

CONTINUITIES AND CHANGE: REFORMING THE CURRICULUM AND THE WAR'S IMPACT ON ONTARIO'S PROGRESSIVIST RHETORIC, 1937–1942

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Social virtues are not things merely to learn about. They are to be achieved only by practising them. They are to be accepted willingly as desirable forms of conduct; they cannot be developed by coercion. The school, therefore, must be organized to permit their exercise and growth in situations that require their practice. Hence, opportunities should be provided for children to work together in groups, each child sharing in the planning, execution, and completion of worth-while tasks.¹

Abstract

This essay considers Ontario as a space of reception for progressive education in the period immediately following World War I. It discusses the reforms to Ontario's curriculum that were heavily inspired by progressivist thinking. In the context, progressive education concerned three themes, which reflected a concern for building schools that fit the modern, progressive age; these concerned a focus on the individual learner, promoting active learning, and correlating schools with social life. The curriculum reforms, it is argued, attempted to weave consistency and order out of three parallel progressivist orientations: child study, social efficiency, and social meliorism.

Introduction

This paper considers the period between 1937 and 1942, which entailed broad and thorough revisions to Ontario's public school curricula. Also, Canada's participation in World War II and the very significant threat that global conflict posed for the maintenance and preservation of democracy brought about some shifts in progressivist rhetoric. The province's popular educational journals, which had heretofore consistently and almost stubbornly

adverse to discussing or debating political matters, rallied behind the cause of a democratic education for a progressive world. Still, the progressivist articles did not engage in any rhetorical disputes regarding different visions for school reform.

Despite their willingness to engage with democratic pedagogical themes on a large and international scale, the journals remain diffident with regards to oppositional progressivist discourses within Ontario. As such, there is a stark absence of editorial critiques about the curriculum reforms or of commentary on the government's stance on matters such as labour disputes. The journals were, in general, supportive of the Ontario government.² Many voices were absent in these sources. Those that were included weighed in on pedagogical matters with cautious optimism, leaning toward a consensus view that democracy was a beacon of hope in times of darkness. In this context, Duncan McArthur, as a major figure in the curriculum revisions and a voice in the periodicals, was aiming to weave together progressivist currents of opinion into a broad and cohesive vision to guide Ontario's school reforms.

Reforming the Provincial Curriculum

In 1934, as the worst of the Depression began to ease, a new government led by Mitchell Hepburn was elected to lead Ontario to better days. Among his many campaign promises, Hepburn's vow to overhaul the education system was particularly appealing to Ontario's educationists, who for fifteen years following the end of World War I had presented progressivist visions in the periodicals. Since 1923, Ontario's Premiers had retained the education portfolio for themselves; consequently, Hepburn argued that the Department of Education had been led by men lacking "particular training" in educational matters.³ Dr. Leo J. Simpson, the new Minister of Education, had been a school board trustee in Barrie and was considered a good party organizer with grassroots support among trustees and educators.⁴ The new Deputy Minister of Education and Chief Director of Education, Duncan McArthur, would become the driving force behind the Department's push to reform Ontario's schools. In Robert Stamp's view:

Actual leadership was assumed by the new deputy minister, Duncan McArthur. This was the outstanding educator Hepburn had been seeking for over a year—a Queen's University history professor, member of the Kingston Board of Education, and a man who had the respect of the province's teachers. Hepburn had failed to lure McArthur into the political arena as a Liberal candidate in the 1934 election, but the subsequent offer of the senior civil service position in the department had its appeal. Eventually, McArthur would have a taste of both worlds, for he moved from deputy minister to minister following Simpson's death six years later.⁵

Among the first announcements by the newly formed Department of Education was a promise to review and revise Ontario's course of study.⁶

The curriculum of Ontario's schools did undergo considerable change, most notably in 1937 and 1938. The reforms to the program of study in those years represent a culmination of the progressivist reform energies and an attempt to institutionalize progressivist practice in schools. The revised curriculum embodied the core progressivist principles as defined in this thesis, making provisions for individual learners, active learning, and studies of relevance to contemporary society. E. J. Transom from the Central Public School in Timmins, trying to be objective in his assessment of Ontario's curriculum revisions, explained the primary difference between the "old" and "new" courses of study as follows: "The old course stressed, almost exclusively, subject matter to be learned. The new course introduces other factors, like personality development, and socialization or citizenship."⁷ It also brought together many of the concerns raised in progressivist journal articles since 1919, including the study of extant social problems, the fostering of community, enterprise learning, health studies, and opportunities for students to have options regarding their courses of study.⁸

As far back as 1911, reference had been made to the need for Ontario's educational system to broaden the course of study so that it could better relate to a modern world and its various needs.⁹ One prime focus was the need to differentiate between a program that would provide general learning leading to university matriculation and a program that would prepare students more narrowly for particular domains in society.¹⁰ It was not until 1937 that the shift toward a progressivist paradigm would fully transform Ontario's program of study.

One of the most significant themes in the revised program was the attempt to balance a concern for developing a common curriculum and an interest in enabling individual choice. Consequently, upon entering high school, all of Ontario's students were introduced to a common Grade 9 program that featured certain compulsory subjects: "English, social studies, health and physical education, business practice and writing, mathematics, general or agricultural science, French, general shop for boys and home economics for girls, and music and art."¹¹ English, social studies, and health remained compulsory subjects in Grade 10, whereas in Grades 11 and 12 history replaced social studies as the third compulsory subject. Further, students had to select four of the following optional subjects to supplement their core curriculum: "mathematics, science or agriculture, shop or home economics, and music and art or music or art."¹² There were slight variations in the optional courses available to students in the industrial, home economics, commercial, and art courses.

As W. G. Fleming argues, with respect to program revisions for the elementary schools, the *Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools, 1937* "was an event of considerable importance of the evolution of curriculum in elementary schools in Ontario because of the progressive outlook defined in the introduction and embodied in the recommendations."¹³ The Ontario program had been developed by a committee of educators led by Thornton Mustard and S. A. Watson and was heavily influenced by the Deputy Minister of Education, Duncan McArthur.

In 1936, McArthur had selected Mustard, of Toronto Normal School, and Watson, from Keele Street Public School, and instructed them to lead the committee. These two educationists "were pragmatists, convinced by the realities of

the depression that a different approach to classroom learning was necessary to prepare students for an uncertain future."¹⁴ In light of the dramatic effects wrought by modernity, faith in a stable, predictable future had been shaken.¹⁵ Their report and the ensuing revised *Programme* drew many of their ideas and phrasing from reports of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education in Great Britain, which dealt with the topics of adolescence, primary schooling, and nursery schools.¹⁶

The Ontario *Programme* dealt with many similar interests, but not exclusively so. A concentration on health was one relatively new domain for education stressed in the revised curriculum, involving the maintenance of healthy environments in schools and the provision of experiences that could produce lifelong healthy habits. The instructional aspects of health education were framed in terms consistent with my definition of progressive rhetoric, as described most consistently by child study progressivist articles. In other words, the instructional aspects should relate to social life and activity as experienced outside of the school.

So important was this aim of health promotion that the Department of Education issued a handbook for teachers in 1938 to facilitate its implementation in the schools.¹⁷ The teaching aid, titled *Health: A Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers in Public and Separate Schools* was prepared by members of a Joint Committee on the Teaching of Health, appointed from the Department of Education and the Department of Health of the Province of Ontario.¹⁸ Its chapters addressed a variety of topics, including the "Need and Meaning of Health Education," "Health Instruction in the Grades," "The Human Body: Scientific and Technical Information for the Teacher," and "Communicable Diseases."¹⁹ Further, the

handbook included a glossary of terms, which related the daily school program to health instruction.²⁰ The definition of *homework* offered in the resource is notable, as it most succinctly strikes all the chords of progressivist rhetoric:

The child needs to play out-of-doors. For his [sic] growth he requires an adequate amount of sleep. Homework which curtails the child's time for recreation and sleep is open to serious question. There are types of homework which have important values in linking up the activities of the school with the child's home and community life. These types give the child an opportunity for outdoor and creative activities and may lead him to explore his own latent abilities. Such homework becomes a contribution to his physical mental, and social health.²¹

Here, the three domains of progressivist thinking that were predominant in Ontario's progressivist discourse meet and intertwine; these involved concern for: a) the individual child's interests and development; b) his or her active participation in learning tasks; and c) the linking of school to society are brought together under the canopy of health.

