

PALOU FREIRE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND POSSIBILITY OF
USING IT IN KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQI EDUCATION

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Abstract

Paulo Freire was one of the most influential and controversial educational theorists of the 20th century. His ideas have been widely adopted around the world and have deeply impacted pedagogical practice since the 1970's. This paper provides a short overview of Freire's theories and considers how his ideas may be introduced into the educational system of Kurdistan in the KRG region of Iraq. Of particular interest to the researchers is the question of the "banking" theory of education and how this type of system presently dominates the pedagogy in Kurdistan. The researchers conducted an in-depth survey of Kurdish graduate students studying abroad using Freire's banking system questionnaire. The research findings actually suggest that the "banking system" in Kurdistan undermines the long-term goals and objectives set out by the regions educational leadership. Consequently, they propose several possible strategies and innovative ways that Freire's ideas can be used to reverse these negative trends and improve the overall educational performance of the regions thousands of university students. In particular, the researchers propose that students planning on attending western universities should undergo special classes or seminars focused on critical thinking development and alternatives to the banking model in preparation for the rigors of western educational practice.

Key words: Education, pedagogy, banking system, memorization

Introduction

I first heard about Paulo Freire about six years ago from my friend Nicholas Rion who was studying Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. At that time, I was a student in the Center for English as a Second Language and planning on studying Educational Psychology at SIU. I was then and I am now very interested in how to reform the educational system in my country of Kurdistan-Iraq. When I explained to my friend Nicholas about how our system was organized or structured, he said to me that it sounded like the “Banking Theory” of education that Paulo Freire talks about in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

At that time, I ordered this book from the internet and started to read about Freire’s ideas. Many of the ideas were difficult and new to me. Also, when I enrolled in Curriculums and Instruction department and started taking classes in education, I learned more about “critical pedagogy”. For this reason, I spent a lot of time with Nicholas talking about such ideas as "praxis", "consientization" and other Freire ideas. However, the one thing I really understood was the "Banking concept". When I read this I knew that it was the way we teach in Kurdistan and the way most schools teach in the Middle East countries. As a result, with my friend Nicholas we began to research more about Freire and how to use some of his ideas as a basis for making some reforms in the present educational system in Kurdistan. One of the things I did with the assistance of my friend Nicholas, who would also help me conduct further research, was conduct a survey of Kurdish students and other students from Middle East countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Iraq. We conducted the survey of CESL students using the 9 point questionnaire that Freire outlines in his book. This survey asks students to critically evaluate

their schools and their classes. The survey we conducted at CESL clearly showed that most of the students, over 95%, believe that the program is a “Banking” type of program or class that Freire talks about.

This personal educational process for the two of us made us think a lot about many educational issues in Kurdistan and was the beginning of an ongoing collaboration concerning educational reform in Kurdistan. What we have come to understand is that most of the Educational system in Kurdistan has been based on this “Banking” idea. Moreover, we realized that this system was still being used in the United States to a great extent and even at our university of SIU in many classes. Furthermore, we have come to believe that for Kurdistan to progress into the future and become more competitive in the world, we will have to try and change many things about our system.

In this short paper Nicholas and I collaborated to discuss many of the ideas about “critical pedagogy” and Paulo Freire. We will also discuss how some of these ideas might be implemented into the Kurdish-Iraqi educational system. Furthermore, we will discuss what many other scholars think about Freire. For example, there are many educational critics that believe Freire’s ideas should be implemented in American schools instead of the present and controversial No-Child-Left Behind Program which focuses largely on testing. Finally, we will discuss some other problems facing the people in Kurdistan and the educational system.

Part I: A Short Bibliography

Paulo Freire was born in Recife, Brazil on September 19, 1921. His family was middle class and in his early years he experienced a good standard of living and had many opportunities. However, this changed in 1929 when there was a worldwide economic depression. It was during

this time that he first started to experience poverty and even hunger. His biographer Donald Macedo writes that this period had a deep effect on his life and that these experiences would:

This had a profound influence on his life as he came to know the gnawing pangs of hunger and fell behind in school because of the listlessness it produced; it also led him to make a vow at age eleven, to dedicate his life to the struggle against hunger, so that other children would not have to know the agony he was then experiencing (Freire 2000, pp. 30).

