PROBLEM-POSING

DESCRIPTION

Problem-posing delves deeply into any issue or problem, demonstrating the extent of its social and personal connections. Problem-posing "focuses on power relations in the classroom, in the institution, in the formation of standard canons of knowledge, and in society at large" (Shor, 1992, p. 31). It challenges the relationship between teacher and student and offers students a forum for validating their life experiences, their cultures, and their personal knowledge of how their world works. Problem-posing is dynamic, participatory, and empowering. Problem-posing is more than a technique that teaches critical thinking; it is a philosophy, a way of thinking about students and their ability to think critically and to reflect analytically on their lives.

FIVE STEPS OF PROBLEM-POSING

Auerbach (1992) has simplified the steps of problem-posing. Problem-posing is a means for teaching critical thinking skills, and many learners need the initial structure these steps provide in order to build confidence and esteem in their ability to think critically. When beginning to problem-pose, it is important to spend time on each step, for these are all essential components in learning how to critically think about one's world.

Describe the Content
What is the dialogue about?
What is happening in the dialogue?

Define the Problem
What is the problem?
What is the cause of the problem?
Why is this a problem?

Personalize the Problem
How does this problem affect our community?
How does this problem relate to our own lives and cultures?

Discuss the Problem
What are the social reasons for this problem?

Discuss Alternatives to the Problem
How can we work together to resolve the problem?
What are the consequences of various courses of action?