

**IN THE CHANCERY COURT FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
OF TENNESSEE  
AT FRANKLIN**

**PARENTS' CHOICE TENNESSEE;** )  
**PATRICIA J. LUCENTE and JAMES** )  
**LUCENTE,** )

*Plaintiffs,* )

Case No. 22cv-51642

-vs-

**JASON GOLDEN, in his official** )  
**capacity as SUPERINTENDENT OF** )  
**WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOLS;** )  
**DAVE ALLEN, in his official capacity as** )  
**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF** )  
**TEACHING ASSESSMENT; PENNY** )  
**SCHWINN, in her official capacity as** )  
**COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION;** )  
**and the WILLIAMSON COUNTY** )  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION;** )

*Defendants.* )

**AFFIDAVIT OF JAMES LINDSAY, Ph.D**

Comes now the Affiant, James Lindsay Ph.D, and being first duly sworn, does hereby depose and say as follows:

1. I am an adult citizen and resident of Blount County, Tennessee, and do make this affidavit based on my own personal knowledge.
2. I am a researcher and author with an area of expertise including Social Emotional Learning (SEL). I have personal experience studying the history and development of Marxist Theories, including those of education.

## **I. Introduction.**

3. Much of the theory and practice of education (pedagogy) employed today in American schools, including schools in Tennessee and, as you will see, Williamson County, is derived directly, with certain modifications from the work of a Brazilian “critical pedagogue” by the name of Paulo Freire.
4. While Freire isn’t exactly a household name in the United States, he is a household name and figure of educational legend in *all* American colleges of education. There, in fact, he is revered, and his work is considered virtually sacrosanct. It has also been incredibly influential.
5. Because of his incredible sway in North American colleges of education, Paulo Freire is recognized as the third most-cited scholarly author in all of the humanities and social sciences by authoritative metrics.
6. It exaggerates none at all to state that Paulo Freire is at the theoretical center of everything happening in colleges of education today, and a succinct way to phrase the consequences of this fact is that *our kids go to Paulo Freire’s schools*.
7. Many of the major “hot-button” developments in education today have roots that can be traced back in whole or in part to Paulo Freire.
8. These include, especially, the abysmal performance in achieving at-grade-level competency in most subjects in most classes in most schools, Culturally Relevant (and Responsive) Teaching, student-led project-based learning, misplaced curricular emphases, and even Social-Emotional Learning. Some of these, like the observed underperformance, are a byproduct of applying Freire’s pedagogy,

- which simply gets education wrong and misprioritizes the classroom and educational purpose.
9. Others, like Culturally Relevant Teaching, are a more-or-less direct repackaging of Freirean education into a more contemporary identity-political domain.
  10. Others draw upon or are direct consequences of Freire's pedagogy put into application, even including Social-Emotional Learning, which has a largely distinct pedagogical genealogy.
  11. Understanding what is happening in our schools today is therefore a matter of understanding Paulo Freire and his work.
  12. Paulo Freire was not merely an educator. He was a Marxist (or, more accurately, a neo-Marxist, though the distinctions are only interesting and important to academics and Marxists).
  13. In fact, the simplest summary of Paulo Freire's extensive body of work is that he *Marxified* education.
  14. This isn't to say that Freire injected Marxist ideas into education, though he did, and it is also not to say that Freire adapted education into a form of Marxist indoctrination, as we'd usually understand it.
  15. Freire changed the theory of education (pedagogy) itself into a Marxist theory of pedagogy. That is his legacy.
  16. His schools—which virtually all of our children in America attend, at least to some degree—therefore treat education and *what it means to be educated* as a Marxist would treat education and being educated.

17. This, in my opinion, is the chief reason American schools are failing so completely at teaching children to read, write, do mathematics, understand history and civics, and become scientifically literate, even at grade level, despite substantial public and other resources being dedicated to the task of educating them. (These basic facts about the failure rate of education, I trust, are sufficiently well-known to the relevant parties not to demand repeating here.)

## **II. Who is Paulo Freire?**

18. An extensive biography of Paulo Freire and a thorough documentation of the havoc he wreaked upon Brazilian education is also not necessary here, for his theory of education is the topic of concern.

19. Throughout his published works, most importantly his two most famous books, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *The Politics of Education* (1985), he reveals enough of his character through the names he repeatedly invokes: Karl Marx, G.W.F. Hegel, Vladimir Lenin, Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro, and Che Guevara standing out in particular. Few, if any, theorists of education (pedagogues) are ever named, referenced, or put into application.

20. Freire, instead, steps up upon a soapbox and declares a Marxist theory of education while speaking generously of these figures and others in the broader Communist movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

21. Freire's most famous book, by far, is his 1970 work, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This book is given pride of place in virtually every, if not literally every, education program in North America today. It is also the third most-cited

- work in all of the social sciences and humanities due to this pride of place in education colleges.
22. In it, he lays out the basic tenets of his philosophy of education, which is essentially Marxist and based upon a few simple concepts, which we will detail thoroughly in subsequent sections.
  23. Particularly, he challenges the prevailing notion of education, characterizing it as a “banking model” of education, which, he claims, treats students as though they are bank deposit boxes into which teachers place knowledge upon which the students can later capitalize upon, or not.
  24. In my opinion, despite its reach, status, and citation count, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is by no means Freire’s most influential work. That designation goes to his 1985 book, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation*, which resulted in his work, including the earlier *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, being brought into the American colleges of education after a favorable but short review in the *Harvard Education Review* in the year of its publication.
  25. Freire, the man, was first brought to the United States in the late 1960s and offered a research position by Harvard University’s college of education. He partially accepted, taking six months of the two-year appointment so that he could also accept an appointment in Geneva with the World Council of Churches. He occasionally visited the U.S. through the 1970s and was invited for a longer tenure on a scholarship by then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, though he declined that offer.

