

## Mindfulness in Education and Paulo Freire: a reflective approach

*Mindfulness* na Educação e Paulo Freire: uma abordagem reflexiva (resumo: p. 14)

*Mindfulness* en la Educación y Paulo Freire: un abordaje reflexivo (resumen: p. 14)

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This essay makes a theoretical reflection upon possible conceptual proximities between the contemporary application of Mindfulness in education and the educational proposals of Paulo Freire. The study manages to approximate Freire to Mindfulness through a few concepts such as “openness to the new” and ‘critical curiosity’, which are related to a certain kind of development of awareness. We conclude that the contributions of mindfulness to the educational process as understood by Paulo Freire are related to the ability to develop a state of presence that brings more awareness to mental and emotional states, as much as it leads to conscious actions opposed to actions in the autopilot. Awareness (which is close to the concept of action-reflection in Freire) becomes, thus, a keyword for transformation towards lesser mental, emotional, physical and social/interpersonal suffering, both in Freire and in Mindfulness.

**Keywords:** Mindfulness. Meditation. Paulo Freire. Education.



## Introduction

This essay proposes to weave an unprecedented dialogue between the Brazilian educator Paulo Reglus Neves Freire (or Paulo Freire, as he is worldly known) and mindfulness. The purpose in establishing this dialogue is to reflect upon the need of pedagogical practices that are permeated by the dialogism present in the body of each subject involved in the educational process, and the possibility of searching for the rising of consciousness and recognition of our *unfinishedness* as individuals in the same process<sup>1</sup>.

### Paulo Freire - life and work

Paulo Freire was born in Recife/PE, on 19 September 1921, and passed away in the City of São Paulo/SP, on 02 May 1997. Son of a housewife and a military, he was taught to read at home, by his mother. At the age of 22, he entered the Law College of Recife (1943-1947) and during this period he got married to Elza Maria Costa, a primary school teacher, with whom he would have 5 children.

Throughout his life, Freire had one single case as a lawyer, which was his first and last one. His real talent was to be an educator and his deeper inclinations drove him to become a teacher. Therefore, he became a teacher of Portuguese Language in Colégio Oswaldo Cruz (Oswaldo Cruz School) and was soon invited to work in the Industry Social Service (Serviço Social da Indústria – SESI).

While working in SESI (1947), his job as Director of The Culture and Education Division allowed him to be in touch with “the people”, since he had to talk and listen to fishermen, industry workers, farm workers, among other workers. Through this contact with the popular layers of Brazilian society, Freire was able to develop his pedagogical thinking and to compose his theory of knowledge towards an education for freedom.

According to Ana Maria de Araújo Freire<sup>1</sup>, Paulo Freire’s second wife,

the life and work of Paulo Freire are interwoven, since he did not write about distant and abstract things of which he had only heard. He wrote about daily life, the obvious, the common daily life. (p. 3)

Paulo Freire worked as a visitor professor in renowned Universities such as Harvard (1969), Cambridge (1970) and, in the 1980’s, he worked at Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP) and in Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUCSP). His work is worldwide acknowledged - especially his teachings on Adult and Teenager Literacy Education - and has sold thousands of copies, including translations which range from English to Hebrew.

Some of his main works, below quoted, have contributed to the fields of sociology, philosophy, epistemology and education. Such recognition has entitled him as “Patron of Brazilian Education” through Law 12.612, from 13 April 2012.

Freire’s recognition is intimately connected to his endless defense of education as a political and dialogic act and to the fact that he was always focused on overcoming inequalities and relations of oppression marked by power. Thus, theory and praxis,



as presented in his work, can only be experienced through political and loving commitment among subjects and this should be true especially in the relationship between educator and the learner, in which both, without hierarchies, should recognize each other and themselves as unfinished subjects<sup>2</sup>.

In this way, the dialogue between Paulo Freire and Mindfulness is an opportunity for new knowledge and learnings to become part not only of teaching practice in classrooms, but also of educators and learners life itself, expecting to contribute to the multidimensional development of all those involved in the educational process.

## Mindfulness in Education

In general terms, the Mindfulness programs applied to Education have suggested the following benefits<sup>3-7</sup>:

- a) Stress and anxiety reduction, including the prevention of potential disorders.
- b) Emotional self-regulation, with the increasing of pro-social and “positive” (healthy) mental states, such as compassion, empathy and altruism.
- c) Reduction of non-adaptive cognitive styles, such as ruminative thinking and over-worrying.
- d) Activation of brain areas connected to well-being.
- e) Development of memory and concentration.
- f) Improvement of inter-personal relations and of life quality.

