



## A Comparative Study of Henry Giroux and Robert Floden's Educational Thoughts for Developing a Model for Philosophy of Teacher Education

Aboosaeed Davarpanah<sup>1</sup> (Corresponding author)

Masoud Khanjarkhani<sup>2</sup>

Seyed Reza Balaghat<sup>3</sup>

Omid Abolghasemi<sup>4</sup>

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: 02 May 2020 Revised: 13 July 2020 Accepted: 07 November 2020 Online: 16 March 2021	The aim of present study is a comparative investigation of two famous philosophers, Henry Giroux and Robert Floden, to develop a model for the philosophy of teacher education. The research method is qualitative with inferential-analytical approach. As a supporter of change, interaction, democracy, and transformation, Giroux emphasizes on training of teachers who are familiar with reflective interaction and its use. Floden also emphasizes the cultivation of a pragmatic teacher who is familiar with theoretical foundations and is an interactive, creative expert, and non-dominant person. From the perspective of the two philosophers, it can be inferred that the ideal teacher is one who believes in reflective interactions and avoidance in the field of education and emphasizes reform in the shadow of accepting "other". Based on the intellectual foundations of these two thinkers, a model has been designed to show the process of training an ideal teacher.
<b>KEYWORDS</b> Critical Thinking Floden Giroux Philosophy Teacher Education	

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan, Email: a.sdaavarpanh@ped.usb.ac.ir

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan, Email: khanjarkhani@ped.usb.ac.ir

<sup>3</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Zahedan, Email: balaghat@edpsy.usb.ac.ir

<sup>4</sup> PhD Student, Department of Educational Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Central Branch, Tehran, Tehran, Iran, Email: omida60@yahoo.com

## **1. Introduction**

An educated person who is supposed to take responsibility of nurturing other human beings needs an educational system that is purposeful and based on reliable principles and methods. To find such a system, we need to think about what and why teacher education is, and to indicate its dimensions with the help of philosophy of education. Of course, this issue is not specific to Iran. For example, Buskist and Irons (2008) argue that teachers are unaware of foundation-based methods and critical thinking. Therefore, some experts are concerned about this situation and believe that if teacher education systems want to teach intellectual skills to teachers, these systems should shift from emphasizing teaching of separate knowledge and skills to application of knowledge and deep focus on pivotal issues and themes (Faqihi, 1999). As critical thinking and open-mindedness can be part of philosophy of teacher education goals, mentors in these centers must make a continuous effort to promote student-teacher learning. In this way, the student-teacher has a more comprehensive view of what is happening around him and gains a clear understanding about training others.

With regard to this short introduction, let us pay more attention to the thoughts of both philosophers. One of Robert Floden's areas of thought is his attention to the philosophy of teacher education. As an expert, Floden focuses on providing appropriate solutions to improve the quality of teacher education. His solutions include the need to properly transfer theoretical and practical knowledge of educators to students, efforts to improve mental state and philosophical attitude of student-teachers and use of advanced practical techniques to link theory and practice for training the teachers. He also emphasizes on essentiality of training scientific education principles as an infrastructure to student-teachers. Floden is interested in subjects such as drawing a roadmap, having a goal that can be implemented, the important position and role of mentor as a practical guide, the importance of teaching specialized knowledge to student-teachers, creating necessary platform for education through interaction and resolving conflicts between theory and practice. Since Floden is expert in areas such as educational policy and practice, teaching and learning, and philosophical issues of teacher education, the assessment of his opinions was considered by present researchers (Davaranah, 2015).

Philosophy of education requires a comparative dimension, and comparative education requires a philosophical dimension (Shahbazi, 2010). Henry Giroux is a philosopher whose explanation and comparison of his ideas with the educational thoughts of Robert Floden can be useful for policy-making of philosophy of teacher education. Therefore, the authors of this article

seek to explain ideas of these two educational philosophers and compare them with each other - in order to provide practical solutions and model to reform the teacher education philosophy in Iran. With these descriptions, first of all, Giroux and Floden's thoughts and messages for teacher education system are expressed. Then the similarities and differences between opinions of two philosophers about philosophy of teacher education are described. Finally, based on the ideas of the two philosophers, a model for philosophy of teacher education will be presented.