The *Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers* did not veil its progressivist rhetoric: "More and more does the progressive teacher appreciate the importance of the physical, mental, emotional, and social capabilities and limitations of the individual pupils under his [sic] care."²² The progressivist themes were projected to offer a viable pedagogical alternative to the traditional curriculum, which was depicted as inflexible, narrow, and overly academic.²³ This alternative sought to actively engage Ontario's teachers in the ongoing experimentation with and definition of progressivist schooling, while building a

community of educators who would be stakeholders in the province's educational future.²⁴

Duncan McArthur explicitly described health education as a powerful way of approaching education holistically, taking into account various aspects of students' development and linking children's school lives to their home lives.²⁵ He described the revised curriculum initiated during his tenure at the Department of Education as:

Essentially an educational program involving the training of both body and mind. It will endeavour to improve the health of our youth by providing greater facilities for games and out-of-doors recreation. We will endeavour to bridge the gap between school and home even should that involve a drastic revision of our traditional views regarding the function of the school. Whatever affects the physical and mental well-being of the children is properly the concern of the educator. The interest of the school in the boy [sic] must not be confined to what happens in the classroom between 9 a.m. and 4 p. m.²⁶

With the introduction of health study into the *Programme of Studies*, McArthur found a means of knitting together all three domains of progressivist concern. Health was one theme that involved activity and active learning, concerned the individual development of students, and related studies to life outside school. Healthy habits, for instance, were described as the results of doing, not "reading and talking. Instruction in Health, therefore, should be active rather than formal in its nature, and should be linked as closely as possible to the child's daily experience."²⁷ Health, the document argued, "should not be regarded simply as a 'subject' of

the curriculum but as a programme pervading the whole life of the school and the whole life of each pupil.”²⁸

With respect to individual subjects, English represented the core of the curriculum. It was seen as occupying “first place among the intellectual exercises of the elementary school. It is of prime importance that children learn to speak and write their mother tongue clearly, accurately, and gracefully.”²⁹ Emphasis was placed on clarity of expression and mastery of reading and writing, both oral and written. Supplemental reading was described as “the most important phase of the English course ... [because] the child who has learned to love reading is not only likely to continue his [sic] education all through life, but is prepared profitably to enjoy his leisure.”³⁰ A child who developed a love for reading and mastered the required skill set was capable of self-directed, lifelong learning. Libraries were positioned as important sources of this supplementary reading. A list of suggested topics and resources for each grade was provided in the *Programme*, including domains of English instruction such as conversation, reading, verse speaking, verse making, storytelling, dramatization, letter writing, word study, sentence study, and writing.

The introduction of social studies was the most meliorist progressivist element of the 1937 curriculum revisions in Ontario. This new subject was explicitly designed to relate school learning in more intimate ways to the broader social context of the province.³¹ It strove to engage students in active examinations of the world as it presently was and could be, not with its past or its heritage. As McArthur himself noted, upon entering the Department of Education, it was apparent to him that “both elementary and secondary school courses were out of harmony with the times, and accordingly sought a

remedy.”³² The expressed aim of the course for social studies was “to help the child to understand the nature and workings of the social world in which he [sic] lives The course aims, also, to develop in the pupils desirable social attitudes.”³³ The subject matter would be drawn from contemporary problems and issues in the world, which would then be contextualized in light of geographical and historical study. The progressive concern for active learning was not neglected; it was “expected that much of the course will be carried out through co-operative activities of various kinds.”³⁴ Active learning—a means of developing the right attitudes of mind—should be encouraged. Teachers should “guard against *merely talking* about the duties of boys and girls, but must provide, instead, daily co-operative activities through which the practice of mutual helpfulness will grow.”³⁵

The revised description for the course in natural science reinforces this theme that the new style of education should emphasize the cultivation of habits of mind more than the absorption of facts or figures. The sciences were important because they could foster in students “a genuinely scientific spirit,” wherein a community of scholarship would thrive.³⁶ Engaging students, as a community of learners, in active scientific inquiry would mean the cultivation of an orientation to learning required of future citizens in a progressive, evolving world. The purpose of the course was to provide experiences for children so that they might learn “to observe carefully and dispassionately, to formulate one’s observations in words or in other ways, and to make proper inferences from what has been observed.”³⁷ Experiential interactions “with real things” in the scientific realm, such as field excursions and experiments, were preferable means of achieving these aims than set “lessons at set periods” in a day.³⁸

Emphatic concern for relating school studies with actual life beyond the confines of classrooms permeates the *Programme*. The stress on active learning that is somehow self-directed or takes into consideration the individual child's interests is a persistent one. Mathematics education, for example, involved helping the child to see the "value of numbers in the ordinary affairs of life, to provide him [sic] with training in the use of numbers for his own practical purposes, and to form the foundation upon which his subsequent mathematical knowledge will be built."³⁹ Art and music, while portrayed as useful media for active and creative expression of instinctive urges in children, were also means of correlating all the subjects and permitting individuals to construct and "express more and more successfully *their own ideas*."⁴⁰

What united both the revised curriculum document and McArthur's broad vision for progressivist reform of schools was a desire to transform a course of studies seen as overly concerned with the inculcation of academic knowledge. Such knowledge was seen as bearing little or no relevance to contemporary life, social activity, or democratic citizenship. It is for this reason that the revised course of study refused to authorize a standardized textbook or reader for each subject and discouraged the use of examinations as the sole measures of progress.⁴¹ McArthur, shortly after his appointment within the Department, had advised Ontario's educationists in 1934 that "the relaxation of the examination system may prove to be of definite encouragement to teachers to promote reading beyond the limits of prescribed texts."⁴² Indeed, by 1940, only the Departmental examinations for high school entrance remained.⁴³ Textbook learning, he continued, was not only narrow, but also its mandate compelled teachers to push

through textbooks at the peril of ignoring broad student interest, activity, and exploration:

The system of authorizing special textbooks for courses of study has likewise led to the encouragement of the formation of habits of mind which cannot be regarded as otherwise than undesirable. The authorizing of a particular book as a text gives to the printed word within the book a literal inspiration. It becomes easy for the student to assume that all of the truth relating to a subject is contained within the covers of the book.⁴⁴

Further, the facts and figures contained within textbooks, once "committed to memory are soon forgotten. The information temporarily acquired is seldom related to the structure of knowledge or experience possessed by the pupil."⁴⁵ Standardized departmental examinations were as ill-suited to progressivist thinking as was the authorization of any single textbook for a subject because both reinforced a passive, acquisitive model of learning.⁴⁶ Consequently, McArthur explained, "the relaxation of the examination system may prove to be of definite encouragement to teachers to promote reading beyond the limits of prescribed texts."⁴⁷

