulo
- **1997** → Death; legacy continues globally

Why Freire Still Matters

“Freire forces us to ask whether our teaching models are designed for efficiency—or for thinking.”



- Developed ideas in contexts of **poverty, illiteracy, and political repression in Brazil**
- Education is **never neutral**—it is always ideological
- Central question: *Who benefits from how we design education?*



The Core Problem: The “Banking Model”



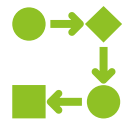
- ▶ Freire’s critique is not just pedagogical—it is **structural and epistemological** (theory of knowledge).
- ▶ Knowledge treated as **static, transferable content**
- ▶ Students positioned as **objects rather than subjects**
- ▶ Teacher authority is **unquestioned and unilateral**

Interpretation for HE context:

- ▶ Content-heavy modules
- ▶ Lecture capture + passive consumption
- ▶ Assessment focused on **recall and reproduction**

This model **reproduces existing social hierarchies** because it discourages critique

Freire's Alternative: Problem-Posing Education



a **design shift**, not
just philosophy:



Dialogue →
knowledge is co-
created



Problem-posing →
learning starts from
real-world issues



Praxis → reflection
+ action

Traditional model	Freirean shift
Content delivery	Learning design
Teacher authority	Facilitation
Knowledge as fixed	Knowledge as constructed
Assessment of recall	Assessment of application & critique

Instead of teaching “sustainability theory” → students investigate local environmental issues and propose interventions

Banking Model *vs.* Problem-Posing Education

Paulo Freire

BANKING MODEL



— Teacher = Depositor —

- Students = Passive “Containers”
- Memorize & Repeat
- Top-Down Authority



Passive Learning

Maintains the Status Quo

VS.

PROBLEM-POSING EDUCATION



— Teacher = Facilitator —

- Dialogue & Critical Thinking
- Real-World Problems
- Reflection & Action



Active Learning

Empowers Change

Why This Matters Now

Freire as **unexpectedly contemporary**:

AI and knowledge abundance

- ▶ If information is everywhere, education must focus on **critical engagement**, not transmission

Student engagement

- ▶ Freire anticipates **active learning, co-creation, inquiry-based learning**

Equity and inclusion

- ▶ Raises question: whose knowledge is legitimised in curricula?

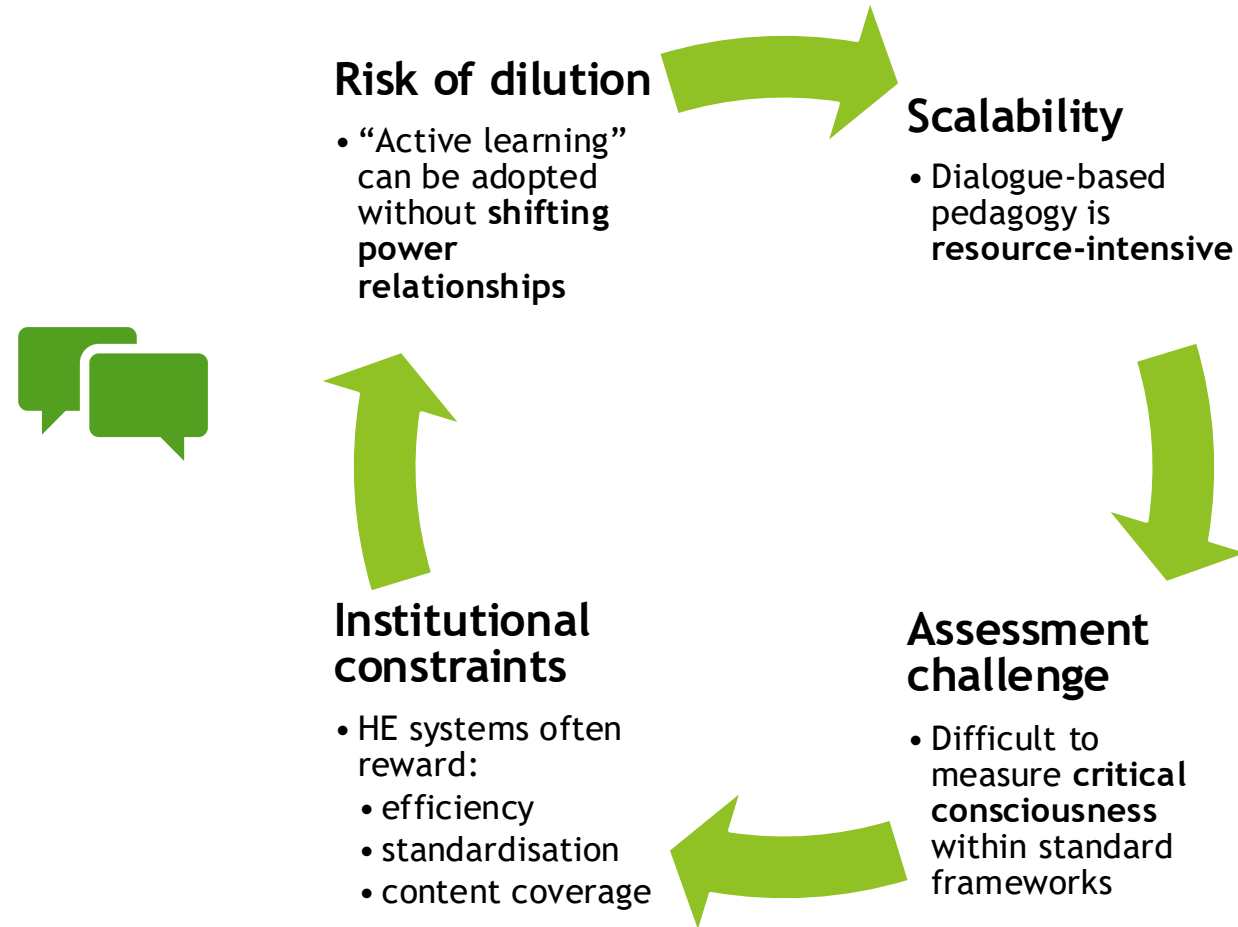
Curriculum transformation

- ▶ Aligns with:
 - ▶ decolonising curricula
 - ▶ participatory pedagogies
 - ▶ authentic assessment

Freire is not just aligned with innovation—he **reveals where innovation remains superficial**



Critical Reflection: Limits and Tensions



On Critical Pedagogy (2014) is a collection of essays by Paulo Freire, published in the Critical Pedagogy series by Henry Giroux. It revisits and extends themes from his earlier works, connecting them to contemporary globalization, neoliberalism, and struggles for democracy in education.



One Takeaway

“Freire’s challenge is not to add interaction to our teaching, but to fundamentally rethink whether students are positioned as recipients of knowledge—or as agents capable of transforming the world.”