EMOTIONAL LANGUAGE-PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED
50 YEARS ON

Stephanie A. Sadownik

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, University of Toronto (Canada)

Abstract

Paulo Freire popularized the Portuguese term *conscientização*, in his work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970). The term represents a growth mindset that is continually developing criticality through consciousness. Freire believed education would benefit from students questioning teachers to develop meaning-making and clarity of rationale. Paulo Freire coined the phrase, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, with his ground-breaking and inspirational view of the education system in 1970. His book noted students as oppressed by an education system by singling out the teacher-student relationship and offered insight into policy changes and approaches to teaching that considered student-centered education and the development of student discourse.

Fifty years later, this paper presents a critical investigation of the impact of technology devices used in education among vulnerable and marginalized populations as a highly significant and needed focus, given the rapidly increasing reliance on internet-based technologies across the increasingly diverse communities comprising our public educational system. Current school technology agreements and poorly worded surveillance policies may silence vulnerable and marginalized populations voice or agency for students challenged by past trauma, lived experiences, emotion dysregulation or specifically a Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD). Teachers, administrators, technology staff and school board members were asked questions related to their understanding of policies related to technology and surveillance of devices such as laptops, cell phones, iPads and school sponsored BYOD programs. The information collected served as an indicator for which to measure the content knowledge and experience of the participants as well as the individual perceived goals or intentions of the participants school in relation to surveillance of staff and students.

Data collected during the study indicated surveillance is attributed to five themes: well-being, assessment, policy, security, punitive. Key findings included: an assumption that school technology agreements included the use of personal devices and schools may not uniquely identify inappropriate behaviour. Additionally, assumptions informed the personal use of technology during school hours with administrators and IT staff referencing general larger district acceptable use policies assumed to be accepted as applicable to all technology equipment and general use. Assumptions regarding the enforcement of the technology agreement applications to personally owned cell phones at school, were enforced during tests; and considered generally accepted privacy concerns by students and staff related to the inappropriate recording of others through taking pictures; video; but extending to accessing social media. Finally, IT staff and administration shared parental concerns of the surveillance of students on Google and phones.

Keywords: At-risk students, tracking, vocabulary, privacy, data collection.

1. Introduction

This research project analyzed employer policy documents, legal expectations (Hills, 2018; MacKenzie, 2016; Maxwell, 2018) and previous research conducted on the use of bring your own device policies (BYOD) for teacher and student laptops and mobile phones, teacher professional development with BYOD and the potential surveillance (Berg, 2015, Fuller, 2019; Goodyear et al., 2019; Hope, 2016; Monahan, 2006; Page 2017; Perry-Hazen & Brinhack, 2018; Taylor, 2013) of teachers and students while on personal devices on school property. In addition to qualitative semi-structured interview data collected between the years 2019-2020 from teachers, administrators, IT staff and policy makers. Specifically, this research is interested in changes in Canadian school curriculum that require teachers of all ages to integrate technology into their classroom and subsequent policy changes that offer cost saving measures (Harris et al., 2012) taken by school districts that have implemented BYOD policies. While the ability of

a teacher or student to use their own device may ease the use of technology (Zhang et al., 2019) and integration into the classroom, the ability of a teacher or a student to hold personal or confidential data on their own devices on school grounds may raise concerns, and a device that travels from work to home and used in both places is more likely to hold such data. The research findings shared here will enable scholars, educational institutions and public servants to understand the potential implications of the use of bring your own device (BYOD) for students and teachers and to critically reflect on the reasons for its use.

2. Theoretical framework

Education has been described by academics as a system of "totalitarianism of dictated education policy, surveillance and punitive accountability" (Ball, 2003, Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Gunter, 2014; Stevenson & Wood, 2013 as cited by Fuller, 2019, p. 32). Both themes of power and resistance are referred to by Foucault (2007) and Bourdieu (1998) in the use of speech as a form of resistance (Foucault, 2007) and the internal conflict that entraps those in power through societal pressure (Bourdieu, 1998). The use of surveillance and restrictions on students have been noted by academics as encouraging cynism and indifference (Uitto, et al., 2016).

Paulo Freire popularized the Portuguese term *conscientização*, in his work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) when he encouraged people in positions of power to help end cultures of silence for the illiterate colonized individuals who were ruled by dictatorships and often forced into slavery living in extreme poverty. The term represents a growth mindset that is continually developing criticality through consciousness and awareness of voices that are silenced, oppressed in need of sociopolitical action brought on through questioning of policies and normalities and introspection. Freire believed education would benefit from students questioning teachers to develop meaning-making and clarity of rationale.

