

Development Education and Dialogical Learning in the 21st Century

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Abstract

This introductory paper on Development Education and dialogical learning attempts to briefly contextualise the emerging need of 'Development Education' (DE) as a new discipline of academic study and public action in the context of contemporary 'globalisation'. In the second part, I discuss in detail the specific aspects of a new learning relationship based on dialogical and communicative learning which, for a discussion in this paper, is based on a constructivist approach with comparative references drawn from a range of Asian and Western thinkers including Mahatma Gandhi and Paulo Freire.

Keywords: *Development Education, dialogical theories of learning, competence, empowerment, social transformation*

Introduction: Emerging Need of 'Development Education' as a New Discipline in the Context of Contemporary Globalisation

This paper discusses the emerging need and nature of Development Education in the present and new global order of the 21st century. An understanding of the impact of contemporary globalisation of the world economy, particularly its cultural, social, political and educational impacts, its fast changing communication and informational technologies, necessitate new learning behaviours and relationships, which are relevant not only in educational but also in organisational and development contexts. The transformation of our society towards an interconnected global world and the increasing importance of civil society require deepening of democracy and democratisation of knowledge construction processes based on communicative competence and dialogical learning. A new kind of dialogical learning relationship based on principles of love, trust, sacrifice, empathy, equity, social justice and communicative competence, both in educational and political (or social settings) can enhance theoretical and practical skills in the sphere of learning and competencies to empower individuals. It is argued that Development Education based on such dialogical learning relationships and praxis is capable of promoting self-regulatory motivational processes, which further promote learning and action for a cause.

No education or learning is neutral or separate from the practices and thought processes of society in general. Education systems, politics and institutions are rapidly being transformed by the present era of globalisation. Globalisation can be defined as 'the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness' (Held *et al.*, 1999: 2). In last two decades particularly, globalisation with its neo-liberal ideology has led to a re-

structuring of schooling and education, under pressure from local and international capitalist organisations and compliant governments. Moreover, there are evidences of growing inequality inside and between education and economic and social systems within the policy context of global neo-liberal capitalism, which have diminished democratic and moral accountability and stifled critical thought – by compressing and repressing critical space in education (Hill 2003). Hence as the ideas of M.K. Gandhi, John Dewey, Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas suggest, it is necessary to bring back democratic and moral accountability and critical learning space within education. This resurgence in education and public domain is more possible within a non-structuralist ‘critical humanist’ movement in education.

Following McKay and Romm’s (1992) non-structuralist ‘critical humanist’ position on education, in this paper I focus on dialogical interventionist approaches in education, which allow us to build alternative educational models or paradigms for democratic and moral accountability in learning to ensure democratisation of knowledge construction. Humanism refers to the school of philosophy that believes in human effort and ingenuity rather than religion, and which is guided by empowerment and emancipation of people. Democratisation of knowledge construction is again possible only when educational models/paradigms are ontologically open rather than closed, and which contribute to ongoing debates on the relationship between pedagogy, justice, equity, social transformation and environmental sustainability. I agree with McKay and Romm (1992: x-xi) that ‘it is essential for people’s education to be located firmly within a *non-structuralist* (as opposed to a structuralist) paradigm’. ‘Structuralism’ is used here as an ‘ideal overarching category’, referring to theoretical presuppositions on the concept of social ‘structure’ as an independent force. Structuralists claim that certain basic structures or systems alone govern and explain all human behaviour. Structuralist presuppositions focus mainly on large-scale social structures and social institutions and their interrelationships, which as determining factors have rigid constraining effects on people in society. Unlike the structuralist, a non-structuralist paradigm ‘emphasises the capacity of human beings to reconceptualise the world around them, and their ability to rethink new futures for themselves in the light of their consideration of options’ (McKay and Romm, 1992: xi).