It was also during this period that Freire discovered what he would later call the “culture of silence” that “infected” the masses of poor people in his community. (Freire, 2000, pp. 30) According to Macedo, Freire came to realize “that their [poor people] ignorance and lethargy were the direct product of the whole situation of economic, social, and political domination—and of the paternalism—of which they were victims”(Freire, 2000, pp. 30). Freire began to believe that the poverty and misery that poor people experienced in their everyday lives was because of the education system. “It became clear to him that the whole educational system was one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture of silence,” writes Macedo (Freire, 2000, pp. 30).. As a result of these experiences, Freire decided to focus much of his attention on the field of education. However, it would be several years before he became a major force in educational reform.

When Freire was old enough to go to college, he studied law and philosophy at the University of Recife. It was during this time that he began to develop his philosophy about society and the role of education. Freire writes about this learning process in his book *Pedagogy of Hope*. He says:

It is interesting, in a context of childhood and adolescence, in the connivance maintained with the wickedness of the powerful—with the weakness that needed to turn into the strength of the dominated—that the time of SESI's [Industrial Social Services] foundation, that time of “solderings” and “spicings” of old, pure “guesses,” to which my new knowledge with its critical emergence gave meaning, was the moment at which I read the why, or some of the whys—the tapestries and fabrics that were books already written and not yet read by me, and of yet to be written that would come to enlighten the vivid memory that was forming me: Marx, Lukacs, Fromm, Gramsci, Fanon, Memmi, Sartre, Koisk Agnes Heller, M. Ponty, Simon Weil, Arendt, Marcuse, and so many others. (Freire, 1995, pp. 17-18).

In particular Freire was deeply influenced by the ideas of Karl Marx especially in relationship to class structures in countries like Brazil. In Brazil, most of the people were peasants and most of them could not read or write. At this time, there was a literacy law for voting or participating in the political process in Brazil that required peasants to be able to read and write. Also, according to Macedo there was a form of slavery or serfdom employed by land owners and some corrupt government administrators to subjugate and control workers in the sugar plantations and on cattle ranches throughout Brazil. These institutions alarmed Freire and he vowed to work against them by teaching the peasants to read so they could participate in the political process. One of Freire's biographers John Elias says that when Freire started working the illiteracy rate in the seven state area of Brazil was almost 75% and that the life expectancy for men was only 28 years and 32 years for women (Elias, 1993, pp.1).

He was also a deeply religious man and was influenced by ideas of liberation theology. This political religious movement began within the Catholic Church in Latin America in the 1950s–1960s. Liberation theology arose principally as a moral reaction to the poverty caused by social injustice in that region. According to Macedo, Freire became convinced that the poor people in his country could improve their lives with ideas inspired by this new radical type of education. Although, he earned a degree in law from this university he decided that he would never officially practice it. Instead he decided to devote his life to improving the education and social conditions of poor people in his country.

After he graduated from college, he worked as a welfare official and later became director of the Department of Education and Culture of the Social Service in the State of Pernambuco (Elias, 1993, pp. 3-7). It was during this period that he developed a radical new approach to literacy teaching. According to Macedo and other sources this new teaching approach to reading and writing achieved amazing results. In one early pilot project Freire and his new method taught a group of 300 illiterate peasants "sugar cane workers" to read and write within 45 days (Chavez, n.d). Furthermore, because of the success of these pilot programs the Brazilian government supported his work and granted the creation of thousands of cultural centers countrywide. Elias writes about this period in his biography of Freire *Pedagogy of Liberation*:

There were courses in the states of Rio Grande do Norte, Sao Paulo, Bahia, Sergipe, and Rio GrandeduSul. Freire planned to import thirty five thousand Polish slide projectors and establish twenty thousand cultural circles in the country to reach the approximately

twenty million illiterates. These training courses were developed within eight months, with college students serving most vigorously as coordinators (Elias, 1993, 5).