## **2. Research Method**

The research method is inferential-analytical and comparative. Data collection tools were notes taken from various books and through library study. Content analysis method was used to analyze the data.

## **3. Results**

The results consist of five sections. In two parts, Giroux and Folden's views on the philosophy of education are presented with more emphasis on teacher education. The third and fourth sections are devoted to examining the similarities and differences between the views of the two philosophers. In the fifth section, a model for the philosophy of teacher education system is presented.

### *1) Explanation of Giroux's Thoughts about Teacher Education*

According to Giroux, in the philosophy of teacher education, teachers should be trained who have the following characteristics:

*Teacher as a Supporter of Change:* Giroux rejects the positivists' presuppositions about the three components of "certainty, control, and predictability" and fixed hierarchy of knowledge that positivists have in their mind following Taylor's method of scientific management. He also rejects separation of classroom from social realities, which is endorsed by positivists (Giroux, 1994). He believes in educating a teacher who is both receptive to change and transformative in the shadow of interactions. Training such a teacher is necessarily possible in the context of critical thinking. Therefore, critical education is a tool for change. He also criticizes conservatives for arguing that progressive movements in education have destroyed culture of the past (Apple, 2000; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1986). He also believes that a leading teacher is one who does not consider himself a captive of past traditions.

*Teacher as a Social Capital:* Giroux does not accept the idea of neoliberalism because its basic thought is transfer of education to private sector and calculation of profits and losses. The job of teacher is to provide manpower needed to turn the wheel of the economy (Giroux, 2005). This idea promotes economic ethics that has replaced social values (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 2008; 2009). It seems that in the philosophy of teacher education considered by Giroux, the student-teacher is not seen as a commodity but as a social capital that is not compatible with the criteria of profit and cost. Knowledge is not the end of thinking, but a medium for communication between the teacher and world (Giroux, 1978). From Giroux's point of view, it is necessary to teach critical thinking in the classroom to make students' experiences meaningful. Therefore, according to their lived experience, they should have an active conversation with the teacher (ZibaKalam & Mohammadi, 2014). Giroux believes that knowledge, values and attitudes are better and clearer by using the method of discourse. Neoliberals seek to undermine the role of teacher (Giroux, 2005). It can be inferred that from this point of view, Giroux is opposed to authoritarian teacher education approved by neoliberals. Henry Giroux is a supporter, or in other words, a spokesman for critical education. Critical thinking in his view has two basic presuppositions: 1- There is a relationship between theory and reality, and 2- Knowledge cannot be separated from human interests, values and norms (Giroux, 1978). He seems to endorse the training of thinker teacher, which is supported by all philosophical schools.

*Teacher as an Intellectual:* By examining the relationship between power and knowledge, Giroux tried to create a pervasive critical attitude whose main subject is resistance (Shakari, Ahmadabadi & Fattahi, 2014). Giroux is a staunch opponent of any type of domination, especially cultural domination, and considers that the way to counter such domination is to equip the student-teacher with the weapon of knowledge. He describes knowledgeable teacher as a powerful teacher (Apple, 2000; Giroux, 1980; Leonard & McLaren, 1993). A strong teacher has desired information literacy that can counteract dominance. Giroux proposes theory of resistance and seeks to exploit capacity of teachers to confront system of domination (Giroux, 1985, 2004a; 2005). He advocates a system of teacher education that is resilient and unyielding. According to him, critical education must create a new form of science by emphasizing the collapse of disciplinary boundaries and creation of new places of knowledge production (Salehi, 2015). Giroux, like Foucault, believes that knowledge and power are two sides of the same coin (ZibaKalam & Mohammadi, 2014).