McKay and Romm (1992) argue that a truly liberating education needs to adopt ways to democratise learning and the production of knowledge with an exploration of the link between knowledge and power within an epistemological position, which considers ‘knowledge as a world-construction activity’. Within this epistemological position, from the Indian example we find that Gandhian ideals, praxis and dialogics very much allow for a liberatory education with democratisation of learning and production of knowledge visible in his emphasis on autonomy of the individual, craft-based scientific education, organisational principles of village republics, and principles of *swaraj*, *satyagrah* and *ahimsa*. Gandhi was a fierce critic of modernity, and hence also very critical of modern colonial education as colonising rather than liberating. Like Gandhi, the critical humanist theory, too, seeks to reconstruct education not to fulfill the agenda of capital and the high-tech industries, but to radically democratise education in order to advance the goals of progressive education (cf. Western contemporaries like John Dewey, Paulo

Freire and Jürgen Habermas) in fostering learning that will assist development of individuality, citizenship and community and social justice, and strengthen democratic participation in all spheres of life. Both Gandhi and critical humanists would be critical of the recent global developments in education, where there has been increasing imposition of a neo-liberal agenda on education, making it purely an economic investment for the market and industry. We shall further see, how this agenda is disastrously wrong and why there is the need to strengthen and define an emerging new discipline called 'Development Education', to make it broad-based in terms of critical humanist theory assumptions, both to critique the neo-liberal agenda and to propose alternative conceptions and practices in the development and educational sectors.

From a critical humanist perspective, both educational and social inequalities are long term and inevitable consequences of a hierarchised world, particularly of the capitalist system where 'democracy has now been reduced to a metaphor for the alleged 'free' market' (Giroux, 2004: 35). Education and learning in general reflect and support social inequalities of capitalist society and culture. The 'education industry' is a significant site in the reproduction and replication of the unequal social structures, forms, values and institutions, necessary for the continuation of the system. Although liberal democracy legitimates itself with discourses around issues like rights, freedoms, participation, self-rule, and citizenship, historically it has been warped by a 'damaged and burdened tradition' of racial and gender exclusions, economic injustice, and a formalistic, ritualised democracy, which is deceptive of democratic participation (Giroux, 2004: 35; Brenkman, 2000: 123). McChesney refers to neoliberalism as 'the immediate and foremost enemy of genuine participatory democracy' (1999: 11).

In terms of socio-economic development, contemporary 'globalisation', 'privatisation' and 'liberalisation' have led to greater integration of individual national economies within the global market system. Rui Yang (2003: 269) has argued that 'globalisation is predominantly economic', and contends that 'global exchanges in the economic, cultural and educational domains continue to be unequal'. The majority of nations and communities still remain extremely poor, stagnant and mired in chronic poverty with pathologies like conflict, violence, corruption and lawlessness in their society. Some scholars like John Saul (2006: 6) consider 'the present inequalities within the world-wide economy as the absolutely central fact of the current global reality' and also hold 'the struggle to overcome such inequalities as the absolutely central challenge that confronts humankind'.

However the 'dependency theory' views that the 'developing' countries are not just 'behind' the economically advanced countries but remain subordinated to them by various mechanisms that must be abolished by radical change from below (Saul, 2006: 9-10). The debate about development, under-development and failed states seems unending, but Development Education should take on these debates further and challenge developmental failures. Such a debate must further work on the assumption that solutions to various structural inequalities and social exclusions in society lie in efforts from 'below', signifying an opportunity for all local populations, all weaker segments of society, smaller communities and poorer nations to realise their full potential. Such an effort, debate and potential should be inclusive of not only issues of livelihoods

and economic productivity but also a broad range of capacities, which maintain diversity and foster autonomy, dignity, self-sufficiency and environmental sustainability.

Indeed globalisation, which in a way is considered as the 'direct consequence of the expansion of the European cultures across the world via settlement, colonialisation and cultural mimesis', is often seen as 'unfavourable to small and weak cultures and societies' (Waters and Zajda quoted in Yang, 2003: 270). In most countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America economic inequalities, social exclusion and absolute poverty have grown despite globalisation.

The scale of contemporary international/global inequality is so large that small changes in gross national income have little significance for the poor. Amartya Sen (2002) argues that 'globalism' should be judged not by small changes in income disparities but by its ability to provide the poor with a fair share from the fruits of the growing world economy. Secondly, income is only one aspect of poverty and distribution of wealth. It has other debilitating impact on poorer populations, which cause ill-health, powerlessness and exclusion. Social exclusion relates to inadequate social participation, lack of social integration and lack of power. Social exclusion can be defined as denial of access to individuals and/or groups to participate effectively in economic, social, political and cultural life; and as a result of such a condition they are alienated and distanced from mainstream society (Duffy, 1995). An inclusive democracy, including Development Education, recognises that poverty, inequality and exclusion are very much related to power and agency, i.e. people's capacity or power to control and shape their own lives.

