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# Multiple Perspectives on Education and Society in Newfoundland and Labrador Vol. 2

Co-Editors

Amarjit Singh  
Joan Oldford  
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with

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St. John's, Canada A1B 3X8

ISBN 978-0-88901-475-6



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## INTRODUCTION

This book, which comprises 16 main parts with 156 chapters, contains all articles published in the *Morning Watch: Educational and Social Analysis* Winter 2007, Vol. 35, Nos. 3-4 to Winter 2016, Vol. 43, Nos. 3-4. The Table of Content organizes the material according to sixteen themes. There may be some overlap; certain articles could have been included under more than one category. The Table of Contents identifies authors' names and their chapters. At the end of the book, there is a Name Index of all colleagues who contributed articles for publications in the *Morning Watch* during 2007 to 2016. The themes or categories are: Critical Transformative, Educational Leadership and Administration, Educational Technology, Effective Teaching and Management, Indigenization, Post Secondary Learning, Psychology, Reflections and Essays, Research Writing and Students Experiences, Rural Education, Special Education, Additional Readings, Book Reviews, Exordiums, Academic Journeys, and Rural Health and Education.

Diverse Issues in Education. Currently, there are many forces and trends in Newfoundland and Labrador's cultures that appear to be changing the face of education in the province. Included are: a developing oil industry, a surge in pride of being a "Newfoundlander and Labradorian", the attitudes and actions of a young generation of local public intellectuals and leaders in business and education, continuous reorganizations of the Faculty of Education and Memorial University in the context of a global marketplace, and an emerging relationship between global corporations and institutions of higher education. A group of people in the Faculty of Education started the *Morning Watch* as a project in 1973, with the goal of creating a space in the form of a local journal sensitive to local, political, social, cultural, economic, historical, educational, and philosophical nuances.

It was imagined that colleagues in the Faculty and the field, who had a vested interest in the state of education and society in our province, could articulate their multiple voices for action. The journal was basically seen as a venue for communicating educational and social ideas relating to different levels of schooling processes among teachers, students, professionals, policy makers, and to some extent, the general public. This focus of the *Morning Watch* basically remains the same today, i.e., a desire to keep our local voices and identities in the context of global forces affecting almost all aspects of our daily lives. It is being said that there are some intangible cultural contexts in this province that we have to articulate and hold on to. We believe these perceived intangible cultural contexts can best be understood through thinking and rethinking the interaction between things local and global in the age of globalization, trans nationality and growing surges in diasporic consciousness. The *Morning Watch* has been dedicated to this vision since its inception in 1973. What continues to be produced in it by our colleagues is a new local knowledge that attempts to expand on old ideas in response to contemporary issues and concerns as they arise from emerging social forces and trends. The collection of articles in this volume, we hope, will serve as the next step in the journey of examining educational change from multiple perspectives in the context of changing ideologies in Newfoundland and Labrador society and cultures. It can also be a step towards capturing a sense of hope for what our educational system could be in a fast changing world.

Amarjit Singh

©December, 2016



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We wish to thank all the authors who have contributed to the Morning Watch since its inception in 1973, and we sincerely hope that others will contribute to the Morning Watch in the future. As we have always maintained, any publication of this kind requires collaboration, cooperation, commitment in terms of time, energy and morale and, above all, an understanding of various people. We wish to thank Dr. Kirk Anderson (Dean-Faculty of Education) and all those who have been encouraging and helpful in generous and diverse ways in the production of the Morning Watch. I also would like to thank Nadeem Saqlain (Graduate Assistant), Amit Sundly (Graduate Assistant), Hasnat Abrar Khan (Memorial Undergraduate Career Experience Program Assistant) and Thomas Hawkins (Technical Assistant) for their support with this book. If there is any merit in this anthology, the credit is due to these people. However, the editors bear the sole responsibility for any shortcomings which this anthology might have.

*Note: Please note that two videos from Jonathan Barnes and David Smart (Vol. 41 issue 1-2) are not included in this book. Similarly, an Author index and a power point presentation (Vol. 38 issue 1-2) from Doyle, Clar and Singh, Amarjit (2006) are also not a part of it. But, this material is still available in its respective issues.*

Dr. Amarjit Singh & Others  
St. John's  
December, 2016

## PREFACE

Editors of *The Morning Watch* from its beginning infused the journal with an energy that has sustained it since those early days of its existence. While placing Newfoundland cultural values at the forefront, it also provided a vehicle for Newfoundland scholars and researchers to share their important work initially within this province but later to the broader global community. Its continuous chronicling of cultural and social events has endeared its place among scholars both locally and in the larger global community. While financial constraints caused it to be published electronically it has also provided a forum for their issues to become part of the greater academic collections worldwide.

I was privileged to have an important research article that was a collaborative effort between Professor Jeffrey Bulcock and me. The survey that we developed was adopted by a number of Canadian provinces to measure the attitudes of students toward their schooling experiences. The article was published after Jeffery's death but I am certain that he would be happy to see that it was finally published in *The Morning Watch*.

*The Morning Watch* has engrained itself as a core part of our educational community as it seeks to maintain the cultural and social mores of our province and region. It has been vital in developing a critical mass of literature that will serve as an historical record of this province as the newest province in our great country. The historical collections of our recent educational traditions and our earliest efforts are important components that have been made possible by our two founding editors and continued more contemporarily by the recent contributions of others.

It is an honour to be in a position to comment on the fine work of our editors and contributors and to encourage others to take up the yoke as we go forward to ensure the continuation of the important work begun by Drs. Singh and Baksh. We owe no less to our society and its cultural importance.

**Noel Hurley, PhD**

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# **Part 1**

## **Critical Transformative**

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## **Chapter 1: Empowerment and the Literacy Myth**

William T. Fagan  
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### **Abstract**

While the constructs of “empowerment” and “literacy” are commonly used synonymously, this notion provides a very limited understanding of what empowerment entails. This paper documents a struggle for empowerment by a low-income community in trying to obtain funds for a community literacy project which had proven very successful and of which the people were quite proud. Through journal writing the author kept track of the experiences of this power struggle, and in documenting the scenario identifies nine signposts along the “empowerment highway”. These are divided into those that are supports for those seeking power, and those that are obstacles of the power group.

### **Process of Empowerment: A Struggle of Strategy**

Many, who proclaim the merits of literacy, often use "empowerment" as a synonymous benefit. For example, in the introduction of his book, *Literacy and Empowerment*, Courts (1991) states: “This is book about literacy, about what mature literacy means, why so few people feel the empowerment of language and its many uses...” (p. xxiii). Equating literacy with empowerment is a simplistic and false notion of the literacy-empowerment relationship and fails to recognize the complexities of empowerment which may only be attained through an empowering process. Literacy, actually may be the antithesis of empowerment. The purpose of this paper is to describe, analyse, and reflect on a process of empowerment in one particular instance.

### ***The Occasion of Seeking Empowerment***

Gore (1992) points out that empowerment is not “property”; it is not something that is given or handed over from one to another. The power leading to empowerment is something that is expressed or carried out, and to understand how this is done, one must understand the specific context or occasion in which it occurs. The occasion for seeking empowerment in this study was an attempt by a low-income community to overturn a decision denying funding for a community literacy project. This community is home to about 150 families in a city in Atlantic Canada. Data showed that more than one-half of the children were failing in school. In the three years preceding the study, there were 17 instances of children (some children were involved more than once) who were either denied entry into kindergarten because they were deemed not ready, or repeated kindergarten. Of 43 children in the junior high school, 21 either had repeated a grade or were in a modified program. There had been no children who graduated from grade 12 in the previous three years. Yet, the Community prides itself on being active in promoting support for its members under trying conditions. Many Community volunteers contribute in various ways at the Community Centre. They are active in the Community Garden. There have been various attempts to support children’s learning. A very successful family literacy program for parents of children of pre-school years has operated for six years and was facilitated by two parents from the Community. However, various challenges face the Community: low income, transient

dwellers, incorporating new Canadians, scarce resources, lack of transportation, availability of drugs to youth, and few successful role models in education.

Various programs operate through the Community Centre to raise the profile of education and to meet the needs of children and adults, especially, helping adults help children. Some of these programs were funded over a two-year period, and in the third year, all programs of this nature, ten in all, were brought together into a single project, titled Community L. E. A. R. N. (Learning, Empowerment, Action, Reflection Network). It is this project which was rejected for funding.

### ***Research Context***

This study is ethnographic in nature, a main goal being to understand the contexts of those in power and those seeking power. Trueba (1993) stated that the main purpose of ethnography is to interpret the meaning of behaviour by providing an appropriate social and cultural context, and by building theoretical models or mental constructs or explanatory artifacts. I was a participant-observer since I was a volunteer in the Community and engaged in discussions with those holding power. The importance of having someone from within the context being studied, doing the ethnography is strongly emphasized by Oser (1995) who states: "To pretend to have knowledge without having it, to pretend to tell the most important things without seeing the whole, to pretend to be able to reproduce without knowing, are strictly speaking, forms of cheating" (pp.33-34). A key methodological instrument in ethnographic research is a personal journal which I kept regularly. Each page was divided into three sections: What I observe/see/hear; What I think about this; and What might happen from here. The value of such a journal is that it provides a running commentary on occurring events which when viewed retrospectively, often reveals patterns of behaviour. The context in which the power sharing initiative originated is referred to as Community (capital C).

An important factor in any context is the participants. In this study on empowerment, participants are key to understanding the empowerment process, since it is the participants who define the process. Courts (1991) states that "Power is not to be taken as a phenomenon of one individual's consolidated and homogeneous domination over others, or that of one group or class over others" (p.98). All participants have power of one sort or another. In the case of the specific occasion being documented here, there are two groups of antagonists, the Funding Agencies and their Agents, and the Community and its representatives.

### ***We Cannot Fund ...***

"We regret to inform you that we are unable to fund your proposal this year." (Letter from Federal Agency)

The first shock wave ran through the Community when the letter was received which declared that there would be no funding through the federal funds. In my Journal of August 30, I wrote:

There was basically shock that the proposal which we believe is superbly written and addresses very specific literacy needs and innovative solutions was not funded. People from the Community enquired about whether literacy



programs would be operating the fall, and on being told that funding had been denied were very disappointed. The feeling appeared to be that anything good cannot last.

When a similar response was received from the Provincial Agency, the Community had to make a choice. To do nothing would be to be silenced, which as Powell (1999) states is one of the goals of the agent holding the balance of power. Surrey (1987) states, “The capacity to be ‘moved’ and to respond and ‘to move’ the other, represents the fundamental core of relational empowerment” (p.32). Welch (2000) adds that when you care about people, “choosing not to resist injustice would be the ultimate loss of self” (p.165). A decision was made to become active in seeking an overturn of the decision not to fund the Community literacy project. Taking an active role is described by Shor (1992) as “questioning the status quo”, and insisting “that knowledge is not fixed but is constantly changing” (p.189).

### ***The Struggle for Empowerment***

The struggle for empowerment went on for eight months. Data collected were organized as "Signposts", some of which were positive and supportive, while others were negative and hampered the journey towards empowerment. These are listed below and described briefly.

#### Supports Signposts

- +Identifying a Target Audience
- +Conviction
- +Stamina or Persistence
- +Enlisting Support

#### Obstacle Signposts

- Delays
- Linguistic Garble
- Paper Trail
- Us and Them
- Lack of Independence

#### + Signpost 1: Identifying a Target Audience

A first step is to determine who your supporters are.

We felt that these were the key personnel who would be interested in the future of the Community in terms of the literacy development for children and adults, and for support of the parents and community. (Journal, September 1)

These included the Administrator Officer of the Community, the Community Project Director, school principals, and the political representative for the area. This was soon revised to exclude school principals as attempts to secure funding to support the learning of school children might be interpreted as a criticism of schools. The Community representatives met with the political representative for the area to provide background information.

#### + Signpost 2: Conviction

As Gore (1992) indicates, empowerment is not something that is handed over from one to another. It relates to a specific issue in a specific context. It is important that in seeking empowerment that the power seekers be convinced of the importance, significance, and value of

the issue which they are pursuing. We had no difficulty in having this conviction. Community L.E.A.R.N. was an essential part of the Community for enhancing education and literacy. After a discussion one evening on youths getting into trouble, I expressed my feelings in my Journal.

I see these youths and it makes me sad – sad that the parents feel helpless in dealing with the situation, and sad that these young lives are on the road to being wasted. Prevention is so much easier than intervention but prevention needs support. Right now, if we can provide for the very young, it is hopeful that when these are young teens, they will not be hanging around getting into trouble.

I still believe we must get the children when they are young and when the parents have more hope for them, and help support parents and children – this is enough motivation for tonight to keep me fighting for funding. (Journal, September 12).

#### + Signpost 3: Stamina or Persistence

A key strategy of those in power in denying power to others is to engage in a “wearing down” process aimed at those seeking power. Power seekers must have stamina and persistence to continue. This is not always easy in light of people having many other commitments. A great source of joy to the empowered, no doubt, must occur when they realize their adversaries have given up. My comments on this and how the actions of the empowered wear down their opponents are from two Journal entries.

Stamina is a very important part of the process of empowerment. It certainly is significant to have at least two people involved as one can keep up the spirits of the other when necessary. Striving for empowerment can be a road to depression, if one continued to pursue it and not make any progress. (Journal, October 31)

And an entry from January 22 in the next year.

It has been over a month since we heard anything. Do they think we have gone? Have they gone? We just can't give up now. We have invested too much time and effort and the issue which began this is still there. Day by day many children are headed for a life of educational failure. We just can't allow this to happen on our watch. We have to keep on.

#### + Signpost 4: Enlisting Support

Enlisting support is especially necessary for maintaining stamina. I have concluded from personal experience, and from this endeavour that it is very difficult to attain power against a power group when you are acting solo. The old expression, “there's strength in numbers” is definitely true. It was important to keep the Community informed. This was done in a number of ways. The Community may be described as “casual” in terms of peoples' relationships so there were many opportunities to talk to people in an informal way and share what was happening.

Furthermore, a number of parents missed having the literacy project and enquired about it, thus providing another opportunity to share information. There were also opportunities to share information with the Board of Directors of the Community. We also decided to include a column in the Community monthly newsletter (which went to all Community members and many others from outside the Community) titled, Education Corner. My Journal entry of November 6 states:

I realize that we have not promoted Community L.E.A.R.N. as much as we could. Publicity is actually setting the groundwork for future advocacy, and perhaps this is what I had overlooked. For advocacy to be effective, a certain amount of groundwork must be done. After all if you advocate cold-turkey, then you have a double challenge, to inform the public of what you have to offer and to ask their support. When the groundwork has been done, then you can concentrate on soliciting support. What we need is a brochure on Community L.E.A.R.N. – a very effective brochure which anyone who sees should buy into the project. Hopefully this will provide more visibility and support. If the powers that be are aware of this, they might know that it is not going to go away.

There is a danger that optimism or pessimism can cloud one's interpretation of support. Early in the experience we met with the principals of the schools which the children attended. We understood from the discussion that they would support the Community L.E.A.R.N. project as an effort to support parents supporting children. We felt confident about their support and we drafted a letter which they would sign and which would go to the funding agency. However, when we went to collect the signatures, the first principal we approached expressed reservations about signing. He said that this should be talked through some more and it "may not be the way the schools want to go".

There is the old saying, "Don't count your chickens before they are hatched." I think we did. We were so excited by the support from schools or as I thought. I can understand wanting to discuss it further – but he does not seem to realize that time is of the essence. However, his point that it may not be the way the schools want to go is irrelevant – the Community wants to go this way, and will, with or without the schools' support. (Journal, October 18)

Ironically, or fortunately, at the meeting of January 29, among an extended group of stakeholders, the school principals endorsed the first recommendation of the position paper, which was to fund the Community L.E.A.R.N. project.

#### - Signpost 5: Delays

There are two kinds of delays – inevitable and tactical. Soon after the Community started the empowerment process, one agent went on holidays. When he returned, we learned the political representative would be away for two weeks.

Patience or impatience is a key factor in trying to attain empowerment. Everything seems to drag when there is no action, and action is needed for

empowerment. I may have to work more on patience – or to use another old saying, “Rome was not built in a day.” (Journal, September 11)

We decided to meet with the political representative’s assistant to keep the momentum going. While patience might help deal with inevitable delays, tactical delays usually result in a lot of frustration on the part of those seeking empowerment. When we met with the political representative on his return, he suggested that we write two letters to two agents restating our case for funding. About a month later we received a letter from one agent, basically confirming their earlier decision. We then scheduled a meeting with the two agents only to be told when we arrived for the meeting that it was scheduled for two days later. When we did meet, we were asked to write up our perceptions of the meeting, get a list of students in school and their current status of achievement, and break down the budget according to subparts of the project. Assigning more tasks is part of the delaying tactic. Breaking down the budget according to the subparts of the project did not make any sense as a strength of the project was that person and material resources would be shared across subparts within a holistic framework. After we submitted the breakdown, we were then presented with a number of questions and were to schedule another meeting to deal with these. We asked if the questions could be forwarded to us first beforehand as it might expedite the meeting, if we had already prepared the responses. It took a whole evening (6:30 -11:00 pm) to prepare responses. Some of the questions were about discrepancies between the initial budget and the breakdown budget, which were easily explained by the receipt of some interim funds from the federal agency (and the provincial Agency knew about this), or because a new building was being opened which added to facilities costs, or because budgeting for items separately is not the same as budgeting for an overall project.

This is not a process of empowerment, this is like fighting a bloody battle and the other side has much stronger forces than we have. I now estimate that we have each spent about 240 hours in total which, could be more profitably spent on other important activities. (Journal, December 11)

Christmas then intervened and it was not until more than a month later (January 24) that information was received that the proposal had gone back to the Funding Committee and an updated Financial statement was now requested from the Community. A meeting of the larger group of stakeholders met on January 29. A position paper was prepared stating the concerns and providing recommendations. There seemed to be general consensus at that meeting that Community L.E.A.R.N. should be funded. We left, thinking or hoping that funding would be forthcoming. It would soon be February, almost a year since we started the proposal process.

#### - Signpost 6: Linguistic Garble

Linguistic or language garble refers to confusing or contradictory language which often causes the power seeker to go ‘round-in- circles’, rather than move the issue forward. The reason given for the rejection by the Federal Agency for not funding Community L.E.A.R.N. was that it was “delivery” based. We checked the description of previously funded projects by the Federal Agency and discovered many which were as much “delivery” based as Community L.E.A.R.N. In fact, descriptions of some of the funded projects contained the word “delivery”. This raised

the question of when is delivery not delivery? Some weeks later the Federal Agency phoned the Community to invite us to submit a different proposal for \$20,000 which was available.

