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Transformative- Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) to Reimagine Education

Tackling Controversies in Diverse Settings

Teresa M. Cappiali

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“This is a groundbreaking work that offers a profound exploration of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). Essential for educators committed to fostering equity and social justice, this book is an invaluable resource that inspires and equips readers to reimagine education for a better, more inclusive future.”

—Michalinos Zembylas, *Professor, Open University of Cyprus, Greece*

“This book is an extraordinary contribution to build new transformative and emancipatory pedagogies. A great book, a must-read.”

—António Nóvoa, *Member of the UNESCO International Commission on The Futures of Education; Honorary President, University of Lisbon, Portugal; Former Ambassador of Portugal at UNESCO*

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—Jeffrey G. Reitz, *Professor Emeritus of Sociology and R.F. Harney Professor Emeritus of Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, Canada*

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Teresa M. Cappiali
NOIWE_No Innovation Without Education
Malmö, Sweden

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QUOTES

Education does not change the world. Education changes people. People change the world.

—*Paulo Freire*

The goal of a scientific educational method is not only to “observe” how (students) learn, but to transform them.

—*Maria Montessori*

Hope is not a form of empty optimism, but a catalyst for critical engagement and transformation. In the politics of hope, education becomes a practice of freedom, a means to envision and work towards alternative futures.

—*Henry Giroux*

*Dedicated to my students, for whom I have great love.
And to all the idealists, utopians, and dreamers of our time.
To those who have dared—and those who will dare.*

*This work is meant to bring us together and to create the conditions in which
we can empower the youth to reimagine the world they deserve to inherit.*

*And in memory of Professor Jeffrey G. Reitz—mentor, friend, and quiet
visionary, who showed me that humanizing pedagogy is not just an idea
but a lived commitment to helping others become more fully themselves. His
belief in me helped me believe in myself, and that changed everything. We
are not alone in this. People's great love and ideas never die: they live
through us.*

PREFACE

This book advocates for a pedagogy that is humanistic, humanizing, and scientifically grounded, seeking a more holistic, interconnected, and socially relevant education for all.

At this critical juncture in the evolution of education, we must embrace paradigm shifts on a global scale. While innovative teaching methods are widely recognized, significant challenges remain, which prevent their full transformative potential being realized. This book emerges from my passionate commitment to reimagining education and my belief in its power to bridge the gap between academic theory and practical application, addressing some of today's most pressing social challenges.

The time is ripe to capitalize on collective knowledge and efforts to envision a world where positive change through education, at both individual and societal levels, is not only possible but necessary.

I propose **Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP)** as one possible path forward. TEP is an integrated philosophy and methodology that encapsulates the essence of innovative pedagogical methods developed worldwide. The solutions we need are already within our reach, embedded in the diverse and creative educational practices evolving globally.

Building on the philosophies and methodologies of Maria Montessori, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and others—including insights from Indigenous communities—TEP aims to systematize these varied knowledges and model designs for evaluation and application. This book explores how to create learning environments that promote healing and inspire profound

understanding, and engagement with the critical issues shaping our world and shared humanity.

I have developed TEP over 12 years of research and teaching on sensitive human rights-related issues, including discrimination, inequalities, racism, gender-based violence, and radicalization, particularly in migration contexts. Working with students and human rights defenders from diverse global backgrounds, my approach has been enriched by this cross-cultural exchange and collaboration. Drawing on my experience teaching sensitive and controversial topics in diverse university settings, in this book I show the role of TEP in fostering deep, transformative change that transcends current educational boundaries.

Beyond academia, this work draws on fieldwork experiences with immigrants and refugees and collaborations with international bodies, local activists, and grassroots communities addressing human rights, immigration, gender violence, and discrimination across North America, Europe, and North Africa. TEP reflects these diverse experiences, offering a framework grounded in both academic rigor and practical insight.

I believe that TEP has the potential to contribute meaningfully to both scientific inquiry and societal change. It is designed to drive a paradigm shift in education, addressing persistent challenges while responding to the rapid transformations driven by social justice movements, increased diversity in educational settings, and the growing role of digitalization in education.

While TEP is just one possible approach within the complex landscape of education, it aims to inspire readers to rethink and transform teaching practices. TEP offers flexible strategies that can be fully embraced or selectively integrated into existing educational frameworks, encouraging interdisciplinary thinking and innovation.

This book is not intended solely for specialists in education. It aims to reach a broad audience of scholars, educators, practitioners, community leaders, and policymakers who are interested in exploring new teaching methods. While its interdisciplinary nature might seem like a limitation to some, it is also one of its greatest strengths—prompting readers to think outside the box and consider how TEP can address today's interconnected challenges.

My hope is that readers worldwide will engage with the ideas presented here, experiment with new methods, and collaborate to create an educational system that fosters transformative societal change. This vision

extends to all living beings and the planet, nurturing love, care, and compassion for oneself, others, and the world.

Malmö, Sweden
30 August 2024

Teresa M. Cappiali

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book stands as a testament to the collaborative effort of colleagues, students, community-leaders, and practitioners worldwide. At its core is their invaluable feedback, engagement, and support, which have profoundly shaped my understanding of the key principles of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) and its potential impact across educational contexts and levels, making it a unique and powerful approach to education.

Reflecting on over 12 years dedicated to academic research and teaching, I am filled with gratitude for the countless encounters and experiences that have brought me here. This book represents both a professional endeavor and an intensely personal, transformative journey, encapsulating my aspiration to leverage my international training, experience, and education for the betterment of future generations and society.

My deepest gratitude goes to the students, educators, NGOs, and civil society organizations that have contributed to and shaped this journey. Their experiences, challenges, and successes have been instrumental in shaping this work.

Special thanks are due to the students who have engaged in various phases of TEP's development and refinement. Their active participation in pilot projects, interviews, focus groups, and surveys has been crucial to the pedagogical initiatives detailed in this book. Their willingness to share experiences and provide honest feedback has shaped this work's content and reinforced its foundation. Moreover, their encouragement and perspectives have highlighted TEP's potential as a pioneering alternative for a more inclusive and meaningful educational experience.

I am particularly thankful to my colleagues at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI) in Sweden, whose dedication to human rights education has profoundly inspired me. Their insights and interest in TEP have deepened my understanding of its significance and potential. Their support and collaboration have been instrumental in recognizing TEP's key role in advancing Human Rights and Peace Education. This partnership has expanded TEP's educational outreach and highlighted the global need for refining pedagogical strategies through greater philosophical, theoretical, and methodological integration. Additionally, their unwavering support has been pivotal in the creation and dissemination of the podcast series¹ *Building Hopes: Engaged Educators Change the World*, which showcases contemporary, innovative educational approaches rooted in Critical Pedagogy.

I am immensely grateful to the many NGOs, colleagues, and mentors who have supported and guided me throughout this journey. Special thanks to Corinne Trang, Sima Wolgast, Spency Pigmentel, Nathalie le Boulter Pavelic, Felisa Tibbitts, Jeffrey Reitz, and Rabii El Gamrani for their inspiration and guidance. Their contributions have been invaluable in helping me understand the multiple and interdisciplinary implications of TEP and in shaping the broader vision of this book.

I also extend my sincere thanks to Lund University for their generous support, including covering the Open Access fees and providing substantial funding for the research that informs this book. I am especially grateful to the consultants hired by Lund University and LU Innovation—Sophie Hyden Picasso, Fredrik Edman, and Mette Skraastad—whose invaluable insights and guidance have been instrumental in developing the ideas presented in this book and in the growth of my start-up, NOIWE—No Innovation Without Education (www.noiwe.com). Their expertise and support have enriched this work, and I deeply appreciate the time and effort they dedicated to shaping its direction. Their belief in my work has been crucial in affording me the necessary time to explore TEP beyond the specific research area of this book.

Finally, I would like to thank Jerome, Ivelise, and all my friends from 17 Océan for their patience and support during the writing process. The memories of this book are intertwined with their everyday presence and the warmth of our shared moments.

¹ See also the instagram page: https://www.instagram.com/building_hopes_the_podcast/?igshid=NTc4MTIwNjQ2YQ%3D%3D

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Ethics Approval The authors confirms that informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved and cited in the project. The participation was entirely voluntary at all stages of the evaluation process.

IN MEMORIAM

I wish to honor the memory of Professor Jeffrey G. Reitz, whose presence in my life and work extended far beyond the traditional role of academic mentor. I first met Jeffrey during my doctoral studies, while undertaking a visiting fellowship at the Ethnic, Immigration and Pluralism Studies Program at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto, in 2014–2015. From that first encounter, Jeffrey stood out as a generous and deeply engaged scholar—someone who offered not only intellectual guidance but also human connection. Over time, he became a brilliant mentor and a supportive friend.

As a junior researcher searching for my path, Jeffrey taught me to trust my own voice, experiences, and the responsibility I bear as an educator and scholar. His encouragement sharpened my convictions and emboldened me to shape new ideas and visions for the future. His impact went beyond academic feedback: he showed me, side by side, what it truly means to accompany someone, helping me grow into a fuller version of myself.

Jeffrey combined rare integrity and intellectual depth with kindness and humility. He embodied a humanizing pedagogy in every interaction—grounded in non-hierarchical relationships, rigorous inquiry, and a sincere belief in others. His generosity remains one of the clearest examples I've known of how we become more human by recognizing our own worth and dismantling barriers to fulfillment.

Last year, Jeffrey read and heartily endorsed this book. He challenged me to envision TEP as a broad educational philosophy for justice and inclusion, rather than a niche methodology. Though I can no longer share this next chapter with him in person, his voice echoes through these pages, and his legacy continues to shape every insight I carry forward. This book is, in part, for him.

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book advocates for a paradigm shift in education through the framework of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). Grounded in humanistic, humanizing, and decolonial philosophical traditions, TEP prioritizes holistic, inclusive, deep, experiential, interconnected, transformative, and emancipatory learning. Initially developed to address controversial and sensitive topics in highly diverse classrooms, particularly among graduate students in the social sciences, TEP seeks to transform educational research and practice to meet the demands of an increasingly diverse, interconnected, and polarized world.

Beyond specific applications, TEP seeks to foster inclusive, equitable, and justice-oriented educational spaces that contribute to transforming both educational systems and society at large. It promotes inclusion by enriching learning through the collective knowledge, skills, and experiences of learners. TEP engages students holistically across the individual, relational, and socio-political dimensions of learning, contributing to deeper personal and societal transformation.

The book presents empirical evidence that highlights the effectiveness of TEP in addressing complex, sensitive subjects within academic settings. Applicable across a variety of educational contexts and learner groups, TEP serves as a model for research and practice in alternative methodologies, advocating for a meaningful shift in educational paradigms.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Teresa M. Cappiali (Ph.D., Université de Montréal, Canada) is an academic, international consultant, and founder and CEO of NOIWE-No Innovation without Education, a start-up dedicated to educational innovation. She serves as an Affiliated Senior Researcher at the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI) in Sweden. She is also a Research Resident Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS) at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (UM6P) in Benguerir, Morocco. Here, she leads the project TRANSFORM_EDUC, which explores the potential adaptation of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) across North and Sub-Saharan Africa. Developed in partnership with NOIWE and embedded within the UM6P ecosystem, the project investigates inclusive, critical, and humanizing education in settings undergoing educational transformation, and examines how AI can be ethically integrated to promote equity, deep learning, and learner empowerment.

With over 12 years of experience, spanning research and consultancy at the intersection of social science, educational science, and human rights, Dr. Cappiali's expertise covers critical areas such as migration, inequalities, racism, gender, intersectionality, diversity, and discrimination. Her extensive research with vulnerable communities across North America, Europe, and North Africa has provided her with intercultural insights and practical approaches to addressing diversity and inclusion.

Over the past decade, Dr. Cappiali has been at the forefront of developing Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP), an innovative framework designed to address controversial and sensitive topics in diverse

settings, fostering inclusion and driving social transformation. Her commitment to advancing human rights and empowering marginalized groups is evident in her academic work and leadership at NOIWE, where she focuses on creating inclusive and equitable practices through research-driven educational strategies.

Throughout her career, Dr. Cappiali has taught a wide range of interdisciplinary social science courses on migration and discrimination to diverse student populations in Canada, Italy, Sweden, and Morocco. She has also collaborated with educators, academic institutions, and NGOs on human rights and related topics. These collaborations have taken place through national and international programs worldwide.

Dr. Cappiali's contributions to academia have been recognized with prestigious awards and grants. Her research has been widely published in top-tier academic journals and by leading university presses. Most recently, she completed a two-year individual project titled INTERSEC_RACE, funded by the Vinnova-MSCA Seal of Excellence program (2021–2023) and honored with the European Commission's Seal of Excellence (2020). This project examined the interconnection between migration politics, racism, and intersectional discrimination and violence against vulnerable migrants and refugees in North Africa.

ABBREVIATIONS

DELT	Deep and Experiential Learning Theory
SEL	Socio-Emotional Learning
TLT	Transformative Learning Theory
TEP	Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy

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CHAPTER 1

Overcoming Challenges in Education: A Paradigm Shift via Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP)

Abstract This chapter sets the stage by highlighting the urgent need for a paradigm shift in education to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities of today's diverse, interconnected, and polarized world. It delineates the limitations of current educational paradigms in addressing controversial and sensitive topics while also arguing for the need to promote the essential knowledge and skills needed to thrive in a complex society and upholding key humanistic values in the process. The chapter introduces Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) as *one* way forward, showcasing its potential to promote a holistic, interconnected, and socially relevant model of education. TEP expands educational goals by emphasizing the inclusion and well-being of learners while connecting deep learning with transformative and emancipatory goals. The book's primary aim is to examine the philosophical, theoretical, and methodological foundations, alongside practical guidance and ethical considerations, for developing and evaluating pedagogical interventions based on TEP. Although TEP was developed within the specific context of higher education, it has the potential to be extended far beyond its original application, offering valuable insights for diverse educational settings and levels globally.

Keywords Paradigm Shift • Critical Pedagogy • Inclusive Education • Emancipatory Education • Transformative Learning • Diversity • Controversies

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The current global landscape presents numerous challenges that education is uniquely positioned to address. Organizations like UNESCO and the UN highlight the crucial role that education must play in responding to some of the most pressing issues of our time, such as environmental degradation, inequality, marginalization of vulnerable communities, discrimination, radicalization, poverty, violence, war, and the spread of conspiracy theories (UNESCO, 2012, 2017b).¹ Beyond reacting to these challenges, education has the potential to foster creativity, instill greater adaptability, and prepare individuals and communities to thrive in increasingly diverse and interconnected societies (Robinson, 2015). In doing so, education upholds values like solidarity, peace, and justice (Montessori, 1949; Dewey, 2007/1938; Freire, 1998), while committing to the protection of all living beings and the planet (UNESCO, 2020; Mbembe, 2019; Nhat Hanh, 2008; Nussbaum, 2024).

While innovative pedagogical approaches have emerged to respond to evolving needs globally, this book argues that what we need is a paradigm shift in education—one that is both urgent and already underway. As the urgent challenges mentioned above demand more from education, the educational landscape is evolving. Innovators across the globe are developing approaches that align with the growing need for holistic, interconnected, and socially relevant learning experiences. Philosophical questions—such as “What is the role of education in challenging times?” (Giroux, 2022) and “What type of society do we want to build for the future?”—have become central in current debates. These questions invite scholars, educators, and policymakers to reimagine education as a genuinely transformative force—one that is capable of reshaping futures for individuals and societies alike (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2018).

In this context, educational institutions—formal and non-formal—are increasingly embracing approaches grounded in traditions that engage learners more holistically and interactively, while others focus on how

¹United Nations (2022) “Transforming Education Summit” United Nations, New York, 16, 17 & 19 September 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit/about>

learners can promote social transformation. Despite their differences, these approaches converge in their focus on socially relevant education, as demonstrated in fields such as Human Rights Education (HRE), Peace Education, Social Justice Education, and Global Citizenship Education, among others.

In this book, I argue that, despite significant advancements, convergences, and the cross-fertilization of ideas across fields and disciplines, many innovative educational practices remain fragmented, or confined to specific geographical areas or niche settings. This fragmentation hinders their broader integration into educational systems worldwide (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). As a result, their full potential has yet to be consistently reflected in systemic research or applied meaningfully in practice (Cappiali, 2023). To move forward, education must bridge these gaps, ensuring that innovations in one sector inform and enhance educational practices more broadly. What is needed now is not merely the addition of alternative methods to existing paradigms, but a profound reevaluation of educational frameworks. Calls for a paradigm shift are growing louder, driven by the need to fully integrate promising practices into the core of educational systems. This transformation will require global collaboration to co-construct collectively a new, inclusive and transformative educational paradigm for all (Cappiali, 2023).

Grounded in over a decade of international teaching, research, and collaborative work in human rights education, I have developed Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) to answer the challenges of teaching controversial and sensitive topics in diverse classrooms, shaped by direct experiences with learners confronting discrimination, marginalization, and trauma. TEP is a unified philosophy and methodology that seeks to capitalize on strengths of existing approaches by breaking with traditional disciplinary boundaries. Its philosophical approach combines individual transformation grounded in humanism, which emphasizes the development of the whole person—intellectually, emotionally, and morally—fostering personal growth and autonomy (Montessori, 2002/1912; Dewey, 2004/1916), with emancipatory education rooted in humanization, which seeks to affirm the dignity and agency of learners by confronting and overcoming systems of oppression (Freire, 1972). This blend creates a framework that is holistic, interconnected, and socially relevant. Initially developed to address sensitive and contentious topics within diverse higher education classrooms, TEP goes beyond traditional educational goals by promoting inclusion, deeper learning, and transformative outcomes, while prioritizing learners' well-being and personal growth. Grounded in inclusivity and equity, in this book, I seek to establish TEP as a humanizing pedagogy for all (Cappiali, 2023; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

Over time, TEP has evolved into a systematic yet adaptable methodology (Cappiali & Tazi, 2021; Cappiali, 2023, 2024a). Beyond its contributions in the arena of inclusive and socially relevant education, this work aligns with global discussions around the reimagination of educational paradigms (UNESCO, 2021). The empirical analysis in the book fills a notable gap by exploring the application of TEP in higher education—a sector that has, until now, offered limited insights into effectively managing sensitive and controversial topics. While I have explored some core aspects of TEP in previous work (Cappiali, 2023, 2024a, 2024b), the present book delves deeper into TEP’s features and potential and offers evidence of its broad applicability. The experiences detailed here transcend their specific origins, providing practical tools and perspectives for educators, practitioners, and scholars committed to creating more inclusive, engaging, and meaningful learning environments.

This opening chapter lays the foundation for the book’s exploration of why a paradigm shift in educational practices is imperative. It begins by highlighting the need to move beyond the teacher-centered paradigm, and to combine the learner-centered paradigm with Critical Pedagogy, while underscoring the growing demand for more inclusive education. The chapter further stresses the importance of developing strategies to address controversial and sensitive issues like racism, gender-based violence, and migration—topics central to my academic work. It then provides an overview of TEP’s key features, outlines the intended audiences, and concludes with a roadmap for the book, detailing its structure, themes, and contributions to help readers navigate the discussions ahead. Ultimately, the book advocates for TEP as an innovative and adaptable approach, suitable for full or partial implementation across diverse educational settings.

1.2 WHY A PARADIGM SHIFT

In recent decades, the inadequacies of existing educational approaches in preparing learners for a rapidly evolving world have become all too apparent. Critics like Sir Ken Robinson and organizations such as UNESCO have noted the urgent need for educational systems to evolve, advocating for a new paradigm that fosters creativity and inclusivity (Robinson, 2006, 2015; UNESCO, 2021). Alternative approaches that align with the technological advancements and societal changes characteristic of the twenty-first century are necessary, moving away from outdated rote memorization and vertical classroom structures and toward methods that enhance

critical thinking, adaptability, and the ability to engage meaningfully with complex global challenges.

Building on these insights, I explain in this section that the call for a new educational paradigm is both clear and urgent. To meet the demands of our time, education must transcend the limitations of current approaches. Such a shift should promote inclusivity, empower individuals and communities, and equip them with the tools to navigate complex societal issues. A paradigm in education refers to the broad framework that shapes how education is conceived, implemented, and evaluated, encompassing the fundamental beliefs, theories, and practices guiding educational systems (Kuhn, 2012/1962). Debates around educational paradigms reflect deeper philosophical tensions about the purpose of education, the role of the teacher, and the most effective ways to engage and empower learners (Cappiali, 2023). A paradigm shift, therefore, entails a fundamental rethinking of these foundational assumptions. It can generate transformative approaches to teaching and learning, while redefining the role education plays in nurturing democratic, equitable, and sustainable futures amid ongoing global transformations (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2018).²

At present, most educational systems employ variations of three dominant paradigms: teacher-centered, learner-centered, and Critical Pedagogy. Below, I present a comparison of these paradigms, highlighting their strengths, limitations, and global variations. While each paradigm has its own strengths, none fully addresses the diverse and evolving educational needs of our time. In practice, educational approaches are often more complex and fluid, blending traditional and innovative methods that are shaped by local contexts and global influences. Thus, my comparison is not intended to oversimplify the diverse and context-dependent nature of educational practices worldwide, but rather to highlight key elements and gaps that need to be addressed in the shift toward more dynamic and inclusive approaches.

In this book, I argue that the true potential of education lies in transcending the boundaries of these established paradigms by addressing

²Thomas Kuhn (1962) defines a paradigm shift as a fundamental transformation in the assumptions, concepts, and practices guiding a field of inquiry. These shifts occur when the existing framework no longer addresses emerging challenges, leading to the adoption of a new paradigm that redefines how knowledge is produced and understood. Kuhn argues that such shifts are not merely incremental changes but revolutionary transformations that redefine the field's approach and practice. Applied to education, this would mean replacing traditional methods and content-focused education with more holistic, learner-centered, and inclusive approaches that align with contemporary societal and technological changes.

their respective limitations. While I propose moving beyond the teacher-centered paradigm, I build on the learner-centered emphasis on autonomy and personal growth and expand this vision to include the critical, socio-political orientation of Critical Pedagogy. By integrating these perspectives, I propose a new, unified approach grounded in both humanistic and humanizing philosophies that equips learners to understand and engage with the world around them, while challenging systemic inequalities. This comprehensive framework fosters both individual and collective transformation, positioning education as a powerful tool for societal change.

Table 1.1 presents a detailed comparison of these three educational paradigms, highlighting their distinct philosophies, methodologies, and how they shape teacher-learner relationships, prioritize educational outcomes, and employ diverse processes within the learning environment. This comparative analysis, which builds on my previous work (Cappiali, 2023), reveals key insights into the limitations of each paradigm in meeting contemporary educational demands and the challenges involved in their implementation. By examining these paradigms side-by-side, the table underscores the need for an integrated approach that can bridge these gaps and adapt to complex, context-dependent educational needs.

1.2.1 *The Teacher-Centered Paradigm*

The teacher-centered and learner-centered paradigms remain most prevalent in formal education worldwide, though their distribution varies significantly across regions and cultural contexts. The teacher-centered approach involves one-way knowledge transmission from teacher to learner, relying heavily on direct instruction, rote memorization, and a hierarchical structure between teachers and students (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005; Weimer, 2002).

In many regions, including parts of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and areas of Europe, teacher-centered education remains deeply entrenched. This model is often rooted in cultural traditions emphasizing respect for authority, hierarchy, and structured learning environments. For instance, in countries like China, Japan, and South Korea, Confucian principles have historically shaped educational systems, reinforcing the teacher-centered model's alignment with cultural norms of authority and order in the classroom. Similarly, in parts of the Middle East and North Africa, authoritarian, religious, and colonial legacies continue to influence teacher-centered instruction, maintaining a top-down approach to learning.

Table 1.1 Comparison of the three educational paradigms

<i>Key characteristics</i>	<i>Teacher-centered</i>	<i>Learner-centered</i>	<i>Critical Pedagogy</i>
Philosophical roots	Essentialism Perennialism Authoritarianism	Constructivism Pragmatism Individualism	Critical Theory Constructivism Marxism Feminism Decolonial Theory
What is knowledge?	Predetermined Given	Constructed	Situated Co-constructed Shared
Role of education	Knowledge transmission	Active engagement Critical thinking	Critical consciousness
Learning dimensions	Cognitive	Cognitive Practical	Holistic
Teacher-learner relationship	Hierarchical	Egalitarian	Egalitarian
Who holds power?	Teacher	Shared by teachers and students	Shared by teachers and students
Learners' role	Passive	Active	Critical of the status quo
Preferred teaching methods	Lectures, Direct instruction	Practical and experiential activities	Practical and experiential activities Community engagement Critical dialogue
Main educational goal	Acquisition of specific sets of knowledge and skills	Autonomous learning	Conscientization (critical awareness and action for social change)
Expected learning processes and outcomes	Superficial learning Memorization	Deeper learning Critical thinking Application of knowledge	Empowerment Emancipation
Relationship to diversity	One-size-fits-all Overlooks or marginalizes diverse perspectives	Recognizes and values diversity Aims to include multiple perspectives and adapt to individual needs	Actively seeks to include and value diverse perspectives and experiences, challenges inequities and silencing

In Latin America, moreover, traditional teacher-centered methods remain widespread, often shaped by historical and colonial legacies. Despite reforms in countries like Brazil and Mexico, many classrooms still reflect a top-down instructional model that limits student engagement and critical thinking. Within Europe, although learner-centered models have gained ground in countries like Finland, Sweden, and Norway, teacher-centered practices persist in more conservative education systems, such as in France, Austria, Switzerland, and Southern Europe (Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal), where traditional authority and structured learning models remain influential. Similarly, in parts of Eastern Europe, post-Soviet educational models continue to uphold teacher-centered approaches.³

The teacher-centered paradigm has long faced criticism from educational theorists and practitioners. In the early twentieth century, figures such as Maria Montessori and John Dewey challenged the rigid, authoritarian structure of teacher-centered education. Montessori (2002/1912) emphasized the importance of fostering independence and self-directed learning in children, advocating for a prepared environment where learners could explore and develop at their own pace. Similarly, Dewey (2004/1916) rejected the passive nature of traditional education, instead promoting experiential learning, where students actively engage with real-world problems and take ownership of their learning process.

Similarly, Paulo Freire's (1972) concept of "banking education" critiques traditional educational models where teachers are seen as depositors of knowledge, and students are passive recipients. In this model, students are expected to memorize and regurgitate information without engaging critically or creatively. Freire argued that this approach reinforces power imbalances and stifles students' ability to develop critical consciousness and agency. Instead, he advocated for a more dialogical and participatory model, where learners and teachers co-construct knowledge through active engagement, reflection, and problem-posing.

The critiques from Montessori, Dewey, and Freire represent just a few of the many challenges to teacher-centered approaches that have laid the

³The discussion of the geographical distribution of different educational approaches presented here and in the next two sections is based on informal conversations, workshops, and interviews I conducted with teachers and scholars working in these regions. While some literature addresses specific regional practices (e.g., Watkins & Biggs, 2001 for Confucian influences in Asia), comprehensive global comparisons of educational paradigms are limited. Therefore, my observations draw on both primary insights and selective academic sources to outline these geographical variations.

groundwork for more learner-centered and critical approaches to education. However, resistance to replacing the teacher-centered paradigm continues at both political and practical levels. Even in contexts where learner-centered methods are gaining traction, elements of teacher-centered instruction persist, often resulting in hybrid models (Cappiali, 2023).

More recently, the limitations of the teacher-centered paradigm have become even more evident in discussions about meeting diverse students' needs. It is argued that it is insufficient for addressing the complexities of today's diverse and dynamic educational landscapes. The pedagogical methods used fail to engage learners in ways that promote active learning, critical thinking, and deeper understanding (Weimer, 2002; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005; Mascolo, 2009; Fernandez et al., 2022; Serin, 2018). From the perspective of inclusive education, moreover, this paradigm can alienate students and may even be considered oppressive as it is centered on one-size-fits-all pedagogy (Freire, 1972; Cappiali, 2023). Given these limitations and the evolving needs of learners, it is my view that the teacher-centered paradigm must be replaced with more inclusive, interactive, and learner-centered approaches that promote meaningful, active engagement and holistic development (see also Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

1.2.2 *The Learner-Centered Paradigm*

In recent decades, there has been a significant push in many educational contexts—driven by both academics and policymakers—to move away from traditional teacher-centered methods and embrace alternative educational approaches. Learner-centered approaches drawing, for instance, on the tradition of John Dewey (Weimer, 2002; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005; Mascolo, 2009; Fernandez et al., 2022), alongside critical and decolonial pedagogies (UNESCO, 2021; Cappiali, 2023; de Jong et al., 2019; de Carvalho, 2022; Pimentel, 2023), have emerged as key substitutes in the push for educational reform that better meets the needs of contemporary society.

Celebrated for fostering deep learning, active participation, critical thinking, and learner autonomy, learner-centered approaches prioritize the needs of the learner and encourage personal growth and empowerment by tailoring educational experiences to individual contexts. These models are seen as effective in cultivating lifelong learning skills and preparing learners for complex societal roles.

Globally, the adoption of learner-centered approaches has been shaped by various cultural, economic, and policy-driven factors. In regions such as

North America, the United Kingdom, and the Nordic European countries, learner-centered models are widespread in both private and public schools. More recently, as part of educational reforms like the Bologna Process of 1998–1999, many European countries have aimed (not always with success) to integrate these approaches into their academic programs.

However, even in countries where learner-centered paradigms have been widely adopted, significant challenges remain. First, many institutions operate with a hybrid approach, combining elements of learner-centered education with teacher-centered practices. This often results in a limited shift of control, where teachers retain significant authority over the curriculum and learning processes, thereby constraining the potential of learner-centered methods to fully empower students and prioritize their needs and perspectives (Cappiali, 2023; Weimer, 2002; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

Second, learner-centered approaches often lack a holistic integration that fully engages the whole person in the learning process, as advocated by educational philosophies like Montessori's. These models tend to prioritize cognitive and academic aspects of learning over the development of the emotional, social, and physical dimensions of the learner. This compartmentalization can limit the learner's overall growth and fails to nurture the interconnectedness of learning experiences, which are essential for fostering self-awareness and a sense of belonging in the world (Montessori, 2002/1912; Cappiali, 2023).

Third, Dewey envisioned education as a means to develop not only individual autonomy and creativity but also a deeper connection to democratic participation and social responsibility. However, many learner-centered models in use today—especially those in formal education—tend to narrow this broader vision, focusing more on individual development and personal achievement and less on promoting democratic values and ethical engagement with society. (Cappiali, 2023).

Finally, while fostering personal growth and creativity, learner-centered models often fail to fully engage with the broader socio-political realities that shape students' lived experiences, such as systemic racism, marginalization, economic disparity, and environmental crises. Although these methods have contributed positively to modern educational practices, the emphasis on individual success can reinforce individualism and personal success without challenging the societal structures that perpetuate inequality and exclusion (Brookfield, 2017).

To overcome these limitations, there is a need for a more comprehensive educational approach—one that expands upon, for instance, Montessori’s and Dewey’s broader vision by integrating both holistic development and personal transformation and Freire’s deep commitment to structural change. Such an approach would ensure that education engages with both personal and societal dimensions, addressing not only cognitive and emotional growth but also the broader socio-political context in which learners exist. As I will argue in this book, we can move forward by combining Montessori’s and Dewey’s transformative vision of education with more explicit emancipatory aims rooted in Critical Pedagogy, seeking to transform society and make it a more just and inclusive space for all.

1.2.3 *Critical Pedagogy*

Critical Pedagogy is an educational paradigm focused on raising critical consciousness to empower learners in recognizing and challenging oppression and inequality within both society and educational systems (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1997; hooks, 1994; Darder, 2017; UNESCO, 2017a). Pioneered by Freire in his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Critical Pedagogy draws on critical theory, Marxism and the Frankfurt School to position education as a means of liberation. At its core, it views education as a practice of freedom, where learners develop the ability to identify and challenge systemic structures that perpetuate inequality (Darder, 2017; Giroux, 1997). Also referred to as “social-emancipatory,” Critical Pedagogy intertwines individual learning outcomes with a focus on empowerment and social justice (Taylor & Cranton, 2012).

Critical Pedagogy integrates a range of theories and methods developed worldwide, all unified by the goal of educational empowerment, particularly for marginalized communities. It conceptualizes education as a liberatory process that fosters critical awareness—or *conscientization*—among learners. This process seeks to empower individuals and communities to critically analyze their realities, identify genuine needs and systemic issues, and engage actively in societal transformation (see Freire, 1972; UNESCO, 2017a; Darder, 2017; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). In emphasizing education as a means of raising critical consciousness to challenge and change oppressive systems, Critical Pedagogy incorporates a variety of contemporary approaches, such as feminist, intersectional, critical race, Indigenous, and decolonial theories (de Jong et al., 2019; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

Although Critical Pedagogy originated in non-formal education and grassroots movements, in recent decades it has gained momentum in formal educational settings as well. Today, it is employed by an increasing number of educators in schools across the globe, particularly in North and Latin America, where education is seen as a means to amplify marginalized voices and challenge dominant power structures (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Efforts to embed Critical Pedagogy into higher education curricula and other academic fields have been also significant (Tibbitts & Keet, 2023; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024; de Carvalho, 2022; de Jong et al., 2019; Pimentel, 2023).

Moreover, Critical Pedagogy is widely employed in various disciplines, such as Human Rights Education, Peace Education, and Social Justice Education (see Chapman & Hobbel, 2019; Mullen, 2021; Hantzopoulos & Bajaj, 2021; Tibbitts, 2017; Zembylas, 2015; UNESCO, 2017a; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008), often in combination with learner-centered approaches. These developments reflect a growing convergence toward more engaged and transformative practices in both formal and non-formal educational settings. Building on this momentum, Critical Pedagogy has the potential to become even more relevant in formal educational settings worldwide (de Jong et al., 2019; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

Geographical variations significantly influence how Critical Pedagogy has been adopted and adapted across educational systems to address a range of challenges. In nations confronting their colonial legacies—such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and various countries in Latin America, notably Brazil where Freire’s legacy is particularly strong—there are concerted efforts to enhance the visibility and representation of Indigenous and non-white communities, integrating Indigenous and decolonial perspectives into curricula (de Jong et al., 2019; de Carvalho, 2022; Pimentel, 2023; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). In post-colonial regions such as Africa and Asia, Critical Pedagogy has become part of broader initiatives to decolonize education and create inclusive curricula that recognize students’ diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds. This is particularly evident in areas where social movements and grassroots activism intersect with educational reform, helping to shape new pedagogical practices that engage with local contexts and empower marginalized communities (Freire, 1972; Darder, 2017; de Jong et al., 2019; Pimentel, 2023).

Where Critical Pedagogy has been applied, its impact has been profound, particularly in empowering learners and communities to challenge societal norms and fostering transformative, inclusive learning environments (UNESCO, 2017a; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). However, despite its growing influence, Critical Pedagogy remains largely confined to niche areas, with mainstream educational frameworks proving slow to adopt its principles. Many educational systems continue to be shaped by colonial legacies and neoliberal policies that prioritize standardized testing and rigid curricula, which often limit opportunities for transformative, critical engagement (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux, 2022).

Such tendencies speak to a broader challenge in educational paradigms—the resistance to transforming learning environments to better accommodate and reflect the diverse needs of learners, especially those from historically marginalized groups. Below, I briefly explore the internal debates surrounding inclusive education and how they intersect with broader debate about the need for a paradigm shift.

1.2.4 Connecting the Inclusivity Debate in Education to a Broader Paradigm Shift

The recent push toward inclusivity and equity in education has sparked substantial debate among educators, policymakers, and academics (Strange & Cox, 2016; Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019; Rix, 2024; Gibson & Cook-Sather, 2020; Ahmed, 2012; Migliarini & Elder, 2023). While learner-centered models are frequently praised for creating engaging and supportive spaces, teacher-centered methods tend to fall short in addressing the unique challenges faced by learners with special needs. This underscores the growing consensus on the need for a paradigm shift toward more inclusive, equitable, and transformative educational practices (Cappiali, 2023).

Worldwide, there is a growing recognition of the need for more inclusive practices, prompting institutions to revise curricula and adopt inclusive frameworks to better accommodate diverse learners (Hockings, 2010; Achtaridou et al., 2022). Yet critical questions remain about whether these changes go far enough. While initiatives like Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Responsiveness to Diversity (Gay, 2000), and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) (Goleman, 2015/1995) have expanded access and participation, they often remain limited to adjusting to the current systems without fundamentally transforming them. From the perspective of

curricular improvements, efforts to foster inclusivity within traditional educational frameworks are undoubtedly important, especially for promoting the success of historically marginalized learners (Ahmed 2002; Migliarini & Elder, 2023). However, while such approaches may improve inclusion, they often fail to address the deeper cultural and structural changes necessary for genuine educational transformation (Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019). They tend to focus on improving the existing system without questioning or reshaping the dominant educational paradigms (Cappiali, 2023, 2024b).

Pushing the debate further, scholars and communities—especially those coming from or working with marginalized groups—advocate for a more profound transformation: one that rethinks the foundational structures of education itself. Drawing inspiration from Freire’s Critical Pedagogy and decolonial theories, they call for a comprehensive reexamination of power structures and the role of education in addressing inequality (Chapman & Hobbel, 2019; Mullen, 2021; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; de Jong et al., 2019). Proponents of this view suggest that real transformation requires systemic changes that challenge not only curricula and pedagogy but also the cultural and institutional barriers that inhibit true inclusivity.

Ultimately, the debate on inclusivity is inseparable from the broader call for a paradigm shift in education. To address the deeper socio-political and cultural dimensions of exclusion, a fundamental rethinking of how education systems operate is required. Moving beyond superficial adjustments and embracing holistic, structural change will enable educational institutions to make inclusivity an inherent part of their framework—not just an add-on. This approach would position inclusivity as a core element of an education system committed to promoting equity, justice, and social transformation (Cappiali, 2023; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

1.2.5 Transcending Educational Boundaries with TEP

Following the overview of educational paradigms and the debate on inclusivity, it is essential to explore how education can move beyond the limitations of existing approaches. In my recent work advocating for a more inclusive, equitable, and just educational system (Cappiali, 2023; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024), I have argued that combining the strengths of learner-centered strategies with the emancipatory goals of Critical Pedagogy offers a more comprehensive path forward. This integrative

approach fosters deep learning, inclusivity, and personal development while simultaneously addressing structural injustices and empowering learners to contribute to collective change.

While learner-centered and Critical Pedagogy share some common principles—particularly in their emphasis on empowering learners—there are crucial distinctions between the two. Learner-centered models prioritize individual autonomy and personal engagement, which are vital for fostering student agency and active participation. However, they often fail to consider the broader socio-political contexts that influence education, such as systemic inequalities and power dynamics. In contrast, Critical Pedagogy connects learning to social justice, focusing not only on individual development but also on transforming society by addressing power imbalances and promoting collective empowerment. Where learner-centered approaches emphasize personal growth, Critical Pedagogy seeks to cultivate both personal and societal transformation.

TEP transcends these boundaries by leveraging the strengths of both approaches. By integrating the individualized focus of learner-centered models with the socio-political commitment of Critical Pedagogy, it creates an educational framework that supports holistic development while also confronting systemic injustices. This unified framework positions education as a catalyst for both personal and social change, advancing its transformative and emancipatory potential.

1.3 TACKLING CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSITIVE TOPICS IN DIVERSE SETTINGS

Before introducing the key features of TEP, it is important to address why engaging with controversial and sensitive topics in education is crucial for realizing the potential of this integrated approach. To navigate these complexities, this book addresses two pivotal questions:

- *How can we tackle complex, controversial, and sensitive issues such as social exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination in an ethical and pedagogically relevant manner?*
- *How can we leverage the diversity represented in educational settings to promote well-being and deep learning, while also cultivating learners' holistic development and fostering both individual and societal transformation?*

The first question challenges us to develop strategies that address controversial and sensitive issues directly, while considering the varied dimensions of human experience and societal structures to enhance the learning journey. The second question emphasizes the importance of promoting holistic and interconnected learning by leveraging diversity as a key pedagogical asset.

Navigating controversial and sensitive topics that impact learners' lives—while respecting the diverse spectrum of viewpoints and identities—should be a global educational priority (UNESCO, 2021; Council of Europe, 2016). Addressing these issues while respecting diversity is essential for fostering educational environments that value pluralism and tolerance (Council of Europe, 2017; Magendzo et al., 2015; Magendzo, 2016). This endeavor is crucial for equipping learners to become informed, critical thinkers and active citizens (Freire, 1998). When thoughtfully integrated into the curriculum, controversial and sensitive topics equip learners with essential skills such as dialogue, critical analysis, and empathy, empowering them to engage meaningfully in societal discourse and contribute to building more inclusive communities.

Furthermore, addressing controversies in an educational context can help prevent conflicts by promoting understanding across diverse perspectives and fostering peace and social cohesion. Engaging with these topics meaningfully and respectfully not only helps learners navigate complex societal issues but also supports the creation of more inclusive and tolerant societies (Zembylas, 2015).

1.3.1 Why Controversial and Sensitive Topics Matter in Education

Controversial and sensitive issues are defined as matters that elicit intense emotions and create divisions within communities and society at large (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 8). Key issues can range from local concerns—such as mosque-building or the presence of crucifixes in schools—to broader national or global challenges like greenhouse gas emissions, accommodation of religious diversity, and radicalization of youth. The contentious nature of these topics varies significantly by location and time; for instance, bilingual education policies may provoke heated debates in one country but be widely accepted in another. It is essential, moreover, to recognize that a controversial issue goes beyond mere disagreements or differences of opinion; it stirs strong emotions, fosters animosity, and creates deep divisions among communities (Parker, 2016; Zembylas, 2015; Council of Europe, 2017).

In an increasingly polarized world, these conflicts around diversity and social issues often surface in classrooms, making the treatment of controversial and sensitive topics a crucial responsibility within education (Parker, 2016; Zembylas, 2015). Educators must navigate these issues with care, ensuring that discussions are not only ethically grounded but also transformative—equipping learners to engage with and understand complex societal challenges. The contextual understanding of what constitutes a controversial issue lays the groundwork for unpacking the pedagogical and ethical challenges educators face when addressing these topics in practice.

1.3.2 Challenges in Teaching Controversial Topics Today

Controversial issues are inherently complex, often lacking straightforward solutions and stirring strong emotions that can deepen divisions and provoke suspicion and mistrust. The sensitivity of these topics varies widely based on cultural, age, gender, and other socio-cultural factors. When addressing such topics, it is crucial for educators to navigate ethical concerns meticulously and mitigate potential harm, particularly in cases directly impacting learners (hooks, 1994; Brookfield, 2019). Yet, many educators often lack the necessary training and support, leaving them—and their institutions—ill-equipped to help learners engage with the complex world around them.

The need to transform our educational approaches has never been more apparent, especially when it comes to addressing controversial and sensitive topics such as racism, gender-based violence, discrimination, migration, and the inclusion of immigrants in society—all of which are central to my academic work. Teaching students in the social sciences from diverse backgrounds for more than a decade has heightened my awareness of the urgency to radically transform our educational approaches to more effectively address significant issues that profoundly impact students' lives, both directly—as members of affected communities—and indirectly, as participants in societies grappling with these challenges.

These concerns resonate with a broad spectrum of practitioners and educators in both academic and non-academic settings, particularly in environments dedicated to promoting inclusive and equitable education (UNESCO, 2021; Council of Europe, 2017; Magendzo et al., 2015; Magendzo, 2016). Such topics span a range of disciplines and include climate change, social and environmental justice, polarization, radicalization, religious diversity, human rights, freedom of speech, and ethics in

artificial intelligence. In response, practitioners are increasingly seeking alternative pedagogical approaches to meaningfully engage learners with topics closely connected to their lives (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

1.3.3 Leveraging Diversity as a Pedagogical Resource

With mass migration and the increasing inclusion of underrepresented groups, educational landscapes worldwide have transformed into diverse mosaics of backgrounds and experiences among teachers and learners alike. This diversity—encompassing gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, visible and invisible disabilities (Ahmed, 2012; Migliarini & Elder, 2023) as well as diverse political and worldviews (Cappiali, 2023)—enriches educational settings but also introduces complex challenges. Heterogeneous classrooms necessitate the creation of safe spaces for discussing controversial and sensitive topics, which demands high levels of empathy, anti-discriminatory practices, and cross-cultural awareness from both educators and learners. These discussions are not merely academic; they are vital in navigating and understanding the personal and collective implications of these topics, especially because many learners in our classrooms are directly impacted by these issues.

These reflections highlight the crucial importance of establishing an inclusive, multifaceted educational environment that acknowledges and actively leverages the diversity of learners to navigate controversial and sensitive topics effectively and ethically. Such diversity, particularly among learners who have faced significant personal challenges, including trauma, underscores the need to create a respectful and empathetic learning atmosphere. When approached thoughtfully, classroom diversity can serve as a dynamic resource, enriching learning experiences and contributing to broader societal impact. Yet, engaging with this diversity also requires managing the complexities and ethical considerations associated with discussing personal and potentially traumatic topics, ensuring that such discussions are both sensible and transformative (Zembylas, 2015).