*Democratic Teacher Education:* Efforts to prepare teachers practically ready for accountability depend on the existence of democracy. A philosophically educated teacher in the present century is

one who has the ability to make important changes through democracy. This means that teacher educators should not only introduce democracy-based practice as a model, but that teacher education classes should become a community of learners experiencing democracy. In Giroux's educational philosophy, the role of a trained teacher is to revive democracy. School is a safe and social place where teacher and student interact and practice critical thinking skills (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2004). According to Giroux, education must provide the conditions for all groups and individuals in society to take an active part in the realization of a democratic society, regardless of gender, culture, race or class. Giroux critical pedagogy seeks to create conditions for change in the type of knowledge, justice and skills of students by creating critical education so that instead of cultivating only good citizens, they become critical citizens" (Salehi, 2015: 87). It seems that an interactive teacher education and critical teachers considered by pragmatists is also approved by Giroux. On the one hand, he advocates the promotion of cultural democracy and positive reform and change in the student-teacher way of thinking, attitude, knowledge and vision, and on the other hand, supports a critical teacher education.

*A Critical Teacher Education:* Giroux's educational philosophy is based on critical multicultural education (Shakari, Ahmadabadi & Fattahi, 2014). He tries to remind the need for a connection between culture and critical thinking to his readers. On the one hand, he considers critical education as an aspect of postmodern education (Giroux, 2004a) and on the other hand, he raises this question: How knowledge is formed and how it is displayed. He accepts action-oriented critical education (Hoppenfeld, 2005). Giroux expects from teacher education centers not to simply prepare the student-teacher for a job. He argues that the purpose of universities and higher education institutions should not be limited to vocational training. Rather, the university should be a place to practice critical thoughts (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2003). From one side, Giroux emphasizes influence of culture on critical thinking. He does not distinguish between culture and critical thinking and considers critical thinking as a basis for cultural growth, interactionism, acculturation and flexibility (Giroux 2004b, 2005). According to Giroux, cultural studies are a tool for teachers and other cultural stakeholders to deal critically with issues (Shakari, Ahmadabadi Arani & Fattahi, 2014). He believes that any idea and philosophy that ignores social and cultural issues is doomed to failure (Khalili & Hosseini, 2010). Giroux (1985) in his book entitled "Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning", seeks a form of critical education that views educators as cultural agents and transformational thinkers with special political and social roles. In his view, critical education, instead of defining the role of the teacher in terms of specialized-technical language, should clarify the role as a thinker and cultural agent - which produces more appropriate

ideologies and social practices (Salehi, 2015). Regarding the issue of acculturation, Giroux speaks of "border education". He speaks of concepts such as contradictory text, contradictory memory and contradictory politics. Broader education is cultural education which provides the capacity to get acquainted with different cultures and environments critically (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). It seems that Giroux tries to distance himself from the philosophy of idealistic teacher education and approach the philosophy of postmodernist teacher education by proposing the category of "broader education". By suggesting this idea, he questions the traditional and ancient goals of education (Salehi, 2015). His goal is to create a democratic society in which the voices of others can be heard (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991).

*A Creative Teacher Education:* Another aspect of Giroux's opinion is about "self-creation" (Giroux, 2004a). He agrees with Foucault that expression is possible through self-creation. Giroux accepts self-creation through the critique of culture and self as an educational goal. He also criticizes the old education system and believes that their role was limited to recreating knowledge. Giroux criticizes the positivists for advocating a teacher who strives to maintain present circumstances. Through standardization, positivists have used precise language (expressing everything in scientific, mathematical, and formulated language) as the basis for their claim at teacher education. The consequence of this type of thinking is the training of teachers who lack critical vision (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). Teachers should not limit themselves only to teaching subjects and must develop the power of text review - by preparation of opportunity for students - (Shakari, Ahmadabadi Arani & Fattahi, 2014).