Poverty and social exclusion are twin processes, which prevent social, political and material rights and benefits of citizenship. Chronic poverty and rising income inequality cause desperation and alienation. Some groups, communities or populations become chronically poor because of negative internal features like social exclusion, discrimination, stigma, declining assets, low wages or lack of work, lack of minimal social protection, dependency on a patron or a moneylender, etc. A culture of poverty and exclusion makes it more difficult to escape poverty economically, socially and psychologically. A culture of poverty at the individual level, according to Oscar Lewis (1959) is visible in the 'strong feeling of marginality, of helplessness, of dependence and inferiority, a strong present time orientation with relatively little inability to defer gratification, a sense of resignation and fatalism' among the poor and the deprived. At an economic level, the poor and the deprived face unemployment, underemployment and low wages. Further they suffer high capability deprivation with poor nutrition and education.

However, unlike Lewis, Freire's liberating pedagogy found in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972) resists forms of fatalism reproduced in traditional education discourses that often mechanise the act of knowing. Freire challenges all educators to embrace 'history as possibility', where the act of analysing reality opens up the space for critical reflection and creativity. Such acts, he shows, are not isolated and individual, but integral to larger forces for change. One's capacity to dream, to reach, and to engage with a troubled world are the essence of a meaningful and liberatory pedagogy. Because of inequality and poverty as the genesis of most dehumanisation problems, Development Education is concerned with issues of exclusion, exploitation, discrimination, stigma, apathy, fatal-

ism, unemployment, dependency, poor health, etc and tries to find historical possibilities towards the quest for human fulfillment. Both for Gandhi and Freire, true humanisation is marked by freedom, autonomy and responsibility and sees freedom as 'the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion' (Freire, 1972: 24; cf. Dalton ed., 1996: 11).

It may be useful to point out that along with other larger global issues and the quest for human completion, Gandhi was concerned about endemic dehumanisation problems of people living in our modern society. Dennis Dalton writes that Gandhi insisted that 'we should not violate nature through self-indulgence. In a plea for self-restraint, he distinguished between essential needs and unnecessary accumulation of things, or between needs and wants' (Gandhi in Dalton ed., 1996: 132). Gandhi suggested both substantive and procedural solutions to many of these problems and worked as a committed crusader, in order to allow all deprived people and communities (along the axes of caste, ethnicity, class, gender and region) to understand their own [under]development, empowerment and well-being. Development Education is concerned with these structural problems of inequality, exclusion and other issue of larger public concern, which may be deemed fit by a community. To establish its legitimacy, Development Education must be democratic, open to dialogues; it must be able to redefine various problems and aspirations of a community within their situational contexts and provide at least part (if not full) solutions within a holistic and critical humanistic perspective.

Meaning and Scope of Development Education (DE)

A renaissance in learning is needed for the regeneration and transformation of society, strengthening and deepening of democracy and solving some or all of the above discussed debilitating conditions. Because of its critical and holistic understanding of human problems and their solutions, I think Development Education (DE) is well placed to deliver the promise of renaissance in learning. Apart from the difficulty in establishing hegemony of democratic values, the real challenge for DE is to develop critical awareness, knowledges, skills and capabilities of various populations (Sen, 1990; Nussbaum and Sen, 1994). DE must be concerned with how learning, knowledge and education can be used to assist individuals and groups to overcome educational disadvantage, combat social exclusion and discrimination, and challenge economic and political inequalities – with a view to securing their own emancipation and promoting progressive social change. Hence one of the foremost tasks for DE entails capacity building (both of institutions and individuals) to eliminate debilitating poverty and powerlessness among masses and to empower them socially, economically and politically through a new kind of dialogical learning, training and awareness.

DE is a kind of emancipatory and dialogical learning based on 'critical humanist' pedagogy¹. One basic assumption of DE based on critical humanism is that larger global problems of poverty, exclusion, domination and subjugation, illiteracy, malnutrition, illness, social inequalities based on caste, class, gender, religion and ethnicity cannot be solved by mainstream traditional approaches in education as they suffer urban, elitist and corporatist bias. Hence DE distinguishes between 'merely useful knowledge', and 'really useful knowledge'. 'Merely useful knowledge' keeps the poor, the deprived and the

discriminated in their place and supports the status quo to maintain it. A 'really useful knowledge' enables people to understand the root causes of the circumstances in which they find themselves in order to transform it. 'Really useful knowledge' is created when individuals and groups begin to reflect upon their experience with each other, in ways that lead to greater insight and understanding, and which enable development of theories linked to strategies for bringing about such changes. DE seeks solutions by involving people themselves in their own development through a new education, training, community mobilisation and self-management based on dialogical learning and critical thinking. McKay and Romm write that while the 'critical humanist' model may not appear as radical as some of the 'structuralists', 'its radicalism lies in the belief in the relationship between human beings and their own ideas' (1992: 60); and also in 'the discursive character of symbolic communication' which refers to a process in which people exchange viewpoints critically and reflexively 'without these viewpoints becoming 'fixed' into authoritative signs' (*ibid.*: 53).