These advances in literacy education and the early career of Freire in Brazil ended with the 1964 military coup in that country. At that time, the Brazilian government was led by the Labor Party and the President was Joao Goulart. This was during the time of the Cold War between the Eastern Soviet bloc countries and the Western countries dominated by the United States. Many military and business leaders in Brazil believed that Goulart and the Labor party were too closely associated with the Communist East, especially the Castro government in Cuba. In early April 1964 the Brazilian Armed forces seized power in a coup d'état and began a twenty year period of military and right wing control. Several people were killed and even more were imprisoned after the coup (Elias, 1993, pp. 7-10)

Freire was accused of treason for his educational philosophy and practices. He was jailed for a period of 70 days and then he was exiled to Bolivia. According to Elias, Freire was just one of over one hundred and fifty other people who were stripped of their citizenship rights and deported. Later he moved to Chile where he spent five years and worked in the Christian Democratic Agrarian Reform Movement. Elias writes, "In the two years of work there, Freire's campaign for Chile won a UNESCO award for successfully eliminating illiteracy among a great number of the Chilean population" (Elias, 1993, pp. 8). All of these experiences would have a major impact on his teaching philosophy. It was also during this period that he began writing his first book *Education as the Practice of Freedom*. He followed this with his most famous book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in the Portuguese language, which is spoken in Brazil, in 1968.

In 1969 Freire moved to Harvard University as a visiting professor and after this he moved to Geneva, Switzerland to work as an advisor to the World Council of Churches. During this time, Freire became more famous because of his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. His educational philosophy would have a major impact especially in developing Third World countries such as Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

Freire would not be able to return to Brazil until 1980. When he moved back to his home country he was able to go back to teaching adult literacy. He also ran for political office and was appointed as the Secretary of Education for the city of Sao Paulo. Freire died from heart disease in 1997 (Freire, 2000, pp. 12-26).

Today, Paulo Freire is considered by many educators and curriculum developers to be one of the most important educational thinkers of all time. His ideas and “critical pedagogy” are taught in most universities across the world. For example, the text books for several college classes including *Curriculum Theory* and *Curriculum: From Theory to Practice* both devote several pages to his ideas. In *Curriculum: from Theory to Practice*, author Wesley Null calls Freire “a formidable figure within what has become known as “critical pedagogy” or “critical theory (Null, 2011, pg. 94-95).” Education critic Herbert Kohl says that Freire is “perhaps the most significant educator in the world during the last half century” (Freire, 2000, pp. 16).

However, according to Macedo, Freire's ideas are not as well received in the United States as they are in other regions of the world. He says this is because of the radical nature of his thoughts and the fact that they are critical of the present “positivistic and management model” practiced by so many American institutions” (Freire, 2000, pp. 15-16). Also, Freire's ideas are criticized in the United States by many conservative commentators and critics for being too closely inspired by Marxist ideas and theories of power. On the other hand, according to an

article entitled, "The freirean approach to adult literacy education" published by the *Center For Adult English Language Acquisition* Freire's methods are widely practiced in some ESL programs in the United States such as the Hispanic Literacy Council in Chicago, Bronx Educational Services, BASE in Los Angeles, the Adult Literacy Resources Institute in Boston, and numerous others (Spener, 1992, pp, 1-4).

Moreover, there is little doubt that Freire's ideas are still important. According to Macedo writing in 1997, there have been over 1,000,000 copies of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* printed in over 20 languages including Arabic, Swahili, Hausa, and Mandarin. Furthermore, there are Paulo Freire Institutes at such institutions of higher learning as UCLA in Los Angeles, University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, University of Central Lancashire in the United Kingdom, Federal University of Pernambuco in Brazil and dozens of other locations.

Shortly before Paulo Freire died he wrote the following:

We need to say no to the neoliberal fatalism that we are witnessing at the end of this century, informed by the ethics of the market, an ethics in which a minority makes most profits against the lives of the majority. In other words, those who cannot compete, die. This is a perverse ethics, in fact, lacks ethics. I insist on saying that I continue to be human...I would then remain the last educator in the world to say no: I do not accept history as determinism. I embrace history as possibility where we can demystify the evil in this perverse fatalism that characterizes the neoliberal discourse in the end of this century." (Freire, 2000, pp.26)

Part II: Some of Freire's Ideas About Education

According to one of college text books entitled *Curriculum: From Theory to Practice* Paulo Freire is most widely known for his radical education ideas called “critical pedagogy” or “critical theory.” The education critic and reformer Henry Giroux describes critical pedagogy as an “educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action” (Giroux, 2010).