26. His influence on education in the U.S. began again in earnest on a trip to the Northeast in 1983, when he was able to connect in person with a profoundly left-wing Critical Pedagogue by the name of Henry Giroux, who worked tirelessly to bring Freire and his ideas to North America. Giroux was instrumental in forwarding Freire's work in colleges of education and wrote the foreword to *The Politics of Education*. He also ensured Freire's work would have a receptive audience in ed schools by devoting much of the first half of the 1980s to getting approximately one hundred Marxists tenured in colleges of education, something he is openly very proud of having done.
27. *The Politics of Education* is a curious book, to be sure. The book is essentially an edited collection of essays by Freire, apparently written originally between 1970 and 1985, and five of the first six chapters (so, first six essays) in the book explain the basic ideas of his pedagogy (theory of education) in greater clarity, detail, and brevity than does *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. The exception is the fifth chapter, which discusses the role of the social worker, characterizing social workers and teachers both as types of educators whose duty it is to generate political literacy in those they assist.
28. In my opinion, this chapter foreshadows the widespread implementation of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), particularly "transformative SEL," which matches Freire's terminology, tone, and intention quite closely, by opening the door to think of teachers as *de facto* social workers who are to intervene in the social and emotional lives and processes of their students in addition to their academic development. Though its genealogy is distinct, the Freirean model

- provides ground in which the incorporation of psychological and social work practice are incorporated into educational spaces and programs.
29. For Freire, however, the point of all such instruction is unambiguously *political* generally and *to generate a Marxist consciousness* specifically. Entire chapters in the book are dedicated explicitly to these themes since they are, for Freire, the point of education.
30. The entire seventh chapter, for example, is dedicated to the role and process of “conscientization,” which is the raising of a Marxist “critical” consciousness. This goal of raising a critical consciousness in learners is also one of the three stated goals in Gloria Ladson-Billings’s “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” which she introduced in 1995.
31. Strangely, the subsequent five chapters of the book (meaning 7–11) hardly mention education at all. Instead, they are explicitly political and/or religious in character. Chapter 7 suggests Che Guevara as an ideal model of what a “critically conscious” educator should look like. Chapter 8 is titled “The Process of Political Literacy” and explains that the purpose of literacy education is to create political literacy, *whether or not actual literacy is achieved*. Chapter 10, for another example, is wholly devoted to Liberation Theology and the connection to the Church. Chapter 11 is a short word of praise for the unique character of James Cone, famous for his Black Liberation Theology, which is some kind of hybrid of Liberation Theology, the (Fabian Socialist) Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch, and black liberationism (a neo-Marxist precursor of Critical Race Theory).

32. The religious tone is so explicit and central to Freire's pedagogy that Henry Giroux, in the foreword to the book, remarks that Freire's is a "permanent prophetic vision" for what education means and might achieve.
33. At some points (in chapters eight and nine), Freire explicitly claims that to be effective, teachers must personally live through a kind of personal "Easter" that awakens them to a full Marxist political consciousness (otherwise, they are "necrophiliac," death-loving, as used by the neo-Marxist psychologist Erich Fromm, who Freire cites). He specifically calls upon them to die to the existing order of society and resurrect themselves as people with (Marxist) consciousness. This is sufficiently bizarre in an educational theory book, especially one of this degree of influence, to merit quoting directly at some length:

This new apprenticeship will violently break down the elitist concept of existence they had absorbed while being ideologized. The sine qua non the apprenticeship demands is that, first of all, they really experience their own Easter, that they die as elitists so as to be resurrected on the side of the oppressed, that they be born again with the beings who were not allowed to be. Such a process implies a renunciation of myths that are dear to them: the myth of their superiority, of their purity of soul, of their virtues, their wisdom, the myth that they save the poor, the myth of the neutrality of the church, of theology, education, science, technology, the myth of their own impartiality. From these grow the other myths: of the inferiority of other people, of their spiritual and physical impurity, and of the absolute ignorance of the oppressed.

This Easter, which results in the changing of consciousness, must be existentially experienced. The real Easter is not commemorative rhetoric. It is praxis; it is historical involvement. The old Easter of rhetoric is dead—with no hope of resurrection. It is only in the authenticity of historical praxis that Easter becomes the death that makes life possible. But the bourgeois



world view, basically necrophiliac (death-loving) and therefore static, is unable to accept this supremely biophiliac (life-loving) experience of Easter. The bourgeois mentality—which is far more than just a convenient abstraction—kills the profound historical dynamism of Easter and turns it into no more than a date on the calendar.

34. For those who know what they are looking at, this is a replacement of the Christian theological beliefs regarding the central event of their faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, with a blatantly Marxist counterfeit in which the individual dies to the existing world and is resurrected into a Marxist (conscious “Socialist Man”)—his own Marxist “Christ.” It also accuses those using any other educational theory of being involved in a vast death cult (“necrophiliac” education).
35. It is at this point that I must remind you that Freire’s intention with this unsettling passage is to insist that this Marxist “Easter” is a necessary precondition for any who want to be educators *and for those they would take as learners*.
36. Thus, it is at *this* point that I must also remind you that this is written in the book that changed the course of North American colleges of education to make them into what they are today.
37. It is on the back of this instruction that our education system has been remade (in the “real Easter” of “historical praxis” that “the bourgeois mentality” cannot accept) such that *almost all of our kids go to Paulo Freire’s schools*, wherein they are Marxified themselves.
38. Christian sensibilities aside, to the degree that this pedagogy has informed public schools in the United States and Tennessee, one might suspect it butts up against a heretofore unrecognized Establishment Clause challenge. That’s a matter for a

deeper debate in another forum, however, and so now, having gained some idea of who Paulo Freire is and what his work entails, we turn our attention to the major concepts of his pedagogy.