*Transformative Teacher Education:* Giroux believes "transformational intellectuals" should be nurturing in teacher education (Giroux, 1985). He supports the concept of the revolutionary intellectual teacher (Giroux, 2004a). In Giroux critical education, teachers are transformative intellectuals who have a special place in education (Salehi, 2015). Giroux tries to introduce teaching as a technique and teacher as a professional intellectual (Shakari, Ahmadabadi Arani & Fattahi, 2014). According to Giroux, a trained teacher is a social intellectual who combines theory and practice.

## 2) *Explanation of Floden's Opinions about Teacher Education*

Floden, as an expert in the field of teacher education and familiar with the issues of teaching and learning, always seeks to provide appropriate solutions to improve the quality of teacher education.

He also emphasizes that teaching scientific principles to student-teachers and attention to infrastructure is essential.

*Teacher as a Theorist:* It is important for the teacher to prepare a roadmap and have a goal that can be implemented. Floden and Buchman (1989) stated that it is necessary to train knowledgeable teachers who are familiar with theory, principles and foundations of education.

*Teacher as a Mentor:* The mentor should act as a student-teacher guide to help student-teachers to learn classroom management. According to Floden, Buchman & Schweil, (1991) the main purpose of education is learning. Appropriate motivation and a sense of responsibility are two desirable elements for guidance of student-teachers. This indicates their acceptance of responsibility because practical training requires high motivation. Floden and Buchman (1989) identified three types of knowledge in teacher education: Propositional knowledge, case knowledge, and strategic knowledge. They believe that knowledge is a proposition derived from common experience in teacher education. Propositional knowledge guides mentors and promotes a particular type of learning. Case knowledge helps memory by providing examples, and strategic knowledge is a form of knowledge that guides teachers in resolving conflicts and applying principles and rules in a particular situation. It seems that all three types of knowledge are necessary in the philosophy of teacher education; because it leads to more interaction between the mentor and the learner. The claim is that the content of teacher education subjects and lessons should be clarified. Conceptual analysis is important, but it becomes more valuable when accompanied by effective guidance.

*Teacher as Familiar with Theoretical Foundations:* The need to properly transfer the theoretical and practical knowledge of the mentor to student, theory and practice are the two main categories in the philosophy of teacher training. There is a positive relationship between preparing teachers theoretically and trying to improve their performance. Floden is interested to use advanced practical techniques to link theory and practice in teacher education, and to resolve disputes between these two in teaching. Student-teachers must be able to understand concepts, principles, theories and research related to practice. This issue can be explained in the form of a link between theory and practice. The claim is that a teacher who is merely an observer certainly does not have the efficiency of a teacher who puts theory and practice at the top of his agenda. These two teachers are fundamentally different from each other (Floden, Buchman & Schweil, 1997). The main argument is that the goal is to provide necessary basis for moving towards application of theoretical concepts, although the realization of such a space is not always easy. The connection

between theory and practice is fraught with difficulties due to a lack of understanding of the concept of connection. For teacher training, there may not be a proper understanding of the combination of theory and practice. To get rid of such confusion, Floden believes that education must shift from mere theory to establish a link between theory and practical knowledge. Surely, this depends on solving the obstacles. Conflicts between theory and practice in teacher education must be resolved; because real knowledge is able to show theoretical achievements in practice. To improve teacher education, Floden suggests the use of advanced practical techniques to make connection between theories and practice (Floden & Butchman, 1989). Both authors believe that advanced techniques may be appropriate for teachers, but they must be able to use them in practice. Also, focusing only on techniques is not enough and they must be operational. Therefore, teacher education should seek to create a variety of behaviors that lead to the development of practical skills.

*An Interactive Teacher Education:* The importance of transferring case and strategic knowledge as well as creating the necessary context for the possibility of such training is provided through interaction behaviours.