We discussed drafting a different proposal for this invitation but could only think of using parts of the original proposal, even though it had been rejected, since this is what made sense to us as community based literacy. (Journal, September 2)

Four of the ten components were funded by this money. Shortly after we had a letter from the Provincial Agency which read: "Since the (Community) is being offered (by the Federal Agency) the total amount requested under the revised budget, it would appear this issue has been resolved." But the issue was not resolved. Why would the Provincial Agency think for a second that \$20,000 for four components would resolve a request for over \$40,000 for ten components? Their letter also suggested that we had been given help by the Federal Agency in crafting our "revised" proposal. This was not so.

Whether language garble results from misinformation or misunderstanding, or is deliberately crafted to control a situation, it still constitutes a weapon on the part of the empowered to keep the disempowered in a subservient and defensive position.

#### - Signpost 7: Us and Them

Courts (1991) maintains that those in power belong to the same club. "They will form an unincorporated repository of power" (p. 62). It became very obvious early in this power-seeking experience that there were two distinct groups – those in power and their supporters, and the Community or those seeking power. We very early questioned the agenda of the Provincial Agency.

We wondered what was the real agenda of the Agency Funding Committee. It seemed as if they were trying to find ways NOT to fund literacy projects as opposed to recognizing good literacy projects and finding funding for them. In fact, we wondered if the Community was low priority, or if parents helping children at school age level, or forming positive home-school partnerships was a low priority. The Community has been most innovative in its programs; as far as we know, it has a one- of- a kind family literacy program for parents and teachers of school age children. (Journal, August 30)

While the other signposts explain **how** the group-in- power may deny power to others, they do not explain **why**. The make- up or constitution of the group-in-power may explain why. Being part of a group means that you know and understand this group and have allegiance to it, and simultaneously, you know less about groups outside of this one. If a person has not lived nor spent considerable time in a low-income community, her/his understanding tends to be indirect and academic versus direct and personal.

Wilber (2000) explains group structure or make-up in terms of the group members' level and breadth of understanding issues. He identifies eight levels of understanding, and four areas of

breadth which reflect a holistic notion of people and the contexts in which they live and from which they derive values, etc. For example, if one views the funding of Community L.E.A.R.N. as simply implementing an adult literacy and family literacy project, and not also as an issue of social justice, then the person's views are limited, and decisions and actions result from that limited vision. In terms of levels of understanding, Wilber considers Level 6 as the level at which participants in a group rely on rules, regulations, and policies to direct and explain behaviour. The significance of rules was very obvious in the actions of the provincial agency group. Very early in this scenario, we were told that the proposal did not follow the rules of the Federal Agency. A reason given for denying funding from the Provincial Agency was that there was on record, a "rule" that more than two positions would not be funded. Yet, another project funded in the time frame of Community L.E.A.R.N. had more than two employee positions.

At the January 29 meeting which included an extended group of stakeholders, another person from the Provincial Agency took the offensive with regard to our position paper and defended provincial policy, regulation or practice. The Community was told that if the proposal were reconsidered, this would violate the rule of no-appeal, and then other groups denied funding might ask for similar consideration. The presence of other groups who might appeal or how they would know our proposal would be funded, was not entertained.

#### - Signpost 8: The Paper Trail

"Death by paper is quiet, painful and very slow" (Taylor, 1996, p. 133).

There was a long paper trail in this empowerment process and included: The *Grants for Literacy Project Guidelines*, financial statement of the Community Centre, initial proposal, acknowledgement of receipt of proposal, rejection letter 1, rejection letter 2, part of initial proposal resubmitted, re-drafted budget 1, re-drafted budget 2, breakdown of budget into sub-components of project, letters requesting meetings, letters refuting reasons given for denying funding, several letters within the Agency and between Agency and Community, project brochure, position statement, etc. What is the purpose of all this paper? Taylor (1996) states, "'Facts' are never *value* free. What is written and not written recasts people's lives. Print is used quite literally to decide who lives and who dies" (p. 9). Print on paper is very much rule governed and those in power use it to deny power to others, while the disempowered often gullibly hope, that their marks on paper may make a difference to the power structure.

Denny Taylor's book *Toxic Literacies* (1996) "is about those of us who have the power and privilege to control the text and about those who live in poverty and are controlled by it" (p. 14). Her book could have been written for the Community L.E.A.R.N. project and the efforts of a low-income community to empower itself. Literacy is not empowerment in the sense that when you become literate, you become empowered. Literacy as paper text may become a weapon of power when it is used by those already in power. As mentioned above, facts are never value free and, even when they are not facts, they are referred to as facts, as information not to be questioned, and if they are questioned, not to be responded to. The Provincial Agency never responded satisfactorily to challenges to three of the four reasons for rejecting the proposal. Their response to the fourth challenge became repetitive, the funds are earmarked for adult literacy only, and even if the project is to benefit adults who benefit children, they do not apply.



As Taylor says, "... texts (written documents) are political constructions that do not represent reality. They are no one's actuality" (Taylor, 1996, p. 238).

#### - Signpost 9: Lack of Independence

One of the drawbacks in a small province/territory is that everyone knows someone who is in power and is often dependent on that power for benefits. It is the old story of who will bell the cat? The Community is not independent of those in power in terms of its subsistence; in fact it depends very much on the power or goodwill of others – the Provincial Agency, or charitable or religious groups. Consequently, one is hesitant to “rock the boat” or “bite the hand that feeds one.” It is often the perception rather than the reality which dictates belief and action or lack of it. But perception is reality. One always has to question the consequences of seeking power, of speaking out, and there are many tales of unfortunate consequences. Consequently, only very few feel independent enough or are willing to take the consequences of challenging power and injustice.

#### **Conclusion**

Power is too often understood within a simplistic paradigm. One notion is that literacy is power, and unfortunately the hopes, we, as educators, often build up, are dashed when people are faced with the reality of power. Power exists above and beyond literacy; it is political. Certainly, literacy may be considered power at an elementary level, when considered as a skill in understanding and using print. But this is minimal power in bringing about change.

The nine signposts along the highway to empowerment, identified in this study, show how complex the process of seeking power, actually is. The support signposts show which resources those seeking power may capitalize on, while the negative signposts show the obstacles they must be prepared to face and challenge. Unfortunately, a power struggle, regardless of literacy levels, does not always result in attaining power. Hinchey (1998) points out that power and powerlessness are not based on intelligence and hard work (nor literacy level). They often simply occur by virtue of one's privileged or un-privileged position. Taylor (1996) adds that those in power ignore the ‘facts’ of the challengers and proceed blindly to promote their own reality. Unless the disempowered should find another form of leverage to seek power, the end result is fatalistic and the disempowered remain in a powerless position.

While this study was conducted in a particular context, the implications of the nine signposts in seeking empowerment are relevant in a wide range of contexts: social, economic, educational, political (at different levels), and religious.

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## **Chapter 2: Voices of the Teacher Interns: Local/Global, Diversity and Social Justice Issues in Globalization and Teacher Education\***

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This paper starts with the assumption that diversity is now a fact of life either due to the logic of global capitalism or due to postcolonial and postmodern conditions.<sup>1</sup> In all these cases the idea of diversity requires that local and global issues should be conceptualized (debated) in relationship to each other with a focus on social justice. The necessity of such conceptualizations is well expressed by terms such as “Global Localism” and the slogan “Think globally, act locally.” Suarez -Orozco explains the issue in this area succinctly: “Globalization is experienced as unsettling in many parts of the world because it threatens deeply held cultural models and social practices. I suspect that the complex challenge of globalization may turn out to be managing to maintain the proactive features of local culture---such as local worldviews, values, and morals, local religious beliefs and practices---while acquiring the instrumental skills and sensibilities needed to thrive in the global space” (HGSN, April 1, p. 4). Further, “a big part of the evolving definition of 21<sup>st</sup>- century is the role of education” (p. 2). Globalization has created inequalities in all spheres of life and for varieties of reasons this is the biggest threat to sensibilities needed to thrive in today’s “global village”. Therefore, teacher interns and other stakeholders in teacher education need to articulate the role of education to deal with this threat.

The paper takes these assumptions into account as working hypotheses, and suggests that any teacher education program, by necessity, will have to take into account diversity in its local/global context. Specifically, the paper suggests a reflective and critical approach to build such a teacher education/internship program (see figure 1). We have discussed this approach in detail elsewhere (Singh et al 2001) . It is sufficient to state that this approach recognizes that there are many stakeholders in teacher education. They all have their own unique cultures, which enable them to combine local / global discourses related to issues and problems they face in ways that enable them to find solutions to those problems most suitable to the conditions of their community, province, state, regions and countries. Broadly defined, a culture is a way of life of people. It includes what they say, the way they act, the way they negotiate with others and navigate different paths made available to them by their social and cultural environment, so that they can live their lives as desired.

This author has described (Singh et al, 2001, 1998; also see endnotes 2, 3, & 4) three predominant cultures that the teacher interns and those who work with them during the internship process need to fully understand and learn about. These three cultures are:

- 1.a culture of partnership or cultures of partnerships<sup>2</sup>
- 2.a culture of collaboration or cultures of collaboration<sup>3</sup>
- 3.a culture or cultures of reflective and critical internship in teacher education.<sup>4</sup>

Further, each culture identified above can itself be conceptualized as having many sub-cultures. This is so because the total internship process and teacher education process themselves are embedded in multiple and complex global/local social, cultural, political, economic and organizational realities.

## **The Study**

If education has to play a big role in the evolving definition of 21<sup>st</sup>-century, education of the future teachers becomes a significant concern in the organization of educational systems in all societies of today. There are many stakeholders who are interested in teacher education and structures and functions of educational systems. Teacher interns are one of the very important stakeholders in teacher education. Thus, this paper first briefly describes basic understandings taken into account in building any effective teacher education/internship program, and then presents data from a study this author conducted in one of the provinces in Canada. The study involved one hundred and eighty teacher interns, and focused on one aspect of their culture. As a teacher educator, the author asked the interns: “What does being local and global mean to you?” Since globalization invokes multiple meanings, particularly in regards to education, the purpose of this study was to listen to the voices of teacher interns, as those voices related to the meanings they attached to various on-going local/global discourses (Dissanake and Wilson, 1996; Arnove and Aleberto (2007). The interns were asked in classroom situations to participate and to critically engage in local/global discourses, and to write down what being global and local meant for them. Later this paper presents their voices. Their voices illuminate their values, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, awareness and plans of actions which enable them to describe the meanings they attached to concepts such as global and local. This information should be of value for all stakeholders who are interested in teacher education and education reforms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Teacher Education/Internship Programs**

An effective teacher education/ internship program would require understanding of many cultures as defined by various stakeholders in their own voices. One way to approach this is to create safe sites for stakeholders to voice their concerns in the context of many formal institutions. These would also be the sites in the public spheres. These would be sites where others can carefully listen to their reflective and critical voices, for example, pertaining to concerns they have about their schools, families, communities and relationships among them.

Listening to each others’ voices by all parties at various sites would help contribute toward building positive school cultures through building collaborative teams. The school cultures are necessary, if not sufficient, conditions for attaining the sets of educational outcomes expected by all parties. One such set of expectation is that the school and the internship/ education programs for teachers produce educated persons. The educated persons are those who are equipped and motivated to respond appropriately to the demands of long term sustainability of diversity as it is manifested in its multi -faced forms in all spheres of life--- intellectual, social, aesthetic, emotional, moral, spiritual, and physical. A positive school culture is also necessary to attain other highly sought educational outcomes, locally and globally, such as educational excellence, high retention rate, high graduation rate, high achievement and employability of graduates, equal education opportunity, equal educational outcomes, and school accountability.

## **Meanings of Being Local /Global: Voices of the Teacher Interns**

In daily conversations with each other, students, professors, teachers, school and university administrators and personnel frequently use terms such as local, global, globalization, global

economy, and global cultures. These terms also appear daily in newspaper and TV newscast. At times of hiring and firing businesses use these terms to explain their policies. In family gatherings parents and siblings advise each other what steps to take to be successful in life. In other words, these multiple interactions in the public spheres and also in the institutional settings create a pervasive context in which teacher interns use their different voices to negotiate, navigate and carve out their role as future teachers. In this process of articulating, the data from this study show that teacher interns attach multiple meanings to terms local and global. “Local as a concept is multidimensional. As a high school student, being local was being a [BRH] school student... Also being from [this city] would make me local to being a townie as opposed to someone from outside this area. However, one is a [resident of this province] which is their locality within Canada.... Also on a global setting I am a Canadian which is local to me. I feel that being local is very complex.... I think it involves a feeling of being comfortable in a place, or to have a feeling with a place. To be familiar makes a place feel like home. Therefore, local is something I feel connects all people because also people want to feel comfortable” (Chris). Below we present typical voices of several more teacher interns that support Chris’s perspective. Their voices are presented in the form of quotations under selected themes. These themes emerged in teacher interns’ reflecting notes that were analyzed by the author. The names given in the brackets are not real. The texts of the reflective notes by students should be taken as working notes; they are not edited for grammatical appropriateness.

### ***Not Sure of the Meaning of Local/Global***

For example, here are voices of some of the interns:

(Grace) I am “not really sure what may be meant by local here.”

(Alice) “Although I don't actually know the exact definitions of the term local and global--- I don't really have a clue what you mean!”

(Joyce) “I do not really consider the concept of being local to be that significant for me. I'm not sure why that is.

(Susan) “This may be way off base because I don't really understand what "local" means.”

(John) “I am not exactly sure what a global economy is. “

(David) “Honestly, I do not know what being local and/or global means....”

### ***Matter of Perception***

For some teacher interns the meaning of terms global and local is a matter of individual perception, and the meaning varies in different situations and contexts. Here are their voices:

(Joan) “Therefore, in my opinion the perception of what is local depends upon the individual.”

(Bill) “It all depends on the context. Very confusing!”

(Paul) “Being local... It is interesting to look at how the concept of local is changing in society.”

(Mary) “To me being local can be interpreted in many ways....Depending on the situation, being local has many different meanings. It does not only mean where you come from geographically. It may be where you see yourself socially, such as your position in the classroom. In any case "being local" have many different meanings.”

(Jill) “I think that to be local has several dimensions.”

(Barb) “We may .... say that we are local but there is no set meaning... I am local in position, but as a whole there is no local no set way to be the same.”

(Pauline) “How do I see myself as a "local" person? This is a very difficult question to answer without considerable consideration. Depending on the circumstances defined by the concept "local", I see myself as an individual with personal ideas, attitudes, opinions and beliefs.”

### ***Place, Culture, Home, Comfort, Family, Environment....***

Many teacher interns articulated the meaning of the terms local /global in the following typical ways:

- L - Is for the Length of time a person lived in a certain area and that means they are from there and are a local.
- O - Is for the Offices that run local school boards in a given area.
- C - Is for the Children that attend local schools in their area.
- A - Is for the Affect that local schools have on children who move to different areas.
- L - Is for the Love that people and society have for their region they belong to.

AND THAT'S WHAT LOCAL MEANS TO ME! (Matthew)

(Patricia) “Local to me means everything in the environment and culture, including the people, places and things within the city and the province. It is the everyday occurrences within our local environment. A global village includes the people, places, things and culture throughout the world. A global village is one that writes everyone within the world and considers the world’s events in this context.”

Local are our own cities or regions or even province. It depends on what exactly you are trying to do and from what viewpoint.”

(Sally) “Local refers to a familiarity, comfort and position in a geographically set area, smaller than a province or state. It relates to the belonging profile of an individual in his/her community and describes the geographic and cultural root of the individual.”

(Sandra) “Being local refers to someone who stores culture, tradition, and some sense of cultural identity with others who live in their area.”

(Patricia) “local to me means everything in the environment and culture, including the people, places and things within the city and the province. It is the everyday occurrences within our local environment. A global village includes the people, places, things and culture throughout the world. A global village is one that writes everyone within the world and considers the world’s events in this context.”

(Christine) “When reflecting on what being "local" and "global" means to me I think about my town and my province when using the term local and I think about outside of Canada when I think of global.

Local to me means things and people that are located within [our province]. The events that occur here are what affect me locally. But when I reflect on global events and things I see that as those things that occur outside of Canada and that affect everyone in the world like the price of the Canadian dollar and the price of the U.S. dollar. They are global events.”

(P.W.) “To me, local means the environment that you were raised in and that you understand and know about. It means knowing the values and structures of the society that you grew up in. The things you do, the way you act, the desires you have generally stem from the surroundings in which you live.

When you go outside the environment that you are used to and is comfortable with them you are talking globally. Globally means that you are looking at other cultures, values, beliefs, etc. that is unfamiliar to you and about which you need to learn and be aware of.”

(Krista) “It is easy to see these days the differences between a local versus a global economy. Locally, issues are addressed within the community through the people who live there. They have the same backgrounds, live in the same geographical area and attend the same places. Local people tend to speak the same language and have a common unique dialect.

A global village on the other hand, incorporates all the diversities within the world. People unite from different countries, languages, ethnic background social classes. These people have a common means of communication such as the television, internet or radio. It seems that the world is becoming more of a global village as technology advances.”

(Debra) “To me being local means being from some community in [in this province] with certain traditions of [this province] Examples of these would be [provincial] music, fishing, .... and so on. As well when something, such as clothing or crafts, is said to be local I imagine it was made and produced right here in [this province]. We are also a global community as well, in the fact that our products are sold outside of [this province] and we also receive products from away to be distributed here. We also have people from all over the world residing in [in this province], working or going to school. To me, however, I feel that [this province] is more a local community than a global community because of the tight relations within [this province] and the fact that sometimes it feels as though this is the only place in the world.”

(Cathy) “Global to me means that we are affected by other parts of the world. We don't live as isolates which we certainly were reminded of on September 11th. I think the internet has made the interaction and communication between other parts even more obvious.”

### ***Technology Bridging Local and Global Gap***

Many interns believed that technology is instrumental in bridging the perceived gap between being local and global and changing the meaning of these terms. Here are their voices:

(Sandra) “Well, I'm from a very small community on the South Coast of [this province]. I grew up very isolated from the "big city". However, through television, media, Internet and travel I realized that I was not isolated at all. The world is becoming much globalized. We can sit in our computer room and chat with someone in Japan. Globalization is achieved through communication; communication has been made very easy in the past 20 years. We all act and contribute locally (to our environment: people and society). However, we all work together locally to create a global environment.

Being a fan of technology (I am in the conjoint tech Education degree program) I felt that technology is essential for globalization. However, technology has to be handled responsibly.

(Jill) “Today's world is very global in the sense that everything is available at the touch of a button on the Internet. Kids today know more about what is happening in a global context than what is going on in their own region. For example, I know more about Quebec history and American history than I know about the history of (this city).