In addition to liberating students from prescribed texts and rote learning, the new model aimed at liberating the teacher. By seeking to dethrone an academic curriculum taught through authorized textbooks and tested via provincial examinations, McArthur staked his progressivist visions on the teachers of Ontario who would necessarily enact such principles. As reported in a 1941 supplement in *The School*, reporting on the new curriculum in Ontario, "the successful operation of any plan of education depends upon the teacher. The full benefits of the new curriculum can be realized only if the teacher

understands the objectives and is able to secure results.”⁴⁸ If the traditional, academic curriculum depended on standardized texts and assessments, the progressivist program of study would succeed only if teachers and principals were permitted freedom to make activities relevant, interesting, and interactive in different contexts.⁴⁹ There is a cliché regarding a French inspector of schools who boasted that on any given day he could know what page of the textbook every child in the country was reading. It was against such very standardized visions of schooling that the 1937 and 1938 programs were positioned.⁵⁰

It is because the notion of standardization, at its very core, conflicted with the progressivist stress on individualized instruction and the freedom to choose a personally meaningful course of study that the curriculum revisions provided ample opportunity for electives. Beyond the common Grade 9 program, McArthur contended there should be “a wide range of studies available for the various qualities of minds in the boys and girls.”⁵¹ It is in this context that the Department of Education’s loosening of language requirements and the demise of Latin and Greek as compulsory subjects can best be understood. As McArthur told J. F. McDonald in response to the University College Professor’s argument that the loss of Latin would make Ontario a weak and effeminate culture, “the psychology that it doesn’t matter what you teach a boy [sic] so long as it’s unpleasant is antiquated.”⁵² McArthur’s progressivist sensibilities found that compulsion in learning was neither useful nor desirable.⁵³

Aside from its implications for Ontario’s curriculum reforms, this exchange between Professor McDonald and Minister McArthur most clearly indicates the extent to which the periodicals would go to isolate pedagogical statements from any political controversy and

rhetorical debates. Firstly, neither *The School* nor *The Canadian School Journal* published articles directly critical of McArthur’s progressivist reforms. Secondly, McArthur’s debate with McDonald was not reported at all in the journals, only in newspapers that covered the O.E.A. conference that year, *The Globe* and the *Toronto Daily Star*. *The School* provided no account of the conference. *The Canadian School Journal*, the official organ of the Association, offered a terse but positive summary of McArthur’s thesis that “the greatest service the teaching profession could render to humanity would be to make French and Latin optional instead of compulsory subjects.”⁵⁴ There is no mention of McDonald or of any critical response to McArthur’s address. The summary does remind the reader that “Dr. McArthur said that the universities in this province are more rigid in their requirements than Oxford, Cambridge or Aberdeen.”⁵⁵

In general, Patrice Milewski’s assessment that “the *Programme* can be understood as signifying a fundamental transformation that broke with previously existing pedagogies” is generally correct.⁵⁶ Milewski identifies the 1937 curriculum as “a rupture in educational discourse.”⁵⁷ In his view, “it conditioned or defined what could be said about teaching, learning, children and schooling for the greater part of the twentieth century.”⁵⁸ In Robert Stamp’s assessment, both “culturally and politically, the revised program of 1937 implied a partial rejection of absolute values passed on to former generations of pupils.”⁵⁹ The new *Programme* emphasized preparation for the present and the future more than it did transmission of past triumphs, heritage, and tales.

The actual extent to which progressive discourse and rhetoric actually affected classroom practice and, even, educationists’ conceptions of what direction progress should pursue is

debatable. A rupture in the official discourse, howsoever dramatic or bold, does not necessarily correlate with a rupture in the modes and methods of instruction. W. G. Fleming touches on this point directly:

The Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools, 1937 demonstrates a highly progressive orientation and might have set the schools of Ontario on an entirely new path had certain circumstances been more propitious. The main reason why the point of view expressed in the document was ‘ahead of its time’ was that the short period of preparation for elementary teachers ... made it impossible to induce them to abandon the patterns by which they themselves had been taught.⁶⁰

Fleming is right: progressive rhetoric takes on a very different character within the confines of a school or a particular classroom. If, however, as is the case here, the language of progressive schooling is of prime interest, the 1937 and 1938 curriculum documents represent significant ruptures in the discourse of systematized and departmentally sanctioned visions of progress.

Ontario’s Curriculum Revisions in Relation to the Various Progressivist Orientations

Yet at this juncture, it is fitting to ask how Ontario’s curriculum revisions in the late 1930s and early 1940s can be assessed in light of the different progressivist orientations that populated the context. Progressive education was received and interpreted variously by educationists. This matter of competing, or divergent, progressivists is too often ignored in historical studies of progressive education, but the heuristics used here for describing different groups of progressives

pursues a model laid out by Herbert Kliebard in the United States.

Kliebard saw the field of progressives as populated by shifting coalitions of competing interest groups, each competing for influence over school reforms.⁶¹ As Kliebard argued, the very term *progressive education* begged a question:

I was frankly puzzled by what was meant by the innumerable references I had seen to progressive education. The more I studied this the more it seemed ... that the term encompassed such a broad range, not just of different, but of contradictory, ideas on education as to be meaningless.⁶²

Kliebard identified three distinct and divergent progressive interest groups embroiled in a struggle for the curriculum and school policy, each advocating a particular reform aim: efficiency, social reconstruction, and developmental psychology. The developmentalist interest group held, Kliebard argued, an almost romantic faith in nature and the unfolding stages of child development. The developmentalists traced their “ancestry as far back as Comenius, most prominently to Rousseau, and then to the work of Pestalozzi and Froebel.”⁶³ Pedagogically, the orientation, which was geared principally toward the scientific and psychological understanding of human development, had a central principle of striving “first of all to keep out of nature’s way.”⁶⁴ The social efficiency advocates saw scientific management of schools as the best means to reform schools and make them more progressive. “Of the varied and sometimes frenetic responses to industrialism and to the consequent transformation of American social institutions,” Kliebard noted, “there was one that emerged clearly dominant both as a social ideal and as an

educational doctrine. It was social efficiency.”⁶⁵
The third interest group that Kliebard considers in relation to progressive education are the social meliorists, whose zeal for confronting social injustice in society through educational reforms reached its zenith during the Great Depression.⁶⁶

Returning to the subject of Ontario’s progressivist curriculum reforms, what follows is an exploration of the extent to which the revised *Programmes of Study* reflected the concerns of distinct progressive interests. Despite the coexistence of varying versions of progressive education in the province, all progressivist educators were bound by the parameters of particular themes, which they debated. These themes, referred to here as the domains of progressivist rhetoric, were: a) concern with the promotion of active learning; b) promotion of education that conformed to the interests of individual learners; and c) relation of education to the needs and realities of modern, contemporary reality. themes: activity, individuality, and the relationship between education and society.

As an example, the relationship of the individual to the larger social order in Ontario can be considered. Efficiency progressivists were primarily concerned with the maintenance and management of the existing economic and social orders. Progressivist reforms would help those orders run more smoothly and efficiently. Schools could be managed and operated as industries were run. Ultimately, they needed to follow the industrial models in order to relate school studies as specifically as possible to the vocational realities in Ontario. Students’ aptitudes and interests could be gauged, businesses could be surveyed, training programs could be implemented, and guidance programs could help individuals find their vocational niches.

The meliorist position was most frequently, at the very least implicitly, critical of business, rampant individualism, and laissez-faire capitalism. The social order was, from this progressivist orientation, not only changeable, but also requiring change. Greater social cooperation was necessary if future citizens, the students in Ontario’s schools, could approach social problems and deal with them adequately. A healthy democracy required active citizens who would challenge the established social orders and think critically about their contexts. The good of any one person was indivisible from the good of all.

Similarly, child study progressivists depicted cooperation and social activity as vital in education, but for different reasons. Development and adjustment to different stages throughout life were characterized as necessarily social processes. Individuals had freedoms and needed to exercise these in order to retain distinct senses of self through life, but all actions had consequences with social implications. Social adjustment was not the same as social conformity, and the latter was unacceptable because it imposed a pattern of living and thinking that limited the individual’s activity and creativity.