The interplay of controversies and diversity within educational settings presents both methodological and ethical challenges as well as key opportunities for educational renewal (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012; Zembylas, 2015). To effectively navigate controversial and sensitive topics in diverse classrooms, several practical and ethical questions arise:

- *How can educators engage with sensitive topics in a way that respects all learners, including those personally affected by such issues, without censoring those who have not?*
- *How can the diversity within the classroom be leveraged to foster deep listening, perspective change, and mutual learning?*
- *How can educators encourage learners to share and voice their experiences and perspectives, thereby enriching their educational journey and enhancing their capacity to influence society positively?*
- *What are the best practices for navigating the ethical complexities involved in these discussions, ensuring a balance between fostering open dialogue and protecting learners' vulnerabilities and emotional well-being?*

These questions are foundational in shaping an educational approach that not only addresses immediate educational objectives but also prepares learners to engage thoughtfully with critical questions that concern their lives and society at large.

In addition to raising ethical considerations that require critical and thorough examination (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 8), tackling controversies in educational settings also prompts key questions about academic freedom and the teacher's identity, beliefs, values, and positionality within the power structure (Brookfield, 2017; Brookfield & Hess, 2021). Educators must strike a nuanced balance between expressing personal perspectives and fostering an environment that promotes open and respectful dialogue among learners. Such a balance is crucial for navigating the complexities of teaching sensitive topics while ensuring that educational spaces remain inclusive and equitable. For example, as a white educator, I find it essential to approach discussions on racism with humility, awareness of my positionality, and an informed understanding of anti-racism (Brookfield & Hess, 2021). Moreover, it is imperative to consistently integrate and emphasize anti-discriminatory practices. Reflecting on one's positionality helps prevent harm and leverages classroom diversity as a resource to broaden learners' understanding of others' perspectives and the societal problems that affect them (Zembylas, 2015; for details, refer to Chaps. 3, 4 and 5).

The pressing questions raised in this section carry significant practical and ethical implications, calling for a reconsideration of our educational goals, particularly in how we approach controversial and sensitive issues within diverse learning environments. To truly equip teachers and learners with the tools to engage critically, navigate differences, and contribute

meaningfully to societal transformation, we need to embrace more holistic, interconnected, and socially relevant pedagogical frameworks that are better aligned with the realities of our globalized and diverse society. In this book, I will demonstrate how TEP has enabled me to effectively address these challenges by integrating diverse perspectives, fostering critical engagement, and creating safe, inclusive learning spaces. Through TEP's principles and practices, I have been able to support learners in navigating complex topics and in contributing to meaningful change. The next section will introduce the core elements of TEP, building on the ethical and pedagogical foundations discussed here.

1.4 CORE ELEMENTS OF TEP: A PATHWAY FORWARD

Capitalizing on current developments in the fields of education, TEP seeks to expand educational goals by combining traditional academic goals—such as the acquisition of knowledge and skills—with learners' well-being and emancipatory aspirations. In my research and teaching, TEP has proven invaluable in addressing controversial and sensitive topics like systemic exclusion, including racism and other forms of discrimination, while creating an environment that recognizes and nurtures the intrinsic worth and potential of every individual and community.

1.4.1 *TEP's Expanded Goals*

The following figure introduces the seven core goals of TEP in a nutshell. For a more detailed view, see also Table 2.1 in Chap. 2, which elaborates on these overarching goals.

TEP functions as an integrated framework that addresses the multifaceted aspects of learner development—intellectual, practical, emotional, and social—while also engaging with broader questions about the role of education today. Central to TEP's philosophy is the creation of learning environments that cater to the diverse backgrounds and life experiences of learners. TEP supports educational environments that are inclusive and equitable, leveraging the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of both teachers and learners (Freire, 1998).

Within the TEP framework, holistic development serves as the overarching aim encompassing the comprehensive growth of learners. This goal is not merely an addition to the educational objectives; it is fundamentally integrated throughout the entire learning process. The pursuit of holistic development ensures that education is not confined to the

acquisition of knowledge alone but extends to support the development and growth of individuals who are capable of critical thinking, self-awareness, empathy, compassion, and active societal engagement.

In TEP, each goal presented in Fig. 1.1 contributes uniquely to the broader aim of holistic development. This holistic perspective is enriched by the inclusion of Indigenous and decolonial insights, which emphasize interconnectedness and spirituality, further enhancing the educational experience. Through this comprehensive framework, TEP seeks to promote academic and personal growth and to cultivate a deep commitment to equity, social justice, ensuring that learners are prepared to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

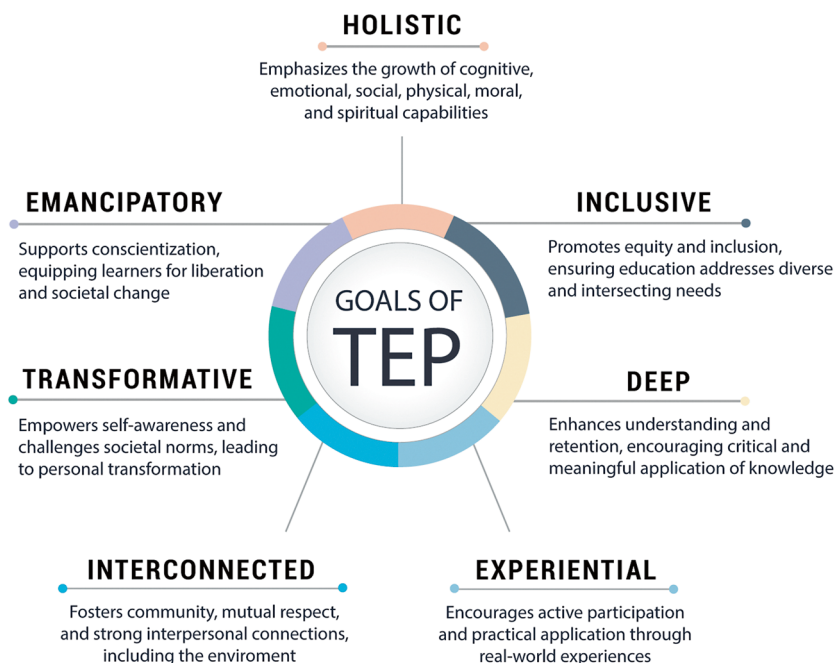


Fig. 1.1 Overarching goals of TEP

1.4.2 *A Cohesive Framework*

The core goals of TEP have been shaped by synthesizing diverse educational traditions into a unified, cohesive framework. TEP seeks to empower educators to implement broad, impactful changes across educational systems, advocating for a flexible, inclusive approach that addresses the fragmentation currently hindering the progress of innovative educational methods. By merging learner-centered strategies with Critical Pedagogy, TEP offers a comprehensive model for fostering holistic personal and societal transformation.

I argue for the emergence of a new educational paradigm, evidenced by the substantial achievements of innovative educators worldwide (Cappiali, 2023; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). However, these approaches are often developed in isolation or in competition with one another—addressing similar educational challenges, yet remaining marginalized within mainstream systems due to a fragmented educational landscape. The lack of comprehensive integration of these diverse innovations reveals an urgent need for a more cohesive approach—one that effectively synthesizes and leverages existing educational theories and practices to maximize their transformative impact (Cappiali, 2023).

TEP is built upon three interrelated components—combined philosophies, combined theories of learning, and pedagogical interventions—which will be described in depth throughout the book. Below, I provide a brief overview to introduce readers to TEP.

1.4.2.1 *Combined Philosophies*

TEP is an integrative educational framework that draws on a blend of humanistic and humanizing philosophies—from the foundational work of Maria Montessori (2002/1912) and John Dewey (2007/1938) to Paulo Freire’s Critical Pedagogy (1972)—alongside Indigenous and decolonial knowledge systems. At its core, TEP is committed to fostering inclusive, equitable, and just learning environments that reflect humanistic values and support the development of democratic societies that value diversity and inclusion.

In TEP, “transformative” refers to personal transformation in the humanist tradition, emphasizing the importance of individual growth and autonomy. Simultaneously, “emancipatory” reflects a commitment to addressing injustices, aligning with the humanizing aspect of education that seeks to liberate individuals from systemic oppression. As such, TEP

embodies a *humanizing philosophy for all*, recognizing that true inclusion cannot exist without also confronting injustice alongside personal transformation (Montessori, 2002/1912; Freire, 1998).

Decolonial approaches further enrich the pursuit of a humanizing education by challenging the dominance of Eurocentric knowledge systems and dismantling colonial legacies. They promote a plurality of epistemologies and amplify marginalized voices, thereby enhancing TEP's commitment to inclusivity. This dedication to epistemic justice fosters educational environments that prioritize the lived experiences and knowledge of marginalized groups (de Carvalho, 2022; May & Skukauskaite, 2016). Additionally, these approaches expand the focus beyond a human-centered worldview to embrace an earth-centered perspective that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all living beings and the planet. Hence, by embedding decolonial insights into its core, TEP advances the educational mandate to promote inclusion, equality, and justice, ensuring that personal transformation and the fight against injustice are intricately linked to the protection of all living beings and the Earth.

1.4.2.2 *Combined Theories*

TEP's theoretical foundation combines elements from Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT), Critical Pedagogy, Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL). By integrating these diverse approaches, TEP offers a holistic educational experience that also addresses relational and socio-political dimensions of learning. This interdisciplinary combination ensures that learners are not only acquiring knowledge but also developing emotional intelligence, empathy, and critical awareness necessary to engage with complex social issues. TEP's adaptability across diverse educational settings makes it a dynamic framework for fostering both individual and collective transformation.

A key component of TEP is its focus on inclusive education principles via the use of intersectionality (Migliarini & Elder, 2023). Intersectionality, as developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) and expanded by Collins and Bilge (2020), offers a framework to understand and actively challenge systems of power, oppression, and marginalization within education and society at large. By considering the interplay of diverse social identities—such as race, gender, class, and sexuality—TEP identifies and addresses the exclusion of marginalized viewpoints and knowledge systems, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable educational experience.

By integrating diverse perspectives—including religious, political, and cultural worldviews, as well as Indigenous epistemologies from both the Global North and the Global South—TEP redefines “inclusion” as more than mere access to education. Instead, it positions inclusion as a catalyst for enriching learning through a broad spectrum of skills, competencies, and knowledge, with particular emphasis on relational ways of knowing. This approach creates a transformative space for the collective exploration of critical issues and deepens insights into how educational systems can inadvertently marginalize certain groups and perpetuate inequalities.

1.4.2.3 Pedagogical Interventions

A distinctive feature of TEP’s practical application is its use of pedagogical interventions, which move beyond traditional lectures by engaging learners in dynamic, learner-centered activities. These interventions are intentionally designed to influence teaching and learning processes, achieving specific educational objectives within the broader framework of TEP. They are aimed to effectively translate TEP’s educational principles and theories into practice, engaging learners meaningfully with content, promoting critical thinking, and generating transformative and emancipatory outcomes. By fostering holistic development, inclusion, deep and experiential learning, interconnectedness, and personal and social transformation, these interventions embody the seven core goals of TEP.

Drawing on my experiences in both academic and non-academic contexts (as outlined in Chap. 3), I have refined these interventions to create inclusive learning environments where all students feel valued and empowered to contribute. These activities combine a variety of formats, such as self-reflective exercises, critical discussions in small groups, immersive exercises, simulations, and role-playing—each carefully crafted to actively engage students and leverage the diversity of their perspectives and lived experiences. This approach facilitates a rich exchange of knowledge and immerses students in real-world applications of their learning.

1.4.3 Cross-Fertilization

The combination of diverse philosophies, theories, and pedagogical interventions within TEP seeks to offer a cohesive and comprehensive framework that goes beyond traditional educational paradigms. By synthesizing these elements, TEP empowers educators and learners to create transformative educational experiences that are holistic, interconnected, and

socially relevant. Throughout this book, I will demonstrate how TEP's framework has enabled me to effectively address the challenges posed by fragmented educational approaches, harnessing the strength of diverse perspectives to foster critical engagement and meaningful social change.

It is important to emphasize that TEP is not intended as an entirely new or competing model. Instead, it builds on existing educational philosophies, theories, and practices. Many of the practices advocated by TEP are already in use across various fields and disciplines, though often in a fragmented manner (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). By consolidating these emerging trends and convergences, TEP aims to offer a cohesive framework that can unify and strengthen diverse areas where these discussions are taking place. For a detailed account of this integration, see Chap. 6.

TEP capitalizes on cross-fertilization by integrating existing ideas into a structured and scientifically grounded framework. In doing so, it addresses the challenges related to fragmentation and insufficient integration across educational philosophies and theories. Inspired by Montessori's work on "scientific pedagogy," TEP emphasizes evidence-informed methodologies for educational interventions, ensuring both their effectiveness and adaptability to various contexts, while also allowing for measurable processes and outcomes.

TEP's flexibility allows educators to tailor its principles and practices to their specific needs and contexts. Whether you are a scholar, a practitioner, or a policymaker, this book invites you to explore TEP's potential as a powerful transformative educational tool that can be adapted and applied to a wide range of educational settings and purposes.

1.5 ENGAGING DIVERSE AUDIENCES

This book is designed for a diverse audience spanning multiple sectors. TEP can be applied as a comprehensive framework or integrated selectively into existing curricula, enabling educators to incorporate its transformative and emancipatory principles in various educational settings. Those educators already utilizing elements of TEP—such as in Human Rights Education, Peace Education (HRE) or related fields—may find further insights to enhance their current practices. The structure of this book reflects this versatility, offering both conceptual frameworks and practical strategies that readers can adapt to their specific needs.

While the book is primarily aimed at scholars, educators, community leaders, and policymakers with a background in education, TEP's

principles and practices can benefit those outside traditional educational roles as well. By offering new perspectives and tools for fostering transformative learning and critical engagement, TEP ensures its relevance across disciplines, educational levels, and geographical contexts.

For those working in environments where teacher-centered methods still dominate, even small adjustments—such as incorporating reflective practices, critical dialogue, or experiential learning activities—can make a meaningful difference. While implementing TEP in its entirety may not be feasible in all settings, adopting specific practices can serve as a step toward more transformative and inclusive education.

Educators grounded in learner-centered models can enrich their practice by integrating TEP's transformative-emancipatory dimensions, which extend beyond individual achievement to foster holistic and interconnected forms of learning. This approach, already gaining traction in institutions across North America, continues to expand as elements of Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), Critical Pedagogy and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) are further incorporated into curricula (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

While the primary focus of this book is the application of TEP within the social sciences, its framework is highly adaptable across a wide range of disciplines, including arts and humanities, law, social work, public health, environmental studies, and STEM fields (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024; Cappiali, 2024b). TEP's principles are particularly relevant to fields that already embrace approaches aligned with its core values, such as Human Rights Education, Global Citizenship Education, Peace Education, Anti-Racism Education, and Environmental Justice and Sustainability.

These fields—especially those addressing controversial and sensitive topics like racism, discrimination, migration, poverty, and social or environmental justice—can benefit greatly from TEP's holistic, transformative, and emancipatory potential. By applying TEP's framework, educators and practitioners can enhance educational experiences that empower learners to critically engage with pressing societal issues and contribute to meaningful social change.

Finally, although many examples in this book are drawn from higher education, TEP's principles and practices are adaptable to all educational levels—from primary to non-formal education. Educators can tailor TEP to align with learners' developmental stages and cognitive abilities, ensuring that transformative and emancipatory education is accessible to students of all ages.

1.6 STRATEGIC READING: A GUIDE TO CHAPTERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

This section offers guidance on how to navigate and utilize the book effectively. While the chapters are best understood within the broader context of the book, each one also provides valuable standalone insights, making them accessible to readers from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. I encourage readers to begin with the chapters that align with their specific interests and contexts. For those seeking additional context or theoretical grounding, references to related chapters and appendices are provided throughout the book to support a deeper understanding. Educators will find practical strategies for creating inclusive and equitable learning environments, while researchers can engage with innovative methodologies and theoretical frameworks for studying and expanding TEP. Whether reading the book cover to cover or focusing on selected sections, my hope is that readers will be inspired to explore TEP in ways that best suit their professional needs and contexts.

Part I introduces the foundational underpinnings of TEP, setting the stage for understanding its core principles and methodology. Chapter 2 explores TEP's philosophical and theoretical bases, establishing a solid foundation for its continued evolution. The chapter's primary contribution lies in presenting a unified framework that transcends traditional boundaries between educational philosophies and learning theories. By bridging these divides, it lays the groundwork for the practical application of TEP across diverse educational settings and contexts.

Chapter 3 delves into the research and methodology behind the development and refinement of TEP, providing an in-depth look at the scientific pedagogy inspired by Montessori's seminal work (2002/1912). It illustrates how TEP's philosophical principles are translated into concrete, actionable strategies designed to achieve measurable learning outcomes aligned with its core educational goals: holistic development, inclusion, deep and experiential learning, interconnectedness, transformation, and emancipation.

To support educators in applying these methodologies, the chapter outlines key elements for developing, testing, and evaluating pedagogical interventions across diverse settings, with an emphasis on addressing controversial and sensitive topics. Additionally, the chapter incorporates new insights from my ongoing research, showcasing how TEP's methodology

can be expanded and refined to respond to evolving educational needs, particularly in diverse and complex learning environments.

After guiding readers on how to implement TEP's core elements, the chapter introduces the socio-psychological component of the methodology. Although still in its early stages of development, this component aims to assess the future applications and the impact of TEP's interventions at individual, group, and contextual levels. It considers key factors that influence learning and transformation, such as psychological and political resistance or openness to change, emotional responses to sensitive topics, trauma, and group dynamics. By incorporating these dimensions, this component ensure that TEP's interventions will be responsive to the unique needs and characteristics of different participants and learning environments, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how TEP can enhance the educational experience of learners across contexts.

Part II showcases the empirical application of TEP through a case study of a successful pedagogical intervention addressing racism in higher education. Drawing insights from a graduate course on migration and discrimination, it demonstrates how TEP can be translated from theory into practice. The focal point is a two-day workshop titled "Racism, Anti-Racism, and Identity Politics in Europe: The Case of France from a Comparative Perspective," implemented over six years in Italy and Sweden (2016–2021). This intervention exemplifies TEP's approach to addressing sensitive topics in diverse classrooms and highlights its potential to harness diversity, foster inclusivity, and enrich the educational experience—particularly when tackling controversial subjects that deeply impact learners' lives.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the workshop, including content selection and teaching strategies. It emphasizes the importance of adapting methods to diverse learner backgrounds and creating a supportive environment for open discussion and critical engagement. The chapter serves as a practical guide for educators and practitioners looking to apply TEP principles in real-world contexts. This workshop is presented as the most sophisticated example of TEP's methodology, offering insights that can be adapted to other topics and educational settings. The chapter presents key examples of how TEP's principles can shape effective pedagogical interventions, with broader implications beyond the specific context in which the workshop was originally conducted.

Chapter 5 evaluates the impact of the intervention using qualitative data to demonstrate how it enhanced learners' understanding of racism.

The findings show how the workshop deepened learners' grasp of racism's historical and contemporary contexts in Europe and beyond and encouraged meaningful discussions on social justice. The metaphor of light passing through a prism is employed to illustrate how TEP's adaptable methodology refracts diverse learner experiences into a spectrum of educational processes and outcomes, highlighting the multifaceted impacts and opportunities for discovery through transformative education. This chapter will be particularly relevant for researchers and educators interested in assessing the effectiveness of TEP's pedagogical interventions.

Chapter 6 concludes the book with a compelling call for adopting a humanizing pedagogy that responds to the global demand for transforming education to envision sustainable and just futures for humanity, the planet, and all living beings. This chapter positions TEP as a powerful framework for facilitating such change by integrating inclusivity, critical consciousness, and social justice. It highlights how TEP can be adopted in full or in part and can complement the work already being done globally. By providing a scientifically grounded methodology, TEP seeks to systematize evolving practices to create a more cohesive and effective approach to transformative education. Rather than serving as a wholesale replacement for existing models, TEP is presented as a complementary framework that deepens educational efforts to address critical societal challenges.

Ultimately, the chapter serves as a call to action for scholars, educators, practitioners, community leaders, and policymakers to explore how TEP can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of various stakeholders. By fostering a collaborative spirit and emphasizing TEP's broad applicability, the chapter advocates for a radical transformation of educational practices—one that can lead to meaningful change at individual, collective, and societal levels.

The book includes *eight detailed appendices and a comprehensive Glossary* that provide additional resources and context for understanding and implementing TEP. These resources equip readers with tools and insights to deepen their engagement with the framework and its future developments, extending beyond the original context in which it was developed and applied.

The appendices serve as practical guides for applying TEP across diverse educational contexts:

- Appendix A provides an overview of the methodology, detailing the development process, data collection methods, and pilot studies that informed TEP's creation.

- Appendix B outlines the core philosophical principles of TEP and their practical implications, demonstrating how these foundational ideas can be translated into real-world applications.
- Appendix C emphasizes the critical role of teachers in TEP, focusing on reflective practices and fostering inclusivity.
- Appendix D presents ethical guidelines for implementing TEP, ensuring that its approaches remain respectful, inclusive, and ethically sound.
- Appendix E provides guidance on using trigger warnings, helping educators prepare students to engage with sensitive topics in a supportive environment.
- Appendix F explores the use of learning circles to promote critical dialogue and relational learning, core elements of TEP's collaborative approach.
- Appendix G supplies detailed instructions and preparatory materials for the workshop on racism, enabling educators to accurately replicate this key intervention.
- Appendix H presents the questionnaire used to gather student feedback on TEP's overall approach and the four pedagogical interventions implemented in my courses.

The Glossary offers clear definitions of key concepts, ensuring that readers—regardless of their familiarity with the educational philosophies and theories discussed—can fully engage with the material. It is designed to be inclusive, providing accessible explanations that foster understanding and promote meaningful dialogue around the transformative and emancipatory aspects of education.

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PART I

Foundations of TEP
and Methodology



Philosophical and Theoretical Integration

Abstract This chapter explores the philosophical and theoretical foundations of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). TEP combines holistic, inclusive, deep and experiential learning with the empowerment of individuals and communities for personal and socio-political transformation. By integrating humanistic, humanizing, and decolonial philosophies, TEP draws on various learning theories, including Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT), Critical Pedagogy, Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL). Rooted in inclusive education with a strong emphasis on intersectionality, TEP challenges the exclusion of diverse knowledge systems, particularly from marginalized communities, to create more equitable educational practices. This chapter lays the groundwork for applying TEP across diverse educational settings, transcending traditional boundaries and highlighting the convergence of key educational philosophies and theories.

Keywords Learner-centered education • Critical Pedagogy • Decolonial approaches • Deep and Experiential Learning Theory • Transformative Learning Theory • Socio-Emotional Learning • Inclusive education • Intersectionality

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter delves into the philosophical and theoretical foundations of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). By combining holistic learner development with a focus on the well-being and empowerment of individuals and communities, TEP aims to foster personal and social transformation by synthesizing various educational traditions into a flexible yet robust framework.

Educational philosophies define the broader aims of learning, whereas theories of learning focus on the practical processes that bridge abstract ideals with concrete practice. This chapter begins by examining the philosophical traditions that inform TEP, highlighting its open nature and its integration of various traditions aligned with its transformative and emancipatory goals. Specifically, I explore the contributions of humanistic, humanizing, and decolonial philosophies, each of which provides crucial insights into TEP's comprehensive approach.

The chapter then addresses the key learning theories that guide TEP's pedagogical objectives. It illustrates how TEP integrates various theories, including Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT), Critical Pedagogy, Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), and Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), to achieve its educational goals. Informed by inclusive education principles and emphasizing intersectionality, TEP proactively addresses the exclusion of marginalized knowledge systems to promote equitable and just educational practices. Here, inclusion is not merely a goal but an integral pedagogical orientation that transforms educational practice by embracing the richness of diversity and fostering mutual learning through a plurality of perspectives.

Finally, the chapter highlights the innovative dimension of TEP: its ability to acknowledge and systematize the convergences between different philosophies and theories to address contemporary educational challenges more effectively. Rather than providing an exhaustive literature review, this chapter presents a broad perspective on the commonalities and intersections across these philosophies and theories. It demonstrates how TEP seeks to weave these threads together into a cohesive, holistic, and socially relevant educational framework.

2.2 TOWARD AN INTEGRATED EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

In developing a robust philosophical foundation for TEP, I draw upon various educational philosophies that emphasize both the transformative and emancipatory roles of education, alongside more conventional academic goals. The works of Maria Montessori (2002/1912), John Dewey (2004/1916, 2007/1938), Paulo Freire (1972), and decolonial theorists serve as key influences.

Although these thinkers emerged from distinct contexts, their philosophies share common principles of personal growth, peace, and emancipation. When integrated, they provide a comprehensive understanding of education that expands its scope to encompass inclusive and equitable goals while simultaneously challenging traditional paradigms (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024; Claeys-Kulik et al., 2019; Rix, 2024). While each thinker offers a unique approach, their insights are complementary. By synthesizing their core elements, TEP endeavors to transform individual learners, raise their social and political consciousness, and liberate them from oppressive educational structures, contributing to more just and equitable societies.

The integration of their philosophies leads to three core dimensions on learning in TEP: the individual, relational, and socio-political dimensions. These dimensions align with Montessori's and Dewey's focus on holistic growth and Freire's commitment to social transformation. While these dimensions are inherent in each author's work, TEP offers a more explicit and cohesive framework that addresses the nuances and complexities of modern education:

- **Individual dimension:** Emphasizing personal growth, self-directed learning, and the development of critical thinking, creativity, and autonomy. This dimension encourages learners to take ownership of their educational journey, reflect on their progress, and engage thoughtfully with the world.
- **Relational dimension:** This dimension highlights the importance of cultivating meaningful interactions among learners, educators, and the community. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of all participants in the educational process, fostering collaboration, dialogue, and respect for diverse perspectives. Such a network of relationships enhances collective learning.

- **Socio-political dimension:** Critical engagement with social structures and power dynamics underpins this dimension. Learners are encouraged to examine societal issues, contribute to transformative action, and become active participants in social justice initiatives.

A key innovation of TEP is its emphasis on the relational dimension of learning alongside the individual dimension. This is an often underexplored area in traditional educational theories. This dimension encompasses essential elements such as cultivating trust, open communication, and collaboration, which are crucial for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment where all voices are equally heard and valued. By recognizing the interdependence of individuals within and outside the learning environment, TEP strengthens relationships through shared experiences and fosters a sense of belonging among teachers and learners. This interconnectedness not only enriches individual learning but also creates a supportive community where insights and knowledge flow freely (hooks, 2003). Ultimately, promoting compassion, empathy, and social responsibility within the relational dimension equips learners with essential qualities for engaging with diverse communities and addressing complex challenges.

The following sections delve further into the philosophical foundations of the three key dimensions of learning and illustrate their roles in shaping the TEP framework. **Appendix B** also provides a detailed overview of how TEP's philosophical principles can be practically applied, serving as a guide for educators looking to implement TEP effectively.

2.2.1 Transformative Education Grounded in Humanistic Philosophies

Transformative education, grounded in humanistic philosophies, centers on the inherent value and potential of each learner. Drawing particularly from the work of Montessori (2002/1912) and Dewey (2004/1916, 2007/1938), this tradition emphasizes holistic development, seeking to nurture individuals not just academically but emotionally, intellectually, and morally. By valuing learners' subjective experiences, these approaches create environments where students are encouraged to explore their interests, potential, and values. Beyond academic success, humanistic education fosters personal growth, self-actualization, and intrinsic motivation, encouraging learners to become active participants in their own development.

Many contemporary learner-centered approaches draw inspiration from these humanistic traditions to varying degrees, focusing on autonomy, creativity, and ethical development. However, they often fall short of integrating a truly comprehensive approach that considers the broader social and political dimensions as well as the relational dimension—which are necessary for fostering individual and social transformative change. The emphasis on the relational dimension, which addresses the interactions and connections between individuals within the learning environment, is a distinctive feature that is often underrepresented in these approaches. This vision, however, was at the heart of Montessori’s and Dewey’s philosophies of education.¹

A key feature of humanistic philosophy is its connection to the transformative goals of TEP, particularly in the *individual dimension* of learning. Both Montessori and Dewey emphasize creating supportive and empathetic learning environments that address not only intellectual but also emotional and social needs. This aligns with TEP’s aim to foster self-actualization and personal autonomy, encouraging learners to take control of their own educational journey while cultivating curiosity and an intrinsic desire to understand the world (Montessori, 2002/1912; Dewey, 2007/1938). In this philosophy, learning is seen as being driven by internal motivation rather than by external pressures or rewards. This provides the foundation for personal growth and deep and experiential learning.

In addition to focusing on individual development, both Montessori and Dewey highlight the importance of—the *relational dimension* of learning. Montessori’s educational model encourages mixed-age peer learning, with teachers serving as guides to facilitate the development of social and emotional skills. Similarly, Dewey’s democratic classrooms emphasize experiential learning through collaboration and problem-solving. Both

¹While this section primarily focuses on the works of Montessori and Dewey, it is important to recognize that the humanistic philosophy of education is shaped by the diverse contributions of several seminal authors, each bringing unique perspectives to its development. Notable among these are: (1) Abraham Maslow, whose exploration of self-actualization in *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1968) emphasizes the fulfillment of individual potential; (2) Carl Rogers, who in *Freedom to Learn* (1969) advocates for a learner-centered approach that nurtures personal growth; (3) Howard Gardner, who introduces the theory of multiple intelligences in *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983), advocating for personalized education that respects diverse talents; and (4) Nel Noddings, who, in *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984), introduces the ethic of care, emphasizing the importance of relationships and caring within educational settings.

philosophers see education as a tool to strengthen social ties and civic responsibility, promoting relationships within the learning community that are vital to both personal and societal growth.

Montessori and Dewey also incorporate the *socio-political dimension* of learning into their educational philosophies, each contributing to TEP's broader goal of preparing responsible, civic-minded individuals. Montessori's focus on education for peace, cultural understanding, and conflict resolution equips learners with the skills to become proactive, peaceful participants in society (Montessori, 1949, 1955). Dewey views education as central to social progress, arguing that the classroom should serve as a microcosm of democracy, where learners engage in decision-making and community-centered activities. For Dewey, education is not simply preparation for future employment but a fundamental method for promoting social reform and informed civic participation (Dewey, 2004/1916).

Together, Montessori and Dewey provide a humanistic foundation that integrates personal growth with relational and socio-political engagement, forming a critical component of TEP's holistic and interconnected educational framework.

2.2.2 *Emancipatory Education Grounded in Humanizing Philosophies*

Emancipatory education, rooted in humanizing philosophy and strongly influenced by Freire (1972, 1998), complements the humanistic tradition by extending its focus to the transformation of societal structures that perpetuate inequality, aiming to empower individuals and communities to pursue social justice and equity. Freire's work showcases the role of education in developing critical consciousness, empowering learners to challenge oppressive systems. It centers on amplifying marginalized voices, advocating for education that challenges marginalization and exclusion and promotes social justice and transformative change.²

² The humanizing approaches to education are influenced by a diverse array of Western and non-Western scholars who have contributed with unique insights. In addition to Freire's seminal work, the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, there are other crucial references: (1) bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), which challenges traditional educational norms, advocating for education as a tool for liberation and social change; (2) Gloria Ladson-Billings' research on culturally relevant pedagogy, detailed in *The Dreamkeepers* (1994), emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing learners' cultural backgrounds in the educational process;

Freire believed that education is a process through which individuals discover themselves as creative agents and become more fully human (*individual dimension*). This involves fostering self-awareness and critical thinking, enabling individuals to understand their experiences and identities in relation to the world around them. According to Freire, education should lead to the humanization of both the oppressed and the oppressors by promoting empathy, understanding, and a commitment to creating a more just society (Freire, 1972, 1998). As such, it involves recognizing the full humanity of all individuals, promoting dignity, respect, and empowerment, and transforming systems of oppression. In education, this means empowering learners—especially those from marginalized groups—to develop self-awareness, recognize their agency, and work toward dismantling oppressive structures (Freire, 1972; Fanon, 1952; hooks, 1994).

In addition to this individual dimension of learning, Freire notes the importance of *relational learning*. His pedagogy advocates for collaborative, dialogic learning that elevates critical consciousness and fosters solidarity. In this respect, education is about creating equitable and empathetic learning environments that recognize and respond to students' diverse experiences and identities. The relational dimension of learning, here, is more than simple collaboration. It seeks to promote a sense of community and solidarity, encouraging learners to work together toward equity and human dignity (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1998; Giroux, 1997; Darder, 2017). This approach places a premium on inclusivity, respect, and understanding, seeing education as a collaborative and participatory process where students feel valued and empowered. It focuses on fostering a relational learning environment where learners' voices are central, and education becomes a tool for personal and collective transformation.

A humanizing philosophy also emphasizes the empowerment of individuals and communities to work toward social justice and a better world. As such, Freire's philosophy extends into the *socio-political dimension* by encouraging learners to understand and address the broader structures of power and oppression that shape their lives. This socio-political dimension

(3) Audre Lorde's writings, particularly *Sister Outsider* (1984), underscore the intersectionality of identities and the necessity of confronting systems of oppression within educational settings; (5) Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's critical race theory, as outlined in *Racism without Racists* (2003), sheds light on the pervasive nature of racial inequalities and the need for anti-racist education.

involves engaging learners with issues of social justice, enabling them to become active participants in the struggle for equity and human rights.

Finally, Freire's insights are further enriched by decolonial philosophies, which critique Eurocentric educational frameworks and aim to dismantle colonial legacies that shape which forms of knowledge and educational practices are considered legitimate. Below, I briefly introduce the contribution of decolonial approaches.

2.2.3 *Supporting Emancipatory Education via Decolonial Philosophies*

To further enrich its humanizing approach, TEP advocates for the integration of decolonial approaches, which recognize diverse epistemologies and integrate alternative knowledge systems to create a more equitable and just educational framework (Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2013; Hutchinson et al., 2023). By challenging Eurocentric notions of knowledge as a universal and objective truth, these perspectives highlight the cultural and historical contexts embedded in all forms of knowledge. This perspective expands the boundaries of what constitutes legitimate knowledge within educational spaces, pushing for the inclusion of multiple ways of knowing and understanding the world (Cappiali, 2023).

Decolonial philosophies critique how colonial histories and power dynamics have shaped education and knowledge production (Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2013; Hutchinson et al., 2023; May & Skukauskaite, 2016; de Jong et al., 2019; de Carvalho, 2022). They aim to dismantle the legacies of colonialism embedded within educational systems, including the dominance of white supremacy and Eurocentric knowledge structures, which perpetuate inequality and marginalization. By advocating for these principles, TEP seeks to create an inclusive and equitable educational landscape that values diverse epistemologies and cultural perspectives.

A central figure in this humanizing and decolonial project is Frantz Fanon. For Fanon, humanization is inseparable from the process of decolonization. In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon asserts that colonization dehumanizes both the colonized and the colonizer, and true liberation lies in restoring both the humanity of the oppressed and the oppressor. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), he delves into the psychological effects of colonization, arguing that overcoming internalized racism by the oppressed and reclaiming identity and dignity is essential for genuine humanization. Fanon's work underscores that decolonization is

integral to emancipating minds from internalized oppression and cultivate the critical awareness needed to challenge systemic injustices.

Central to decolonial perspectives is the expansion of our understanding of *interconnectedness*—between humans, nature, and spiritual elements. Indigenous educational approaches, for instance, highlight the profound relationship between land, culture, community, and spirituality in learning. These educational models diverge from traditional Western paradigms by integrating cultural and ecological knowledge honed over generations. Indigenous education stresses the importance of protecting the planet, nurturing ecosystems, and valuing non-human life, positioning education as a tool for sustaining the environment and advancing justice for all beings.

Decolonial philosophies advocate for an education that respects and incorporates these diverse ways of knowing. Decolonizing education thus involves questioning existing power dynamics, transforming curricula and pedagogies, and reshaping the very purpose of education to include multiple epistemologies. This approach addresses the human-centric focus of traditional models and integrates a responsibility toward non-human life, fostering a deeper respect for all living beings.

From this standpoint, education becomes a tool for liberating minds from colonial legacies, empowering individuals and communities to challenge and transform oppressive structures, and rebuilding societies in more equitable and sustainable ways (Battiste, 2013). This critical examination extends to pedagogical practices, curriculum design, and institutional structures, with the goal of making education more inclusive, reflective, and capable of fostering critical consciousness. Moreover, this approach allows to expand the concept of inclusion beyond a solely human-centered perspective, opening the path toward an educational practices that integrates an *earth-centered dimension* of learning.

All things considered, by weaving together the humanistic, humanizing, and decolonial strands, TEP promotes educational practices that are transformative, emancipatory, and committed to justice and inclusivity. The humanistic vision in TEP aligns with the goal of fostering personal growth, while the humanizing perspective embraces social justice and equity. Together, these dimensions of TEP connect individual transformation with a broader societal project, envisioning a society in which individuals and communities can thrive and live in dignity. This scholarship collectively establishes a robust foundation for understanding and promoting a *humanizing philosophy for all*—one that prioritizes empowerment, social justice, and the dismantling of oppressive structures. By integrating these interconnected dimensions, TEP positions itself as a

comprehensive framework that seeks not only to transform individuals but also to reshape educational systems and societal structures.

2.3 TOWARD AN INTEGRATED EDUCATIONAL THEORY

This section transitions into TEP's theoretical constructs, illustrating how its core principles are operationalized into educational practice. Understanding learning theories is crucial for grasping how learning occurs, and my goal is to rigorously transform TEP's philosophical principles into actionable educational praxis. This ensures that they align with the overarching aim of enhancing individual potential and addressing societal challenges through a systematic methodology.

TEP integrates elements from Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT), Critical Pedagogy, Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), and inclusive education via intersectionality to form an integrated and adaptable framework. Each theory brings unique principles that, when thoughtfully integrated, enhance the implementation of TEP. This combination nurtures holistic development by addressing cognitive, emotional, social, and ethical dimensions of learning, while also fostering critical reflection, self-awareness, and emotional regulation.

Integrating these theories enriches our understanding of education by broadening its scope to embrace inclusive and equitable goals (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). These approaches challenge traditional, lecture-based methods that rely heavily on passive listening and rote memorization, instead emphasizing active, learner-centered strategies that engage students more deeply. By fostering a variety of skills and competencies—from critical reflection and emotional awareness to collaborative engagement and ethical understanding, just to name a few—these approaches empower students to become critical thinkers and agents of change.

The benefits of this theoretical integration are multifaceted: it nurtures holistic development, enhances engagement through experiential learning, and enriches the learning environment through interdisciplinary perspectives. Together, these approaches create a comprehensive framework capable of promoting TEP's key broader goals of fostering both holistic and interconnected dimensions of learning, aiming towards both individual and social transformation.

Figure 2.1 visualizes these theoretical contributions, highlighting their foundational significance for TEP. These theories ensure that TEP is both

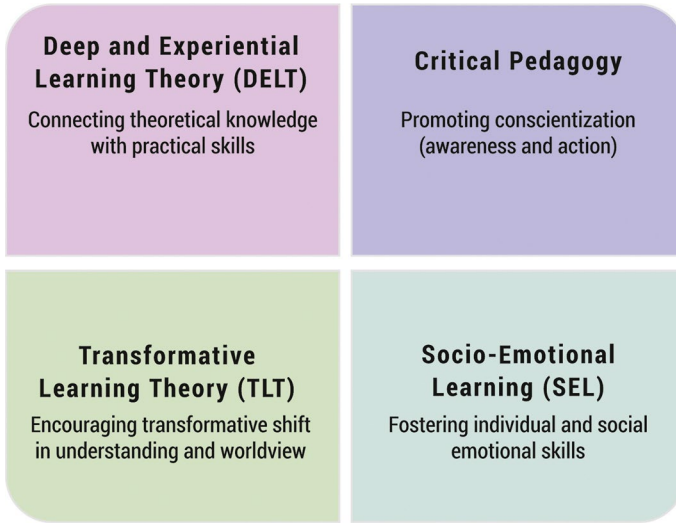


Fig. 2.1 Merging educational theories within TEP

theoretically robust and practically effective in fostering individual and social change. By integrating elements from these diverse theories, TEP broadens educational objectives and unveils new opportunities for a more comprehensive educational framework.

These theories integrate into TEP, aligning with my effort to broaden educational goals:

- *Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT)*: Emphasizes learning through experience and reflection, fostering self-actualization and intrinsic motivation. It values personal insights and reflections alongside academic achievements, connecting learning with real-world experiences through hands-on, meaningful engagement.
- *Critical Pedagogy*: Empowers learners to analyze societal structures and address inequalities, encouraging education as a practice of freedom. It uses approaches to education that emphasize social justice and promotes democratic participation via problem-posing, critical dialogue and other educational strategies.
- *Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)*: Focuses on personal growth through self-reflection, enabling learners to revise their perceptions and beliefs for significant transformation. It encourages dialogue and reflective practice for lasting changes in perspectives and behaviors.

- *Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)*: Equips learners with emotional and relational skills, emphasizing emotional intelligence as a foundation for transformative learning. It promotes self-awareness, empathy, and healthy interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, TEP places a strong emphasis on inclusive education by integrating the principle of intersectionality. It embraces diversity by ensuring that all learners—regardless of their backgrounds, identities, or abilities—have equitable access to learning opportunities. TEP promotes an inclusive environment in which differences are respected and valued, while addressing systemic power structures and various forms of marginalization in the classroom.

While these theories are distinct in their origins and focus, integrating them into TEP leads to a richer and more effective learning experience, such as supporting deep cognitive transformations alongside the development of essential socio-emotional skills. Below I detail how each theory influences TEP. Each offers unique methodologies and empirical insights that contribute to TEP's foundations. The aim is to showcase their individual contributions while emphasizing their points of convergence, which intersect and mutually reinforce key dimensions of transformative and emancipatory education.

2.3.1 *Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT)*

Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT) is a key educational theory informing TEP. Rooted in the foundational work of educational theorists such as John Dewey (2007/1938) and David Kolb (1984), who developed the Experiential Learning Model, DELT represents an evolution of the learner-centered paradigm. Montessori's educational philosophy and its practical applications are also central in shaping this advanced version of the learner-centered model (Montessori, 2002/1912). Grounded in humanistic educational philosophy, DELT challenges traditional teacher-centered instruction and one-size-fits-all strategies by emphasizing individualized learner development and active engagement.

DELT builds on constructivism, a theory positing that learners actively construct their own understanding through experiences, rather than passively receiving knowledge. It also draws on pragmatism, which

emphasizes the practical application of knowledge and the idea that learning is a dynamic process grounded in real-world problem-solving and reflection.³

Scholars supporting DELT advocate for deep learning, suggesting that learners must actively engage with material in ways that challenge their existing knowledge and cognitive structures, fostering deeper levels of comprehension and application. By encouraging learners to actively reflect on and engage with their experiences, DELT promotes not only intellectual development but also personal growth, making it a cornerstone of TEP's holistic and transformative vision.

Moreover, DELT emphasizes meaningful engagement with content, critical thinking, and the application of knowledge and analytical skills through direct experience. It focuses on understanding and meaning making in the learning process rather than mere memorization or surface learning. Moving away from teacher-centered methods (e.g., lectures), DELT encourages learners to make connections between ideas, reflect on their own understanding, and apply knowledge to new situations. It highlights the importance of active engagement, reflection, social interaction, and personal relevance in achieving deep and meaningful learning experiences (Wurdinger, 2005; Serin, 2018; Weimer, 2002; O'Neill & McMahon, 2005).

Recent developments in DELT as both a research field and practical application have been significantly shaped by contributions from educational psychologists and pedagogues who have expanded upon its foundational concepts. The theory has evolved to incorporate reflective practice,

³ Dewey applied pragmatism to education, emphasizing that learning is a dynamic, experiential process involving active engagement with the environment. Knowledge, for Dewey, is not static but must be discovered through inquiry, reflection, and interaction with the world (Dewey, 2007/1938). His work laid the foundation for experiential learning and construc-

tivist principles, which assert that learners build understanding through their interactions (Dewey, 2004/1916; Kolb, 1984). Dewey's influence is also evident in Paulo Freire's focus on praxis—reflection and action aimed at transforming oppressive structures (Freire, 1972). Freire adapted Dewey's principles of experiential learning and democratic education to his own context of political oppression. Scholars like Henry Giroux (1997) have previously highlighted these connections between Dewey's and Freire's philosophies (Critical Pedagogy) particularly around democratic education, experiential learning, and social transformation.

metacognition, and the influence of emotions and personal values on the learning process. This comprehensive strategy addresses cognitive aspects of learning while also emphasizing the significance of emotional and social factors (Mehta & Fine, 2022). DELT is applied across various educational levels and settings, from primary education to higher education and professional training, with notable implementation in North American and Nordic European contexts.

Pushing for an explicit integration of DELT into TEP offers several significant benefits, enhancing its effectiveness and depth. *Deep learning* encourages learners to engage with content, promoting analytical thinking and reflection. This aligns well with the transformative aspect of TEP, which focuses on personal transformation through knowledge and critical reflection. The integration strengthens learners' ability to absorb knowledge and to evaluate and reflect upon their own beliefs and values, fostering deeper personal and intellectual growth.

DELT highlights the importance of *experiential learning* through direct experience and the practical application of knowledge. This approach not only equips learners with practical skills but also deepens their understanding, making education more meaningful and impactful. DELT's focus on experiential activities—incorporating both action and reflection—aligns closely with the core principles of TEP. By promoting active participation, critical thinking, and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts, DELT strongly supports TEP's key educational goals.