39. The essentials can be captured in four of Freire's key concepts: what I refer to as the "Marxification" of education, the "generative concepts" approach, "codification and decodification," and the "dialogical method." Those familiar with education as it is taught and practiced throughout North America will find at least the last three of these immediately recognizable, if not familiar, though in slightly modernized forms.

### **III. The Marxification of Education**

40. Paulo Freire Marxified education itself.
41. That is, he turned pedagogy into a Marxist theory and turned the very concepts of education and literacy into sites of Marxian social analysis.
42. This is not equivalent to inserting Marxism or Marxist ideas into curricula, nor is it the same as revamping education into a Marxist indoctrination, as many allege. It is a far deeper shift in the theory of education that has redefined how we educate our students throughout the United States.
43. Teaching Marxism or Marxist ideas or even indoctrinating students in Marxism is something that would occur within some other pedagogical framework suited to teaching children. This is not what Paulo Freire is offering.
44. For Freire, the very concept of being "educated" or "literate" (I will use these interchangeably) is something that must be understood in a Marxist way. In short, Freire builds a pedagogical architecture in which those in powerful, privileged,

- bourgeois, or otherwise advantaged positions in society decide what it means to be “educated” and “literate” in such a way that it structures society to their own advantage while oppressing the underclass of “uneducated” and “illiterate” people outside that structure.
45. To elaborate, Freire’s world is one in which nobody needed to be educated until society changed and began to value formal education, including basic literacy, in certain ways that marginalize the uneducated (this is the thrust of the first half of the sixth chapter of *The Politics of Education*).
46. Agrarian peasants, who could neither read nor write, were at the center of their communities until the need to be literate so one can fill a bourgeois job came to dominate society. Meanwhile, those bourgeois people who order society using “educated” work, set up an entire social and professional structure that gets to determine who is and is not sufficiently “educated” to be able to participate in this upper echelon of society. In turn, they designed “education” itself, including the methods of teaching literacy (especially to adult agrarian peasants), in a way that reproduces and inculcates those values in the students, largely by artificial means (like the Brazilian equivalent of what we, as English speakers, would call “phonics”). This allows them to certify those they wish to admit to bourgeois “educated” society and to exclude and marginalize those who don’t fit the “educated” mold according to their own unjust, if not bogus, standards. This marginalization through education Freire characterizes as a form of violence against the uneducated (chapter 6).
47. In this way, Freire Marxifies education itself.

48. Being educated—we commonly hear “formally educated” from activists today—is framed out as a form of bourgeois private property that are only accessible to certain elites who have granted access to themselves and those they select.
49. Education is therefore a process of political grooming into the elite class that, by design, most people cannot succeed with. This creates an oppressive social structure between the educated and uneducated that is wholly created by that upper caste and imposed upon the lower, putting them intrinsically in class conflict.
50. The goal of a genuine education, then, is the awakening of the critical consciousness of this state of affairs in the underclass together with their own revolutionary consciousness by which they will eventually overthrow the unjust system. Everything else is false education that should be replaced by his own (Marxian) methods.
51. This bears a moment’s elaboration in terms of its practical impacts. Effective pedagogies—which are never cited by Freire—are framed as part of the problem.
52. “Formal education” exists to make a relatively small number of people able to succeed in the prevailing system while failing everyone else.
53. Specifically, teaching someone to read so that they can get a good job, for Freire, merely enables them to participate in the existing system and thus validate and reproduce it, which maintains or even concentrates the oppression of the illiterate by this structural arrangement of society.

54. Thus, teaching people to read (or do math, etc.) is of low priority, and subjects such as reading, mathematics, and everything else are to be transformed into vehicles for a different kind of education with different priorities and goals.
55. Specifically, learning skills valuable to existing social, political, and economic system is of minimal priority, if it is not intentionally avoided or disrupted.
56. Freire goes on to explain that true education is political education (specifically, true “literacy” is political literacy). This is a somewhat subtle point that is also rooted in Marxist thought.
57. Freire argues at length (particularly at the opening of chapter 6) that all education is intrinsically political education. It either politicizes people in the standards of the existing society or in the (Marxist) liberation from it.
58. True education, Freire insists, has little to do with learning to read “disconnected symbols” or “memorizing” irrelevant simple sentences, like “Ava saw a grape” (or, in the American context, “See Dick run”), and should instead educate “learners” (no longer “students”) in the context of their lives and the political ramifications of that context.
59. These are to be interpreted by the “educator” (no longer “teacher”) through a Marxist lens of class antagonism with the goal of awakening class consciousness.
60. Not to put too fine a point on it, but chapter 8 of *The Politics of Education* bears the title “the process of political literacy.” This process is carried out through the three methodological points referenced above, most immediately, the utilization of “generative” words and concepts to awaken political literacy.