Critical and reflexive thinking are parts of discourse analysis, which applies linguistic and semiotic analysis towards a social problem such as structures of dominance and oppression. It is based on understanding language as a force of dominance and ideology. Critical thinking consists in engaging in probing questions at their most fundamental level. It consists in examining deep-seated conceptual presuppositions in philosophical discourse. Critical thinking believes that people can be involved in 'making things happen' rather than 'have things happen' to them. Critical thinking as a basis for learning is the antithesis of 'rote learning' or what Freire (1972: 46) calls 'banking education'. Critical thinking is the antithesis of all mainstream passive learning, basic training and behaviour modification programmes. None of these mainstream programmes involve the learners in critical learning in initiating and examining ideas. It is based on the assumption that all people, depending on their intelligence and ability, are capable of actively engaging with their wider world in order to live in dignity and reconstruct it according to their deliberations. Knowledge and information produced by experts, including policy makers in government and international agencies, the media, scientists, educationalists, and economists should not be regarded as exclusive preserves of privileged and dominant groups. All expert knowledge must always be scrutinised, interpreted, judged and redefined in the light of everyday experiences and local relevance.

Critical thinking helps in challenging fatalism, prejudice, apathy and indoctrination. It needs to be pointed out that critical theorists from Herbert Marcuse to Theodor Adorno have always considered that the 'most important forms of domination are not simply economic but also cultural and that the pedagogical force of the culture with its emphasis on belief and persuasion is a crucial element of how we both think about politics and enact forms of resistance and social transformation' (Giroux, 2004: 32). Critical thinking is not only concerned with conquering individual and group 'ignorance' but also in developing critical skills needed for the examination of the status quo which favours inequalities, injustices and the abuse of power. Hence DE must help people to critically engage as active citizens and participate in an informed manner in social, cultural, economic and political life to undertake a reconstitution of an equitable and just democracy.

One of the larger global goals of DE is to ensure that development is not pro-rich, monopolised and manipulated. Rather, it should be participatory involving people and communities at the grassroots level. Another legitimate goal of DE is to address livelihood concerns and powerlessness of marginalised and ordinary people. In the educational sector, it can work to ensure that knowledge is not commercialised or privatised (e.g. patent gridlock). DE should work to create the physical, moral, political, social and economic capacity of ordinary people who are marginalised or disadvantaged, in order to make them locally self-reliant, autonomous and globally competitive. However, in its pedagogic attempts, it should make the political agenda of transformation more educational instead of making the educational agenda of transformation more political. To quote Giroux (2004: 33), who echoes Gandhian concerns as well, DE, as a new cultural and educational politics, 'must reinvigorate the relationship between democracy, ethics, and political agency by expanding both the meaning of the pedagogical as a political practice while at the same time making the political more pedagogical'. Cultural and educational politics are important because culture and education practices are the pedagogical sites where 'identities are formed, subject positions are made available, social agency enacted, and cultural forms both reflect and deploy power through their modes of ownership and mode of public pedagogy' (Giroux, 2004: 32). Thus, critical pedagogy, dialogically shared knowledge and public education are essential to the reconstitution of political agency and democracy. Making the political more pedagogical in this case suggests not only allowing individuals to understand various modes of production of knowledges and social practices in terms of oppositional cultural dialectics but also bringing them together for shared criticism and analysis toward collective visioning.

The basic pedagogical principles of DE relate to assumptions of critical humanism, democracy, participatory citizenship, autonomy and empowerment along the principles of equity, justice and sustainable development. In order to derive and enumerate some provisional pedagogic principles of DE, because they are further subject to debate and consensus, here I borrow much from Giroux's ideas (2004) on critical pedagogic principles. These provisional DE pedagogic principles are:

- (a) DE as a project of public intervention and academic study must be informed by a political and democratic vision with a heightened awareness of the diverse ways such a vision gets mediated in different contexts.
- (b) As a new project of intervention, DE also suggests reconstitution of the relationship between the pedagogical and the political, making it more indeterminate, open to constant revision, in order to allow constant dialogue with its own assumptions.
- (c) The very concept of DE as a project of intervention suggests the directive nature of its pedagogy. That means, it recognises that every pedagogical practice presupposes some notion of the future, which allows one to prioritise some form of knowledge and identification over another, and maintains selective modes of social relations.