In addition, achieving TEP's comprehensive objectives requires moving away from traditional, lecture-based teaching methods and developing diverse, dynamic activities that embody TEP principles. Research in DELT highlights the critical role of practical activities in education, emphasizing their importance across different disciplines and subjects (Beard & Wilson, 2013). Such activities encourage active participation, facilitate the practical application of knowledge, cultivate diverse competencies and skills, provide contextual understanding, offer multi-sensory experiences, and enhance learner motivation and interest (Wurdinger, 2005). Extensive empirical research further suggests that practical activities not only engage and empower learners but also foster inclusivity, catering to diverse abilities and learning preferences (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

Therefore, by incorporating DELT into TEP, the learning process becomes more dynamic, participatory, and directly relevant to real-world situations. Learners engage in hands-on experiences, allowing them to see the immediate implications of their learning—a particularly valuable

approach when addressing sensitive topics in diverse cultural contexts. Integrating DELT into TEP also broadens the scope of teaching methods and learning activities. This integration offers greater flexibility in curriculum design, enabling educators to tailor their practice to accommodate various learning styles and needs.

2.3.2 *Critical Pedagogy*

In the previous chapter, I introduced Critical Pedagogy as a paradigm. Here, I highlight key theoretical insights that integrate DELT with TEP's vision, establishing a clear connection between deep learning, personal transformation, and emancipatory goals (Cappiali, 2023, 2024). As explored earlier, one of the most significant strengths of Critical Pedagogy is its commitment to equity and social justice. Here, I argue that it also provides a robust framework through which to theorize and address oppressive systems—not just within education but across broader society. By encouraging learners to develop critical consciousness (or *conscientização*), Critical Pedagogy enables them to recognize the socio-political forces shaping their lives and equips them to take transformative action. This approach is particularly effective in diverse learning environments, where it values learners' cultural and experiential backgrounds, creating a more inclusive and empowering educational experience. This makes it a powerful tool for fostering active citizenship, especially in contexts where education is used to challenge oppressive power structures.

Connected to both humanistic and humanizing philosophies, Critical Pedagogy advocates for practices that encourages personal and societal transformation via holistic development of learners (UNESCO, 2017). It integrates cognitive, practical, and emotional dimensions of learning (Freire, 1972; UNESCO, 2017), and combines a commitment to enhancing the well-being of individuals (*individual dimension*) with a dedication to pluralism, democratic values, and justice (*relational and socio-political dimensions*) (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Freire, 1998; hooks, 1994; Darder, 2017; Giroux, 1997; Brookfield, 2019).

Critical Pedagogy, moreover, posits that these dimensions of learning need to relate to action (praxis). As such, it acknowledges that education is inherently political. It challenges the neutrality of education, highlighting how traditional educational practices can perpetuate societal inequalities and advocating for practices that promote justice and equality (Giroux, 1997). In practice, it encourages learners to (1) examine their

surroundings, beliefs, and values to develop critical consciousness and agency, and (2) take ownership of their own learning by reflecting on the world around them and acting to change it. In this way, Critical Pedagogy challenges individualistic philosophies of education, emphasizing the key role of relational learning, while promoting pluralism, democratic values, and social justice (or what I call socio-political learning) (Freire, 1998).

Integrating Critical Pedagogy into a unified theory rooted in TEP offers several advantages. Critical Pedagogy benefits significantly from the interdisciplinary nature of TEP, particularly through its connections with Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT). DELT incorporates elements of Critical Pedagogy by fostering critical engagement with content, encouraging learners to connect academic knowledge with broader social, political, and ethical contexts (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). Moreover, TEP's principles are infused with intersectional and decolonial insights. Such integration aims to deepen our engagement with the current educational imperative of decentralizing knowledge and challenging the exclusion of diverse viewpoints. This ensures a more inclusive and equitable global educational system. By connecting Critical Pedagogy with insights from psychology and other disciplines, TEP enhances its theoretical foundation and practical applications.

TEP adds value both within the discipline of Critical Pedagogy and as a new educational framework. It connects to global decolonial and social justice movements, emphasizing the role of education beyond formal schooling and incorporating perspectives from the “Global South” and community-based education perspectives (Tarlau, 2019; Chapman & Hobbel, 2019).

In Box 2.1, I present key examples of how core elements of Critical Pedagogy can be operationalized in educational practices through TEP. I draw on the TEP's framework, which is organized around three dimensions of learning—individual, relational, and socio-political—to highlight how the theory of conscientization can be translated into tangible, impactful pedagogical strategies. This serves as one of several concrete examples of how Critical Pedagogy both enriches, and is enriched by, its integration within TEP. It is important to note, however, that while Critical Pedagogy has historically been employed to empower marginalized communities, its application within TEP requires thoughtful adaptation when working with diverse groups, including those who may not experience structural oppression. In such cases, particular care must be taken to avoid conveying ideological overtones, and instead to foster

Box 2.1 Operationalizing conscientization in educational practices through TEP

Individual dimension

Personal awareness and recognize and name one's own oppression

- Learners are guided to recognize and articulate the oppressive systems and structures impacting their individual lives. This involves, for instance, self-reflection activities where learners identify personal experiences of oppression and analyze how these experiences have shaped their lives. Educators can use personal narrative exercises, autobiographical writing, and reflective journaling to help learners name their own oppression—or lack thereof—as a way to foster self-awareness, critical reflection, and dialogue across diverse experiences.

Critical reflection and introspection

- Encourages learners to engage in introspection to understand the root causes of societal issues. Techniques such as reflective journaling and personal essays are used to develop critical consciousness, enabling learners to see beyond surface explanations and to consider broader systemic factors.

Empowerment through action

- Moving beyond awareness, conscientization involves empowering learners to take concrete actions grounded in their critical reflection and personal interests. These actions can take many forms—ranging from advocacy and civic engagement to initiatives aimed at fostering equity or addressing systemic challenges. Educators play a crucial role in equipping learners with the tools, confidence, and ethical grounding needed to contribute constructively to their communities. Practical activities might include organizing community projects, contributing to public dialogue, participating in social movements, and developing campaigns that address identified concerns. By translating reflection into action, learners—regardless of their perspectives or starting points—can engage with real-world issues in ways that are relevant to their values and social contexts.

(continued)

Box 2.1 (continued)**Relational dimension****Critical reflection and mutual learning**

- Facilitates mutual learning and understanding through learning circles, where learners and educators engage in dialogue to reflect on societal issues. This process encourages learners to challenge existing narratives and question the status quo. Learning circles promote collective inquiry, shared experiences, and the co-construction of knowledge, fostering a deeper understanding and critical consciousness.

Community engagement

- Encourages learners to engage with their communities through service-learning projects, internships, and partnerships with local organizations. It is crucial to facilitate opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility.

Ethical and reflective practice

- Emphasizes ethical considerations and reflective practice, cultivating a sense of responsibility and ethical engagement. Reflective practices such as journaling, peer feedback, and self-assessment help learners process their experiences and insights.

Socio-political dimension**Identify oppressions in society**

- Learners are encouraged to identify and analyze broader oppressions within society. This involves a thorough analysis of power dynamics, social inequalities, and systemic injustices that affect different groups. Educators facilitate activities such as mapping exercises, case studies, and historical analysis to help learners understand these societal oppressions. This step connects personal experiences to larger social contexts, fostering an informed awareness that is essential for empowerment.

Analyze power dynamics

- Involves analyzing and challenging power dynamics within educational and societal structures. Encourage critical examination of how power operates and affects different social groups.

(continued)

Box 2.1 (continued)**Dismantling hierarchical power structures**

- Focuses on promoting and advocating for equitable power relations. Educators aim encourage learners to question and challenge the status quo and to seek more just educational systems and societies.

Commitment to peace, social justice, and empowerment

- Sees education as a tool for personal transformation and social change, addressing and dismantling structures of oppression and inequality. Educators can guide learners in advocacy efforts, social justice initiatives, and community activism.

Challenging historical narratives and eurocentrism

- Involves revising historical narratives to include multiple perspectives, particularly those of marginalized and colonized groups. Emphasize the importance of integrating diverse viewpoints into the curriculum.

Recognizing and valuing Indigenous knowledge

- Integrates Indigenous and local knowledge systems into the curriculum and challenges Western-centric perspectives. This includes the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages, traditions, and knowledge systems.

Promoting critical reflection and action (praxis)

- Encourages educators and learners to engage in critical reflection on privilege and marginalization and to act toward social justice. This involves the continuous cycle of reflection and action, empowering learners to make meaningful changes in their communities.

open, inclusive, and critically reflective learning environments that are welcoming to all learners—regardless of their political orientation or positionality.

2.3.3 *Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)*

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) provides crucial insights in terms of integrating additional theoretical and practical elements into TEP, particularly those related to deep personal transformation (Taylor & Cranton,

2012; Cranton, 2016).⁴ Initially developed by American educator Jack Mezirow in the late 1980s, TLT is grounded in psychology and focuses on how adults change their frames of reference through critical reflection (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Although its connection to Paulo Freire's work is more indirect, both share a focus on critical reflection and emancipation in learners. Over the past five decades, TLT has been continually refined by various scholars, especially in the field of adult education in the United States and Canada (Cranton & Taylor, 2012).⁵

TLT is rooted in humanist and constructivist philosophies, providing a unique perspective on educational goals that typically focus on basic learning outcomes. Proponents like Cranton and Kasl (2012) emphasize the need to distinguish TLT's objectives from traditional learning goals. While acknowledging the key role of education in promoting deep learning, TLT involves more than just acquiring knowledge or enhancing skills; it encompasses a deeper, transformative process where learners experience profound internal changes.

Within TLT, individuals are viewed as autonomous beings with inherent capacities for growth, development, and self-realization. Experiences are seen as socially constructed, and learning is described as a process of deriving significance from these experiences (Cranton & Kasl, 2012). TLT explores the mechanisms of profound personal transformation through critical introspection, dialogue, and the scrutiny of one's presuppositions and convictions (Mezirow, 1997). The theory emphasizes the role of education in fostering significant cognitive shifts, highlighting the need for transforming individuals' beliefs and perspectives. This transformation is facilitated by pedagogical methods that address both rational aspects—such as critical reflection and the creation of environments conducive to cognitive learning—and what Cranton and Taylor (2012) refer to as extra-rational ones—including the emotional, imaginative, and spiritual aspects of learning (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Stuckey et al., 2014).

Methodologically, TLT centers on the process by which individuals confront, reassess, and ultimately change some of their held beliefs and assumptions about the world and themselves. This theory stresses the

⁴This subsection builds on the analysis presented in Cappiali (2024), where I explore the benefits of integrating Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) and Critical Pedagogy. The discussion highlights how this integration can enhance both educational theory and practice.

⁵Despite its notable influence in American adult education (Cranton & Taylor, 2012), TLT's impact in other regions of the world, including Europe, seems considerably limited (see, e.g., Kokkos, 2012).

importance of personal transformation through critical reflection and self-examination (Mezirow, 1997; Cranton & Taylor, 2012).⁶

Mezirow's theory of transformative learning has been instrumental in deepening the understanding of the stages of transformation within TEP, particularly in addressing controversial topics in diverse settings (detailed in Chaps. 4 and 5). Mezirow outlines a series of phases that individuals usually navigate during transformative learning experiences. Drawing extensively from the field of psychology, these phases involve key processes essential for profound personal growth and perspective change (see Box 2.2).

Box 2.2 Phases of transformative learning in Mezirow's theory

1. **Disorienting dilemma:** The initial encounter with a challenging situation that prompts reflection on existing beliefs and assumptions.
2. **Self-examination:** Engaging in critical self-reflection to assess and question one's beliefs, values, and assumptions.
3. **Exploration of alternatives:** Actively seeking and considering different perspectives and ways of thinking.
4. **Acquisition of knowledge and skills:** Learning new concepts and skills to better understand and adapt to new experiences.
5. **Experimentation and practice:** Applying newly acquired knowledge in real-world settings to test and refine one's understanding.
6. **Reintegration:** Integrating new insights into one's worldview, leading to a more coherent and authentic self-conception.
7. **Critical reflection:** Continuously evaluating one's beliefs and assumptions considering new experiences and insights.
8. **Personal transformation:** Experiencing a profound shift in self-understanding and perspective about the world.

⁶Taylor (2006) elaborates on the concept by stating, "Encouraging transformative learning entails teaching for change. It revolves around the notion that learners undergo profound evaluations of their value systems and worldviews, leading to subsequent transformation." Mezirow (1997) underscores the potential of TLT to instigate epistemological and ontological shifts in learners. In his seminal work "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice," Mezirow describes transformative learning as "the process of effecting change in a frame of reference" with lasting impact. He suggests that this change involves adopting "a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience."

Critics have long scrutinized TLT, particularly focusing on Mezirow's foundational work, for its emphasis on reason at the expense of other crucial aspects (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). One prominent critique contends that Mezirow's initial theory predominantly views transformative learning as a rational, cognitive process, overlooking the vital role of affective and emotional dimensions in transformative experiences (Dirkx, 2008). Moreover, this emphasis on critical reflection as the primary catalyst for transformative learning has drawn criticism for potentially prioritizing critical thinking over alternative forms of knowing, such as intuitive or aesthetic modes, which could potentially offer more fertile ground for profound transformations via a more holistic strategy (Perry, 2021; Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Lastly, critics argue that TLT's focus on individual transformation neglects the social and cultural contexts of learning, failing to recognize the influence of social structures, power dynamics, and collective knowledge in shaping transformative processes (Brookfield, 2017).

In response to both internal and external critiques, TLT has evolved along various trajectories, resulting in a more comprehensive theory that acknowledges multiple dimensions of learning, including its emotional aspects (Dirkx et al., 2018), as well as issues related to emancipation and social justice (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Key to this evolution is the examination of the essence of change and the strategies employed to enact it (Cranton & Kasl, 2012).

This evolution is significant for TEP as it suggests a shift toward more holistic perspectives and an amplified focus on emancipatory education (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Stuckey et al., 2014). This shift lays a promising foundation for the integration of TLT with Critical Pedagogy—a convergence that is particularly relevant for TEP's aim of transcending conventional teaching methods, by prioritizing individual change and personal development, aspects that are often overlooked in traditional academic instruction (see also Cranton & Kasl, 2012; Taylor & Cranton, 2012).

Notably, recent advancements in TLT further strengthen this alignment by highlighting the role of emotional and intuitive dimensions in transformative learning and advocating for their integration in the TLT's theoretical framework (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). These advancements position TLT within a broader, more holistic understanding of learning that encompasses all facets of an individual's being (Perry, 2021; Dirkx, 2008). This enhances learners' engagement and sense of agency.

Furthermore, TLT's increased acknowledgment of the impact of social structures brings it into closer alignment with my goal of merging TLT and Critical Pedagogy into a cohesive and justice-oriented framework.

To sum up, by combining insights from TLT and Critical Pedagogy, TEP advances a comprehensive framework that bridges personal transformation with structural change. It enhances the individual-focused lens of TLT with the justice-oriented goals of Critical Pedagogy, offering a holistic and interconnected perspective that aligns inner growth with collective emancipation (Cappiali, 2024). This synthesis not only reshapes how we understand transformative education, but also forms the philosophical backbone of TEP's multidimensional approach.

This conceptual integration finds its most impactful expression in the TEP framework, where the alignment of TLT and Critical Pedagogy enables a richer, multidimensional learning experience. TLT emphasizes processes of personal transformation—empowering learners to reframe their perspectives, question assumptions, and engage in deep self-reflection and growth (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). In turn, Critical Pedagogy directs attention to structural inequalities and the transformative potential of education to resist oppression, foster inclusivity, and advance educational justice (Freire, 1972; hooks, 1994; Giroux, 1997). Within TEP, this synergy is further expanded to more explicitly include the *relational dimension*—emphasizing dialogue, empathy, and mutual recognition as essential to both personal and collective transformation. While this dimension is also emphasized among some scholars in the field of TLT (e.g., Taylor, Dirkx), a fully integrated framework that systematically brings together the individual, relational, and socio-political dimensions of learning—as interdependent and equally essential pillars—remains distinctive to TEP.

2.3.4 *Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)*

Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) is an educational theory that emphasizes the development of emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making among learners. Rooted in philosophical traditions that focus on the holistic development of the individual, SEL draws from humanistic philosophy, underlining personal growth and self-actualization. Pragmatism, particularly the ideas of Dewey, underscores the importance of social skills and democratic participation, while Lev

Vygotsky (1978)'s social constructivism informs SEL in respect of learning through social interaction. Additionally, the contemporary concept of emotional intelligence, popularized by Daniel Goleman in 1995 and revisited in 2015, further shapes SEL by providing a more scientific-grounded approach rooted in contemporary psychology.

SEL's key contribution lies in preparing learners to effectively navigate their emotions, set and achieve personal goals, understand others, cultivate positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Durlak et al., 2015). By integrating these diverse influences, SEL creates a comprehensive educational framework that nurtures both the emotional and social competencies of learners (CASEL, 2024).

As outlined in Box 2.3, SEL's contributions align with the core interconnected dimensions of learning identified in TEP. By focusing on the individual dimension through self-awareness and self-regulation, SEL complements TEP's emphasis on personal development and deep learning. The relational dimension of SEL, with its focus on social awareness and relationship skills, integrates naturally with TEP's commitment to fostering empathetic and collaborative learning environments. Finally, SEL's increasing emphasis on the socio-political dimension, which underscores responsible decision-making, resonates with TEP's dedication to empowering learners to engage in ethical and socially conscious actions, driving both personal and socio-political transformation. This alignment underscores SEL's key relevance within the broader TEP framework, enhancing its capacity to nurture holistic development and promote a just and inclusive educational experience.

Box 2.3 Core competencies of SEL and their alignment with TEP

Individual dimension

- *Self-awareness*: Understanding one's own emotions, personal goals, and values. This includes recognizing one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.
- *Self-regulation*: Learning how to navigate emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals. This involves stress regulation, self-motivation, discipline, and the ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals.

(continued)

Box 2.3 (continued)**Relational dimension**

- *Social awareness*: Showing understanding and empathy for others. This includes understanding social and ethical norms for behavior and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports.
- *Relationship skills*: Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict. This competency includes communication, listening, cooperation, negotiation, resistance to harming social pressure and norms, conflict resolution, and seeking or offering help when needed.

Socio-political dimension

- *Responsible decision-making*: Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior. This covers the ability to consider ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

SEL provides a comprehensive theory for the cultivation of socio-emotional skills. By integrating SEL into the curriculum, educators can create learning environments that support academic achievement and the holistic development of learners. This theory helps learners develop the skills necessary to navigate complex social environments, build strong interpersonal relationships, and make ethical and constructive choices in their personal and professional lives.

The integration of SEL into TEP underscores the importance of a well-rounded education that prepares learners not just academically but also emotionally and socially. This integration transforms SEL's insights into a comprehensive tool for both personal and societal transformation in education, thereby enhancing its potential to effect meaningful change.

Box 2.4 highlights some potential benefits I have identified in my exploration of SEL's integration into TEP's theory.

In the context of TEP, SEL can enhance the individual, relational, and socio-political dimensions of learning by promoting empathy, ethical behavior, and social responsibility. These skills are essential for fostering inclusive and supportive learning communities that value diversity and equity. By

Box 2.4 Potential benefits of integrating SEL with TEP
Enhances critical reflection and emotional intelligence

- SEL's focus on self-awareness and self-regulation enriches the critical reflection process central to TEP by integrating emotional intelligence, thereby fostering a more holistic understanding of oneself and one's place in the world.

Supports social justice and empathy

- The social awareness and relationship skills components of SEL align with the goals of TEP by fostering empathy for and understanding of others. This is crucial for challenging social injustices and working toward more equitable communities.

Facilitates active and experiential learning

- SEL's emphasis on responsible decision-making and relationship skills enhances the effectiveness of active and experiential learning practices advocated by TEP. Emotional and social competencies are critical for collaborating on projects, resolving conflicts, and engaging with real-world problems.

Promotes social transformation

- Integrating SEL with other theories in TEP, particularly Critical Pedagogy, supports social transformation. It equips learners with the skills necessary to navigate and contribute positively to their communities and the broader society.

Evaluative methods and broader implications

- Incorporating SEL into TEP also introduces valuable evaluative methods to gauge the success of integrating TEP's pedagogical interventions into educational practices across diverse groups and geographical contexts.

prioritizing emotional and social competencies, SEL aligns with the transformative and emancipatory goals of TEP, ensuring that education addresses the full spectrum of human development. SEL enhances TEP's objectives by incorporating emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills. This holistic perspective prepares learners to be empathetic, engaged, and socially responsible, ultimately contributing to positive societal change.

While SEL enhances the ability to navigate social and emotional landscapes, it has faced criticism, particularly from scholars in the critical tradition like Zembylas (2015), for its lack of engagement with broader socio-political issues. Critics argue that SEL's focus on emotional learning often overlooks important questions of power and politics, rendering it somewhat depoliticized. In response to these critiques and the growing demand for social justice in education, some scholars are working to better connect socio-emotional learning with structural and political contexts. By emphasizing the emotional dimensions of social justice and power dynamics (Ramirez et al., 2021), these scholars highlight SEL's potential to address broader socio-political issues. These developments suggest that SEL can further expand its influence and deepen our understanding of the critical role emotions play in education—a field that remains underexplored despite a recent surge in interest (Zembylas & Schutz, 2016; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014). Consequently, this evolving scholarship will be valuable in further enriching TEP in the future.

2.3.5 *Inclusive Education via Intersectionality*

Inclusive education focuses on ensuring that all learners, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, socio-economic status, language, gender, ethnicity, age, or other characteristics, have equal opportunities to learn, participate, and succeed in the same classrooms and programs (Migliarini & Elder, 2023). The aim is to remove barriers to learning and participation, allowing all students to benefit from educational opportunities alongside their peers. Inclusive education aims to nurture a culture of understanding, respect, and equity, enriching the educational experience for everyone (Duncan-Andrade, 2022).

TEP builds on current developments in inclusive education by integrating intersectional perspectives, which deepen our understanding of power dynamics in educational settings. Grounded in the work of Black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), intersectionality recognizes that individuals simultaneously hold multiple social identities—such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability—that interact to shape their experiences and opportunities. These identities do not operate in isolation but intersect in ways that can amplify marginalization or privilege. Within TEP, intersectionality is key to analyzing how personal experiences of learners are shaped by structural inequalities, and it supports the creation of inclusive spaces that center the voices of those most affected by overlapping

forms of exclusion (Ahmed, 2012; Collins & Bilge, 2020; Migliarini & Elder, 2023; de Jong et al., 2019; St John & Suhendra, 2024). This approach directly supports TEP's commitment to promote *individual* and *relational dimensions* of learning by fostering empathy, recognition, and critical engagement with systems of power. Moreover, intersectionality allows to go beyond merely including diverse perspectives; it offers tools for identifying and challenging intersecting systems of power, oppression, and marginalization within educational practices (Crenshaw, 1991; May & Skukauskaite, 2016; Collins & Bilge, 2020) (*socio-political dimension*).

These insights deepen TEP's scope, making it more effective in addressing diversity and fostering a truly inclusive learning environment. This includes validating the experiences of marginalized communities, such as Indigenous and non-white groups (Ahmed, 2012; Cappiali, 2023). Moreover, an intersectional perspective allows to engage with the complexity of diversity in the classroom, enabling teachers and learners to understand, discuss, and deconstruct intersecting forms of exclusion and discrimination. By examining the "positionality" of each participant in the learning process and the "power dynamics" within the classroom, the learning environment can more accurately reflect broader societal dynamics.

Integrating intersectionality into TEP, therefore, represents a fundamental rethinking of how education can be made more inclusive, equitable, and justice-oriented. This perspective prepares learners to navigate and contribute to a diverse and complex world, equipping them with the critical consciousness and empathy necessary for realizing social change. It underscores the commitment to not only educating learners but also transforming educational spaces into welcoming, affirming, and empowering environments for all.

To sum up, by incorporating intersectionality in diverse classrooms, educators can better address the unique experiences and perspectives of all learners. These inclusive practices can benefit everyone, including more privileged learners (Curry-Stevens, 2007; Cappiali, 2023). While addressing the alienation and silencing of marginalized individuals, intersectionality can also encourage critical self-reflection and awareness among less marginalized learners (Freire, 1998; hooks, 1994). This involves examining positions of privilege, understanding systemic oppression, and actively dismantling oppressive structures. These strategies can foster shared responsibility and collective action for social justice, benefiting both marginalized and privileged learners (see Chap. 5 for concrete examples).

2.4 TOWARD A MORE HOLISTIC, INTERCONNECTED, AND SOCIALLY RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Contemporary education is increasingly marked by cross-fertilization and convergence across fields and disciplines, creating new opportunities to develop more comprehensive and impactful educational frameworks. This trend, which I will further explore in Chap. 6, underscores a shift away from rigid disciplinary boundaries toward integrated approaches that embrace complexity and interconnectedness. The TEP framework is situated within this evolving landscape, advocating for a holistic, interconnected, and socially relevant framework that addresses the multifaceted dimensions of learning—individual, relational, and socio-political.

TEP builds on this global movement by combining diverse theoretical contributions and best practices from humanistic, humanizing, and decolonial philosophies. It seeks to align educational goals with broader societal challenges, fostering an educational practice that is both socially relevant and transformative. By drawing on this convergence of ideas, TEP promotes an inclusive, interdisciplinary framework that not only nurtures individual potential but also contributes to collective empowerment and societal change.

Table 2.1 below synthesizes the seven core goals introduced in Chap. 1, detailing the focus and description of each goal within TEP.

Table 2.2 further illustrates the philosophical and theoretical elements that align with TEP's core practices, connecting each goal with foundational philosophies, theories, and practical implications.

By integrating these diverse philosophical traditions and theories, TEP advances a cohesive and adaptable framework that transcends conventional learning models. This approach equips learners not only with the critical knowledge needed to understand the world around them but also with the capacity to actively engage with and transform it.

Although distinct, the theories informing TEP become highly complementary in practice. For example, fostering critical reflection (TLT) is deepened by developing self-awareness and emotional regulation (SEL) alongside conscientization (Critical Pedagogy). Many educators are already blending these perspectives to nurture both cognitive and socio-emotional development (see Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). By challenging traditional, lecture-based methods, these theories offer profound ways to empower learners as critical thinkers and agents of change. When applied through a unified framework, they enhance engagement through

Table 2.1 Overarching goals of TEP

<i>TEP goal</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Description</i>
Holistic	Comprehensive learner development	Emphasizes the growth of cognitive, emotional, social, physical, moral, and spiritual capabilities, ensuring well-rounded development. Integrates Indigenous perspectives on interconnectedness and spirituality.
Inclusive	Accessibility, relevance, and intersectionality in education	Promotes equity and inclusion, ensuring education addresses diverse and intersecting needs of all learners, integrating decolonial and Indigenous perspectives for a more inclusive and culturally responsive environment.
Deep	Meaningful engagement with content	Enhances understanding and retention by encouraging learners to apply knowledge thoroughly and meaningfully, informed by intersectional analysis.
Experiential	Hands-on learning and real-world application	Encourages active participation and practical application of knowledge through real-world experiences and activities. Integrates experiential learning methods to deepen understanding and foster practical skills.
Interconnected	Building respectful and empathetic relationships	Fosters a sense of community, mutual respect, and strong interpersonal connections within the learning environment. Emphasizes Indigenous and decolonial practices. Extends relationality to include the environment and non-human entities.
Transformative	Personal growth and critical consciousness	Empowers learners to develop self-awareness and challenge societal norms, leading to personal transformation and the deconstruction of colonial mindsets.
Emancipatory	Active societal engagement for social change	Supports conscientization, equipping learners for liberation and societal change. It integrates intersectional and decolonial approaches to address systemic inequalities.

Table 2.2 Integrating philosophical, theoretical, and practical aspects of TEP

<i>Goals of learning</i>	<i>Philosophical foundation</i>	<i>Theories</i>	<i>Practical implications</i>
Holistic	Humanism, Humanization, Decolonial Insights	DELT, Critical Pedagogy, TLT, SEL	Encourages comprehensive learner development across cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and ethical domains.
Inclusive	Humanism, Humanization, Decolonial Insights	Critical Pedagogy, TLT, SEL, Inclusive Education (Intersectionality)	Ensures education is accessible and relevant to all.
Deep	Humanism, Constructivism	DELT, TLT	Engages learners in meaningful exploration of content, enhancing deep understanding and retention.
Experiential	Humanism, Constructivism, Pragmatism	DELT, TLT	Promotes hands-on, real-world learning experiences that connect theory with practice.
Interconnected	Humanism, Humanization, Decolonial Insights	Critical Pedagogy, Decolonial Theory	Encourages an understanding of the interconnectedness of individual, societal, and planetary well-being.
Transformative	Humanism, Constructivism, Pragmatism	TLT, Critical Pedagogy	Promotes critical consciousness, empowering learners to challenge societal norms.
Emancipatory	Humanization	Critical and Decolonial Pedagogy	Equips learners to actively engage in and contribute to societal change, promoting social justice, equity, and inclusion.

experiential learning and enrich the educational experience by incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives, thereby broadening the scope of education to embrace expanded educational goals (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

By systematically combining these theories, TEP facilitates a necessary transition toward teaching practices aligned with its underlying philosophy. This unified approach enables a shift from conventional methods to more dynamic, inclusive, and transformative educational practices designed to achieve TEP's expansive goals.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The current global educational landscape increasingly demands innovative, learner-centric methodologies that transcend traditional, lecture-based approaches, which often fail to meet diverse learning needs and equip students for today's complex challenges (Fernandez et al., 2022). In response to these limitations, TEP integrates a broad spectrum of educational philosophies and theories—offering a holistic, flexible, and adaptable framework. TEP fills a critical gap by harmonizing cognitive development with emotional, social, and ethical growth, ensuring that learners are not only educated but also empowered to act as agents of personal and societal transformation. By drawing on the strengths and convergences of various approaches, TEP seeks to promote an inclusive framework capable of real-world applicability and continuous evolution, addressing the shortcomings of conventional educational systems.

This chapter has argued for the need for a cohesive framework that harnesses the rich insights of multiple educational traditions. TEP represents an effort to detect and amplify these convergences, creating a cross-disciplinary model that exceeds the sum of its parts. However, the true impact and viability of TEP can only be realized through rigorous research and practical implementation. While TEP offers significant promise, its philosophical ambitions must be tested and adapted in practice if it is to achieve its full potential.

It is important to note that the systematization proposed here is just the beginning. While this book primarily focuses on three dimensions of learning, TEP has the potential to further evolve by incorporating more elements from Indigenous and decolonial knowledge systems in the future. Such contributions would deepen the framework by broadening its scope beyond human-centric perspectives to recognize the interconnectedness of all life forms. The preservation of the planet is essential not only for

human survival but also for justice and respect for non-human existence. By extending critical consciousness to non-human life, we can advocate for educational philosophies that emphasize compassion, love, and respect for all beings. In doing so, TEP seeks to advance a more inclusive, ethical, and ecologically attuned vision of education that resonates with the evolving demands of our time (UNESCO, 2021; Mbembe, 2019; Nhat Hanh, 2008; hooks, 2003; Nussbaum, 2024).

To bridge theory and practice, I have developed a methodology that supports the practical application and evaluation of TEP through theoretically grounded and testable pedagogical interventions. This methodology provides educators with tools to apply TEP's principles in real-world settings while offering a structured approach to assess their impact. In the next chapter, I will explore this methodology in depth, offering key insights into how TEP's philosophical and theoretical foundations can guide educational practices across diverse educational contexts and disciplines.

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CHAPTER 3

Toward a Scientific Pedagogy

Abstract This chapter introduces the methodology central to Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). At the heart of this methodology is the pursuit of a “scientific pedagogy,” a concept inspired by Maria Montessori yet distinctly crafted for TEP. This approach is pivotal in translating TEP’s philosophical and theoretical principles into praxis. Characterized by its systematic yet flexible nature, the methodology is designed to adapt to various learners and contexts. The chapter provides guidance on formulating, executing, and evaluating the pedagogical interventions rooted in TEP, which were initially applied to address controversial and sensitive topics in diverse settings. The metaphor of light passing through a prism illustrates the method’s emphasis on allowing for both structured experimentation and discovery. This perspective anticipates varied impacts on diverse groups and embraces the possibilities of achieving expected outcomes as well as encountering unforeseen results and new opportunities. Building on my preliminary work, this chapter sets the stage for future expansions of TEP. It lays a strong interdisciplinary foundation, integrating perspectives from both educational and social sciences, with the potential to expand beyond its original scope. This chapter is particularly valuable for educators and practitioners who wish to adapt TEP to their work, offering guidance on how to develop pedagogical interventions that align core TEP principles with specific educational

contexts and needs. It also provides invaluable insights for scholars looking to conduct research in TEP and related fields.

Keywords Pedagogical Interventions • Interdisciplinary Methodology • Diversity in Education • Intersectional and Decolonial Perspectives • Controversies

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the methodology central to Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). At the core of TEP's approach is the pursuit of a "scientific pedagogy," a concept inspired by Maria Montessori (2002/1912) yet distinctly adapted for TEP. This methodology translates TEP's philosophical and theoretical principles into practical, testable pedagogical interventions that are both structured and flexible, allowing them to be tailored to diverse learners and contexts.

TEP's methodology is represented metaphorically by a prism—just as light refracted through a prism produces a spectrum of colors, TEP interacts with learners' varied backgrounds and experiences, generating diverse educational processes and outcomes. This adaptability and openness to unexpected results foster an environment where curiosity, creativity, and internal motivation are encouraged.

The chapter targets a broad audience of scholars, educators, and practitioners worldwide who are interested in implementing TEP's principles, either in full or in part. Originally developed for teaching controversial and sensitive subjects and dealing with ethical dilemmas in diverse classrooms, TEP's methodology has wide-ranging applicability beyond its initial scope, making it suitable for various educational and social contexts.

TEP's methodology is structured around two key complementary components: (1) the **pedagogical component**, which focuses on translating philosophical principles into concrete, practical interventions, and (2) the **socio-psychological component**, which employs an evidence-based approach to refine these interventions through cycles of implementation, observation, and feedback. These components work in tandem to ensure that TEP remains responsive to the specific needs of diverse learning environments and participants, fostering deep learning, critical reflection, and emotional engagement.

In the following sections, I will provide an in-depth exploration of these components, highlighting how each contributes to the effectiveness

of TEP’s methodology. This chapter also offers guidance on formulating, executing, and evaluating pedagogical interventions rooted in TEP principles, with an initial focus on addressing controversial and sensitive topics in highly diverse educational settings. It is designed to be accessible to both those unfamiliar with the theories informing TEP and those already engaged with related fields. Scholars, educators, and practitioners will find this chapter particularly valuable for incorporating TEP’s core principles into their specific educational contexts and needs.

3.2 PEDAGOGICAL COMPONENT

As discussed in Chap. 2, TEP integrates the strengths of various philosophies and theories into a cohesive framework designed to transcend traditional educational goals. To effectively translate TEP’s principles and theories into practice, a systematic methodology is essential—one that can be developed, tested, and evaluated in a consistent manner.

The pedagogical component of the methodology ensures internal coherence by drawing on established principles in curriculum development literature, emphasizing the alignment of theory, learning objectives, teaching methods, learning activities, and assessment strategies (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Fink, 2003; Gronlund & Brookhart, 2009; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Consistent with the concept of “constructive alignment” (Biggs & Tang, 2011), TEP distinguishes between educational goals and learning objectives. Educational goals are broad, long-term aims that provide a general direction for the educational process, while learning objectives are specific, measurable steps that learners can take to achieve these goals (see also Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024a, p. 11; Cappiali, 2024b, pp. 222–223).

As such, TEP aims to:

1. Translate broad educational goals into well-designed pedagogical interventions.
2. Establish a strong connection between three crucial elements of each intervention: (a) targeted educational objectives, (b) practical activities, and (c) relevant assessment tools. This integrated approach fosters deep learning and promotes transformative, emancipatory outcomes.

To achieve these aims, the following section presents the TEP Multidimensional Model, which is designed to translate TEP’s core goals into actionable and testable learning objectives.

3.2.1 *The TEP Multidimensional Model*

The TEP Multidimensional Model applies TEP’s philosophical and theoretical foundations to real-world educational settings, enhancing both learning objectives and practices. By translating TEP’s educational goals into specific learning objectives, the model employs a holistic and interconnected approach to address various dimensions of learning (see also Cappiali, 2023, 2024a). Figure 3.1 visually represents this model.

The first feature of the model seeks to synergize learners’ cognitive, practical, affective, and action dimensions **holistically**, with each contributing uniquely to the learning process. **Cognitive learning** involves the mental processes of understanding, reasoning, and knowledge acquisition. **Practical learning** relates to the application of skills in real-world contexts. **Emotional learning** pertains to values and emotional intelligence. Here, TEP explicitly integrates emotional learning to foster socio-emotional and introspective abilities, aligning with Goleman’s (2015/1995) concept of “emotional intelligence,” which emphasizes the ability to understand and regulate one’s own and others’ emotions. It also

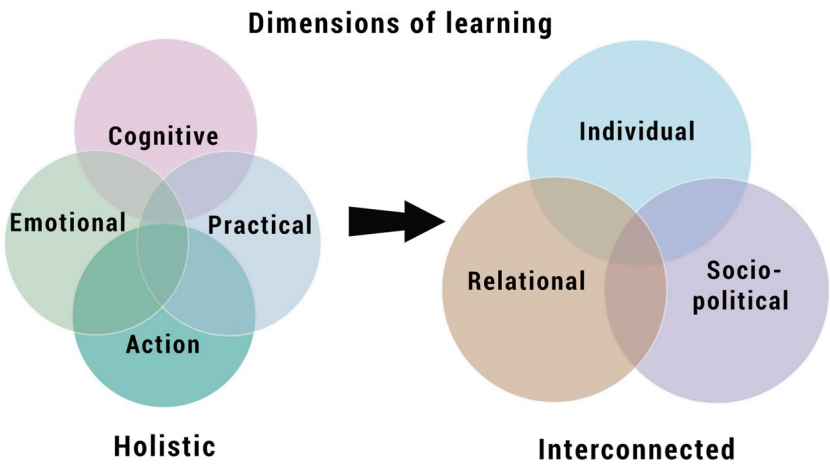


Fig. 3.1 The TEP Multidimensional Model

incorporates aspects concerning political emotions (UNESCO, 2017; Freire, 1972; Zembylas, 2015).¹

Moreover, the integration of the **action(-oriented) dimension** ensures that the theoretical and cognitive understanding gained through TEP translates into tangible changes in attitudes and behaviors, supporting practical applications and societal impact. This dimension involves purposeful engagement that connect theory to practice. As such, It is an integrative dimension that connects cognitive, practical, and emotional aspects, emphasizing the dynamic nature of learning by showing that it is not just about acquiring knowledge and skills, but also about engaging in meaningful actions (Montessori, 2002/1912; Dewey, 2004/1916; Freire, 1972).²

The second feature of the model emphasizes **interconnectedness**. This is a key element of TEP's humanizing and decolonial philosophy, where education is seen as an essential instrument for social change. Consequently, the focus extends beyond an individualistic model to promote personal development within a collective context. This insight is closely connected to the idea that education should promote "conscientization" alongside learning. Freire envisioned education as a process of liberation, where learners develop critical awareness, or conscientization, of their position in the world. This awareness enables them to analyze their own reality, identify real problems and needs, and take action to transform society (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1997; Darder, 2017).

¹Political emotions refer to the feelings and emotional responses that are shaped by, and in turn shape, power relations, social structures, and historical contexts. These emotions are not purely individual but are connected to broader societal forces, including issues of inequality, identity, and justice. Emotions such as fear, anger, hope, and solidarity can be mobilized to either perpetuate or resist social injustices and can be critical in promoting or impeding social change. In education, political emotions play a vital role in shaping learners' experiences and interactions, as well as in engaging critically with controversial and sensitive topics. According to Zembylas (2015), educators must recognize the role of emotions in both sustaining and challenging inequalities, and create learning environments where political emotions are acknowledged and addressed constructively to promote social justice and equity.

²The integration of the action-oriented dimension is justified on both philosophical and psychological grounds. Philosophically, Montessori's emphasis on hands-on learning, Dewey's pragmatism, and Freire's Critical Pedagogy all highlight action as a vital component of meaningful education. Psychologically, Kolb's experiential learning theory underscores the importance of active experimentation in the learning cycle. Additionally, behaviorist theories emphasize the role of practice and reinforcement, while Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory points to the significance of active participation in socially meaningful activities. Collectively, these perspectives affirm that action is essential for effective learning and development.

In TEP, conscientization is achieved by creating a safe and inclusive space that acknowledges the diverse experiences and needs of all learners (Cappiali, 2023). This space engages learners in meaningful ways by capitalizing on their lived experiences, perspectives, and worldviews (Cappiali, 2023). Engaging with emotions is crucial to overcoming initial resistance when discussing controversial and sensitive topics, prompting deeper reflection on injustice, changing attitudes and behaviors, and promoting reconciliation and “healing” (Zembylas, 2015; hooks, 1994).

Box 3.1 presents an overview of each dimension of learning, integrating the holistic and interconnected features identified in the model.

Box 3.1 The Three Interconnected Dimensions of Learning **Individual Dimension**

- This dimension centers on personal learning and transformation. It enhances individual knowledge and comprehension by encouraging self-reflection and growth. Learners are prompted to internalize new information, leading to personal insights and a deeper understanding of themselves in relation to the subject matter. Activities within this dimension emphasize the importance of processing information internally, fostering awareness of one’s own beliefs, biases, and values.

Relational Dimension

- This dimension focuses on developing social skills, empathy, and communication, creating a supportive community where learners exchange diverse perspectives, enriching the learning experience. It emphasizes critical engagement with others’ emotions to cultivate relational skills like empathy, deep listening, compassion, and community building (Goleman, 2015/1995; hooks, 2003). By participating in dialogue and collaborative activities, learners learn to appreciate different viewpoints, negotiate understanding, and work together toward common goals (Dewey, 2004/1916). This dimension prepares learners to navigate and contribute positively to diverse and inclusive societies through meaningful interactions with peers, by fostering an ethics of care and community building (Zembylas, 2015).

Socio-political Dimension

- This dimension engages with systemic structures and societal norms that influence individuals and communities (Freire, 1972;

(continued)

Box 3.1 (continued)

Zembylas, 2015). It encourages learners to analyze and question existing societal norms and power dynamics, fostering critical consciousness. Learners are empowered to recognize social injustices and advocate for transformative action, connecting their learning to broader social contexts. Activities within this dimension support the development of skills and awareness needed to take meaningful action toward social transformation.

Overall, this holistic and interconnected approach, as outlined in the TEP Multidimensional Model, seeks to deepen academic engagement and prepare learners to navigate and influence the world with a keen sense of social responsibility, empathy, and a commitment to personal transformation and social change (Freire, 1972; Zembylas, 2015). The necessity of incorporating a interconnected perspective is underscored by the understanding that individuals are not isolated entities but are embedded within communities (Freire, 1998; hooks, 2003).

In TEP, for conscientization—a critical awareness leading to transformative action—to occur, teaching strategies must strive to create a comprehensive learning environment that emphasizes interconnectedness. This environment should integrate the multiple dimensions of learning, enabling learners to experience a deeper and broader educational journey that transcends individual-centered perspectives in education (Freire, 1972). This integrated perspective ensures that the learning experience resonates with the theoretical underpinnings of TEP, viewing learning as a dynamic process that incorporates both philosophical principles and practical aspects.³

It is important to note that the Multidimensional Model is primarily based on research implementing TEP in the field of social sciences, but additional dimensions could and should be considered. Future implementations of TEP can and should be expanded to explore its implications beyond socio-political contexts, including the interconnectedness with all living beings and the planet, drawing from decolonial perspectives. This

³This forms a core component of the methodology and will be elaborated upon through empirical evidence presented in Chaps. 4 and 5. These chapters will highlight the application of the theory within the context of migration studies, with a particular focus on racism as a pertinent case study.

aspect is crucial in relating educational methodologies to broader social justice perspectives and applying them to teaching about the natural world and human interconnectedness with nature. From a decolonial standpoint, this perspective emphasizes the recognition of learners as integral components of the natural world, shaped by and contributing to the broader ecological and social systems. This comprehensive view challenges the anthropocentric and colonial legacies in education, advocating for more inclusive and just perspectives that acknowledge the interconnectedness of all beings and the planet (*earth-oriented dimension*).

3.2.2 *Expanded Learning Objectives*

The TEP Multidimensional Model leads to a rethinking of educational learning objectives, aligning them with TEP's seven core goals, where learning is holistic, inclusive, deep, experiential, interconnected, transformative, and emancipatory. This perspective enriches educational methodologies by intertwining traditional educational aims—such as knowledge acquisition and skill development—with the well-being of learners and the pursuit of transformative and emancipatory goals on both individual and collective levels.

Table 3.1 represents my initial attempt to translate the TEP Multidimensional Model into practical, observable processes and outcomes across various dimensions of learning. This table integrates the diverse elements of TEP, tailored to foster an inclusive learning environment and effectively address key sensitive issues. It underscores the importance of expanding learning objectives by systematically incorporating the four key theories—DELT, Critical Pedagogy, TLT, and SEL—that form TEP's unified theoretical framework (cf. Chap. 2).