61. Indeed, keeping with the inappropriately religious theme of his approach to education, Freire says repeatedly in *The Politics of Education* that the purpose of education is to help the oppressed learn to “speak the word so that they proclaim the world.”
62. He contrasts typical education against this, calling them dead and death-loving (necrophiliac), by mischaracterizing them as teaching students only to repeat the word and thus maintain the same oppressive world that he insists is the fundamental problem. Ironically, he also accuses more traditional approaches to education as suffering from a messianic complex that seeks to save the illiterate from their illiteracy.
63. To be clear, Freire unapologetically uses his Marxified educational theory (Critical Pedagogy) to teach a variation of Marxist Theory, too. He is absolutely clear (and devotes chapters of his books) to the objective of his educational program: to raise a Marxist or critical consciousness in “learners” so that they might engage in revolutionary struggle to overthrow the existing system.
64. In fact, Freire argues clearly in *The Politics of Education* that following the revolution, if achieved, the need for a critical consciousness and critical education theory to facilitate it *increases* rather than resolves itself. (This is where he upholds the model of Che Guevara before also praising the Communist Cultural Revolution in China, in chapter 7.) He then goes on to explain that the revolution must be *perpetual* to be authentic so that it never becomes a (necrophiliac) status quo. Education is for preparing learners to see the need for a perpetual cultural revolution, to Freire, explicitly and in his own words.

#### IV. The “Generative” Concepts Approach

65. While occasionally, especially with regard to sexuality and gender, books introduced to children in schools today are obviously inappropriate to any reasonable observer.
66. Often, however, the matter is more ambiguous as to how they constitute a potential problem, especially where issues of race and Critical Race Theory are concerned.
67. Introducing a book about a figure like Ruby Bridges or events like the Tulsa Massacre or a development like the Harlem Renaissance do not immediately suggest that something “Race Marxist” is taking place, though frequently teachers, parents, and other interested parties recognize that *something* seems wrong.
68. As it turns out, this is yet another hallmark of Freirean pedagogy.
69. In particular, it is the component in which education is shifted from “literacy” to “political literacy” and “consciousness-raising” elements are introduced *in the guise of* other subjects.
70. For Freire, teaching “disconnected syllables” and “meaningless” sentences, as one encounters in a phonics-based (or the equivalent) literacy education program, misses the key opportunity of education. That opportunity, of course, is to awaken a (Marxist) political consciousness and political literacy. In a dysfunctional attempt to kill two birds with one stone, Freire recommends repeatedly throughout all of his major works that literacy education should proceed using what he refers to as “generative words,” which we can generalize to “generative” concepts.

71. For Freire, a “generative word” is a three-syllable word (for reasons to do with the structure of Portuguese) that also has some political relevance to the learner. For examples, Freire suggests using the Portuguese words for “slum” and “struggle” explicitly as generative words from which to begin to teach literacy to peasants.
72. In general, then, the generative concepts approach to education attempts to teach every lesson possible by presenting some politically relevant, usually negative and oppression-centric, concept through whatever other subject.
73. In reading and vocabulary, it might take the form of choosing the relevant books to repeat a particular agenda or presenting vocabulary words that have particular resonance: poor, poverty, misery, starvation, oppression, injustice, harm, and so on, with higher than one might expect from statistical frequency at grade level.
74. In mathematics classes, it might take the form of using statistics lessons or word problems to present a particular politically relevant circumstance, such as calculating statistics about racial oppression and advantage rather than choosing politically neutral statistical exercises.
75. In history classes, it could take the form of tailoring the curriculum to focus on certain types of materials to the exclusion of others, such as slavery or the various civil-rights movements (racial, sexual, and so on).
76. The generative concepts approach is being utilized any time the general curriculum is being skewed to present a “hidden” (usually very thinly veiled) political lesson as either the secondary or *de facto* primary purpose of the lesson.
77. For Freire, the purpose of using a generative concepts approach to pedagogy is straightforward: to get the “learners” to engage with material that he believes is



- politically relevant to their own lives (not mentioned: in a way that Freire himself, as a Marxist, thinks appropriate).
78. This will enable the primary educational activity to become discussion about the generative concepts while, as a secondary effect, the putative pedagogical goal (e.g., learning to read in a literacy class) will come along for the ride. Setting up a circumstance to place himself into a facilitator's role for these ensuing discussions, as "educator," in order to raise a (Marxist) political consciousness of the context and circumstances of the learners' lives is his explicitly stated goal.
79. For example, by introducing a lesson on "acceptance" and "dignity" regarding gender and sexual themes with young children, it is likely that many of the students will be encountering these ideas for the first time, thus "necessitating" further discussion, which the schools may or may not facilitate and into which parents may be co-opted without their consent. Similar effects occur with race and other politically relevant issues.
80. Freire's given justification for this bait-and-switch approach to education is that it produces higher engagement by connecting to the learners more effectively at the level of their lived experience while educating the learner in the political meaning and implications of their lives.
81. Virtually the entirety of the program called "Culturally Relevant Education" put forth by Gloria Ladson-Billings (originally in 1995) is a simple repackaging of Freire's generative concepts model using racial and other identity politics as the source for generative concepts (packaged as "cultural" facets of identity groups).

82. Ladson-Billings is one of the most influential and active education activists in the country today and is a primary consultant on state-level education initiatives, including, for example, the “Ed Equity Virginia” program implemented by the Virginia Department of Education.
83. Ladson-Billings, like Freire, whom she cites, appeals to greater student engagement as the justification for these programs, which she explicitly explains in her seminal 1995 paper on the topic exist to fulfill three aims: to create academic success (though she never says how or what this looks like), to be “culturally competent” (which is to say to employ the generative concepts approach, often through the “dialogical” method), and—explicitly—to awaken critical consciousness (i.e., Marxist understanding of the themes). “I have defined culturally relevant teaching as a pedagogy of opposition (1992c) not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment. Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) Students must experience academic success; (b) students must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) students must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order,” Ladson-Billings writes (“But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,” *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1995, p. 160.)
84. The Marxian purpose for this program she also makes clear: “Not only must teachers encourage academic success and cultural competence, they must help students recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities” (p. 162).