For Jon Kabat-Zinn<sup>8</sup>, “[...] Mindfulness is related to ‘being in touch’ with a deep questioning about one’s view of the world and about who oneself is” (p. 3).

In Education, the way one observe the process of teaching in its complex aspects, and the way one see students, goes through a deep exercise of “being in touch”, of being anchored in the present moment, with openness and curiosity, without a pre-conceived posture in what regards the phenomena that present themselves.

It is important to remark something in advance Mindfulness applied to educational contexts should not be presented as an innovative methodology that “discharges” all other pedagogical practices in Education and presumably offers the promise of 100% of efficacy in solving all contingencies and problems historically constituted.

This would be rather naïve, pretentious and inadequate. However, Mindfulness, if in touch with Freire’s pedagogy, may be seen as a condition of “emancipation” (empowerment) against all kinds of oppression and suffering. In this way, being able to help the social actors of educational contexts – teachers, students and managers – become aware of their own demands, whether they are physical, mental, emotional or relational, in the context of their own reality (always unfinished, since it is always in movement).

In general, it is possible to relate some categories proposed in Mindfulness to Education. First, the idea of a beginner’s mind, that is, to see that each event should be observed in its singularity. Second, the impermanence of phenomena, taking into consideration that every phenomenon is subject to change. Third, the possibility of



providing conscious responses, as opposed to the act of simply reacting in a habitual and automatic way. Below, we shall work in more detail on these and other categories.

## Methodological aspects

In methodological terms, this work fits in the genre of essays, which means it is a text that includes opinions, that is, in which personal impressions, ideas and reflections of the authors are presented, though based on theoretical data. It aims at problematizing issues concerning the implementing of “Mindfulness” in the educational context.

The aphorisms by Paulo Freire were extracted basically from the versions in Portuguese of the 4 following works: “Education, the practice of freedom”<sup>9</sup>; “Pedagogy of autonomy”<sup>2</sup>; “The importance of the act of reading”<sup>10</sup> and “Pedagogy of the oppressed”<sup>11</sup>.

Throughout the article we shall develop some specific issues raised by Paulo Freire, chosen among the wide range of reflections made by the educator. We do not have the intention of completely go through the concepts he proposed, but rather only touch some of his universe in order to establish possible interlocutions between his thinking and the universe of mMindfulness.

We have organized the text in the following sub-parts: “Curiosity and criticality”, “Acceptance of the new”, “Reading the world”, “Recognizing dialogism” and “Towards a humanization of the educational process”. The categories have been selected based on the academic dialogues about mindfulness that the authors of this article have been conducting. Varied knowledge was added up and, through a process of collective maturation, new possibilities of connections gradually emerged.

## Curiosity and criticality

According to Paulo Freire<sup>2</sup>,

“teaching requires criticality”. Under this perspective, naïve curiosity, without abandoning curiosity, may become critical. Curiosity as “the unveiling of something”, as “search for clarification, as a sign of attention that suggests being alert, is an integral part of the phenomenon of life. (p. 34)

From Freire’s perspective, two fields are touched/touch each other, altogether: curiosity and criticality.

Mindfulness can be defined as a “state or trace that refers to the ability of being attentive to what happens in the present, with openness and acceptance”<sup>12</sup> (p. 20).

Acceptance, in this case, should not be mistaken for resignation or conformity; it comes closer to a sense of openness to the immediate experiencing, without pre-judgements and having an attitude of curiosity.



According to Jennings<sup>6</sup>,

[...] we all have a stored file full of emotional memories which influence the way we think, feel and behave. They are usually called “scripts” or “conditioned answers”. (p. 60)

Mindfulness can promote the increasing of two essential abilities concerning scripts. Through its regular practice, it is possible to cultivate: 1<sup>o</sup>) Decentering: the skill of relating to thoughts and emotions in a non-attached manner, as a mere observer<sup>13</sup>, (p. 174), without immediate identification with the personal scripts; 2<sup>o</sup>) The recognition of an emotional pattern, making it possible to “respond” with more awareness to the situations, instead of simply automatically “reacting” when facing them<sup>6</sup>, (p. 63) (our highlight).