Paulo Freire coined the phrase, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, with his ground-breaking and inspirational view of the education system in 1970. His book noted students as oppressed by an education system by singling out the teacher-student relationship and offered insight into policy changes and approaches to teaching that considered student-centered education and the development of student discourse. Fifty years later, this view of the education system is related to the use of technology and data collection in schools.

Vulnerable populations are often defined by the ability of a population to access resources (Aday, 1994; Flaskerud and Winslow, 1998). Thompson and Spacapan (1991) suggest vulnerable populations lack control of their situation, while Aday (1994) considers vulnerable populations to be "at-risk". Marginalized populations are defined as individuals who are excluded socially (Montesanti, et al., 2017) and although an awareness of this exclusion exists more energy needs to be directed towards engaging marginalized populations in the very communities they are excluded from participating in (Baatiema et al., 2012). Montesanti et al. (2017) suggest there is a general consensus internationally that marginalized populations benefit from community participation, but there exists "little specificity about how" (p. 637). Stigma is defined as "the phenomenon whereby an individual with an attribute which is deeply discredited by his/her society is rejected as a result of the attribute (Goffman, 1963, p. 21 as cited by Bottorff et al., 2013). Bottorff et al., (2013) continue to note that stigma leads to marginalization.

3. Methodology

The study presented in this paper was created in response to an earlier study (Sadownik, 2018) noting the benefits to sharing thinking online in Google Classroom for the teaching of mathematics to students aged 10-12 years. In this original study (Sadownik, 2018), parental shared awareness of Google Classroom and teacher decision-making and/or curriculum planning was shown to increase parent engagement, which had an occasional commensurate effect on parent anxiety (Sadownik, 2018). It is inclusive of policy documents that participants voluntarily shared regarding their technology agreements and provincial mandates or policies used by the school in relation to personal devices and surveillance of personal devices on school electronic resources. Research presented in this paper represents qualitative semi-structured interview data collected between the years 2019-2020. Qualitative research focuses on answering research questions about why something occurs and how it is possible. "Qualitative inquiries involve asking the kinds of questions that focus on the why and how of human interactions" (Agee, 2009, p. 432). In these instances, qualitative research is selected as a way to reach an understanding of a phenomenon to create a situation that allows someone the opportunity to share their personal experiences. Agee (2009) notes "qualitative research questions, then, need to articulate what a researcher wants to know about the intentions and perspectives of those involved in social interactions" (p. 432). Semi-structured interview questions are less formal and rigid allowing the researcher to respond to the participants answers by asking questions in a fluid conversational pattern to further clarify responses

previously collected and recorded for validity and authenticity (Ritchie et al., 2013). In the education field, many researchers rely on structured and semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and the analysis of documents.

Four Canadian School Districts initially agreed to participate in person and online regarding the monitoring of vulnerable and marginalized populations with personal devices connected to school electronic resources. This participant pool has since grown to be inclusive of eight School Districts and spans across Canada in its third year of data collection. Interviews took place on-site at school board offices, and online through videoconferencing, over the phone and through emails at the participant's convenience and with the researcher bearing all costs. No participant was provided with an honorarium or gift for their participation. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) protocols for Face-to-Face contact were followed and noted in this study, which was updated with COVID-19 protocols in October 2020.

Interview transcripts were reviewed with an open-coding format, which facilitated the consideration of emergent patterns. The information collected served as an indicator for which to measure the content knowledge and experience of the participants as well as the goals or intentions of the school in relation to the goals of the study. After each interview, the audiotape was transcribed, and the participants were given the opportunity to modify, amend, delete or edit any part of the transcript prior to analysis, coding and publication. Data collected during the study indicated surveillance in the participant's schools were attributed to five themes: well-being, assessment, policy, security, punitive. FOIPPA compliance, intent, test taking procedures and age are all considerations for the theme of policy. Security considers subcategories such as installing a footprint on a device, industry wide lists, blacklists and shares advantages for creating different networks for different devices and limiting access based on entry site. Punitive includes parent reports about teachers, administrative monitoring, students' behaviour, investigations and a reactive mindset without active monitoring. Few connections were made between the use of surveillance in schools and learning or assessment of learning. Similarly, few responses indicated the use of surveillance for measuring wellness in schools.