Reviewing the various types of progressivist positions, albeit summarily, reveals how difficult the Department of Education’s task of bringing these together coherently was. As mentioned earlier, the introduction of health studies was one way of stressing the common concerns of Ontario’s progressivists. V. K. Greer’s appraisal of the new *Programme of Studies* made clear that the Department had aimed to cast its net broadly and appeal to all kinds of progressivists:

Those successful teachers who had found the former courses somewhat rigid

now enjoy the freedom which they may use in the choice of subject matter.... The parents are also keenly interested, and very largely because they have noted the increased interest on the part of the children. A prominent University professor states that the psychology of the course is thoroughly sound and quite abreast of the present-day opinions of leading psychologists. The man on the street comments that his child is reading more and enjoying the activities and projects of the classroom. On the whole, there can be no doubt that a child-centred programme is a better programme than a subject-centred one.⁶⁷

The Department of Education believed that centring the new course of studies on individual students as opposed to academic content would give Ontario's educational stakeholders an agreeable foundation for reform. Greer stated confidently at the conclusion of his long appraisal: "There need be no turning back. All are agreed that we are now making progress under this new programme."⁶⁸ If Greer's assessment of the situation was accurate, what did the curriculum revisions offer to progressivists of fundamentally different orientations to garner their support?

Health, which reached out to all progressivists, would have particularly appealed to child study concerns. Indeed, the core themes in the revised *Programme of Studies* appear to be influenced in greatest measure by developmentalist concerns. In the *Programme's* discussion of "The Child's Need for Success," for instance, Blatz appears to have written the following statement on the topic of security:

The development of the individual takes place largely through social participation. Indeed, many capacities

of the individual are brought out only under the stimulus of associating with others. But in order that development may be continuous, the efforts of the individual must be attended by success. It is true that "we learn from our mistakes," but it is equally true that continued and prolonged failure stops growth altogether.⁶⁹

An introductory section titled "Fostering Individual Talent" is similarly imbued with child study rhetoric: "This Programme of Studies accordingly attempts to provide for differences in the abilities, tastes, and interests of individual pupils; and requires that the teacher be alert to detect and foster the growth of individual talent."⁷⁰

Just as health studies were introduced with the intention that they would be woven through all aspects of the school, the ethos of developmental psychology permeated the entire document. It suggested that mathematics, for example, be instructed in a way respectful of the learner's stages of development and understanding.⁷¹ Further, promotion from one grade to another would be based on the age of the student, and not solely on annual external examinations.⁷² The notion that school activities needed to be centred on the learner's interests in order to engage him or her in studies that are meaningful and motivating is woven throughout.⁷³

The social efficiency progressivist rhetoric also weaves in and out of the document at various instances. On occasion, it is wedded to a child study theme in a way that seems to show the two orientations as perfectly compatible: "Learning takes place most efficiently when the interest of the learner is aroused."⁷⁴ Such instances beg the question as to whether a teacher should aim to arouse the learner's interest in order to make

education more meaningful for the student or more efficient for the teacher. The *Programme of Studies* was most certainly seeking to establish common progressivist ground; in this case, the engaged student is less likely to provoke disturbance and more inclined to work fastidiously on a task. Similarly, the provision of greater options and elective courses following the common Grade 9 program seems favourable to both child study and efficiency progressivists. For the former, elective subjects would allow for greater experimentation and individual choice in school whereas, for the latter, freedom to select courses would permit the tailoring of educational programs suitable for particular abilities or vocational channels.

In other sections of the *Programme of Studies* the school's role was depicted as having to "assist the pupil to master those skills that are essential to human intercourse in a modern society."⁷⁵ These skills included those involving "the conversion of materials to serve human purposes," such as agriculture, home economics, manual training, and crafts.⁷⁶ The descriptions of these subjects in the *Programme of Studies*, however, do not go nearly as far in their espousal of efficiency rhetoric as the mildest of such articles in the source journals. The value of the course in crafts, for example, is stated in very Deweyan language:

The value for older children of some training in the traditional crafts is now generally recognized. In doing and making, students not only develop manual skill, but the ability to think their way through the difficulties presented by materials and processes. Handwork has value also in helping children to realize the importance of accuracy, for mistakes in the concrete are easily recognized and can seldom be erased or wholly

corrected. Moreover, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the brighter children require manual activity of this type as much as those of lower mental capacity.⁷⁷

Manual and craft work were thus presented as subjects that could help students develop useful skills and habits independently of any vocational pursuit. Further, manual training was not to be treated as a subject toward which students would be streamed if their academic work was insufficient. The message promoted greater inclusivity, not classification.

Home economics is a very notable exception, clearly stating that the subject:

Possesses a definite educational value, not unlike that of craftwork for boys, but more important in its practical bearing. Chief among these educational values is the development of a girl's natural interest in her home, together with the cultivation of desirable attitudes towards the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of life in the home. Scarcely less important, educationally, is the opportunity afforded by the work in Home Economics to train the girls in proper habits relative to their personal appearance, the care of their belongings, and the conservation of their health.⁷⁸

In terms of the efficient management, maintenance, and preservation of social order, nothing in the *Programme of Studies* makes a statement as transparently social efficiency progressivist as this: "The practical value of skill in the various activities of the home must be apparent to all. Regardless of their station in life, practically all girls will share, sooner or later, in the management of a home."⁷⁹ Gauging by the descriptions of courses offered in the curriculum alone, one might surmise that only Ontario's girls

required particularized training for their predestined domestic role in society.⁸⁰ On the whole, however, the *Programme of Studies* did not go as far in its espousal of efficiency rhetoric as it did with the language of child study and meliorism.

The social meliorist emphasis is emphatically clear in a number of instances, most notably in relation to social studies. “The aim of the whole course in Social Studies is to help the student to understand the social world in which he [sic] lives,” announced the provincial curriculum document.⁸¹ The meliorist concern for studying current events in the contemporary context was encapsulated in this new subject, which offered an opportunity to relate historical, geographical, and social studies to problems in students’ lives outside of school.⁸² Discussion was identified as a useful tool for the teaching of social studies, a tool by which students could develop critical habits of mind:

Children will acquire in a very meaningful way a great deal of geographical and historical material, and what is more important, learn to think geographically and historically and to watch for further items of information confirming or refuting the views expressed in class.⁸³

While espousing such meliorist ideas, the *Programme of Studies* weighed in far more cautiously than many of the discussions in the source journals did.

Teachers were advised to confine the discussion of current events to matters of fact, rather than opinion: “Little good and much harm can come from airing *opinions* upon international, political, or religious problems—opinions probably founded on inadequate information.”⁸⁴ The note of caution can be interpreted as

suggesting that teachers lead their students to make claims based on warrants and evidence, which would stimulate research. It can also be seen as a way of limiting potential controversy associated with this new subject arising from overly provocative discussions or critical attitudes expressed in school. Ultimately, the *Programme of Studies* stood firmly in its assertion that the principle of cooperation and the ideal of democratic citizenship were foundations for future social growth and activity. As asserted in the 1942 edition of the document, published in the midst of World War II: “The world has become an interdependent social and economic unit, and the future advancement of civilization, following the settlement of our present troubles, will be dependent upon the establishment of ideals of cooperation rather than those of rivalry.”⁸⁵

Social studies, of course, came at the expense of history and geography, which were no longer treated as separate subjects in Ontario’s elementary schools. The province’s humanists could have, at the very least, found the centrality of English in the *Programme of Studies* valuable. The first aim for English study identified in the document was the cultivation of “a genuine and abiding love of good reading,” which implied that literature would persist in schools.⁸⁶ In fact, every classroom was seen as requiring “a small, well-chosen, attractive library” that would help “to cultivate properly the love of reading and to form the habit of finding in books information and enjoyment.”⁸⁷ The second aim, “to develop in the students the power to express themselves correctly and effectively in oral and written language,” suggested that formal study of grammar and usage should remain in the school program.⁸⁸