- (d) The normative nature of every pedagogy allows DE to challenge every pedagogical practice (including its own) as it 'does not offer guarantees as much as it recognises that its own position is grounded in modes of authority, values, and ethical considerations that must be constantly debated in terms of the ways in which it both opens up and closes down democratic relations, values, and identities' (Giroux, 2004: 36).
- (e) Central to DE for remaining committed and responsible to entire humanity is that it must address real social needs, must be grounded in real aspirations, hopes, anxiety, fears and strengths of people, with a passion for democracy and acting for creating conditions for expansion of democratic forms of political and social agency.

We may note here that the above provisional principles also suggest that no pedagogy can ever be treated as a fixed set of principles and practices that can be applied mindlessly across different contexts or pedagogical sites. Pedagogy must always be contextually defined in order to respond especially to the conditions, formations, and problems, that arise in different educational contexts or sites. Thus, DE suggests that there is further need to debate, research and study the multidimensional aspects of disadvantage, social exclusion and empowerment in order create self-sufficient, autonomous and self-sustainable communities. Hence over the past decade, DE has been advocating a more central pedagogical place for 'voice', 'dialogue' and 'dialogical learning'.

Dialogue and Dialogical Approach to Learning

The term 'dialogue' comes from the Greek, which signifies 'flow of meaning'. In simple terms, 'dialogue' means two-way communication. It is the opposite of 'monologue', which signifies one-way communication. Bakhtin (1986) defined dialogue as a 'shared enquiry' or 'communication between simultaneous differences'. Dialogue refers mainly to talk among consenting subjects. 'Dialogic' or 'dialogical' is characterised or constituted by the interactive, responsive, democratic, fair and impartial nature of dialogue rather than by the single-mindedness of monologue. It is also different from formal openness of a discussion where prior beliefs about other participating members are not suspended. 'The essence of dialogue is an inquiry that surfaces ideas, perceptions, and understanding that people do not already have' (Isaacs, 1999: 2). Dialogue as a construct sees meanings simultaneously in two directions: one, it looks towards individual processes of thinking and reflection, and two, it looks towards the constitution of cultural practices and communities at particular historical stages (Renshaw, 2004). It may also be useful here to distinguish between the 'dialectic' and 'dialogic' approach. While a dialectic approach to paradoxes tries to understand human society in separate and dichotomous terms, a dialogic approach sees meaning in simultaneity and interplay of polarised entities. A dialogical approach helps in developing assumptions and propositions about generative capacities of individuals, organisations, movements and institutions (including schools), which lie in the interplay between the dualistic conceptions of continuity and change, agency and structure, cooperation and conflict, long-term and short-term visions, and internal and external sources of change (Poonamallee, 2006).

The 'monological' approach which is part of the dominant paradigm in most mainstream educational settings, seeks reduction of truth to a single perspective aiming at 'a stable and settled 'truth' in the form of a representation of some kind' (Wegerif, 2005: 709). 'Dialogue' and 'dialogic' are closely related but the term 'dialogic' has a more radical importance. The 'dialogical' approach shares with the socio-cultural theory the idea that individual thinking skills originate in mediated dialogues, and it goes beyond in claiming radically that it is not the appropriation of tools but induction into dialogue which is the primary thinking skill, reconceptualised as 'learning to learn', with all other thinking skills following from this induction. The two key assumptions of a dialogic framework according to Rupert Wegerif (*ibid*) are:

- Any communicative act is interdependent with other acts, it responds to what has gone before and anticipates future responses; it is similarly 'in dialogue' with other aspects of context such as the social setting.
- Meaning does not exist 'ready-made' beforehand but is always constructed in dialogues (which may well be the internal dialogues of thought).