Being local means, being aware of what is going on around you in your own region so you can gain a better perspective of your own culture.

(Jolene) “My opinion of the word "local" has changed drastically in the last few years. The addition of computers and the internet has made us much more globalized. We can talk with people in China or Turkey. My opinion of local has changed to include "anything that is accessible to us within 10 minutes." This means that anything on the internet is thereby local.”

(Catherine) “We have been asked to discuss global and local and what it means to us. I do think we live in a Global Society, a society that is very closely linked with rest of the world. With the use of today's technology this is being furthered. In respect to education we see this becoming so as well, for example, the realization of distant education courses and other courses, being taught through video and internet. This truly is bringing society closer together. The opportunity to be in a multi-cultural classroom is even greater than ever before. To maintain a "local" identity is still a very important aspect of our lives and education. We must continue to not lose sight of teaching students their own culture and this helps an individual here a better understanding of one's self. We must as educators keep a balance of both globalization and local identity.”

(Jim) “I think to me local means to be from a certain area. For example, people who live in [this city] and surrounding areas. These people would be considered locals, anyone from outside of this area would not be considered local.



I think we all have the opportunity to be global. With today's technology we are able to speak with and learn about people from other cultures. We can talk to them one on one through the internet, we can even see them in person with new computer camera equipment. With all the new technology we can communicate with someone half way across the world just as easy as our next door neighbor.”

(Stephen) “We live in a "global village". In years gone by things were more local. People worked in a certain locality, lived in a certain locality, associated with people of the same locality. People seemed more isolated than today's society. Not much was known outside of one's locality.

With advancements in transportation and technology the world has become a global village. If something happens half way around the world, we find out about it quickly.

However, the term local is still used. When we use the word we tend to think of a particular area, or region. We think of local issues, things that pertain to a local area. Global issues deal with larger areas-things that pertain to the world E.g. World Peace.”

### *Negative picture*

(Yvette) “What does being local mean to you? Difficult question to answer. I live in [rural area X] and in particular [community A]. I am surrounded by my father's family – all eight brothers and two sisters. My grandfather basically owns all the land on the top portion of our street. Growing up my friends where my cousins – very sheltered. This bothered me as I was growing up if I took it upon myself to travel overseas etc. as much as possible. Also I volunteered and worked for many years at the Refugee Immigrant Advisory Council One Association for new Canadians.

Being local to me equals isolation, limited transportation, lack of industrialization, etc. Even on a broader scale [this province] is an isolated place surrounded by water. However, on a positive note being local means security, familiarity, comfort and an appreciation and love for my surroundings, i.e., the ocean, the fox, the apple trees, my garden, etc.”

(Kristen) “Today, you asked us to describe what being "local" means to me. When we talk about things "global" I think we tend to take into account a large variety of ethnicities, cultures, religions, values, occupation, and so on. Similarly, I believe to be local is connected to how each person relates to their own community in terms of all of these things. For example, a fisherman that comes from a very fishing based community. I think, could easily be referred to as local, and just the same as someone who strays from what is considered "normal" for that region could also easily be labeled also. More often than not, I think there is a stereotype attached to this word, which sometimes is inappropriate.”

### *Where are you from*

(Angelina) “What does being local mean to you? When I first hear the word "local" I think about where I'm from, (city B). Participating locally means helping out around my community and participating in local events. For example, in [city B], important local events include the Winter Carnival, the World Cup Triathlon, and the 1999 Canada Winter Games. Also, local

extracurricular activities include downhill cross-country skiing, hiking, biking, swimming, hockey and baseball. I try to participate in many events and activities. However, as I got older, and the world becomes more like a global village technologically, economically, and socially, the term "local" begins to take on new meaning. The world is at the fingertips of every individual (e.g., person in rural area [in this province] on internet talking to person in Uganda). Instead of just being concerned with our physical locality, we are more concerned with the situations provincially, nationally, and internationally. The world is increasingly becoming our definition of locality."

### ***Born and Raised There***

(Karen) "A local is someone who has lived in a place for a particular period of time, long enough to know your way around and start to understand the local culture. You don't have to be born and raised in the area to be a local. I think that you could have grown up on the Mainland or on the other side of the world but that if you have settled here now, know the area and call it home – you are now a local."

(Karen) "To me being a local means being part of my local community which is .... I am a "townie" to me that is what it is to be a local. I was born and raised in [this city] and have lived in this "local" community for 21 years. It is a privilege to live in town because of the great things it has to offer. Ex.: Big Shopping malls to ... [the Street with many pubs]. I am proud be, a local ... proud to be [also a person from the City].

(Jonathon) "Coming from a small community [Y] from which the next closet town [P] is 72 km away, my definition of being "local" is probably not a real definition at all. For me it means sharing a common history, a common culture and especially a common occupation. [Y] was once a prosperous mining town and most worked in the mines or for the mines. If you were either born and/or raised in [Y] you are called a ["YEER"] and therefore for me being "local" means having something in common with other residents in the area (i.e. family relationships, a shared history of mining and logging (a common vacation, family roots in the town etc.)."

(Sherry) "To me, to be local means to be from a certain area. It has to do with a physical location. I live in [area F] and in [area F] I'm local just as the man on the side of the road who sells "local" vegetables meaning vegetables from that area. I am from that area as well, therefore I am a local. When I say someone is from the Mainland, it implies someone from roughly Ontario and further on West. I guess to a certain extent when someone says they are local it implies that they adopt the local culture as well. Local culture is often seen as the majority culture however, so someone who is "local" in [area F] is usually thought of as white and Christian. This idea of local is wrong, who can say that someone born in [area F] who is African and follows a different religion isn't local? That person is just as local as I am; he is living and was born in the same area as me. The only problem that I find with the use of the word "local" is the last point that I made, that it usually implies being part of the majority – this is incorrect. For me being local means being born and living in the area you are in. Unfortunately, often terms such as locals and mainlanders imply negative stereotypes which are incorrect."

(Morgan) "Being local means a lot more than actual being from the local area, like [this province] for example. People born in [this province] don't necessarily have a knowledge and



appreciation for it. Granted, most [this province] know and respect where they are from but not all. What is the difference between someone born in [this province] in the 1970's and someone from the US, England, or China who has lived here for 30 years. Really there is no difference. Just because someone is born here doesn't necessarily make them proud of where they are from. Being local means having a respect and appreciation for that place. Being from that place is not necessarily enough."

(Helene) "The idea of 'local', in context, is related to the concept of community. In [this province] there is a distinction between 'baymen' and 'townies'; people from rural communities and those from larger towns such as [ city G], but in terms of the global community, [this province] are 'locals' and the term CFA (Come From Away) is used to denote those from Mainland, Canada or elsewhere in the world. Humans are social beings; family, community, country and world community are the levels of society which we inhabit. To be a responsible member of the world community a person should first be able to function on the 'local' level, in his or her family and community. The term 'local' usually indicates that a person has lived in an area all of their life, or has become a 'local' by length of time or by empathy with the people who are 'locals'. People who are good citizens of their local community are usually able to think on a global level, and act as responsible members in all levels of society."

(Gloria) "My feeling of being local is, to me, a sense of belonging to where I am. Mainly, it means my birthplace, where my parents still are, and visiting the place I grew up. Local to me, is also the sense of belonging in my family, in my classroom, and amongst my peers. I am not global with regards to traveling but I am global in my perceptions of the world in general and of people of different cultures. I love meeting people of different backgrounds then myself and finding out about them. Someday I hope to travel, but for now it's great to be a true-born [in this province]."

(Krista) "When I think of being local or global, several ideas and notions emerge. I don't think that people are either one or the other. I feel people belong to both categories. As a psychology major, I appreciate that people are diverse and have many facets. No one person can be adequately labeled by a single definition.

Take me for example. I am a local person of [city G in this province] as I was born here and I live here. However, I am also a global person, as I am constantly affecting and being affected by the world. I don't think that global is defined as someone who travels a lot. I think instead that everyone is a global person because of their impact and contribution that makes the world.

For me, no person can be labeled either "local" or "global". I believe that everyone is both of these types."

(John) "During the course of the evening the class was challenged to define themselves as being either local or global. It is my belief that in this age, it is impossible to be a non-global individual. We are constantly bombarded by information on unprecedented scale. Both local and national newscasts are filled with International news and all forms of print media carry some degree of global coverage. Even in an area as isolated as (this province) it is easy to see the influence of global cultures. Subsequently, I believe we are all global people."

(Susan) “Being local means to me that you have to be born and raised in a community and where you have roots.

For example, my dad lives in (community W) but is originally from (community Z). He moved to [community W] 29 years ago. My dad is seen as a local from [community Z]. He has aunts, uncles, cousins and childhood friends there. Although he has spent close to three decades in one small community, he is still not looked upon as a local.”

### ***Pride/nationalism***

(Dennis) “What does it mean to be local? To be local is a part of who I am. I am very proud to be local and will never give it up. No matter where I go in his journey called life, I will bring with me the things I have gained from being local.

Also, I think that this class will help me to better my communication skills and I look forward to a great semester. You always have to communicate and hopefully this class will help me to improve on these skills.

(Vanessa) “Being local means a great deal to me! I come from a small community of about 600. Because of this there is an enormous sense of unity within the community. I am involved in many local organizations and it gives me a great sense of pride. In fact, it was being the leader of 4-H that made me realize I wanted to be a teacher.

Being local on a provincial level also instills a great sense of pride for me. The ABC special the other night about September 11<sup>th</sup> and the way people were welcomed into [city O], made me feel so proud to be a [resident of this province].

Because of this pride I will be staying in [this province] to work and inspire our own youth.”

(Stephanie) “What does it mean to be a Local? For me, it's a sense of pride. I am very proud to say that I'm a [resident of this province] and the heritage and culture that are associated with being a [this province]. It is important as human beings to have a sense of belonging and being a part of a unique culture creates that sense of belonging. What's even more interesting about being a local is that you take your culture with you whenever you go. It doesn't matter if you are living in [in this province] or Ontario or Japan you will always be a [resident of this province]. The fact that we are indeed living in a global village has affected each and every one of our lives but it does not change where we come from or the culture that is unique to that particular area of the world. I am a [resident of this province] and I always will be.”

(Kristen) “What does it mean to me to be local? To be local, I feel proud! Living in this province is an experience. You will never meet anyone like you do here. A lot of people who are not local even agree. However, I believe that in order for one to say that he/she is local, they must be able to say that have experienced [this province]. They have seen what it has to offer and have knowledge of its culture.

To know that I am local I know that I carry with me many traits that may not have if I wasn't. I can walk down a street and greet people and know that they will greet me. To know that I'm local I know that I will want others to know and I would want them to experience what I have!

### ***Education/schooling***

(Dave) “As teachers we will need to appreciate the cultural backgrounds of our students, whether they are city kids moving from a small town, they may be members of an uncommon religion or may have just moved to Canada. Teachers have to do their best to keep an open mind and accept and celebrate differences. All of society needs to do this, but as teachers we have a responsibility to do this because we will influence how our students think they are the next generation of society.”

(Stephen) “What does being local mean to you? A term that I've been learning a lot over the last couple of years is Globalization. Increasing emphasis is being placed on mergers and countries are beginning to cooperate economically. Further communications technologies allow people from all over the world in a manner that is easier than visiting your neighbor.

Almost as a reaction to this travel is the post-colonial emphasis on local culture and local customs. Aboriginal rights are being given increased attention and, while by companies are starting to come to [this province], there is a bigger push to insure local benefit (i.e., iron ore smelter HERE). [This province's] culture is also being expected across the country in the form of music and ....

As a teacher I will have to educate my students so that they can be effective global citizens. At the same time, however, they must be made aware that their local values and customs are important as well.”

(Nicholas) “Being local means to live 'here', where ever you are at the time. Right now, we are in [this city] so those who are from (grew up) in [this city] are considered to be locals. Those who 'grew up' in any community are considered to be locals. You acquire similar ideologies, beliefs, cultural values, and language of those who live in that community. In school, these ideologies are predominant; other residents who move into the community may have different view and values but are 'assimilated' into the local community or are considered to be 'outsiders'.”

(Sean) “What does being local mean to you? I take local in the sense that I try to be aware of the various aspects of my immediate surroundings and, more generally, the day to day life that I live. It must be recognized that these now immediate concerns are at the same time both intimately tied to and distinct from broader, less specific spheres. For example, as a teacher "being local" refers to my awareness of the culture, issues and atmosphere in my school (and even more specifically my classroom). Being global, as a teacher, will involve my awareness of and relationship with larger issues, such as the state of education generally or the effects of media on youth.”

(Amy) “What does “being local” mean to you? To me being local can be interpreted in many ways. Globally, being local to me means being Canadian. On a national level, it means being a (from this province). Provincially, being local means I’m from “the bay”. In any case, “being local” invokes a sense of pride about where you come from. For me, being from an out port community in (in this province) is something to take pride in. It’s a small community, with closeness between people. It’s like you come from a very large family. Depending on the situation, being local has many different meanings. It does not only mean where you come from geographically. It may be where you see yourself socially, such as your position in the classroom. In any case “being local” have many different meanings.”

(Dana) “What does being local mean to you? I think being local in one sense means knowing the culture of the school, and the culture and community that the students are coming from.

If you are a “local”, it means you grew up in that community, possibly that school. I think it makes a big difference, especially in small schools or small communities because you can relate to the students.

I think in another sense (broader sense), local means relating to our culture here in North America, or even in Canada, or even here in [this province] rather than other provinces, countries, or other parts of the world.

It depends on the context in which you are looking at the word. In any case, I think local is personal term.”

(Catherine) “We have been asked to discuss global and local and what it means to us. I do think we live in a Global Society, a society that is very closely linked with rest of the world. With the use of today’s technology this is being furthered. In respect to education we see this becoming so as well- the realization of distant education courses and other courses being taught through video and internet. This truly is bringing society closer together. The opportunity to be in a multi-cultural classroom is even greater than ever before. To maintain at “local” identity is still a very important aspect of our lives and education. We must continue to not lose sight of teaching students their own culture and this helps an individual here a better understanding of one’s self. We must as educators keep a balance of both globalization and local identity.”

(Nadine) “What does it mean to you to be local and global? I believe for me to be local would mean that I have a good sense of local community. I would have to understand the different ways in which my local community works. We go out on religious, community events and special days. You should help out with local volunteer groups, schools, etc. And have a strong sense of community.

Global would be more of world wide community. You would think more in terms of a broader community. You would think not just about your own community but also about everyone else’s. Not just your own culture but many others.”

(Jenny) “I lived in Vancouver for seven years and I also have a perspective gained from living in a larger city. The biggest problem in the schools in Vancouver was children that could not speak English. Over half of the students in the school where I volunteered were in ESL classes.

Therefore, the society influenced the school system. Thus issues in education are greatly affected by society both on a local level and global level.”

### ***Awareness of Interdependence of Local/Global Relationship***

(Cuilean) “What does being local mean to me? Being local means having connections: connections being family members that have roots in the community. As well being local means being involved in the community. Through certain organizations, (church, sports, and community events: such as manifest, art shows, etc.). The most important things about being local are having emotional ties, local distinctions and the feeling of connectedness to a certain local.

Local is what is known/or common and global is what we desire to know/or uncommon. The new global intervention has challenged/or changed our meaning of local. Is local Canada? (this province)? Or [this city]? We now look at this on all levels.”

(Darrell) “Being local means to me a heightened sense of awareness of your immediate surroundings, yet at the same point in time being aware of its connectedness with the global community. "Being local" means emphasizing the importance of local functions and duties as a primary goal. I think that with the advent of technology and greater interconnectedness between the global communities less emphasis has been placed on the importance of the local community. However, restricting yourself to only local functions can be disadvantageous and cause you to be less enlightened to new ideas as a teacher.”

(Kim) “What does being local mean to me? Being local is very important in my opinion. I come from a small community in Trinity Bay and since the economy has become so industrialized the population in the community has decreased because people are moving to find jobs. This community depended on the fish plant for many years. When the fish population was in danger, the company stopped processing fish and many people lost their jobs and had to move away. The plant is now processing crab and employs part of the community. There are two grocery stores in the community and my family believes that you should support your own community and buy from the stores. There are many people who would rather drive 45 minutes to pick up food. This does not help out our community. If you want to help your community grow you need to invest in that community and keep things local. The plant in the community now has two more plants in the province. They have markets all over the world, but their industries are located in [in this province] to employee [from this province] and make their products locally.

Peter “What does being local mean to you? The concept of local is quite complex when one utilizes their knowledge about socialization and globalization. Local for me actually encompasses a provincial bonding. However, this bonding does not exclude the immigration or out migration of local peoples. Each new addition to the province adds to the culture and each out migration aids the enhancement of global understanding concerning our province .... This leads to a greater understanding of the issues whether political, economic, educational that all of us as a nation or world are affected by.”

(Tina) “What does being local mean to you? Since I am originally from a small community, and the economic situations for most families centered around one industry (fishing), this type of community structure is vital to its survival. When people have employment within communities they can support other businesses such as retail stores, gas stations, etc. to be also viable within the community. I have seen communities lose their main industry for employment and witnessed the people leave their homes in search of employment.

When communities have a substantial economic base, then social interactions such as group activities, sports activities, fund-raising for special events, etc. can flourish. When economic problems exist in communities’ people have less money to support their local interactions.

It is important to support local industry (such as buying from provincial retail store, versus buying from Wal-Mart where profits go to the US). The need to be more aware of consumer spending is important to support local economies.

Globalization is affecting the lives of local communities especially when they move industries out of one-industry based towns. For example, ERCO [in this town], although the environmental advantages were greatly improved when the industry there shut down, however economically it was not good for the town as people needed to move away to gain employment.”

(Neil) “Local no I have never considered myself to be "local" to anywhere. I have moved too often to even think of myself as from somewhere. I think a lot of people get really attached to where they are from, or grew up and I have never experienced this. I have developed a fondness for [this province]. But I believe that I'll probably never feel "local".

With the influence of Globalization upon our post- modern world, I believe that people must cling to the concept of "local", before all boundaries in culture, are blurred before societies lose characteristic that make them unique. Influence such as media is fighting this concept of "localism".”

(Erica) “To be "local" is to be a person who has lived in a specific place for their whole lives. To be "global" is to be a person who travels all over the world and experiences all different cultures. These people aren't afraid to experience different things, and don't look down on other's beliefs and customs. Locals don't necessarily have to do this either, but they are more concentrated on things that they have experienced their whole lives. They tend to be very traditional, and like to stick close to home.”