V. K. Greer’s assessment of the new curriculum stated clearly that a progressive program did not imply unfettered activity catering

entirely to children's "whimsical desires" and "changing interests."⁸⁹ In fact, Greer seemed to acquiesce to humanists' critiques of progressivist reforms, stating that Ontario's schools would maintain their academic rigour:

It will be wrong to interpret the new course as inviting the teacher to do away with all distasteful tasks. It will also be wrong if the acquiring of factual knowledge is belittled. It will be dangerous also if too much emphasis is placed upon play and upon activities which have very little or no worth-while purpose. The inexperienced teacher may easily mistake physical bustle for mental activity, with the result that much energy may be spent and little progress made. Drill, review, and examinations will still be needed, and it will continue to be very important that the child's factual knowledge at the end of any period will be at least equal to, if not greater than formerly.⁹⁰

In fact, Greer cited Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, stating that the pupil should "use his own language with exactness, freedom, and charm."⁹¹ For the time being, English, a broad term "made to include English literature, English grammar, English composition, supplementary reading, spelling, and writing," remained useful in Ontario's *Programme of Study*.⁹²

World War II, Ontario's Schools, and the Educational Journals

As the 1940s and World War II neared, certain minor revisions to the 1937 and 1938 curriculum documents were undertaken. In W. G. Fleming's assessment, the "general nature of the recommended approach remained essentially the same. The introduction was rewritten in 1941

with much greater stress on the objective of preparing children to live in a democratic society."⁹³ Indeed, "Education for Social Living" was the first theme treated in the 1942 publication by the Department of Education.⁹⁴ "Co-operation in a democratic group," was depicted as the highest social value, requiring that students practice "self-control, intelligent self-direction, and the ability to accept responsibility."⁹⁵ Ontario's schools, the introduction argued, needed to facilitate opportunities for students to work together in order to plan, execute, and complete worthwhile and common learning tasks.

So vital were these cooperative activities to the vitality of democratic education that a lengthy, nine-page description of "Enterprises" was included in the document immediately following the introduction.⁹⁶ While the 1937 curriculum had stressed individualized learning and self-direction, in 1941, in light of the war experience, the individual learner was depicted as having to learn and practise cooperative and democratic habits of mind.⁹⁷ Fleming has argued that the stress on democratic citizenship also affected themes and topics in Ontario's textbooks and educational resources from the late 1930s and early 1940s.⁹⁸

Modifications made to the province's curriculum documents when reprinted in the early 1940s reflected the most dominant theme running through *The School* and *The Canadian School Journal* between 1940 and 1942. In that period, the editorial articles in the two journals repeatedly reinforce the necessity of fostering democratic habits of living in Ontario's schools to counter the forces of Nazism and fascism. And Duncan McArthur, as befit the Minister of Education, demonstrated his commitment to the idea of democratic education in a flurry of speeches and publications between 1941 and 1942.⁹⁹

On December 7, 1941, for example, McArthur published an article in *Saturday Night* titled “Education for Democracy” that *The Canadian School Journal* found compelling enough to discuss at length for trustees and ratepayers throughout Ontario.¹⁰⁰ In the article, McArthur stated that the purpose of education was the creation of good citizens. There were no self-contained individuals, he argued, who were not also social beings with responsibilities to the school, town, municipality, province, Dominion, and Empire. Ontario’s schools had to prepare the province’s youth to “undertake the responsibilities of citizenship, fortified by habits of mind which accustomed them to the recognition of the rights of others and to their obligations to the community.”¹⁰¹ Eventually, the war would end, McArthur stated; at that time, society would require citizens with courage, endurance, and understanding capable of building a new and forward-looking world.

In his Christmas message to Ontario’s trustees and ratepayers, the Minister of Education reminded readers of *The Canadian School Journal* that the strains provoked by world war had imposed extra responsibilities upon the province’s schools.¹⁰² Because many fathers were engaged in military service and many mothers were occupied in war industries, “the home has too frequently become one of the first of our war casualties.”¹⁰³ The teachers, in particular, had borne a greater burden in providing anchorage for boys and girls in the province, through curricular and extracurricular supervision. Education had come to represent for McArthur a great model of public service and citizenship committed to the preservation of democracy.

“In no other war or national crisis,” explained an editorial in *The Canadian School Journal*, “has the school occupied such an

important place as at the present time.”¹⁰⁴ Ivan Schultz, Minister of Education for Manitoba, echoed this sentiment when classifying “teaching as a war profession.”¹⁰⁵ The first duty of teachers, he argued, was to the schools and the children. Schultz implored educators across the country to remain in the classrooms, where they could be of best service to the community and the youth of society.

The Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), with radio broadcasts reaching homes across the entire province, was increasingly regarded as having “direct responsibilities, educational and cultural” with regards to the fostering of democratic citizenship.¹⁰⁶ “The citizen’s task,” explained the CBC’s Gladstone Murray, “might be described as learning how to play his or her individual part—through self-sacrifice, discipline and initiative—in adaptation to new conditions.”¹⁰⁷ Preserving democratic ways of life was the primary responsibility of schools; radio, like education, touched the lives of the entire body of Ontario’s citizenry. In times of war, Murray argued, the responsibility of public institutions was to exert a unifying influence on the public’s temper and thought, stimulating national consciousness. In times of peace, which would follow, educational organizations had the responsibility to impart information and opinions that could enable citizens to participate in democratic life, “i.e., reconstructing and reshaping the Post War [sic] world.”¹⁰⁸

It is, perhaps, these last two points which can best describe the responsibilities that Ontario’s two most popular educational periodicals – *The School* and *The Canadian School Journal*, published by the Ontario College of Education and the Ontario Educational Association, respectively – appeared to assume in the context. The exclusion of oppositional discourses from, for example, socialist and

separate school sources, offered a limited range of definitions regarding progressive education. It can even be argued that the progressivist editorials in the journals represented a consensus view of educational reform, casting a net not broad enough to encompass actual debate, tension, or rhetorical cutting and thrusting. Both the journals considered here depended on subscriptions for their survival. Generally speaking, *The School* reached an audience of teachers, teacher educators, and teacher candidates. *The Canadian School Journal* appealed directly to taxpayers and school trustees. The rousing of political debates and controversy was not in the interests of either source journal, and, perhaps to a fault, the journals isolated pedagogical matters from any political entanglements.

There certainly were differences between the publications, but these were most evident outside of the editorial articles and reports concerning this thesis. *The School*, for instance, included sections on model lessons, assessments, and templates that could be of immediate practical use to educators. The journal reported on matters happening in schools and of interest to those who worked in schools. *The Canadian School Journal* included sections reporting on meetings of trustees, school councils, and school boards. The journal brought to the attention of its readership events related to taxation, policy, jurisdiction, and funding. This journal, in particular, concentrated its editorial topics during the early 1940s on themes related to democracy and citizenship. This emphasis reflected the journal's base in the O.E.A., which, in the early years of World War II, had emphasized the idea of education for citizenship, with the aim of bringing together Ontario's educationists for that purpose.¹⁰⁹

This is not to say that *The School* neglected the war effort and its implications for Canadian students. The journal's angle on events was one that typically addressed classroom practice. In 1940, for example, under the editorial management of Charles Phillips, *The School* began publishing a monthly diary that teachers used to help their pupils "follow the course of momentous events in Europe."¹¹⁰ The diary recounted significant events happening in Europe during the war, and suggested that students mark these happenings on an outline map, follow the reports in local newspapers, and write a monthly essay recounting the "Achievements of the Month."¹¹¹