*Attention to Philosophy of Mind and Non-domination in Teacher Education:* This issue is an attempt to improve the mental and philosophical attitude of student-teachers. According to Floden, efforts are needed to improve the student-teacher's philosophical mentality. In his view, attention to the category of do's and don'ts, proper use of the tools of reason, and ability to make the right connection between cause and effect are three important propositions that help student-teachers to accept everything through reason and rational thoughts. Teachers are expected to have a strong and clear philosophical perspective to handle potential conflicts. A trained teacher is one who knows his purpose, knows logic and philosophy of teacher training. It can be inferred that if we try to cultivate philosophical mentality of student-teachers and strengthen their philosophical attitude in teacher education, we have taken the right path in their education.

*A professional and transformative and cultured intellectual teacher education:* Theoretical assumptions can be taught to all student-teachers as long as there is a suitable tool and specific philosophy behind such an idea. It is appropriate to provide the right conditions for such a purpose, although culture can be helpful in this direction. New learning is not possible without a prior understanding of relevant and systematic concepts. Floden emphasis on a creative, advocate of



change, pragmatic, familiar with the teachings of theory, interactionist, mindful and non-domination, expert and intellectual, transformative teacher education based on foundations of philosophy of teacher education such as axiology, logic, and epistemology. In order to summarize and analyze carefully the findings related to the learner's lifestyle in Giroux's educational views and Floden's teacher training philosophy, the similarities and differences between these two views are clearly explained in next two sections.

### *3) Similarities between the views of Giroux and Floden about Philosophy of Teacher Training*

A brief overview of the comparison of Giroux and Floden's theories in the teacher education can reveal some common points: Giroux emphasizes teacher education which is supporter of change. For example Giroux rejecting the positivist assumptions which accept fixed knowledge (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). They believe that teacher education leads to a system that has put maintaining the status quo on its agenda. On the other hand, Floden and Buchman (1989) acknowledge Schellman's propositional knowledge in teacher education, which is a science that guides instruction and promotes a particular type of learning to accept change. Giroux considers creativity in teacher education desirable. Aronowitz & Giroux (2003) argue that given the increasing awareness of students through databases, the role of teachers should be to teach "how to learn". Floden also agrees with the training of creative teachers. If educators can manage the discussion, student-teachers may learn how to be competent to lead such discussions (Floden, 1997). Giroux mentions the role of the teacher as a transformational intellectual (Giroux, 2004a). Floden agrees with Giroux on this point. He and his colleagues argue that new learning cannot be systematized without a prior understanding of related concepts. Giroux accepts the basis of teacher education through interaction. Giroux believes that the teacher should be educated and powerful. He admits that a strong teacher has good information literacy and able to deal with domination. Giroux proposes the theory of resistance and seeks to use teachers' opportunities to deal with system of domination (Giroux, 1985, 2004b, 2005). Floden also considers science and knowledge as the weapon of a trained teacher. Floden and Buchman (1989) accept Schlmann's view of strategic knowledge as a weapon. Strategic knowledge is a form of knowledge that guides the teacher in resolving conflicts and applying principles and rules in a particular situation. Floden considers the ability to confront system of domination using reason and logic as another important characteristic of a trained teacher. Giroux believes that culture should be respected in teacher education, which is important in the shadow of critical thinking. Critical thinking is the basis of cultural growth (Giroux, 2004a,

2005). Floden and his colleagues also believe that new learning cannot be systematized without an initial understanding of related concepts, and there must be a cultural space necessary for its happening (Floden, Buchman, & Schweil, 1997).