(Susan) “What does it mean to be Local? Global, in a Global Village? Local can mean to be from a certain area. I think that local means one area that a person comes from. Here in (this province), especially in smaller communities, being local means that if you come from there, people know you. If someone new comes in, everyone knows. As for global to me, that implies everyone from around the world. It's more of a way of saying that everyone belongs to the same "village" and no one is a stranger. To me, local means that I'm from [this city, form this province]. Global means I'm from this planet.”

(Lisa) “What Does it Mean to be Local? Global? I could go on for PAGES about what it means to be local and global. However, I will stick to one experience – my summer job.



In the summer I work as a tour guide for the famous "bird and whale" tours in --- (which I will leave nameless). As I gave the tours every day, the twists from all over the world viewed me as a local girl. I also saw myself in that sense as a local girl. I knew the area and the people, I spoke with the local accent, and I felt comfortable on the ocean. However, I also saw myself as one person in a large, global network of people who had one thing in common – the love of marine life. People from Germany, Japan, Australia, and Africa could converse with me about a common interest. I never again will see the tourists that I talked with on these daily tours. However, for a couple hours, our different cultures disappeared and we were part of the same community of marine-life lovers. So, I could definitely see myself as local and global at the same time.”

(Timothy) “It's a funny thing about the concepts of local and global. While living in [in this city] I always heard about a "local identity" and how important it was to represent where you come from and I feel that I have, but there is an interesting twist on this.

I lived in London, England for 8 months, and I was a true heartiest [person from this province]. I was treated special because I was different (accent and general attitude), and I loved it.

However, I began to resent any other [person from this province] I met over there that stole my "thunder" I also adopted English traits and some slang.

Upon my return I was dreading hearing a [local provincial accent] and was mocked for my use of English slang. Of course this all worked itself out, but it just goes to show how the concepts of being local and global are not mutually exclusive.”

(John) “...the class was challenged to define themselves as being either local or global. It is my belief that in this age, it is impossible to be a non-global individual. We are constantly bombarded by information on unprecedented scale. Both local and national newscasts are filled with International news and all forms of print media carry some degree of global coverage. Even in an area as isolated as [this province] it is easy to see the influence of global cultures. Subsequently, I believe we are all global people.”

(Roseanne) “What it means to be "Local" in a Global Society? This topic is very important to me these days. I work at [College X], a "local" college. We have been contracted to transplant our local college to a global setting in ---- in [another country]. So, I'm now looking at ourselves as locals, as [from this province], and trying to see how we can make the best matches to send the right "local" people to our global campus in [another country]. All suggestions and comments welcome. I hope to learn a lot from this course that can help in my job.”

(Erin) “What it Means to be Local vs. Global....I guess local for me doesn't really carry the same meaning it did 50 years ago. There is a greater community of friends that are in NO WAY geographically connected for me. People with common interests to me in Europe are more likely my "local" friend. Similarly, other members of [this city and this university] without interests or activities in common with me I would consider global.”

(Regan) “The concept of local vs. global people is an interesting topic. Having spent the past semesters in Norway, I have experienced the life of a global person, being the outside individual

in any communication situation. Having had this experience, I feel that I have become more effective in local communication..”

(Janelle) “What it means to be Local? I am a very local person. I rarely travel and live in a small place. Because of my background, I don't know too much about different places in the world but I enjoy being local. I find you learn a lot more by being local because you get to know the people around you more and what their lifestyles are all about.

In one way, when I think about it, I'm not fully local because the people around me, like I learned tonight are from all sorts of places around the world so you learn about them and their ways of life and in turn became more global yourself.”

(Brad) “Living in a post modern society and a globalized economy is a much different lifestyle than the lifestyles of our parents and grandparents. Today we communicate with people all around the world through many mediums such as face-to-face communication in Japan, teleconferences, telephones, cell phones, voice messages, email, and many more. In today's world, people need to be knowledgeable in many areas of communication in order to be successful.”

(Megan) “Today we discussed 'a way' in which two people view how a school should be set up - what kinds of things are crucial to a successful learning environment, and how they should be viewed, or rather a good way to deal/handle them.

Being Global, to me, means being able to exist in today's society as an individual. An individual who is concerned with what is happening in the world and how it relates to them personally.”

(Julie) “To me, being global means being aware of the world around us. It is important to know about things from a local perspective - how certain issues and decisions affect our communities, province and country; but it is also valuable to determine how those same issues, decisions and values affect the world around us. We also need to try and look at things from other people's perspectives - how their values and beliefs affect their choices. If we are more aware of many perspectives, we are more able to make informed, appropriate decisions. In some ways, being global is thinking outside our own particular "box".

(Melanie) “I think that global issues are those that affect the world in general such as decisions that are made by governments and higher officials. For instance, the decisions made by President Bush regarding the war on terrorism not only affect the United States but the rest of the world as well.

Local issues are those that affect people on a smaller basis whether it is within a specific community, group, school, etc. A good example of this I believe is the \$40 recreation fee imposed upon all [by this university] students to pay.”

(Faith Ann) “I believe being global is defining us with relation to our world. Such things as media and the internet allow us to be active participants in global issues. It also allows us to be informed. However, being local probably defines us more as an individual - where we fit in our society, our beliefs, values, and actions, etc. But the global aspect also allows us to be more



objective. Together, they help us form ideas of who we are in relation to our community and our world.

## **Discussion:**

How would teacher interns' voices help to contribute toward building positive school cultures through building collaborative teams? How should multiple stakeholders interpret voices of the teacher interns? What should those who teach the interns include in their course material? How should they teach them? These are some of the challenging questions for all stakeholders involved in teacher education.

There are at least four factors that characterize the wave of globalization: growing worldwide immigration, the power and ubiquity of new global technologies, the post-nationalization of production and distribution of goods and services, and the back-and-forth cultural flows (Suarez-Orozco, 2004).

In this context, how should voices of the interns be interpreted? Should we interpret interns' voice from various perspectives in cultural studies, postcolonial studies, postmodern studies, globalization, transnationality, neo-liberalism, critical race theory and so on? As we know, using any one of these perspectives to make sense of interns' voices is likely to produce different meanings. These meanings, in turn, may have different implications for policy makers, school administrators, politicians, business people, school reformers and other similar stakeholders interested in teacher education. Moreover, these groups of people are more likely to have their own views of what does local/global mean to them, because globalization engenders difference and complexity; it makes difference "normal".

For example, in its more critical view cultural studies explores how to discover disempowering structures and find out means to intervene in those structures in order to bring about a more equitable and just future. Globalization has created inequalities in all spheres of life – social, political, economic and cultural. This is the biggest threat for varieties of reasons with which teacher interns and other stakeholders in teacher education should be concerned. Globalization dominated by neo-liberalism did not bring reduction in global poverty. Policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund on countries have been disastrous for the poor and the environment. The gap between the very rich and the very poor regions of the world keeps growing (Peet, 2003; Orelus, 2007; Protilio and Malot, 2008; Maud and Jane-Robertson, 1994). In the area of new global technologies much more needs to be done to reduce the digital divide.

The voices of most interns presented above show no use of such language that draws our attentions to issues related to social justice. Instead, they use language of global culture. There are ample voices affirming cultural identities. Cultural identity converses, among other things, upon place, nationality, history and ethnicity. Globalization in this area has created a feeling of global togetherness among people having a global soul. Shelly articulates this feeling: "I think that in today's society, especially the society we live in; to be local is to be global. I come from a small town of 500 people, yet already I have visited five different countries. I had to learn to fit into their cultures and societies. This is made easier at this time in history because of the exposure, through media, movies, schooling, etc., to learn ... how these people live. Also, in

living in such a small town I keep in contact with people from all around the world through email, chat programs and telephone. So, to be local would mean that you're familiar with your immediate surroundings, friends and culture. But, you can also be familiar with many other cultures as well. Today, we are almost all connected together - globally.” In Jenny’s words “I consider global or a global village to consist of the people of the world to be related in aspects of human life and to be connected in some way, i.e., communication. It involves a relationship of beliefs or social attitudes between ethnic communities and nations. It involves societal effects on each other.”

In similar vein, some people ask other people questions such as, “where were you born and raised” and “where do you come from”. Looking from the perspectives of postcolonial and critical race theories, it becomes clear why sometimes these questions raise deep uneasiness and even resentment among certain people and fear of adverse political consequences for others (Wu, 2002). It depends on who asks these questions to whom and for what purpose. On the other hand, as it is clear from the voices of the interns above, being born and raised at a place where one is living, and telling others about the place where one is from, create a sense of genuine affirmation of one’s social self, a feeling of friendship and closeness, and pride in local and national identity. At the same time, expressing these feelings in a strong language and tone often leads to exclusionary practices and privileging of discourses that emphasize “otherness”.

Teacher interns themselves have to be aware of their own voices from critical and reflective perspectives. That is to say, they self-consciously have to explore underpinnings of discourses they use to define terms such as local and global. This they need to do because as teacher interns they will sooner or later inherit complex and diverse school and classroom cultures. As Suarez-Orozco points out “children growing up today are more likely than in any previous generation in history to live a life of working and networking, loving and camaraderie with others from different national, linguistic, religious, and racial backgrounds....In a globalized world, the ability to cross cultural boundaries, work with others by understanding and empathizing with their points of view, and the ability to consider multiple perspectives will become increasingly important” (op. cit, p 3) In these contexts, for teaching in their classrooms the interns would also need to know the following in order to have some focus on social justice issues:

1. How to translate provincial/state learning objectives into practical learning experiences, while taking into account local/global dynamics.
2. How to prepare instructional plans that take into account local/global issues.
3. How to prepare lesson plans that are sensitive to local/global discourses.
4. How much time to spend on different tasks in classrooms. For example, the time the interns need to spend on local/global issues.
5. How to manage the diverse classrooms?
6. How to design different teaching practices and strategies for students with diverse cultural backgrounds.
7. How to integrate local/global issues into the prescribed curriculum content.
8. How to build a strong foundation in literacy skills incorporating local/global issues?
9. How to persevere in a school culture that may not be sensitive to local/global social justice issues.

10. How to work out the effort and time required for high achievement along with inculcating awareness of local/global social justice issues.

Preparation of programs for school is a very important task. Therefore, teacher interns should be able to prepare programs to be used in schools. The structure of these programs must provide their students a structure of intellectual skills which will include inquiry, inference, reflection, critical and creative decision making, analysis and evaluation. Moreover, these programs should enhance students' technological competence and prepare them as good citizens. Similarly, teacher interns also are expected to learn how to address and nurture students' physical, emotional, social, spiritual and moral needs.

## **Conclusion and Suggestions**

### ***Conclusion***

The discussion presented above leads this author to conclude that teacher interns have to learn an integrated approach to curriculum which allows them to do all the things mentioned above in the context of the school. The relevance of multitasking and multiple learning skills are likely to increase.

These expectations held for the teacher interns by stakeholders put great responsibilities on the shoulders of cooperating teachers, internship supervisors and school personnel, all of whom have their own cultures. The challenge for teacher educators are, what and how should they teach teacher interns in educational systems? Educational systems are social systems and as such in a globalized world they will also have to engage students, cognitively, socially, and behaviourally in the class rooms. Classrooms in the post-industrial democracies are characterized as places where boredom has become a norm. In this situation, should teacher educators, cooperative teachers, and school personnel as key stakeholders in internship process resort to systemic thinking as a perspective to achieve these goals? Through this perspective they can attempt to comprehend institutional and organizational contexts, as well as, their own cultures. A series of questions can be raised in achieving this goal. For example, a start could be made by asking the following questions:

- Are the organizations where three cultures - culture of partnership, culture of collaboration, and culture of reflective and critical internship- are located learning organizations? How are they learning local/global aspects of school and society?
- Do these organizations promote authentic dialogue in relation to local/global issues?
- What kind of culture do these organizations, in fact, create, maintain, promote and perpetuate?
  - local or global or hybrid or multicultural or simply cultures of whiteness?
- What kind of cultures do they discourage – non-European cultures and cultures of diverse social, gender, race and sexual orientations, for example?

In our own work, we have developed a critical and reflective teacher education model. In doing this we have made use of critical and reflective pedagogy approach in education (Singh and Doyle, 2006, Singh et al, 2001a, Singh et al, 2001b, Singh, Hamnett et al, 1984). Our approach attempts to engage these partners with local/global discourses related to social justice issues and create learning and teaching opportunities for them to function as intellectuals and cultural workers (Singh, 2000b).

In the final analysis, globalization is changing in fundamental ways local cultures, societies, and economies. Both immigrants and those who live at places of their birth need to learn new skills and sensibilities to experience globalization in creative and imaginative ways. To accomplish this goal, a great deal of thinking, talking and doing is required. For it is through conversations with each other that we are able to resolve our problems critically, creatively, imaginatively and reflectively. Therefore, we need to learn more about culture of various stakeholders in teacher education through research and candid observations. We will be better served if we produce "local knowledge" about these cultures. In order to achieve this, co-operating teachers, internship supervisors and school personnel ought to make their observations of the internship process public. This they can do either through presenting their ideas at conferences, in -service programs or through writing in journals (Kumar, 1997, Doyle and Singh, 2006, Singh et al. 2001b) In this respect locally born and raised educators should remind themselves of their families' histories as immigrants, while at the same time learning from the experience of new immigrants. Suarez-Orazco explains, "*per secula seculorum* has been the immigrant story the world wide over: keeping the social cohesion and the protective features of home cultures while managing to acquire the skills and competencies needed to thrive in the new country" (HGSE, 2004, p. 4). This new country, I suggest, should be thought of a space that exists between local and global space, i.e., in-between-spaces.

### ***Some Specific Suggestions***

Let us focus on the culture of reflective and critical teacher internship and the faculties of education's involvement in educating future educators. Among other things, I am part of this culture simply because I have been involved in teacher education for more than three decades in a faculty of education. Over the years I had have many conversations with my colleagues, teachers and teacher interns about issues related to social justice in society and schools. In my experience all these people have been genuinely interested in creating a just and democratic society, although they differ about how to integrate a notion of social justice in their teaching practices in a given institutional setting. In many faculties of education and schools there are distinct and explicit policies, programs and courses that promote teaching of issues related to social justice, while there are other faculties of education and schools that promote integration of these issues in their policies, programs and courses relatively implicitly (see *Journal of Teacher Education*, November 1, 2005; *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Spring 2003). The fact is, as many of us have experienced, that teaching issues related to poverty, inequalities in school and society, discrimination based on age, gender, race, class, sexual orientations, and so on is not an easy task in today's classrooms in North America (Kumar, 1997). Generally, many students feel uncomfortable with the discussion of social stratification in today's consumer oriented society because such discussions often imply criticism of today's capitalist society. From the perspective of majority of students such discussions lead to advocating socialism and they do not like

socialistic ideas. They associate these ideas with communist societies and do not see socialist values as democratic values. This is where it matters most how we teach. If we show our students that in all contemporary societies, people, like them, have desire to improve their lives through education (i.e., they have something akin to the so called “American Dream”), then students do understand that no body should be discriminated against because of their race, gender, social class, age, sexual orientations and other social and cultural values. In my experience this is the first step for both teachers and students to sensitise each other to conversations about social stratification. Conversations about these issues can be made more complex as we keep teaching by including discussions about colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, socialism, communism and democracy in the courses we teach, depending on time available and objectives of different courses in the total scheme of curriculum that is designed for the teacher internship programs at various specific institutional contexts. I see this as a more practical approach to teaching about issues related to social justice. In certain institutional settings and cultural/political contexts it may take a long time to have separate courses and programs in faculties of educations to talk exclusively about social justice. It is not to say that we stop our efforts to change such settings and contexts. The other thing we may do is to extend our teaching (interaction with others) beyond the walls of faculties of education. We as educators and citizens should engage ourselves in conversations about social justice in all the public spheres (i.e., churches, community places, sports arenas, home, pubs, social gatherings, wedding parties, and so on) in which we happened to be located at a particular time, and not wait to discuss those issues only in classrooms, faculty meetings and retreats (e.g., visit website of the Paul and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy for conversations taking place on such topics as “the Branding of Social Justice”, and “Teacher Education”. See Kumar, 1997).

\* This article is a revised version of the earlier paper that was presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education, Honolulu, Hawaii in January, 2008. The original title of the paper was “Local /Global and Diversity Issues in Globalization and Teacher Education”.

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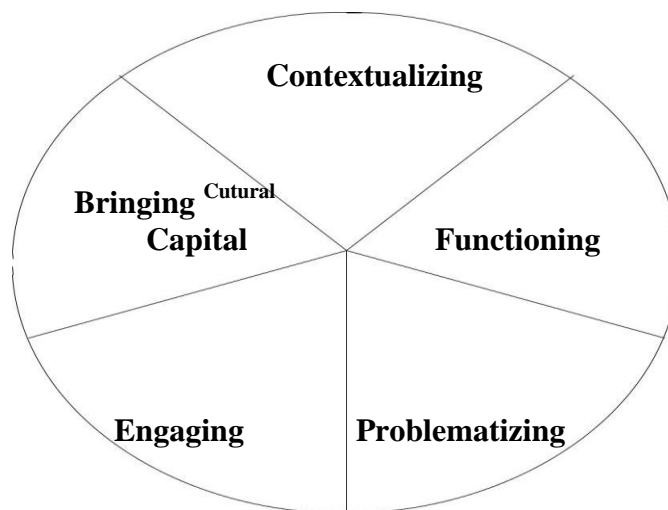
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### **THE RCIP (REFLECTIVE AND CRITICAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM) A MODEL FOR TEACHER EDUCATION**

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- Describing/Contextualizing
- Bringing Cultural Capital
- Engaging
- Problematizing Dominant Practices and Discourses
- Functioning as Intellectuals and Cultural Workers

**Figure 1 - RCIP Model:**

<sup>1</sup> The situation of the world we live in has changed due to emergence of Global Capitalism. The latter condition has “disorganized” earlier ways of thinking global relations in terms of colonizer/colonized, First/ Third Worlds, North / South or the “West and the Rest.” The new Global

Capitalism has created “a new international division of labor.” This has been achieved through the networks created by the transnational corporations. The transnationalization of production is deemed to be the source of both global unity and fragmentation--- economically, socially and culturally. Notably, corresponding to economic fragmentation is cultural fragmentation, which has been debated in terms of “multiculturalism” and “diversity.” These terms have multiplicity of meanings some of which have lately been captured by such terms as “postcolonialism” and “postmodernism.”

<sup>2</sup> As discussed above, our schools are expected to produce well-rounded educated persons to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and beyond. Such educated persons can not be produced without the help of various partners involved in creating, managing, implementing and evaluating the curriculum in schools and the internship process. Who are these partners? These partners are (the list is not meant to be exhaustive or in order of importance): the various Departments of Education and Training, the schools, school board associations, the school councils, program specialists, education faculties, universities, religious organizations, business organizations, and so on. All the partners have their own groups, organizations and cultures. There is a need to understand their cultures in a systematic way, if the goal is to improve our schools and educate the populace in a desired direction. This will require, among other things, creating new forms of institutions and communication networks so that we all can have pragmatic, open and endless conversations with each other. For it is through unending interactions with each other that we develop our self. The self in turn enables us to create new forms of knowledge. Based on new awareness we are able to imagine new societies and hope to create them through our actions.