The information collected by the four School Districts represented in this paper set a framework for the literature and guided the direction of themes emerging from previous interviews, ones that aligned with the literature review as well as new ones that had yet to be mentioned such as considerations for well-being and assessment. Data collected during the study indicated inappropriate behaviour in schools, from the perspective of participants is often anything not assignment related, without the permission of the teacher and during instructional time, or on school wifi. Consent for taking pictures, videos, recording others, disrupting others, or interacting in a hurtful and harmful way was also indicative of inappropriate behaviour. Finally, concerns about the use of phones in class and the exchange of personal phone numbers lead to the perception of cheating with phones on math problems, or during tests, and privacy concerns. As of Nov 2019, the province of Ontario has issued an acceptable use policy to guide school principals in the application of the term in Ontario schools.

4. Summary of key findings

The information collected by the four School Districts represented in this paper set a framework for the literature and guided the direction of themes emerging from previous interviews, ones that aligned with the literature review as well as new ones that had yet to be mentioned. Triangulation of data was achieved through teacher review of interview questions and initial written response to the list of questions prior to interview, followed by teacher interview and clarification, followed by participant review of transcript data and School District review of final summary data and prior to external review with conference submissions and peer blind review.

Acceptable use of personal devices on schools may not be uniquely identified and may fall under general considerations of a larger district acceptable use policy. Depending on the school district, a policy that regulates the type of devices a student is allowed to bring in may exist, and an acceptable use policy for computer devices may exist, but an acceptable use policy for student personal devices may not, "So, I will say it isn't well defined right now and we actually are working on an administrative procedure on BYOD so what we do have right now is one procedure that has to do with the use of technology in the district, right". Both case studies with IT staff participants echoed the same response, "What we have is for the use of all communication devices, we essentially have a procedure that we put in place, that lets them know that anything and everything on their computer can and will be monitored if required. It is not specific to BYOD but it is just general use of all computing devices". Having a district wide acceptable use policy is strategic for IT staff "Especially from a FOIPPA compliance perspective, including their personal devices, if they use their personal devices in the classroom".

Cell phone use at school, in particular: during tests; taking pictures; video recordings; accessing social media and texting raised concerns for IT staff, parents, students, administrators and teachers. The

inappropriate use of a cell phone combined with social media lead to policy change for one participant "five years ago we had an incident (suicide), with what we as a staff deemed to be inappropriate use of cell phones and social media in schools and we developed a school policy and we have been under that school policy ever since". From both an IT perspective and parent, participant concerns about cell phone use are seen as used for cheating, "you know I have another kid who has been told during a test to put the phone away" or for privacy related violations, "in terms of filming, I do know that our schools view for my students that taking a photo, taking a video of somebody without their knowledge is not allowed or frowned upon".

Administrators have commented on the policy related to the use of cell phones for students and teachers. When dealing with staff members about inappropriate cell phone use, the conversation can go a bit differently but is still a concern, "The teachers, well, from time to time we have had to have conversations with staff around phone use in the school. We have had staff members that have been caught playing video games during instructional time. It has never gotten to a point where we have had to involve the union". "For staff, I think it would be beneficial to have stricter policies about what devices (namely phones) should be used for and when". While also noting that the use of personal devices on school grounds has legal implications, "I have one parent who is a lawyer, who clearly, she really didn't have any ground to stand on but she was a parent that challenged me and this was four years ago. She said that phone is my property, I paid for that phone therefore you don't have a right to look on that phone".

5. Responsive measures

Scholars note various benefits to membership including greater access to resources (Brent et al., 2017); and a motivation to work as a collective with positive evaluations (De Cremer, 2002). Gray, Wright and Pascoe (2017) note Maslow's (1962) example, "the need to belong to or be part of a social network is universal and operates only after lower-order needs such as food and security are met" (p. 271). This is in direct opposition to the immediate loss of membership that occurs at the institutional level for progressive discipline models related to infractions of technology agreements, or inappropriate behaviour that has been recorded for staff and students.

The concept of responsiveness has been referenced by both Human Rights activists and human computer interaction innovations; defined as 'a capacity to change shape or direction in response to stakeholder and public values and changing circumstances'" (Owen et al. 2013, as cited in Steen et al. 2021, p. 513). The need for technology and surveillance policies in schools to become responsive to the changing climate of school populations has become an urgent matter given the rapidly increasing reliance on internet-based technologies across the increasingly diverse communities comprising our public educational system. Current school technology agreements and poorly worded surveillance policies may silence vulnerable and marginalized populations voice or agency for students challenged by past trauma, lived experiences, emotion dysregulation or specifically a Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD) who are in a greater need to belong or to be accepted as part of social network. Considerations for policymakers related to accommodations for vulnerable and marginalized populations, or review of surveillance policies related to what is considered appropriate use of technology is fast becoming a priority to provide a voice to students and develop awareness of a more inclusive school community.

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