Two months later, a lengthy article by H. E. Smith from the University of Alberta reminded Ontario's teachers that the basis of the educational philosophy "caught up in the phrase 'progressive education'" could be summed up in "an abiding belief in the superiority of the democratic way of life over any other known way of life."¹¹² Living democratically, he explained, entailed an emphasis on "the desire to co-operate rather than to compete, tolerance of the rights of others rather than selfishness, critical-mindedness rather than suggestibility, and concern with present conditions of living rather than with the life of the past."¹¹³ Progressivist rhetoric in the early 1940s predominately represented a means of asserting democratic attitudes and dispositions in educational contexts. In this meliorist progressivist vision, active and critical citizens were the greatest hope for democracy.¹¹⁴

What is certain is that both journals, despite their editing out of certain controversial or oppositional discourses, were forums where the moulding of Ontario's educational future could be explored. This future, particularly with regards to citizenship education and training, was depicted by progressivists as necessarily broadening the

vision of education to include more than book learning and academic knowledge. Schools were means of bringing Ontario's youth into contact with the actualities and problems of life outside the classroom. Faced with global conflict and world war, progressivist articles generally depicted the school's role as one promoting greater interest in public affairs, readiness to subordinate individual welfare to the common weal, and national unity.¹¹⁵

Shifts within the Spheres of Politics and Pedagogy

The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (C.C.F.) was a socialist party that had emerged from the Depression years as a national political force. In Ontario, partly in response to "Hepburn's anti-Labour policies during the 1930s and the substantial growth in labour organizations and collective bargaining during the war years," many of Ontario's educationists rallied behind the party.¹¹⁶ It was, according to Robert Stamp, a "mixture of status consciousness and utopian idealism that prompted some Ontario teachers to flirt with the C.C.F. and other left-wing political groups in the early 1940s."¹¹⁷ His assessment might explain why the Canadian Association for Adult Education put forward a 1943 document advocating greater social responsibility and social planning, and why the National Council for Canadian-Soviet Friendship gathered 15,000 people in Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens that same year calling for teacher exchanges between Russian and Canadian institutions. In the 1943 election, Ontario's Liberal government was ousted from power in favour of Colonel George Drew's Progressive Conservative Party, which secured a minority government by gaining a mere four more seats at Queen's Park than the C.C.F.¹¹⁸

While the start of World War II had provoked a shift in progressivist rhetoric, leaning

it predominately toward meliorist espousals of democratic citizenship, the global conflict would persist longer than the almost singularly meliorist visions for progressive education could endure. In Robert Stamp's assessment, "while a few educational leaders would keep the progressivist spirit alive throughout the war years, its viability as an educational philosophy was now under consistent attack. Education for peace had been shelved in favour of military preparedness."¹¹⁹ The League of Nations, which had been represented as the model of educational cooperation and democratic citizenship, had proven feeble and toothless in the face of Nazi and fascist threats.¹²⁰ In 1945, with the war in Europe clearly won, Drew lost a vote in the Legislature and immediately called a new provincial election.

Emphasizing the word *progressive* in his party's name, Drew equated the C.C.F. with fascist Germany's National Socialism and represented the impending election as one between the warring forces of fascism and freedom.¹²¹ The Progressive Conservatives actually did secure a majority government; the C.C.F. slipped to eight seats. W. G. Fleming's suggestion that the 1937 *Programme* would have borne very different fruit had certain events transpired differently is abundantly clear in light of the politics of postwar Ontario. Less than four months before the sudden passing of Duncan McArthur due to illness, Drew made clear that he had assessed progressivist ideas and found them wanting: "Teaching democracy was important, but there's been a little too much carrying the ideas of democracy to the point that children have as much right to express opinions as the teachers."¹²² The *Toronto Daily Star*, with an ominous tone, predicted the end of progressivist thinking in the Department of Education, noting:

What the Colonel has overlooked is the fact that the only way to learn democracy is to practise it. And the best way the teachers can put their lesson across is by fostering and encouraging self-confidence, initiative, and independent thinking among children. Col. Drew would have the youth strapped into obedience.¹²³

Premier George Drew, like his Conservative predecessors George S. Henry and Howard Ferguson, maintained the Education portfolio and steered the Department in a different direction from his Liberal predecessors, including the progressive-minded Duncan McArthur.

Summary

Robert Gidney, whose historical consideration of Ontario's system of schools *From Hope to Harris* begins where this thesis ends, at World War II, described the province in 1945 as "just beginning to emerge from fifteen years of wrenching dislocation and haunting insecurity."¹²⁴ While the war, which stimulated economic growth and instilled a sense of common purpose, solved some of the serious problems provoked by the Depression, it also "bred its own dislocations, of people and resources, and the dominant mood of the immediate post-war years was a deep yearning for normality, security, and stability."¹²⁵ Gidney's general observations regarding Ontario's population in the latter part of the 1930s and early 1940s have some relevance with regards to progressivist rhetoric in the province's journals.

Canada's active involvement in World War II began in 1939 and, by 1940, the sense of common purpose just referenced coalesced as a common interest in democratic education. The discursive communities brought together by the journals agreed, despite different interpretations

of what progress in schooling might entail, that democratic schools providing opportunities for active learning and citizenship training were vital to the nation. In Robert Stamp's words, "teachers' magazines and teachers' meetings were preoccupied with the question of how best to teach citizenship and democracy."¹²⁶

Perhaps, beyond the war effort, the coalescence can be attributed to the efforts of the Department of Education in Ontario, which, under the influence of Duncan McArthur, brought together various progressivist themes in the revised *Programmes of Studies*. The new curricula introduced in 1937 and 1938 attempted to weave together distinct visions for progressive schools in the province and to derive some order and consistency from them. The revised course of studies rejected a strictly academic model of learning based on memorization and examination of facts or figures contained within textbooks. In so doing, it related to the domains of progressive education treated in this paper: active learning, individualized instruction, and links to contemporary society.

In the foreground of the revised curriculum, seen as weaving its way through all the subject matter, was the introduction of health study. Social studies, a new course at the time, was likewise intended to bring together various subject matters. Social studies, history, geography, and civics could be interrelated thematically for the purpose of addressing extant social problems or questions. Enterprise tasks and project-based learning were depicted as useful ways of engaging students in the active and cooperative study of issues that had actual relevance outside of academic texts.

Students in secondary schools were given a common foundation through a general Grade 9 program that would allow them to explore various subjects before deciding on a focus. From Grade

10 onward, they had increasing opportunities to select courses of study that were both useful and relevant to their interests and vocational or academic paths. The loss of Latin as a mandatory subject caused some concern, but it was, McArthur argued, the only way of ensuring that the individual learner could “try himself [sic] out along different lines under the guidance and direction of teachers, that he might reach conclusions regarding his particular capabilities and aptitudes.”¹²⁷ The varied program enabled Ontario’s students to actively engage with “different lines of approach to education” in order to free them from the bonds of a strictly academic and traditional course of study.¹²⁸

Endnotes

¹ *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools, 1942* (Toronto, ON: Department of Education, 1942), 6.

² In fact, the source journals generally heaped praise on Minister of Education, Duncan McArthur. Particularly following his appointment as Minister following the death of Leo Simpson, the journals reiterated McArthur's credentials, experience, and commitment to Ontario's schools. See, for example, "The New Minister of Education," *The Canadian School Journal* (September 1940): 319; "The New Education," *The School* (October 1940): 172; and "Personal," *The School* (October 1940): 174. Having reported, in "The New Education" that "a revision of the *Programme of Studies* has just been published," the following commentary in "Personal" extols the virtues of the Minister, arguing "the province is fortunate in having a distinguished educationist in the cabinet post charged with the administration of the schools." *The Canadian School Journal*, likewise, praised McArthur and expressed confidence that he would "vitaly affect the youth of Ontario and influence the critical period which will follow the war. Ontario looks forward to still greater progress in the field of education and recognizes the valuable service which Dr. McArthur will contribute as a member of the Cabinet in all matters affecting public interest."