<sup>3</sup> I have just identified many partners involved in the internship process. Many of these partners regularly collaborate with each other to achieve certain educational outcomes in this province. For example, the school districts, the schools, the cooperating teachers, the internship supervisors, the teacher interns and the Faculty of Education collaborate in the delivery of the teacher internship program.

The point is that collaboration, as a form of interaction and conversation, creates its own culture. A great deal has been written in this area and the research is extensive. We have reviewed some of the research in this area and have produced "local knowledge" which shed light on what it means to be a cooperating teacher, internship supervisor and teacher intern in this province and what it means to collaborate with the Faculty of Education as the only institution of higher learning in this province. These meanings become part of the total internship culture, which in turn affect the degree to which the internship program in this province can be implemented successfully.

Therefore, we need to understand various elements of cultures of collaboration. We have, like many others, come to realize that any collaboration is based on trust, give and take (exchange), respect, care and continuous dialogue among all parties involved on an equal basis. It is based on a sense of humility among the participants, acceptance of differences and tolerance of many previously unheard voices. The "global village" built on the foundation of collaboration is not a village built on the unified voice of the people who live in it. This village defies any single true common canon. On the contrary, it is a village built on people's ability and skills in recognizing and incorporating into their daily actions the contradictory voices and experiences of many people who live in it. Collaboration is based on reciprocal exchanges in which participants feel

empowered, enabled and socially mobile. It is based on a set of attitudes which encourages inclusion of all partners rather than their exclusion. Collaborative practices and life styles thrive on democratic principles of participation, fairness, justice and equality.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, much is written on reflection, reflective and critical education and internship. A rich and extensive literature also exists in this area which links reflective education and internship to larger issues of social policy and nation-building. We have reviewed some of this literature and how it impacts on the locally generated internship process in this province.

Briefly, cultures of reflective and critical internship thrive on conversations of hope and possibilities. These cultures are capable of transcending discourses of despair, gloom and doom. Dooms day talk characterizes many of the education reform reports produced in this province and elsewhere. The reports use piles of statistics to create a profile of the educational system in this province in which very little good is seen to be happening. The numbers are used to create images of crises in society, rather than positively portraying the life styles of people in this province. The reports are more interested in creating an image of society which corresponds to the self-images of those who have produced those reports. Instead of re-affirming the self-images of many people in this province, the reports just do the opposite. More often than not they have become instruments of social policy which undervalues the self-confidence and self-concepts of people in this province.

On the contrary, cultures of reflective and critical education and internship aspire to build a democratic society and to encourage democratic living. These cultures do not shy away from the radical meaning inherent in the idea of democracy by adopting a cynical set of attitudes which re-enforce the idea that issues related to inequalities - social, political, cultural, economic and gender - are unproblematic, and therefore, need not be taken too seriously in education policy formulation and implementation

In addition, cultures of reflective and critical thinking in education encourage continued conversations among all members of society. They encourage unchecked (except for extreme hate speech) freedom of speech and communication in all forms, specifically they encourage previously no heard and unrecognized voices to be heard and recognized through creating new safe spaces and rights.

Not only this, these cultures encourage all partners involved in the internship process to raise critical questions which challenge the existing status quo or one-dimensional thinking, e.g. schools should be changed to meet the demands of global economy and nothing else. Instead of seeing downsizing and school closure as the only solutions to problems created by a global economy and technological changes, reflective and critical cultures empower people to think in terms of the possibilities of creating new forms of communities, sets of relationships and desired goals.

### **Chapter 3: The Illusion of Certainty**

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We live in an age when there is a serious lack of certainty. The television channels are filled with news of multi- billion-dollar bail-outs to save us from the economic experts. The local Cameron Inquiry, investigating faulty hormone receptor testing, indicates that more than 40 per cent of retested samples had been wrong. Cynics would claim that this result is still better than flipping a coin. I am writing this paper at a time when I am directing a play called Doubt. This play deals with two key elements in our lives-doubt and certainty. These elements are also a constant in our academic work. Only naive positivists believe they have a grasp on certainty. Recognizing that illusion of certainty is a healthy academic exercise.

Some time ago I wrote an article for this journal called “Dancing with Paradigms” (*The Morning Watch*, Winter 2006-Fall 2007, *Studies in Newfoundland Education and Society*, Vol. IV (2002, p. 1289), which explored the place and value of critical research. Each term I revisit many of the claims made in that article to check my own level of over-certainty. On a more important matter, I have become curious about how some graduate students, who are exposed to various approaches to research, gravitate to critical educational research. There are many times when I believe that I can guess what students will be most comfortable with quantitative, qualitative, or critical research [Illusions are ever present]. I want to explore my understandings of how some graduate students building on their own ideologies and experiences, move toward realizing that critical research can often be the best approach for dealing with the complexities of educational, social, and cultural life.

The context for this piece is a graduate course that consists of quantitative, qualitative, and critical approaches to educational research. This course examines ways of knowing, educational theories, and methodologies as they apply to the various approaches to research in education. The course was developed and is taught by a team of professors. As I indicated above, my particular interest here is in how graduate students accept, respond to, and eventually gravitate to one of these approaches. This journey has taken on a particular fascination for me.

The raw material for this piece consists of hundreds of final papers from graduate students who have been exposed to three approaches to research. Furthermore, I draw on countless hours of thesis and dissertation supervision, where graduate students examine their ideologies, practices, and comfort levels as they agonize over their own research practice. Part of the exercise with graduate students is to indicate the array of approaches to educational research. In this way students can better appreciate that their own divergent thinking and research interests are not out of tune with the rest of the academic world. One other aspect of this process is to help graduate students appreciate the significance and complexity of what they do. This often means trying to set a context for the ever-changing site of educational research.

Given my own ideologies and interests, I stress that critical social research attempts to reveal the socio-historical specificity of knowledge and to shed light on how particular knowledge reproduces structural relations of inequality and oppression, as well as liberation and transformation. The intent of critical social research is to expose enduring structures of power

and domination, to deconstruct the discourses and narratives that support them and to work as advocates for social justice. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) claim, “an emerging approach to educational research is the paradigm of critical educational research” (p.26). I will add that this approach is also foundational to the work I do in theatre: thus the present production of *Doubt*.

We are not always comfortable with a critical education theory that looks at the role that education reciprocally plays in the shaping of public life. In particular, critical education theory interrogates how public life is shaped through the exercise of power used instrumentally through the medium of education. We need to realize that critical education theory sees education as being shaped by the structures and the powers that exist in the wider society, but it also sees education as a powerful force for shaping the minds, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours of the general public. This is where fundamental questions about who shapes the official curriculum, whose knowledge counts, and how classrooms and administrative offices are shaped by the contexts of social, political and economic forces. As Kincheloe (2003) tells us:

Our understanding of an educational situation depends on the context within which we encounter it and the theoretical frames that the researcher brought to the observation. These ideological frames are the glasses through which we see the world... The explicit rules which guide our generation of facts about education are formed by particular world views, values, political perspectives, conceptions of race, class, and gender relations, [as well as] definitions of intelligence (p.61).

The impact of such an approach, with such loaded questions, is not lost on graduate students. They realize very quickly that these questions have to be applied to their own work in teaching and learning. We are not talking about “the other” here, we are talking about ourselves. It is easy to see why there would be much greater comfort with simply sending out a survey and having it computer coded. Having said that, it is my experience that many graduate students are not afraid to ask the hard questions. They often realize that, if there is to be any possibility of transformation, the vexing questions need to be asked and institutional structures and practices need to be interrogated.

Part of the concern for graduate students, who have been exposed to thoughts of objectivity, is in realizing that any attempt to dispense with values, historical circumstances, and political considerations in educational research is misguided. Another issue has to do with accepting that understanding a particular educational issue is very often locked into context, plus acknowledging the conceptual frames they bring to the inquiry. They had been told, or have assumed, that, for research to be valuable, it should not be tainted by researcher- belief systems. Some students prefer to be just told “how to do it”. I have found that, especially in recent years, such students are in the minority.

Graduate students write that their desire to change the status quo stemming from the issue of emancipation is one particular area; for example, dealing with schoolyard bullying. They see the purpose of critical research is to change a problematic situation or phenomena, and merely understanding it is not enough. They further claim that critical approaches to educational inquiry need to enable powerless people to understand and change their world. Some graduate students

assert if they stand by and refuse to question the issues/concerns in their own surroundings, they will become dormant. It has been forcefully stated, once again by graduate students I work with, that a main philosophical thought behind critical research is that it should result in emancipation of the disempowered, bringing about social change. It is encouraging to see local school districts put new emphasis on social justice. This is now evident in professional development. This move is not easy, for it is a struggle against hegemony, risking disturbance of the status quo, and desiring the improvement of education by changing it. This realization is a powerful one, especially when it is internalized in a fashion that impacts on, and transforms work in teaching and learning. Graduate students tell me that we are in a better position to do this when we realize that our educational problems and solutions are both linked to social, political, cultural, and economic realities.

The field of Critical Education Theory has been in existence almost as long as there has been formal compulsory schooling, that is, for slightly more than a hundred years. Early studies involved the relationship between schooling and democracy. [John Dewey](#)'s work in the early 20th Century was important here. Similarly, the writings of people like Bertrand Russell, [Ivan Illich](#), [Paulo Freire](#) and many others have contributed greatly to our understanding of the ways in which education serves the interests of society's dominant culture. This work is being carried on in some masterful ways with the people involved in The Paulo and Nina Freire International Project For Critical Pedagogy (<http://freire.mcgill.ca/>).

Research is a value-laden activity, from the choice of research subject and the questions to investigate, through to the interpretations and publication of results. Critical research is not afraid to reveal its theoretical, political and ideological underpinnings. It actively engages with and challenges dominant assumptions and 'taken for granted' ways of knowing. Its critical credentials are especially clear when it is employed to reveal the hidden agendas, partialities and limitations of 'official' research and when it is part of an ongoing process of, and advocacy for, radical social change. Graduate students appreciate that critical research seeks to uncover what is and to change it. Critical educational research challenges the norm, the usual way of doing things, with the expectation that change is powerful and can occur at the individual as well as societal level. They also realize that the researchers' own values are part of the process and the research is value-laden, whether that includes the choice of subject, the questions, or the interpretation. Collaboration and creative interaction between researchers and the researched is of mutual benefit.

Critical educational research should seek to move beyond understanding and describing in order to provide a systematic critique of the conditions under which particular educational practices occur. If critical educational research is to lead to any real transformation or institutional change, then all the factors that effect schooling must be critiqued. Critical educational research should always begin with the notion that knowledge is structured by existing social relations. Educational research should never be done in a vacuum. Problems do not occur in a vacuum so how could solutions to these problems occur in a vacuum? It should also be noted that educational instances can not be observed without reference to the shared educational values and beliefs of those involved with the critical research. We can only make sense of our research findings if they are placed against the background of a shared educational framework of thought. This is one of the reasons that solutions to educational problems must be produced and presented



in their social, cultural, historical, economic, and political context. In addition to this, critical educational research should concern itself with the values, beliefs, judgments, and interests of the people involved with the particular research project. We have to remind ourselves that knowledge is never the product of a mind that is detached from the realities of daily concerns. Knowledge is produced out of human activity that is motivated by natural needs and interests. We also know that the road we are on is never ending: as Augusto Boal (1979) says, the play is never finished. As you have noted, the challenges of transformation are ever with us. Once again I turn to my graduate students for insight and inspiration. These graduate students often plan critical research approaches to tackle difficult issues related to their own work. One experienced teacher took on the perturbing issue of student expulsion from public school. She believes that it is through the critical action research process that she would question the use of expulsion, and indicate how unfair, biased, and ineffective this disciplinary method is. Through critical action research she would attempt to initiate a change of the school discipline policy. The graduate student stated that this form of punishment creates waves that ripple far from the initial splash and flows into a variety of contexts; the overall effect of expulsions radiates from the student to the teacher, administrators, parents, guidance counsellors, and board and department members. It is a never-ending road that sets up vicious cycles in schooling. Given the work context of many of the graduate students I talk with, critical educational research, on so many issues, could be conducted using an action research approach which lies in the will to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as the conditions under which teachers and students work in schools. These bright graduate students, as experienced teachers, believe that emancipatory action research moves beyond technical and practical improvements and towards the transformation of societies so as to realize the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. One graduate student sums up a lot of what I am writing about when she refers to the journey through the various research paradigms and comes to the conclusion that her particular work can only be realized through research that moves beyond the literal, pass the quantitative and qualitative, and into the realm of research that breeds inquiry, challenge, and change. Lovely, isn't it?

## **Chapter 4: Journeying back: understanding, reclamation and recovery through research with Indigenous people**

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### **Abstract**

Like that of other people of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq descent, my Indigenous ancestry was stigmatized and largely hidden by my family through my childhood. Through my research with Indigenous elders, beginning with the Inuit-Metis of Southern Labrador, I began to realize that stigmatization and the use of denial as a coping strategy was a common experience in Indigenous Canada. Here, I go beyond locating myself in the text to begin what Robert Nash calls a scholarly personal narrative (2004) rooted in my experience as a person of Mi'kmaq descent in modern day Newfoundland. As a researcher, I encountered people who modeled reclamation and recovery. This research also gave me many opportunities to contextualize Indigenous cultural loss. Through the Labrador research and other research with Indigenous people in Quebec, Ontario, and Nova Scotia I gained an intimate knowledge of Indigenous coping mechanisms and strategies and the deep Indigenous commitment to cultural values, mores, and practices.

### **Introduction**

Trine Dahl (as cited in Arnold, 2011) argues that “academic writers leave traces of themselves in their writing which may be linked to national as well as disciplinary culture” (p. 67). Josie Arnold (2011) points to the self as a source of data and argues that it is inevitable that the self will become involved in the production of academic knowledge. Indeed, he states that if we unpack academic texts, we see them as “sewn together as a compilation of the scholarly, the anecdotal or popular, and the autobiographical” (p. 3). These are good descriptions of my experience as an academic researcher and writer and as a person of Indigenous descent. Here I offer the beginning of what Robert Nash (2004) calls a “scholarly personal narrative” in which a writer explores some aspect of his or her personal life with reference to the academic literature. While Nash effectively advocates for a new genre, recognizing the liberation element of telling and retelling stories, others such as Jane Gallop (2002) urge that we locate ourselves in our texts since reality is socially constructed. Though others do not go as far as Nash, there is an increasing understanding of the benefits to the academy of “self-reflection, observation and analysis” (Arnold, 2011, p. 72).

Several years after I graduated from the London School of Economics, I received a call from the manager of the Labrador Inuit-Metis Nation (LMN, now NunatuKavut Community Council or NCC), the political organization of the Inuit-Metis or Southern Inuit of Labrador. I was a newspaper columnist, writing the biweekly *A Second Thought*, which appeared in the St. John's *Telegram* and the St. Anthony *Northern Pen*. I had interviewed the LMN's president, Todd Russell, for one of my columns. The Metis, as they were mostly called then, were protesting the granting of an outfitters license to an affluent Newfoundland businessman on the Eagle River, a salmon-rich stream of water that was sacred to Indigenous people. The Inuit-Metis wanted the license revoked and government funding provided to establish an Inuit-Metis Cultural Centre on the river. Inuit-Metis elders had been arrested for occupying the site and the RCMP had claimed



someone had taken shots at one of their helicopters. (The police later apologized, admitting this was a fabrication.)

The story of the Eagle River was a classic tale of New World colonialism, taking place right here in Newfoundland where there was and remains a blanket of silence about settler culpability. In Newfoundland, there is a cultural emphasis on sameness and a minimization of differences. These features are rooted in the need to avoid conflict as cooperation was essential for survival. People lived in small coves dispersed along an 11,000 mile coastline with a harsh climate and unyielding soil, very unlike the arable land of Southern England and Ireland, from where many of the settlers came. Extended families fished together throughout the long summer; this meant that women had to live with the knowledge that they could lose their husbands, sons, and fathers in a sudden storm. A kind of “we’re all in it together” notion was woven into the settler culture. But this is not the experience of history, of everyone who calls the island or Labrador home.

For the LMN, I would be doing research on Indigenous knowledge and liaising with the coastal communities on the NATO low-level military flying that was being conducted from the air base at Goose Bay. The international struggle against the thousands of annual sorties by German, British and Italian pilots by the Innu is well-known. It culminated in Innu occupations of the runways and the arrests and imprisonment of their leaders. The Inuit-Metis, however, had mixed feelings about low-level flying. I would sort through all this and work with the Innu, the Labrador Inuit of the North Coast, scientists, and military representatives, all of whom made up the new Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research.

I wrote in my column that the LMN’s protest on the Eagle River would go down in history as the awakening of the Labrador Inuit-Metis. It was also an awakening for me as a person of Indigenous descent. I had been raised in St. John’s, the island’s capital city in the 1970s, my father’s family having been refugees from the weak rural economy. In terms of identity inculcation, the schooling of Newfoundlanders of my generation featured pan-North Americanism but we did study European history and we had to sign a petition congratulating Queen Elizabeth II on her 25th jubilee. Newfoundland celebrated the 25th anniversary of its union with Canada around the same time and I vaguely remember a song we were taught in honour of this occasion. We had foggy ideas about our ancestors having come over from Ireland and England a long time ago. We learned – erroneously -- that the Mi’kmaq were brought over from Nova Scotia by the French to kill off the Beothuk, who were much lamented. There were “no Indians left on the island” but there were in Saskatchewan and, in grade six, some of them became our pen-pals.<sup>1</sup>

It was confusing because I knew I was part Mi’kmaq. But I didn’t know a lot about it and can’t recall verbalizing it in school. This might be because I knew that Mi’kmaq wasn’t a “good” thing to be. This awareness began when my family was on a South Coast beach when my younger and very dark-skinned brother was called a “jackatar.” The derogatory nature of the word was obvious but I did not understand its meaning and my father was reluctant to tell me. Finally, he said, “It’s someone from the West Coast of the island.” Genetically, I soon learned, we were jackatars: people of mixed Mi’kmaq and French descent, most of whom did indeed live on the island’s West Coast. Now everything else made sense and the unspoken was exposed and given meaning: the long black plaits of my great-aunt Rachel, the “Indian” slurs that people in my father’s home

community made about my great-uncle, the chocolate eyes of my brother, our inky hair colour, that mysterious sense of shame that was already part of our fibre as children.