This table seeks to ensure a thorough implementation and evaluation of the impact of the TEP Multidimensional Model and its different dimensions. Each dimension should be refined to fit the context of tailor-made pedagogical interventions, adapted to a variety of settings according to the specific educational content and goals. The research I have conducted so far suggests that this comprehensive framework allows for an accurate assessment of how learners from diverse backgrounds are affected by TEP's pedagogical interventions.

Table 3.1 Translating TEP goals into assessable learning objectives (processes and outcomes)

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Practical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Action</i>
Individual	Understanding of personal position in the world, privilege, power dynamics	Self-awareness, self-regulation	Compassion toward oneself	Taking responsibility for one's development; adopting inclusive and ethical behaviors in everyday life
Connection with TEP goals	<i>Deep, transformative, inclusive</i>	<i>Experiential, transformative</i>	<i>Transformative</i>	<i>Interconnected</i>
Relational	Understanding of personal position vis-à-vis others, social awareness	Respectful interaction skills, critical thinking skills, deep listening	Empathy and compassion toward others, deep listening	Engaging in dialogue, collaboration, and mutual support; challenging exclusionary behaviors
Connection with TEP goals	<i>Deep, inclusive, interconnected</i>	<i>Inclusive, experiential, interconnected</i>	<i>Inclusive, interconnected</i>	<i>Transformative, interconnected</i>
Socio-political	Awareness of "being in and with the world," understanding social problems and power	Application of practical and critical thinking skills in broader societal contexts	Understanding the role of political emotions to understand social issues	Participating in civic life, advocacy, and collective action to address injustice and promote change
Connection with TEP goals	<i>Emancipatory, interconnected</i>	<i>Emancipatory, interconnected</i>	<i>Emancipatory, interconnected</i>	<i>Emancipatory, interconnected</i>

3.3 THE TEP PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

To effectively translate TEP's expanded learning objectives into practice, the pedagogy employs strategic interventions—deliberate, purposefully designed actions aimed at enhancing the teaching and learning process to achieve specific educational goals. These interventions are theoretically grounded, empirically evaluable, and adaptable to diverse learning environments.

Initially developed to address complex societal challenges such as inequalities, racism, discrimination, and gender-based violence, these interventions have a flexible structure that allows them to be applied across various educational contexts and levels. They consist of workshops featuring theoretically informed, interconnected activities that actively engage learners, facilitate constructive dialogue, and value diverse perspectives.

TEP workshops vary in duration, ranging from four 3–4-hour sessions to two- or four-day events. They are organized around progressive building blocks, starting with simpler content and advancing to more complex issues. Each workshop includes preparatory work (readings or relevant materials) and uses a hybrid format of in-person and digital activities.

Activities often begin with real-life examples of contemporary issues—such as the rise of the far right, anti-Black sentiment, and debates on multiculturalism—supported by intersectional conceptual tools. These materials connect to learners’ lived experiences and engage them with meaningful content that stimulates both intellectual and emotional growth. Learning activities focus on connecting minds, hearts, and socio-cultural influences, promoting conscientization through, for instance, dilemma posing, critical dialogue, empathy, deep listening, and collaborative learning.

The success of TEP’s pedagogical interventions depends on the strong interconnection of four key elements: the *prepared environment*, *meaningful content*, *interconnected activities*, as well as *practices and ethics*. These elements are essential for creating cohesive and impactful learning experiences that meet TEP’s educational goals while adhering to ethical standards (Fig. 3.2).

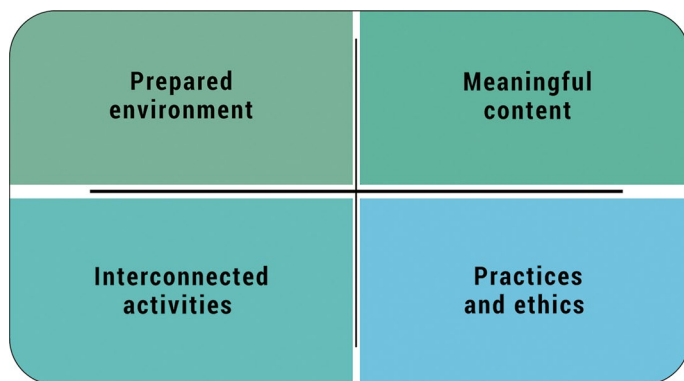


Fig. 3.2 Core elements of the TEP pedagogical interventions

3.3.1 *The Prepared Environment*

A cornerstone of TEP is the concept of a “prepared environment,” inspired by Montessori’s educational philosophy. Montessori believed that the learning environment should be structured to support the natural development of learners’ abilities and interests. In Montessori’s (Montessori, 2002/1912) methodology, the concept of a prepared environment is a meticulously structured learning space where every component is thoughtfully designed to support self-directed learning and autonomy. Within this environment, learners are given the freedom to choose their own materials and activities, allowing them to explore subjects at their own pace and according to their individual interests. This freedom within a structured setting encourages learners to take ownership of their educational journey, fostering independence, intrinsic motivation, and a deep engagement with the material. The prepared environment is carefully curated to balance guidance and freedom, ensuring that while learners have the liberty to make choices, those choices are always within a framework that supports their developmental needs and educational growth.

Similarly, the TEP prepared environment emphasizes a learner-centered design, incorporating interactive and collaborative spaces, reflective practices, real-world relevance, and flexibility. This approach nurtures a holistic and inclusive educational experience, empowering students to engage with complex and sensitive topics while fostering both personal and collective growth, as well as social change.

In practice, the prepared environment aims to replace extensive, lecture-oriented approaches with dynamic learning activities that empower learners to explore and develop their own inclinations. When lectures are included, they should be short, highly interactive, and integrated into a broader educational framework. In this context, the role of the educator shifts from being a traditional lecturer to a facilitator and guide, focused on creating spaces where learners can engage with well-designed activities that stimulate critical thinking, self-reflection, and transformative learning. This aligns with TEP’s objectives of promoting deep, meaningful learning experiences that are responsive to the diverse needs and contexts of learners.

The prepared environment strategically harnesses the diverse knowledge, backgrounds, and life experiences of learners, significantly enhancing the learning journey. It champions a holistic, bottom-up approach that allows students to interactively and freely engage with the material. The environment leverages well-structured, theory-based activities and

practices, such as simulations and role-playing, in alignment with TEP's philosophical and theoretical foundations (cf. Chap. 4 for an example of this).

Box 3.2 presents some key elements to create a prepared environment that supports the principles of TEP, promoting an inclusive, engaging, and dynamic learning experience for all students. These examples are just a few, and there is potential for further expansion of the TEP prepared environment (cf. Chap. 6).

Box 3.2 Key Guidelines for Creating a TEP Prepared Environment

- **Learner-centered and bottom-up design:** Pedagogical interventions prioritize the needs and preferences of learners, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning journey. This includes preparing activities and materials that allow for freedom in the learning process.
- **Encouraging autonomy:** Design spaces that enable students to take ownership of their learning, with opportunities for self-directed projects and independent study.
- **Interactive and collaborative spaces:** Learning activities are designed to promote interaction and collaboration among students, facilitating peer learning and the exchange of diverse perspectives.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** Create activities that can easily accommodate diverse learning styles, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.
- **Accessible resources:** Ensure that learning materials and resources are easily accessible to all students, promoting independence and self-directed learning.
- **Reflective spaces:** Provide moments for reflection and introspection, allowing students to process their learning and develop critical thinking skills.
- **Collaborative zones:** Designate areas for group work and collaboration, encouraging communication, teamwork, and peer learning.
- **Cultural relevance:** Incorporate culturally relevant materials and design elements that reflect the diversity of the student body and promote inclusivity.

(continued)

Box 3.2 (continued)

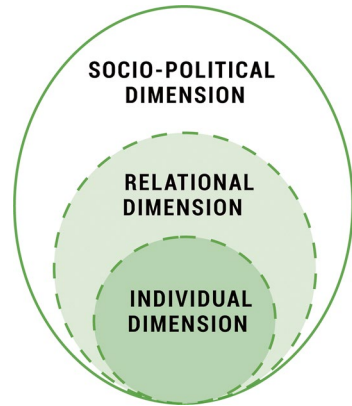
- **Natural elements:** Include natural elements such as plants, natural light, and outdoor learning spaces to create a calming and inspiring environment.
- **Safety and comfort:** Ensure that the physical environment is safe and comfortable, with appropriate lighting, seating, and ventilation.
- **Visual and tactile stimuli:** Use visual and tactile stimuli to enhance learning, such as educational posters, hands-on materials, and interactive displays.
- **Space organization:** Maintain a well-organized space with clearly labeled areas and resources to help students navigate the environment easily.
- **Reflective practices:** Embed regular opportunities for reflection within learning activities, enabling students to analyze their experiences and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
- **Real-world relevance:** Connect activities to real-life issues and challenges, making learning more relevant and engaging for students. This is especially crucial when addressing controversial and sensitive topics such as racism, discrimination, and social justice.
- **Incorporation of technology:** Integrate technology in meaningful ways to enhance learning experiences and provide students with access to digital tools and resources.

3.3.2 Meaningful Content

Another core element of TEP's pedagogical interventions is the integration of learning theories and practices with social science research, closely connected to Freire's concept of praxis. This meaningful content is designed to engage learners holistically and across three key dimensions: individual, relational, and socio-political. The objective is to create a learning environment that promotes conscientization, as advocated by Freire, by encouraging a comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

When integrated within the TEP prepared environment, meaningful content enriches the educational experience by equipping learners with the necessary tools and context to explore and comprehend issues with significant socio-political implications. This content ensures that educational material is relevant, impactful, and conducive to deeper learning and critical engagement with personal, interpersonal, and societal realities.

Fig. 3.3 Infusing the pedagogical interventions with meaningful content



The content is designed to acknowledge and engage with the three interconnected dimensions of learning—individual, relational, and socio-political—while remaining adaptable to incorporate additional dimensions, such as environmental issues (*earth-oriented dimension*) or other topics relevant to the specific educational goals of the pedagogical interventions (see Fig. 3.3).

For this core aspect of TEP, I draw from the field of psychology and the principle that interventions should be informed by key theoretical knowledge from relevant disciplines, such as Human Rights Education (HRE), Peace Education, and anti-racist education. Accordingly, the methodology supporting TEP’s pedagogical interventions links learning theories with social science research to create meaningful content. For instance, if the aim is to reduce prejudice, TEP interventions must be informed by an understanding of the mechanisms that sustain and mitigate prejudice and discrimination and the development of effective strategies to challenge and transform these dynamics (Kite et al., 2022).

When addressing sensitive topics such as racism and discrimination, this approach requires connecting knowledge of how these phenomena function and persist in society. In this book, TEP integrates insights from critical social sciences—specifically critical race studies, intersectionality, and decolonial theories—with fields that study prejudice, such as the psychology of prejudice (Kite et al., 2022) and the sociology of migration. This interdisciplinary perspective exposes students to a variety of viewpoints, leading to a more thorough and comprehensive understanding of complex social issues.

This focus on meaningful content also involves reflecting on the essential elements of TEP employed, in practice, to promote learners' inclusion, well-being, emancipation, and deep learning. Chapter 4 provides an example of this by showing how insights from critical social sciences, particularly those dealing with exclusion and discrimination, are used to inform students' perspectives.

It is crucial to note that, unlike many prejudice-reduction interventions in the field of psychology, TEP emphasizes empowerment through knowledge, enabling learners to develop a deep understanding of the mechanisms that maintain discrimination in society. Rather than focusing solely on individual cognitive or behavioral change, this perspective highlights the transformative power of education to foster both intellectual and personal growth. This aligns with TEP's overarching educational goals of promoting holistic development, inclusion, deep and experiential learning, interconnectedness, transformation, and emancipation.

TEP develops knowledge-based practices and tools that address resistance (including denial) and create interventions to reduce prejudice and discrimination (Peucker, 2011; Kite et al., 2022). The pedagogical interventions aim to educate about social injustice and raise awareness, with the goal of dismantling systems of oppression. The literature informing this approach is largely inspired by intersectional and decolonial epistemologies and theories (cf. Cappiali, 2023). However, the concept of meaningful content as a key element of TEP is adaptable and can be applied to pedagogical interventions in other disciplines and fields.

3.3.3 *Interconnected Activities*

The pedagogical interventions within TEP utilize a range of thoughtfully designed activities to support the prepared environment. These activities can include critical discussions, immersive exercises, simulations, and role-playing, each carefully crafted to engage learners actively while respecting the diversity of perspectives and experiences they bring to the learning environment (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024a). This strategy promotes a robust exchange of ideas, allowing learners to explore sensitive and emotionally charged topics in a productive manner (hooks, 1994).

The diversity of these activities aligns with TEP's broad educational goals. To meet these goals, classroom activities must vary to address different dimensions of learning (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Beyond developing cognitive and rational skills, a wide range of activities should

cultivate extra-rational skills, such as empathy and deep listening, while leveraging emotional experiences as valuable learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2017; Boler & Zembylas, 2003). To truly connect with learners' lived experiences and engage their "hearts" (hooks, 1994; Dirkx, 2008), some activities must tap into real-life issues. By combining a diverse array of well-designed activities, educators can deepen subject matter understanding, nurture critical thinking skills, and enhance emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2015/1995).

This strategy enables the crafting of comprehensive learning experiences that support learners' holistic development. Tailoring activities to various intelligences and capabilities enhances pedagogical inclusivity, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their unique learning styles, can fully engage and benefit from the educational process.

Empirical studies reveal that practical activities engage learners actively, promote inclusivity, and recognize diverse capabilities (Wurding, 2005). Well-designed activities play a crucial role in the learning process and are essential components of effective education across various academic disciplines and subjects (Fink, 2003; Beard & Wilson, 2013; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024a). These activities are integral to supporting active participation, applying theoretical knowledge, developing diverse competencies, providing contextual understanding, enabling sensory-rich experiences, and boosting motivation and engagement (Beard & Wilson, 2013). From an inclusivity standpoint, moreover, practical activities offer substantial benefits. They facilitate the achievement of diverse educational outcomes that extend beyond traditional academic objectives, including enhancing the practical and emotional dimensions of learning and promoting greater inclusivity and accessibility for learners with various learning needs (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024a, pp. 5–6).

Box 3.3 presents some directed benefits of interconnected activities in meeting the seven educational goals identified in TEP (cf. Chap. 2).

Box 3.3 Benefits of TEP Interconnected Activities

Holistic development: Activities integrate cognitive, practical, emotional and action-oriented dimensions of learning, aligning with TEP principles.

Inclusivity: Activities address issues of diversity, discrimination, and social justice, and are catered to the learners' needs, inclinations, and learning preferences.

(continued)

Box 3.3 (continued)

Deep learning: Activities promote a range of skills including critical thinking, research, analysis, public speaking, and teamwork.

Experiential learning: Activities connect learning to real-world contexts, making it relevant and impactful.

Interconnectedness: Activities encourage empathy and ethical reasoning by highlighting diverse perspectives and experiences.

Transformation: Students are encouraged to embrace change in perspectives and attitudes about themselves, others, and the world.

Emancipation: Activities empower students to challenge and transform oppressive social structures.

3.3.4 Practices and Ethics

TEP practices and ethical considerations are integral to creating learning environments that challenge and transform oppressive systems. These practices emphasize self-reflection and the evaluation of power dynamics within the classroom, aligning with Freire's (1998) call for educators to engage in praxis that promotes an emancipatory agenda. Detailed examples of these practices, along with their adaptation for pedagogical interventions on racism, are provided in Chap. 4 and **Appendices B, C, D, E and F**.

At the core of TEP practices is the fostering of significant individual, relational, and socio-political change, with a focus on liberating individuals and groups from oppressive conditions (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024b). Educators are encouraged to critically assess their practices to avoid perpetuating dominant ideologies or reinforcing existing power structures (Brookfield, 2017). The field of Critical Pedagogy highlights the potential challenges involved in this endeavor, particularly the risk of introducing new forms of oppression as well as retraumatization in diverse classrooms, where learners from marginalized groups may face unrecognized issues (Ellsworth, 1989; Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024b).

To address these problems, TEP prioritizes an intersectional and decolonial focus on “positionality” and “power dynamics” within the classroom. This approach not only challenges existing power structures but also promotes reflexivity, encouraging both educators and learners to recognize and unlearn ingrained prejudices and oppressions. While knowledge is situated (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1991), it must also address real-world problems and meet social justice demands. In this context,

educators and learners should work together to raise awareness about, and actively challenge, inequalities and discrimination within both educational and societal contexts (Freire, 1972).

The integration of intersectional and decolonial perspectives enriches TEP practices by recognizing learners' diverse identities and needs. Intersectionality acknowledges the interconnected forms of oppression and privilege that individuals experience based on their social identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2020). By addressing these dimensions, educators can create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment that respects and values the unique experiences of all learners.

A decolonial approach critiques the Eurocentric and colonial foundations of traditional education (hooks, 1994; Smith, 2012; de Jong et al., 2019). By emphasizing marginalized voices and knowledge systems, decolonial pedagogy aims to dismantle prevailing power imbalances and enhance critical awareness among learners. Throughout this book, I demonstrate how incorporating intersectionality and decolonial views into pedagogical practices can enhance engagement on cognitive, practical, and emotional levels, fostering a profound sense of interconnectedness and inspiring a drive for action and change (Cappiali, 2023).

Ethical considerations are paramount when addressing controversial and sensitive topics within diverse groups. They allow to avoid harm but also to promote a learning environment where learning and transformation can happen. In my work, I draw extensively on bell hooks' (1994) ethics of care and Michalinos Zembylas' (2015) ethics of discomfort. The ethics of care emphasizes empathetic relationships, the creation of supportive learning environments, and the promotion of ethical development. It also addresses systemic injustices, prioritizing the emotional and spiritual well-being of learners and teachers. The ethics of discomfort, meanwhile, engages with the challenges of exposing learners to distressing content while balancing critical thought with emotional support.

As such, TEP takes inspiration from Zembylas' work on political emotions in the fields of Peace Education and Critical Pedagogy. This author provides key insights and methodologies for educators to address emotional responses and ethical dilemmas associated with teaching controversial issues effectively. A central element of Zembylas' writing is his advocacy for a "pedagogy of discomfort" and the practice of critical emotional reflexivity in educational settings (Zembylas, 2015). Pedagogies of discomfort encourage learners to examine their own beliefs, values, and emotions—particularly those that are uncomfortable or challenging—to foster

empathy, understanding, and transformation. This approach aims to disrupt conventional views and narratives, prompting both learners and educators to reflect on their positions within structures of power and privilege and to consider the perspectives of those who are marginalized or oppressed.

TEP practices, therefore, demand a comprehensive approach that integrates ethical and methodological considerations in line with its broad educational goals. Key ethical principles include cultural sensitivity, preventing stigmatization, ensuring inclusivity without tokenism, and creating safe learning environments (hooks, 1994; Ellsworth, 1989). Educators must respect learners' autonomy and be mindful of the emotional impact of discussing controversial topics (Boler, 1999; Brookfield, 2017, 2019; Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Zembylas, 2015).

Overall, this approach allows to navigate TEP's complex ethical landscape, enhancing the effectiveness of the pedagogical interventions while promoting trust, mutual respect, and a sense of community among teachers and learners (hooks, 2003). For a detailed overview of key ethical guidelines, refer to **Appendix D**.

3.4 THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPONENT

The socio-psychological component of the TEP methodology is designed to evaluate the impact of pedagogical interventions using a social science framework. It aims to integrate learners' perspectives into the educational process, addressing how participants react to and process challenging topics. By drawing on an interdisciplinary foundation that incorporates insights from psychology, sociology, and other social sciences, this component captures the complex dynamics of learning in diverse educational settings.

This component examines both internal psychological dynamics—such as resistance to change, emotions, and trauma—and external socio-political influences like power dynamics and group behavior. It evaluates the impact of TEP's interventions across individual, group, and contextual levels, ensuring that the methodology remains effective in navigating sensitive and controversial topics.

To achieve these objectives, the socio-psychological component employs co-participative strategies to ensure interventions are responsive to learners' needs and interests (Könings et al., 2017). It utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods to observe and assess the effects of interventions on participants. By combining these approaches, this

component not only measures the learning outcomes of the interventions but also actively involves learners in the evaluation process, making it a dynamic and adaptable element of the methodology.

Below, I provide an overview of the key elements that emerged from the pilot studies, which have informed the insights and perspectives presented throughout this book.

3.4.1 A Circular Method to Develop and Consolidate the Pedagogical Interventions

The procedure to develop, implement, test, and improve context-sensitive pedagogical interventions follows a circular method, as identified by Olsson et al. (2010) and previously introduced by Montessori (2002/1912). This approach moves from theory-driven activities and ethical practices rooted in TEP and the integration of its results. It starts with an initial exploratory phase, followed by observation and the discovery of potential unexpected outcomes, and the integration of insights into new pedagogical interventions. I have structured this process into four distinct stages, as visualized in Fig. 3.4.

The circular method emphasizes the importance of continuously refining teaching practices and activities over time through a cycle of self-reflection on the teacher's practices and direct observation of learner interactions within the classroom. This is achieved through a systematic integration of "objective" analysis of results and learners' experiences (based on assessments of the impact on learners' learning processes and outcomes) and their "subjective" perceptions of the activities (based on their feedback and personal experiences).

A key aspect of this methodology is the systematic integration of various forms of feedback and analysis over time. By considering learners' experiences and responses, the pedagogical activities can be continually adapted and improved over time. This perspective ensures that the pedagogical intervention remains relevant, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs and perspectives of the learners, ultimately enhancing the overall educational experience.

Box 3.4 offers a concrete illustration of my journey in crafting and refining a pedagogical intervention focused on addressing racism over the

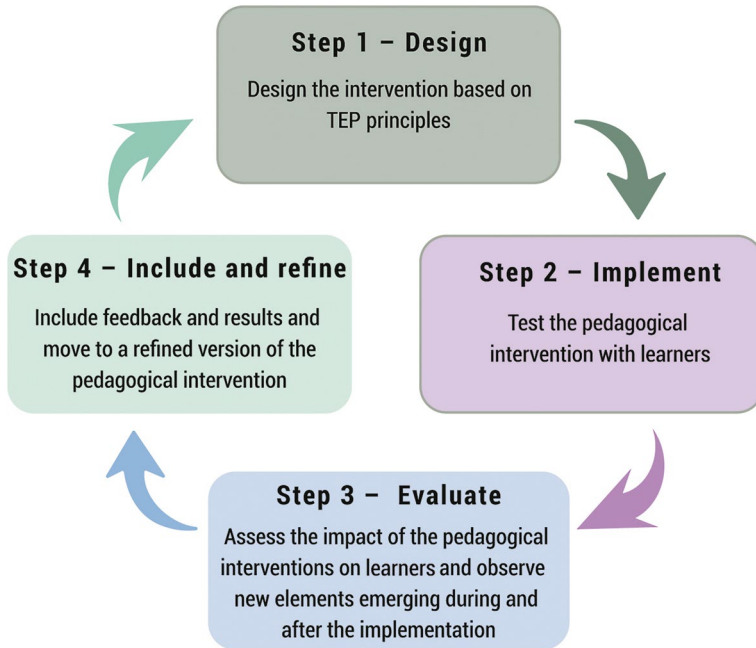


Fig. 3.4 A circular method to develop and consolidate the pedagogical interventions

course of six years (2016–2021). The workshop became one of the most comprehensive and highly valued activities within TEP. Its development was structured into four stages. Evaluation involved triangulation of diverse data sources, including self-reflective notes, observations, student feedback, and various assessment strategies. This approach consolidated insights from pre-assessment surveys, observation notes, assessment portfolios, anonymous evaluations, and follow-up surveys. The effectiveness of TEP was measured through learners' individual assignments, feedback, and final exams, focusing on their understanding of racism and its impact on their values and beliefs. Readers can refer to Chaps. 4 and 5 for an overview of this pedagogical intervention and its impact.

Box 3.4 Consolidating a Pedagogical Intervention on Racism

Stage 1 (Italy, 2016–2018): The first three years represented the incubation phase, where I moved from practice to theory to develop the workshop. Faced with the practical challenge of teaching sensitive topics related to migration in diverse classrooms, I developed and implemented activities inductively using digital tools (mainly videos) that focused on real-life problems linked to racism and anti-racism. The initial evaluation combined direct observation (based on my own assessment of the results and learners' written and oral feedback) with theoretical insights from the field of education, with a particular focus on Critical Pedagogy and social science research.

Stage 2 (Sweden, 2019): In the fourth year, I expanded the scope of the pedagogical intervention by linking the structures of the interconnected activities (including the different exercises and the timing of their introduction) more closely to meaningful content (based on insights from critical race theory, intersectionality, and decolonial research), taking into consideration potential resistance from some learners. This allowed me to better bridge theory and practice and to use a knowledge-based perspective to refine the activity. Both learners' feedback and my own observations played a crucial role in assessing areas of improvement and identifying elements that could be omitted.

Stage 3 (Sweden, 2020): In the fifth year, I completed the refinement of the pedagogical intervention, reviewing the teaching strategies and activities carefully and seeking coherence in all its elements. I aimed to increase the impact and promote a transformative experience in the learners. I relied on the learners' feedback, focus groups, in-depth interviews, and my own observations to assess the impact.

Stage 4 (Sweden, 2021): In the sixth year, the refined version of the pedagogical intervention was put into practice. During this implementation, I had the opportunity to closely witness the effectiveness of the workshop in all its aspects. The final version of the workshop is presented in Chap. 3, with supporting material in the dedicated Appendices.

3.4.2 *Assessing the Impact of Psychological and Social Factors of Pedagogical Interventions*

The socio-psychological component of TEP supports the evaluation of pedagogical interventions across diverse individuals, groups, and contexts. Grounded in interdisciplinary research—particularly social and political psychology and sociology—this approach aims to understand how different learners engage with complex topics.

To create effective educational interventions on complex social issues like discrimination and racism, it is essential to draw on insights from these interdisciplinary fields. Social and political psychology and sociology, for instance, help predict, evaluate, and explain how individuals and groups respond to interventions based on their psychological traits and social positions. For example, individuals with authoritarian tendencies or radicalized viewpoints may exhibit predictable forms of resistance, while those in privileged positions might resist acknowledging how social structures maintain their status. Additionally, trauma can significantly hinder—or even obstruct—learning, which makes it essential to integrate trauma-informed approaches into pedagogical design (Zembylas, 2015).

3.4.2.1 *Understanding Resistance*

Understanding the psychological barriers that learners may experience is crucial for designing effective educational interventions. Resistance to change in educational settings often arises from psychological defense mechanisms that protect individuals from confronting uncomfortable truths or altering deeply held beliefs. This resistance tends to be especially pronounced when discussing controversial or emotionally charged issues such as racism or social inequality (Brookfield, 2019; hooks, 1994; Freire, 1998; Zembylas, 2015). Educators using TEP must consider three key aspects of resistance to change:

1. **Cognitive dissonance:** When individuals encounter information that conflicts with their existing beliefs, they experience discomfort and may reject or resist the new information (Mezirow, 1991; Zembylas, 2015). Educators must anticipate this discomfort and implement strategies to help learners process and work through it, facilitating reflection and supporting the development of new perspectives. Drawing on Mezirow's theory, in TEP, this discomfort can be intentionally triggered in educational settings through the use of *disorienting dilemmas*, which act as catalysts for critical reflection and potential transformation.

2. **Psychological rigidity:** Individuals with rigid cognitive and emotional frameworks, such as those with authoritarian tendencies (Altemeyer, 2006/1981; Duckitt & Bizumic, 2013), are likely to resist interventions that challenge their worldviews. Socio-psychological research provides insights into how individual traits, such as authoritarianism, social dominance orientation (SDO), and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), influence attitudes toward diversity and inclusion initiatives (Ho et al., 2015; Dru, 2007; Heaven & St. Quintin, 2003). Studies show that individuals with high levels of authoritarianism tend to resist changes that challenge hierarchical (and in some cases, racial) norms, leading to pushback against interventions that promote equity and participation. Understanding these tendencies allows scholars and educators to better anticipate resistance and tailor interventions aiming to encourage openness to change.
3. **Trauma:** Individuals who have experienced trauma may resist change because it threatens their psychological equilibrium. Trauma-informed pedagogy emphasizes creating safe spaces for learners to engage with challenging topics without risking re-traumatization (hooks, 1994; Zembylas, 2015).

3.4.2.2 *Strategies for Addressing Resistance*

Psychological and sociological research offer various strategies for dealing with resistance and fostering change. Some of these strategies include:

1. **Contact hypothesis:** Structured, meaningful interactions between social groups can reduce prejudice, particularly when equal status, shared goals, and cooperative activities are present (Kite et al., 2022; see also Allport, 1954). By creating opportunities for positive inter-group contact, this strategy encourages mutual understanding and diminishes stereotypes, making it effective for managing resistance and promoting inclusive learning environments.
2. **Addressing implicit bias:** Research on implicit bias shows that unconscious attitudes can hinder behavioral change and perpetuate resistance (Kite et al., 2022). Educators can implement implicit bias training and awareness-raising initiatives to help participants recognize and mitigate these biases, thereby making them more open and receptive to challenging content.
3. **Trauma-informed approaches:** Trauma-informed approaches emphasize creating safe, trustworthy, and empowering learning environments. Learners with a history of trauma may struggle with emotional regula-

tion and cognitive flexibility, which can hinder their ability to engage meaningfully in the learning space. Zembyla's (2015) insights on the pedagogy of discomfort allows to balance emotional resilience with critical reflection, ensuring that learners can process difficult topics without becoming overwhelmed.

Below, I present some methodological insights from my preliminary research, which will guide the future developments of TEP.

3.4.2.3 *Evaluating TEP Impact Across Learners and Contexts*

Evaluating the impact of TEP's interventions requires an understanding of how individual, group, and contextual variations influence responses to educational content. Table 3.2 provides an overview of some of the key variations to consider.

One of the primary challenges in educational interventions on human rights and social justice topics is determining which individuals and groups derive the greatest benefit from these practices and under what conditions they are most effective (Peucker, 2011; Kite et al., 2022). There is a risk of "preaching to the choir," where interventions primarily engage audiences already aligned with the perspectives being presented, instead of reaching a more diverse demographic. Additionally, interventions designed to empower marginalized groups may inadvertently trigger backlash from other segments of society (Kite et al., 2022).

Preliminary findings from pedagogical interventions on racism with highly diverse groups show that learners' responses vary depending on four distinct types of individuals. Table 3.3 illustrates the expected responses based on individual characteristics, using the example of racism and drawing on the case study presented in Chaps. 4 and 5 of this book.

Table 3.2 Evaluating the impact of TEP across variations

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Variations</i>
Individual	Diverse range of learners, drawing on social-psychology research (e.g., open vs. resistant to change, conservative vs. progressive, privileged vs. less privileged)
Group	Homogeneous vs. heterogeneous groups; radicalized versus less radicalized groups
Contextual	Geographical and educational variations (e.g., teacher-centered vs. learner-centered approaches, authoritarian vs. democratic countries) as well as levels of education (e.g., age)

Table 3.3 Expected responses based on individual characteristics (e.g., topic of racism)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Individual characteristics</i>	<i>Processes observed during the intervention</i>	<i>Outcomes observed after the intervention</i>
1. Affected and open to change	Individuals directly affected by the topic (e.g., racism); usually hold progressive views	Willingness to engage and learn from the educational intervention; openness to learning and exploring perspectives	Likelihood of positive engagement and transformation
2. Affected and resistant	Individuals directly affected by the topic (e.g., racism) but display resistance or discomfort; may hold progressive or conservative views	Potential challenges in engaging with the content, which may include lack of awareness or resistance (due, for instance, to trauma) may impede learning and transformation	Resistance to acknowledging or addressing the topic; possible closure and limited impact
3. Not affected and open to change	Individuals not directly affected by the topic (e.g., racism) but open and receptive; usually hold progressive views	Willingness to engage despite a lack of personal connection; openness to learning and understanding the relevance of the topic	Potential for expanding awareness and fostering empathy
4. Not affected and resistant	Individuals not directly affected by the topic (e.g., racism) but display resistance or discomfort; may hold progressive or conservative views	Display resistance to the subject; lack of personal connection may contribute to resistance; manifested resistance to acknowledging or empathizing with the issue	Two possible outcomes: (1) resistance to acknowledging or addressing the topic; possible closure and even backlash or, alternatively, (2) radical shift or change in perspective (from deeper understanding and transformation)

This categorization helps predict diverse responses to pedagogical interventions and offers insights into potential challenges and opportunities for positive outcomes when addressing sensitive topics. It is crucial to highlight that gender is *also* a relevant factor, with women and non-binary learners usually being more inclined to be open to the subject in both the affected and the non-affected groups. Gender dynamics should therefore be a central aspect of any future investigation.

At the contextual level, the implementation of TEP needs to consider variations within diverse geographical and educational landscapes and levels of education. This entails examining differences, for instance, between teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches, as well as variations between authoritarian and democratic educational systems. Such an approach requires an assessment of the potential implementation and effectiveness of TEP in environments where teachers and learners are accustomed to different teaching and learning styles. Furthermore, it allows to explore how TEP influences these educational spaces and how it can evolve further to better align with distinct educational needs.

3.5 CONCLUSION

Initially developed for graduate students in the social sciences, the TEP methodology has evolved into a versatile framework that extends beyond its original scope by integrating insights from both educational and social sciences. The preliminary exploration of TEP's methodology presented in this chapter offers promising evidence of its effectiveness, particularly in addressing controversial topics within diverse educational settings.

While these initial results are encouraging, there remains significant potential for refining and expanding the approach to maximize its impact and applicability. The successful case study, which is elaborated upon in the following chapters, illustrate how TEP's evidence-based approach can inform effective pedagogical interventions and pave the way for pioneering research and innovative teaching strategies.

One key exciting finding of my preliminary research indicates that TEP interventions may have a greater impact, even in resistant groups, when conducted in heterogeneous rather than homogeneous settings. This is because relational learning and empathy are central to fostering transformation. Future research should further explore these results using more advanced qualitative and quantitative methods, including experimental designs with control groups, to validate these preliminary hypotheses. Additionally, it is crucial to develop specialized interventions for radicalized groups, including those exposed to or perpetuating violence (e.g., prisoners and prison workers) or individuals from extremist groups. This comprehensive research

agenda will provide a robust foundation for adapting and refining TEP's pedagogical interventions to diverse educational settings and learner demographics, ensuring their effectiveness in fostering meaningful transformation across contexts. A more detailed discussion of future research directions and strategies for advancing TEP's applicability can be found in Chap. 6.

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PART II

Implementing TEP in Diverse
Classrooms



A Pedagogical Intervention on Racism and Anti-Racism

Abstract This chapter illustrates how I have applied Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) to address controversial and sensitive topics in diverse classrooms. It presents a detailed account of a two-day workshop on racism titled “Racism, Anti-Racism, and Identity Politics in Europe: The Case of France from a Comparative Perspective,” introduced in graduate courses in the fields of migration and discrimination. The workshop serves as an advanced example of how to use the TEP methodology. The chapter highlights the four key elements of TEP interventions designed to holistically engage learners: prepared environment, meaningful content, interconnected activities, and embedded ethical practices. It explores the various steps and the rationale behind them. Central to this methodology is the TEP prepared environment, which replaces traditional lectures with dynamic, learner-centered activities that promote self-directed learning, critical dialogue, and transformative experiences. Meaningful content is delivered through direct engagement with social sciences literature and real-life, relatable examples of discrimination, employing visual material such as documentaries and video clips by rappers. The intervention encourages students to develop a deep understanding of racism and, when necessary, to challenge it by leveraging their diverse experiences to promote conscientization. This is done via the integration of core ethical issues that allow to engage with peers who have different backgrounds and experiences with racism and other forms of

discrimination. This practical guide offers educators a blueprint for reproducing and adapting the workshop. Beyond its specific focus, it offers insights on the TEP methodology, allowing for the development of effective pedagogical interventions with implications beyond the topic and context in which it was implemented.

Keywords Pedagogical Intervention • Controversial Topics • Sensitive Topics • Racism • Intersectionality • Immigration • Discrimination • Inclusion • Positionality

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter illustrates how I have applied Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) to address controversial and sensitive topics in diverse classrooms. It presents a detailed account of a two-day workshop titled “Racism, Anti-Racism, and Identity Politics in Europe: The Case of France from a Comparative Perspective,” conducted within graduate courses on migration and discrimination. The primary objective of the workshop is to create a safe space for challenging discussions about controversial and divisive topics, allowing students to acquire key knowledge and skills about racism while transforming their perspectives (Freire 1972; Zembylas 2015a).

The workshop has been pivotal in developing and consolidating the TEP methodology, as discussed in Chap. 3. It was one of the longest and best received TEP pedagogical interventions, with students suggesting that other workshops in the course be developed along similar lines. Over the years, the workshop has consistently garnered enthusiastic responses from students of various national backgrounds, despite the emotional challenges it may elicit. Many learners reported a heightened awareness of racism’s pervasive effects on individuals, communities, and broader society, gaining insights from those directly affected by the problem, as further evidenced in Chap. 5. This acknowledgment underscores the workshop’s effectiveness as a case study for the theory and methodology used and its potential for expanding new activities based on the same procedure.

This chapter elucidates the potential of the TEP methodology for both specialist and broader audiences. Together with the supporting material found in the appendices, it provides a concrete guide for educators to reproduce and adapt the workshop. Beyond its specific focus, the chapter offers insights on the TEP methodology, allowing for the development of

effective pedagogical interventions with implications that go beyond the immediate topic and context. The specific techniques and strategies employed during the workshop are outlined, providing practical examples of how TEP principles were integrated into the curriculum. This methodology highlights the adaptability of TEP across various topics, levels of education, disciplines, and contexts.

The next section explores the key elements of the pedagogical intervention, followed by a discussion of the expected objectives achieved through the intervention, highlighting how students are impacted differently based on their direct experience with racism and their openness to change. The concluding section anticipates how the effectiveness of the pedagogical strategies presented in the chapter is supported by empirical evidence in Chap. 5.

4.2 CONTEXT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION AND RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF THE CASE STUDY

The workshop is part of the course segment titled “Immigrants’ Integration in Receiving Countries,” which addresses the exclusion and multiple forms of discrimination faced by immigrants, refugees, and racialized groups in Europe. I implemented an initial version of the workshop with students in Italy (2016–2018) and then in Sweden (2019–2021) (cf. **Appendix A**). The workshop explores highly sensitive and controversial themes related to racism, anti-racism, and identity politics in Europe, using France as a primary case study. It employs a comparative dimension, enabling students to analyze both commonalities and variations across actors in society, forms of racism and anti-racism, as well as between European countries, while also leaving space to extend the comparison to other countries they know, including their countries of origin. The material, mostly visual and provocative with real-life content, encompasses a diverse range of perspectives, including viewpoints from both left-wing and right-wing actors, in addition to insights from immigrants and racialized communities residing in Europe.

The course material is broad in scope. Through a variety of activities, including four key pedagogical interventions like the workshop on racism, and group presentations, students are exposed to a range of disciplines and perspectives from the fields of migration and racism. This allows them to

develop a nuanced understanding of the theories in the field and to engage in informed debate.¹

A strategic choice is to place the workshop toward the end of the course to ensure students are already familiar with key concepts and have developed the capacity to engage in a safe and inclusive learning space while addressing sensitive issues in migration. Trust between the teachers and the learners is essential at this stage, as deep engagement is only possible in a context where learners are fully committed to the process.

4.3 OVERVIEW OF THE PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION

Central to the TEP methodology are the four core elements of the pedagogical interventions: prepared environment, meaningful content, interconnected activities, and ethical practices. In this section, I demonstrate how these elements are tailored to the workshop. The methodology aligns with TEP's goal of addressing the diverse needs and contexts of students, fostering profound and transformative learning experiences. This is achieved through the careful translation of TEP's key principles into theory-driven pedagogical interventions.

4.3.1 *Prepared Environment*

The TEP prepared environment prioritizes a learner-centered design, promoting interactive and collaborative spaces, reflective practices, real-world relevance, and adaptability. A crucial part of this methodology is the replacement of traditional lectures with dynamic activities that foster self-directed learning and critical dialogue (Freire 1972). The focus is on creating an environment in which learners engage with thoughtfully designed activities that encourage self-reflection, critical thinking, and meaningful engagement. This holistic and inclusive educational setting seeks to empower students to engage with controversial and sensitive topics, supporting both personal and relational learning while advocating for action and societal transformation.

In this environment, the teacher's role evolves from a traditional lecturer to that of a role model and a facilitator (see **Appendix C**). This shift

¹ For the literature used in the course, please refer to the link provided for an earlier version of the course: https://www.graduateschool.sam.lu.se/sites/graduateschool.prodwebb8.lu.se/files/2020-06/final_sims26_200529.pdf

becomes evident as students assume more active roles in their learning, engaging with both the material and each other.

Real-life examples of discrimination are utilized, reflecting on pivotal questions: how can educators enable students to perceive, comprehend, and discuss the roots and prominence of racism in society, particularly against the backdrop of persistent denial, victimization, and silencing of racialized groups? The design of the workshop specifically addresses the tendency of academic literature to inadvertently erase the experiences of marginalized groups by presuming the “neutrality” of the knowledge produced about them (Brookfield 2019).

The multimedia sources and the key steps of the workshop are core elements of the pedagogical intervention. Videos are carefully selected and thematically combined to stimulate various student reactions, such as disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow 1997) and emotional discomfort (Zembylas 2018) around the topic of racism. The intervention seeks to engage as much as possible students holistically—engaging both minds and hearts—to develop a deep understanding of the topic at hand and, when necessary, to challenge the status quo by leveraging their diverse experiences to promote conscientization (Freire 1972).

The pedagogy of discomfort (Zembylas 2015b) involves intentionally creating cognitive and emotional tension in learners by challenging their existing beliefs, assumptions, and values. By engaging with discomfort, learners can develop greater empathy, open-mindedness, and a more profound understanding of complex social issues. The goal here is to provoke self-reflection and encourage learners to question their perspectives, ultimately nurturing transformative learning experiences.

One of the practical challenges here is to encourage discussions about the teacher’s and students’ own privileges and examine whether discriminatory practices and discourses are being practiced in their context. One way to achieve this is to use “disorienting dilemmas” (Mezirow 1997), a strategy aiming to trigger a deep questioning of a person’s convictions and provoke a reassessment of his/her perspectives, creating cognitive and emotional conflict that prompts learners to explore alternatives and actively engage in the transformative learning process.

Figure 4.1 presents an overview of the key steps in the workshop that replace traditional lectures with a prepared environment. This environment is built around several interconnected activities, enabling students to work through the material independently. Carefully selected supporting materials are introduced to achieve a variety of learning objectives, facilitating a holistic and meaningful learning experience.

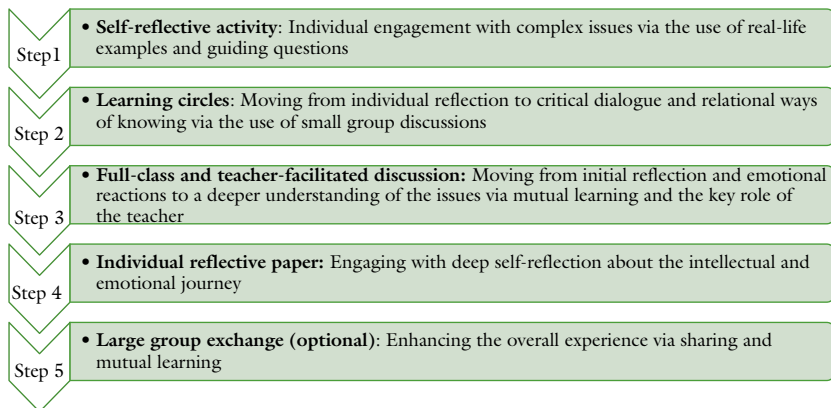


Fig. 4.1 Interconnected activities of TEP's prepared environment adapted to the workshop

4.3.2 *Meaningful Content*

To tackle racism, the workshop employs an interdisciplinary approach that merges critical social sciences research with insights from various disciplines covered during the course. This allows for a comprehensive examination of the mechanisms of exclusion and discrimination, both structural and otherwise, as well as the responses from groups that have experienced racism. When addressing controversial and sensitive topics such as racism, it is crucial to consider the mechanisms of power and denial both within and outside the classroom (Brookfield 2019; hooks, 1994). Critical traditions in the social sciences—including feminist, intersectional, critical race, post-colonial, and decolonial studies—provide invaluable theoretical and conceptual tools for analyzing the structures, power dynamics, and ideologies that perpetuate inequalities and facilitate the exclusion of certain groups (Collins and Bilge 2020).

Building on these foundations, the workshop integrates interdisciplinary research on discrimination and racism, infusing the activities with meaningful content to ensure that learning experiences are relevant, impactful, and conducive to deeper learning and active engagement. This content is delivered through direct engagement with social sciences literature and real-life, relatable examples of racism and anti-racism in society.