In the process of Mindfulness practice, one can understand, as Kabat-Zinn<sup>8</sup> states,

[...] that “we can learn to work with the great powers of our lives, we can learn to notice them, ‘to make critical choices’ and to grow in wisdom and compassion” (our highlight). (p. 47)

From this perspective, the attitude of mere reacting when facing events is abandoned and the responses become aware, reflected and attentive. Maybe it is at this point that we can approximate mindfulness to Freire’s ideal of an education that allows for the individual the necessary reflexive recognition of one’s thoughts and decisions<sup>2</sup> (p. 12) in the context of work demands and the consequent necessary interventions in the educational process.

Similarly, Luis López González<sup>5</sup> – author of TREVA (*Técnicas de Relajación Vivencial Aplicadas al Aula*), a program from the Instituto de Ciencias de la Educación da Universidade de Barcelona, proposes the application of mindfulness to the process of teacher training education – mentions that in education we must take into account “[...] the teacher’s ‘posición sócio-crítica (socio-critic position)’ and ‘su libertad para reflexionar’ (his freedom of thinking) (p. 79)”.

## The acceptance of the new

The critical and aware posture in educational contexts presupposes what Paulo Freire<sup>2</sup> (p. 39) calls “acceptance of the new”, which “should not be rejected or embraced just for being new”. The old continues to be new as long as its validity is reaffirmed by careful analysis: the point here is the impartial observation of the pre-conceptions about teaching practice, which deserves to be revisited moment by moment with new eyes and new twists.



Some pragmatic questions can contribute [to the discussion about the “new”]:

how do I see my training education and my activity as a teacher? Do I see them as perfectly ‘finished’ or am I open to new pedagogical proposals? Do I have a close definite idea of my students [and of who they are] or do I regard them as unique and particular beings thus different from each other in their human complexity? Do I believe in the possibility of changing students’ realities and the context I am inserted in or do I affirm/reinforce the existence of an inexorable and fatalistic future?<sup>2</sup>. (p. 89)

Although we usually fall into the trap of regarding our points-of-view and courses of action as the best and thus we lock up to the new, the fact is that changes are an inevitable part of our lives and, to be more specific, of our professional lives. Economic, social and political changes inevitably happen, whether we want them or not to happen.

Eihei Dogen<sup>14</sup> Zenji, a zen master from the XII Century in Japan states as follows: “Flowers fall independently of our attachment to them, and weeds grow regardless of our aversion to them” (p. 127).

This is exactly what is called in the Buddhist tradition “impermanence” (*anicca*, in Pali Language), also translated as “instability”, or even “uncertainty” of all “phenomena” (*dhammas*, in the transliteration from Pali).

Such instability reflects also in the educational context: the way of acting of the managers, the teachers and the students must be constantly questioned and revised, so that we can notice which the most effective practices for the democratic and collective production of knowledge in each historical moment are. This is very close to Freire’s idea<sup>2</sup> (p. 55) that we must be aware of our “unfinishedness”.

Demarzo and Campayo<sup>13</sup> (p. 37) literally establish that, in mindfulness, the “beginner’s mind” (expression which comes from the title of a famous book by Shunryu Suzuki) is cultivated. With this mind, we are “able to experiment each new situation or interpersonal relation as if it were the first time we are living it, that is, free from the reminders of our stereotypes and prejudices and thus open and curious towards everything”. By practicing mindfulness, we search to observe each situation in its integrity, with openness and with a curious regard without pre-judgements towards whatever happens. This is critically relevant for the educational context.

## Reading the world

In Educational contexts, would mindfulness be one more technique working towards keeping silent, disciplined and docile students, ready to produce more and more? We definitely think this would be a rather mistaken conclusion.

The practice of mindfulness may promote the flourishing of a deep sense of care towards oneself and towards people surrounding. “We start to feel as part of the whole and, thus, responsible for a better world and for making this world’s inhabitants happier”, as said by Demarzo e Campayo<sup>13</sup> (p. 212), and this is how they understand



“interbeing” (*op. cit.*, p. 39), a term coined by the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist Master Thich Nhat Hanh. In the educational process we are not detached from the rest of the world. On the contrary, families, students, teachers and managers are connected in the social net and are co-responsible for building up an effectively democratic school.