Indeed, as I intuited as a child, Mi'kmaq social identity was a negative experience. Acting Chief Ellie Edmonds reported, "As a young child I recall being made fun of and called a 'savage' because we were Mi'kmaq" (Federation of Newfoundland Indians, n.d., ca 2006; <http://qalipu.ca/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/2011sept-Elder-Stories.pdf>). Mi'kmaq responded to the stigma surrounding them by hiding their ethnicity as best they could (Federation of Newfoundland Indians, n.d., ca 2006; <http://qalipu.ca/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/2011sept-Elder-Stories.pdf>). Mi'kmaq parents found that denial of Indigenous ancestry was the most effective way to protect Mi'kmaq children and secure what employment was available, although even these drastic strategies did not always work at the paper mills in Corner Brook and Grand Falls.

As a coping mechanism, secrecy became pervasive. Mi'kmaq woman Annie Randall said, "One of the greatest kept secrets in Newfoundland history is that there are Indians in Newfoundland" (Federation of Newfoundland Indians, n.d., ca 2006; <http://qalipu.ca/site/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/2011sept-Elder-Stories.pdf>). This strategy extended to Indigenous people throughout North America and beyond. A Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq explained:

When I was growing up, there was so much discrimination; you didn't dare mention the word Micmac. I never told a soul. My husband died and he didn't even know who I was. I even changed my name so nobody would know (Berry, 1999, pp. 17-18).

Another Indigenous informant described the pervasive sense of shame he felt while growing up, with the result that "I didn't teach my children to be proud. Now my oldest son won't admit his Native ancestry. I lost that" (1999, p. 18). For many Mi'kmaq social identity was eroded and a sense of attachment to the Mi'kmaq nation severed.

By the time I began my work with the LMN, my great-aunt Rachel, an expert in Mi'kmaq medicine, was dead. My grandmother, Angela, who was of English stock but knew every obscure branch of our family tree was long dead. So was my father who had researched his family history. But now, my work with the LMN gave me a route to the semi-hidden Indigenous side of my ancestry. I felt a sense of loss because my Mi'kmaq ancestors were the people who tied me to the land I lived on. My European ancestors had left their homelands and I hardly knew the places they came from.

Many of the European ancestors of the Inuit-Metis had come from the British Isles but agricultural skills would not keep them alive in Labrador. They had to become Inuit, like the women they married. They had to learn to hunt caribou, build sod huts, trap salmon in nets, drive dog teams, and kill seals on ice pans. Their children spoke English mostly and many learned to read from family Bibles but they lived Inuit lives and married each other. These social and economic adaptations led to the development of an Inuit-Metis culture, with its emphasis on pragmatism, independence, and sharing. This culture is eloquently documented in the writings of Lydia Campbell, writing in the 1890s, and, in the 1970s, by Elizabeth Goudie, the author of *Woman of Labrador*. Meanwhile, a scan through the two centuries of literature in which Campbell and

Goudie's people appear, reveals that they were known as "breeds", "half-breeds", "Natives", "Eskimos", and "settlers", depending on the writer, the time and the place.

Like the Mi'kmaq (and so many other Fourth World peoples), many of the Inuit-Metis denied or hid their Indigenous ancestry, as best they could. At least that is one way to look at it. In the oft-repeated words of LMN President Todd Russell, they "didn't shout it from the rooftops because [we] didn't have to. Now we do." In other words, as industrial development proceeded in Labrador, beginning with World War II, they became politicized with their politicization focused on their Indigenous identity. Working with them, I began to speak openly of my own mixed European-Indigenous heritage, feeling for the first time that I had a right to this heritage. I allowed myself to feel the loss of it and to try to make up for it through learning and reclamation.

For the LMN, President Russell and I traveled the coast in a small open boat; alongside us were schools of porpoises (a traditional Inuit-Metis food). I interviewed elders from Paradise River, Domino, Square Islands (a summer fishing station), Charlottetown, William's Harbour, St. Lewis, Mary's Harbour, and Cartwright. Their stories reflected Inuit-Metis land-use and occupancy; they told of tracking animals for food and being able to tell where the animals were. They also told of making gear to catch fish and moving inland in winter into the woods, the Indigenous practice of seasonal transhumance. They recalled hungry nights especially in spring, harvesting and steeping bog bean for the sick, picking "puff plants" to ease babies' diaper rash and so on. These are all Indigenous practices, demonstrating deep knowledge and longstanding tenure, as well as an Indigenous world-view that has remained largely intact in the digital era. I began to see my own relatives in their stories; my stories and theirs began to collapse. I told this to the elders, who were interested; because of the commonalities, it had meaning for them. We realized simultaneously and together that much of the Indigenous experience is universal: coping mechanisms and strategies, the sense of loss, the commitment to culture, especially cultural values, and cultural persistence, even in the face of massive social, economic, and technological change.

The work with the Labrador Metis Nation was, for me, the beginning of many research and related projects with and for Indigenous organizations and governments. These projects focused on land claims, and health and education policy. I was a member of LMN's land claims team and did land claims research planning for the Migmag Mawiomí Secretariat of Quebec. Through this encounter I learned of the striking parallels between the histories of the Quebec Migmag and the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq. The Quebec Government's position was that the Migmag were brought over from New Brunswick—after the French settlers had arrived and were established. This position mirrors the Government of Newfoundland position, which was first articulated by Premier Brian Peckford who was quoted in the St. John's *Evening Telegram* in 1987 as saying, "The Micmac people were no more aboriginal to the island of Newfoundland than were the Peckfords, who came here in 1791" (Jason Sylvester Benwah, Mi'kmaq History and People, [http://www.benoitfirstnation.ca/mikmaw\\_article35\\_december.html](http://www.benoitfirstnation.ca/mikmaw_article35_december.html)). This position is well integrated into Quebec settler mythology, entrenching settlers' sense of entitlement to land ownership. It frames the settlers as the only legitimate inheritors of the land and the First Nations people as outsiders and interlopers, effectively negating their Aboriginal land rights.

After Labrador, I worked with the Six Nations of the Grand River on health policy and was on the reserve the day the last Tuscarora speaker died. The loss of language that is pervasive in Indigenous Canada is rooted in many factors, including residential schooling, church missionizing

and changes in communications technology. In an officially bilingual country, Indigenous language loss is invisible, even to Indigenous people, who might find it too painful to deal with. The Mi'kmaq language, which contains a vast vocabulary and is soft to the ear (*wela'lin* means thank you, for instance), is almost extinct in Newfoundland.

In Nova Scotia, my research for Acadia First Nation brought me together with people who had been uprooted from their homes in a 1950s government effort to centralize them. There were similar resettlement programs in this province which, I believe, affected Indigenous people disproportionately. I worked with Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq who had been kidnapped as children – some as young as five years old – and placed in residential schools. There they would suffer multiple losses from language to sexual abuse, the repercussions of which continue to be felt through Indigenous families and communities across Canada. Some of these people modelled how to cope with loss, reclaim cultural identities, and cultivate resilience.

I worked on education policy in the Inuit communities of Labrador's coast and was there the day the Nunatsiavut Government was created in spite of the effects of residential schools, forced resettlement, and the near erasure of Inuktitut. The Nunatsiavut Government remains a living example of cultural survival and adaptation. As with any government born of colonial processes, the Nunatsiavut Government resulted from a flawed land claim settlement. But the very fact of the Nunatsiavut Government made people proud -- and no longer ashamed-- to be Inuit, which is significant, given colonial history. In the Innu communities I saw how colonial policies, including those related to education, continue to try and invalidate Innu world-views and ideas. The school system, for instance, was an important tool in forcing the Innu to become sedentary, settling in villages year-round and almost eliminating *nutshimit*, spring and fall trips to the country: home. But few societies are as resilient as that of the Innu. Innu-eimun, the language of the Innu, remains the first language of virtually all the Mushuau Innu, for instance. This is almost a unique situation in Canada where less than a handful of Indigenous languages are healthy.

Cultural identity is complex, particularly in the case of Indigenous and other racialized cultural identities. Examining a positive shift in the Black experience in the United States, Cross (1978) proposed four stages of racial identity: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization, which he correlated to self-esteem. These stages were tested with African-Americans and not with the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, who have been the subject of few academic studies (Parham and Helms, 1985). In spite of this, the concept of cultural identity as a process, as suggested by Cross, usefully frames 'racial' or cultural identity as shifting, moving and changing. As Rockquemore and Brunsma (2002) assert, “ ‘racial identity’ is not a matter of individual choice” but the result of “constrained structural parameters” (p. 352). Confronted with persistent racism, the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq were forced into a pre-encounter phase, sometimes for generations, in which they compartmentalized their culture. More colloquially, this might be described as keeping it “at bay”.

Another typology was developed by James A. Banks (1976) around the same time. Banks' model, aimed at educators, included six stages. It is important to note that Banks himself is an African-American living in the modern day United States and he would have lived much of what he researches and writes about. During the first stage, ethnic psychological captivity, individuals have internalized the negative stereotypes aimed at them by the larger society. They feel shame. In the second stage, ethnic encapsulation, people feel defensive about their culture and threatened by the

dominant culture that surrounds them. In the colonial and post-colonial period, most Newfoundland Mi'kmaq would have been in one or both of these two stages. Today more people are in the third stage, ethnic identity clarification, in which they begin to reinforce their emerging cultural identity. People may or may not progress to the other stages: biethnicity (a strong sense of one's own culture and an understanding of others), multiculturalism and reflective nationalism, and, finally, globalism and global competency.

In his study of Indigenous cultural identity in Canada, Berry (1999) acknowledges how Indigenous identity is compromised (as African-American identity is in the United States). Indigenous people might choose to attach to or detach from an Indigenous group, feel positive or negative about being Indigenous, and conceal or demonstrate one's Indigenous identity (Berry, 1999). These choices are determined, at least to a degree, by external social factors, such as enduring racism and discrimination: historically, the Roman Catholic Church's active discouragement of the Mi'kmaq language and, latterly, accusations of inauthenticity and fraudulence in response to settlers' perceptions of Indigenous privilege. Berry describes something of the Indigenous experience in post-colonial Canada; "many (Indigenous people) are 'conflicted' or inconsistent in the sense that individuals don't know who they really are, or they have incompatible ideas and feelings about themselves" (p.6).

The stages described by Cross (1978) and the choices identified by Berry (1999) are not discrete and are not part of a linear progression. Mohawk artist Greg Staats alluded to this during his 2011 visit to Memorial University's Grenfell Campus. He advised members of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation to use their status cards to get tax exemptions in department stores "on a good day but not on a bad day" when negative reactions might hurt more. For Staats, choosing not to demonstrate cultural affiliation, even if it meant not exercising Indigenous treaty rights, was part of self-care. In the long term, Staats implied, self-care was important to the preservation of Indigenous cultural identities.

To answer a question posed by the editors of this journal, what traits was I now bringing out of hiding and into the light? Shame was one, buoyed by a heightened sense of privacy and even secrecy. Slowly, the shame began to fall away, though not steadily because, as we've seen, external social factors continue to force choice-making about cultural identity on a regular basis. In this way, I was leaving Banks' (1976) ethnic psychological captivity and ethnic encapsulation stages and becoming immersed in the ethnic identity clarification stage. A trait I brought into the light was my deep attachment to the land, the South Coast barrens and Labrador tundra in particular, the places shorn of trees and people, the places where caribou quietly pad through moss. Another trait was my long-held inherent reaction against the individualism of North America. My father taught me that the community matters more than the individual and that our 'job', as it were, is to contribute to the community. For all my father's talk of education, there was little mention of what it could do for me as an individual. There was, instead, the Indigenous imperative to serve the community, not individual ambition. Today I see this same commitment in many of the Indigenous students. This commitment to community is counter-cultural in North America, much more so than at first glance and it bears some thought.

Bringing all this to the surface, where it belonged, put me out of step with my fellow Newfoundlanders and began an inevitable process of cultural disengagement, given the significant differences between the Newfoundland cultural lens and the Indigenous cultural lens. The



response to ecological problems is one example. Innu and Mi'kmaq do not frame hunting as a right that people have over animals. It is the animals' land (as well as the people's land). Animal behaviour is not problematized in Indigenous discourse. Thus, Innu and Mi'kmaq do not form organizations that call for moose or seal culls because these animals have "taken over the highways" or are "eating all our fish," as per Newfoundland public discourse. The Newfoundland cultural framework reflected Judeo-Christian concepts like man's dominion over animals. A surprisingly proportion of First Nations cultural mores persist, albeit in various and sometimes altered forms, despite the lengthy colonial period. Like many people of Indigenous descent, I learned these relational values from my father and my other older relatives; I just didn't identify or name them as Mi'kmaq but now I am able to do so.

I acknowledge that, because I do not look Indigenous, white privilege is part of my daily life and of my "story", to use Arnold's (2011, p. 3) term. As someone who is at least partly culturally disengaged, however, there is another layer in my experience. Daily, I face the challenge of living and working among Newfoundlanders, considering them to be my people, but feeling not quite one of them. Newfoundlanders frequently point to the alleged injustice of the 1960s Churchill Falls hydro-electric development and they usually assume the same rights to Muskrat Falls, which is square in the middle of Indigenous Labrador land. I see these issues through an Indigenous lens, not a Newfoundland/settler/colonial lens and thus my view is in direct opposition to the dominant views. I have to remind myself that this dominant view is people's long-held and largely unchallenged world-view and, most importantly, that it has meaning for them. Describing North American settler orientations such as this one, Chickasaw Elder and educator Eber Hampton said at the 2012 Indigenizing the Academy conference in British Columbia, "It's all they have". When these worldviews are informed by Judeo-Christian religious traditions, as is the case in the Newfoundland context, these views represent people's "best knowledge," Eber explained. This framework is a way to understand the dominant and potentially harmful world views of the larger society.

The Federation of Newfoundland Indians concluded a 40 year struggle for recognition with the formation of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation in 2011<sup>2</sup>. Today, young children, including my daughter, are growing up taking part in public Mi'kmaq events, including drumming and powwows. They seem to have only positive associations with their Mi'kmaq ancestry. Parents like me are making a point of passing on the few Mi'kmaq words we know. Among these words is *kitpu* or eagle; there are few words more important than this one because First Nations people believe the eagle is the bird whose wings touch the face of the Creator.

Thus, when external factors –in the form of racism, exclusion, and colonial government policies--conspire, identity is compromised and becomes inconsistent. In spite of the persistence of these factors, Indigenous identity and people's emotional attachment to their Indigenous identity has survived. As I gradually reclaim my own personal identity, I am doing this against the background of a claiming of a broader cultural identity. This story is hardly unique to this province as Indigenous identity all over the Fourth World has been eroded through similar patterns described here. But the collective reclamation represents a significant milestone for Newfoundland and Labrador and through it lies the potential for healing and liberation for us all.

<sup>1</sup> Besides the Indigenous history of the province, the French, Jewish, Lebanese, and Chinese history of Newfoundland were also absent. There was no notion of the province as a multicultural site. This has slowly begun to change; for instance, in 1987, Alison Kahn wrote *Listen While I Tell You: A Story of the Jews of St. Johns, Newfoundland*; this was followed in 1992 by Priscilla Doel's *Port o' call: Memories of the Portuguese White Fleet in St. John's, Newfoundland*; and, more recently, in provincial government policy, such as the Immigration Strategy.

<sup>2</sup> There are 24,000 members of the band. Despite media reports of more than 100,000 applicants/members, the federal government virtually ceased admissions in 2012 with the result that a not insignificant number of legitimate applicants will be refused membership and thus, status under the *Indian Act*. Again, this division of nations into status and non-status Indians is a familiar story across Canada.

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## **Chapter 5: The Black Days of Bear Markets: Defending a Democratic Conception of Higher Education**

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### **Abstract**

This article examines the promise of critical education in the contemporary era. It asks whether careerist or corporatist training models of university education are premised on the untenable assumption that educational neutrality is possible. It suggests that we reaffirm the role of the university as an autonomous, democratic, learning community and begin to see the need for a critical citizenship model of “higher” education. A central part of this equation is the need to reconceptualize tenure, not simply as a form of autonomy from external constraint, but, as a fiduciary obligation to democratic principles and communities.

### **Introduction: The Cost of Freedom?**

As a young Ph.D. candidate, I was very troubled to read a recent Globe and Mail article entitled “Black Days for Those Dreaming of the Ivory Tower” (Church, 2009).<sup>1</sup> Though, in many respects informative, the piece exemplified a perspective which is the result of a public haunted by the interminable spectre of their own expendability. In my mind, it embodies the threat posed by two distinct but interrelated conceptualizations of university education: namely, a corporate training model and a “professional” careerist model. In some ways, both forms of university education make the mistake of assuming that democracy, like the free market, can continue to flourish on the fractured bedrock of easy choices. For too many students and teachers, democracy is a kind of theatre backdrop, there to provide a place for us to get on with the scripted action of getting ahead in the world.

Although the democratic conception of education is often associated with a naïve idealism, I want to emphasize its utility and its importance to the university as a progressive, socially responsive institution. In particular, the writings of critical educators such as John Dewey (1944), and, more recently, Nel Noddings (2006), Michael Apple (2003; 2004) and Henry Giroux (2004; 2005; 2006), stress the need to define collective forms of self governance which have their basis in a critical conception of an educated, informed citizenry. Towards such an aim, the university has an affirmative duty to balance public goods with a sense of the importance of individual autonomy. Starting with the assumption that these lessons have key implications for teacher educators uniquely positioned in relation to atrophying public spheres, I want to argue for the inevitability of ideological positioning, as well as, the futility of somehow attempting to place ideology above practical politics. The deteriorating state of democracy in the contemporary western world, the polarization of global society and the faltering economy are interconnected, deeply complex, problems. The primary educational issue, seen in such a context, is not whether the university will become a site of more effective post industrial training, but whether it will



continue to act as an incubator for democratic values which themselves shape the direction of markets and governments.

How, then, can we as educators and citizens help cultivate democratic forms of political organization uniquely responsive to a broad array of problem solving approaches? For the critical educator, the problem is one of producing citizens who are both democratically minded and productive as opposed to acting as the simple pawns in partisan power plays or the neglected wards of self indulgent elites. In the words of Bill Readings (1996) “the University is becoming a different kind of institution, one that is no longer linked to the destiny of the nation-state by virtue of its role as producer, protector and inculcator of an idea of national culture” (Readings, 1996, p. 3). If Readings (1996) is right, the idea of the university as a democratic cultural inheritance can help us bridge this difficult time of economic, political and moral crisis by protecting democratic values even as the nation state and the civil protections it affords are assailed, both from inside and without.

