

**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY  
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Learner: **Steven Diaz**

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN**

**Please Follow These Procedures:** If requested by your mentor, use an assignment cover sheet as the first page of the **word processor** file. Use "headers" to indicate your course code, assignment number, and your name on each page of the assignment/homework including this assignment cover sheet. .

**Keep a Photocopy or Electronic Copy Of Your Assignments:** You may need to re-submit assignments if your mentor has indicated that you may or must do so.

**Academic Integrity:** All work submitted in each course must be the Learner's own. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by the faculty mentor. The knowing submission of another persons work represented as that of the Learner's without properly citing the source of the work will be considered plagiarism and will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course, and may result in academic dismissal.

**ED5003**

**Dr. Butler Pearson**

**Philosophy of Education**

**Activity 10: Integrative Essay on  
Critical Analysis of Educational  
Institutions and Processes**

**Dr. B-P,**

**Thank you for your feedback in my previous assignment. Yes, I learned very well the 12 Educator Accomplished Practices! Thanks to Nova Southeastern. LOL! I had a challenging experience when writing this essay. I decided for the topic of empowerment and disempowerment since it relates with my philosophy of education that education "unlocks the door of opportunity."**

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Integrative Essay on Critical Analysis of Educational Institutions and Processes

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The popular quote “Learning is power” has been overly used by many people that its true significance has been trivialized. The ramifications of learning, therefore; having an education, is often overlooked and misunderstood. Learning is often seen as a passive activity by many people, where the flow of knowledge and skills goes only in one direction, from the *source* to the *receiver*. These individuals see education as a “banking” activity, using Freire’s criticism about the current model of education, where individuals receive, memorize, and repeat (as cited in Cahn, 1997, p. 461). This type of education provides a narrow view of the world around us and numbs the individuals’ awareness of the consequences of many events in their life, which could create the dangerous attitude of indifference and resignation. These passive learners will probably become also passive members of a society that is in urgent need of active individuals to address the serious social, economic, political, and environmental problems. According to Freire, they have been empowered (in the negative sense!) to adjust on how the world is and to inhibit their creative power to change the world (as cited in Cahn, 1997, p. 465).

For education to unlock the doors of opportunities for an individual’s life, the individual must be empowered to make intelligent, conscious, and informed decisions. Having an education means having choices, which implies having the power to improve and to be the best we can be. Having an education also means to have the power to question or be critical of anyone’s actions, decisions, or propaganda that may have an impact on us and our community. “Education is now recognized as the pathway to freedom, and free democratic society depends on its members’ abilities to freely choose, think, and express themselves, and to actively contribute to the political and social processes in pursuit of their interests” (Pimentel, 2006, para. 33). In other words, an educated individual is fully aware of his or her rights and duties, and will not hesitate to be an

active member of a democratic society to protect and improve it. Ravitch stated that “Education, today more than at any time in the past, is the key to successful participation in society” (as cited in Gutek, 204, p. 276).

Empowering our students to become one day productive and active members of a democratic society, schools must become agencies of empowerment of the democratic ideals. According to Breault (2003), “To nurture a deeper appreciation and grasp of democracy, the school can create an environment in which students are empowered in a truly democratic sense” (p. 3). The process of empowering our students at school must be initiated by those who have constant and direct contact with students, the classroom teachers. “The complexity of issues facing today's students, classrooms and schools require the professional public school teacher to embrace the role of empowered and activist designer and implementer of public school policy and practice” (Talbert, 2003, p. 51). Teachers need to believe and practice empowerment to teach their students about empowerment. They need to stop working in isolation and start working in collaboration with other teachers to make their voice be heard. They should stop being afraid or apathetic of questioning educational policies that do not empower their students. Teachers must stop being marginalized from the decision-making of educational policies since they are the ones who know what is happening in their classrooms.

“With the pressure for teaching to higher academic performance standards becoming more intense in today's schools, many teachers are reluctant to take time away from the academic curriculum to introduce the concept of student empowerment” (Jones, 2006, p. 12). Teachers who only “teach for the test,” who do not connect knowledge to their students’ experiences and who do not provide opportunities for students to reflect on why they are learning a new knowledge and how can it be used to their benefit are disempowering their students. The

teacher who does not expect the best from their students and does not model what is a good democratic citizen is disempowering his or her students. A teacher who does not attempt to bring back to the learning process those disengaged and passive students and push them to become active learners is perpetuating in them indifference and resignation. If the teacher does not provide constant feedback to inform them about their academic performance, and what can they do to improve, is fostering ignorance in his or her students. A teacher who praises unequally or does not praise at all his or her students is taking away the greatest power from students: motivation and hope!

As the popular quote states “Learning is Power,” schools are agencies of empowerment since learning is the main activity in such place. Teachers are the most powerful agents of empowerment in schools. There will be no schools if there are no teachers. They are the one who makes a difference in a student’s life. Teachers are responsible to teach their subject matter well, which will empower their students with useful and meaningful knowledge. However, they should also teach students to be critical of themselves and the community they live. “Teachers become educators when they get fully aware of the surrounding world's influence on every individual. And, most of all, they must be open to the reality of learners, get acquainted with their way of being, adhere to their right to be. Educators choose to change the world with learners” (Pimentel, 2006, para. 40). Schools become agencies of disempowerment when at least one of its teachers decides to close the doors of opportunity in a student’s life; and this cannot be!

### References

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