Dealing specifically with the problem of literacy and language, Paulo Freire<sup>10</sup> makes clear that:

Reading ‘the world’ precedes reading ‘the word’, therefore, the later reading of the word cannot exist without the previous reading of the world. Language and reality are dynamically intertwined. The critical reading of a text can only be attained if the perception of the relations between text and context is present. (p. 19-20)

Freire<sup>10</sup>, in “The importance of the act of Reading”, refers to his own childhood in order to describe the above-mentioned process of ‘reading the world’. For him, “texts”, “words” and “letters”, in the childhood context, were embodied in the birdsongs, in the dance of the treetops, in the rainwaters playing with Geography, in the wind whistle, in the clouds in the sky, in the color of the foliage, in the scent of flowers [...] (*op. cit.*, p. 21). Through his poetic manner of portraying the world, Freire gets close to the idea of “inter-being”, that is, being with everything that exists.

Considering this, Freire<sup>2</sup> states that “teaching requires respect for the learner’s wisdom”, and such wisdom is “socially constructed in community practice” (p. 33).

This practice implies the possibility of relating this wisdom to the teaching/learning of the contents. In a challenging tone, he asks:

Why don’t we use the students experiences in living in areas of the city which the government policies have abandoned, in order to discuss, for instance, the pollution of the streams and of the brooks, or the low level of well-being of the populations, the big dumps and the risks they offer to the people’s health? (p. 33)

For Paulo Freire<sup>2</sup> in teaching there must be “the most determined dismissal of any type of discrimination”(p. 39). Both the knowledge of the teacher and of the student, though different, are equally relevant, and should not be ranked in a hierarchy. In this domain, Rômulo Lins<sup>15</sup> says:

I think that, in sharing the differences the most intense opportunity of learning takes place; and this happens at the moment in which teacher and student(s) understand that each one is differently legitimated at that moment<sup>15</sup>. (p. 547)

Knowledge is, in this way, built up collectively, and in this process the meanings proposed by teachers and students are equally legitimate.



## Recognizing dialogism

Mello<sup>16</sup> (p. 56) thinks over the connection between teacher and student. He explains the transitivity of the verb “to say”, according to him “so clear and strong, so much constitutive of people that sometimes we are not aware of this transitivity: if someone “says”, it means he or she “says something” to “someone”. However, as the author explains further, there is another word that is paired to “say”, and it is the other side of the coin, that is, the word “hear”. It is worth considering that

We cannot make a mistake in classroom by thinking that saying/speaking has the same value for the teacher as hearing has for the student. The interpersonal connection establishes that both should also know how to listen, which means to have an attitude of respect, receptivity and acceptance of the other. At the confluence of saying/speaking and hearing, the senses are born<sup>16</sup>. (p. 57)

This is an essential issue in what regards the understanding of what is language itself: the presence of the other. For Bakhtin<sup>17</sup>,

“enunciation is the product of the interaction between two socially organized individuals”. Language being what makes human beings think and act, we cannot think of human interaction without language. And it is through an act of language that we recognize the other, since it is through words that I define myself in relation to the other. (p.112-3)

Without the other there is no self-recognition. The awakening of my awareness operates in the interaction of the awareness of the other. Inter-subjectivity is, thus, inherent to language: the subject is only capable of recognizing oneself throughout the other, which means there is no way out but to validate the notion of alterity. If the dialogic aspect is the foundation of all connections between the self and the other, it inexorably must guide the pedagogic, as stated by Terzi<sup>18</sup>.

Paulo Freire<sup>11</sup> takes “dialogism” as the essence of education understood as the practice of freedom. When penetrating dialogue as a human phenomenon, the essence of dialogue, that is, “the word”, is unveiled. In the word there are two constituting dimensions: “action” and “reflection”, “and they are so much entangled in such a radical interaction that if a small part of one of them is sacrificed, the other one immediately resents. There is no true word that is not praxis” (p. 107). Word, in Freire’s theory, would have the ability to transform the world through action-reflection.

However, he points out that, if word is praxis, if it is world transformation, it cannot be the privilege of a few, but it is the right of everyone, and it cannot be defined as the act of depositing ideas of a subject onto another one (we shall develop this further).

Dialogue is a “horizontal relation” between educator and learner, and it is nourished from love, humbleness and hope one has on the other, so that they can be critical in a connection of congeniality between them. Communication can only happen under these circumstances, as Paulo Freire<sup>9</sup> (p. 107) clarifies.





Anti-dialogue, on its turn, is based on a “vertical relation”, which places the educator above the learner, to the extent that it is unloving, and a-critical (meaning that it does not generate criticism exactly because it is unloving); it is not humble, it allows for no hope and is arrogant.