³ See, for example, "Education Criticism," *The Globe*, June 5, 1934: 5.

⁴ See, for example, "Notes and News: Ontario," *The School* (September 1934): 65–68. Simpson was a medical doctor as opposed to an academic, like McArthur.

⁵ Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876–1976*, 155.

⁶ "Notes and News: Ontario," 66–68.

⁷ E. J. Transom, "Time Off for Thinking," *The School* (February 1941): 507. Transom believed the new, progressive schools drew their principles from the study of contemporary society: "The work of the teacher, principal, or supervisor now is to study society, ascertain modern trends and movements, learn the fundamentals of personality, child development, and child psychology."

⁸ These concerns, on the whole, are dominated by those espoused by meliorist and developmentalist journal articles. The Department of Education's concern for efficiency were predominately directed at reforming the system of taxation and consolidating school boards. See, for example, "Summary of Dr. McArthur's Address," *The Canadian School Journal* (May 1940): 192–93.

⁹ John Seath, *Education for Industrial Purposes* (Toronto, ON: King's Printer, 1911).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 263. Seath actually noted seven domains for study in Ontario's schools: courses leading to university matriculation, courses leading to normal schools or Faculties of Education, household science courses, commercial courses, agricultural courses, manual training courses, and middle school art courses.

¹¹ Fleming, *Schools, Pupils, and Teachers*, 129.

¹² *Ibid.*, 130.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁴ Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876–1976*, 167.

¹⁵ The preparation of students for an uncertain future, as well as the overall concern for trying to manage or control education in a mutable, unpredictable world was a common theme in progressivist texts, including John Dewey's. See, for example, Richard D. Mosier, "Progressivism in Education," *Peabody Journal of Education* 29, no. 5 (1951): 274–81.

¹⁶ *Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools, 1937* (Toronto, ON: Department of Education, 1937). The British publications are most commonly referred to as the Hadow Reports.

¹⁷ *Health: A Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers in Public and Separate Schools* (Toronto, ON: The Ryerson Press, 1938).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, v. In the foreword, the handbook is described as having taken shape following experiments on the teaching of health in elementary schools in Ontario. The experiments were initiated by the Department of Health, supervised by the Department of Education, and implemented by progressivist educators: "This experiment was initiated by Dr. J. T. Phair, Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Province. Through the offices of Mr. V. K. Greer, Chief Inspector of Public and Separate Schools, the co-operation of six inspectors was obtained. These Inspectors, in turn, enlisted the services of a number of progressive and interested teachers who were prepared to undertake the work."

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vii–viii.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 6–16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²² *Ibid.*, 28.

²³ *Ibid.* In the handbook's discussion on "The Individual Child," the concentration on health is depicted as a means of enabling a flexible curriculum. The traditional program was described as setting up arbitrary academic levels of achievement and insisting that they be met by every child: "The inevitable result has been rigidity and inflexibility of the school programme. There has been over-emphasis on arbitrary academic standards. The neglect or inadequate consideration given to the physical, emotional, and social development of the individual child has resulted in the adoption of class-room procedures which too frequently are inelastic and ineffective in developing a well-balanced personality," 28.

²⁴ *Ibid.* The text's foreword states the following: "The Handbook is submitted for use in schools, not as a final guide, but as an experimental and tentative outline of procedure. It is hoped that the teachers will accept it as such, record their observations and suggestions, and forward them to the Department of Education. Such observations and suggestions should prove of great value in future revisions," vi.

²⁵ See, for example, “Dr. McArthur’s Views on Youth,” *Toronto Daily Star*, July 30, 1943: 6. The article, incidentally, praises McArthur’s “progressive views on education.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷ *Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools, 1937*, 25.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

³¹ “Editorial Notes: New Approaches to the Social Studies,” *The School* (April 1937): 645.

³² “Ontario’s Educational System,” *Toronto Daily Star*, July 19, 1943: 6.

³³ *Programme of Studies for Grades I to VI of the Public and Separate Schools, 1937*, 71.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 73.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 127. Emphasis in original text.

⁴¹ See, for example, “New School Course to Discourage Exams, Abolish Homework,” *Toronto Daily Star*, September 14, 1937: 1. This front-page article in the newspaper summarized the spirit of the 164-page curriculum document as leading to “less stress on factual type of teaching.”

⁴² McArthur, “Education for Citizenship,” 286.

⁴³ Harris, *Quiet Evolution*. The high school entrance examinations were not withdrawn until 1949.

⁴⁴ McArthur, “Education for Citizenship,” 288.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* McArthur explained the relationship between examinations and textbooks as follows: “The presumed necessities of examinations, again, encourage the teacher to attempt to satisfy the requirements of education by demanding that the pupil make himself [sic] familiar with the information contained within the authorized text. Instruction in such cases is degraded to the mere reciting of facts set forth on the pages of the text. Such a process, by no stretch of the imagination, can be found to have any relation to education,” 288.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 288.

⁴⁸ “Supplement: Reports on Educational Progress in Canada and Newfoundland, 1940–1941,” 919.

⁴⁹ See, for example, “New School Course to Discourage Exams, Abolish Homework.” Recall, also, the cliché regarding French education, which postulated that at any given moment of the school day all children of the same age will be having exactly the same lesson. This vision of a standardized and centralized educational system reflects how entrenched le programme—the national curriculum, dating from Napoleonic times—had become in the country’s educational system.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Julian Nundy, “Education: Teachers as Lone Wolves: France, 750,000 Children Sit Down to Be Tested on the Same Day,” *Independent*, June 10, 1993.

⁵¹ “Optional French and Latin Urged by Deputy Minister,” *Toronto Daily Star*, March 30, 1940: 27.

⁵² “Optional French and Latin Urged by Deputy Minister,” 27. *The Globe* attributes a slightly different quotation to McArthur: “It does not matter what you teach, as long as it is unpleasant. That educational psychology is absolutely antiquated,” “McArthur Would Cut Language Requirement,” *The Globe* (March 30, 1940): 5.

⁵³ “Optional French and Latin Urged by Deputy Minister,” 27.

⁵⁴ “Latin,” *The Canadian School Journal* (April 1940): 155.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁵⁶ Patrice Milewski, “‘The Little Gray Book’: Pedagogy, Discourse, and Rupture in 1937,” *History of Education* 37, no. 1 (2008): 92.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 92. Emphasis in original text.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 92. My emphasis. The parallels that Milewski draws between the educational rhetoric and medical discourse seem to go too far, and it seems a further stretch to assert that “this discourse formed a body of knowledge that intervened in the experience of teaching and learning to shape or define normal child development, teaching, learning and schooling,” 92.

⁵⁹ Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876–1976*, 175.

⁶⁰ Fleming, *Schools, Pupils, and Teachers*, 9.

⁶¹ Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*; Filene, “An Obituary for ‘The Progressive Movement,’” 20.

⁶² Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, xi.

⁶³ Herbert M. Kliebard, “Keeping Out of Nature’s Way: The Rise and Fall of Child-study as the Basis for the Curriculum, 1880–1905,” in *Forging the American Curriculum: Essays in Curriculum History and Theory* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 51.

⁶⁴ G. Stanley Hall, “Ideal School Based on Child Study,” *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the National Education Association* (1901): 474–88.

⁶⁵ Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, 76.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 151–74.

⁶⁷ Greer, “Appraisal of the New Programme of Studies,” 194.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 231. Greer’s article is spread over seven pages in *The Canadian School Journal*.

⁶⁹ *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools*, 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷¹ Greer, “Appraisal of the New Programme of Studies.” Greer boasted: “The new courses and the new textbooks in arithmetic will make the work more interesting and will delay complex processes until they are more readily understood by the pupils,” 198. See also, “The Aim of the Course” in the *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII*, which states: “The teacher should endeavour to lead his [sic] pupils at each stage of their growth to

explain for themselves, in terms that are intelligible to them at the time, the social world in which they are a part,” 26.