France is used as a focal point for examining racism in Europe, primarily due to its colonial history and its substantial population of color, largely

stemming from migration, particularly from its former colonies. This context is closely intertwined with societal denial, and as such it offers a significant opportunity to scrutinize the disparities between national identity, official color-blind narratives and practices, and the calls from racialized groups to eradicate racism and other forms of discrimination in society.

France's situation is not unique but reflects a broader trend in Europe, where the systemic exclusion of individuals of color, particularly Muslims and Black men and women, is well-documented and widespread (FRA, 2019; ENAR, 2018). Utilizing France as its central case study, the workshop also facilitates comparisons with other European countries, including those from which students originate or where they have migrated to.

This comparative dimension is a vital aspect of the workshop. It empowers students to apply their acquired knowledge and personal experiences, allowing them to introduce examples from different countries into the classroom setting. Furthermore, the choice of a European case that is not directly tied to the country in which the class is being taught, such as Italy and Sweden, introduces a level of "distance" from the subject of study. This strategy seeks to prevent learners from prematurely activating emotional or defensive responses, such as guilt, defense mechanisms, and denial strategies. Doing so ensures that the impact of the activity remains intact and maximizes its effectiveness.

A crucial aspect of the material used is its intersectional perspective, which involves a careful examination of how discourses, whether explicit or implicit, intersect with factors such as race, gender, and class (Collins and Bilge 2020). The intersectional perspective prompts students to unpack the complex interplay of power and discrimination based on gender, class, ethnicity, nationality, religious belief, sexual orientation, (in)visible disabilities, and disparities between the Global North and Global South. Intersectionality encourages a deeper understanding among students about the roots and impact of racism and challenges the persistence of denial, victimization, and silencing of racialized groups in society. Furthermore, the workshop examines how academic literature often inadvertently contributes to the marginalization of specific groups by perpetuating the myth of "neutral" knowledge (Brookfield 2019).

Additionally, the workshop incorporates post-colonial and decolonial viewpoints, which are essential for presenting students with alternative narratives to the prevailing discourse on immigration in Europe. These perspectives contest Eurocentric views by amplifying the voices and lived experiences of immigrants and racialized groups themselves. This is a

fundamental component of the workshop's content, as it allows us to examine the experiences of a variety of actors (individuals and groups) who encounter racism while avoiding the trap of victimization.

In recent years, the public discourse surrounding migration and racialized groups, particularly Muslims and veiled Muslim women, has become highly politicized in France. The rise of Islamophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment, exacerbated by events such as the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks, has contributed to an environment where immigrants and racialized groups from the ex-colonies, notably Muslim Arabs and Blacks, have experienced increased state surveillance and the propagation of criminalizing narratives. Anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric has further fueled a sense of alienation among migrants and racialized groups.

In response to growing manifestations of racism, immigrants and racialized groups, especially Muslim Arabs and Blacks, have been proactive in raising their voices and increasing their visibility in public spaces. They have done so through mobilization efforts and by crafting counter-narratives that seek to expose and undermine the pervasive racism and marginalization they face within European societies (d'Appollonia 2015; Keaton et al. 2012; Cappiali 2022). Additionally, these groups have highlighted their significant contributions to European history, underscoring their rightful place in the broader narrative (Cappiali 2022).

To counteract the silencing of marginalized voices in academic research, educators can prioritize incorporating the perspectives of those who directly experience discrimination and oppression. These perspectives often illuminate the mechanisms of oppression, making them more visible and tangible (Cappiali 2022; Lamont et al. 2017; Essed 1991). By centering the voices and experiences of oppressed groups, this methodology adds depth and authenticity to the research and contributes to what Sandra Harding terms "strong objectivity" (Harding 1992). This concept posits that by incorporating diverse perspectives, especially those of marginalized groups, the rigor and comprehensiveness of research findings can be improved, leading to a more robust and equitable understanding of social phenomena. In light of this, the workshop emphasizes a variety of societal perspectives, contrasting the views of the state and far-right groups with those of communities affected by racism.

Box 4.1 presents the complete list of written and visual material chosen for the workshop.

Box 4.1 Written and Visual Supporting Materials**Supporting literature (Mandatory reading)**

- Chapter 13 “New Ethnic Minorities and Society” of the book de Haas, H., S. Castles, and M. J. Miller (2020) *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. New York: Guilford Press, 6th ed.

Three opinion articles:

- Rokhaya Diallo (2018). “On football, identity and ‘Frenchness’: Are some members of the French national team only French when they win?” Aljazeera, Aug 2, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/8/2/on-football-identity-and-frenchness>
- Rokhaya Diallo (2019). “French whiteness is in crisis: Why did Lilian Thuram’s matter-of-fact analysis about white supremacy cause a storm of controversy in France?” Aljazeera, Oct 10, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/10/10/french-whiteness-is-in-crisis>
- Michael McEachrane (2014) “Seeing Sweden’s race problem for what it is: Ultrnationalism and racism are not just problems of Sweden’s political fringe.” Aljazeera, Dec 15, 2014. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/12/15/seeing-swedens-race-problem-for-what-it-is>

Short videos to watch in order:

- [Racism against immigrant football players in Europe](#)
- [The European hipsters who are appealing to the far right](#) (watch only until minute 8)
- [The rise of the far-right in Germany](#) (watch only until minute 11)
- [French Rapper Médine On Paris After The Attacks](#)
- [Médine - Speaker Corner \(Official Video\)](#)

Documentary:

- **Black France:**
[Episode 1 - Conflicting Identities](#) (from the beginning to 27:30 minutes)
[Episode 3 - The Immigration Problem](#) (the entire video; about 47 minutes)

Table 4.1 illustrates how selected videos, combined with supporting literature and three opinion articles, provide students with a comprehensive view of perspectives surrounding racism and anti-racism in society. These materials are introduced gradually to deepen understanding and promote learning and transformation at the individual, relational, and socio-political levels.

This curated content encourages participants to analyze and connect various forms of racism—including those expressed by elites, state actors, political parties, far-right organizations, and the media—with anti-racist practices and counter-narratives from civil society organizations, intellectuals, artists, football players, and community leaders who are directly impacted by these issues. By integrating these materials, the workshop

Table 4.1 Meaningful content for an exploration of racism and anti-racism

<i>Visual material</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Aspects of racism and anti-racism covered</i>
Racism against immigrant football players in Europe	Racism in football from the perspective of targeted groups (“Arabs” and “Blacks” in various European teams)	Comparative perspective highlighting the systemic nature of racism, national identity, whiteness, and “the others.”
The European hipsters who are appealing to the far right	Emerging grassroots far-right movements against multiculturalism	Cultural racism, covert racism, civil society, right-wing identity politics, radicalization.
The rise of the far right in Germany	Neo-Nazi movements using overt supremacist narratives openly referring to Hitler	The growing relevance of neo-Nazi ideology in mainstream politics across Europe, biological racism, open racism, white supremacist ideology, and political elite racism.
French Rapper Médine on Paris After the Attacks	Controversial Franco-Algerian rapper challenging Islamophobia, criminalization of Muslims, and discrimination in France after the Paris attacks	Secularism, Islamophobia, silencing of Muslim groups in public debates, multiple identities, feeling of alienation, cultural emancipation.
Médine - Speaker Corner (Official Video)	Social exclusion, social segregation, counter-narratives, social movements, forms of resistance, agency	Denouncing systemic discrimination and injustice, counter-narratives and resistance, amplifying marginalized voices and highlighting key demands.

(continued)

Table 4.1 (continued)

<i>Visual material</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Aspects of racism and anti-racism covered</i>
Black France Episode 1	A historical, multi-dimensional, and multi-actor perspective on racism and anti-racism in France via decolonial perspectives (Colonial times and World Wars I and II)	Understanding the different dimensions of racism in society from a historical perspective to understand racialization and race, challenging national myths, the legacy of colonialism, and anti-colonial narratives, decolonial and reparation movements.
Black France Episode 3	A historical, multi-dimensional, and multi-actor perspective on racism and anti-racism in France (Post-war period—1990)	The links between post-colonialism, migration, and racism, from ex-colonized to migrants constructed as labor force, migrants as scapegoats, contrasting interests represented in society: the state, political parties (across the political spectrum), the far right and political racism, trade unions, civil society, the role of political debates, laws, and the media.

offers a well-rounded understanding of both the problem and the ongoing efforts to combat it.

The materials in Table 4.1 introduce students to various forms of racism and anti-racism. To deepen students' understanding, I utilize five key concepts within critical social sciences as supporting material. These concepts, defined in Box 4.2, often emerge from students' discussions in small groups and plenary sessions, allowing for a bottom-up approach to learning. This method encourages students to actively engage with the material, collaboratively constructing their understanding of the complexities of discrimination and racism. Later in the workshop, I provide more formal definitions of these concepts, moving from the students' initial collective knowledge to a deeper understanding. This ensures that the learning process is both participatory and grounded in existing theories.

While these concepts primarily rely on critical social theories, I enrich the discussion with alternative explanations from a variety of disciplines, drawing on material already covered in other parts of the course. The dynamic nature of the workshop also allows for the inclusion of additional concepts based on student insights, emerging discussions, and evolving needs. This flexible approach ensures that the learning experience is tailored and

Box 4.2 Key Concepts Used as a Roadmap

- **Institutional Racism:** A central concept that aids in comprehending the historical and ongoing marginalization of non-white populations in the Western world. It is defined as a system of oppression that produces social hierarchies and stratification within society based on presumed racial differences (Kendi 2019). Furthermore, it denotes a fundamental principle of social organization that is upheld and perpetuated through legislation, policies, and racist ideologies (Kendi 2019; Omi and Winant 2015).
- **Othering:** Othering is a process that involves portraying certain groups as “undeserving” and subsequently subjecting them to unequal treatment and marginalization based on this characterization. Scholars in the post-colonial tradition, such as Edward Saïd, have examined why and how Western civilization constructs its “Other.” Saïd (1978, p. 12) writes: “Ideas, cultures, and histories cannot be understood or studied seriously without also studying their force, or more precisely, their configurations of power.” Saïd elucidates that under the colonizer’s scrutiny, the Other became the representation of the “West” in its own terms. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988, p. 76) further contends that this process of the “West” defining and representing the “non-West” on its own terms led to the constitution of the colonial subject as the Other, someone who could be colonized. Consequently, the process of othering—in which the West is established as the norm while non-Western cultures and peoples are perceived as deviations from this norm—entails the dehumanization and inferiorization of other cultures and peoples (Saïd 1978).
- **Race:** In line with critical race theorists Michael Omi and Howard Winant (2015), this concept should be understood not as a biological category but as a social one. While it is widely acknowledged that race lacks biological validity, it remains highly relevant as a social category. Omi and Winant emphasize that race continues to symbolize and signify social conflicts and interests. This relevance persists even in so-called post-racial or color-blind societies, where race still plays a fundamental role in structuring and

(continued)

Box 4.2 (continued)

representing the social world along racial lines. In this context, race can be viewed as a power relation with a socio-political function, shaping discourses and practices that allocate power and resources while perpetuating inequalities.

- **Racialization:** This term refers to the process of attributing social meaning to human bodies. It underscores the notion that race is not fixed but socially and politically constructed, acquiring varying meanings across different times and spaces. Racial inequality is not solely based on constructed differences related to ethnicity, appearance, origin, culture, and language; it also hinges on the classification of individuals based on their skin color, deeming them different and inferior due to their phenotypical characteristics, often referred to as “people of color.” These perceived differences have historical roots and are reactivated by political discourses. This reactivation makes it easier to justify and support unequal and differential treatment as well as abuses against historically marginalized groups based on their presumed racial inferiority.
- **Intersectionality:** This concept is essential for the study of racism as it underscores the co-production of interlocking forms of oppression and exclusion. It highlights the multi-dimensional nature of the lived experiences of marginalized individuals (Crenshaw 1991; Essed 1991; Collins and Bilge 2020). By focusing on the role of domination and its operational mechanisms that generate inequalities in society, intersectionality serves as a potent conceptual tool for enabling students to comprehend and analyze racism within the context of other axes of exclusion and oppression, including gender and class.

responsive, providing students with a broad and deep understanding of the multifaceted nature of racism and the diverse efforts to combat it.

It is important to note that these concepts are not exhaustive. They represent a key conceptual framework to guide the readings, reflections, and discussions of the workshop. Other concepts may also be introduced by students or teachers as the content of the exercises evolves, depending on students’ insights, knowledge, and emerging questions. The teacher’s

role is to progress from introducing key concepts to providing in-depth explanations (e.g., focusing on mechanisms and theories) to clarify the “how” and “why,” using relevant literature (for further discussion, see **Appendix C**).

4.3.3 *Interconnected Activities*

Through a series of structured and interconnected activities, students engage in self-reflection, group discussion via the use of learning circles, and analysis, leading to a deeper understanding of these complex issues and, ideally, to conscientization (Freire 1972). Box 4.3 presents an overview of the workshop. A complementary version can be found in **Appendix G**, where I detail the instructions given to students and other relevant information, including suggested timings.

Above, Box 4.4 outlines the specific pedagogical principles used at each stage of the workshop, demonstrating how TEP’s methodology is

Box 4.3 Structure of the Workshop: A Step-by-Step Strategy

STEP 1: Individual Pre-Workshop Preparation

Assignment: Self-reflective activity with guided questions and supporting material

Description of Tasks:

- Students complete individual work prior to the workshop day.
- They read three opinion articles about racism and anti-racism and watch several short online videos and a documentary, following a given order and structure.
- Multimedia sources provide a shared visual and emotional experience for deep individual reflection and subsequent discussions.
- Students rely on the support of semi-structured guiding questions (see **Appendix G**).

Intermediate Objectives:

- Facilitate engagement with complex topics.
- Encourage reflection on personal perspectives and biases.
- Provide visual and narrative context to issues discussed.
- Establish a shared reference point for further analysis.

(continued)

Box 4.3 (continued)

- Prepare students for collaborative learning experience and critical dialogue.

STEP 2: Learning Circles

Assignment: Small groups interactive activity

Description of Tasks:

- Students gather in small groups (3–4 students) for a two- or three-hour session.
- The small groups should be as diverse as possible in terms, for instance, of gender and nationality.
- Discussions center around guiding questions, answers, and emotional reactions to the written and visual material.
- Students share their reflections and explore new questions while also exploring their emotional reactions.

Intermediate Objectives:

- Develop critical and respectful dialogue skills.
- Enhance understanding through peer exchange.
- Create a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

STEP 3: Full-Class and Teacher-Facilitated Discussion

Assignment: Share reflections and engage in meaningful discussions in a larger group

Description of Tasks:

- Students convene with the entire class and teacher for a three-hour session.
- Small groups present reflections discussed in STEP 2.
- The teacher facilitates and guides the discussion, encouraging connections between students' reflections and course concepts and theories.

Intermediate Objectives:

- Facilitate comprehensive understanding of workshop themes.
- Encourage articulation and connection of reflections with theoretical perspectives.
- Reinforce collective learning by encouraging exchanges with peers and the teacher.
- Support navigation of complex ideas through guided discussion.

(continued)

Box 4.3 (continued)**STEP 4: Individual Reflective Paper**

Assessment: Students write a reflective paper (not graded)

Description of Tasks:

- One week post-workshop, students submit a 3–4 page individual reflective paper.
- Students select one or two key issues related to the workshop and reflect on their experience.
- The paper is not graded to allow students to express themselves freely.

Intermediate Objectives:

- Assess the ability to independently reflect and analyze.
- Encourage free expression without grading pressure.
- Connect academic learning with personal insights and real-world applications.
- Encourage engagement and connection of key theory and concepts with real-world examples.

STEP 5: Workshop Follow-Up in the Large Group (Optional)

Assessment: Meeting in the large group to share experiences and insights

Description of Tasks:

- An optional follow-up session is held for further group reflection.
- The teacher and students revisit themes, share insights from reflective papers, and discuss evolved understandings.

Intermediate Objectives:

- Reinforce understanding through continued reflection.
- Provide an additional opportunity to share and learn from each other's reflections.
- Conclude the workshop with cohesive understanding.

integrated into the learning process. By aligning these activities with TEP's core principles, the workshop seeks to address complex topics like racism and discrimination holistically and promote the three key dimensions of learning identified in TEP: individual, relational, and socio-political. Beyond its specific context, the examples illustrate how educators can select and apply TEP's key principles to design interconnected activities within their pedagogical interventions.

Box 4.4 TEP's Pedagogical Principles Used for Each Step**STEP 1: Individual Pre-Workshop Preparation**

- **Meaningful content:** Introduces alternative perspectives via an intersectional and decolonial lens, which avoids victimization.
- **Visual and emotional engagement:** Deepens understanding through multimedia content.
- **Engage with complex emotions:** Emphasizes the importance of emotions in learning and transformation.
- **Lived experiences:** Integrates real-world examples to enhance understanding and empathy.
- **Self-reflection:** Encourages introspective analysis.
- **Self-directed learning:** Promotes open answers and deep analysis based on students' experiences.
- **Disorienting dilemma:** Challenges preconceived notions and stimulates critical thinking by highlighting contradictions in society and in students' personal views on the topic.
- **Political emotions and the pedagogy of discomfort:** Encourages students to engage with discomfort as a catalyst for learning and growth.
- **Questioning reality with problem-posing:** Promotes deeper understanding of societal constructs and personal beliefs.

STEP 2: Learning Circles

- Semi-structured small group discussions to promote equal participation and deep listening (see **Appendix F** for a detailed overview).
- **Relational ways of knowing and mutual learning:** Promotes learning through collaboration, deep listening, and interactions.
- **Diversity as pedagogical orientation:** Enhances learning through diverse perspectives within groups.
- **Critical dialogue:** Involves discussions based on lived experiences and deep engagement.
- **Emotional engagement:** Cultivates deep listening, empathy, compassion, and understanding.
- **Shared experiences and knowledges:** Strengthens collective learning and a sense of interconnectedness and community.

(continued)

Box 4.4 (continued)

- **Deep listening and compassion:** Cultivates empathy and understanding among peers.

STEP 3: Full-Class and Teacher-Facilitated Discussion

- **Democratic classroom:** Groups present their insights, ensuring equal participation and mutual respect.
- **Teacher's role:** Navigate complexity, pose questions, and facilitate problem-solving.
- **Conceptual integration:** Move from key concepts to mechanisms and theories.
- **Praxis:** Connect reflections and theory with action.
- **Critical dialogue:** Encourage in-depth discussions linking personal and group reflections with academic theories.
- **Problem-solving:** Lead to solutions through exploration of possible action.

STEP 4: Individual Reflective Paper

- **Deep individual reflection:** Encourage thorough analysis of workshop themes.
- **Theoretical insights:** Attain a nuanced understanding of issues discussed and application of key concepts and theories.
- **Transformation:** Reflect on the educational journey and grasp key insights based on one's own knowledge and lived experience.
- **Critical consciousness:** Develop awareness of social injustices and motivates action for change.

STEP 5: Workshop Follow-Up in the Large Group

- **Deep group reflection:** Consolidates collective deep reflection and integrates insights through continued dialogue.
- **Closure of the learning circles:** Provides a sense of completion.
- **The pedagogy of hope:** Inspires hope and a belief in the possibility of social transformation.

4.3.4 Practices and Ethical Considerations

To be effectively implemented, the workshop on racism must embed key practices that address challenges and opportunities carefully and flexibly. The teacher plays a pivotal role in designing the pedagogical interventions before implementation, creating an environment that is conducive to learning, and guiding students through the material during

implementation. The teacher's responsibilities include adhering to ethical practices and guiding students to apply these practices as well. A more comprehensive overview of these aspects is presented in **Appendices B, C, and D**.

Box 4.5 highlights key aspects already emphasized in the appendices, tailored here to meet the specific needs of addressing racism within the workshop.

Box 4.5 Examples of TEP Practices Adapted to the Workshop

Reflective teaching practices and facilitator role:

- The teacher's presence adjusts to the workshop's dynamics, with decisive interventions needed at times for deeper understanding.

Creating a safe environment and trust:

- Promote an environment where students feel secure discussing sensitive topics.
- Build trust and a sense of safety between the teacher and students, as well as among the students themselves.

Active commitment to inclusivity and anti-racism:

- Demonstrate integrity and explain the importance of an active commitment to anti-racism, serving as a model for students (hooks, 1994).
- As a "white" teacher, openly acknowledge and address specific dilemmas and practice (Brookfield and Hess 2021).
- Ensure diverse perspectives are acknowledged and valued, addressing potential conflicts related to polarizing topics.

Engaging hearts and minds:

- Encourage students to connect their experiences and emotions with the topic, enhancing their understanding of racism.

Connecting discussions to broader theoretical knowledge:

- Help students move from opinions and mere debates to critical discussions based on current academic knowledge of the topic.

Empathy, care, and cross-cultural awareness:

- Recognize that many non-EU students, particularly those with darker skin, have encountered various forms of discrimination.
- Encourage awareness that many students may have experienced racism, emphasizing the importance of care, empathy, and awareness of power dynamics and cross-cultural needs in the classroom.

(continued)

Box 4.5 (continued)**Voluntary participation:**

- Avoid coercing students to share their experiences and respect their readiness (or lack thereof) to do so.

Leveraging emotional reactions and challenges as a learning opportunity:

- Be prepared to deal with strong emotional reactions to the material, including guilt, shame, anger, pain, or insecurity, and explain how these emotions allow learners to better understand the nature of racism (hooks 1994).

Providing a platform for difficult conversations:

- Play a crucial role in large class debates, providing a platform for challenging conversations about racism and promoting deep understanding and questioning.
- Enable complex conversations about racism, facilitating transformative and emancipatory processes.

4.4 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

When addressing controversial and sensitive topics like racism through TEP, additional practical aspects must also be considered. The process of learning is crucial, as TEP emphasizes that students gain valuable insights not just from the content, but from the dynamics of the learning experience itself. For example, they learn the importance of transforming interactions to enable meaningful conversations on sensitive issues. This approach needs to be ethically grounded and to engage the whole person, including emotional capacities, promoting a deeper understanding of complex topics.

Additionally, three key features are central to this process: (1) explicit ethical guidelines for students, (2) the use of trigger warnings, and (3) intentional engagement with resistance. Resistance can create discomfort or even hinder learning. While **Appendices D** and **E** provide a broader discussion of these aspects, the examples below illustrate their concrete application to discussions on racism. This demonstrates the flexible use of TEP methodology, allowing educators to adapt its core features to other pedagogical intervention.

4.4.1 *Remind Students of Key Essential Guidelines*

- Create general rules with participants' involvement.
- Ask to safeguard an inclusive learning environment.
- Ask students to directly address power dynamics when engaging with others in the small and large groups.
- Focus on preventing the marginalization of some voices.
- Promote mutual understanding and learning from diverse experiences and perspectives.
- Recognize and validate emotions as part of the learning process.

4.4.2 *Use Trigger Warnings*

A trigger warning is a cautionary message that is given before viewing material, reading a text, or discussing subjects that may remind learners of past traumas. These subjects can provoke various emotions of varying intensity in learners. It is important to remain attentive to anticipate and respect the potentially difficult emotions learners may feel throughout the workshop, especially when viewing visual material which is likely to evoke strong emotional reactions and distress among learners (cf. **Appendix E**).

Learners are encouraged to share topics or triggers they prefer to avoid discussing, which can be done anonymously using scraps of paper collected in a bowl to promote empathy and group consciousness. Teachers and learners may not always initially be aware of triggers. Using cards (red, orange, or green) can help to create a safe space if someone becomes aware of a difficult response during the pedagogical intervention. Learners can hold up a card that represents their emotional comfort level when asked, with the red card indicating distress, which can be raised at any time.

In the event of a red card, it is crucial to rely on practical and ethical guidelines to address sensitive matters and distress, allowing the person concerned to take a break. This underlines the need for care and empathic consideration during the workshop, remembering that some learners may have had difficult personal experiences. When discussing discrimination (e.g., sexism, racism, or Afrophobia), those not directly affected should adopt a respectful practice, listen attentively to the experiences of those affected, and avoid speaking flippantly about heavy subjects. Non-affected learners are encouraged to recognize the collective responsibility of

maintaining a safe, secure, and comforting space, asking respectful questions, and focusing on behaviors that promote these dynamics.²

Box 4.6 presents additional considerations concerning how to deal with complexity during the process. Dealing with crises and tackling different forms of resistance head-on, teachers and learners can create an

Box 4.6 Considerations on How to Deal with Resistance and Other Challenges

Examples of cross-cutting practical considerations to address challenges:

- **Rules for facilitators and learners:** The development of rules involves the active participation of learners to reinforce their commitment and responsibility. Certain key rules—such as mutual respect, active listening, confidentiality of sharing, and the right to speak—are crucial to the smooth running of sessions.
- **Repeatedly emphasizing the added value of inclusion:** Beyond guaranteeing access, inclusion aims to promote mutual understanding and learning from the diverse experiences and perspectives of learners.
- **The role of emotions and how they are considered:** Recognizing and validating emotions as an integral component of the learning process helps to create a more empathetic and understanding learning environment. This can be achieved by asking learners during intense moments about their emotional state by inviting them to hold up color-coded cards representing their emotional state. This could be red to signify discomfort, yellow for neutrality, and green for comfort and joy.
- **Address learners' vulnerability and sensitivity:** Adopting strategies to protect and support learners' needs is essential. When forming small groups, ensuring equitable distribution and diverse representation guarantees an inclusive experience. However,

(continued)

²In the various contexts in which I have implemented TEP, participants have reported that trigger warnings were beneficial in raising their awareness of the importance of addressing these topics sensitively and helped them engage meaningfully with the material. Those affected by the topics addressed were particularly touched by this practice as it reinforced their trust toward me as the facilitator. Additionally, this methodology creates a safer and more inclusive learning environment and strengthens the connection among the participants.

Box 4.6 (continued)

some people may have a difficult time when confronted with statements that remind them of traumatic experiences. In such cases, it is important to constantly remind people of their collective responsibility in dealing with subjects that may be harmless for those who have not experienced them, but painful for others.

- **Crisis and transition handling:** Crisis preparedness, involving the development of plans to deal with unforeseen situations and delicate transitions, is vital for keeping sessions flowing. In addition to the previous recommendations on collective responsibility and emotional awareness, it is advisable to take small breaks during intense moments, and to perform exercises such as meditation, deep breathing or others before moving on to other stages.
- **Feedback from learners during and after the workshop:** Gathering feedback through color cards, group discussions, downstream questionnaires, and individual interviews is essential in assessing the effectiveness of the workshops, and to bring together impressions and suggestions that might enrich the method and content.

Strategies to address resistance and promote change:

- **Emotional resilience tools:** Incorporate stress regulation activities, such as relaxation breaks, breathing exercises, or open discussions on emotions related to the subject.
- **Tools for political resistance:** Encourage constructive debate by establishing respectful rules of communication and stimulating perspective-taking to show the diversity of opinions.
- **Tools for normative resistance:** Create an inclusive space where learners feel free to express their views without judgment. Use case studies to illustrate how social norms can change.

Promote open-mindedness, tolerance, and respect:

- **Structured discussion tools:** Use discussion structures that encourage active listening, validating opinions, and finding common ground.
- **Perspective exercises:** Suggest an exercise in which learners temporarily adopt someone else's point of view, nurturing empathy and understanding of different perspectives.
- **Anonymous feedback:** Set up a mechanism for learners to express their concerns or views anonymously, promoting open dialogue.

environment that is conducive to learning, even when learners face emotional challenges.

Before ending the chapter, the section below details how specific learning objectives rooted in TEP are adapted to the workshop on racism.

4.5 INTEGRATING TEP OBJECTIVES

By aligning the workshop’s objectives with TEP’s theoretical framework, I aim to systematize its impact and enable other educators to replicate and adapt the intervention. As discussed in Chap. 3, I employ constructive alignment (Biggs and Tang 2011; Cappiali and Jean-Pierre 2024, p. 11) to ensure that the learning activities and assessment methods align with the intended learning process and outcomes of TEP. The specific educational objectives related to the topic of racism are summarized in Table 4.2 (for an overview of the broader objectives, see Table 3.1, Sect. 3.2). These objectives combine the holistic dimensions to learning in TEP, encompassing cognitive, practical, emotional, and action-oriented dimensions, with its interconnected dimensions: individual, relational, and socio-political.

Table 4.2 TEP Learning Objectives Tailored to the Workshop

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Practical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Action</i>
Individual	Enhanced understanding of personal biases and the systemic nature of racism; reflection on one’s own position within power dynamics	Development of self-regulation strategies to recognize and counteract personal biases	Growth in self-compassion while addressing personal challenges related to racial identity and biases	Commitment to ongoing self-education and behavior modification to combat personal prejudices
Relational	Increased awareness of how racial dynamics affect interactions; better understanding of the experiences of others from different racial backgrounds	Improved skills in engaging respectfully and empathetically with people of diverse racial backgrounds	Engagement in meaningful discussions about racism and anti-racism in the classroom; deep listening and compassion	Deeper empathy toward individuals affected by racism and an emotional commitment to supporting racial equality

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Practical</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Action</i>
Socio-political	Deep understanding of the mechanisms of racism as a structural issue affecting society; understanding the historical and social contexts of racial issues and the various reasons why and how racism is produced and maintained in society	Application of learned skills to promote anti-racist practices in various social settings	Greater awareness of the role of political emotions in connection to one's emotional responses to social injustices and motivation to support societal change	Participation in social movements, community actions, and public advocacy to address and rectify racial injustices

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an illustrative example of how pedagogical interventions can be developed in line with the philosophical and theoretical promises of TEP to create impactful learning experiences. It examined the crucial role of well-designed activities, supported by reflective practices, in promoting concrete solutions to the challenges of tackling controversial and sensitive topics while leveraging the diversity present in our classrooms (Freire 1998). This methodology is not merely about imparting knowledge or encouraging students to adopt an anti-racist stance; it is about creating a flexible learning environment where open, safe, and critical engagement with these complex topics can occur, enriched by the diverse experiences and perspectives of students from different countries and walks of life.

Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge the potential for unexpected outcomes, such as shifts in students' perspectives and deeper emotional responses to the material. Utilizing the metaphor of a prism to address intersectionality and diversity, I recognize that students' diverse backgrounds and social positions can lead to different learning outcomes and transformations. This diversity in responses is crucial for understanding the full impact of the workshop and the added value of TEP in education. By working collaboratively with their peers and the teacher, students in such an environment are enabled to reflect on and challenge their perspectives as well as personal and societal myths (Freire 1972). This relational

dimension is a fundamental aspect of TEP, leading in some cases to deep personal transformation as well as deep understanding of the complex nature of racism and discrimination.

As we move forward to Chap. 5, the theoretical framework and objectives outlined here will be examined in practice, with a focus on the diverse and nuanced responses of learners who engaged with this pedagogical intervention. Connecting theory and methodology to empirical evidence, Chap. 5 will demonstrate how the pedagogical strategies employed during the workshop enabled most learners to experience various aspects of the TEP learning objectives. In line with Freire's concept of praxis—where reflection and action are intertwined—the results reveal key aspects that differ among students, shaped by their individual and collective experiences (or lack thereof) with racism. This connection between theory, reflection, and action underscores the potential of engaging with controversial and sensitive topics in a manner that is both critical and transformative.

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Impact of the TEP Pedagogical Intervention

Abstract This chapter offers key examples of the impact of a pedagogical intervention rooted in Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP), with a specific focus on addressing racism. It examines students' feedback and the overall impact of the pedagogical intervention on their learning experience. The findings show evidence of students' enhanced ability to perceive, understand, and discuss racism and other forms of discrimination against immigrants and racialized communities in Europe (mobilizing key concepts and theories rooted in social sciences research). The results also reveal how students experienced a variety of processes and outcomes, including deep shifts in beliefs and perspectives in some cases, as well as increased engagement in critical awareness and actionable initiatives. Overall, the examples highlight how the pedagogical intervention promoted deep learning, allowing for a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the topic. It facilitated meaningful critical discussions on discrimination, racism, and social justice while fostering individual transformation and a desire to act for change. As such, the chapter illustrates how TEP can be highly effective in tackling controversial and sensitive topics, navigating complex emotional reactions, and transforming educational challenges into opportunities.

Keywords Pedagogical intervention • Holistic approach • Emotions • Deep learning • Racism • Intersectionality • Conscientization

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the impact of the pedagogical intervention developed using selected principles of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) introduced in Chap. 4. Titled “Racism, Anti-Racism, and Identity Politics in Europe: The Case of France from a Comparative Perspective,” the intervention consists of a two-day workshop aimed at cultivating students’ deep learning, critical dialogue, empathy, and critical consciousness about key sensitive topics.

Expanding on the metaphor of light refracting through a prism, this chapter considers the tangible and, in some respects, unforeseen positive impacts of TEP on students. By weaving together various strands of data, I illustrate the nuanced ways in which the diversity of the student body influences the different effects observed. These firsthand accounts attest to the effectiveness of the TEP pedagogical intervention and showcase how students’ unique backgrounds and experiences contribute to the rich, varied outcomes of the learning process.

Core findings are explored through an in-depth analysis of diverse qualitative data, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations of student reactions during the course, and informal conversations with students. The analysis also includes anonymized pre- and post-assessment questionnaires, various assessment techniques such as written papers and small group presentations, and students’ anonymous evaluations of the course. The learners who attended this workshop come from all over the world, many having experienced racism in their lives. For a more comprehensive overview of the methods used to collect and analyze the data, see **Appendix A**.

The chapter presents both the students’ positive feedback, highlighting their enthusiasm and the diverse experiences they brought to the pedagogical intervention based on their identities and worldviews, as well as the impact of the intervention, evaluated through the theoretical framework and methodology outlined in Part I of the book. It demonstrates how the pedagogical intervention not only achieved traditional learning objectives—such as enhancing students’ ability to recognize, understand, and discuss discrimination and racism against immigrants and ethnic communities in Europe (through the mobilization of key social science concepts and theories)—but also met broader TEP objectives, such as cultivating inclusion, promoting emotional engagement and changes in attitudes and behaviors toward self and others, and supporting acceptance and tolerance of oneself and others.

TEP promotes deep learning while equipping students with essential tools for personal growth, social interaction, and the critique and transformation of societal structures. This holistic and interconnected approach ensures that learning extends beyond traditional academic goals, connecting meaningfully with the real-world experiences and challenges that students face, and nurturing more engaged, socially responsible learners. For a comprehensive overview of my initial attempts to systematize the processes and outcomes observed when evaluating the impact of TEP, I recommend that readers explore Sect. 3.2 in Chap. 3.

The chapter first introduces key examples of students' feedback on the methodology used (subjective experience), from enthusiasm to resistance. Subsequently, it presents an in-depth analysis of the impact of the pedagogical intervention on students, combining both subjective and objective aspects of their experiences. It concludes with a discussion of how the results align with TEP's core theoretical and methodological principles, as described in Chaps. 2 and 3.

5.2 STUDENTS' FEEDBACK

This section combines various sources to demonstrate the encouraging responses of students, illustrating how their diversity also influences the distinct positive impacts that the TEP intervention had on them. It uses selected data from interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires completed at the end of the workshop to provide evidence of the students' general reactions toward the approach and the workshop itself. All student names mentioned in this chapter have been anonymized.

The students enrolled in my courses have a variety of backgrounds, identities, and experiences, especially concerning the migration topics discussed in the curriculum (refer to Chap. 3 for more details). Below, I share insights gathered from an anonymous questionnaire distributed at the end of the course in 2021. This questionnaire featured several questions aimed at evaluating the general pedagogical approach (Questions 5 and 7, both open-ended), capturing any significant positive or negative emotional experiences and challenges (Questions 8–9), and assessing any shifts in perspectives, including potential deep crises and the coping mechanisms employed (Questions 10–14). Out of 14 students, 12 provided responses, which were subsequently coded and analyzed along with other qualitative data. For an overview of the questionnaire, readers can refer to **Appendix H**.

Box 5.1 summarizes some findings on students' overall perceptions of their experiences of the approach, combining closed and open questions.

Box 5.1 Student feedback on the overall experience and change in perspective

Positive experiences (10 students out of 12):

- *Very positive* (5 students): They expressed clear enthusiasm.
- *Generally positive* (5 students): They provided positive feedback, some of which included mild criticism or less enthusiasm compared to others.
- *Mixed responses* (1 student): Alternated between positive and neutral feedback.
- *Neutral to partly negative* (1 student): This student's neutral responses were interpreted as partly negative due to subtle criticisms. However, this student acknowledged experiencing a positive change in perspective.

Overall assessment of student experiences (11 positive responses):

- *Very positive* (6 students): They expressed excitement about the approach, despite occasional criticisms.
- *Positive* (5 students): Favorable responses with varying degrees of enthusiasm.
- *Neutral* (0 students): No students were completely neutral.
- *Negative* (1 student): Expressed dissatisfaction.¹
- *Very negative* (0 students): No instances of very negative experiences.

Change in perspective (11 out of 12 students experienced a change in perspective):

- *Change in perspective* (10 students): The majority reported a mild change in perspective. The activities did not incite major crises or severe emotional challenges. Most changes pertained to levels of understanding or perception.
- *Significant transformation* (1 student): This student, who also had a very positive overall experience, reported a crisis in beliefs and deep transformation.
- *No change reported* (1 student): Despite having a positive overall experience, this student did not perceive any change in perspective.

Evaluating the change in perspective (closed question with multiple choices):

- *Very Positive to Positive* (5 students): 1 very positive, 4 positive.
- *Neutral* (3 students): Neither particularly positive nor negative.
- *Negative* (3 students): Felt the change in perspective was negative.

¹It is interesting to observe that in response to an open question on the questionnaire, this same student answered that she had “learned a lot.” This response underscores the importance of including open-ended questions in evaluations, as they can reveal the depth and nuance of students’ learning experiences, providing insights that closed questions might overlook.

This detailed breakdown of answers offered me some insights into how students perceived their experiences and the impact of educational activities on their perspectives, highlighting predominantly positive outcomes and significant changes in understanding among learners. Box 5.2 integrates additional insights and presents specific examples of students' positive feedback on the general pedagogical approach.

Box 5.2 Examples of students' positive reactions to the pedagogical approach

Question 5. Can you give your general impression of the pedagogical approach used during the 4 activities? (Write sentences or words)

"I liked it very much. It gives the students freedom and space for creativity as well as a non-judgmental space for expressing their ideas. And everyone learns from everyone. This was amazing. Rather than students-learn-from-a-book approach. Books are there and anybody can reach it. But having the chance to talk with almost everybody in my course in migration context and to be able to share my views and receive their views gave me a better holistic perspective on what is really happening, rather than what is written on the books." (N 5)

"I like the variation: From smaller groups to the whole class, to watching movie clips, to drawing and writing maps. I'd like to recommend it to my faculty professor, especially to include longer hour workshops." (N 11)

"Overall, I enjoyed the 4 activities because it was getting out of the routine at the same time that helped us to learn and understand the topics of the class." (N 1)

"This is a super interesting and interactive teaching method." (N 2)

"The approach helped me discuss the benefits that migrants bring to the Global North, the violence experienced by migrants before and after migrating, and how this affects their behavioral tendencies in society. We, as students, were able to discuss among ourselves what being a migrant is all about, how they are viewed, and how they perceive themselves." (N 3)

"It makes the classroom and learning process less boring and more attractive." (N 12)

The exploratory nature of the interventions led to a range of surprising, and at times counterintuitive, reactions, along with diverse learning processes and outcomes. Notably, emotional challenges were less frequent than initially expected, especially during the final implementation in 2021. Contrary to my concerns, most students did not find the workshop particularly demanding. Even among those who did, including two racialized individuals, the difficulty was not perceived as overwhelming. Interestingly, some students who appeared to dislike the approach demonstrated an enhanced understanding of the topic.

It was not always possible to assess some students' emotional states solely through classroom interactions and feedback. However, most students reported encountering few, if any, significant challenges. This suggests that while these activities may not have been particularly demanding in this context, their impact could vary in different settings. Nevertheless, the students' willingness to engage with challenging material indicates a readiness to confront difficulties when they perceive the potential benefits.

Below, I present two examples of students who supported the approach despite the challenges:

Some exercises in the course were emotionally challenging, but this was necessary. They were difficult, but also empowering. The workshop on racism was amazing. Yes, it was challenging, but racism in society is a reality we need to face, and everyone should be learning about it. On a personal level, it provoked deep reflections about my own experience as a racialized woman in Europe. (Interview with Rosa, she/her, originally from Mexico, 2021)

Some topics of the course disturbed me psychologically and made me wonder how my ancestors could have suffered such mistreatment. It led me to reflect deeply on the importance of showing these realities to new generations so they understand the harshness of colonialism. Discussing racism in the classroom was emotionally charged. Despite the potential for emotional disturbance, these stories are crucial and should be shared, ideally through audiovisual media. I appreciated that we were encouraged to be open-minded before some more challenging activities (Email from he/him, originally from Nigeria, 2021).

Box 5.3 introduces an exchange I had with a student from Cameroon who was directly affected by several issues covered in the course. This conversation has profoundly influenced the educational approach proposed in this book, reinforcing the importance and effectiveness of the TEP methodology. It illustrates the significant impact that the workshop can have on students, especially those facing considerable personal and emotional challenges.

Box 5.3 Exchange with a student directly affected by several topics of the course

During the workshop, I noticed a student who appeared quite distressed, which prompted me to email him to ask if he was doing OK. In response, he expressed gratitude for the effort put into the course, especially appreciating the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences. He mentioned that the course resonated with his personal challenges and requested a private discussion to talk further about his situation.

Our meeting lasted over an hour. He shared that his struggles weren't directly due to the course content but stemmed from his personal circumstances. Each topic discussed in the course mirrored his life challenges. He remarked, "You are reading through my life," indicating how closely the course content related to his personal experiences.

He revealed the difficulties of adapting to life in Sweden, including financial hardships with a looming fee of 5000 euros for the semester. He also shared distressing news about a civil war in Cameroon, leading to his family being displaced and his mother suffering a broken leg. These issues compounded his stress, making it hard for him to concentrate on the readings and participate fully in class.

Despite the triggering nature of the workshop on racism, he said that he didn't find my approach disrespectful or hurtful. He felt that the course allowed him to reflect deeply, saying it was not as challenging as I might have thought but instead resonant and thought-provoking.

Concerning the small group work using learning circles, he appreciated being placed in diverse groups, highlighting how this arrangement allowed him and others to share and learn from vastly different life stories. This setup facilitated understanding and empathy among students as well as empowered him by acknowledging and validating his experiences. He remarked, "You know, the way you organized the small group work is really useful: the other students listen to me and can learn from my experience. We bring our lives into class."

Throughout our discussion, I remained attentive to the ethical implications of discussing sensitive topics and personal hardships. Ensuring that he felt safe, respected, and supported was paramount, as these discussions can be both revealing and healing.

This exchange with the student is just one of the many examples I have experienced over the years that speak to the importance of employing attentive and responsive teaching methods that recognize and address the diverse needs of students—a fundamental practical and ethical aspect of the methodology advocated in this text.

Overall, the reactions and feedback from students presented so far show that the TEP methodology was positively welcomed by several students. While acknowledging existing limitations and challenges, the study actively addresses these concerns, taking inspiration from Zembylas' (2015a) and hooks' (1994) insights on the importance of engaging with complex emotions to promote deep learning, transformation, and even healing, through a thoughtful combination of an ethics of care and an ethics of discomfort. Additionally, ideological disagreements have surfaced, particularly where students have expressed discontent with course topics due to their adherence to supremacist ideologies, as observed in one specific course. These findings highlight the necessity of carefully anticipating and managing emotional complexity and ideological diversity in educational settings to maximize the transformative potential of TEP. They also underscore the crucial importance of developing more advanced methods to evaluate these dynamics across individuals and groups, as a means to inform and improve future implementations.

5.3 UNVEILING DEEP LEARNING AND TRANSFORMATIVE-EMANCIPATORY EXPERIENCES

This section delves into the impact of the pedagogical intervention on students who participated in the most advanced versions of the workshop during the last two years (2020 and 2021). It offers crucial insights into the effects of the TEP principles on students both during and after the workshop. It mainly uses quotes from the final reflective essays of the course. Here, students submit a non-graded paper one week after the workshop to reflect on their learning experiences (refer to **Box 4.3** and **Appendix G**).

5.3.1 *The Role of Real-World Examples: From Disorienting Dilemmas to Critical Reflection and Deep Learning*

Freire highlighted the difference between critical thinking as a cognitive endeavor and an inquiry-based approach, which requires a deeper and holistic involvement from the learner, and it goes as deep as questioning

common sense and implicit biases to help students develop self-awareness (Freire, 1972). Freire describes this learning principle as critical dialogue, distinguishing it from simple expressions of opinion or debates (Darder, 2017). Unlike merely sharing personal viewpoints or striving to win a conversation through rational understanding, critical dialogue focuses on the holistic engagement of the learner (*individual dimension*) and collective reflection (*relational dimension*) about societal problems (*socio-political dimension*). Its goal is to ask profound questions regarding the “how” and “why” of a situation, aiming to uncover solutions.

