

EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARS

Jaziea Farag is an award-winning Children's author, an Education Advisor for Wales for a Fostering Agency and Speech and Language Specialist Teacher. She is an Early Years and Racial Trauma Consultant and currently completing her PhD. Her research interests include creating feelings of belonging for families in Early Years settings as well as educational and vocational aspirations of Black and Minority Ethnic learners and the links with Racial Trauma.

She has been teaching for over a decade in Wales and formerly taught during the Educational Reform in Abu Dhabi and as a part of the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team for a Local Education Authority. She is an active champion of Anti racist practice in education and works closely with DARPL to facilitate training for Governors, Practitioners and Senior Leaders to nurture their journey to anti-racism. A highlight of her career so far was being asked to set up the first Teacher Network for BERA.

During my years of teaching and now as a consultant my thoughts on the fundamentals of how children learn have stayed predominantly the same. I have always considered that children learn best when they feel safe and valued. I strongly believe that it is meaningless planning for learning unless you first plan how you are going to meet these basic needs for all children in your setting. To do that, I feel that practitioners need to focus not just on the resources, environment and learning experiences but the values, wellbeing and self-awareness of all the adults who are interacting with the little people in your care. I think we sometimes underestimate and undervalue the power of a positive role model and the impact of the connections they build with young people. I therefore always try to reflect on how I am feeling and my responses when I enter a classroom or setting as I truly believe that an enthusiastic adult that shows interest can really spark engagement and therefore learning. Another area of education that I always try to incorporate into my practice no matter where I am working is the involvement of the wider community around a child and ensuring that I am not working in isolation, this should include families and members of the community.

My first memories of school are great ones. Laughter, friendships and lots of outdoor play. I attended a Primary School with a high level of culture and diversity in terms of its pupils until I was 7, and then we moved out of the area, so I attended a very different school from Year 2 onwards. Moving to this school was the first time I became aware of my race and have vivid memories of the first day and several events that followed where I felt othered, alone or very 'on display.' Through the entirety of my education, I was never taught by anyone that looked like me and it is only looking back and reflecting, that I realise the impact that had on me personally and the influence it had on my teaching philosophy. It led me to really spend time when I was in the classroom planning for a diverse and inclusive education, but it wasn't always easy to find the information or resources particularly in Wales. This is when my interest in the family as a source of support and learning began and the quest to ensure that all children get to see themselves reflected in their education. A lot of my professional choices have stemmed from those values and this project looking at Educational Scholars has just filled me with joy and 'a-ha' moments as well as more questions. We need to give learners a fuller education so that they can make their own informed decisions.

Jaziea Farag



PAULO FREIRE



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Paulo Freire (1921 - 1997) was an educator and philosopher. Freire was born in Brazil, and due to the Great Depression, his family lived in poverty for many years. During his time in school, Freire was four years behind academically. Reflecting on this in later life, he spoke about how hunger impacted his ability to learn and engage with his schoolwork. His experiences with living in poverty greatly influenced his work as an educator and philosopher. In 1943, Freire attended law school, he also studied philosophy, phenomenology and psycholinguistics. Throughout his life he worked as a language teacher, a director of a number of adult literacy programmes and as an education advisor.

PAULO FREIRE'S WORK

Paulo Freire founded Critical Pedagogy, a concept that explored how political systems influence education systems. Critical Pedagogy examines how, through education, children become oppressed and are taught to follow and accept the rules of those in charge and not to question them.

Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* became a key text in Critical Pedagogy. His work has influenced political and social movements worldwide, for example, movements that challenge and make changes to forms of oppression, such as racism, ableism, homophobia and sexism.

Through Critical Pedagogy, Freire wanted educators to develop a curriculum and education environment where children collaborated with their teachers to examine their own educational experiences. He wanted education to extend beyond the classroom, and for children and teachers to discuss, explore and critique the links between their curriculum and their lives outside of education.

Education always implies program, content, method, objectives and so on... For me it has always been a political question, not exclusively an educational question, at what levels students take part in the process of organizing the curriculum... The more people participate in the process of their own education, the more the people participate in the process of defining what kind of production to produce, and for what and why, the more the people participate in the development of their selves. The more the people become themselves, the better the democracy. The less people are asked about what they want, about their expectations, the less democracy we have.

(Paulo Freire)

Paulo Freire believed that education was a means of freedom from oppression. He believed that through education we can make the world a more just and equitable place for everyone.

REFLECTIONS ON PAULO FREIRE'S WORK

Consider ways in which education may be oppressing children. How does this make you feel?



What opportunities for collaborative learning do you engage in with children? Do you show up as someone who already knows, or as someone who is also learning?

What can you do to make sure that the education you're involved in extends beyond your setting or school and into children's wider lives?



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