In his book called “Working – The art of mindful living” (title translated from Portuguese), Thich Nhat Hanh<sup>19</sup> says that

[...] Loving speech means to speak with love, compassion and understanding. We try to avoid words that may blame or criticize. We try not to speak in a judgmental way, nor with bitterness or anger, because we know that to speak this way can cause a lot of suffering. We speak calmly, with understanding, using only words that inspire trust, joy and hope in those around us. (p. 33)

Luis López González<sup>5</sup> (p. 76), from the TREVA program, when working on the psycho-bodily ability that he calls “voice-speech”, points out that becoming aware of (through the practice of mindfulness) the language in the classroom is something really powerful. We may start to notice certain “perversions” of the language such as “irony, generalization, solenity, negativity” which is quite often present in our speech.

In the dialogic process, interlocution becomes indispensable, and this is where the act of hearing comes from. Jennings<sup>6</sup> (p. 120) discusses what she calls “mindful listening”. According to the author, an important dimension of care involves the way we listen. In order to carefully answer, we must be attentive, listen with an open mind, be receptive to our students and their family members, so that we can understand their experiences, and recognize their needs.

Freire<sup>2</sup> (p. 127) stresses that “teaching requires to know how to listen”. In mindfulness, compassionate speaking does not separate from deeply listening. For Thich Nhat Hanh<sup>19</sup>, in-depth listening “is about listening with compassion”, for it is acknowledged that, when listening with compassion we are giving “someone the chance to express oneself and to feel that one is comprehended” (p. 70).

## **Towards a humanization of the educational process**

When specifically working on the relation educator-learner, Freire<sup>11</sup> exposes, as an instrument of oppression, that which he calls banking model of education. In such a model, the teacher has the task of filling in the learners with the contents of his own narrative, rags of reality disconnected from the totality where they are created. The educator, in this case, makes deposits and provides the information that the students mechanically only receive, memorize, file and repeat in a passive and alienating posture. The educator’s position is of the one who knows and who thus educate; and the position of the students is of the ones who do not know and so must be educated.

In contrast to the banking concept of education, Paulo Freire creates the problematizing and liberating concept, in which the educator is not focused on the donation or the delivery



of knowledge but, otherwise, is based on a deep belief and trust in human beings and in the “humanization” of educator and learner. This process means that both are, simultaneously, educators and learners.

For Freire<sup>11</sup>,

nobody educates nobody, nobody educates oneself, but men educate themselves among themselves (collectively), mediated by the world. (p. 95)

The issues related to Freire’s liberating and problematizing educational concepts are directly connected to respect, hope, love and humanization, and to welcoming and loving the students. These are essential in the educational context. However, it seems that often we run the risk to confine these values to simple “moral advices”, detached from teaching practice. González<sup>5</sup> regrets that:

Among all facets we can find in teaching tasks, the “affective dimension” is, undoubtedly, the one we learn less in a systematic way and, we may say that it does not appear in any kind of internal or external evolution/development, neither at the curriculum level nor at the quality level of the centers or of the teaching planning. ( p. 191)

Would it be possible to cultivate positive emotional states in a way that they could effectively contribute to the relationship of the teacher with him/herself and with the students?

Alvear<sup>20</sup> discusses some connections between the practice of mindfulness and the development of so-called positive emotions, pointing out to studies that suggest this inter-relation. According to him, the application of Mindfulness techniques would provide for a certain level of subjective well-being. Among the positive emotions listed by Alvear, there is joy, serenity and love (loving-kindness).

In the context of Mindfulness practice, it is possible to provide acknowledgment and, later, cultivation of certain emotional states, by bringing focus to them with the use of attention and awareness. An example of this kind of practice would be the practice of “compassion” through loving-kindness (*Metta*, in Pali Language), which is present in some mindfulness protocols.

Demarzo e Campayo<sup>3</sup> (p. 149) describe two key elements of compassion: first, sensitivity to the suffering of others and to one’s self-suffering; second, commitment to relieve suffering.

In the practice of cultivating compassion, the participants of a group of mindfulness progressively enlarge the object of their compassion by mentally wishing happiness, safety, love and well-being. In *Mindfulness y Compasión*, Campayo and Demarzo<sup>3</sup> discuss specifically a protocol that is thoroughly turned to the practice of compassion. They point out to the importance of mindfulness techniques to the cultivation of this affection. They say that



in order to practice compassion mindfulness is necessary because we must gain awareness of other people's suffering and of our own suffering, without judgement, attachment or aversion, so that we can feel compassion for the person who suffers<sup>3</sup>. (p. 38)

In this sense, the practice of Mindfulness can guide towards the surfacing and the cultivation of compassion between teacher and student, so that the speech between them is necessarily dialogic, reducing violence and promoting peaceful and gentle social interactions. The educator, if he is more present, both mentally and emotionally, will be able to dialogue with, listen to and learn with the learner.