Moreover, drawing from Taylor’s insights (2009, p. 30), reflecting on a situation means, first, “questioning the integrity of deeply held assumptions and beliefs based on prior experience.” In line with this insight, the content of the workshop was designed to overcome any barriers the students might have when it comes to understanding and engaging with sensitive topics via *indirect dialogue*, with the actors represented in the visual material, and through *direct dialogue*, via exchange with their peers and with me in class around controversies in society on the topic of racism.

Students’ reactions to the visual material, as described in detail in Chap. 4 and **Appendix G**, show that the latter represented an essential part of the pedagogical activity, as it stimulated students’ curiosity and motivated them to engage with challenging questions. The students’ feedback repeatedly mentioned how the material captured their interest as it allowed them to explore real-life issues from the different perspectives of various groups in society. Students’ engagement was visible throughout the entire workshop, as expressed in the class discussions and individual papers. The contrast of diverse views provided them with meaningful content to explore and discuss sensitive topics with their peers.

Tellingly, one student summarized her first reaction and that of her peers in the final reflective paper:

In our group discussion, we reviewed the assigned questions and our notes and spoke about our initial reactions to the videos. When viewing the material, many of us felt that the subject matter weighed heavily upon us. We watched and laughed at the absurdity of the statements, such as “Hitler was just a figure in history” (in the video on the rise of the far right in Europe), made by far-right leaders in Germany; but upon a deeper reflection, we thought that these statements pose real threats to many people. Our laughter is in fact the embodiment of “white innocence.” This is problematic because it perpetuates and compounds the issues which are the subject matter of this workshop—the impact of racialization and racism in society. (...)

Upon further consideration of the material and an in-depth discussion of the questions posed, we talked about how the “war on culture,” as touted by groups such as the far right, is perceived as an attack on the heterosexual white male. In the case of France, this can be linked to official self-proclaimed colorblind policies, which convey the idea that they do not differentiate based on skin color. Yet, this colorblindness leaves people of color open to racial discrimination as there are no laws in place to protect them from racism. (Clara, she/her, United States, self-identifies as white)

This quote exemplifies how real-life examples can initiate meaningful questions and encourage significant *critical* reflections and questioning of reality. First, the content of the workshop motivated students to engage with the topic of racism in a meaningful way and promoted a process of self-examination and critical assessment of their assumptions and those widely shared in society.

This observation, moreover, illustrates awareness of a key mechanism related to white supremacist ideology described by Gloria Wekker (2016) as “white innocence.” This is a key conceptual tool to think about how, for white students (as the student above had self-identified), far-right discourses and, more broadly, racism in society are mostly perceived as absurd or nonsensical. It is only when looking at the impact of racism on people of color’s lives that one can come to realize how dangerous racist discourses are and how they represent a real threat to these groups. This shifts the conversation—taking it from seeming ridiculous at first to being a very real and even pervasive phenomenon in society, especially as seen from the perspective of those exposed to racism.

Here, it is accurate to say that the material triggered what Mezirow (2000, p. 22) calls a “disorienting dilemma.” This can be described as an event or series of events that can provoke insightful questioning in the learner and make one reconsider previous ways of thinking (ibid.). These questions help learners discover and examine the source of their assumptions or beliefs. Questioning the issue itself, or what Mezirow calls “premise reflection,” can, moreover, initiate a process of learning that may result in perspective transformation (Mezirow, 2000). In the workshop, this change was visible among students who realized how experiences and perceptions of racism at its intersection with other axes of discrimination are embodied and situated (Collins & Bilge, 2020), depending on one’s position in society.

Throughout the workshop, several students recognized that “whiteness” carries privileges, which make it challenging for white individuals to fully understand the complex mechanisms of racism. These mechanisms contribute to what the students referred to as “white innocence,” a term they used appropriately but without citing the relevant scholarly work by Wekker (2016). In Wekker’s work and in critical race studies more generally, the concept of “white innocence” implies that due to their dominant racial status, white people often remain oblivious to the pervasive nature of racism and its detrimental effects on people of color. This ignorance, a byproduct of their racial privilege, typically prevents them from acknowledging or addressing racial issues unless they have opportunities to confront this complex and sensitive reality in a meaningful way (DiAngelo, 2018, pp. 62–63).

The questioning approach discussed here extends far beyond standard critical thinking processes, venturing into the “why” questions that are central to Freire’s concept of meaningful inquiry leading to conscientization. This type of inquiry challenges the status quo and prompts profound reflection. The effectiveness of this process is further enhanced by the interactive nature of the workshop, which provides a range of opportunities to encounter different perspectives and experiences—both from peers and through visual materials. These interactions facilitate a significant reevaluation of previously held beliefs, aligning with Mezirow’s theory for transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000).

5.3.2 *The Key Role of Emotions, Lived Experiences, and Relational Ways of Knowing*

One pillar of TEP is to promote a holistic approach to learning. In addition to encouraging students to exercise cognitive/rational skills, the workshop aims to promote emotional skills via the exercise of empathy and deep listening, as well as the use of emotional reactions as a learning opportunity and as a means of transforming one’s perception of reality (Dirkx, 2008; Zembylas, 2015a; hooks, 1994). By engaging with real-life issues that connect with students’ lived experiences, the workshop actively engages students’ “hearts” with a view to promoting deep, transformative learning and emancipatory goals.

The visual material used in the workshop triggered different emotional reactions in students with different experiences and sensitivity—from surprise to frustration, sadness, and anger. This, in turn, instilled a desire in

most students to talk about complex topics and to learn from each other. Several students, especially those who self-identified as white, felt compelled to exercise empathy and deep listening to understand others' experiences. Additionally, some students who had experienced racism in their lives connected the course material with their experience during the in-class discussions and/or the individual papers, in some cases sharing their own direct incidents with racism and the suffering produced by it.

As they were exposed to a plurality of perspectives, students could expand their views and position themselves in the debate. They were motivated to pose new questions to address the problem they were analyzing. One female student from Russia, who self-identified as white, in the final assessment paper for the workshop, wrote:

In France, there has already been quite a divide between the ethnic French and the people with foreign backgrounds, both those who were and those who were not born in France. During the workshop, we could see musical artists being criticized for pointing out obvious injustices and discrimination in the French society and successful athletes being openly attacked based on their skin color if they did not perform up to the expectations. It is even harder to imagine what regular people who are not rich and celebrities like the aforementioned artist and athletes have to go through on a daily basis. (Tanya, she/her, Russia, self-identifies as white)

Tanya felt compelled to compare and examine arguments from various actors presented in the workshop who experienced racism in society, questioning societal denial and biases. She was struck by the hardships faced by victims of racism, viewing them as troubling issues that need to be addressed urgently. While she acknowledged that several Black individuals portrayed in the documentary *Black France*—including well-known football players, artists, and journalists—were among the more privileged in society, she used her imagination and empathy to extend her reflection beyond these groups of people, exploring the greater challenges likely faced by those less privileged due to their social class. This realization inspired Tanya to focus her entire reflective paper on the impact of racism on poorer, non-white immigrants living in Europe.

In doing so, Tanya also demonstrated a deepened understanding of the importance of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2020) as a concept with which to analyze and discuss racism in connection to other axes of oppression. Reflecting on the visual and written material provided in the workshop, she effectively applied the lens of intersectionality

to explore how racism affects individuals differently across class and other dimensions (e.g., religious diversity). This analysis was enriched by her ability to blend analytical and cognitive skills with empathy and compassion, enabling a more profound understanding of the hardships faced by people subjected to racism, especially those from more vulnerable groups, primarily those from lower social classes. This exploration underscored a profound learning experience, marked by a deep understanding and adept application of the theories introduced in the course material. This exemplifies what I define in TEP as deep learning via a more holistic learning experience.

Another example of the effective use of empathy is evident in a student's analysis of racism experienced by football players. This analysis was based on opinion articles and a video featuring interviews with players who discussed the dual perceptions they face: celebrated as nationals when they succeed but derogated as immigrants when they fail.

The opinion articles and the video about football players are convincing because they are based on the direct experience of and the impact on the people who are facing the problem of racism in a variety of countries. Football players' interviews bring up the racist approach by fans about them being French, Italian, Spanish, Germans, etc. when they do something great, but being an immigrant when they don't. From my point of view, this approach that targets the player's identification based on fear or the lack of acceptance shows that being white is also an identification, and it is a privileged one. Also, identities and self-identification can be multiples. Someone can feel French and also non-white. In my view, the French assimilation strategy, which ignores the people's multiple identities is blind to these people's need. The lack of acceptance of these rich identities can be considered discriminatory. (Larisa, she/her, Romania, self-identifies as white)

The above passage from a student highlights how this fluctuation in identity recognition, contingent on performance, exposes a broader societal issue of conditional acceptance. She draws out how such attitudes toward football players reflect the privileging of white identities and a disregard for the multifaceted identities of individuals who can identify as both French and non-white, for instance. Larisa goes on to criticize the French assimilation strategy for its failure to acknowledge these rich, layered identities, viewing this oversight as a form of structural discrimination. This reflection, rooted in empathy, deepens her understanding of the specific issue and connects it to institutional racism.

This part of the analysis aligns with Ibram X. Kendi's (2019) definition of racism, which underscores its structural nature. Kendi describes racism as "a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities." He explains that "racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing," and "a racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups" (pp. 18–19).

While it is unclear whether the student was aware of Kendi's work, her analysis of the French assimilation strategy reflects his idea that policies that fail to actively confront racism perpetuate racial inequities and are inherently racist. By not addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by certain groups, such French policies may sustain institutional racism. This acknowledgment by the student gives rise to a crucial insight: without targeted action against racism, societal structures continue to enforce disparities, aligning with Kendi's assertion that every policy either reduces or reinforces systemic racism and racial inequality.

More generally, Larisa's quote exemplifies what several students experienced during the workshop: arriving at a deeper understanding of the complex mechanisms of racism in Europe through the lived experiences of people facing it. Like the student quoted earlier, Larisa did not claim to have experienced racial discrimination personally, but she exhibited an active, yet sensible, engagement with this topic, using empathy and compassion to understand the situations of those who have.

Several students who had experienced racism in their lives felt motivated to bring their own incidents into the discussion. In a compelling paper titled "Race Is Not an Illusion; It Is a Reality!" a female student from Hong Kong discussed the persistent impact of racial categorization, drawing parallels between the historical roots of racism in France and its present manifestations in both France and its ex-colonies, as well as her home country, an ex-colony of the British Empire. She wrote:

My reflection on watching the documentary *Black France* is a lot more than educational. Apart from the rich information I gained regarding the history and struggles of the Afro-French growing up in France, it was also an emotional journey which brought me back to the colonial days of Hong Kong. The colonial experiences that Black Africans went through were in a lot of ways similar to what the Chinese experienced in British Hong Kong. Like Afro-French, the Hong Kong Chinese went through a rigorous fight against discrimination during the colonial era. (...) To my understanding, race has

always been the center of colonial reasoning. (...) The idea of white people being superior to other races is way too familiar a concept among people who grew up in ex-colonies, like myself. As soon as the British colony of Hong Kong was formed, a racial segregation policy was introduced there. There were legislations to prevent the Chinese from “intruding” into areas occupied by the Europeans. At the same time, statutory zoning was introduced to public places with the humiliating exclusion of “Chinese and dogs” from accessing “public gardens.” (Vanna, she/her, Hong Kong, self-identifies as non-white)

This student adeptly used key concepts from the course to analyze the provided material and to address the often overlooked discussions around race in Europe and its broader implications, emphasizing how denial is a key mechanism that sustains racism in society (Kendi, 2019). Moreover, the *emotional component* was integral to her learning experience, as she felt a direct connection to the topic. Her comparison of racism’s legacy in France with colonialism and racism in Hong Kong under British rule provoked profound reflections. She drew compelling parallels between the contemporary legacy of racism in Europe, rooted in the colonial practices of the French Empire, and similar patterns in former British colonies, using Hong Kong—a British colony until 1997—as a poignant example (Buettner, 2016). Her argument was that in order to truly understand these deep-seated issues, societies must confront the harsh realities of racism rather than dismiss them as things of the past. In addition, this student considered how these systemic racial inequities continue to impact marginalized communities worldwide. Her paper made a compelling case for recognizing and proactively addressing racial issues across the globe. Later, Vanna brought her reflections into the classroom discussions, sharing insights about Hong Kong that were unfamiliar to the other students and myself. Her knowledge and personal experiences were pivotal in deepening the in-class debate about the nature of racism and its colonial legacy, using global comparisons to understand racism’s impact beyond Europe.

This combination of individual, relational and socio-political dimensions of learning, as identified in TEP (Chap. 3), exemplifies how personal experiences, when aligned with class materials that resonate with their lives, can enable students to expand their understanding beyond the provided cases and help others enrich their perspectives. In such an environment, everyone, including the teacher, is invested in the learning process and can learn from others, particularly through the use of learning circles

(*relational dimension*) (Freire, 1972). They can also draw broader conclusions about the legacy of colonialism and the function of racism historically and in contemporary times from a global perspective (*socio-political dimension*). This approach significantly enriched the entire class's understanding, including my own, demonstrating the profound pedagogical impact of integrating diverse perspectives into academic discussions.

Another female student from Afghanistan, who had lived in Sweden for many years, shared her unique insights in a paper titled "About the Workshop on Racism and My Reflections as a Muslim Migrant Woman in Sweden." She was particularly moved by the documentary *Black France*, which explores the discrimination faced by Black migrants and refugees in France. This prompted her to draw parallels with her own experiences in Sweden, where she faces challenges as an immigrant and a Muslim woman.

In the documentary *Black France*, the perspectives of Black migrants and refugees are highlighted to showcase their experiences of discrimination within the French context. This portrayal motivated me to draw parallels with my own experiences as a refugee woman in Sweden. The documentary depicts a society where White supremacist ideology produces inequality, segregation, and racism against Blacks, who actively protest to resist and challenge these injustices. Despite the significant contributions of Blacks to France's development, they were often depicted as savages needing civilization through racist caricatures and campaigns. Watching this documentary raised many questions for me, and during class discussions, my peers and I used our diverse experiences to debate the portrayal of immigrants as problematic elements within society, including perspectives propagated by far-right political parties. One particularly troubling theme for me is the rights of migrant Muslim women in their host countries. In discussions, I emphasized how these women, especially those wearing the Hijab from predominantly Muslim countries, experience discrimination due to exclusionary practices. Their intersectional identity as Muslim women places them in a particularly vulnerable position within European countries, exacerbated by their distinctive clothing. This distinctiveness leads to their being instinctively categorized as "others," often labeled by some far-right politicians as "unmeltable groups." The mounting of Islamophobia in Europe only serves to intensify their marginalization. The politicization of Muslim women's clothing heightens their vulnerability and insecurity. We need to reconsider the existing societal limitations and rethink how we can address "otherness," aiming to reduce the exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups. (Mahra, she/her, Afghanistan, self-identifies as non-white)

This quote highlights the pedagogical importance of engaging with political emotions in education, as explored by Zembylas (2015b). In the context of *Black France*, Mahra's reflection connects her own experience as a refugee woman in Sweden with the struggles of Black migrants and refugees depicted in the documentary. By engaging with a variety of emotions like guilt, anger, empathy, and discomfort, she and her peers critically reflected on issues such as racism, segregation, and the exclusion of marginalized groups. This approach promotes deep learning by encouraging students to connect their lived experiences with the material, which, in turn, helps them better understand and confront social injustices. It also aligns with Goleman's theory on the individual and relational dimensions of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995/2015) and reflects Zembylas' idea that political emotions are crucial for challenging and transforming perspectives on these issues (Zembylas, 2015a).

5.3.3 *Challenging Denial, Deconstructing Myths, and Exposing Injustice*

Students' analysis of racism during the in-class discussions and the final paper showed that the workshop enhanced the ability of many of them to challenge denial, deconstruct myths that sustain racism, and expose injustice. Several students showed a relevant combination of key analytical skills, such as critical thinking, as well as socio-emotional skills (Goleman, 2015/1995), such as empathy and compassion, to see, understand, and talk about the negative impact of institutional racism as well as various expressions of racism and anti-racism by non-white individuals and groups in society.

Some students explored key mechanisms that perpetuate racial inequality in European societies and beyond. This analysis is crucial, as the mechanisms of racism are often hard to identify and explain, and the literature itself presents a variety of explanations. The aim here is not to promote a single perspective or to expect students to hone their own theories of racism. Instead, the goal is to encourage students to engage with relevant material and to openly discuss these topics and expand their views.

TEP aims to leverage students' prior knowledge and experiences—including those that are not explicitly stated—to transition from opinion-based discussions to a knowledge-based or scientific approach for developing their arguments and counterarguments. It also deepens students' inquiry by encouraging them to analyze how things are and why

they are that way. This shift from merely observing racial dynamics to posing new, explanatory questions marks a significant enhancement in learners' analytical capabilities.

One female student from Iran wrote:

In my point of view, the most considerable issue that was uncovered during the workshop was the fact that racism can be identified at different social and educational levels from ordinary people to university professors. The standpoint reflected in the visual material show that, although France is usually portrayed as “colorblind” (Diallo, 2019), a structured deep-rooted racist ideology exists in society. This also goes hand in hand with a refusal to frankly talk about “race,” which is considered a taboo. Race (meaning “whiteness” here) in France is a “social construct” based on myths about “common ancestry, identity, and culture” (de Haas et al. 2020, p. 79) (...). Hein de Haas et al. (2020, p. 76) elaborate that racialization of minorities is a product of “other-definition.” Accordingly, “[o]ther-definition means ascription of undesirable characteristics and assignment to inferior social positions by dominant groups.” (Farah, she/her, Iran, self-identifies as non-white)

This student's quote is telling because she ventures to analyze the material covered in the workshop via the relevant concepts found in the course literature, namely, Rokhaya Diallo (2019) and de Haas et al. (2020). Her analysis echoes current social-scientific research on racism, which examines the ideological work of institutional racism and challenges the effect of “colorblind” discourses, which are seen as part of a powerful strategy that serves to silence racialized groups' demands to end systemic racism and block possible paths to openly address debates about the causes of racism and its multi-layered effects in society.

Another student, who already had a vast knowledge of migration topics and had also worked for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in the past, highlighted a *renewed* understanding of the role of academic knowledge production in the field of migration studies in Europe, which tends to evade or be blind to the role of racism and racialization when examining hostilities toward non-white migrants in receiving societies (Solomos, 2014; Cappiali, 2022).

“Unwanted but necessary” is a common concept widely used in migration studies to depict the status of immigrants and non-white minorities in a given state, as well as the policy making of the host state as a result of such

status. However, in the aftermath of our workshop, I see these notions to be closely linked to the fact that the concept of “immigrants” refers to people of color and/or those from the former colonies residing in contemporary Western, European societies. By watching the video about the “Identitarian” movement in Austria, as well as the one about the rise of the far-right in Germany, one can observe that hostilities and stereotypes are *de facto* addressed *against non-Europeans, non-Christians, and non-White persons*. These anti-immigrant groups resort to the construction of the “other,” a role played most commonly by the non-European migrants. In this way, they attempt to address certain issues, such as unemployment, by pointing the finger to the immigrants who in their view arrive in Europe to steal jobs and replace Europe’s white population. As history has taught us, portraying immigrants as scapegoats has always provided fertile ground for the rise of racist ideologies by far-right groups in any society and have attracted more manpower to such political parties. (Matthias, he/him, Greece, self-identifies as white)

This quote illustrates how the student began to view the academic debates on migration in a new light—debates that often highlight significant issues regarding the unjust treatment of immigrants, who are perceived as “unwanted but necessary.” After participating in the workshop, the student gained a deeper awareness of how racism fundamentally structures society to exclude specific groups, particularly immigrants of color or non-whites. He noted that the workshop helped him understand that the term “immigrants” often implicitly refers to “non-Europeans,” “non-Christians,” or “non-white persons.” This realization was crucial as it sparked a broader reflection on the rise of racist ideologies and how the concept of undesirable immigrants is intertwined with perceptions of them as non-whites.

From a pedagogical perspective, a new understanding of the discipline brings this student to become more aware of, and to challenge, color-blindness in the field of migration. The student highlighted the dangers of the rise of the far right to immigrants and to Europe and the need to address this issue and develop new strategies to fight these trends.

Another student revealed an increased awareness of the roots and permanent features of racism and its denial in European societies, where, according to her, little is done to improve the situation. She was able to grasp the relevance of using decolonial narratives, exposing racism by deconstructing myths about Eurocentrism.

During the workshop, what became apparent was how racism is rooted in colonialism, and also how much history is repeating itself as a result of a flawed system that is not changing. The video of *Black France* helped deconstructing Eurocentrism in practice through a decolonial perspective, meaning that it had more than one purpose. It not only sought to give a voice to marginalized groups, but it aimed to tell a new story and a new perspective to counter the myths about Black people in France. Together with the music video and interview with Rapper Médine, the workshop showed how racism and xenophobia are just as relevant today as they were many decades ago. Despite the fact that France granted French citizenship rights to some formerly colonized people and that France sees itself as “color-blind,” Black people are still not considered as part of main society. This is a clear example of how, firstly, the concept of “color-blindness” is unproductive and discriminatory, and, secondly, how little the legal status of citizenship can do, no matter how long one has been a citizen of the country. (Filippa, she/her, Sweden, self-identifies as white)

The open critique of colorblind narratives shows an understanding of the mechanisms that silence Arabs and Blacks in French society via narratives that promote inclusiveness at the level of discourse but marginalize these groups in practice. This student acknowledged that an alternative analysis of the problem—using, for instance, a *decolonial perspective*—would go a long way in helping to identify the real problems that reproduce racial inequalities today and tackling them accordingly. The decolonial perspective is a crucial component of understanding racism today (Zembylas, 2018).

Some students brought insightful perspectives not covered in the course literature to analyze racism based on their previous academic and non-academic knowledge and political views. For instance, two students connected the topic of racism to “class” and “material conditions” via the concept of “racial capitalism” to show how capitalism intersects with racism in society to produce racial inequality. Racial capitalism is a concept introduced by Cedric J. Robinson (1983), and it is now widely used in North American academic and political debates by the progressive anti-racist movements. This concept was not addressed directly in the course material, but was nonetheless mobilized by the two students to argue about the link between inequalities and racism.

The song “Speaker Corner” by the Franco-Algerian rapper Médine is a perfect example of how the colonial legacy and neo-liberal policy of France

created a class-based society resulting in social segregation and marginalization of people of African descent. The video is shot in one of many poor *banlieues* (suburbs) of Paris, which can be recognized by their distinctive blocks of concrete flats and apartments. The residential segregation of migrants of African and Middle-East descent is the result of the de-regularization of French policy during the 70s, wherein urban development and provision of decent accommodation became increasingly privatized. In his song, Médine targets politicians and their unfair public policies and demands for recognition of the needs of the people in the suburbs. (...) there is an emphasis of the privatization of the capitalist system, but almost a total ignorance of the racial capitalism it inhabits and the marginalization it establishes. (...) Reflecting upon this, a direct link can be drawn to the importance of education and awareness about racial capitalism and the lack thereof in addressing this issue in French schools. (John, he/him, Netherlands, self-identifies as white)

Overall, the quotes presented in this section illustrate that the workshop helped some students unveil the myths in society that produce racial differences through racist policy and ideology (Kendi, 2019) via the use of different theories and perspectives. Students felt motivated to expand their analysis to various issues concerning racism and to connect them to their pre-existing knowledge and worldviews. Some were also compelled to explore new terrains of knowledge for them and reflect on the depth and pervasiveness of racism in society, drawing on both the course material and their experiences and previous academic and non-academic knowledge, including that gained during the course.

5.3.4 *Conscientization: From Self-Awareness to Empowerment and Action*

Conscientization is a key concept in Freire's theory of education (Freire, 1972). This involves examining and acting on the root causes of oppression. By raising critical consciousness, individuals and communities can become active participants in the struggle for justice and equality. Conscientization refers to the process of critical consciousness-raising or conscientious awakening. From a pedagogical point of view, we need to understand how we can best encourage learners to develop a *critical understanding of their and others' social reality through reflection and action* (Freire, 1972).

Offering students material that avoids the victimization of immigrants and instead shows their key role in society represents a key educational strategy for empowering students who have experienced racism in their lives. This process of self-awareness can be initiated via a comparison of students' experience with that of others who are given a voice in the visual material.

Watching *Black France* challenged me to think about my own experience as a Black woman in Sweden. I see links also with the *Black Lives Matter movement*, which is trying to change public perceptions of Black people and empower others to do the same. Overall, the documentary has become an eye-opener for me to many of the "invisible borders" Black people like me face and are continuously trying to challenge. (Johanne, she/her, Zimbabwe, self-identifies as Black)

Similarly, Mahra, a student from Afghanistan quoted previously, also wrote:

As a migrant woman living in Sweden, I always ask myself, can my contribution be recognized here? How can I fight the racist ideologies that affect me? As a human being, I want to play a positive role around me to end this injustice. Can I play a role in an anti-racist campaign here? These are the issues that boggle the minds of many immigrants like me, who have a non-European background here in Europe. (Mahra, she/her, Afghanistan, self-identifies as non-white)

The two students quoted above exhibited an increased awareness of the impact of racism in their lives and others in similar situations and expressed a need to take action. Both students wrote of a desire to advocate "for oppressed migrants in their conditions of oppression" (Mahra) through various strategies. In their papers, they showed a commitment to translate their awareness into action. Johanne talked about the need to get involved in the Black Lives Matter movement, and Mahra of the need to use "Action Research" (Collins & Bilge, 2020, p. 53) to improve immigrants' living conditions in Sweden.

The quotes above resonate with Freire's core idea that the first step toward liberation is to identify and name one's own oppression (1972; cf. Glossary). Learners, particularly those marginalized or oppressed in

society, begin to recognize and identify the oppressive systems and structures that affect their lives. This involves analyzing power dynamics, inequalities, and injustices.²

Additionally, TEP builds on Freire's approach by emphasizing the potential for educational processes to humanize both the oppressed and the oppressors. By fostering empathy, understanding, and a commitment to creating a more just society, the learning space can become a catalyst for change, raising the awareness of those who are not oppressed and enhancing their understanding of the complex social dynamics under study.

In the workshop on racism presented in this chapter, this broadening of perspectives was often achieved through the effective and ethical use of collective learning, where all participants engage in meaningful reflections and activities. Together, learners explore their intersectional positions within the same social reality, advancing this approach toward a more nuanced theoretical perspective. This method seeks to avoid binary thinking and dichotomies, recognizing the multifaceted nature of human experience and oppression, echoing Frantz Fanon's insights into the complexity of identity and struggle (Fanon, 1952). By transcending fixed categories and essentialized identities, this approach opens up space for more fluid, relational, and transformative understandings of the self and others. It enables conversations that are not limited to predefined roles of oppressed and oppressor, but instead allow for the recognition of shared humanity and the potential for growth and change in all groups—including those who may not have personally experienced a specific form of oppression. This resonates with Zembylas' work on Peace Education, which emphasizes the importance of creating spaces where reconciliation and mutual transformation can occur (Zembylas, 2015a).³

² It is important to note that these two students were particularly receptive to engaging with the topics, which predisposed them to respond more positively to the pedagogical interventions. For my preliminary classification of the expected responses by diverse learners, readers should refer to Sect. 3.4, specifically Table 3.3.

³ In his work, Zembylas discusses the role of empathy and reconciliation in education, advocating for teaching strategies that engage with contested narratives and memories to foster reconciliation and peace. As such, he contributes to a deeper understanding of how education allows us to move beyond simple binaries and identity politics, especially in contexts affected by conflict and social injustices, by integrating a nuanced view of emotions and their role in diverse settings.

One poignant example comes from a female student named Olga, who self-identifies as a white Swede. She described the workshop as a “wake-up call,” acknowledging her previous misconceptions about racism in Sweden. She admitted, “Of course, I have always been aware of the fact that racism exists, but I have seen it more as something that happens as an exception or something that belongs in the past among older generations.” After reading an article by McEachrane (2014), which discusses the tendency among Swedes to view racism as either a relic of the past or a fringe issue promoted by extremists, Olga recognized her own narrow perspective:

I felt very naive and to some extent disrespectful. I wanted society to be more open-minded and good, and I wanted it so badly that I just assumed it was the reality. I think I share this with a lot of Swedes and we as a state need to be better at recognizing the existence of racism as a part of our society, not as the exception. Otherwise, racism will be an issue that continue to grow. (Olga, she/her, Sweden, self-identified as white)

Olga concluded by calling for broader societal recognition of racism as a persistent, not exceptional, part of Swedish society. Her testimony underscores the need for actions that inform and challenge white Swedes to reassess their assumptions and engage more actively in addressing societal issues. Overall, Olga’s reflection illustrates how engaging with structural analysis and personal positionality can foster a deeper, more compassionate awareness—even among those who initially perceive themselves as outside of the problem.

Rosa, a student from Mexico, shared valuable insights into the complexities of identity and discrimination, reflecting her dual reality of being both oppressed and potentially complicit in oppression. Her reflection reveals a powerful realization: a clearer understanding of her lived experience as a racialized woman in Europe, and an growing awareness of her own privileged position within the racial hierarchies of her home country.

The first thing is that the workshop helped me clarify my experience as a racialized woman in Europe. I have been living in Europe for some years now and I have encountered discriminations because of my background. I have been racialized in many ways and have suffered from this not always understanding what was happening. I could not grasp it until I took the course. I have understood that many things I had felt, were indeed real and

that racialization takes many forms. The second important insight concerns the conditions of racialized people in my own country, Mexico. It was troubling to relate with the experience of Black people in France with the experience of racialized people in Mexico. There was something about this experience that was unique in making more aware of these issues. And it was empowering in many ways. (Rosa, she/her, Mexico, self-identifies as racialized in Europe but as white in her country)

Living in Europe, this student experienced racial discrimination firsthand, which initially left her struggling to understand the dynamics at play. Through the course, she gained clarity about her experiences, recognizing them as real instances of racism. This personal revelation marked only the beginning of her journey. Her deepened understanding led her to reflect on the conditions of racialized groups in Mexico, which she had not previously considered. In her reflective paper, she drew several parallels between her experiences in Europe and the treatment of racialized individuals in Mexico, particularly comparing them with the experiences of Black people in France. This comparison enriched her analysis of global racial dynamics and underscored the common challenges faced by racialized populations worldwide.

Rosa's journey highlights a vital aspect of TEP: it empowers individuals to recognize and confront oppressive structures both abroad and in their own countries. Her experience illustrates how educational interventions can promote awareness and empowerment, enabling individuals to engage more effectively with issues of race and identity across different contexts. At its core, this process invites a deeper examination of one's positionality—much like viewing oneself through a prism, where identity is refracted into multiple, intersecting dimensions. Rather than simplifying experience into fixed categories, TEP encourages learners to embrace the complexity of their social realities and to recognize both their vulnerabilities and their responsibilities within them.

Finally, the workshop was of crucial importance for several white students who began to embrace solidarity and explore possibilities for action. As they became increasingly aware of the broader societal implications of racism and the threat posed by the rise of far right groups and extremist views, some expressed an urge to contribute to meaningful transformation in their lives and communities. One student reflected on her evolving perspective and her commitment to continue this work beyond the classroom:

Overall, during the workshop, it has been emphasized how complex the topic of racism is, and how there are a lot of parts of society that need change to create a more humane and equal world. Through the case of *Black France*, one can learn the importance of historic[al] influence and how historic[al] events and systems will echo through society for centuries. (...) With the rise of fascism and xenophobia throughout Europe and many other places as well, the rise of Nazism at the beginning of the XX century no longer feels too far away. This highlights the importance of these kinds of discussions and opportunities for learning in the class, and it spurs a desire to bring this discussion with me to all aspects of my everyday life. (Filippa, she/her, Netherlands, self-identifies as white)

This student's words illustrate the importance of the socio-political dimension of learning and how educational spaces can foster both urgency and responsibility. While it is difficult to assess long-term outcomes, the reflections shared by students suggest that the workshop opened up new possibilities for action. What emerges most clearly is a shift in perspective—also among some white students—toward a deeper awareness of racism and a growing commitment to confronting it in both personal and public spheres.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The findings presented here support the hypothesis that by engaging the whole person and capitalizing on diversity as well as students' ability and willingness to share their views and experiences, we can create pedagogical interventions that support conscientization of their own positions within existing power structures. Zembylas (2015a) argues that emotions are central to the process of learning, especially when confronting uncomfortable truths about oneself and society. By acknowledging and working through political emotions such as guilt, shame, or anger, the workshop allowed learners to engage with the topic of racism in meaningful ways and to develop a deeper understanding of their own positions within systems of power and privilege (see also hooks, 1994). Using empathy and mutual learning, several students who had not experienced racism could become aware of its societal relevance and the suffering it causes. This led several students to undergo a deep transformative learning journey with potentially far-reaching implications for their lives, interactions with others, and future actions.

This chapter also highlighted the significant results achieved through the TEP methodology, with outcomes that exceeded initial expectations. The students' comprehensive analyses and deep insights showcased their sharp analytical skills. These findings indicate that TEP's pedagogical interventions can effectively engage the entire classroom and suggest that leveraging students' collective experiences enhances TEP's impact. This methodology aims to promote humanization among both privileged and non-privileged students, moving beyond simple dichotomization, as discussed by Freire (1972) and Fanon (1952).

While individual learning is crucial, the impact of TEP becomes even more apparent when one evaluates the relational and socio-political dimensions of learning. This framework emphasizes how learning can be measured beyond individual achievements, considering the interactions and transformations that occur within the group and the broader societal context. As bell hooks discusses in *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (2003), education should cultivate a sense of community and collective engagement. By assessing these additional dimensions, we gain a comprehensive understanding of the full pedagogical impact of TEP, highlighting its ability to cultivate deep, meaningful, and socially transformative learning experiences.

The success of this pedagogical intervention confirms the efficacy of the methodology employed and its potential for broader application across various educational settings. The findings in this chapter serve as compelling evidence of TEP's adaptability and resonance, highlighting its ability to engage and inspire a diverse group of learners in transformative and emancipatory ways.

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Reimagining Education with TEP: A Humanizing Pedagogy for All

Abstract This book concludes with a call for a humanizing pedagogy for all. It aligns with global academic, political, and grassroots debates on the urgent need to transform education to reimagine alternative futures for humanity, the planet, and all living beings. Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) is positioned as *one* powerful pathway for driving such change. The chapter consolidates the book's core insights, showcasing TEP's versatility and its potential for application across diverse educational fields, disciplines, and contexts. Reflecting on lessons learned, it highlights how TEP can be adopted in full or in part and linked with other approaches worldwide to promote inclusivity, critical consciousness, and social justice. Ultimately, it serves as a call to action, illustrating how TEP can be adapted to meet the needs of various stakeholders—scholars, educators, practitioners, community leaders, and policymakers. By emphasizing TEP's broad applicability and transformative potential, the chapter advocates for a transformation of prevailing educational practices that can promote meaningful change at the individual, collective, and societal levels.

Keywords Humanizing Education • Inclusive Education • Critical Pedagogy • Intersectionality • Decolonial Approaches • Social Justice

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The field of education is at a critical juncture, as outlined by UNESCO's (2021) report on the future of education, which calls for a new social contract grounded in human rights, social justice, and an ethics of care. Global debates—from academic circles to grassroots movements—emphasize the urgent need to transform education to address pressing challenges such as environmental degradation, migration, social exclusion, polarization, and digitalization (UNESCO, 2020, 2021).¹ These challenges underscore the necessity to reimagine education's role in shaping a sustainable and equitable future for humanity and the planet (UNESCO, 2024; Hutchinson et al., 2023; Nhat Hanh, 2008).

At its core, this book contends that the future of education—and its potential to empower individuals and communities to drive meaningful global change—requires moving beyond outdated educational models, particularly those rooted in traditional, teacher-centered approaches. While numerous innovative solutions to today's educational challenges already exist, progress toward a genuine paradigm shift is hindered by the fragmentation of research and practice. What remains essential is the development of a unified framework that capitalizes on the strengths of diverse educational innovations while staying flexible and adaptable to evolving needs across different fields, disciplines, and contexts.

This book introduces Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) as a potential pathway for meaningful educational progress. TEP is a cohesive framework that synthesizes diverse philosophical and theoretical traditions. Grounded in the transformative and emancipatory visions of educational innovators and community leaders worldwide, TEP incorporates humanistic, humanizing, and decolonial approaches to promote well-being, peace, and justice.

I describe TEP as a *humanizing pedagogy for all* because it seeks to expand the aims of education while advocating for inclusivity, equity, and justice (Cappiali, 2023, 2024a, 2024b). In TEP, humanizing pedagogy refers to an educational practice that affirms the full dignity and agency of learners, emphasizing the power of education to transform both individuals and societies. Drawing on the works of Paulo Freire (1972)

¹See also United Nations (2022) “Transforming Education Summit” United Nations, New York, 16, 17 & 19 September 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/transforming-education-summit/about>

and Frantz Fanon (1961), this approach confronts the oppressive systems and practices that dehumanize marginalized communities. Fanon's insights on the psychological and social impacts of colonialism further deepen TEP's commitment to liberation, encouraging learners to challenge internalized oppression and reclaim their agency.

Initially designed to address controversial and sensitive topics, TEP has evolved into a framework seeking to empower all learners to navigate complex societal issues while upholding ethical standards. This approach offers essential tools for creating an inclusive and safe learning environment, which is not merely a curricular challenge; it is key to cultivating democratic citizenship and advancing social transformation (Council of Europe, 2017).

Building on the insights presented earlier in the book, this chapter delves into the core contributions of TEP and explores its potential impact across diverse educational contexts. It revisits the foundational arguments for a paradigm shift in education, highlighting TEP's expansive educational vision that synthesizes multiple philosophical and theoretical traditions into a cohesive approach and a systematic methodology. The chapter further highlights how I have applied TEP to tackle complex issues like racism through via a practical workshop, demonstrating its capacity to turn sensitive topics into opportunities for deep learning and transformation. The final sections expand on the benefits and broad applicability of TEP across disciplines and contexts, offering a future research agenda and encouraging educators and practitioners to adopt action-oriented approaches that foster a more sustainable and just world.

6.2 EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL GOALS BEYOND CURRENT PARADIGMS

In Chap. 1, I have presented the case for an emerging paradigm shift in education and the need for an integrated approach that builds on existing innovative knowledge and practices worldwide. Despite decades of debate and calls for educational reform, many entrenched barriers persist. In most parts of the world, the teacher-centered paradigm continues to dominate. In Brazil, for instance, despite Freire's strident criticisms, this approach remains firmly rooted in the public education system at most levels.

Teacher-centered approaches, rooted in vertical and often authoritarian philosophies, focus on the teacher rather than the learners. They limit

active participation and foster passivity through a lecture-based format, constraining students' independence and providing little room for critical engagement with the complexities of contemporary society (Montessori, 2002/1912; Dewey, 2004/1916, 2007/1938). From an inclusive education perspective, these models often silence diverse voices and reinforce oppressive dynamics, particularly for learners from marginalized communities (Ahmed, 2012; Freire, 1972; Cappiali, 2023; Pimentel, 2023; de Carvalho, 2022).

In recent decades, particularly in North America, the United Kingdom, and the Nordic European countries, learner-centered approaches have gained traction, often drawing inspiration from John Dewey's progressive tradition. Shifting the focus to students' learning, these approaches emphasize horizontal education, active participation, critical thinking, autonomy, and collaboration. These methods are seen as empowering learners by making them active participants in their educational journey, leading to higher motivation, engagement, and knowledge retention (O'Neill & McMahon, 2005; Weimer, 2002; Mascolo, 2009).

In contexts that have adopted learner-centered approaches, the challenge is to move beyond individual academic achievement and to engage learners more holistically, while promoting a greater awareness of the social structures that perpetuate inequality and exclusion (Brookfield, 2017). While such models promote personal growth and creativity, they can sometimes inadvertently reinforce individualism, emphasizing personal success over a deeper engagement with the socio-political realities that shape students' experiences, such as systemic racism, economic inequality, and environmental crises. These limitations highlight the need for a more comprehensive educational approach that fosters both individual development and structural transformation.

Critical Pedagogy addresses several limitations in education by challenging the traditional teacher-centered paradigm and filling the gaps left by learner-centered models (Cappiali, 2023). Building on Freire's foundational work, it advocates for education as a means to foster critical consciousness (*conscientization*)—the capacity to recognize and question the socio-political forces that shape one's life (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 2022). By shifting the focus to collective empowerment, Critical Pedagogy encourages students to critically examine and challenge the structures of power, oppression, and inequality that influence society.

In practice, Critical Pedagogy advocates for a dialogical approach, where knowledge is co-constructed through meaningful discussions and

reflections between teachers and students. This model fosters critical engagement, encouraging learners to question established norms and prioritize action-oriented learning that integrates theory and practice through *praxis*—the combination of reflection and action aimed at transforming society. It involves engaging learners in critical dialogue about the systemic forces shaping their world—such as racism, capitalism, patriarchy, and environmental degradation—while equipping them with the tools to challenge and transform these structures (Giroux, 2022; hooks, 1994).

Today, the principles of Critical Pedagogy are being increasingly applied across educational contexts and levels, from grassroots movements to formal education systems worldwide (Tibbitts & Keet, 2023; de Jong et al., 2019). In non-formal education settings, for instance, Critical Pedagogy is used in Human Rights Education (HRE), Peace Education, Social Justice Education, as well as community-based education programs, advocacy work, and adult education, where it empowers both educators and marginalized groups to challenge social inequalities. Within formal educational institutions, it is used to reshape curricula to address issues of power, privilege, and systemic inequality that operate within society (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

However, while Critical Pedagogy is a powerful tool for addressing systemic inequalities and empowering marginalized communities, its emphasis on these groups can sometimes limit its broader applicability. By focusing primarily on the struggles of the marginalized, it may overlook or underemphasize the role of privileged groups in challenging and transforming these power dynamics. As a result, Critical Pedagogy risks being seen as relevant only to certain populations, rather than as a broader approach to education that can engage all learners in the pursuit of social justice. Additionally, there is a need to systematically address questions such as its impact across diverse groups of learners, who benefits most from these approaches, and how to effectively engage with or overcome resistance. Thus, to strengthen its framework and expand its reach, Critical Pedagogy could benefit from future scientific and theoretical systematization.

In the book, I demonstrate how, through TEP, I have sought to address existing limitations in education by integrating the strengths of both learner-centered approaches and Critical Pedagogy into a comprehensive framework that fosters individual development while promoting broader societal transformation. I argue that simply replacing the traditional teacher-centered paradigm is necessary but not sufficient on its own. It is equally important to bridge the gap between learner-centered approaches

and Critical Pedagogy. For education to contribute to a world rooted in justice, human dignity, and the protection of all living beings, it must embrace more expansive goals that enhance its holistic, interconnected, and socially relevant dimensions (Cappiali, 2023).

The seven overarching goals of TEP are specifically designed to promote such a paradigm shift. TEP emphasizes comprehensive and inclusive development that addresses both individual and societal transformation. It prioritizes *holistic* growth by fostering learners' cognitive, emotional, social, physical, moral, and spiritual capabilities, while integrating Indigenous perspectives on interconnectedness and spirituality. TEP also promotes *inclusive* education by ensuring accessibility and relevance for diverse and intersecting identities, embracing decolonial and culturally responsive practices. Through *deep* engagement with content, TEP encourages learners to apply knowledge meaningfully, informed by intersectional analysis, while *experiential* learning fosters practical skills and real-world application through hands-on activities. The pedagogy is also inherently *interconnected*, building respectful and empathetic relationships within learning communities and beyond, incorporating Indigenous and decolonial approaches that extend relationality to the environment and non-human entities. Ultimately, TEP is both *transformative* and *emancipatory*—empowering learners to develop critical consciousness, challenge societal norms, and actively engage in social change to address systemic inequalities.

For this reason, I call for redefining the purpose of education to promote a transformative shift that draws on ongoing debates and insights from various fields, ultimately enabling it to more effectively address the complex challenges of our time. The seven overarching goals seek to promote a major rethinking of current approaches. Rather than simply adding elements to existing models (such as inclusive education or experiential learning), they suggest that we can transcend these approaches and move toward a new, unified educational framework. This approach aims to reinvent educational practices by drawing from existing philosophies and theories. It also embodies a pedagogy of hope and love, as championed by Freire, inspiring learners to believe in their capacity for transformation through compassion and care (hooks, 1994; Battiste, 2013; Zembylas, 2015).

The following sections highlight how these goals are grounded in cross-disciplinary approaches, combining philosophical, theoretical, and pedagogical perspectives from diverse traditions, and present the TEP framework as my contribution to support the broader paradigm shift.

6.3 TEP's UNIFIED FRAMEWORK

In Part I of the book (Chaps. 2 and 3), I establish the philosophical and theoretical foundations of TEP and its methodology, highlighting its unique value in integrating diverse perspectives and breaking traditional disciplinary boundaries. This process of systematization leverages the complementarities, convergences, and cross-fertilization already occurring among various educational philosophies, theories, and practices, laying the groundwork for a cohesive framework that harnesses their collective strengths while also having the potential to influence and reshape them in return (see sections below for more details).

Figure 6.1 reiterates the three core components of the TEP framework: philosophical foundation, theoretical integration, and pedagogical interventions. Together, these components provide internal coherence by linking philosophical inquiries about the purpose of education with learning theories that address the question, “How do people learn?” In TEP, philosophical and theoretical considerations have crucial practical applications, converging in pedagogical interventions that are specifically designed to achieve its key educational goals (see **Appendix B** for an overview of the main practical implications).

