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Terry Whitmell
Ontario Institute of Studies in Education
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Prof. Reva Joshee

In 1995, as a result of Ontario Premier Mike Harris' "Common Sense Revolution", a major revision to the structure of Secondary school policy and curriculum was undertaken. The curriculum policy production was sanctioned and highly-controlled by the provincial government. Discussion documents were made public by the Ministry of Education, and citizens in Ontario were given the opportunity to provide written feedback. Formal "feedback sessions" were also held once the process of curriculum writing began, and these were limited to officially recognized "groups". And, most importantly, the writers of the curriculum were contracted through a private-sector style bidding process, rather than being practicing teachers and school board staff, as had been the process with previous curriculum and policy development in Ontario. (Pinto, 2014)

This unique situation makes the resulting curriculum documents of interest, as their writing included an increased diversity of perspectives while at the same time being very controlled by the government. One of the new courses developed at this time was a grade 10, half-credit, Civics course, to be delivered during the same semester as a half-credit course in Careers. While the Careers course gathered together expectations that had previously been a "strand" within each secondary school course such as Business, Mathematics, etc., the content of the Civics course was an expansion upon the strands within primarily History curriculum. Its inclusion within the mandatory courses under Secondary School Reform in 1997, as school structure shifted from a five year to four year program, increased the control and influence of the government on secondary students in the areas of politics and civic engagement.

This paper undertakes analysis of the resulting policy documents, considered with respect to the principles of two influential educators: Paolo Freire and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The focus is on Freire's principles of Problem-posing Education, Liberating education, Education

as the practice of freedom, and Praxis, and Gandhi's principles of Love, Truth, Ahimsa; Courage shown through Humility and Self-Discipline; Thrift, non-possession, trusteeship; Bread labour, local consumption, non-exploitation; and Equality, Environmental stewardship, and social justice. By the mid 1990's, the influences of these principles had been felt by educators, politicians and bureaucrats, and the result was policy that is surprisingly in alignment with the principles of Gandhi and Freire, given that the policy originated and was developed within a right-wing, conservative political environment.

The analysis of both the Canadian and World Studies policy document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013), and the specific expectation of the Civics course, was undertaken in both broad strokes, with colour coding of green and red to indicate alignment or conflict, yellow for areas of concern, as well as commentary on specific policy language as it relates to Gandhi and Freire's principles. (see Attached Appendix A) This analysis is not complete, as it appeared at the mid-point to be in support of several principles, while completely ignoring others.

Paolo Freire published "Pedagogy of the oppressed" in 1970, and in the forward to the 30th anniversary publication, Richard Shaull asserts that;

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the "practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." (Freire, 2014)

The study of Civics can serve either of these purposes. As a mandatory course for all grade 10 students in Ontario, it then has the potential to either oppress or liberate.

In his final publication, "Pedagogy of Freedom – Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage", written to be used in a Harvard Graduate School of Education seminar scheduled for the fall of 1997, but cancelled following his death in May 1997, Freire speaks of "respect for the

autonomy of the learner” (Freire, 1998) It is this principle that underpins the four specific principles that form the basis of analysis of the Civics curriculum, and which connects to the principles of Gandhi.

Gandhi’s view of the role of the learner was much more prescriptive, but was underpinned by his fundamental principles of self-discipline, love and the search for truth. The teacher’s actions, if in alignment with these principles, though directive, would not oppress.

Within the Ontario Ministry of Education Civics curriculum, it is possible to see the principles of both educators, as identified in Appendix A. Where conflict is identified between their principles and that articulated curriculum, it is also possible to see where an educator who embodies these principles can proceed without compromise.

The delicate balancing act between the autonomy of the learner and teacher, and the accountability demanded by educational stakeholders, is one which the current curriculum appears to perform well. There is sufficient flexibility to allow either for exemplary instruction and learning that supports Gandhi and Freire’s principles, or for a teacher to be in compliance without actually having to be consciously aligning with Freire or Gandhi.

Key to both sets of principles is the responsibility that the learner assumes, and the strong ethical basis required. Ideally, a teacher who chose to teach Civics would have an educational background in social justice and would be able to work within the accountability framework of the Ontario curriculum to support the principles of both Gandhi and Freire.

Based on analysis of the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents supporting the CHV20 course, alignment with the principles of Gandhi and Freire is possible, but it is not explicit. However, any attempts to more deeply embed these principles within the policy

documents would then contradict some of the very principles they would be intending to support. The process of accountability could lead to a model of teaching and learning that would not align with the principles of either Gandhi or Freire.

Of concern is the instructional approach taken with this, and other curriculum policy in Ontario. It at times aligns with Freire's "banking" model rather than Gandhi's "process of inquiry in which the student recognises her own individual experience and engenders critical self-consciousness or swaraj." (Mani, Elworthy, Gopinath, Houston, & Schwartz, 2014) When employing critical pedagogy "teachers need to help students understand that students are the subjects of their own lives, not the objects of someone else's story." (Preston et al., 2015)

Analysis reveals stronger alignment overall with the principles of Freire than Gandhi. This could be attributed to the more political and civic-focused principles of Freire, and the more ethical or spiritual focus of those of Gandhi. The chart in Appendix A may be viewed by 'colour' to reveal areas of alignment and conflict. Green indicates support, yellow indicates areas of concern, and red indicates conflict with the principle. Where the language does not relate, or is neutral, the intersection is left blank.

Of particular concern is the almost complete absence within both the Canadian and world studies curriculum, and the Civics course in particular, of either area of thrift, non-possession and trusteeship, or bread labour, local consumption and non-exploitation. This may indicate that the right-wing, conservative governing party, in power at the time of Secondary School Reform, played a role in determining the content of the curriculum. Neither of these principles would be supportive of the capitalist approach taken by the government of the time.

One of the other goals of this exercise was to examine the policy for examples of "slow violence", which would impede implementation of these principles. Both Freire and Gandhi

“expressed the need to understand the power dynamics behind the use of language as linked to social class, as the expression of the identity and power of each class.” (Narayan, 2000) It would appear that the language of the Canadian and world studies curriculum policy does not embed slow violence by commission, but could be seen to do so by omission. To remedy this possibility, topics such as “slow violence” and “microaggressions” could be added and developed through the “Inquiry Process”.

Policy relating to the study of Civics in Ontario secondary schools can be seen to be supportive of the principles of both Gandhi and Freire. There is room for both to be strengthened, and a need to begin to consider issues such as sustainability, non-exploitation, thrift, etc. more explicitly. Educators, however, are able to work within the bounds of the policy to support the educational goals of both Freire and Gandhi.

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