### **The Marketplace in Ruins: Making Sense of the Prospects for Democracy In A World of Failing States**

Much contemporary media commentary, like Church’s (2009) *Globe* piece, seems to ignore the possibility that education is anything more than a form of training which takes its meaning from the “rational” marketplace. In such a system, the value of university training is to help educational consumers find higher paying, status enhancing, jobs. Since education is a demand driven activity, educational success is about the degree of congruence found between educational training and the market. “Good” higher education is education which enables students to achieve a good fit by remaining “mobile” and “flexible”. Competition drives and structures educational systems for the better, university education included.

However, despite the importance of democratic education, the seriousness of today’s economic challenges for new university graduates should not be understated. As Church (2009) points out, the past decade was characterized by predictions of a dire shortage of academic workers, driving dramatically increasing graduate school enrollments. And yet, suddenly, as the economic system began its recent precipitous decline, the threat of redundancy once again reared its ugly head for contemporary academic “knowledge workers”.

What are we to make of such a sudden reversal of fortunes in a time when nation states are incongruously charged with the task of “bailing out” the very corporations which sought to avoid their “oppressive” taxation structures? Ironically the globalization entrenched by multi-lateral trade agreements regarding intellectual property rights, agriculture, services, and barriers to trade (such as the *World Trade Organization Agreement*) is premised on an undemocratic delegation of sovereignty by nation states to transnational regulatory bodies. A key aim of these treaties is the removal of barriers to trade and international finance through unfair competitive advantage. In practice this has also meant a massive reduction in the social function of nation states through the “rationalization” of the state’s public functions.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, the new global citizen is often one who does not enjoy the more robust guarantees provided by constitutional freedoms and rights. Clearly, in an age of perennial outsourcing we

have yet to fully appreciate the impact of a form of “progress” which downsizes our libertarian rights at the same time it places each of us at the mercy of a ruthlessly efficient (or indifferent) global marketplace. Unfortunately, forgetting that fundamental rights have their historical genesis in social struggle makes such an authoritarian future increasingly likely. Failing to recognize the fact that inherently rights are not defined solely in terms of utilitarian considerations, is a lesson often erased by a creeping cultural amnesia.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the contemporary crisis pedagogy often means that what Naomi Klein (2007) has termed “disaster capitalism” takes advantage of mass ignorance and confusion in times of crisis to effect hegemonic agendas. As media coverage of mass protests has shown, dominant cultures recognize the threat inherent in grassroots democratic movements and often take pains to emphasize the negative aspects of popular action. Such corporate mass media re-education has also prevented incidents such as the 2007 exposure of provocateurs at the Montebello summit from being appreciated for what they are: disturbing examples of the erosion of fundamental democratic rights under the pretence of collective security. Somehow we have forgotten that affording those we disagree with or feel threatened by the right to speak, march, or protest is at the heart of the rationale underpinning fundamental democratic rights. Somewhere along the line, radical protest has come to be the prerogative of a faithful few, pacing sallow faced, within the gloomy confines of walled, free speech zones.

Perhaps we need to reconceptualize our notions of success to realize the relevance of public goods? Here, at least, have the hard earned lessons of the past decade impressed upon us the fact that individual autonomy, like the environment, may be another such public good worthy of careful public attention? How does the fact that we live and work in a democracy influence our vocation as academics, citizens and teachers?

To answer these questions, we first need to consider what it is that makes a democracy distinct from other forms of social organization. As a state sponsored activity, education is fundamentally a social process, and, as such, necessarily presupposes some conception of the desired formulation of society and the interaction of its identifiable constituent groups. As such, not only is educational neutrality impossible but any pretense to such a disinterestedness is, at best, disingenuous (deCastell, 2004; Fish, 1994). As Dewey (2005) puts it “the two points selected by which to measure the worth of a form of social life are the extent in which the interests of a group are shared by all its members, and the fullness of freedom with which it interacts with other groups” (Dewey, 2005, p. 60). Democratic education, or what Dewey (2005) terms the “Democratic Ideal”, always entails the need to balance socialization with freedom (Dewey, 2005, p. 52).<sup>4</sup>

Democracy then, tends to broaden notions of the “common interest” used to inform the collective activity of social governance, at the same time as it minimizes public forms of official interference. Thus, democratic education requires us to consider, not only the nature of interests it promotes, but also, the types of barriers which it may legitimately impose upon individuals and groups. In Dewey’s mind, it is as false to suppose that democracy should not be responsive to the needs of society as it is to define the needs of society narrowly in accordance with the privileged needs of any one dominant group.

Dewey's social vision, however, is not furthered by educational aims and values which blissfully equate pragmatic and moral worth with professional norms, a practice which often confuses the vocation of the educator with that of the bureaucrat (Simon, 1996). In this case, the key virtue is obedience to institutional norms as the primary goal is professional recognition or advancement achieved in accordance with processes such as peer review: the ground rules set out by the professional meritocracy. Within the contemporary academy this tendency is reflected in the pervasive near ascetic notion of the academic as expert, as universities are popularly portrayed as the biding places of technicians whose work is, by and large, characterized by a greater degree of autonomy than in the private sector.

The problem with this model is that the line between corporate influence and academic autonomy is becoming blurred, as research agendas, at least in the broad sense, are increasingly influenced by large corporations in pharmaceutical, defence, and high tech industries (Fink, 2008). The key goal of the academic worker in this framework is profitable innovation. Through funding regimes and the disposition of intellectual property rights, autonomy becomes increasingly subject to utilitarian considerations. As the Canadian Association of University Teachers has recently pointed out this is especially evident in the case of the 2009 budget, which, not only reduces research funding for Canada's three major research institutes (SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR) by some 5% or \$ 148 million over three years, but also takes the disturbing step of tying funding to very particular aims (CAUT Bulletin, 2009). A recent article in the University Association newsletter describes some of the most egregious examples of political interference:

The 2009 budget...provides \$87.5 million for new Canada Graduate Scholarships over the next three years, but specifies that 'scholarships granted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council will be focused on business-related degrees.' The budget also stipulates that the bulk of infrastructure money given to the Canada Foundation for Innovation is for future priority projects identified by the Minister of Industry (albeit in 'consultation' with the foundation). And, instead of allowing the peer-review process to determine which research centres are funded, the budget allocates \$50 million to the Institute for Quantum Computing in Waterloo for a new research facility 'that will contribute to achieving the goals of the Government's science and technology strategy.' (CAUT Bulletin, April 2009, p. 1)

In an open letter to the prime minister dated February 12, 2009 the CAUT Executive further describes the recent history of government interference in Canadian research institutions and universities:

Compounding the problem are attempts to direct what research is done. This is not a new issue. The 2008 federal budget stipulated that increased funding for NSERC could only be spent on research in the automotive, manufacturing, forestry and fishing sectors – leaving no opportunity for the majority of Canada's biologists, chemists and physicists. SSHRC was limited to spending its new funding in two areas – researching the impact of environmental changes on Canadians and examining economic development needs in northern communities. Important as these are, it was a narrow directive to apply to the only council

responsible for funding Canada's research in philosophy, history, criminology, anthropology, drama, literature and other humanities and social sciences. This followed the 2007 budget, which restricted all new SSHRC funding to research in management, business and finance, meaning there was no new funding for the majority of Canada's scholars in the social sciences and humanities. (CAUT Bulletin, February 12, 2009)

While we all want to ensure that the proverbial trains run on time, what are the social costs of such blatant forms of political interference? All too often, unfortunately, public problems have been defined in terms which require radical, top down solutions and unquestioning adherence to the dictates of a radical right conception of governance.

In many respects such an elitism relies upon a form of public pedagogy that justifies or acclimatizes populations to large scale, often disadvantageous, structural changes. Recently, this authoritarian prerogative of the knowing expert was evident in the way the late Nobel Prize winning economist and Chicago School luminary, Milton Friedman and his acolytes, saw the Katrina disaster as a unique opportunity to reform the public educational system, by using New Orleans as a mass test case of sorts for private charter schools. In Friedman's words:

Most New Orleans schools are in ruin...as are the homes of children who have attended the. The children are now scattered all over the country. This is a tragedy. It is also an opportunity to radically reform the educational system. (Friedman in Klein, 2007, p. 5)

Friedman's ideologically driven opportunism might equally apply to the contemporary state of the university in the wake of the crisis created by the end of Cold War funding, and the norming of right wing authoritarian values. Without wishing to be alarmist, it is worth noting that Germany in the decade leading up to the war saw similar economic and security related fears, as it imagined itself to be assailed by hidden foreign enemies – a crisis cumulating in the far reaching Reichstag Fire Decree of 1933 which effectively placed Germany under one party rule. This may seem like a far fetched example, but, given what is at stake, I think that the specter of what Giroux has termed "proto fascism" is at least as worthy of attention as the absurd figure of the shadowy, cave dwelling terrorist (Giroux, 2004; 2005).

The War on Terror has no doubt impressed upon us the need for all of us to be continually vigilant against the ubiquitous, unseen threat of the state's powerful and unprincipled enemies. Perhaps in some way this is a shadow of another form of threat, equally pernicious and equally dangerous to the integrity and survival of our lives and our form of governance as we know it – the perennial, often unseen, threat of authoritarianism. Nietzsche's famous dictum "[w]hoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster" might equally apply in the contemporary world to the dangers inherent in trading security for liberty (Nietzsche, 2000, p. 297). Freedom, apparently, is one "good" which globalism cannot seem to mass produce more efficiently. In such a context, careerism or corporatism appear as equal parts cowardice and short sighted self indulgence, in their largely unchecked proliferation, and form an historical indictment of sorts on the current generation.

In an age of austerity how do we deal with the contradiction posed by taxpayer sponsored bailouts for the wealthy, irresponsible purveyors of exotic, dubious financial instruments? In many cases our democracy has become hostage to a reductive, sensationalist infotainment industry which has, by in large, removed any vestige of an informed, critical, public sphere. All too often the popular will is mesmerized by a narrowly defined conception of patriotism which can be seen as vacuous at best. Indeed, Ann Coulter's (2005) anger at Ward Churchill's questioning of the hijackers' motivations for the 911 attacks is a case in point. Coulter (2005), in characteristic bombastic fashion, uses the Churchill "incident" to question the institutional norms and values which safeguard tenured speech:

The whole idea behind free speech is that in a marketplace of ideas, the truth will prevail. But liberals believe there is no such thing as truth and no idea can ever be false (unless it makes feminists cry, such as the idea that there are innate differences between men and women). Liberals are so enamored with the process of free speech that they have forgotten about the goal.

Faced with a professor who is a screaming lunatic, they retreat to, "Yes, but academic freedom, tenure, free speech, blah, blah," and their little liberal minds go into autopilot with all the slogans.

Why is it, again, that we are so committed to never, ever firing professors for their speech? Because we can't trust state officials to draw any lines at all here? Because ... because ... because they might start with crackpots like Ward Churchill — but soon liberals would be endangered? Liberals don't think there is any conceivable line between them and Churchill? *Ipse dixit*. (Coulter, 2005)<sup>5</sup>

Coulter's (2005) vitriol glosses over the long history of struggle which created and sustained academic tenure in the west. Some examples include Bertrand Russell's ordeals at Cambridge, Lee Lorch and Chandler Davis under McCarthyism, as well as David Healy, Israel Halperin, Harry Crowe, Sunera Thobani (Turk & Manson, 2007); and, more recently, the University of South Florida for its firing of Sami al-Arian — an institution whose Board of Trustees, incidentally, has defined misconduct for even tenured professors as any "behaviour the university deems 'detrimental to the best interests of the university'" (Catano, 2003; Schrecker, 2006).

In most of these cases, the offensive, often "unpatriotic", nature of speech is deemed sufficient cause for discipline despite the traditional protections offered by academic freedom. In times of crisis, quite often, authorities close ranks around the guiding principles of security, order and the national interest, without remembering that the fabric of civil society is made up of those rights and principles which allow it to remain democratic. Regardless of the content of offensive speech, then, the independent thought which the university is intended to protect is premised upon the idea that the peace and order which governance is designed to protect are defined, even made possible, by the continued existence of fundamental rights. Order without democratic principles is, in short, tyranny.

Despite their rancorous tenor, then, there is a lesson to be learned from Coulter's (2005) comments. Firstly, they illustrate the importance of solidarity within academic ranks, around the

principle of academic freedom as well as through proactive professional associations (Fink, 2008, p 232). Secondly, despite the impertinent, insensitive, nature of Churchill's remarks, clearly the furor surrounding the issue was very much related to a broader and more systematic attempt to discredit the academic left (Giroux, 2006). As Cole (2007) notes, such institutional witch hunts are often rooted in a desire to reign in outspoken critics of corporatism and chill further dissent:

[this] Orwellian ploy—of calling intolerance 'tolerance'—must be seen in a broader context. There is a growing effort to pressure universities to monitor classroom discussion, create speech codes and, more generally, enable disgruntled students to savage professors who express ideas they find disagreeable. There is an effort to transmogrify speech that some people find offensive into a type of action that is punishable. (Cole in Giroux, 2006, p. 12)

Getting back to the educational question, what is wrong here? I want to argue that what is missing from many contemporary tertiary educational models is some sense of the university as an integral democratic institution, comprised of a self directing, autonomous learning community. This is the very public historical tradition of the university which is suffering a protracted, painful, demise. Unfortunately, negative views of university professors based on outdated stereotypes and a lack of understanding of the real nature of tenure and its very real limitations make defending academic freedom in the current political climate increasingly difficult (Schrecker, 2006, p. 6). In addition, the increasing numbers of sessional and adjunct faculty in many institutions along with the implementation of additional forms of review for even tenured professors raise further concerns (Fink, 2008, p. 230; Schrecker, 2006, p. 9). The reality is, then, that in the words of one commentator, "it makes little sense to talk about defending academic freedom without addressing the structural barriers to it" (Schrecker, 2006). In some ways, it seems, meritocracy raises interesting questions about the ways in which we define and defend our collective interests.

To what degree is the current crisis the result of a state of affairs wherein which "an empty self-referential discourse of excellence has replaced an ideology of national culture and citizenship as a source of university self-evaluation" (Fink, 2008, p. 231)? Despite the fact that all too often efforts to democratize public education end up becoming simply a form of apologetics for "more big government...dressed up in the language of fairness and balance" (Giroux, 2006, p. 20), university educators can take some direction from this century long public school tradition of social studies education which seeks to combine self exploration, career advancement and values exploration with the development of critical, probing, public orientated, minds. This, in part, is premised on the notion that a hallmark of democratic forms of governance is that they allow citizens to question the legitimacy of their norms and values since this very questioning allows not only for the exposure of error but also the exploration of fundamental democratic principles.

How does this compare with the forms of socialization which we find in the university system? In the case of contemporary "higher" education little credence is given to any form of intellectual work which does not advance one's prospect for either securing funding or career advancement. Primarily this means good marks, grants (increasingly influenced by corporate agendas), marketable theses and peer reviewed publications. The result is an educational system where



students have become simply compliant consumers, obedient career opportunists or withdrawn technicians. But, is it possible to instead create a college curriculum which “offer[s]...students the opportunity to learn within a culture of questioning and critical engagement.... the knowledge, values, skills, and social relations required for producing individual and social agents capable of addressing the political, economic, and social injustices that diminish the reality and promise of a substantive democracy” (Giroux, 2006, p. 2)?

As Giroux (2006) reminds us, all too often we fail to take the time to examine, or at least, to publicly discuss, the merits of the values and norms we are striving to measure up to. Seeing the university as a place secured by the institutional safeguard of tenure and maintaining a sense of its public mission are indispensable aims for all those concerned with keeping education democratic. Unfortunately, as a public good, it requires going beyond the corporate – careerist paradigm towards a view of education which is both progressive and proactive in its orientation. Perhaps the university itself is in need of a bailout? An infusion of ideas and people who see democracy itself as a training ground - a form of higher education with the university as one of its few beleaguered remaining refuges. A peer review of a different sort?

### **Conclusion: Those Who Fight Monsters.....**

As William Readings (1996) has astutely illustrated, when we question the aims and utility of the university as an institution “the analogy of production must itself be brought into question....[f]or what is at stake here is the extent to which the University as an institution participates in the capitalistic-bureaucratic system” (Readings, 1996, p. 163). While the erosion of tenure remains a key threat to the institutional integrity of the university can we defend it if the parameters of tenure are narrowly interpreted tenure as simply a contractual guarantee of financial security and creative independence? What I want to suggest is that the university, as a cultural phenomenon cannot continue to exist unless we come to see and define tenure not only as a form of freedom from constraint, but, also as essentially a type of fiduciary obligation. Rather than seeing tenure as a kind of privilege held by an elite minority of reclusive scholars, perhaps we should take pains to educate the public of the fact that “academic freedom at universities is built upon a compact between these critically important institutions and the larger society” (Cole, 2007, p. 195). That is, paradoxically, tenure, like democracy itself requires commitment to the institutional frameworks and values which enable it to exist.

While some may regard this as anathema, in many ways it is much akin to challenging the assumption that neutrality in the face of free choice is possible. But of course, neutrality itself is an active stance, a form of choice. In this case, while held individually, tenure and the academic freedom which it makes possible, are at their heart, a form of public good. As such each comes with a responsibility, at least to consider whether the status of tenure entails some form of professional responsibility to safeguard the university’s role in ensuring the ongoing viability of democracy. In contrast, the danger is that, in the words of Tierney (2004), “when tenure becomes a goal rather than a structure to preserve the goal, then we [will] have bastardized the meaning of academic life” (Tierney, 2004, p. 175). The self governing, responsible, democratic faculty is at the heart of this conception of academic freedom: an institutional grouping which provides a

much needed hedge against the creeping threats embodied by overbearing administrators, academic charlatans and meddlesome bureaucrats (Schrecker, 2006).

Very often, the university remains culturally positioned in relation to the tenuous balance between the demands of a militant populism or an elitist, authoritarian corporatism. As Giroux (2004; 2005; 2006) and others have pointed out, the function of the university as a vital, integral element of the public sphere is of inestimable value in an age of corporatized media and bureaucratized governing interests. The inevitable corollary of this position, of course, is the notion that a university education is much more than mere training or self serving careerism. Given this reality, rather than seeing the University as simply the physical locality for the transmission of inherited forms of knowledge or research into issues of contemporary relevance, we might come to see it as an inherited, transmissible set of cultural values (Giroux, 2006).

And yet, we live in a culture where democracy is being constantly assailed. If the intensification of teachers' work and the standardization of curriculum mean that public schools are being robbed of their democratic heritage, and, if the possibilities for local democracy within communities and labour movements are being simultaneously undermined, where does that leave us? While the internet does provide cause for optimism, it is increasingly being undermined by the twin threats of security concerns and mass consumerism. Given the current state of the public sphere, the university as a set of cultural practices, public and critical in their orientation, fulfills a vital role in democratic socialization. Because of the increasingly rapid erosion of democratic cultures, the reality of economic pressures and the expendability of many potential dissidents, tenured academics are uniquely positioned to exercise their independence in the fulfillment of what might most appropriately be characterized as a democratic, fiduciary duty.