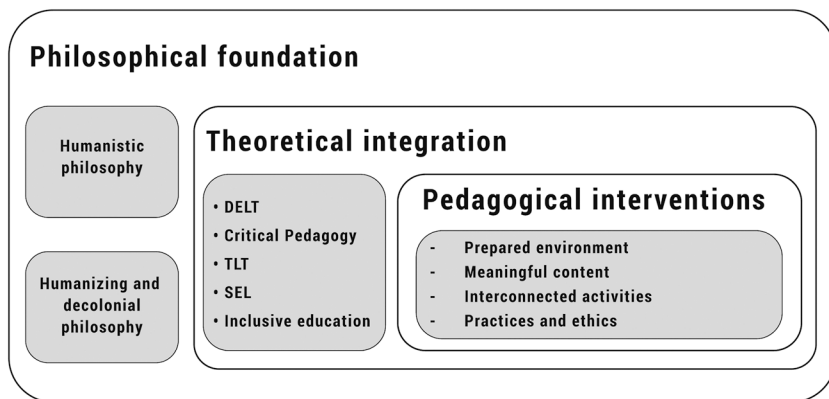


Fig. 6.1 Overview of the TEP framework

6.3.1 *Philosophical Foundation*

Philosophically, TEP draws on the transformative principles of the educational approaches of Montessori (2002/1912) and Dewey (2004/1916, 2007/1938), who envisioned humanistic education as a process that nurtures not only traditional academic skills but also emotional, ethical, and social development. In this context, *transformative* refers to fostering personal and intellectual growth that enables learners to critically reflect on their own beliefs and perspectives, ultimately leading to personal change and a deeper understanding of the world. TEP aligns with this tradition by promoting personal responsibility, creativity, and critical thinking as essential foundations for individual growth and transformation.

Moreover, TEP incorporates the emancipatory principles found in the humanizing philosophies of Freire (1972, 1998) and decolonial perspectives. Here, *emancipatory* refers to education's potential to challenge oppressive power structures, raise critical awareness, and empower learners to take action against social injustices. Freire's work emphasizes the development of *critical consciousness*—a deepened awareness of the power structures and inequalities that shape society—and the transformative action that follows. His concept of *humanization* extends beyond individual development, positioning education as a tool for collective liberation and social justice, which is central to TEP's mission. Decolonial perspectives extend and further reinforce Freire's vision by challenging the Eurocentric and colonial foundations of education and advocating for a transformative shift in educational spaces rooted in epistemological pluralism and inclusion (de Jong et al., 2019; Smith, 2012; de Carvalho, 2022). By centering marginalized voices and Indigenous knowledge systems, TEP addresses power imbalances and encourages deeper social transformation (Battiste, 2013; de Carvalho, 2022; Hutchinson et al., 2023).

Combining the philosophies of Montessori, Dewey, and Freire allows me to integrate the individual, relational, and socio-political dimensions of learning into a cohesive framework:

- **Individual dimension:** Focuses on personal growth, self-directed learning, and the development of critical thinking, creativity, and autonomy. This dimension emphasizes fostering independence and responsibility, connecting personal growth to problem-solving, and linking critical thinking to the broader struggle for liberation from oppression.

- **Relational dimension:** Highlights the importance of relationships between learners, educators, and the community. It values social interaction, dialogue, and collaboration as essential to learning, recognizing the role of relationships in constructing knowledge and acknowledging marginalized voices in the process.
- **Socio-political dimension:** Emphasizes critical engagement with societal structures, power dynamics, and social responsibility. Education is seen as an emancipatory process that empowers learners to challenge inequality, prepare for active citizenship, and foster empathy, peace, and social responsibility.

Furthermore, TEP has the potential to extend beyond traditional human-centered approaches by incorporating an **earth-centered dimension**, drawing on Indigenous and decolonial perspectives that emphasize care for the planet and all living beings. Integrating these perspectives connects the future development of TEP to planetary survival and sustainability (Nhat Hanh, 2008; Hutchinson et al., 2023).

6.3.2 *Theoretical Integration*

Moving from philosophy to theory, TEP integrates Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT)—an advanced variant of learner-centered approaches—along with Critical Pedagogy, Transformative Learning Theory (TLT), Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), and inclusive education through the lens of intersectionality. While educational philosophies provide the overarching vision and core values that guide TEP, educational theories offer practical tools to implement these principles.

Together, these theories shape a comprehensive framework that promotes inclusivity and deep, experiential learning while fostering both individual and societal transformation. Each theory uniquely contributes to aligning TEP's philosophy and practices with its educational goals, thereby enriching its multidimensional approach to learning (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024) (see Table 6.1).

Although these theories share common elements and are sometimes combined in practice, they have not been fused into a unified framework. TEP addresses this gap by drawing on interdisciplinary trends to strengthen and expand existing convergences. This produces a robust educational framework that addresses the individual, relational, and socio-political dimensions of learning in a cohesive manner that in turn contributes to the ongoing development of these educational theories (see Sect. 6.6).

Table 6.1 Integration of educational theories in TEP

<i>Theory of Learning</i>	<i>Focus</i>
Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT)	Emphasizes learning through experience and reflection, cultivating self-actualization and intrinsic motivation by connecting learning to real-world experiences through hands-on, meaningful engagement.
Critical Pedagogy	Empowers learners to analyze societal structures and address inequalities. Education is seen as a practice of freedom, fostering critical dialogue and democratic participation, and challenging Eurocentric influences. It centers marginalized voices and non-academic knowledge systems.
Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)	Focuses on personal growth through self-reflection, encouraging learners to revise their perceptions and achieve lasting changes in perspective and behavior.
Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)	Equips learners with emotional intelligence and relational skills, promoting self-awareness, empathy, and healthy interpersonal relationships as a foundation for transformative learning.
Inclusive Education via Intersectionality	Ensures equitable access to learning opportunities for all learners, addressing overlapping forms of oppression and privilege. By integrating intersectionality, TEP confronts systemic power structures and promotes inclusivity.

6.3.3 Pedagogical Interventions

Transitioning from theory to practice, TEP employs dynamic, well-structured pedagogical interventions—targeted educational strategies and activities designed to achieve specific learning outcomes and promote TEP’s expanded educational goals. These interventions move away from traditional lecture-based formats and support a more inclusive, engaging approach to learning.

TEP’s pedagogical interventions consist of four interconnected elements: *prepared environment*, *meaningful content*, *interconnected activities*, and *ethical practices*. These core elements collectively ensure that TEP’s implementation is comprehensive and adaptable. Table 6.2 provides an overview of each of these elements, illustrating how they work together to create an inclusive and transformative learning experience.

These four core elements form the foundation of TEP’s methodology and are crucial for reshaping current educational practices. Each element not only supports individual learning but also addresses broader relational and socio-political dimensions, ensuring that education is deeply connected to real-world issues.

Table 6.2 Four Key Elements of TEP's Pedagogical Interventions

<i>Element</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Key Contributions</i>
Prepared environment	Creating a learner-centered, structured, yet interactive space that encourages autonomy and collaboration.	To provide a conducive learning environment that supports critical thinking, self-reflection, and active participation.	Inspired by Montessori, emphasizes flexibility, learner autonomy, and a space that nurtures holistic development.
Meaningful content	Engaging learners with relevant, impactful materials that address individual, relational, and socio-political dimensions of learning.	To connect learning with real-world issues, promoting deep understanding and critical engagement with social justice topics.	Combines social science research, Critical Pedagogy with experiential learning, emphasizing the application of knowledge to societal challenges.
Interconnected activities	A diverse range of activities, including discussions, simulations, and role-playing, designed to engage learners and encourage a robust exchange of ideas.	To support critical thinking and emotional intelligence, ensuring deep engagement.	Inspired by Freire, Dewey, and experiential learning traditions, promotes dialogue, empathy, and collaborative learning.
Practices and ethics	Grounding learning in ethical principles, focusing on inclusivity, respect, and care for diverse perspectives and experiences.	To ensure that learning environments are safe, respectful, and inclusive, supporting the well-being of all participants.	Draws on the ethics of care and discomfort, balancing challenge and support in addressing complex social issues.

6.4 TEP METHODOLOGY

The core of the TEP methodology is based on integrating theory-driven pedagogical interventions with interdisciplinary insights from educational and social sciences. These interventions are designed to address the holistic development of the learner across three dimensions of learning: individual, relational, and socio-political.

In Chap. 3, I highlighted how pedagogical interventions can be effectively designed using the principles of TEP's scientific pedagogy. Developed by Montessori (2002/1912) and adapted specifically for TEP, this concept refers to an evidence-based approach to education that emphasizes observation, experimentation, and the continuous adaptation of educational practices to meet the diverse needs of learners while remaining grounded in key educational goals.

This methodology has two core components: one pedagogical and the other socio-psychological. Combined, these components work together to systematize existing practices within the TEP framework, providing a structured yet adaptable approach to implementing and evaluating the pedagogy across various contexts.

The **pedagogical component** is grounded in educational science and focuses on translating TEP's philosophical principles into concrete, practical interventions. These interventions are designed in a flexible format, allowing them to be both theoretically grounded and empirically evaluable. The pedagogical component involves the careful design of a variety of practices and activities that are adaptable and responsive to diverse learning environments.

To ensure internal coherence, I have adapted the concept of constructive alignment by Biggs and Tang (2011; for preliminary work on this, see Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). Constructive alignment is an educational design concept that ensures consistency between the broader educational goals, what learners are expected to learn (learning objectives), how they engage with the content (activities), and how their progress is evaluated (assessment). By integrating these elements, I seek to ensure that TEP's philosophical principles are consistently reflected across both the theoretical framework and practical application, creating a cohesive educational framework that emphasizes thoughtful planning and reflection. As such, TEP's systematic, reflective, and theoretically grounded design allows for careful planning and adaptation (Cranton & Taylor, 2012, p. 19).

The **socio-psychological component** complements the pedagogical component. It allows to evaluate the impact of TEP's interventions across individual, group, and contextual levels, addressing the multiple dimensions of learning identified in the TEP framework. This component uses qualitative and quantitative methods to assess how learners process and react to challenging topics, considering both internal psychological dynamics—such as resistance to change, emotions, and trauma—and external socio-political influences like power dynamics and group

behavior. It also accounts for external factors—such as discrimination, and social inequities—advocating for practices that provide emotional support and build resilience.

In the chapters dedicated to the empirical application of TEP, summarized in the next section, I detail how these pedagogical interventions can be applied to teaching sensitive and controversial topics. Through practical examples, I demonstrate how TEP's methodology functions in practice and how it aligns with TEP's expanded educational goals.

6.5 TACKLING CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSITIVE TOPICS WITH TEP: A WORKSHOP ON RACISM AND ANTI-RACISM

TEP was initially developed as a practical response to the complexities of teaching controversial and sensitive topics in diverse classrooms. Part II (Chaps. 4 and 5) of this book illustrates TEP's capacity to transform these challenges into opportunities for deep learning, personal growth, and individual and social transformation. While the case study presented here focuses on racism, TEP's principles and methods are highly adaptable to a wide range of sensitive and complex issues, including gender-based violence, colonial legacies, climate justice, disability rights, digital surveillance, health inequities, post-conflict reconciliation, refugee integration, religious discrimination, ethical dilemmas in science and technology, and more. This breadth of application enables TEP to provide nuanced and context-sensitive engagement across various educational settings, demonstrating how its framework can be replicated, modified, or extended into effective pedagogical interventions within the social sciences and beyond.

Chapter 4 outlines the components of the pedagogical intervention on racism that contributed to TEP's initial theoretical and methodological development. These components are presented in a step-by-step format, integrating both theoretical and practical guidance. Best practices and ethical considerations are elaborated in the appendices (**Appendices B, C, D, E and F**), which offer additional guidelines to support educators in implementing TEP's interventions effectively while maintaining ethical integrity and inclusivity. By highlighting the intersections of racism with other sites of oppression (Collins & Bilge, 2020), the activities and class debates are structured to create a safe and inclusive space where students can learn from each other and contribute meaningfully to the learning experience.

A key aspect of TEP's approach is its proactive engagement with denial and resistance, which are often prevalent when discussing topics such as racism. Drawing on social science research, these phenomena have been identified as major barriers to deep engagement (Kendi, 2019; Brookfield, 2019). Denial typically involves the rejection or minimization of racism's existence or significance—often expressed through claims of colorblindness or national exceptionalism. Resistance, on the other hand, can be more active and manifest in a variety of ways, from overt rejection of the topic to more subtle forms, such as disengagement or the use of emotional defense mechanisms like guilt or avoidance (hooks, 1994; Zembylas, 2018). TEP anticipates both forms of responses and incorporates strategies to recognize, hold space for, address them within pedagogical interventions. The workshop on racism was therefore designed to minimize denial and manage resistance, nurturing a supportive environment where difficult conversations can take place constructively.²

Moreover, resistance to discussions on racism can also stem from limited prior knowledge and the absence of conceptual tools necessary to engage with the subject effectively. This knowledge gap can lead some individuals to avoid the topic altogether, potentially resulting in backlash when confronted with the reality of systemic racism (Kite et al., 2022). In contexts such as Sweden, where the pedagogical interventions were implemented, a combination of denial and culturally embedded norms of political correctness can contribute to an atmosphere of unease—if not active resistance—toward acknowledging institutional racism and the racialization of people of color in society (McEachrane, 2014). Additionally, there is often a tendency to reduce racism to far-right extremism, rather than recognize it as a structural problem within society at large (McEachrane, 2014; Mulinari & Neergaard, 2017).

By offering students relevant material to gain in-depth knowledge of different expressions of racism in society, the workshop was designed to enhance theoretical and conceptual understanding while facilitating critical reflection and dialogue, fostering a supportive environment for

²It is also essential to uphold core ethical practices when addressing sensitive topics with diverse groups to avoid unnecessary harm (Zembylas, 2015). These include avoiding putting pressure on students to discuss their personal experiences and respecting their individual pace and needs. The reader can refer to the sections on ethics in Chap. 3 and the ethical guidelines provided in **Appendix D**.

students to engage with these complex issues. Through structured activities and guided discussions, the pedagogical strategies aimed to encourage learners to question preconceived notions and develop a nuanced understanding of racism's impact on individuals and communities. The effectiveness of these strategies was assessed using a combination of self-reflective notes, class discussions, and follow-up interviews, revealing varied responses depending on the students' prior experiences and familiarity with the topic of racism.

Chapter 5 delves deeper into the impact of the workshop on students, providing empirical evidence of how TEP successfully promotes critical discussions on racism while fostering transformative shifts in attitudes and behaviors. The findings highlight that the workshop was particularly effective in leveraging the diverse competencies and backgrounds of students, enabling meaningful interactions that go beyond traditional educational frameworks. Through relational learning processes and emotional engagement, the workshop encouraged shifts in perspectives and fostered mutual learning among students—both those directly affected by racism and those who were not. By integrating TEP's theoretical approaches, such as Goleman's (2015/1995) Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Zembylas' (2015) concept of political emotions, the workshop empowered students to critically analyze racism's systemic nature and its broader implications for society.

Using the metaphor of light refracting through a prism, this chapter also illustrates how the diversity of the student body enriched the workshop's outcomes. Learners' unique backgrounds contributed to a multifaceted learning experience, revealing the impactful—and at times unexpected—effects of TEP. Student testimonies further validate the effectiveness of TEP's intervention in nurturing a deeper understanding of racism, with specific examples demonstrating how combining its key principles—such as experiential and emotional engagement, along with critical dialogue and relational learning—enhanced their comprehension of such a sensitive topic like racism.

The findings revealed several profound effects of the workshop, including an enhanced understanding of racism's historical and contemporary relevance, increased empathy, and deep listening across diverse backgrounds, as well as a greater willingness to act for social change. TEP also helped some learners confront denial and resistance, challenge myths around race and national identity, and critically analyze power dynamics and injustice.

Overall, the empirical sections of the book provide a comprehensive analysis of TEP's application in addressing racism, offering insights into how TEP can move beyond this particular case study to become a versatile tool for addressing a variety of sensitive and complex issues in educational contexts. This approach serves as a starting point for expanding educational frameworks across various fields and subjects. These findings not only address practical challenges but also contribute significantly to strengthening the theoretical foundations of TEP itself, illustrating its potential to reshape pedagogical strategies in contemporary educational practice.

6.6 POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TEP FOR EDUCATIONAL THEORIES

Building on its practical applications and positive impact on students, TEP has the potential to significantly enrich the educational theories from which it draws. By adopting TEP's principles and methodologies, these fields could broaden their influence and deepen their transformative impact. TEP's ability to bridge multiple educational theories positions it as a promising framework that could expand the scope of existing models in education, further supporting ongoing cross-fertilization and collaboration.

Such developments are already evident in several educational fields that are shifting toward more holistic, interconnected, and socially responsive approaches. For example, recent scholarship in Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT) advocates for broader, socially relevant approaches that go beyond narrow academic outcomes and include emotions as an essential component of the learning experience (Mehta & Fine, 2022). Similarly, Cranton and Taylor (2012) observe that Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) has evolved through its incorporation of holistic learning principles and Stephen Brookfield's work in Critical Pedagogy. In the field of Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), there is growing recognition of the need to align holistic development with social justice goals, moving beyond a sole focus on academic achievement or emotions disconnected from their socio-political contexts (Ramirez et al., 2021).

While some cross-fertilization among these educational theories is already underway, TEP offers a comprehensive, integrative framework that can deepen and expand this process. Below are some specific ways in which TEP can contribute to these fields:

Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT): DELT emphasizes learning through direct experience and reflection, fostering deep cognitive and practical engagement (Wurdinger, 2005). TEP extends DELT's framework by integrating emotional, relational, and socio-political dimensions, making the learning process both personally meaningful and socially transformative. By directly addressing social justice issues, TEP broadens DELT's focus beyond individual experiences, connecting learning with action and making it relevant to broader societal contexts (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024). Moreover, TEP enhances DELT by promoting engagement with marginalized communities, encouraging mutual learning, and adopting collaborative approaches to social change. This holistic and interconnected approach pushes learners to reflect on their role in addressing societal issues, expanding DELT's overall approach to teaching and learning.

Critical Pedagogy: Critical Pedagogy encourages learners to question power structures, promote social justice, and critically engage with societal inequalities (Giroux, 1997). TEP advances Critical Pedagogy by more explicitly integrating new elements such as Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL), thereby creating an environment where critical consciousness and empowerment are achieved through both intellectual and emotional development. By emphasizing the emotional dimensions of education, TEP draws on insights from psychology, educational psychology and sociology to help learners develop emotional intelligence and collaborative skills alongside their cognitive understanding and critique of power. This integration strengthens the transformative potential of Critical Pedagogy by grounding its emancipatory aims in emotional and relational development.

Transformative Learning Theory (TLT): TLT focuses on personal transformation through critical reflection and self-awareness, leading to lasting changes in perspectives and behavior (Mezirow, 1997; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). TEP amplifies TLT by embedding experiential and socio-emotional elements, fostering both personal and societal transformation through reflective practices. By incorporating these elements, TEP can expand research in TLT to further highlight how learners' perceptions and beliefs are shaped by social structures and to explore strategies for challenging and transforming institutions and systems. This situates personal transformation within a larger emancipatory project, linking individual growth to collective efforts for social justice and systemic change.

Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL): SEL emphasizes emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and relational skills, promoting emotional well-being and interpersonal competences (Goleman, 2015/1995). TEP has the potential to strengthen SEL by looking at emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills via a critical, transformative lens (Ramirez et al., 2021). This approach supports holistic development by addressing the political dimensions of emotions and their connection to social justice (Zembylas, 2015). By teaching learners how to navigate emotional responses to injustices, TEP strengthens the socio-political dimension of SEL. Additionally, TEP's explicit integration of intersectionality prompts SEL to account for how race, gender, class and other key categories shape educational experiences, enhancing culturally relevant socio-emotional skills.

Inclusive Education: Inclusive education aims to ensure that all learners have equal access to learning opportunities. Frameworks such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Differentiated Instruction (DI) focus on creating inclusive and accessible learning environments by addressing diverse needs. However, these frameworks often prioritize accessibility and customization without fully engaging with the interconnected dimensions of learning—individual, relational, and socio-political—that TEP emphasizes.

TEP deepens this engagement with inclusivity by integrating a socio-political consciousness. It encourages educators to move beyond adapting content for individual learners to critically examine the historical and structural factors—such as colonialism, racism, and patriarchy—that shape students' learning experiences. This approach involves integrating discussions on intersecting issues like race, gender, and migration into the curriculum, fostering a learning environment that equips students to challenge systemic inequalities and become active agents of change.

Moreover, intersectionality, a central principle of TEP, highlights the ways in which overlapping social categories such as race, gender, class, and disability intersect to shape individuals' experiences and identities in educational contexts (Migliarini & Elder, 2023). This perspective moves beyond traditional diversity categories by exploring how systems of power and privilege interact to create complex experiences of oppression and resistance to it. TEP's intersectional approach ensures that inclusive education not only adapts to individual needs but also acknowledges and integrates learners' unique and situated experiences.

By incorporating intersectionality into its pedagogical framework, TEP responds to the multiple, interconnected realities that learners face. This

approach also involves decolonizing curricula and integrating Indigenous, non-Western, and marginalized knowledge systems, thereby validating diverse ways of knowing and learning. TEP pushes the boundaries of inclusivity beyond surface-level diversity to address structural inequalities, ultimately creating more equitable educational experiences.

Overall, TEP's contributions to educational theories can support a deeper integration of individual, relational and socio-political dimensions of learning across educational practices, paving the way for new research and practical applications. The following sections delve into how TEP can further strengthen and expand its influence within various educational settings

6.7 TEP's CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND RELATED FIELDS

TEP has the potential to significantly enrich a wide range of programs in Human Rights Education (HRE), as well as related fields such as Global Citizenship Education, Peace Education, Anti-Racism Education, Social Justice Education, and Environmental Justice and Sustainability. These fields frequently integrate elements of Deep and Experiential Learning Theory (DELT) and Critical Pedagogy, and evidence of cross-fertilization among them is steadily growing (Zembylas & Keet, 2018; Tibbitts & Keet, 2023; Tibbitts, 2017; Bajaj, 2017; Parker, 2016).

While many programs in these fields already align with TEP's core principles, they often operate in fragmented ways. There is a need to systematize these practices across different educational contexts, by grounding them in a more robust scientific foundation. In particular, bridging psychological and sociological theory with pedagogical practice allows TEP to promote long-term behavioral change and address psychological resistance—both of which remain central challenges when confronting deeply ingrained biases, especially around sensitive topics like structural racism.

HRE serves as a case in point. Current practices are diverse and typically focus on providing knowledge of human rights norms and principles, promoting values such as equality and dignity, and encouraging learners to become active participants in defending human rights. Key strategies include *education about human rights*, which imparts knowledge of rights and mechanisms for protection; *education through human rights*, which models human rights values in the educational environment itself; and

education for human rights, which empowers individuals to take action for human rights in their communities and societies.

TEP can enhance HRE by offering a more structured integration of holistic learning approaches that address not only cognitive development but also emotional, relational, and socio-political dimensions. Through the incorporation of socio-emotional learning and the promotion of empathy, TEP can help learners engage with human rights issues on a deeper level, fostering long-lasting personal and social transformation.

Furthermore, TEP's focus on intersectionality and decolonial perspectives challenges the Eurocentric and normative foundations often present in human rights curricula. By centering marginalized voices and integrating Indigenous, non-Western, and marginalized knowledge systems, TEP offers a transformative approach that validates diverse ways of knowing and learning. This approach could equally benefit other fields, such as Global Citizenship Education and Social Justice Education, by encouraging critical engagement with global and local justice issues.

It is important to note that while current HRE practices already reflect several elements of TEP—particularly in innovative programs that use emotional engagement and creative approaches—TEP's structured integration of these elements into a unified framework, which is also scientifically grounded, could further strengthen the impact and applicability of HRE, as well as related fields like Global Citizenship Education, Peace Education, Anti-Racism Education, Social Justice Education, and Environmental Justice and Sustainability across diverse contexts and learner groups.

6.8 EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF TEP ACROSS EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

TEP offers a versatile and cross-contextual approach to education, adaptable across a wide range of educational levels and disciplines, from early childhood to higher education. Whether implemented fully or partially, TEP has the potential to empower educators to promote responsibility, empathy, and critical engagement. This flexibility positions TEP as a bridge between educational innovations worldwide, contributing to the development of more equitable and socially responsible learning environments. Moreover, its openness to integration with other approaches allows TEP to capitalize on existing strengths, facilitating convergence with complementary frameworks and enhancing its impact.

While I have argued that the teacher-centered paradigm should ultimately be replaced, I recognize that practical constraints may limit the extent to which educators can fully adopt TEP. In such cases, selected TEP activities can still be effectively implemented, particularly in addressing topics related to diversity and inclusion. Given the global imperative for schools to promote these values, teachers can introduce TEP-based practices to benefit their students, even within more rigid, teacher-centered models.

TEP can also be integrated into learner-centered environments. As I have argued elsewhere (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024), transformative-emancipatory elements can be woven into existing curricula, for instance, encouraging students to reflect on how course content relates to their own lives and experiences. However, TEP's full potential is realized when its transformative-emancipatory framework is adopted in its entirety, allowing for deeper learning and greater social responsibility (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

TEP's expansive goals make the framework relevant and effective across both academic and non-academic environments, formal and non-formal education, and within public and private institutions. As Critical Pedagogy and other foundational philosophies of TEP gain momentum, its potential for expansion across various educational contexts becomes even more evident (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

The following section outlines some examples. These suggestions are intended to complement existing efforts by showing how educational institutions can incorporate more comprehensive frameworks—such as TEP—that address the various dimensions of learning and are grounded in a humanizing philosophy. These recommendations build on current practices and seek to offer additional perspectives and strategies to further support inclusive and transformative learning experiences.

6.8.1 *TEP Across Educational Levels*

TEP's transformative principles and practices can be introduced early and continue to evolve throughout a learner's academic journey. In primary education, TEP can be introduced through methods like storytelling, role-playing, and collaborative activities. These approaches help young learners develop key skills such as empathy, fairness, and cooperation, laying the foundation for their relational and emotional growth.

As learners progress to secondary education, TEP builds on these foundational skills, encouraging students to engage with more complex issues such as global citizenship, racial equality, and climate activism. Beyond theoretical learning, TEP fosters practical involvement through community projects and social justice initiatives, empowering students with a sense of responsibility and agency in addressing real-world problems.

In higher education, TEP can be applied across various disciplines, encouraging learners to critically examine societal issues and engage in real-world problem-solving. This not only enhances academic achievement but also nurtures the development of emotional, social, and relational skills—qualities that are essential for cultivating empathetic, socially responsible citizens.

6.8.2 *TEP Across Academic Disciplines*

TEP can be integrated across academic disciplines to encourage critical reflection on knowledge production, power dynamics, and societal transformation. By promoting interdisciplinary strategies that connect academic theory with real-world action, TEP enables learners to connect academic theory with action (Cappiali & Jean-Pierre, 2024).

TEP is particularly well-suited to the social sciences. In disciplines like sociology, political science, and economics, TEP can encourage learners to examine complex social issues in a multifaceted manner and seek solution to problems.

TEP is equally valuable in both the humanities and STEM fields. In the humanities, TEP moves beyond traditional critical analysis by incorporating an experiential and relational component that encourages students to connect historical facts or literary theories with their own lived experiences and contemporary social realities. For example, in literature courses, while intersectional and decolonial lenses are sometimes used to analyze novels, TEP's contribution lies in guiding students to explore the emotional and relational impact of these narratives, fostering deeper empathy and engagement. TEP's emphasis on emotional engagement and critical consciousness equips learners not only to critique representations of race, gender, and power but also to reflect on how these narratives shape their own perspectives and identities.

Similarly, in history, where critical approaches to imperialism, colonialism, and decolonization are common, TEP's value is in systematizing the integration of these topics with Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) and

community engagement. This could involve collaborative projects where students work with local communities or marginalized groups to better understand historical injustices and their contemporary implications, thereby connecting historical inquiry with action for social change. By bringing together experiential learning, socio-emotional development, and intersectional analysis, TEP offers a unique framework that complements and extends existing educational practices in these fields.

In STEM fields, TEP can foster a more socially engaged framework that encourages learners to consider the broader socio-political implications of scientific research. For instance, in environmental science, the integration of decolonial knowledge and Indigenous perspectives can provide a more comprehensive understanding of climate change and environmental justice. These perspectives not only critique dominant narratives around environmental issues but also highlight the contributions and lived experiences of marginalized communities often overlooked in mainstream scientific discourse. In data science, more efforts can be made to address ethical concerns related to artificial intelligence, data privacy, and algorithmic bias, emphasizing the need to consider the societal impact of technology and its potential to perpetuate inequalities. By incorporating these considerations, educators can encourage students to critically reflect on their role and responsibility as scientists and future professionals in shaping a more just and equitable society—one that respects the Earth and all living beings.

6.8.3 *TEP in Non-formal Education*

TEP's adaptability extends beyond formal academic settings. In community-based learning, aspects of TEP are already used to empower participants to reflect on local issues—such as poverty, environmental degradation, or gentrification—and co-create grassroots action plans. Workshops incorporating more extensively TEP principles can engage community members in dialogue and collaborative praxis, helping them develop solutions rooted in their lived experiences. By bridging the gap between educational theory and action-oriented learning, TEP allows participants to take transformative leadership roles.

In advocacy work, elements of TEP are applied to provide strategies for NGO training by encouraging participants to reflect on power structures, emotional responses to injustice, and the importance of building inclusive, intersectional practices. By moving participants from critical reflection to

sustainable action, TEP enhances advocacy efforts to support effective and lasting change.

In adult education and professional training, TEP can enhance efforts to develop cultural competence, social justice awareness, and empathy. Professionals in fields such as social work, healthcare, business, and public policy can use TEP to navigate ethical dilemmas related to inequality, discrimination, and social justice, fostering more inclusive and ethical workplaces and institutions. Additionally, private institutions can adopt TEP to move beyond market-driven educational models and embrace approaches that prioritize equity, empathy, and social responsibility.

In order to fully realize the potential of TEP across the various domains discussed so far, further research and empirical studies are needed to expand and refine its applications. Below, I outline recommendations for future research that will help assess TEP's effectiveness and optimize its impact across diverse contexts.

6.9 FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR TEP

The development of TEP hinges on further empirical and interdisciplinary research to evaluate its effectiveness across diverse learner demographics, geographical contexts, and subject areas. Initial studies, particularly those addressing controversial subjects within diverse educational environments, have shown significant promise (Chap. 5). However, additional research is necessary to optimize these practices and validate their outcomes. Cross-contextual analyses and pilot studies could expand TEP's methodological framework by incorporating mixed-method approaches to better capture its overall impact. This research will help identify the conditions under which TEP facilitates learning and transformation, allowing for greater adaptability to emerging educational challenges.

6.9.1 *Understanding TEP's Impact on Resistant Learners*

Classroom diversity presents both challenges and opportunities. TEP leverages diversity as a strength, cultivating rich, inclusive learning experiences. However, more research is needed to explore how best to engage with learners from diverse backgrounds and to address responses that may vary. This includes investigating how TEP can be more effective in engaging conservative or more psychologically rigid learners who might resist pedagogical interventions that challenge their pre-existing beliefs.

One of the key goals of this book has been to explore how TEP can become a humanizing pedagogy for all learners, irrespective of their individual, group, or societal context. TEP moves beyond Critical Pedagogy's traditional focus on marginalized communities by accounting for intersectional identities (e.g., gender, race, class) more broadly as well as other aspects of learners' lives, including their political views and religious beliefs (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins & Bilge, 2020).

A critical challenge for TEP is engaging learners who may resist or disagree with its principles (Allen & Rossatto, 2009). Many participants in human rights programs, for instance, already align with progressive or human rights-oriented views, raising questions about TEP's applicability to learners who may not share these perspectives. Self-selection bias suggests that TEP may primarily attract those who are already sympathetic toward its goals. Future research should explore how TEP can reach broader audiences, particularly learners with resistant or conservative viewpoints, including radicalized individual and groups.

6.9.2 *Engaging Emotions in Learning*

Historically, research in education has neglected the emotions, focusing primarily on cognitive learning. However, there is growing recognition of the role that emotions play in education, particularly in addressing structural barriers and historical injustices (Zembylas & Schutz, 2016; Zembylas, 2015). Engaging emotions in learning is critical, especially with respect to addressing trauma and promoting healing. That said, addressing emotions in the learning process presents challenges. While Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) models recognize emotions as critical, they often fail to fully integrate emotions into the core educational experience. Moving beyond additive models, TEP aims to fully integrate deep emotional engagement into the overall learning experience, offering a pathway to deeper understanding and real social change.

The pedagogy of discomfort, as conceptualized by Zembylas (2015), offers a way forward for teaching controversial and sensitive topics. In this book I have shown how it encourages learners to critically engage with their beliefs, values, and emotional responses to complex issues, leading to personal and social transformation. Beyond my preliminary findings, more research is needed in the future to understand how emotions intersect with other dimensions of learning to enhance or hinder learning and transformation through TEP.

6.9.3 *Ethical Challenges in Implementing TEP*

As Zembylas (2015) notes, navigating ethical complexities is crucial, especially when dealing with controversial topics that may evoke discomfort, fear, guilt or other difficult emotions. While discomfort is integral to transformative learning, it must be carefully managed to avoid alienating learners. Educators must create environments that encourage safe, inclusive dialogue where learners can express themselves without fear of judgment or harm. Ethical teaching within TEP emphasizes knowledge acquisition while guiding learners through their discomfort and toward empathy and critical reflection.

Ethical considerations extend to the dynamics of power in the classroom. TEP raises questions about engaging learners with controversial material, especially when some may be directly affected (Zembylas, 2018; Brookfield, 2019). Educators must ensure that marginalized voices are amplified while ensuring to protect vulnerable students. They must also provide adequate resources, facilitate open dialogue, and offer emotional support to students who may be personally affected by sensitive topics.

6.9.4 *Recommendations for Future Research*

To further explore TEP's impact and expand its applicability, future research should focus on key areas such as:

1. Developing tools to measure TEP's impact on different learner groups.
2. Exploring how TEP can engage conservative or resistant learners.
3. Investigating the short- and long-term impacts of TEP on learners' attitudes and behaviors.
4. Examining the effectiveness of TEP in diverse cultural and educational contexts.
5. Studying how TEP's emotional engagement encourages or hinders deeper learning and healing.
6. Addressing political, practical, and ethical challenges to implementing TEP across contexts.

This research agenda sets the stage for TEP's ongoing evolution, ensuring that it remains a responsive and adaptable pedagogy that meets the needs of diverse learners in a rapidly changing world.

6.10 CONCLUSION

This book has introduced readers to the innovative educational framework of TEP. It is my wish that many will embrace TEP and other converging approaches developed around the world to generate positive change and contribute to a more sustainable and just future. By nurturing compassion for oneself, others, and the planet via a pedagogy of hope, love, care (Giroux, 1997; hooks, 2003; Nhat Hanh, 2008), we can empower learners of all ages and backgrounds to drive the societal transformations that our world urgently needs.

While some forms of education continue to uphold the status quo, this book aligns with the global call for a paradigm shift—an education that is more holistic and that empowers learners to create a more just and equitable world. As UNESCO (2021) and other key organizations worldwide call for a global conversation on education, this book has shown how TEP can integrate with innovative educational approaches, collectively contributing to the realization of this vision.

As scholars and educators, we have a responsibility to trust in the potential of new generations to shape and bring about a better future (Freire, 1998; Montessori, 2002/1912). By transforming educational spaces and by equipping teachers and learners of all ages with the skills to critically engage with complex issues and diverse perspectives, we can nurture a humanizing pedagogy that promotes meaningful change.

While this book represents the first comprehensive articulation of TEP, its journey has only just begun. Future developments will further refine its pedagogical strategies and broaden its applications. TEP's true potential lies in its ability to transcend educational boundaries as well as its adaptability across varied learning contexts. As such, the future impact of TEP will depend on the engagement of scholars, educators, community leaders, activists, and policymakers who are willing to adapt and evolve it in response to their unique contexts. Future efforts should focus on fully embracing holistic, transformative, and emancipatory practices rooted in TEP and complementary perspectives (Cappiali, 2023). By transcending boundaries, encouraging collaboration across disciplines, and advocating for such a pedagogy, we can collectively reimagine education as a catalyst for social transformation.

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APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF THE METHODOLOGY

This appendix provides a detailed overview of the research that led to the development of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). While the main chapters focus on key results and a specific case study, this section outlines the broader research and development process that shaped TEP's methodology, highlighting the context of development, group composition, and evaluation strategies.

CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT AND GROUP COMPOSITION

TEP emerged from my efforts to introduce controversial and sensitive topics to diverse groups of students from around the world. Over 12 years of research and teaching on human rights and migration, TEP evolved through a combination of experimental teaching practices and structured approaches applied in both formal and non-formal educational settings (Cappiali & Tazi, 2021). Initially tested in full in two migration courses in Italy (2017–2018), TEP was further refined and implemented during international migration courses at Lund University, Sweden (2019–2021). The development process was supported by active involvement from several students, who contributed to refining pedagogical interventions at various stages.

These courses, conducted in English, featured small student cohorts (10–18 individuals) and represented a diverse mix in terms of academic background, race, gender, religion, and other identities. Approximately half of the students came from non-EU countries, creating a rich environment for exploring privilege, oppression, and social justice from a “Global North”/“Global South” perspective. Gender diversity was also prominent, with more than 50% of students identifying as female. Additionally, several students disclosed learning disabilities or non-hetero-conforming identities, further adding to the complexity of classroom dynamics. Although students’ political views spanned a wide spectrum, from left- to right-wing perspectives, they often shared privileged backgrounds in terms of social class and international mobility. A critical examination of these shared privileges proved essential for discussions on migration and social inequality.

STRUCTURE OF THE PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

The core of the TEP methodology integrates theory-driven pedagogical interventions with interdisciplinary insights from the social sciences. These interventions were designed to address three dimensions of learning: individual, relational, and socio-political.

Four core interventions were systematically applied in small student cohorts (14–18 participants) between 2019 and 2021 (see Fig. A1). Each intervention followed a sequence of building blocks, beginning with foundational concepts and gradually progressing to more complex issues. Students engaged in preparatory work, including readings and films, which were complemented by real-world case studies on diversity and migration. A hybrid format, combining in-person and digital learning, enhanced student participation through dilemma posing, dialogue, and collaborative activities.

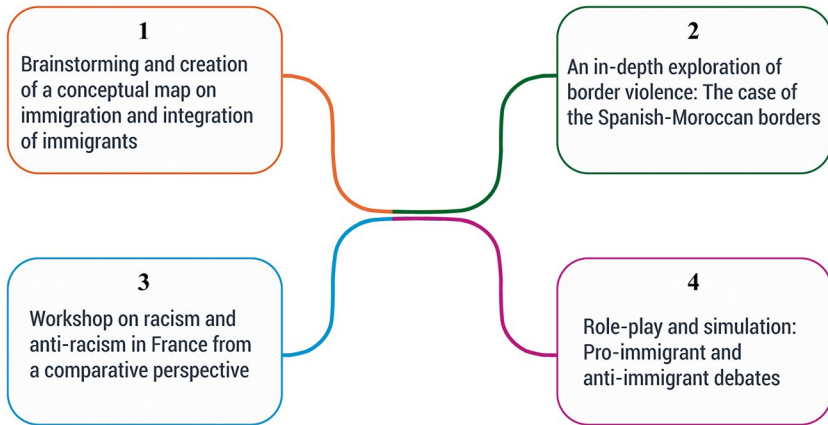


Fig. A1 Four pedagogical interventions for academic teaching

DATA COLLECTION, EVALUATION, AND TRIANGULATION

A triangulation approach was employed to evaluate TEP's effectiveness. This involved collecting and interpreting data through a mixed-methods approach, allowing for a holistic view of students' learning and transformative experiences.

Data collection strategies were varied and comprehensive, and included:

- **Prior learning assessment:** Pre-assessment surveys to evaluate students' prior knowledge and beliefs.
- **Self-reflective notes:** Documenting students' responses throughout the interventions.
- **Observation notes:** Capturing student interactions and learning processes.
- **Various assessment strategies:** For immediate feedback on learning progress.
- **Assessment portfolios:** Including tools and outputs produced by students.
- **Anonymous evaluations:** Providing insights into the perceived relevance and impact of the pedagogical interventions.
- **Follow-up surveys:** Conducted immediately and three weeks after the course to measure short- and medium-term effects.

- **Final exam with open questions:** Assessing the overall impact on understanding of the subject matter of the course.

Several students were also actively involved in refining the interventions, particularly after the academic courses conducted in 2019 and 2020, spanning three months with a group of six to eight volunteer students each year. Several follow-up meetings were organized to discuss some aspects of the activities. These meetings focused on discussing students' experiences and potential improvements to the interventions, especially in relation to the theoretical and practical aspects of my teaching approach. Restrictions on in-person meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic prevented the organization of follow-up meetings after the 2020 course. Some students consented to being interviewed to share their experiences. This involvement ensured that the pedagogical strategies were tailored to meet the specific needs of different learners and contexts the next year. In addition, six in-depth interviews and a focus group with a total of eight students were conducted after the course in 2021.

TESTING IN OTHER CONTEXTS

In 2023, two additional pilot tests were conducted with NGOs, journalists, educators, and community leaders in Morocco to explore the potential relevance of using intersectionality to promote human rights. These workshops involved several international participants, including migrants from Western and Central Africa. Minimal adjustments were made to adapt the pedagogical interventions used in universities to non-academic settings. The results showed high levels of engagement, deep understanding of the issues, as well as significant emotional resonance.

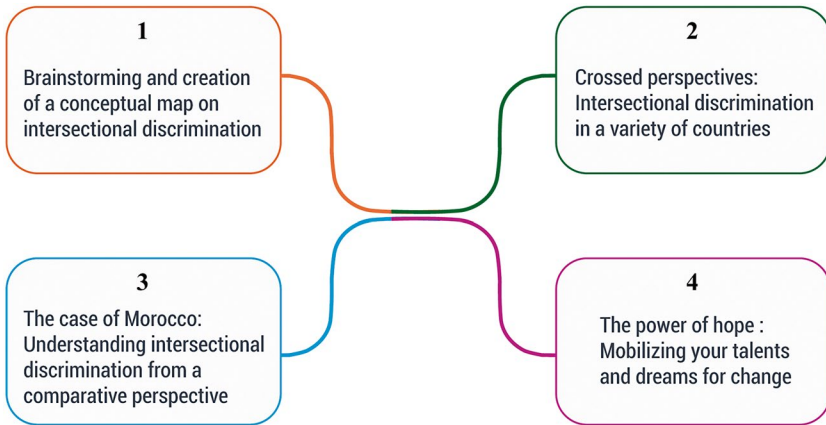


Fig. A2 Four adapted activities for a two-day workshop with NGOs (pilot tests)

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Cappiali, T. M., & Tazi M. (2021). Les défis et les promesses de l'intersectionnalité au Maroc: Une boîte à outils pour identifier, exposer et démanteler les discriminations multiples et croisées. Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. <https://ma.boell.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/HBS%20-%20VF%20Toolkit%20intersectionnalite%CC%81%20-%20Version%20FR%20-%20Sommaire%20cliquable.pdf>

APPENDIX B: CORE PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES OF TEP WITH PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This appendix provides a comprehensive guide to implementing the core philosophical principles of Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) in educational practice. It offers a roadmap for educators and readers who are new to the key concepts explored in this book, illustrating how an expansive philosophy of education leads to a rethinking of both pedagogy and practice.

The structure is organized around the three dimensions of learning introduced in Chap. 2—individual, relational, and socio-political. While these dimensions are interconnected and often overlap, each plays a distinct role in achieving TEP’s overarching educational goals.

INDIVIDUAL DIMENSION

Holistic and whole-person development

- Emphasizes that learning should encompass cognitive, practical, emotional, social, spiritual, and ethical dimensions. Deep, meaningful learning involves intellectual engagement, emotional resonance, and social interaction.

Learner-centered education

- Focuses on tailoring learning experiences to individual learners' interests, needs, and choices, fostering environments where curiosity is nurtured and potential is developed.
- Encourages an active, deep learning approach that emphasizes learner autonomy and engagement, adapting to diverse abilities, interests, and learning styles.

Self-directive learning

- Promotes a bottom-up approach, allowing learners to make informed choices about their curriculum and content, encouraging them to take ownership of their educational journey.

Self-actualization, empowerment, and agency

- Encourages learners to explore their passions, develop self-awareness, and achieve self-actualization, fostering critical thinking and autonomy.
- Empowers learners to shape their own learning environments, promoting democratic, participatory, and reflective practices that encourage learners to take responsibility for their growth.
- Supports learners in acting on new understandings and perspectives, promoting agency and personal responsibility in the learning process.

Intrinsic motivation

- Promotes intrinsic motivation, driven by personal satisfaction and a genuine love of learning rather than external rewards.

Active and experiential learning

- Emphasizes learning through direct engagement with real-world challenges, making education relevant and meaningful by bridging theory and practice.