One of the most important ideas of Freire’s is the Banking concept of education. This idea has been discussed and written about by many scholars. It is also discussed in many text books. Freire writes about this idea in *Pedagogy of Oppressed*. He says:

In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge of processes of inquiry. The teacher presents himself to his students as their necessary opposites; by considering their ignorance absolute, he justifies his own existence. (Freire, 2000, pp.72).

Furthermore, Freire created a list of questions that he says show how schools and classrooms can be evaluated. If a school or classroom can be defined by the following categories then they represent the Banking concept of education.

- (a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- (b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- (c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;

- (d) The teacher talks and the students listen-meekly;
- (e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- (f) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- (g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
- (h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- (i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (j) The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

Many educational critics such as Kohn, Giroux, Aronowitz, Macedo, and others believe that most conventional education is based on the Banking method. In the survey we conducted some years ago of students at the CESL program at SIU myself and my friend Nicholas asked them the questions on Freire's survey. The results clearly showed that most of the students in this program believe that the program is a banking style of education. (See index for survey results) Moreover, in the Iraqi-Kurdish education system almost all of the schools and classes teach in this method. There are very few programs where students can decide what types of classes to take or what kind of information they want to learn in Kurdistan. For example, there are no electives or choices for students in the Higher Education curriculum. Every student must take the same classes and learn from the same type of curricula. In this method, the teacher teaches from the front of the class room and the students listen and take notes. In our system, most of the

students memorize the teacher's lectures and their notes. After this process, all of the students have to take a test and pass the test with at least 50%. This is also different from the American system. Students can pass a class with only a 50% score on the test.

Another main idea of Freire is called "praxis". Freire says that praxis is "the action of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire, 2000, pp. 79). This part of Freire's idea and theory is that students need to learn by doing things and "engaging, applying, exercising, realizing, or practicing ideas." In other words, the students should be challenged to ask questions and solve problems on their own or in groups. One way to do this kind of teaching is described in a report by the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. The authors of this report say:

The term "problem posing" is often misunderstood, perhaps because of the negative connotations given the word "problem" and the frequent reference to problem-solving skills in education. In the Freirean approach, cultural themes in the form of open ended problems are incorporated into materials such as pictures, comics, short stories, songs, and video dramas that are then used to generate discussion. The teacher asks a series of open-ended questions about these materials that encourage students to elaborate on what they see in them (Caela, 1993, pp. 2-4).

In Iraqi-Kurdistan there are not many teachers that practice this type of teaching. Consequently, many students are not comfortable to ask questions of the teacher or make statements about the lessons. Many students are afraid to talk in class and do not wish to be called on in case they might make a mistake. According to the survey we conducted this was a big problem for Kurdish students who were studying in the United States. Many students do not

wish to ask the teacher questions because they do not want the teacher to think they are not smart or they are being rude.

Sometimes, Freire calls this type of work “dialogue”. These ideas are very philosophical and can be very difficult to understand at first. For example, Freire writes about dialogue in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He says:

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who wish this naming---between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them (Freire, 2000, pp. 88).

Simply put, this is saying that students need to be able to speak and not be afraid to say what they think. The student needs to have the right to talk about their ideas and the world they live in. They do not have to except the world of the teacher and what they say as the best thing or the truth. These are radical ideas in my country. In Iraqi-Kurdistan students do not really talk with the teachers very much. They do not argue with the teacher ever.

One of the last ideas we will talk about is the idea of the “culture of silence.” We understand this to mean that people or students do not speak because they believe it will not make a difference. The people are silent because they do not think they have any power to change things or make things better. In Iraqi-Kurdistan this idea is starting to change. When Saddam Hussein was in power the people were afraid to speak out or make complaints. Many people who did this were killed or put in the prison. Moreover, people did not trust each other and they were silent for this reason even inside their homes with their family members.