85. Cultural competence, which is sometimes referred to as cultural literacy—by which is meant a kind of political literacy that treats identity political categories as sites of meaningful politics of identity—is therefore a prerequisite to Culturally Relevant Education. When the “dialogical” approach described in Section VI, below, is incorporated into Culturally Relevant Education, it becomes “Culturally Responsive Education.”
86. These, then, are a perfect repackaging of Freire’s approach, down to and including the idea that academic achievement will magically occur by virtue of being in an educational environment and being “engaged” in it.
87. *Nota bene*, Gloria Ladson-Billings published another seminal article in that same year, 1995, along with co-author William Tate, IV, titled, “Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education,” to position her and the intended goals of her pedagogical work, which is unambiguously rooted in Paulo Freire’s Marxified education.
88. As an aside here, it is worth noting that Critical Race Theory is, itself, a Marxist Theory of race. In fact, it is Race Marxism (or Racial Marxism, if you prefer).
89. In perfect parallel to Karl Marx’s model that a form of bourgeois private property called capital divides society into an oppressive “superstructural” upper class and oppressed “infrastructural” lower class, which are intrinsically in class conflict, Critical Race Theory suggests that a form of bourgeois racial/cultural property called “whiteness” divides society into an oppressive “superstructural” upper class and oppressed “infrastructural” lower class, which are intrinsically in racial class conflict.

90. Marx held that those with access to capital created an ideology called “capitalism” that justifies the existing structure of society, which is based in classism. Marxism seeks to induce a critical “class consciousness” in those allegedly oppressed by or participating in this system.
91. Critical Race Theory maintains that those with access to whiteness create an ideology called “white supremacy” that justifies the existing structure of society, which is structural or systemic racism. Critical Race Theory seeks to induce a critical racial consciousness in those allegedly oppressed by or participating in this system.
92. On and on these comparisons can go because in the same way that culturally relevant pedagogy is a repackaging of Freire’s generative concepts approach to education into the racial and other identity-political domains, Critical Race Theory is a direct repackaging of Marxism into the racial domain (other identity political “Theories” like Gender Theory and Queer Theory reproduce Marxism in other “cultural” identity domains).
93. In this regard, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Culturally Relevant Teaching (the other CRT) go together hand-in-glove in precisely the same way that Freire’s Marxified education theory and the (neo)-Marxist Theory it sought to instill in “learners” do.
94. Culturally Relevant Teaching and Critical Race Theory in education were both explored in significant degree by the same person, Gloria Ladson-Billings, in the same year, and Ladson-Billings still actively pushes *both* concepts into education today, more than a quarter century later.

95. Thus, Critical Race Theory informs and is delivered through Culturally Relevant Teaching, and Culturally Relevant Teaching is a simple repackaging of Paulo Freire's failed generative concepts approach to education.
96. One of the most egregious failures of the generative concepts approach to education Freire introduces is that it not only displaces valuable class time to indoctrinate students in a particular (Marxist) ideology, it does so while embedding itself and hiding within that subject, making it difficult to identify clearly and root out.
97. *Technically*, Paulo Freire was teaching peasants to read with his method.
98. *Technically*, culturally relevant teachers today are teaching subjects like reading, writing, mathematics, history, and science, though the examples are chosen to be "culturally relevant" (that is, generative) and the core of the relevant subject-matter lesson is displaced by dialogue about the impacts of the generative concepts and the feelings those concepts induce.
99. This would happen far less frequently with a non-generative, effectively neutral approach to teaching subject matter.
100. This generative concepts approach, including all culturally relevant (or responsive, or competent) approaches to teaching therefore shortchanges students of the opportunity to learn the subject matter at hand while grooming them toward a "political literacy" considered relevant to the "educator" utilizing the method.
101. It is a very subtle form of indoctrination and ideological programming posing as legitimate education.

102. Most challengingly, the political lesson is disguised as a basic-skills lesson in reading, vocabulary, mathematics, or other subjects through the alchemy of “cultural relevance” or “generative words” as an approach.

### **V. Codification and Decodification as Method**

103. Paulo Freire advances his educational program in three steps that many educators and parents today will find familiar from their kids’ classroom materials: the codification and decodification method. For Freire, after presenting ideas through the “generative” concepts approach, the way to proceed to educate is to position the educator not as a teacher but as a facilitator of this process (one will find this language frequently in educational documents, especially in *Culturally Relevant Teaching and Social-Emotional Learning*).

104. The process proceeds by “codifying” a generative concept, then “problematizing” it, and then “decodifying” it. (These correspond to the three-step dialectical approach underlying all of Marxism, wherein some phenomenon is rendered *abstract*, then *critiqued* through a *negative* critique, and then made *concrete* by attaching it to the lived “reality” of the situation.)

105. In practice, what this process amounts to is presenting an image of a generative concept so that the learner can gain “critical distance.” This is codification. Then, the oppressive or harmful elements of the image are discussed. This is problematizing. Finally, the learner is facilitated (groomed) to identify himself with the idea presented abstractly in the image. This is “decodification.” In this way, Freire pretends, not only did the learner learn to read the relevant generative word, but he also learned to read the political context of his life. In reality, actual literacy is sacrificed through a

terrible pedagogy for political literacy, which isn't neutral political literacy but the activist agenda of the Marxist facilitator grooming the "learners" to see their world and its problems through a Marxist lens.

106. Codification—essentially, presenting something "real" as abstract—is the first step.

107. For Freire, codification proceeds by presenting a drawing of something like a slum or a field being worked by laboring peasants.