Critical thinking and creativity

- Prepares learners for societal challenges by encouraging them to question, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information while fostering creativity in how they express and apply knowledge.

Open-ended and inquiry-based learning

- Promotes pluralism and diversity of opinion, encouraging learners to engage in inquiry that embraces multiple perspectives and solutions.
- Fosters an environment where problems are approached with complex, nuanced answers that reflect the diversity of learners' experiences and thinking.

Emotional and psychological well-being

- Recognizes and supports learners' emotional and psychological needs, ensuring that learning environments are safe, inclusive, and conducive to both intellectual and emotional growth.

Integration of learning into life

- Focuses on how learning extends beyond the classroom and into everyday life, encouraging personal growth and inspiring social action.

Moral and ethical development

- Encourages the cultivation of moral and ethical values, preparing individuals to be responsible, compassionate, and ethical citizens capable of contributing positively to society.

RELATIONAL DIMENSION

Knowledge co-construction and shared learning

- Teachers act as facilitators, guiding learners in co-creating environments conducive to inquiry, problem-solving, and knowledge construction.
- Promotes collaborative learning where knowledge is shared and co-constructed, ensuring that educational experiences are contextually grounded and responsive to learners' diverse realities and societal challenges.

Challenging power relations and promoting inclusivity

- Calls for a critical examination of power within educational settings, aiming to dismantle barriers to inclusion and equity.
- Promotes inclusivity by acknowledging and valuing diverse perspectives, fostering empathy, anti-discriminatory practices, and cross-cultural awareness.

Critical reflection, dialogue, and collective learning

- Encourages critical reflection on privilege, marginalization, and societal structures, with a commitment to social justice through praxis (Freire, 1972).
- Critical dialogue fosters an ongoing exchange between educators and learners, expanding perspectives and promoting deep engagement with societal issues, cultural injustices, and personal beliefs.

Democratic classrooms and ethical practices

- Advocates for democratic educational environments where learners have a voice in their learning experiences, fostering mutual respect, shared responsibility, and a connection between education and democratic principles.
- Ethical guidelines ensure the safety and inclusion of vulnerable groups, promoting ethical engagement throughout the learning process. Both teachers and learners are expected to actively practice ethical and inclusive behavior, with ethical reminders integrated into different stages of the learning process.

Culturally responsive pedagogy

- Adapts teaching methods and curricular materials to respect and incorporate learners' cultural backgrounds.
- Uses the diversity of teachers and learners' experiences to enrich classroom discussions, expanding perspectives and reflecting on inclusivity, especially when addressing polarizing topics that mirror broader societal conflicts.

Empathy, ethics of care, and supportive relationships

- Builds empathetic relationships between educators and learners, characterized by respect, trust, and mutual understanding, fostering vulnerability and openness necessary for transformative learning.
- Promotes an ethics of care, where education is viewed as a collective endeavor that strengthens relationships, emphasizes compassion and solidarity, and encourages collective action for societal well-being.

Connection to community and broader societal roles

- Extends school activities into the community, promoting interactions that help learners understand their societal roles and responsibilities.
- Community and relationality are key, emphasizing the interconnect- edness between the individual, the community, and the environ- ment, encouraging learners to take part in collective actions that benefit society and the planet.

SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSION

Critical awareness and social transformation

- Critical awareness involves analyzing and challenging hierarchical power structures and oppression, advocating for equitable relations within both education and society.
- Education for social transformation encourages contributions to individual and community development, promoting peace, equity, and social justice as key educational goals.

Interconnectedness, reciprocity, and relationality

- Interconnectedness highlights Indigenous philosophies that stress the interdependence of all elements of the world. Education culti- vates respect and responsibility for the environment, culture, and community.
- Reciprocity and respect encourage sustainable resource use and bal- ance in interactions with nature, teaching learners to give back to their community and environment.

Problem-posing and real-world engagement

- Problem-posing education encourages learners to collaboratively tackle real-world issues, enhancing the relevance of education and fostering critical reflection on assumptions and beliefs.
- Interdisciplinary learning promotes a comprehensive understanding of complex social issues by employing diverse methods and perspectives.

Challenging dominant narratives and eurocentrism

- Questioning historical narratives involves re-examining dominant perspectives to include voices of marginalized and (ex-)colonized groups.
- Integration of Indigenous and local knowledge systems into the curricula, challenging Western-centric perspectives and expanding what is considered valuable knowledge.

Social and ethical development for change

- Social and ethical development prepares learners to engage thoughtfully and responsibly in society, promoting social consciousness and ethical values.
- Empowerment for social change motivates learners to act against oppression and become proactive agents of change within their communities.

Critical examination of culture and society

- Critical thinking involves analyzing cultural norms, institutional structures, and the connection between personal beliefs and societal issues, encouraging the questioning and revising of prevailing norms.
- Recognition of the political nature of education highlights the importance of critically examining power structures and challenging the status quo, ensuring that education remains an active force for equity and justice.

Integrating theory and practice (Praxis)

- Praxis advocates for integrating theoretical insights into practical actions that lead to meaningful social change, applying learning to real-life scenarios that address societal problems.

Empowerment, resistance, and liberation

- Education as a site of empowerment fosters critical consciousness (conscientization) by enabling learners to recognize socio-political contexts and act for change. It empowers communities to reclaim their identities and resist oppression.
- Commitment to equity and justice focuses on dismantling oppressive systems and addressing inequalities related to race, class, gender, and sexuality.

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APPENDIX C: THE KEY ROLE OF THE TEACHER: REFLECTIVE PRACTICES AND INCLUSIVITY

This appendix highlights the critical role of teachers in supporting learners as they navigate controversies and sensitive topics in diverse settings. Teachers are vital in creating an inclusive, safe, and open learning environment that enhances the learning experience while protecting vulnerable learners and preventing harm. This approach ensures that learners can engage with sensitive topics while feeling respected and supported throughout their educational journey. While **Appendix D** specifically focuses on ethical aspects, the following integrates key ethical considerations and other important factors central to reflective and inclusive teaching practices.

Acting as a role model and facilitator

- Teachers must earn the trust of learners by modeling the behavior they expect, showing tolerance, respect for others' views, and practicing deep listening.

Embracing the ethics of care

- Ground teaching practices in the ethics of care, prioritizing empathy, compassion, and understanding in interactions with learners (hooks, 1994).

- Recognize the emotional and relational dimensions of education, creating a learning environment that supports the holistic development of all learners.
- Encourage a culture of mutual care and respect, where both teacher and learners are responsible for each other's well-being.

Exercising deep listening and ethical responsibility

- Be attentive to learners' emotional challenges, making oneself available during and after class for those needing support (hooks, 1994).
- Demonstrate integrity and commitment to supporting learners experiencing complex emotions, such as guilt, blame, or feelings of insecurity, throughout and after the learning experience (hooks, 1994).

Engaging in knowledge construction

- Teachers should engage in the construction of knowledge with learners, thinking together, and learning while teaching with humility (Freire, 1972, 1998).

Creating an inclusive and safe space

- Establish a sense of safety between teacher and learners, fostering empathy, promoting anti-discriminatory speech, and cultivating cross-cultural awareness.
- Ensure diverse perspectives are acknowledged and valued, and reflect on inclusiveness with learners, particularly during potential conflicts related to polarizing topics.

Practicing culturally responsive teaching

- Adapt teaching methods and curricular materials to respect and incorporate learners' cultural backgrounds, promoting inclusivity and a broader understanding of the world.

Committing to anti-discriminatory practices

- Uphold a commitment to supporting learners, particularly those who may have experienced discrimination and trauma, by prioritizing their well-being and comfort.
- While some learners—such as those who hold far-right views— may not express themselves openly in such an environment, the educator’s stance against discrimination ultimately benefits the entire class by fostering a respectful and inclusive space.

Recognizing and addressing power dynamics

- Acknowledge and challenge power dynamics in teacher-learner and learner-learner interactions. Proceed cautiously but progressively, becoming bolder as learners develop good practices and relevant knowledge.
- Avoid coercion, respecting learners’ readiness to share their experiences.

Building trust

- Guide learners in confidently addressing difficult issues by demonstrating ethical approaches.
- Ensure that vulnerable groups recognize the teacher’s dedication and legitimacy in transforming views on the topic.
- Demonstrate genuine care and commitment.

Valuing learners’ voices and experiences

- Incorporate learners’ perspectives into the educational process, fostering an inclusive environment where diverse voices contribute to collective learning and growth.
- Amplify the voices and experiences of learners, particularly those from marginalized groups.

Facilitating critical dialogue

- Engage proactively with learners during discussions, encouraging critical dialogue among them.
- Clarify emerging questions and address sensitive or unclear points, taking a position (Freire, 1998) without imposing any single view or engaging in indoctrination.

Providing theoretical insights

- Help learners connect content to knowledge-based perspectives, offering tailored theoretical and conceptual insights to make sense of the complexity of the topic and questions emerging during the activity.
- Introduce alternative perspectives, including community viewpoints.

Supporting deeper learning

- Assist learners in gaining new knowledge and deep understanding of the topic, moving discussions beyond opinions and ideological standpoints using sociological concepts and theories.
- Cultivate meaningful conversations informed by research and scientific knowledge.

Promoting personal transformation

- Encourage learners to challenge previously held views and develop more open and informed perspectives, fostering a potential transformative shift in their frames of reference.

Encouraging conscientization

- Promote learners' awareness of social injustices and encourage critical consciousness.

Nurturing hope

- Inspire hope and belief in the possibility of change through personal transformation and collective action.

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APPENDIX D: ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Description:

Addressing controversial and sensitive topics in TEP pedagogical interventions presents several ethical considerations, which are closely connected to the methodological questions of the pedagogical approaches used. These guidelines combine insights from literature in Critical Pedagogy, Human Rights Education (HRE), and Peace Education, with observations from implementing TEP, including feedback from learners. These guidelines are essential for enhancing the learning experience, learner well-being, and the TEP goals. They provide a roadmap for implementing pedagogical interventions rooted in TEP and related fields, promoting inclusive and just learning environments.

Role modeling

- Teachers and facilitators should model inclusive language and behavior, and clearly position themselves against discrimination while acknowledging their own positionality (Brookfield & Hess, 2021; Freire, 1998; hooks, 1994).

Accountability and transparency

- Ensure accountability in why and how topics are taught, including transparency about information sources, chosen methodologies, and their potential limitations.

Safe learning environment and interactions

- Create a safe space where teachers and learners feel comfortable sharing experiences and opinions without fear of judgment or negative repercussions.
- Establish a trustful environment, essential for open and honest dialogue between educators and learners (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1972).

Cultural sensitivity and respect

- Prioritize respect, inclusivity, and critical engagement in the process (hooks, 1994).
- Ensure interventions are culturally sensitive and respectful to diverse backgrounds.
- Understand and acknowledge the historical and social contexts of different groups, avoiding cultural impositions, including Eurocentrism and cultural imperialism (hooks, 1994; Ellsworth, 1989; Smith, 2012).

Avoiding stigmatization

- Approach sensitive topics in a way that does not reinforce stereotypes or prejudices (Brookfield, 2019).

Accuracy and comprehensiveness

- Ensure content is accurate, unbiased, and comprehensive, acknowledging the complexities and nuances of the discussed topics.

Inclusivity vs. tokenism

- Genuine inclusivity involves meaningful engagement and representation of diverse voices, avoiding superficial tokenism (hooks, 1994; Cappiali, 2023; Sleeter & Grant, 2007).

Representation in pedagogical materials

- Content should accurately represent diverse perspectives and experiences to avoid perpetuating biases and inequalities.

Thinking independently vs. indoctrination

- Encourage critical thinking and understanding of various perspectives rather than indoctrinating learners with a particular viewpoint.
- Aim to empower learners to think independently.
- Find a balance between guiding learners and allowing them to form their own informed opinions.

Learner consent and autonomy

- Respect the autonomy and consent of learners, especially when handling sensitive topics. Provide ways for learners to opt out of certain content if it is triggering.

Emotional and psychological impact

- Pay attention to the emotional and psychological impact of educational interventions on learners.
- Mobilizing feelings and emotions requires careful consideration to avoid interfering with learners' lives or manipulating them (hooks, 1994; Boler, 1999; Zembylas, 2015; Boler & Zembylas, 2003).

Empowerment vs. victimhood

- Focus on resilience, resistance, and the agency of marginalized groups rather than solely portraying them as victims (hooks, 1994; Brookfield, 2019; Zembylas, 2015; Cappiali, 2023).

Balancing universalism and relativism

- Balance universal principles with respect for cultural relativism and varied learner perspectives.

Navigating trauma ethically

- Handle trauma narratives respectfully, avoiding sensationalism or voyeurism. Reflect on how trauma narratives are shared and engaged with (Zembylas, 2015, 2024).

Ethical reflexivity

- Continuously reflect on and adjust ethical positions and practices (Zembylas, 2015, 2024).

Impact on vulnerable groups

- Reflect on the impact of interventions on vulnerable groups, prioritizing their protection and avoiding forcing them into “coming out” situations (Cappiali, 2023).

Critical engagement with emotions

- Examine how emotions are tied to power dynamics, social structures, and historical contexts.
- Recognize the role of political emotions and their role in perpetuating or challenging inequalities (Zembylas, 2015).

Promoting justice, peace, and reconciliation

- Advocate for social justice and reconciliation by challenging historical injustices and inequalities through education.
- Encourage ethical actions that contribute to healing and building equitable societies (Zembylas, 2015; Bekerman & Zembylas, 2012).

Seeking learners’ feedback

- Gather feedback during and after the pedagogical interventions to refine the approach, ensuring that the activities are empowering, contribute to a better understanding of critical issues, and help identify any unintended negative effects (Ellsworth, 1989).

Long-term impact and sustainability

- Consider the long-term impact of interventions. Make sure that they are sustainable and lead to real changes in attitudes and behaviors with regard to sensitive topics addressed (hooks, 1994).

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APPENDIX E: USING TRIGGER WARNINGS FOR SENSITIVE TOPICS

Definition:

A trigger warning is an advance notice provided by educators to alert learners that upcoming course material may contain content that could evoke strong emotional responses or distress due to past traumatic experiences. The goal is to allow learners to prepare themselves emotionally or opt out if necessary. Trigger warnings are a powerful tool in education, particularly in relation to introducing sensitive topics that affect learners' lives. They help to create a supportive learning environment, prepare learners emotionally, educate those with less exposure to these issues, and open opportunities for further discussion and deeper understanding.

Application

- Used when introducing sensitive topics such as inequalities, racism, violence, sexual assault, discrimination, and other human rights violations.
- Crucial in contexts where learners may have varied personal experiences with the topics discussed.
- Essential for creating a compassionate learning environment that acknowledges the diverse experiences of learners.

Purpose and benefits

- Creates a supportive and inclusive learning environment where all learners feel safe and respected.
- Allows learners who may have experienced trauma to prepare mentally and emotionally.
- Fosters empathy and understanding in learners who have not experienced such trauma.
- Emphasizes the seriousness and importance of the topic, encouraging respectful and thoughtful engagement.
- Serves as a catalyst for meaningful conversations and critical thinking about the learning material.
- Supports learners' mental well-being by acknowledging and respecting their personal experiences.

Ethical considerations for implementation

- Ensure that learners' mental well-being is safeguarded while educational goals are met by thoughtfully introducing challenging content.
- Allow learners to make informed decisions about their engagement with potentially distressing material, respecting their autonomy and individual needs.
- Offer information about mental health resources and support services to assist learners in managing their emotional responses.

Rationale for discussing difficult topics

- Emphasize the importance of engaging with sensitive topics despite the discomfort that may be caused. These discussions hold immense educational value, as they are crucial for developing critical thinking, empathy, social awareness, and driving social change.

Example in practice

- **Verbal warning:** "Before we watch today's video, I want to let you know that it contains depictions of situations that may be distressing. If you find this content upsetting, please feel free to step out or take care of yourself in any way you need."
- **Syllabus statement:** "This course includes discussions on sensitive topics such as racism, gender violence, and discrimination. Trigger warnings will be provided before such content is covered. Please reach out if you have any concerns or need support."

APPENDIX F: LEARNING CIRCLES TO PROMOTE CRITICAL DIALOGUE AND RELATIONAL LEARNING

Definition:

Learning circles emphasize collaborative learning and democratic participation. They are organized in small, interactive groups that engage in focused discussions and critical dialogues on specific topics. The primary goal is to create an egalitarian learning environment where every participant's voice is heard and valued. Inspired by John Dewey's and Paulo Freire's pedagogical principles and practices, learning circles promote critical dialogue, mutual respect, and the sharing of knowledge and experiences among learners. By integrating learning circles into educational practices, educators foster a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that embodies a vision of education as a means of achieving freedom and empowerment.

It is important to note that the TEP learning circles should be embedded in the practical and ethical guidelines provided in **Appendices B, C, and D**.

APPLICATION WHEN TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL AND SENSITIVE TOPICS THROUGH TEP

Learning circles:

- Address real-world issues, enhancing the relevance and applicability of learning.

- Serve as effective tools for discussing controversial and sensitive topics, encouraging relational ways of knowing.
- Support a variety of skills, including active, holistic engagement, critical thinking, and personal growth among learners.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Shared knowledge construction

- Knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue and interaction.
- Learners engage holistically and learn from each other's perspectives.

Democratic participation

- Every learner has an equal opportunity to contribute, speak, and be heard.
- The circle structure seeks to minimize hierarchical dynamics, promoting a sense of community and mutual respect.

Collaborative learning

- Learners work together to discuss and explore sensitive topics, fostering peer-to-peer learning and collective knowledge construction.

Critical dialogue

- Emphasizes open, honest, respectful, and reflective discussions.
- Learners analyze and reflect on their own and others' perspectives, with the help of selected material for discussion.

Mutual respect and trust

- Learners should feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.
- Empathy and deep listening among learners should be emphasized.

Problem-posing education

- Learners identify and discuss real-life problems relevant to their experiences.
- Learners develop solutions collaboratively.

Reflective practice

- Learners are encouraged to reflect on their learning experiences and the implications of their discussions, encouraging deeper understanding and personal growth.
- Reflection helps in internalizing the learning and applying it to personal and socio-political contexts.

STEPS TO IMPLEMENT LEARNING CIRCLES IN DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

Forming small groups

- Organize learners into small, diverse groups to ensure a range of perspectives.

Establishing ground rules

- Establish ground rules and ethical guidelines for respectful dialogue and active listening to ensure inclusivity.
- These rules could be co-constructed based on learners' needs and perspectives and should aim to diminish power dynamics during interactions.

Facilitating dialogue

- Pose open-ended questions to stimulate discussion.
- Encourage learners to share their experiences and reflections.

Providing theoretical insights

- Introduce relevant theories and concepts to enrich the discussion.

Encouraging critical reflection

- Allocate time for learners to reflect on the discussion and their learning.

Sharing outcomes with the larger group

- Groups share their insights and solutions with the larger class, fostering collective learning.
- The teacher plays a crucial role in prompting deeper questions, providing theoretical insights, and helping to connect the dots.

APPENDIX G: WORKSHOP ON RACISM AND ANTI-RACISM: DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS AND PREPARATORY MATERIALS

Note to readers: This appendix is anti-racism to allow readers to replicate and/or adapt the workshop in their own courses and activities on racism and related topics, clearly demonstrating how meaningful content is combined with interconnected activities. These activities are rooted in Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). The theoretical and practical insights showing how the workshop was created and implemented can be found in Chap. 4.

The presentation provides students with an outline of what to expect and the necessary preparation for each step of the workshop. These instructions are adaptable for in-person, hybrid, or online courses.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Please follow the instructions carefully, as they will guide you step-by-step through the preparation and activities for this workshop. You are required to complete preparatory work, which includes reading selected opinion articles, watching videos, and answering questions in writing.

OVERVIEW OF KEY STEPS AND TIMETABLE:

STEP 1: Individual Pre-Workshop Preparation (3–4 hours)

- Read the three opinion articles and watch the visual material (including the documentary *Black France*).
- Respond to the questions provided below in writing.

STEP 2: Learning Circles (2–3 hours)

- Discuss your reflections in small groups (4–5 students), using the same questions provided in Step 1.
- Write down the answers discussed and elaborate on the reasoning behind your group's conclusions.
- Reflect on whether your perspectives shifted after discussing the topics with others compared to your individual responses.
- End your discussion by noting any questions/comments/doubts you would like to share with the teacher and the class during Step 3.

STEP 3: Full-Class and Teacher-Facilitated Discussion (2–3 hours)

- Participate in a full-class discussion facilitated by the teacher.
- Each group will present its reflections from Steps 1 and 2 and link them to relevant concepts and theories from the course.
- The teacher will provide theoretical insights (e.g., key selected concepts) to help interpret the material.
- The teacher will engage with the students to foster deep understanding and mutual learning.

STEP 4: Individual Reflective Paper

- Submit a 3–4 page individual paper showcasing your engagement with the material, participation, and critical reflections on the workshop topics.
- Choose any topic that resonates with you, and feel free to explore the theoretical perspectives that you find most meaningful for your reflection.
- The paper will not be graded but will receive detailed feedback to support your learning process.

STEP 5: Workshop Follow-Up in the Large Group (Optional)

- A follow-up session for further group reflection will be held a week after the workshop.
- The teacher and students will revisit key themes, share insights from reflective papers, and discuss any evolved understanding.
- This follow-up will consolidate learning and provide closure.
- **Note to readers: Step 5 is optional.**

PREPARATORY WORK (STEP 1)

Written and Visual Material for Workshop Preparation

- Read the opinion articles and watch the visual material provided below.
- Answer the corresponding questions in writing and be ready to discuss your reflections with your peers during the workshop.

Tasks:

- Work individually.
- Read and watch the material in the order presented. Take notes as you go, focusing on sociological concepts used by interviewees and your observations.
- Answer the questions provided below, referring also to the mandatory reading (Chapter 13, in de Haas et al., 2020) for comparison.

Questions Referring to Short Videos (from 1 to 3):

1. Do you find the three opinion articles convincing? Why or why not? Explain your reasoning.
2. What are your general thoughts/reactions to the videos and material? How do you feel about what you have seen? What commonalities and differences do the actors in the videos share? Focus on the content of the messages.
3. Identify and discuss key concepts used in the visual material relevant to class topics. Who uses these concepts, in what context, and how are they defined?

4. Are you aware of contemporary political developments related to identity politics as explored in the material? What are your thoughts?
5. What is the connection between racism and football in Europe? Why is football a key site where racism is visible in society?

Focus on Two Videos by French Rapper Médine (from 4 to 5):

1. What is your reaction to the videos? Analyze both the text and the images/symbols used. What messages is the rapper conveying?
2. Who are the targets of his critique?
3. Is the message aggressive? How might this video be received in France? Compare this to reactions in your own country or the country where you live.
4. What are the rapper's goals? Do you think his approach will help him achieve them? Why or why not?

Note: For Video 5, focus on the images and symbols first, and then on the lyrics. Find the English translation of the lyrics and research any references (events, authors) mentioned in the song.

Questions on the Documentary *Black France*:

1. What are some of the main topics addressed in *Black France*? What stood out to you, and why?
2. How does the documentary relate to the themes in Médine's song (Video 5)? Consider specific lyrics or themes that resonate with the historical narratives presented.
3. Identify similarities and differences between the historical developments introduced in the documentary and more recent events. For example, how do the financial crises of 1973 and 2008 compare to the potential effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on marginalized communities?
4. Is France a unique case? Compare it with other contexts (e.g., European countries and your own country of origin) in terms of race relations, immigration policies, or historical treatment of Black communities.

Questions on the Entire Material Covered for the Workshop:

1. How are the topics addressed in the material and focusing on France, Sweden, Austria, and Germany related to the other material covered in the course?

Reflect on the connections between these countries' policies, social dynamics, and historical contexts. How do the topics addressed expand or challenge your understanding of broader themes discussed in the course?

2. What are the claims of far-right organizations in countries like Austria and Germany, and how do they differ from the claims made by groups affected by racism?

Analyze the perspectives and arguments put forth by far-right organizations. Consider how their rhetoric contrasts with the narratives and lived experiences of affected groups depicted in the video on football, Médine's song, and the documentary *Black France*.

WRITTEN AND VISUAL MATERIAL

Mandatory Reading:

- Chapter 13 “New Ethnic Minorities and Society” from *The Age of Migration* by de Haas et al. (2020).

Opinion Articles:

- Rokhaya Diallo (2018). “On football, identity and ‘Frenchness’: Are some members of the French national team only French when they win?” Aljazeera, Aug 2, 2018. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/8/2/on-football-identity-and-frenchness>
- Rokhaya Diallo (2019). “French whiteness is in crisis: Why did Lilian Thuram’s analysis about white supremacy cause controversy in France?” Aljazeera, Oct 10, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2019/10/10/french-whiteness-is-in-crisis>
- Michael McEachrane (2014). “Seeing Sweden’s race problem for what it is: Ultrationalism and racism are not just problems of Sweden’s political fringe.” Aljazeera, Dec 15, 2014. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/12/15/seeing-swedens-race-problem-for-what-it-is>

Videos on Racism and Anti-Racism in Europe:

- **Video 1:** Racism against immigrant football players in Europe. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRuMU6fAOw>
- **Video 2:** The European hipsters who are appealing to the far right (from the beginning to 8 minutes). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5eq-4xEAKk>
- **Video 3:** The European hipsters who are appealing to the far right (from the beginning to 11 minutes). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbU54wZsabs>
- **Video 4:** French Rapper Médine on Paris After the Attacks. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iF-nhyBt76w&t=9s>
- **Video 5:** Médine - Speaker Corner (Official Video). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_FCAOM8GG8&list=OLAK5uy_kQeCGd_kh9HsV7nWhLibTfEdV0D4T7f5Ds&index=12

Documentary:

- ***Black France:***

Episode 1 - Conflicting Identities (from the beginning to 27:30 minutes) <https://vimeo.com/168270987>

Episode 3 - The Immigration Problem (the entire video; about 47 minutes) <https://vimeo.com/168280078>

REFERENCE

- de Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World* (6th ed.). Guilford Press.

APPENDIX H: QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDENTS FEEDBACK ON THE TEP APPROACH

Note to the reader:

This appendix presents a questionnaire aiming to gather feedback from students who participate in my courses on migration, focusing on their experiences with the four key pedagogical interventions, as indicated in **Appendix A**. For students, I referred to these interventions as *activities* to make them more accessible and relatable. The pedagogical intervention focusing on racism, which is highlighted in this book as the main case study, is the third intervention on this list. These interventions were designed to explore controversial and sensitive topics using Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP). While some student responses are included in Chap. 5, this appendix provides a more detailed overview of the types of questions used to gather their feedback. Readers may also use this appendix as a resource when designing their own student feedback questions.

Instructions for Students:

General description:

- This survey includes closed and open questions.
- It is anonymous and aims to gather your feedback on the four activities we did in class.

- You will have a chance to give your opinion and reflect on your experience for each activity and the general approach used to develop and implement the activities.

The four activities are:

Activity 1: Brainstorming and creation of a conceptual map on immigration and integration of immigrants

Activity 2: An In-depth exploration of border violence: The case of the Spanish-Moroccan borders

Activity 3: Workshop on racism and anti-racism in France from a comparative perspective

Activity 4: Role-play and simulation: Pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant debates

Questions:

1.1 How much did you like Activity 1? (Conceptual map)

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Neutral
4. I liked it
5. I liked it very much

1.2 What were the most significant aspects of Activity 1 that you experienced? (Write sentences or words)

2.1 How much did you like Activity 2? (In-depth analysis of border violence)

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Neutral
4. I liked it
5. I liked it very much

2.2 What were the most significant aspects of Activity 2 that you experienced? (Write sentences or words)

3.1 How much did you like Activity 3? (Workshop on racism and anti-racism)

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Neutral
4. I liked it
5. I liked it very much

- 3.2 What were the most significant aspects of Activity 3 that you experienced? (Write sentences or words)
- 4.1 How much did you like Activity 4? (Simulation of pro-immigrant and anti-immigrant debates)
1. Not at all
 2. A little
 3. Neutral
 4. I liked it
 5. I liked it very much
- 4.2 What were the most significant aspects of Activity 4 that you experienced? (Write sentences or words)
5. Can you provide your general impression of the pedagogical approach used across the four activities? (Write sentences or words)
6. Do you think any of the activities could be improved? If so, how? (Write sentences or words)
7. What are the most remarkable positive and/or negative aspects of these pedagogical tools? (For example, engaging, fun, not challenging enough vs. boring, too challenging, not engaging) (Write sentences or words)
8. Did you find any of the activities emotionally challenging? If so, how? (Write sentences or words)
9. What were the most significant positive and negative emotions triggered by the four activities? (List at least three or four)
10. Did you experience any change in your perceptions of the facts and phenomena presented?
1. Yes
 2. No
11. Can you give one to three examples of a shift in perspective from your previous beliefs? (Write sentences or words)
12. Do you feel that this change was primarily at the level of your perception, or did it lead to a more profound rethinking or crisis of your beliefs? (Write sentences or words)
13. How would you describe the experience of changing perspectives, if any?
1. Very negative
 2. Negative
 3. Neutral
 4. Positive
 5. Very positive
14. How did you cope with any challenges you faced during the activities, if any? (Write sentences or words)

GLOSSARY

INTRODUCTION

This glossary provides clear definitions and explanations of essential concepts and theories discussed in this book. It is intended to serve as a valuable resource for researchers, educators, and practitioners, particularly those who may be less familiar with the philosophies and theories explored within these pages.

Below is a list of the terms included in the glossary:

1. Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP)
2. Conscientization
3. Critical dialogue
4. Critical Pedagogy
5. Decolonial approaches
6. Democratic education
7. Disorienting dilemma
8. Educational paradigm
9. Ethics of care
10. Ethics of discomfort
11. Humanistic pedagogy
12. Humanization
13. Humanizing pedagogy
14. Learner-centered paradigm

15. Learning circles
16. Meaningful content
17. Naming of one's oppression
18. Pedagogical intervention
19. Pedagogy of discomfort
20. Pedagogy of hope
21. Pedagogy of love
22. Political emotions
23. Praxis
24. Prepared environment
25. Prism metaphor
26. Scientific pedagogy
27. Teacher-centered paradigm

1. **Transformative-Emancipatory Pedagogy (TEP) (Teresa Capiali):** A cohesive educational framework that integrates the strengths of both transformative and emancipatory approaches. TEP promotes seven core educational goals: holistic development, inclusion, deep and experiential learning, interconnectedness, transformation, and emancipation. Originally developed to address sensitive and contentious topics in diverse classroom settings, TEP's relevance extends far beyond this initial context. It employs theory-driven pedagogical interventions that engage learners holistically and address three core dimensions of learning: individual, relational, and socio-political.
2. **Conscientization (Paulo Freire):** This concept refers to the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through both reflection and action. It involves recognizing and understanding the socio-political contradictions and injustices in one's environment and taking steps to challenge and transform oppressive structures and norms. Conscientization is a core principle in educational models aimed at fostering empowerment and social change.
3. **Critical dialogue (Paulo Freire):** This term refers to an educational strategy that involves learners engaging in an open, reflective, and critical exchange of ideas. Critical dialogue is a key element in Critical Pedagogy, emphasizing mutual respect, active listening, and the co-construction of knowledge. The goal of critical dialogue is to uncover and challenge underlying power structures and assumptions that perpetuate oppression. Through this process,

individuals collaboratively explore and question their experiences and the world around them, cultivating critical thinking and consciousness. Critical dialogue aims to promote relational learning by enabling participants to better understand complex realities, uncover myths, and reshape those realities for individual, collective, and societal liberation.

4. **Critical Pedagogy (Paulo Freire):** Also known as Pedagogy of liberation, Critical Pedagogy is a philosophy of education and a methodology developed by Paulo Freire that centers on the emancipation of oppressed individuals and communities through education. It challenges the traditional “banking” model of education, which treats learners as passive recipients of knowledge, and instead advocates for a participatory, dialogical approach to teaching and learning. Critical Pedagogy encourages learners to examine their social reality, identify oppressive structures and ideologies, and work collectively to transform them.
5. **Decolonial approaches:** Decolonial approaches in education challenge the Eurocentric and colonial foundations that have historically shaped educational systems. These approaches advocate for the inclusion and validation of Indigenous knowledge systems and perspectives. By deconstructing colonial legacies and promoting a more inclusive and equitable methodology, decolonial education seeks to address power imbalances and support educational practices that honor and integrate diverse cultural and epistemological contributions.
6. **Democratic education (John Dewey):** This core principle of Dewey’s educational philosophy underscores the role of education in promoting democratic values and practices. Educational spaces, including classrooms, are seen as communities where learners actively participate in decision-making processes that affect their learning and community. This approach promotes collaboration, mutual respect, and shared responsibility among learners and teachers. In a democratic classroom, learners engage in open dialogue, critical thinking, and problem-solving activities that reflect real-life democratic principles. The goal is to create a learning space where learners feel valued, empowered, and prepared to contribute to a democratic society, nurturing social responsibility, ethical understanding, and civic engagement.

7. **Disorienting dilemma (Jack Mezirow):** This concept refers to a critical incident or experience that challenges an individual's existing beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives. In an educational context, such dilemmas can be intentionally introduced through challenging coursework, discussions, or real-life problem-solving activities. These experiences often trigger a process of profound reflection and self-examination, leading to a re-evaluation of previously held views. Through this transformative process, learners can develop new, more inclusive, and integrative ways of understanding themselves and the world around them. By incorporating disorienting dilemmas into the curriculum, educators can promote deep learning and personal growth, encouraging learners to become more critical, reflective, and adaptive thinkers.
8. **Educational paradigm:** An educational paradigm is a comprehensive framework that influences how teaching and learning are structured and understood. It includes underlying theories about how knowledge is acquired, the role of the teacher and learner, and the goals of education. Paradigms reflect the prevailing educational philosophies and methodologies, shaping curriculum design, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. Changes in paradigms signify shifts in educational priorities and approaches, adapting to new insights and societal needs.
9. **Ethics of care (bell hooks):** Rooted in principles of compassion and interconnectedness, the ethics of care prioritizes the emotional and spiritual well-being of both learners and educators, particularly those who have experienced suffering and trauma. It advocates for the creation of safe, inclusive spaces where emotional support, empathetic relationships, and ethical development are central. The ethics of care promotes collaborative learning experiences that foster a sense of community and shared responsibility, while encouraging educators to critically examine their own biases and privileges. By integrating moral values into the curriculum and addressing the impact of trauma, the ethics of care seeks to empower both learners and teachers to heal, grow, and thrive within a compassionate and equitable educational system.
10. **Ethics of discomfort (Michalinos Zembylas):** This concept deals with the ethical dilemmas involved in exposing learners to challenging and potentially distressing content. Educators must balance the need to provoke critical thought and awareness with the

responsibility to support learners' emotional well-being. The ethics of discomfort requires sensitivity to the diverse experiences and vulnerabilities of learners, ensuring that the learning environment remains supportive while promoting growth. Ethical dilemmas may arise in deciding how much discomfort is appropriate and how to handle learners' emotional responses. Educators must be prepared to facilitate discussions on difficult topics with care, providing necessary support and resources. This approach helps learners to navigate complex emotional and ethical landscapes, fostering a commitment to social justice and ethical action.

11. **Humanistic pedagogy (Maria Montessori and John Dewey):** Humanistic pedagogy is an educational philosophy that emphasizes the development of the whole person, focusing on nurturing students' intellectual, emotional, and social capacities. Rooted in the philosophies of thinkers like Montessori and Dewey, this pedagogy prioritizes the inherent dignity and potential of each individual. It promotes learner-centered education, where the needs, interests, and experiences of students are central to the learning process. Humanistic pedagogy encourages self-directed learning, critical thinking, and creativity in an environment where students are motivated to learn and grow as autonomous, empathetic individuals. The goal is to create educational experiences that support the holistic development of students, preparing them to contribute meaningfully to society while achieving personal fulfillment.
12. **Humanization (Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon):** Humanization is the process of becoming more fully human through the pursuit of social justice, equality, and the development of one's potential. Freire describes humanization as the process of creating learning environments that recognize the inherent dignity and worth of every person, fostering conditions that allow all individuals to flourish. This involves developing critical consciousness, practicing empathy, and transforming oppressive structures. Fanon adds to this by emphasizing that humanization is a key aspect of the decolonization process. For Fanon, humanization involves the struggle for liberation from colonial oppression and the creation of new social orders that allow formerly colonized people to reclaim their identity and agency. This perspective highlights the need for a radical restructuring of societies to address the deep-seated impacts of colonialism and systemic racism.

13. **Humanizing pedagogy (Paulo Freire and bell hooks):** Humanizing pedagogy is an educational philosophy inspired by Freire that seeks to address and rectify historical and ongoing oppressions by centering marginalized voices and experiences. This pedagogy aims to promote social justice through educational practices that reflect the needs and knowledge of historically excluded groups. In addition to Freire's focus on empowering individuals through critical engagement and the transformation of oppressive structures, humanizing pedagogy also draws from decolonial and Indigenous perspectives. Decolonial approaches endeavor to recognize and validate Indigenous knowledge systems and practices, challenging the dominance of Western epistemologies. Indigenous educational practices often focus on holistic, community-based approaches that honor cultural heritage and collective well-being. Together, these perspectives advocate for an educational paradigm that respects and uplifts diverse viewpoints, working toward a more inclusive and equitable society for all.
14. **Learner-centered paradigm:** The learner-centered paradigm shifts the focus from the teacher to the learner, prioritizing the needs, interests, and learning styles of students. Here, learners are active participants in their education, engaging in inquiry, problem-solving, and collaboration. The teacher acts as a facilitator or guide, supporting students as they construct their own understanding and knowledge. This approach emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, and the application of knowledge in real-world contexts. The learner-centered paradigm is flexible and adaptive, aiming to foster autonomy, motivation, and lifelong learning skills in learners.
15. **Learning circles (Inspired by John Dewey and Paulo Freire):** This concept, inspired by the pedagogical principles of Dewey and Freire, emphasizes collaborative learning and democratic participation. Learning circles are small, collaborative groups of learners who engage in discussion and critical dialogue about specific topics. They aim to create an egalitarian learning environment where all learners' voices are valued and respected. In the context of Freire's and Dewey's work, learning circles foster critical dialogue, mutual respect, and shared knowledge among learners. By incorporating learning circles into educational practices, educators can create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that aligns with Freire's vision of education as a practice of freedom and

empowerment, and Dewey's emphasis on experiential learning and democracy in education.

16. **Meaningful content (Teresa Cappiali):** This is a core element of TEP's pedagogical interventions that integrates theories and practices of learning with social science research. This content is designed to engage learners across three dimensions: individual, relational, and socio-political. By carefully selecting and adapting content that aligns with TEP's philosophical and theoretical principles, educators can transcend individual-centered biases, encourage a holistic learning experience and highlight the interconnected nature of learning. This approach ensures that educational material is relevant, impactful, and conducive to deeper learning and critical engagement with individual, relational, and socio-political realities. When integrated within the TEP prepared environment, meaningful content enhances the educational experience by providing learners with the tools and context necessary to explore and understand complex issues. This synergy between environment and content creates a powerful strategy for transformative education, promoting both personal growth and social change, and allowing for expansion to other key issues related to TEP's educational goals.
17. **Naming of one's oppression (Paulo Freire):** This concept involves the process of individuals recognizing, articulating, and understanding the specific ways in which they are oppressed. According to Freire, this act of naming is the first step toward liberation, as it empowers learners to identify and analyze the root causes of their suffering and the structures that maintain it. By facilitating this process in the classroom, educators can help learners develop critical consciousness and a deeper understanding of social injustice. Through naming their oppression, learners can begin to mobilize and take collective action to challenge and transform oppressive conditions, ultimately moving toward a more equitable society.
18. **Pedagogical intervention (Teresa Cappiali):** Within TEP, this term refers to a deliberate and purposefully designed educational methodology aimed at modifying or influencing the teaching and learning process to achieve specific educational goals. It involves implementing targeted interventions that enhance student engagement, understanding, and achievement within an educational setting. TEP's pedagogical interventions are structured around four core elements: (1) a prepared environment, (2) meaningful con-

tent, (3) interconnected activities, and (4) ethical practices. These elements collectively emphasize empowerment through knowledge, enabling learners to gain deeper insights and develop critical thinking skills. The approach highlights the transformative power of education, aligning with TEP's overarching goal of promoting holistic development, inclusion, deep and experiential learning, interconnectedness, transformation, and emancipation.

19. **Pedagogy of discomfort (Michalinos Zembylas):** This concept involves creating educational experiences that challenge learners to confront uncomfortable emotions, trauma, and difficult truths about social injustices and power relations. By navigating discomfort and trauma, teachers and learners can create a learning environment that supports healing while engaging with complex social issues that affect their lives and society. This process helps teachers and learners develop empathy, critical awareness, and a commitment to ethical action. In the classroom, this approach seeks to push teachers and learners beyond their comfort zones to engage with the emotional and traumatic aspects of the material, ultimately promoting personal growth and a stronger dedication to social change.
20. **Pedagogy of hope (Paulo Freire):** This term reflects the belief in the transformative potential of education to instill hope and empower individuals to enact social change. Grounded in Freire's Critical Pedagogy, it acknowledges the challenges and injustices present in society but remains optimistic about the possibility of collective liberation through education. It emphasizes dialogue, critical reflection, and praxis (the integration of reflection and action) as means to cultivate hope, conscientization (critical consciousness), and a sense of agency among learners.
21. **Pedagogy of love (Paulo Freire):** Pedagogy of love is a concept within Freire's educational philosophy that emphasizes the importance of love, care, and empathy in the teaching and learning process. Freire argues that education should focus on the development of human relationships characterized by mutual respect, understanding, and compassion. Pedagogy of love encourages educators to cultivate a deep sense of empathy and solidarity with the learners, creating supportive learning environments where educators and learners feel valued, respected, and empowered. It recognizes the interconnectedness of individuals and the transformative potential of love in fostering critical consciousness and social change.

22. **Political emotions (Michalinos Zembylas):** Political emotions in education refer to the ways in which emotions are intertwined with political and social dimensions within educational settings. Zembylas examines how emotions such as anger, guilt, fear, shame, empathy, and compassion, play a crucial role in shaping educational experiences and practices. These emotions influence how individuals engage with issues of power, identity, justice, and resistance. By understanding political emotions, educators can better address the emotional and affective aspects of teaching and learning, fostering a more inclusive and socially aware educational environment. This understanding helps educators create spaces where learners feel empowered to express and navigate their emotions, ultimately contributing to a deeper engagement with social justice issues in the classroom and in society at large.
23. **Praxis (Paulo Freire):** This refers to the process by which theory and practice are intertwined and inform each other. It involves a reflective and active engagement in the world, where individuals examine their experiences, understand their socio-political context, and take action to transform their reality. Freire emphasizes praxis as a means of achieving critical consciousness, empowering individuals to challenge oppression and promote social justice through informed, reflective, and intentional action.
24. **Prepared environment (Teresa Cappiali):** A structured learning space designed to support the natural development of learners' abilities and interests, inspired by Montessori's educational philosophy and adapted to TEP. This environment emphasizes learner-centered design, interactive and collaborative activities, reflective practices, real-world relevance, and flexibility. Traditional lectures are replaced with dynamic, interconnected activities that foster critical thinking, self-reflection, and transformative learning. The TEP prepared environment aims to create a holistic and inclusive educational experience, empowering learners to engage with complex and sensitive topics while promoting both personal and collective growth, as well as social change. A crucial aspect of this environment is its integration with meaningful content, ensuring that learning experiences are relevant, impactful, and conducive to active, deep learning and critical engagement with complex societal issues.

25. **Prism metaphor (Teresa Cappiali):** A conceptual tool used in TEP to illustrate the diverse responses of learners to pedagogical interventions. Just as a prism refracts light into a spectrum of colors, TEP's interventions reveal a range of student reactions and learning outcomes, shaped by their individual backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. This metaphor highlights the adaptive and innovative qualities of TEP's methodology, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and responsiveness to diverse learner needs. By anticipating and embracing varied impacts on individuals and groups, the prism metaphor underscores TEP's commitment to fostering deep, meaningful learning experiences that are inclusive, context-sensitive, and adapted to the learners' diverse perspectives and needs.
26. **Scientific pedagogy (Teresa Cappiali):** Within TEP, this methodology translates broad philosophical and theoretical principles into practical, testable pedagogical interventions. Inspired by Montessori's approach but uniquely crafted for TEP, it is systematic yet flexible, adapting to various learners and contexts. This approach embraces both structured experimentation and the unexpected, fostering an environment where curiosity, creativity, internal motivation, and adaptability are key. By integrating these elements, scientific pedagogy aims to create a dynamic and responsive educational experience that promotes deep learning, personal growth, and both individual and social transformation.
27. **Teacher-centered paradigm:** This educational approach positions the teacher as the primary authority in the classroom, controlling most aspects of the learning process, including what is taught, how it is delivered, and how students are assessed. The focus is on the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, often relying on lectures, direct instruction, and standardized testing. In this paradigm, learners are typically viewed as passive recipients of information, with limited opportunities for input or interaction. The emphasis is on mastering content and adhering to a fixed curriculum, with success primarily measured by the ability to recall and reproduce information.

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