Now that Saddam is gone the people discuss politics and make many complaints against the government. However, there are many people who still do not talk and speak out. This is very true in the school system and the University system. In this system, people do not speak out in the classroom. Students only talk about politics and complaints outside of the classroom. With Freire's ideas teachers should encourage students to have these types of dialogues and talks in the classroom. One way to make this happen might be to have University seminars like in the United States. This might be an idea that could be developed in a pilot program.

We think that these are some of the main ideas about reforming education. Moreover, they are a different way to think about how students learn and how to conduct education in a better way. We believe that the Banking concept of education is a big problem in Iraqi-Kurdistan and that it will not be easy to change this. Finally, we believe that many of these ideas should be used to help prepare students to study in western countries universities and also to be better prepared for the globalizing world. It is recognized by many scholars and citizens that Kurdistan is changing very rapidly and it will need many new ideas to help make these changes.

Part III: No-Child-Left-Behind, Paulo Freire and Some New Ideas

One of the biggest educational debates going on in the United States that has ramifications for Kurdistan is about the No-Child-Left Behind Program and all of the critics of this idea. This is an important debate that educators in Kurdistan should be aware of because in Kurdistan the entire system is based on testing. In Kurdistan-Iraq students are tested all of the time and almost all of the lessons must be memorized by the students. Students are tested at every educational level and these tests will be very important for the student's future. In other words, these tests will determine what programs the student will take in the future. For example,

many of the critics of testing and No Child Left Behind talk about Paulo Freire's ideas like Henry A. Giroux.

Giroux writes in one article "that the major issue now driving schooling is how to teach to the test." He says that many classrooms in America are "dead zones" where there is no critical thinking, self-reflection, or any other types of real learning going on (Giroux, 2010). In his article entitled "Rethinking Education as the Practice of Freedom: Paulo Freire and the Promise of Critical Pedagogy" he quotes the education critic Stanley Aronowitz who writes:

Few of even the so-called educators ask the question: What matters beyond reading, writing, and numeracy that are presumably taught in the elementary and secondary grades? The old question of what a kid needs to become an informed 'citizen' capable of participating in making the large and small public decisions that affect the larger world as well as everyday life receives honorable mention but not serious consideration. These unasked questions are symptoms of a new regime of educational expectations that privileges job readiness above any other educational values (Giroux, 2010).

According to Aronowitz, Freire did not think that education was only for teaching students how to get jobs or careers, but instead a way to learn to live in the world and live a "self-managed life" (Giroux, 2010). In Kurdistan the educational system is only designed to get students jobs in the economy or society. It does not teach the skills to survive in the global economy and world or really to be competitive for the new companies coming to the region from the western world. Although, the government is trying to send many students to western countries like the United States and England, most classroom education in Kurdistan is still only

for jobs or “careers” in the student’s future and many of these students are not prepared to study in the West.

Giroux says that Freire rejected these types of ideas. He writes that Freire was against the idea that education should only meet the demands of the economy or “market” and that it should be more about challenging students with critical thinking, teaching freedom, and social responsibility. Moreover, both Giroux and Aronowitz further state that Freire believed that education should also be about teaching students to create a “socially just world.” Even though most young Kurdish students are very interested in politics and the future of our country, the educational system does not really participate in this dialogue. In the Kurdish system there is no debate in the classroom about things like politics, government, and reforming the system. These types of discussions take place mostly outside of the classroom.

Another critic of the American education system is Alfie Kohn. In his book called *The Schools Our Children Deserve* he writes about the banking concept and talks about Paulo Freire. Kohn says that throughout history many educators have critiqued the system. He quotes John Dewey who called this type of system a “static, cold storage ideal of knowledge.” Kohn calls the present system a “jug and mug” model. He explains that this means that information or knowledge is “poured from the big container into the little ones.” (Kohn, 1999, pp. 62)

All of this information may be very new for many educators and students. According to the survey we conducted of Kurdish students before they came to America many said that they thought the American educational system was the best in the world and that testing was the most important part. They said that they really never considered that testing students might be a negative phenomenon. This is very important because in Kurdistan-Iraq the government is

focusing much new attention on higher standards, tests scores, and copying western models of administration.