⁷² Greer, “Appraisal of the New Programme of Studies.” Greer argued that the new curriculum offered a more holistic view of learners, focusing attention on the individual’s development and not merely on academic achievement: “No doubt the authors of the new courses intended that less emphasis should be put upon the annual external examination used solely as a basis for the promotion of pupils. It would be an equally faulty extreme, however, to promote all pupils on the basis of age. The best procedure will be the careful study for the work being done by pupils when they first begin to show retardation. Individual attention will then be given, and there is no doubt that by doing this we shall avoid demotions and failures to a much greater extent than we have done in the past,” 199.

⁷³ See, for example, the section on “Activity and Interest,” in the *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools, 1942*, which states the following: “All learning involves activity and effort on the part of the learner. ‘Learning is an active process.’ ‘We learn to do by doing.’ ‘The child develops through his own activity.’ In applying these precepts one must remember that the term ‘activity’ does not refer to physical movement only. It must be borne in mind that mental processes—thinking, reflecting, planning—are as truly ‘activities’ as conducting an experiment or acting in a play,” 9.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁸⁰ The value of home economics extended from the cultivation of girls’ “standards of good taste in clothing and home-furnishings” to the fostering of “an appreciation of scrupulous cleanliness in person, dress, and surroundings,” 116. The content of the course included particular activities that each girl needed to learn, including: needlework, familiarity with various textiles and sewing equipment, cooking, laundering, and furnishings.

⁸¹ *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools, 1942*, 26.

⁸² *Ibid.* The document states: “Every event occurs in a geographical setting, has roots in the past, has implications for the present and may have repercussions in the future,” 29.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 29. Emphasis in original text.

⁸⁵ *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools, 1942*, 29.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 43. See also Greer, “Appraisal of the New Programme of Studies.” Greer argues for the importance of libraries in schools to support academic work: “The course places strong

emphasis on the advantages of supplementary reading, and again the success of the course will depend largely on an ample and well-chosen library and on the ability of the teacher to inspire the pupils to read good books,” 197–98.

⁸⁸ *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools, 1942*, 40.

⁸⁹ Greer, “Appraisal of the New Programme of Studies,” 196.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 197. Greer’s use of Eliot is all the more interesting in light of Herbert Kliebard’s identification of Eliot as standing “in the forefront of the *humanist* interest group.... Eliot, a humanist in his general orientation, was also a mental disciplinarian, but, although this thinking affected his thinking on curriculum matters to a large extent, he was not exactly a defender of the status quo in curriculum matters.” Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, 9. Emphasis in original text.

⁹² Greer, “Appraisal of the New Programme of Studies,” 197. Incidentally, L. J. Bondy, writing in the same year as Greer, wondered for how long English would be deemed useful by progressivists. The humanities had lost ground with the demise of classics, and they would continue to be marginalized in the face of ongoing reforms: “It is enough for my purpose that, in a scheme of this kind, it is only by mere accident that modern languages will be found *useful*, and their defenders will find it increasingly difficult to explain why they should be retained.... For a brief moment a few of the more thoughtless among the defenders of modern languages seemed to welcome the change. The loss of the Ancients would be the gain of the Moderns. Now it is becoming more and more evident that the forces that have achieved such success in ostracizing Greek and Latin are being arrayed with the same deadly purpose against the modern languages. The success of these efforts is already being felt. Italian and Spanish have practically disappeared from our high schools; German is slowly yielding ground. For reasons that are largely extraneous to education, French has not suffered so much in this province. However, unless something is done to improve its position, we may confidently expect that it will join its vanishing companions. And all this in the magic name of progress.” Bondy, “The Present Situation in Modern Languages in Our Schools,” 121. Emphasis in original text.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁹⁴ *Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools, 1942*, 5.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13–21. The section provided Ontario’s teachers with directions regarding how to use enterprise activities to foster purposeful activity, natural ways of learning, integrated subject matter, self-direction, and fundamental skills.

⁹⁷ Fleming, *Schools, Pupils, and Teachers*, 128–30.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* These themes, Fleming noted, dealt more with contemporary social problems and issues. Increasingly, they

concerned Canada's growing relationship to the United States and its role in the North Atlantic.

⁹⁹ See, for example, McArthur, "Education for Democracy," *The Canadian School Journal* (January 1941): 13; McArthur, "Education and the Empire," *The Empire Club of Canada Speeches* (Toronto, ON: Empire Club of Canada, 1941); and "Message from the Minister of Education," *The Canadian School Journal* (December 1942): 373.

¹⁰⁰ McArthur, "Education for Democracy," 13.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰² "Message from the Minister of Education," 373.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 373.

¹⁰⁴ "Schools and the War," *The Canadian School Journal* (June 1942): 174.

¹⁰⁵ "Notes and News: Teaching as a War Profession," *The Canadian School Journal* (October 1942): 324.

¹⁰⁶ Gladstone Murray, "Radio and Citizenship," *The Canadian School Journal* (April 1942): 113.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 113. Murray argued that "radio listening has become a part of the defence mechanism of democratic society," 113.

¹⁰⁹ Murray, "Radio and Citizenship," 114.

¹¹⁰ A. S. H. Hill, "Towards Victory: A Current Events Notebook," *The School* (September 1940): 7.

¹¹¹ Hill, "Towards Victory: A Current Events Notebook," 7.

¹¹² H. E. Smith, "The New Education in Alberta," *The School* (November 1940): 187–88.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 188.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Charles Phillips, "Editorial: School and Society," 1. Phillips informs readers of *The School* that "many articles on a variety of subjects will be found to refer repeatedly to education for democratic citizenship. Beginning with this issue, emphasis will be placed on a particular monthly theme." These themes were all related to classroom practice. In September 1941, for example, the theme was classroom management.

¹¹⁵ See, for example, C. C. Goldring, "Some Educational Gaps," *The Canadian School Journal* (April 1942): 140–41.

¹¹⁶ Baskerville, *Ontario: Image, Identity, and Power*, 204. Hepburn, Ontario's Premier, bitterly opposed labour unions and refused to allow the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.) to form unions in the province. He not only took the side of General Motors when a C.I.O.-led strike began in Oshawa on April 8, 1937, but also formed a volunteer police force to suppress the striking workers. At the same time, the C.C.F. supported the strike.

¹¹⁷ Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876–1976*, 180.

¹¹⁸ Baskerville, *Ontario: Image, Identity, and Power*, 205.

¹¹⁹ Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876–1976*, 174.

¹²⁰ The social meliorist concerns for social justice, international cooperation, and active citizenship were persistent throughout the interwar period and survived the demise of the League.

¹²¹ Baskerville, *Ontario: Image, Identity, and Power*, 205.

¹²² "Notes and Comment," *Toronto Daily Star*, March 16 1943: 6.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 6. In fact, when critiquing democratic, progressivist education, Drew had argued that "firm measures supported by the mandate of the strap still have an important place."

¹²⁴ Robert D. Gidney, *From Hope to Harris: The Reshaping of Ontario's Schools* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 10.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²⁶ Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876–1976*, 177.

¹²⁷ "Dr. Duncan McArthur," *Canadian School Journal* (April 1937): 126. This article reproduced a speech that McArthur, then Deputy Minister of Education, delivered to the Trustees' Department at the O.E.A. conference in 1937.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 126. McArthur depicted Grade 9, which provided opportunities for students to sample different topics and programs, as the core of modern schools: "That year, I say without any hesitation, will be the most important year for the boys and girls of our Collegiate Institutes. The decisions likely to be made during the course of that year, discussions with parents and teachers, will have a most important bearing on the future of our boys and girls."