## Final considerations

In this essay, we aimed at reflecting upon how, in educational processes, we can create a state of presence, of more awareness about mental and emotional states, as well as more awareness of interpersonal relations, instead of maintaining a naïve consciousness which is often motivated and driven by actions which are performed in the so called "autopilot".

We have discussed the potential human beings have to open to the new: since all phenomena are impermanent, they are open to being perceived with the "beginner's eyes". This allows room for us to choose how to act, abandoning merely impulsive reactions, which make us automatically repeat habits and not believe in the possibility of change.

We have brought to light the problem of "world reading" by Paulo Freire, which goes hand-in-hand with the idea of "interbeing", favoring the perception that in the educational environment we are all interconnected and our actions will cause effects on others.

We have worked on importance of "dialogism", in which the educator's and the learner's speeches are lovingly and horizontally connected and on how, consequently, this connection generates an open posture of sympathy and of empathy as we recognize that we are educators and learners at the same time.

Starting from Freire's proposals, we may think of education as capable of emancipating people from all kinds of oppression. However, quite often "oppression" is mistakenly understood only in the context of social class conflict. We, on the other side, state that Paulo Freire proposed education as practice of freedom against every and all kinds of "oppression". We could even say that Freire went beyond the empowerment of individuals, since he wished and worked for the emancipation of suffering itself, in its varied forms.

As an educator, Freire was very sensitive and attentive to the fact that there is suffering in the world. As a result, he committed himself to the change towards a society that was better for everybody, in which living well would be a reality, whether for the economically disfavored or favored, or for those who, although being well-off, could be suffering either mentally or emotionally [or physically as well].

This is maybe the point of most proximity between Freire's thinking and the proposal of experiencing Mindfulness, that is, the understanding that all beings suffer and that it is possible to eradicate this suffering. If, on one side, Paulo Freire proposed social transformation through action-reflection; on the other side, Mindfulness provides deep internal personal transformation, which should therefore contribute to collective change.

### Authors' contribution

All authors have actively participated in all steps for the creation of the manuscript.

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Este ensaio traz uma reflexão teórica sobre a possível proximidade conceitual entre a aplicação contemporânea de *Mindfulness* (atenção plena) na Educação e as propostas educacionais de Paulo Freire. O estudo consegue aproximar os conceitos de Freire do quadro referencial da Atenção Plena, por meio de conceitos como “abertura ao novo” e “curiosidade crítica”, relacionados a certo tipo de desenvolvimento da consciência (*awareness*). Conclui-se que as contribuições da atenção plena para o processo educacional, conforme entendido por Paulo Freire, relacionam-se à capacidade de desenvolver um estado de presença que traga mais consciência aos estados mentais e emocionais, além de levar a ações conscientes em oposição a ações inconscientes. Consciência, conceito próximo ao de reflexão-ação em Freire, torna-se, portanto, uma palavra-chave para a transformação em direção à diminuição do sofrimento mental, emocional, físico e social/interpessoal, tanto em Freire quanto no *Mindfulness*.

**Palavras-chave:** Mindfulness. Meditação. Paulo Freire. Educação.

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Este ensayo proporciona una reflexión teórica sobre la posible proximidad conceptual entre la aplicación contemporánea de *Mindfulness* (atención plena) en la educación y las propuestas educativas de Paulo Freire. El estudio consigue aproximar los conceptos de Freire del cuadro de referencia de la Atención Plena, por medio de conceptos tales como “apertura a lo nuevo” y “curiosidad crítica”, relacionados con cierto tipo de desarrollo de la conciencia (*awareness*). Se concluye que las contribuciones de la atención plena para el proceso educativo, conforme entendido por Paulo Freire, se relacionan con la capacidad de desarrollar un estado de presencia que brinde más conciencia de los estados mentales y emocionales, además de llevar las acciones conscientes en oposición a las inconscientes. La conciencia, concepto próximo al de reflexión-acción en Freire, se convierte, por lo tanto, en una palabra clave para la transformación hacia la disminución del sufrimiento mental, emocional, físico y social/interpersonal, tanto en Freire como en *Mindfulness*.

**Palabras clave:** Mindfulness. Meditación. Paulo Freire. Educación.

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