108. Alongside the image, the generative concept is presented, so the word *favela* (slum, in Portuguese) is provided as caption to the image.

109. This "codifies" the idea of a slum for the learner while leading him to identify the word "slum" with what he sees in the abstract image of a slum.

110. Freire's stated goals through codification are two. First, the learner will learn to sight-identify the word "slum" and associate it with the image, after which syllabic (phonics) exercises can proceed. (This is similar to the way dyslexic children are taught to read but that doesn't work well for most children.) Second, the learner will obtain "critical distance" from the contents of the codification. He might live in a slum himself, but he will be able to see it as something *someone else* lives in, or something wholly abstract.

111. In modern circumstances, generative images, texts, contexts, and other educational contents can be used to portray identity-political (Identity Marxist) concepts to children in schools.

112. For instance, they might read books about slavery and the unjust treatment of slaves and learn to see slavery in the codified context. They may also watch evocative videos or work through picture books.
113. What makes this issue difficult for those who want to get education right, there's frequently nothing particularly wrong with much of the material presented in these sorts of lessons (sometimes and in some domains, particularly in sex, gender, and sexuality-relevant lessons, it is more obviously egregious or inappropriate).
114. The underlying purpose of presenting codified materials and generative concepts is the problem, frequently not the presentation itself, though occasionally the problem of clear political distortion is evident enough on its own.
115. That underlying purpose is to raise the topic at all and then to engage in it through the following steps, which groom the learner into viewing the generative concept through a broadly Marxian lens and subsequently becoming an activist.
116. It will be presented. Then it will be discussed *and problematized*. It will then be attached to something meaningful in the learner's own lives so that the problematized (Marxist critiqued) interpretation will be made "concrete" for the learner, when then understand himself as someone who should do something (be an activist about) that "problematic."
117. *This is not the purpose to which parents entrust public schools with their children or their educations.*
118. Codified learning materials may be quite subtle, like having a preponderance of identity-political material as curriculum, or quite egregious,



- such as working blatantly political topics into mathematics word problems. They may also be ambiguous, such as having a class of young children draw pictures of their families specifically for the purposes of raising a discussion about a family in the class known to have same-sex parents.
119. Ambiguous cases are incredibly difficult to identify except by a “you know it when you see it” standard because they depend almost entirely upon the intentions of the teacher, which may not be known or reliably communicated.
120. Virtually all of “cultural competence” and Culturally Relevant Teaching is a recreation of the codification aspect of Freirean pedagogy into the Identity Marxist “cultural” framing.
121. Again, the goal of codification is to give the learner critical distance—which is a pun. While it seems to mean (and could mean) making the topic abstract enough to engage in *critical thinking* about it, in the Freirean approach, the purpose is otherwise, namely to engage it through *Critical Theory*, the operative tool of what is known as “Critical Marxism” or “neo-Marxism” (Freire is identified by most Marxists today as a neo-Marxist).
122. The education theorist Alison Bailey distinguishes these two approaches unambiguously in her 2017 education paper titled “Tracking Privilege-Preserving Epistemic Pushback in Feminist Critical Race Philosophy Classes,” *Hypatia*, 32(4), Fall 2017. She explicitly names the neo-Marxist Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School as the goal of critical pedagogy and says critical thinking is often used to reassert and reinscribe the exact power dynamics critical pedagogy exists to challenge (pp. 881–2).

123. In particular, Critical distance gives the learner room to critique what he sees—at a political level. Freire calls this process “problematizing” what (oppression) is now visible to the learner in the codified presentation. The learner is taught to critique the injustices and power dynamics producing them in this stage.
124. Again, in the modern classroom, this can be quite subtle or rather overt.
125. In the subtler aspects of the problematizing process, students will be asked how the characters in the relevant stories must *feel* to be in those situations.
126. They’ll be led, or groomed, to see the “problematics” with whatever situation is present and to connect those to unjust power dynamics the critical educator is grooming them to see in virtually every circumstance.
127. Social-Emotional Learning is geared particularly to facilitate this process, particularly the more contemporary and Marxists “Transformative SEL,” promoted, for example, by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning).
128. “Transformative” here refers to Marx’s call to transforming the society and those within it into a Socialist society filled with Socialist Men. It is also explicitly what Freire identifies as the purpose of education, to teach learners to be politically literate and critically conscious *so that they can transform the world* (through a process he calls “annunciation and denunciation” wherein the transformed world is announced in the act of denouncing the existing world through Marxist critique).

129. The SEL lesson will ask kids to identify how the people in the codification feel about the injustices under auspices of developing “social awareness,” for example. In more overt case, students will critique—or be given the critiques—for what is wrong in the situation in harsh, uncompromising terms about the racism, sexism, or other injustices that construct what is presented in the codified course materials.
130. Finally, once the abstracted codification has met its negative through problematization, the Freirean educator’s role is to “decode” the codification, which is to say that he will connect it to the lived experience or “lived realities” of the learners.
131. The message is “it is *you* who was presented in this codification, which you now understand to be very problematic.” This, Freire tells us, makes the political context (oppression or complicity in oppressing) “concrete” for the learner and is a key step in his core pedagogical goal of raising a critical (Marxist) consciousness in the learner and calling it true “literacy.”
132. This is typically accomplished through appeals to empathy, so that students learn to feel themselves to be the characters in the codified stories they are presented with and then problematize (Marxist critique).
133. In practice today, Social-Emotional Learning is almost certainly at the center of this process of connecting the feelings evoked through the earlier stages of the method to the learners themselves.
134. The message may be something like, “People who looked like you did *x* or had *y* done to them because that’s how society is really organized.”

