

**Universitat de Barcelona, Diálogos y Saó, como acción formativa-
investigadora el laborator i d'iniciatives ciutadanes ettore gelpi**

Gelpi, Freire i l'aprenentage permanent

**Competences and the Right to Lifelong Education. 45 Theses for an Alternative
Critical Discourse**

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1. The discourse highlighting a 'commercially and market oriented' type of competences, often measured through a positivist approach and according to outcomes, is arguably the most hegemonic in education today.
2. This discourse reflects the broader and equally hegemonic discourse regarding competition and mobility (capital and labour) in an age characterised by the intensification of globalisation
3. The discourse regarding this type of competences made its presence felt in vocational education.
4. It made its presence felt in vocational education.
5. In many countries, it led to a highly reductionist and behaviourist concept of competence, on the British model.
6. The essence of each task would be revealed as it was broken down into its various components
7. This criticism not unique to Australia and this discourse is not restricted to vocational education
8. It can well apply to the OECD and EU influences in documents concerning lifelong learning
9. We have reached a situation where everything has to produce results that can be measured in quantitative ways. Jean Francois Lyotard calls this 'performativity'
10. The dominant discourse on competences focuses on education for 'employability' and ICT

11. The old UNESCO discourse on lifelong education, promoted by Ettore Gelpi and others, based on an expansive and humanist concept of education and human capacities, is reduced to a discourse of learning that projects a two-dimensional image of human beings.
12. Human beings are conceived of, through the new discourse on lifelong learning, as producers / consumers rather than critical agents in the Freire sense.
13. Functionality takes precedence over criticality: functional competence rather than critical literacy /critical competence.
14. The emphasis in the EU discourse is on 'employability': everything targeted towards rendering the European economy the most competitive 'knowledge economy' in the world.
15. 'Employability' does not mean 'employment' , as Gelpi emphasized in *Lavoro Futuro*.
16. Adult Education agencies in Europe have become ESF (European Social Fund) dependent – the emphasis as a result is placed on 'employability'. So much for the broader concerns of community and collective learning, the traditional forms of Freire inspired popular education!
17. The competences given importance in the dominant discourse are those that should, in theory, enable persons to become more in demand in the labour market, more 'marketable.'
18. Education is regarded no longer a public good but a consumer product – anathema to the UNESCO inspired writers, like Gelpi, on Lifelong Education.
19. Lifelong Learning in its modern garb signifies the updating of competences in an 'employability' sense
20. This is all part of the functions of the Neoliberal State.
21. It is very active state - bails out banks etc.
22. It controls the inward flow of labour through stiff immigration policies and rigid detention procedures (carceral state)
23. It has the responsibility of developing the infrastructure for the mobility of capital.
24. It is under pressure to render much Post-compulsory education-HRD oriented, in a stratified and racialised Higher Education system.
25. Developing HRD entails the attainment of those competences that attract investment and that permit the labour force to render industry more competitive.
26. These narrowly defined competences, those that fit the labour market and the perceived demands of the economy.
27. This is a reductionist view of competences and learning.

28. It promotes the idea of education as an individual and not a social responsibility, the kind of collective social responsibility called for by Freire in his pedagogy of the oppressed.
29. Individuals are called on to finance wholly or partially their own access to education as though they are purchasing a consumer product rather than availing themselves of a public service to which they are entitled as citizens. (entitlement).
30. There is a shift towards narrow competences at the expense of those that are central towards autonomous learning and active citizenship
31. Critical Literacy, as promoted by Paulo Freire and Lorenzo Milani, becomes the major casualty in this situation.
32. The antidote to this would be a concern with the collective in the development of a collective public sphere.
33. These competences are meant to equip persons not only individually but also collectively (Freire, Milani, Suchodolski, Gelpi, Dave).
34. It would allow persons to contribute to the development of a genuinely democratic environment.
35. This concept leads us to hearken back to John Dewey, Aldo Capitini, Juergen Habermas, Maxine Greene, the last mentioned adding the imagination to critical literacy.
36. Crucial here is Freire's concept of critical literacy – reading the word and the world
37. This entails a critical reading of the world – the principal 'competence' to regenerate public sphere
38. For want of a better word than 'competences', I would call, in this sense, for a key set of 'competences' for a thick democracy.
39. Thick democracy' entails direct social participation
40. Social movements engaged in promoting social justice can create the right context for acquisition of the various competences that are useful in this regard.
41. These include the ability to mobilise persons around public issues, develop organisational skills and exercise rights which would otherwise remain unknown to the persons concerned, and the ability to conceive of and create processes of social learning - methods of non violent protests, 'teach-ins'.
42. It entails reading the construction of the world
43. Entails use of competences given importance in the dominant discourse, for example the use of internet, computers etc.

44. **The competences have a social purpose and are considered as vehicles to update strategies and modes of communication.**
45. **The major challenge is to read not only the word and the world but also the construction of the world through the mass media.**