

Abstract

World religions should be taught at the secondary level of education. In this, a pragmatic approach is superior to the traditional approach, because it shows not just the history of this topic, but it also lets students experience the everyday life of those who believe. It is not in any way a method to convert anybody to this or that faith or tradition. It is a pedagogic method for critical thinking and both making and challenging interpretations of the facts before each student. In my thesis I showed my own method and I made my own version of a better textbook that utilizes the basic points of pragmatic pedagogy. I studied the works of John Dewey, John Gatto, Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner. And I propose a method that takes no more than 4 lessons, if needed, which is the most time teachers can give to such topic. I looked at the educational programs of the Czech Republic and found that world religions are a very small portion of the subject Education in citizenship.

Since John Dewey was an atheist, it is not common for people to think of religion as a topic to teach with his methodology. Most of the social sciences are still taught as history lessons and not as the fun and interesting lessons they can be. I think it is not just the natural sciences that should have their laboratories at schools and do experiments, it is also the social sciences that can have their fun. The most basic could be the experiment of people voluntary paying. Students could put out drinks or biscuits and leave a can where people can put money. Then they can watch how many pay and how many don't. It is an easy and fun experiment that anybody can do. This is an example of my belief that a praxis and experience driven education is a part of social sciences, which contains the study of world religions. I showed this in my thesis through my study of public textbooks and I identified what I believe they lack. I studied how many activities they have prepared for the students and if the activities have a meaning behind them, or if it is just an exercise in blind memorization. Some textbooks failed, some are above average, yet I still cannot identify a social studies textbook that succeeds in presenting useful praxis, as understood within a pragmatic pedagogy.

I studied the pedagogic parts of pragmatic philosophical tradition and I've written about how religion connect to such pedagogy. I identified where the Czech Republic educational system places teaching about world religions. The subject of Education in Citizenship is the one which should apply religion to its curricula, but with the time

funding of only one lesson per week, I calculated that the topic of world religions only gets at best four lessons. I studied the publicly available textbooks and I found correlations. Since it is only 4 lessons per 4 years at a tertiary level of education, textbooks don't pay much attention to religions. Some discard it, some mention it, and some even write quite long texts about it, yet none do any of the religions justice. All of the textbooks are written as a tool for traditional frontal education – a transmission of data from teacher and textbook to student. They are not prepared for teachers who would like to teach with a pragmatic approach. For this reason, I made my own version and tried to adhere to the principles of pragmatic pedagogy.