135. This part of the process involves the most “grooming” of the learner by the educator (facilitator) because it leads them to understand *themselves* in terms of the political conception of the educator.
136. The objective of this part of the process is to awaken the critical consciousness that leads the learner to see themselves as part of the broad oppressor/oppressed structural dynamic of society and to realize their role in the objective of changing the society to end that dynamic entirely. That is, it is for raising an explicitly a Marxist consciousness of whichever power structure the educator is making relevant at the time, whether race, sex, gender, sexuality, class, or something else.
137. The codification and decodification approach is therefore a way to start with a generative concept and lead students in a grooming fashion through a deliberate process of political awakening on Marxist terms—including to the need for class/group solidarity and social activism (to become “change agents”).
138. It is a deliberate attempt to use tools like Social-Emotional Learning, cultural competence, and Culturally Relevant Teaching to raise a critical (Identity Marxist) consciousness in students, often while sacrificing learning the underlying subject matter due to the misplaced pedagogical goals and commitments.
139. That each of these domains explicitly says in modern academic writing about their purposes that among their goals is raising a critical consciousness in students, and that this means getting them to analyze not the course contents in academic terms but instead to study the power and power dynamics located within

them, this is not only not a stretch but a simple statement of unobscured fact about their purpose.

## VI. The Dialogical Model and Egalitarian Classroom

140. The final component I will present in the Freirean model of education is perhaps the most famous: his so-called “dialogical model” of education. Appealing back to Plato and Socrates while saying they did it wrong because they didn’t use it to raise critical consciousness, Freire insists that true and proper education must be “dialogical,” which is to say that it is achieved through *dialogue* between “educators and learners *as equals*.”
141. This is part of why Freire (sometimes) insists on the linguistic shift away from “teachers” and “students” to “educators” and “learners.” As noted previously, the role of the “educator” is largely one of a *facilitator*, but this “dialogical” relationship should also consider learners as valid knowers in their own right. (Note: This framing mostly comes from *The Politics of Education*; in his earlier and more famous *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire merely hyphenates to indicate a new dialectically combined concept: “teacher-students” and “student-teachers.”)
142. There is a deep Marxist theoretical explanation for this shift that can be summarized in shortest form by saying Freire believes the hierarchical relationship (in knowledge, power, etc.) between teachers and students reproduces a power dynamic that “domesticates” students and makes them the *objects* of an educational process rather than learning *subjects*.

143. Freire bases this approach not upon any pedagogical theory but instead on the underlying Marxist belief that man is ultimately his own creator and comes to know that through (1) realizing his own subjective consciousness, (2) realizing it can imagine something it wants to create in the world, (3) can make that thing as an object in the world, and (4) see himself, as creator, in the object he created from his subjective perspective.
144. For Freire, following Marx, not only things but also society, other people, and man himself are the objects of this subject-object relationship that begins by realizing oneself to be a knowing and creative subject.
145. Much of *The Politics of Education* discusses this theme—Marx’s ontology of man and society—rather than actual education.
146. In summary, Freire frames out traditional pedagogical approaches in two ways, one of which is his own invention: the “banking model” and the “nutritionist model,” which he borrows from existentialist philosopher (and Marxist) Jean-Paul Sartre.
147. These are essentially the same straw-man of educational theory and practice.
148. Both operate, says Freire, from the educator’s underlying belief that the student is “empty” and needs to be filled or nourished with knowledge in order to become a knower, rather than being considered a knower in his own right by default—through recognizing his knowledges (mostly of his lived experiences) and his “ways of knowing” as equally valid, if not superior, to “formal educational” knowledge and rigorous epistemology.

149. In the “banking model” of education, Freire claims that educators and pedagogues, thus also students, see the uneducated or illiterate like empty bank deposit boxes to be filled with a kind of knowledge-based capital by the teacher.
150. It is important to understand Freire claims that teachers using any method outside of his think this way about their students and the purpose of education: they know something; the students don’t; and it is their job to deposit knowledge into their empty bank accounts.
151. The students, in turn, are then presented with a choice, according to Freire, to either “capitalize” upon these deposits or not by, if they do, becoming productive members of the economic and social system that values “formal education” and sees it as necessary for its own (bourgeois) maintenance.
152. As a result, when educating someone fails to produce elite success for them, the bourgeoisie can claim that it is somehow the fault of the learner, not the teacher, the system, or the allegedly bogus things it considers knowledge.
153. The failed learner can be accused of being lazy, stupid, or otherwise deficient—giving birth to another term common in today’s Freirean education programs, the *deficit model*, which is held up and criticized in effigy in order to disparage other educational theories and promote Freirean pedagogy and its derivatives.
154. The “nutritionist model” of education is roughly the same thing replacing the analogy to bank deposits with food and drink to nourish someone into being a fully capable member of society (which Freire sees as bad, recall, because it leads to the reproduction and false legitimacy of the existing system).