There is another thing in Kohn's book about the ideas of Taylorism and John Dewey at the beginning of the 20th century. According to Kohn, the No child Left Behind or the testing model is very similar to the things they did in America during the birth of the state controlled educational system. Kohn says that they did not work then and that they will not work nowadays. In his book he quotes from a saying of John Dewey about this problem in education:

What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography and history, to win ability to read and write, if in the process the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worthwhile, of the values to which these things are relative: if he loses desire to apply what he has learned and, above all, loses the ability to extract meaning from his future experiences as they occur (Kohn, 1999).

It is interesting to see how all of these critics discuss the ideas of Paulo Freire. They all see that the present system is very much like the "Banking" system and that it has many negative effects on the students. These are all important ideas that Kurdish educators need to consider for our future. The big question in Kurdistan is how do we create better standards and improve student learning, but not rely exclusively on too many tests. We have to move away from too much memorization and create new learning environments. These ideas will be difficult to implement in Kurdistan-Iraq on a large scale. However, some small types of pilot programs could be developed at universities and in high schools.

We have other ideas that we think might be a way to start reforming the system without causing too many problems in the beginning. For example, there are a growing number of teachers and students in Kurdistan who are talking to each other on the Internet about

educational reform. Students are also unionized in Kurdistan. Maybe, in the future there could be a student education conference where students, teachers, administrators, and the government agencies could start talking about reform. Moreover, individual universities could create certain types of programs or even smaller seminars that would better prepare students for studying overseas. One of the important things about this kind of program would be to help “teach” students to learn more on their own and to take the “learning” initiative, instead of waiting for the teacher to tell them what to do. This is one of our biggest problems.

Another thing that we believe we will have to do is prepare students to read more academic journals, books, and research studies. This is another major problem. We think that some universities could have special classes or a pilot program to help students learn more about doing academic research. When the Kurdish students surveyed for this work first came to the United States they said that they were not prepared for American or western style research methods and dealing with the emphasis this system puts on research. This is not the case in Kurdistan. In general, people in Kurdistan do not read many books. This is a huge problem and will require a major effort in the future to improve literacy and make more books available to students. We will also have to encourage students to read more and we have many ideas about how this could happen. This will require the cooperation of the government and the department of education, but it could be implemented in the future over a several year period.

Conclusion:

As we have seen in this paper, Paulo Freire was, and is, an important figure in the area of educational reform. For some reformers like Kohn, Freire is the most important educational thinker of the last fifty years. However, for many people such as the Board of Education in the state of Arizona where his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was banned from high school classrooms,

his ideas are far too radical and political. Nevertheless, there are few educators in the world who are not familiar with his fundamental theory of “banking” in education. As a result of this, his ideas continue to have an effect on education. Furthermore, for some educators like Kohn and Macedo his ideas offer many solutions to the present No-Child-Left-Behind type systems that focus so much attention on testing and maintaining allusive and arbitrary standards.

Freire's fundamental idea about the “banking” concept of education and how this practice has many negative consequences is the central theme that Kurdish educators should pay attention too. As we have stated before, this is the one point that is the underlying principle of the educational system in Kurdistan. Moreover, after further discussions, consideration and research we strongly believe that it must be changed or reformed in our system, if we expect our graduating students to be able to compete in a globalizing world. Furthermore, according to the surveys we conducted of Kurdish students in the United States this “banking” type of system in Iraqi-Kurdistan is directly responsible for so many of their difficulties in adjusting to the educational systems in the United States and other western countries.

In conclusion we hope to be instrumental in starting the dialogue about educational reform in the KRG region of Iraq and hope that the readers of this paper will join us in this effort. It will take all of us to make a difference for a better future.

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	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
N	Valid	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		.97	.93	.93	.97	1.00	.97	1.00	.93

According to this table the mean for all questions is 96.66 % of the entire sample in this survey. This indicates that an overwhelming number of students identify the CESL program as operating in the manner Freire claims is representative of a “banking” and anti-independent /empowerment pedagogy (Freire, 2000). Only 3.44% of the responders disagreed with this assessment and considered the program structured otherwise.