

## A Unhealthy Learning Environment Preserve and Perpetuate Social Oppression

In contemporary society, an increasing number of people are enthusiastic about the educational system. Such a phenomenon contributes to the controversial issue whether or not the education system functions to preserve and perpetuate social oppression. Personally, I believe a unhealthy learning environment, focusing on banking education system in the essay, will preserve and perpetuate social oppression. In the following, I will use Paolo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" to introduce what is banking education system and how it will preserve and perpetuate social oppression to students and Keith Osajima's "Internalized Oppression and the Culture of Silence—Rethinking the Stereotype of the Quiet Asian-American Student" to explain how it applies to students. At last I will talk about my personal experience which relates to social oppression.

Banking education system means teachers disseminate knowledge, rather than create a space of mutual learning. In "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," it defines banking education system as "the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filling, and storing the deposits" (Freire 72). Banking education system puts the students and teachers into opposite places. Freire argues, "students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor"(Freire 72), which means students cannot communicate with teachers and do not have right to express and discuss their own personal

thoughts. Besides banking education system portrays knowledge to be treated like gifts, “bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (Freire 72). Both of these are against the original purpose of education, which is to develop students’ independent and critical thinking abilities. And these two are harmful and create social oppression to the students. Moreover, as banking education system “filled” (Freire 76) the students by deposited experiential truly knowledge, so the students have to “receive the world as passive entities” (Freire 76). They do not have the right and chance to accept the knowledge, to express their personal critiques and to comment the world on their own initiatives. Besides, banking education system “dominant minority prescribe” (Freire 76) for students, which “[deprive students] of the right to their own purpose” (Freire 76). Therefore, banking education system make students lose their independent and critical thinking abilities. No wonder, the results of banking education system are “lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge” (Freire 73). It is obviously that a unhealthy learning environment is harmful for the students and preserve and perpetuate social oppression.

Osajima suggests that internalized oppression means “People come to accept the myth and stereotypes about their group as part of who they naturally are” (Osajima 153) and it is a part of social oppression. In “Internalized Oppression and the Culture of Silence,” Osajima explains how the banking education system preserve and perpetuate social oppression in reality by

discussing about the phenomenon and results of social oppression. Keith Osajima believes that the unhealthy learning environment make students keep quiet in the class, which is an obvious feature of social oppression. Teachers always using banking education system to build lots of “good” students, “Internalized Oppression and the Culture of Silence” defines “good” students as “[a] good student is quiet” (Osajima 154) and always can get good grades, is forming the unhealthy learning environment which is harmful to the students. As social oppression discourages and demotivates students from critical thinking and reflection, students will prefer to hide their talents and gifts instead of practising them. Therefore, social oppression makes them believe they can only be quiet students. Besides, oppressed students are not confident with themselves. After that students refuse to show themselves, because they are afraid to do something wrong. Both of these will cause students to keep silent in class; and both of these will leave negative effects for the students in future, like inferiority emotions and losing elaborative faculties. Furthermore, the unhealthy learning environment will also cause students to feel dangerous in the class. Most students hope to stay safe in class, so they follow “quiet culture,” “the oppressed students believe and feel that they do not have a voice in determining the conditions of their world,” (Osajima 154) just do not want to attract any attention from the others. Osajima argues that “a passive, quiet, conforming behavior as a mean to survive racial hostilities” (Osajima 154) for students. In some way, quiet represents safety for them. Therefore, “quiet” makes “the

oppressed become resigned to their situation and do not look critically at it” (Osajima 153).

After reading the passages of Osajima and Freire, I almost believe that I represent the student who always endure social oppression in class. In fact, when I was in middle school, I was a “bad” student. Besides, all of my teachers should be the center of the class, which meant my teachers teaching is the structure of Freire’s “banking education system.” But I always would like to provide some thinking directions which were different from textbooks. Therefore, my teachers always critiqued that my thoughts were weird, which meant it was right in logic but it was not the answer, so I always got little scores on the paper. Besides, my spoken English was poor, not only in grammar but also in pronunciation. Therefore, every time, I read English materials out loud in the class, the classroom would be hell for my classmates and my teachers would always feel confused. Since I realized keeping quiet is better than speaking for me, I refused to read any reading materials out loud, asked any question or volunteered to answer any questions. The only thing I really did in the class is taking notes, receiving the knowledge from teachers. It could reduce the hostility from my classmates, because I did not “kill” their ears anymore; and could reduce the chance of leaving bad expression to my teachers, because I did not use my misleading spoken English to waste their time. The quiet makes me become a “good” student and I lose thinking and creating ability at the same time. The unhealthy learning environment, banking education system, is really

harmful to me and it causes me to suffer social oppression in class. Therefore, I completely support Freire and Osajima's critiques.

In a word, I still firmly advocate that a unhealthy learning environment, banking education system, will preserve and perpetuate social oppression. It is harmful to the students and causes students suffer social oppression in class. In the essay, I have used "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" which is written by Paolo Freire to explain what is banking education system and how does it preserve and perpetuate social oppression; and "Internalized Oppression and the Culture of Silence—Rethinking the Stereotype of the Quiet Asian-American Student" which is written by Keith Osajima to introduce that what are the results when social oppression works on the students.

### Bibliography

Keith Osajima, *Internalized Oppression and the Culture of Silence—Rethinking the Stereotype of the Quiet Asian-American Student*

Paolo Freire, 1970, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*