155. In opposition to this, Freire proposes that learners are already knowers who would be recognized as such if the existing power dynamic and “Messianic” model of traditional education would just see them for what they are.
156. The knowledges they possess and “ways of knowing” (folk epistemologies) they employ are at least equally valid to those utilized by “formal education” and researchers. These folk epistemologies are always rooted in the lived experience of systemic oppression—a point about which Freire is also explicit.
157. In fact, they are likely to be *more valid* by virtue of the underlying Marxist belief that the oppressed subject understands oppression and, once awakened to a Marxist consciousness, the nature of the oppressive society *better* than those who are privileged by it.
158. Another deep Marxist theory about the role of ideology in producing false consciousness, particularly the willful ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists (those who are privileged in the society and seek to justify their privilege by thinking in any other way than Marxism), underlies Freire’s thought and approach here.
159. Thus, teachers and students have to be abolished (Marxist German: *aufheben*) and replaced with educators and learners who learn together about the political context of their lives *as equals* through *dialogue*.
160. In practice, this looks like the educator engaging in open dialogue with the “learners” about the relevant conditions of their life and designing, shall we say, a



- culturally relevant and responsive approach to teaching (the generative concepts approach).
161. Based upon this student-led and educator-facilitated dialogue, generative concepts can be identified and amplified and the codification, problematization, decodification method can be devised in a “contextual way” to teach “political literacy” “as a process of change.”
162. The educator’s role is to facilitate this discussion so that it always veers toward awakening critical consciousness and inspiring activism on its behalf.
163. In the modern parlance, this is rendered as teaching students to become “change agents,” often in “student-led classrooms.”
164. In fairness, Paulo Freire was working with adult peasants in South America—not children with adult teachers—when he introduced the idea that educators and learners should engage with one another *as equals*, but this important difference in relationship type has not only been elided as Freirean education made its way into North American K–12 schools, but it has also been downplayed.
165. Much effort has been dedicated, particularly in the intersection of Queer Theory and education, to eliminating the ideas of childhood innocence and developmental appropriateness, including where it comes to treating adults and children in a “dialogical” classroom as though they are equals, which they emphatically are not.

## **VI. Conclusion**

166. Our kids currently go to Paulo Freire’s schools.

167. These schools are unambiguously Marxist (unless we split hairs and call them neo-Marxist or Woke Marxist) in their architecture, pedagogy, methods, and goals.
168. They have abandoned the idea of educating American children to grow toward becoming successful and prosperous adults in American society because they want to undermine, destroy, and replace American society.
169. Rather than teaching literacy, numeracy, or other educational basics, Freirean schools use subject matter like reading, writing, mathematics, history, social studies, and science lessons to teach Marxist consciousness of one or more forms at a time.
170. As a result of more than a decade of this practice, American schoolchildren are almost universally failing in basic competency in virtually every subject at virtually every grade level. They are more “politically literate,” in the Freirean sense, than ever before, though.
171. In my opinion, even with every other significant and concerning problem happening in the country today, correcting the problem of Freirean education is a high-priority item, certainly within the top five biggest and most pressing issues, if not the top three.
172. Freirean education is Marxist education, and it has no place in any American public school system.
173. It is also explicitly religious education, for those who have read Freire and understand just how prominently Liberation Theology (fusion of Marxist Theory and Catholic theology) features not just in Freire’s underlying thought but in his

explicit framing of education. This, rightly understood, makes its inclusion in the American public school systems a severe First Amendment violation that, so far, goes unrecognized and uncorrected.

174. That issue aside, Freirean education doesn't work, and it is easy to understand why it doesn't work.

175. It explicitly and intentionally replaces gaining mastery in any subject with using that subject as a proxy for generating "political literacy."

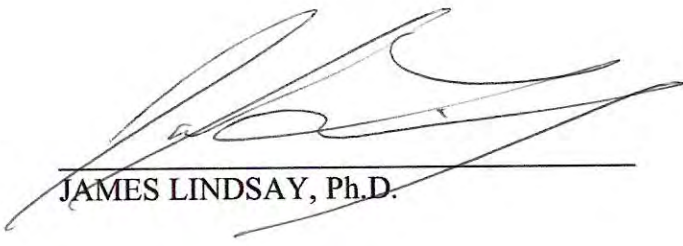
176. This is wholly inappropriate, completely ineffective at educating students, and a gross violation of the public's and parents' trust in these school systems and the teachers and administrators who facilitate their programs.

177. Parents send their children to public schools to be *educated*, not to be groomed into "political literacy" through a Marxist perversion of education.

178. Taxpayers pay their property and other taxes to fund public schools because an *educated* populace is a public good in a democratic republic such as ours, whereas a know-nothing, discontented activist class emphatically is *not* (as was demonstrated amply through the last half of 2020 throughout much of this country).

179. Failing to teach our children to succeed, thrive, and prosper in the existing system because you hate the existing system betrays the public's and parents' trust and has no place in any public school system in the United States of America (or any other country that wants to stay healthy and intact in the long run).


Further affiant saith naught.

  
JAMES LINDSAY, Ph.D.

STATE OF TENN )  
COUNTY OF BLOUNT )

Personally appeared before me, Timothy Scott Norton, a Notary Public in and for said County and State, the above-signed JAMES LINDSAY, and did make oath that the information contained in the foregoing document was true and correct to the best of their information, knowledge and belief.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1 day of JUNE, 2022.

  
Notary Public

My commission expires: 09/23/2024



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that on the 7th day of July, 2022, a true and exact copy of the foregoing Affidavit of James Lindsay was served upon the person(s) listed below:

Jason Golden  
Official capacity as Superintendent of Williamson County Schools  
1320 W. Main Street  
Franklin, TN 37064

Dave Allen  
Official capacity as Assistant Superintendent of teaching, Learning and Assessment  
1320 W. Main Street  
Franklin, TN 37064

Penny Schwinn  
Official capacity as Commissioner of Education  
710 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, TN 37243

Williamson County Board of Education  
c/o Jason Golden  
1320 W. Main Street  
Franklin, TN 37064

By the method(s) identified as follows:

- U.S. Mail, Postage Prepaid
- Hand-Delivery
- Overnight Delivery Service
- Certified Mail, Return  Receipt Requested
- Email

/s/ Larry L. Crain  
Larry L. Crain