



National College of Art and Design

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Essay/Assignment Cover Sheet

Name of Student: Bernadette Nugent

Course: Curriculum Studies

Submission Date: 5/1/24

Lecturer/tutor Dr. Patsey Bodkin

Essay/Assignment title Curriculum essay

Criteria	Ex	VG	Good	Fair	Poor	Comment
Introduction (statement of problem, response to task)						
Range and use of appropriate sources						
Development of argument (analysis, interpretation)						
Conclusions (application, findings, outcomes)						
Presentation, language, academic conventions						

Please tick Y/N for Profile of Needs

☐

General comment:

Indicative grade:

Tutor:

Date:

Curriculum as a form of social destruction:

“Social destruction brought about by the lack of sex education in Russian curricula”

As of 2024, attitudes towards sex education being taught in Russian schools present themselves as a topic of huge debate and contention. Although there has been some progress in recent years towards recognising the importance of providing a comprehensive sex education to students in Russia, aiming to address prevalent issues such as sexually transmitted infections, consent and reproductive health, there are still conservative ideologies within Russian society that are heavily resisting the implementation of such reforms to curriculum. Tradition values and concerns about the likely impact on cultural norms have led to the government facing challenges in establishing a standardised sex education curriculum.

However, Russia did not always hold this viewpoint on sex education, quite the opposite. In the mid 1950's, after Stalin's death, came an approach towards sex education that had not been seen in the Soviet Union before. The Soviet state launched a sex education programme, producing brochures for young people aiming at reducing the amount of abortions, STD's and above all aiming to hold control over their sexual experiences. In the 1960's, Russian psychologist Viktor Kolbanovsky published two books on the topic of sex education. While he insisted on the need for sex education for all, his beliefs were still rooted in the traditions followed in Russia at the time. He saw sex as something to limit very strictly, even in marriage, and to avoid the over excitement of the subcortical

parts of the brain, plainly, that passion should never prevail over reason. (Yurievna, 2019). At this time more discourse around sex came about, and the role of schools and teachers in providing sexual education to youth was questioned, resulting in the course 'Fundamentals of the Soviet family and family education' being added to the curriculum at the beginning of the 60s. (Русская семёрка, 2017). While this course was widely unsuccessful given the strong taboo still attached to the word sex, and the unwillingness of teachers to deliver the content, it still opened the doors for discussions around the topic. At the time pedagogical experts viewed children as highly sexual creatures (Alexander, R., 2021), not unlike the beliefs of Freud, and so took about creating discourses around sex which aimed to eliminate any opportunity for developing sexual perversions, homosexuality being regarded as the main antagonist, with an overarching aim to repopulate the country after the war.

This ideology of anti-homosexuality has stayed deeply rooted in modern day Russian society, and has proven time and time again to be one of the most socially destructive beliefs in modern times. Russia's Supreme Court has moved to classify the "international LGBT social movement" as an extremist organisation in the latest global move against LGBTQ+ inclusivity. (Burga, 2023) This ruling will state that it is not just individuals identifying as gay, non-binary etc who may be targeted by prosecutors, but anyone working in an activism role, or who merely supports LGBTQ+ people. The lack of information about LGBTQ+ issues being delivered in school settings has contributed to significant social repercussions, and has fostered an environment which perpetuates discrimination and ignorance. Failure to address and teach about the diversity of sexual orientations and gender identities in schools not only limits the understanding of the broader population, inside and out of Russia, but also completely undermines the

challenges faced by individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ living in Russia. This lack of awareness leads to hugely harmful stereotypes, stigmatisation and isolation, but also to extreme violence and in many cases even death of the non conforming individual. Pila, a Russian vigilante group which has been terrorising LGBTQ+ Russians since its formation in 2018 posted a list of names of identifying individuals, calling for their assassinations in return for a cash reward. (Litinova, 2019) A 2023 study by Professors Kondakov and Katsuba of UCD, identified 1056 hate crimes with 365 fatalities all relating to homosexuality in Russia in one year. The lack of education provided to the youth of the country has to be held responsible for this, there is an absence of humanity, a distinct lack of empathy and understanding of sexuality held in Russia which is leading to social destruction which many of us schooled in mainland European countries could not possibly comprehend.

Moreover, the lack of acceptance and education around sexuality has led to an AIDS epidemic in Russia. Of the thirty nine million people living with HIV today, over one million are living in Russia. (Toren, 2023) Russia's response on such remains muted, but the problem continues to grow. If there is no teaching occurring, there is no way for people to understand this issue and safely resolve it. Simply, people are dying from a disease that they are being given no information about. This is not a new phenomenon, and has existed in Russia for decades, but is undoubtedly a human rights issue. People cannot prevent it if they do not know the cause of, or how to.

In the present day, a sex education curriculum does not exist in Russia, and likely will not for the foreseeable future. Although pilot programmes do exist, Putin's regime seems entirely focused on increasing the country's population and continuing on cultural traditions, even if this means filling the youth with hateful, misinformed

ideologies which are proven to be causing serious social issues and destruction to communities. More than 500,000 abortions were performed in Russia in 2022, a staggering number. Russia was one of the lowest-ranking countries in Europe by access to modern contraception. (Statista Research Department, Dec 19, 2023) Given the lack of information surrounding sex and basic reproductive science young men and women are given, and the repercussions unsafe sex can bring, this is not surprising. The effects of abortion can be catastrophic, both mentally and physically. There are proposals to ban abortions within private clinics in Russia, which will undoubtedly result in the birth of children whose parents are not in a position to care for, leading to more social challenges, all resulting from the lack of education provided to these youths.

In conclusion, the absence of a comprehensive sex education in the Russian curriculum has undoubtedly yielded socially destructive consequences, as evidenced by the alarming rate in hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community, the escalating AIDS epidemic and the persistently high rates of abortion. Failure to address issues relating to sexual health and identity within the education system perpetuates stigma, fosters ignorance and ultimately compromises the overall well-being of society. It limits young people's ability to make informed decisions, potentially perpetuating a cycle of ignorance through generations to come. The socially destructive impact of the inadequate sex education in Russia highlights the urgent need for curriculum reform to enable a more informed, tolerant, empowered and healthy society. The urgency of addressing this educational gap cannot be overstated, as it is integral to shaping a future where tolerance, awareness, and socially responsible behaviour prevail, steering society away from the destructive repercussions currently unfolding.

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