'Voice' and 'dialogue' relate to knowledges, meanings, purposes and subject identities, which are communicated in a variety of written as well as oral forms. Following Bakhtin (1986) one may argue that voice and dialogues are issues related to a speaking subject's perspective, conceptual horizon, intention and world view. A dialogical approach to education is based on systematic and coherently organised representation by two or more interacting subjects of a phenomenon or a process about which they endeavour to know more about, increasing the possibilities of active interest in interpretation, meaning making, and knowledge creation, challenging all 'given' conceptions in ways that stimulate 'praxis', i.e. a synthesis of theory and action, theory and experimentation, knowledge and experience, work and science, and also actions based on rational deliberations (in the Aristotelian sense). Institutions and their contexts can be analysed as socially and historically mediated social practices, which show multilayered voices and historically evolved artifacts, rules and patterns of discourses. Whether learning is effective or ineffective depends on cooperation or conflict generated by these multilayered voices and discursive practices. Learning is more effective if the group of learners is able to develop shared communication, understanding and conceptual agreement, i.e. a common framework for learning, particularly shared understanding about communicative processes, purposes, beliefs and practices in various social and academic settings and encounters. Of special interest is the management of boundaries of learning environments to help learners move competently and coherently between different settings or frameworks.

Dialogical education generally involves a series of dialogic encounters within a group or a community of learners who together pose-problems, enquire and seek solutions for change, based around interrelated issues identified within a given situation or context. In an educational setting, students and teachers as dialogical equals and co-investigators are involved in shared construction, deconstruction and codification of themes, abstractions, events and ideas from a particular situation, and then they communicate them to others. In this manner, all teachers and students receive feedback from each

other. Here both teachers and students become mutual co-investigators in an open and ongoing enquiry that constitutes 'the beginning of an authentic act of knowing' (Freire 1972). For Freire, dialogical education is a combination of action and reflection directed at structures and issues that require transformation, 'towards humanisation – man's historical vocation'. (Freire, 1972: 58). In the same spirit on 10 March 1946, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: 'Education is that which liberates' (Gandhi, 1986, p29) and 'knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life. Servitude is of two kinds: slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true study' (*ibid*, p30)

Conclusion

The persuasive and communicative functions of dialogue and communicative action are emphasised in the writings of Gandhi, Bakhtin, Vygotsky, Freire and Habermas who all think that all our language, reason, morality and social organisations (particularly democracy) are dialogical and relational in character. However, both Gandhi and Freire are well aware that there is no guarantee that the practice of education will ever conform to this democratic, dialogical and educational ideal. Hence for Freire, dialogue at least must cohere to a 'critical reference point', which is not unrealistic or utopian. For Gandhi too, the search for *satya* (truth) through the application of *ahimsa* (non-violence) must at least morally question the relations of power and subjugation as a quality residing in the interface between acquiescence and consent, the ruler and the ruled, and receptivity and agency (Steger, 2006: 348). Thus a genuine dialogue for communicative action (*satyagrah*) and transformation involves both the Gandhian and Freirean principles, which require willing partnership and cooperation with mutual respect for possible disagreements, confusions, failures and misunderstandings. This dialogical process also involves Gandhian and Freirean principles of mutual respect, trust, and concern. If it so happens, then a dialogical relationship in schools and colleges cannot be superseded by an instrumental cognitive interest alone. Both will grow and mutually reinforce each other. On the other hand, it implies that education itself is a process of 'initiation' into dialogical relationships for building new teacher-taught environments, in terms of making of curriculum, evaluation, meaningful knowledge construction, etc. and finally creation of new democratic and self-reliant communities.

In this paper, I have argued that both intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, dialogue and communication both in the educational and political (or social) settings together can enhance theoretical and practical skills in the sphere of learning and competencies to empower individuals. Such praxis would help individuals to infer causal and conditional relations between events and actions that affect people's lives and ways of thinking. It helps them both individually and collectively to articulate and act coherently in an assertive and competent manner. Most significantly, such praxis promotes self-regulatory motivational processes, which further promote learning and action for a cause. I have also suggested that a dialogical and critical humanist pedagogy based on Development Education as a new discipline of academic study and political action is necessary for addressing the problems and aspirations of the 21st century. It is

suggested that further studies in learning relationships can advance our understanding of the role and relevance of dialogical learning in all kinds of educational, organisational and developmental contexts.

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Note

1 For details see McKay and Romm 1992, 48-61. According to McKay and Romm, humanism considers that participation in the process of world-construction is neither an individual nor a purely subjective practice: it is 'intersubjective' both in terms of its historical heritage and in terms of the discursive character of symbolic communication.

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