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## Women empowerment through critical pedagogy

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### Key words

Critical Pedagogy, women, UAE, classroom, empowerment, leadership

### Abstract

60% of university students in the United Arab Emirates are women. However, 10% of these females only are found in the workplace. This difference is worrisome. Critical Pedagogy or "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" as called by Paulo Freire (1970) or transformative education aims at empowering students in the classroom thus making them social agents. Women are no exception. There exists a tight co-relation between classroom gender oppression and biases and the outside world i.e. the home, the work place, and society at large. This paper investigates into the possibilities and challenges of introducing critical pedagogy in the curriculum in United Arab Emirates .The study has a three fold objective. First objective is to raise awareness about the existing gap between females' participation in education and their role in the workplace. Females should be aware of their potential and full rights to actively contribute to the development of their respective countries.

A second objective is to investigate the possibilities and challenges of introducing critical pedagogy in the classroom. The study examines ways to empower women through critical pedagogy to shift their role from being passive recipients in the classroom to active participants and leaders. This presupposes rethinking the methods of teaching in the classroom through critical reflection and questioning among students about gender issues that impact their own lives. Third objective is to examine the feasibility of including Critical Pedagogy in the curriculum within the local cultural and social contexts of the UAE. Critical pedagogy should question all established elements of culture, language, gender and education that hinder the participation of women in the workplace on equal footing with their male counterparts.

This paper critiques the traditional by rote learning process and urges experiential and shared learning and teaching methods.

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