#### *4) Differences between the views of Giroux and Floden about Philosophy of Teacher Training*

Perhaps the most important factor that has caused the fundamental differences between the two experts is the basis of education in views of Giroux and Floden about philosophy of teacher education. Giroux believes in a cultured critic teacher education (Giroux, 2004b, 2005), while Floden refers only to cultured teacher education (Floden, Buchman, & Schweil, 1997). Giroux advocates democratic teacher education. He argues that the role of the trained teacher is to revive democracy (Giroux, 2004a), while Floden's view of teacher training has a philosophical perspective. Floden and Buchman (1989) believe that desirable skills can be taught to teachers through the strengthening of philosophical mindset. The subject of ethics and its various interpretations is another distinguishing feature of Giroux and Floden. While Floden's definition of morality shows itself only in the form of some citizenship laws, Giroux pursues upbringing of a critical citizen instead of a good citizen. Giroux believes that through critical education, conditions can be created to change the knowledge, justice and skills of students and to nurture them to be a critical citizen instead of just good citizen (Salehi, 2015). However, in Floden's opinions, we cannot see traces of ethics to the same extent. Quality in teacher education is more important than Giroux. Floden and Buchman (1989) state that theorist teachers should be trained who are familiar with the principles and foundations of education. For Floden, It is more important to train a pragmatic teacher who is familiar with the educational teachings. According to Floden, expectation from students is to learn and to do (Floden, Buchmann, & Schwille, 1997). Based on similarities and differences between Henry Giroux and Robert Floden's opinions about teacher education a model was developed:

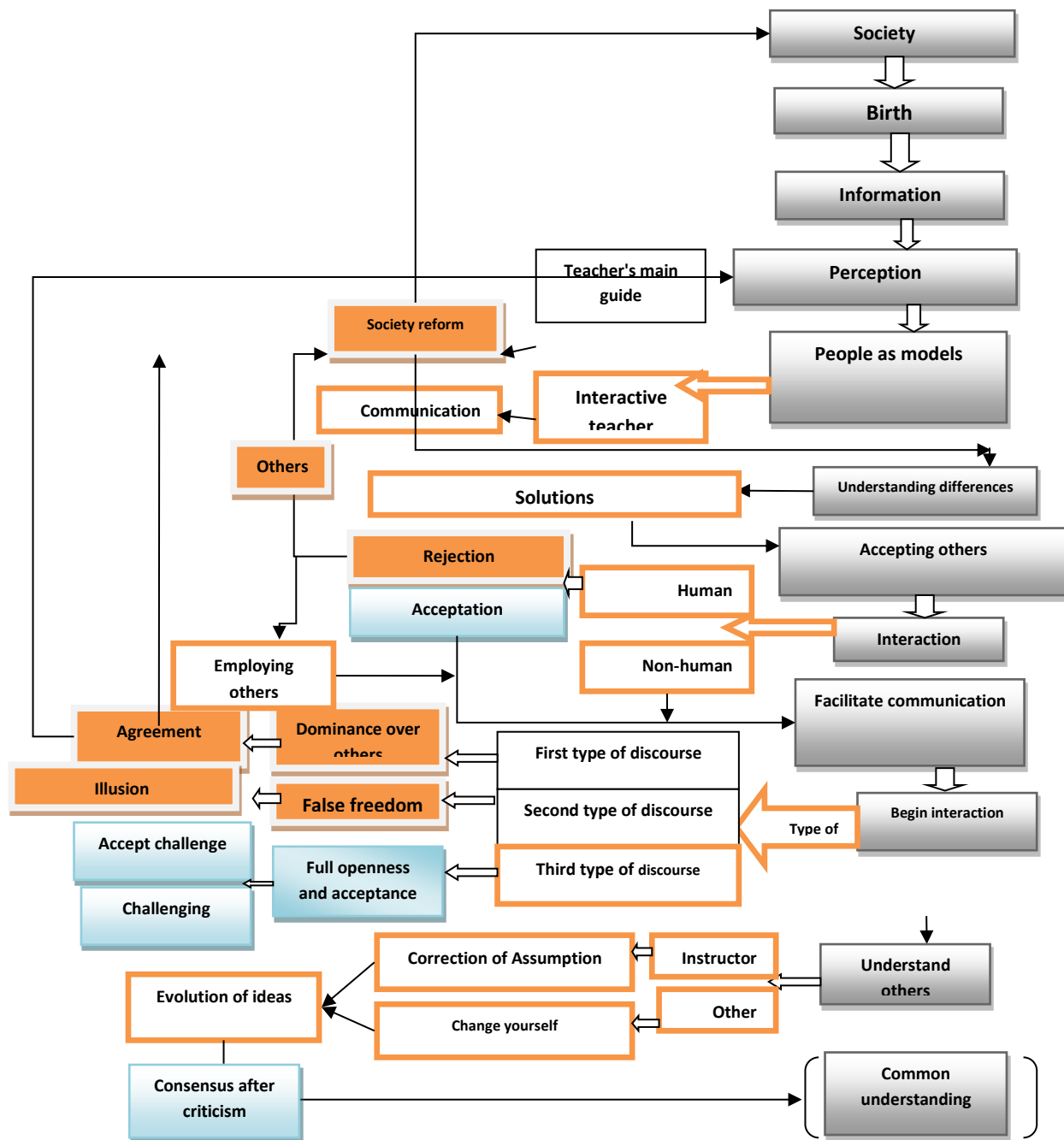


Figure 1: Model of Transformational Process of Student-teachers Base on Giroux and Floden's views

In the above model, the person is in a state of acceptance when entering the community and is a recipient. But if the educator has a centralized and non-interactive approach in the path of education, the child's creativity will be limited and restrained. The interactive mentor provides the ground for freedom-based education by assuming acceptance of others and their ideas and abilities and paying attention to the individual's agency. This freedom facilitates excellence for both parties, although the instructor - or adult - in the interaction may receive less knowledge than the learner. With this in mind, there is an interaction between you/me that is free and based on human agency, in which we escape restraint and rely on movement and motivation. In this situation, challenge and critique is a value that the instructor and the student excel in and with each other. But the important question is how the ideal teacher should be trained with this approach in the early stages of education and at higher levels. To answer this question, the following diagram is designed:

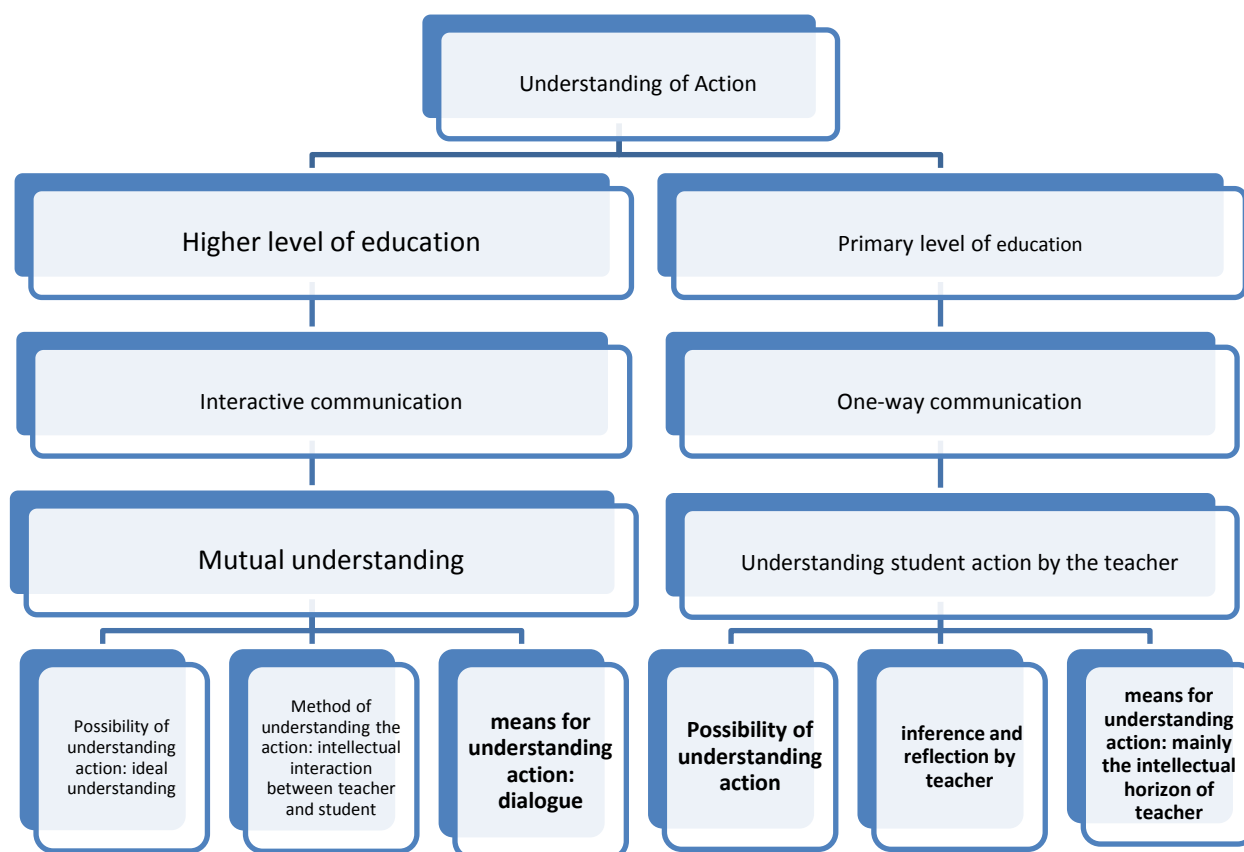


Figure 2: Primary and Secondary Interaction Levels between Teacher and Student in the Educational Process

In fact, although the focus of these two ideas is on interaction, avoidance, and acceptance, the present authors believe that the trained teacher should be aware that in the early stages of education, he is often a transmitter and somewhat one-sided, but in higher levels, more interactions and issue of formation are highlighted. Therefore, training is sometimes formation and other time shaping, and the teacher trained for the elementary school is more of time a "shaper" than the teacher of higher levels.

#### **4. Conclusion**

To improve the teacher education system and achieve the desired results, it is necessary to pay more attention to philosophical assumptions. A general revision of the principles, foundations, goals and programs of teacher education with emphasis on the development of the philosophy of teacher education can shape a better future for this system. Emphasis on traditional methods, devoting a lot of time to theoretical topics instead of attention to practice, the absence of instructors alongside student-teacher during the time of internship, and superficiality and ignoring the position of educational theories in the field of action, will continue the stagnation in teacher education. It is worthwhile to eliminate the above shortcomings in the agenda of the officials of the teacher education system. In the meantime, the lack of clarity in the framework of the philosophy of education provides the ground for mixing and eclectic measures in teacher education. If teacher education be supporter of change, interactive, scholarly, powerful (authoritative), democratic, cultured, creative, and transformationally intelligent, and if attention is paid to the training of a quality, pragmatic teacher familiar with the theories, interactive, subject-oriented and expert in teachings as Floden said, the student-teacher becomes aware that the concepts of teacher and student are not absolute and each has an intellectual horizon. In fact, the teacher is no longer the absolute teacher and student also a passive person (pure learner). Both the teacher and student learn. Both, to some extent (in different proportions), contribute to and benefit from the excellence and growth of themselves and each other in this process. Therefore, one of the messages of this article to teachers and activists in the field of education is humility. The word "teacher" implicitly conveys the message that "I am the teacher who understands"; but in the new approaches, there is no power-seeking and self-centeredness in the words and actions of the teacher (and other stakeholders). This conveys a message to their learners that along with talking, they should listen. "Listening" is one of the most important elements in education. Of course, this is open not only to human being, but to any "text". Control is promoted and taught instead of freedom and restraint. If human authority is not taken into account in education, no thought can be permanent. Creative

thoughts always arise in the shadow of interactions and continuous improvement. Dissatisfaction with what you have and striving for new things can be a condition for the dynamism and durability of any move.

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