Although many of us have been relieved to see a long awaited change in political climate are we at risk of losing sight of the hegemonic constellations of power which rest unchanged behind the masquerade of official partisanship? In some ways, the litmus test of positive change is not simply whether we are safer but, whether change has allowed us to maintain our most valued and vital democratic institutions. The idea that universities should simply exist as a type of handmaiden to commerce fails to see the value in its role as a purveyor of democratic ideals and values. Good government has its genesis in an informed, critical citizenry and the university plays a key role in ensuring that free, independent thinkers can contribute to an informed, vibrant, public sphere. Unfortunately, the opposite seems to be occurring as shallow political rhetoric and a democracy of mass consumption replaces any possibility for a resurgence of an accountable politics of grass roots engagement. Indeed, such a state of affairs brings to mind a particular passage from Lewis Carroll (1993):

'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less.'

'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you *can* make words mean different things.'

'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master - that's all. (Carroll, 1993, p. 223)



Will the ubiquitous forces of terror and the market ever allow us to once again be our own masters? I think not, unless we first learn to step through the distorted looking glass of the current age – one which tells us that we should forget the possibility of freedom, for the often illusory promise of a world ruled solely by the intractable gods of unbridled greed and wealth.

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## ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.globecampus.ca/in-the-news/article/black-days-for-those-dreaming-of-the-ivory-tower/>

2. With the obvious exception of defence and surveillance capacities.
3. Though Plato was no democrat by any stretch of the imagination, his “Socrates” provides a timely warning when he admonishes us to consider that “[t]his and no other is the root from which a tyrant springs; when he first appears above ground he is a protector” (*The Republic*, viii, 565).
4. “The two elements in our criterion both point to democracy. The first signifies not only more numerous and more varied points of shared common interest, but greater reliance upon the recognition of mutual interests as a factor in social control. The second means not only freer interaction between social groups (once isolated so far as intention could keep up a separation) but change in social habit—its continuous readjustment through meeting the new situations produced by varied intercourse. And these two traits are precisely what characterize the democratically constituted society” (Dewey, 2005, p. 52).
5. <http://www.anncoulter.com/cgi-local/article.cgi?article=42>

## **Chapter 6: Blue Collar Pedagogues: Democracy, “Vocational” Schooling and Antonio Gramsci’s Organic Intellectual**

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### **Abstract**

*This article argues for the utility of a public pedagogy centered in a Gramscian notion of the organic intellectual. Implications for technical and career-based schooling are explored. Critical pedagogy, more specifically, a border-crossing-civic literacy, is presented as a model for the transformation of vocational education. A special focus is placed upon the work of Michael Apple and Henry Giroux and their emphasis upon the interrelationship between education, culture and contested publics.*

### **Introduction: Pragmatism, Vocationalism and Critical Education**

Academic freedom is a well accepted aspect of university tenure and the university’s status as an independent knowledge producing community. However, within the college system the relationship between institutional function and critical thought is much less clear. The granting of collegiate degrees, the increasing prevalence of inter-institutional transfers and the vocational nature of professional training makes distinguishing the functions of higher educational institutions increasingly problematic (Grubb & Lazerson, 2005; Skolnik, 2003, pp. 9, 11). Moreover, given the social, symbolic and cultural capital associated with colleges and their close affiliation with working and middle classes, the conventional vocational model makes it increasingly difficult to outline the precise relationship between vocational training and civic education (Coben, 1998; Santoro, 2005; Lakes 2005; Lewis, 1998; Pinto, 2007; Grubb & Lazerson, 2005; Rehm, 1989, p. 111; Tarrant & Tarrant, 2004).

In contrast to a narrow technical conception of education and the familiar tripartite division of educational institutions into public, college and university systems, there are significant practical and theoretical insights to be offered by an educative model which incorporates “technical” knowledge into a broader public framework (Jarvis, 2008; Rehm, 1989; Lewis, 1998; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1996; Kincheloe 2004). Primarily, this means creating a form of critical vocational literacy in opposition to the “functional and socially reproductive [educative] model” which has conventionally mediated learning in the collegiate context (Pinto, 2007, p. 193). Such a model is intended to address the serious issues surrounding vocationalism’s relationship to class and race-based forms of inequality, as well as the difficulties it poses for broader efforts to resuscitate critical thinking skills among the broader populace and within post-secondary institutions (Rehm, 1989, p. 111).

In this regards, some impetus for a critical vocational model can be found in Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s conception of the organic intellectual, both in its original formulations, and as part of critical pedagogy’s contemporary notions of “public” and “transformative” intellectuals (Giroux, 1999; Apple 2003, 2004; McLaren, 2005; hooks, 1994, 2003). A key unifying theme – particularly as presented within the work of Michael Apple and Henry Giroux – is the notion of

democratic citizenship which provides a means of relating knowledge to the hegemonic mechanisms of cultural and economic reproduction. For universities and colleges alike, then, civic education provides the basis for recognizing the importance of critical publics and the exigencies of a critical, civically-minded pragmatism (Kincheloe, 2004).

Rather than taking solace in critical pedagogy's newfound status as a discipline finding increasing acceptance within the Academy, the present paper seeks to undertake a critical assessment of the field's theoretical inheritance as a means of determining the types of collaborative projects consistent with its democratic, egalitarian principles. Among the key presumptions which inform such a position are: i) the idea that contemporary democracy is in a state of deep, protracted crisis; ii) the belief that corporate culture has infused authoritarian principles throughout the entire educational spectrum, at the expense of the civic conception of education as a public good; and, iii) the contemporary militarization and commodification of the public sphere and popular culture which requires that those committed to "deep democracy" pose concrete strategies as a means of resuscitating the conventional linkage between an educated citizenry and robust democracy.

If autonomy is derived from communal forms of organization, then, what kinds of solidarity are possible for intellectuals seeking to forge critical alliances across institutions, work places and learning cultures? To what extent has vocational education become a force for conformity and constraint as opposed to being "about treating individuals as adults and educating them so that they may mature and develop as responsible persons playing their full part in the world" (Jarvis, 2008, p. 5). In light of such challenges, the present paper undertakes a tentative exploration of possibilities for enhancing the viability of contemporary democracy through cross-cultural and inter-institutional allegiances as a means of reconceptualizing education as a public good. A central aim is to foster collaborative, integrative approaches to the perennial problem of dealing with the discomfiting reality of "two worlds of schooling, partly overlapping, one preparing for college and the other for jobs" as we attempt to forge a more pragmatic and principled conception of education which is skeptical of arbitrary distinctions between the pragmatic and the political (Goodlad in Rehm, 1989, p. 109).

### **Antonio Gramsci: Hegemony and the Organic Intellectual**

Since knowledge is inherently social, a responsive comprehensive pedagogy requires that we consider the broader question of the integration of "technical control" and "intersubjective communication" in the areas of knowledge formation, application and transmission (Habermas, 1973, p. 8). In this vein, the work of Antonio Gramsci (1891 – 1937) is often taken up by those advocating a more democratic, far reaching critique of capital (Apple, 2003; 2004; Giroux, 1999; 2001; 2005; Kolakowski, 2005, p. 963).

From Sardinia, Gramsci was a journalist, writer and former leader of the Italian Communist Party (Kolakowski, 2005, pp. 964, 967, 965). Imprisoned by Mussolini's fascists in 1926, Gramsci spent the rest of his life completing a now famous series of posthumously published essays and fragments. Writing at the time of Italian modernization, Gramsci argued that seemingly progressive educational reforms of the Italian government were actually being used to marginalize the working classes and peasantry by denying them "rigorous" intellectual training (Giroux, 1999). Gramsci saw that rather than alleviating poverty, education (apart from

enhancing mobility for the select few) served hegemonic aims. As such, schooling served contradictory functions since it supported hegemonic class structures, and yet, the intellectual training it provided was necessary to realize the working classes' revolutionary potential (Holub, 1992, p. 154).

Refining common place distinctions among elements of the intelligentsia, Gramsci argued that there were two broad categories of intellectuals, namely: i) traditional intellectuals such as members of the clergy, scholars and teachers who served the status quo by allowing education to reproduce the existing social structures; and, ii) organic intellectuals whom every class produces “naturally” and who serves its interests. While these categories are fluid and interdependent, for Gramsci they provided some means of conceptualizing and understanding the role of the intelligentsia in the creation and contestation of hegemony (Coben, 1998, p. 214). As one of the first modern thinkers to appreciate the pedagogical implications of mass culture (Coben, 1998, p. 213; Gramsci, 1971; Giroux, 1999; Holub, 1992), Gramsci believed that the invaluable part of the latter type of intellectual activity was that it was fundamentally public in nature and thus was not confined to the parameters of existing *bourgeois* institutions. In contrast, Gramsci argued that members of the conventional intelligentsia, “mediate between the owners of the means of production and those who do not own and organize the means of production, those who sell their labour power to the owners” (Holub, 1992, pp. 164, 165). Since the state's power was in large part premised upon the consent of the governed, social change could be effected by public re-education through the collective efforts of a vanguard of reformist intellectuals.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, for Gramsci, understanding the ongoing “war of position” between oppressor and oppressed within society requires a critical examination of the ideological tendencies inherent in the commonsensical (Coben, 1998, p. 213). Within this process of cultural re-entrenchment, the function of the intellectual is to help the oppressed understand their own exploitative class positioning (Morgan, 1996; Kolakowski, 2005, p. 984). Accordingly, Gramsci argued, we should be reluctant to parse the practical and theoretical since “there is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 9). Worker and industrialist alike, then, represent the need for a critical synthesis of technical knowledge and a facility with social organization (Gramsci, 1971, p. 3).<sup>2</sup> For Gramsci, the modernization of Italian society held the implicit promise of a new type of organic intellectual: a “critical specialist [who] participates in specialized forms of production, distribution and exchange, while simultaneously purviewing the place of this form of production and distribution in a system of relations” (Holub, 1992, p. 168).

Consistent with such theoretical eclecticism, a key organizing principle of Gramsci's categorization is his belief that it is an error to look for “the criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore, the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 8). Despite the limited functions educational institutions purport to perform, their actual operation, Gramsci maintains, is inevitably historical and related to the surrounding structures of civil and political society (Gramsci, 1971, p. 9; Kolakowski, 2005, p. 969; Holub, 1992).

However, these structures evolve against the process of social struggle: namely, a kind of frontal war whereby competing hegemonic blocs vie for position. For Gramsci, although it uses both



repressive and ideological means, hegemony's primary mode of operation is pedagogical (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 10, 12; Giroux, 1999, p. 2; Holub, 1992, pp. 155, 156). Thus, socialist revolution must likewise proceed through an educative movement whereby the prevailing *doxa* of *bourgeois* society is replaced by a revolutionary ethos. Moving away from a cruder economic determinism, Gramsci emphasizes the importance of historical agency by which the oppressed contest the ideological mechanisms of cultural hegemony (Holub, 1992, p. 157).

Consequently, Gramsci believed that any pedagogy was inevitably political since it invariably effects the reproduction of capital and ideology or the revolutionary aims of the proletariat. Moreover, his unorthodox reading of Marx promotes a theory of power which is productive rather than repressive and which underscores the role of schooling in eroding individual autonomy through the creation of a false political consensus. As we shall see, far from being relegated to theoretical obscurity, these ideas play a formative influence upon critical pedagogy's engagements with official knowledge and popular culture.

### **Critical Pedagogy: Michael Apple, Henry Giroux & Gramsci's Organic Intellectual**

At the risk of overgeneralizing, in many respects critical pedagogy represents a synthesis of Marxist critique and progressive democratic thought. As a discipline concerned with both egalitarian and emancipatory ideals, critical pedagogy holds that rather than being tailored specifically to the demands of the workplace, education should promote the critical skills which are required for learners to become active, reflective, political participants (Tarrant & Tarrant, 2004, p. 115). Towards such an end contemporary progressive pedagogies have explored such issues as the ideological influence of mass media, the mass disparities of modern globalization and the commodification of popular culture.

In particular, such themes resonate within the work of Henry Giroux, a leading figure in contemporary critical pedagogy. A prolific author, Giroux, has been a forceful, critic of the authoritarian legacy of conservative, corporate influences in public education. More specifically he has integrated the insights of cultural studies and critical theory in developing a comprehensive theory of the pedagogical importance of culture (Doyle & Singh, 2006, pp. 1, 13, 34, 39).

Though remarkably eclectic in his influences, Giroux characterizes Gramsci as an important theoretical resource for those interested in "defending education as a public good and cultural pedagogy as central to any discourse of radical politics" (Giroux, 1999, p. 2). In particular, by emphasizing what he terms the "politics of culture", Giroux emphasizes Gramsci's belief that "every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship" (Gramsci in Giroux, 1999, p. 3). As a result, in the hands of Giroux, Gramsci's ideas regarding hegemony and the public intellectual become important tools for analyzing the specific mechanisms by which the right has outmaneuvered the left in inaugurating a "new authoritarianism" (Giroux, 2006). For Giroux, Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony requires an educative response which emphasizes the inter-relationship between culture and knowledge – power as a means of cultivating a critical, civic consciousness (Giroux, 2001, p. 197).

More specifically, from the standpoint of a transgressive critical pedagogy, Giroux argues that Gramsci's work has "broaden[ed] the conditions for the production of knowledge and the range



of sites through which learning for self determination can occur” (Giroux, 1999, p. 18). Giroux believes that such an emphasis is important since “it legitimates the call for progressives to create their own intellectuals and counter-public spheres both within and outside of traditional sites of learning as part of a broader effort to expand the sources of resistance and the dynamics of democratic struggle” (Giroux, 1999, p. 18).<sup>3</sup>

For Giroux, Gramsci’s focus on how ideology becomes embedded in commonsensical beliefs provides a means of decoding the historical, cultural and structural operations of power (Giroux, 2005, p. 163; Giroux, 2001, pp. 67, 151). However, more importantly, Giroux stresses Gramsci’s emphasis upon the fact that the success of hegemony itself is contingent upon the continued operation of competing, sometimes loosely constituted, historical blocs. Thus, unlike classical Marxism, Gramsci’s theory emphasizes the need to develop broad counter - hegemonic alliances as a means of fermenting a socialist reorganization of culture:

Gramsci’s theory of hegemony redefines the structuring principles that maintain relations between dominant and subordinate classes in the advanced capitalist societies. For Gramsci, the exercise of control by the ruling classes is characterized less by the excessive use of officially sanctioned force than it is through what he calls the struggle for hegemonic leadership. Hegemonic leadership refers to the struggle to win the consent of subordinated groups to the existing social order. In substituting hegemonic struggle for the concept of domination, Gramsci points to the complex ways in which consent is organized as part of an active pedagogical process on the terrain of everyday life. In Gramsci’s view such a process must work and rework the cultural and ideological terrain of subordinate groups in order to legitimate the interests and authority of the ruling bloc. (Giroux, 2005, p. 163)

Not surprisingly, the aforementioned link between hegemonic power and popular culture, becomes a formative influence upon Giroux’s emancipatory, “border crossing”, pedagogy. According to Giroux, “Gramsci...makes clear that pedagogy is the outcome of struggles over both the relations of meaning and institutional relations of power...” (Giroux, 1999, p. 14). Building on Marxist notions of ideology and hegemony, as well as Freirean *conscientization*, Giroux notes the importance of inter-disciplinary, transformative intellectuals in the struggle to contest and reclaim popular culture. Borrowing the insights of cultural studies, Giroux urges critical scholars to recognize that “by connecting the role of the intellectual to the formation of democratic public cultures educators can work to provide ethical and political referents for cultural workers who inhabit sites as diverse as the arts, religious institutions, schools, media, the workplace, and other spheres” (Giroux, 1998, p. 56).

In light of culture’s educative function, Giroux questions the wisdom of limiting transformative pedagogies to conventional institutional spaces, given the interdependence of knowledge and power and the limitations of an educational vision enthralled with a simple “performative” legitimacy (Lyotard, 1988). Drawing on the fields of cultural studies and critical theory, Giroux emphasizes the way critical pedagogy has become a comprehensive critique of modern institutional cultural practices and capital’s propensity to continually reinvent its own ideological positioning. In doing so, he, like other critical pedagogues, focuses on a “civics ...[informed by

an] appreciation of the diverse ways economic, political, and social forces shape lives and structure unequal power relations” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1996, p 72).

Though Giroux does take up many modernist libertarian themes, he is careful to note that, while early progressive educators have offered many important insights regarding the importance of civic education, they did not anticipate the extent of mass culture’s infiltration of everyday life, a relationship, which, for Giroux becomes increasingly important “as conservative policies move away from a politics of social investment to one of social containment [and] state services are hollowed out and reduced to their more repressive functions” (Giroux, 1999, p. 3). As a result, critical educators, Giroux insists, must endorse a form of “cultural literacy” which tries to help students understand the myriad intersections of knowledge and power within popular culture (Doyle & Singh, 2006). Unlike its conventional counterparts, for Giroux, a critical cultural literacy “provides the capacities, knowledge, skills, and social relations through which individuals recognize themselves as social and political agents” (Giroux in Doyle & Singh, 2006, p. 13).

However, Giroux’s approach is far from a simplistic acknowledgment of the contemporary relevance and pedagogical influence of mass culture. As part of a broader attempt to refine our practical ability to code and decode the complex workings of power within culture, Giroux differentiates between technical, hermeneutic and critical emancipatory forms of rationality and suggests that an effective response to ideological hegemony requires a form of citizenship training rooted in the latter (Giroux, 2001, p. 176). Unlike competing forms of literacy, such critical literacies are an indispensable means of exposing the adverse influence of oppressive ideological and social structures (Giroux, 2001). In contrast to schooling which is “distinct from education in that it takes place within institutions which serve the interests of the state”, such forms of critical literacy are fundamentally public and transformative in nature (Giroux, 2001, p. 241).

Applying Giroux’s analysis of education and culture, then, we see that vocational training must recognize the need for reflexivity as organic intellectuals of all stripes examine the ways in which authoritarian aims have come to dominate vocational training across the full range of contemporary schooling cultures. Giroux reminds us that viewing technical knowledge as scientific or value neutral ignores the function such training serves in ideological dissemination and social reproduction. As such, for Giroux, critical pedagogy must look towards the model of the transformative organic intellectual as well as the specific intellectual described by Foucault, who is keenly aware of the particular exigencies of particular lives, local histories and truth regimes (Coben, 1998, p. 215). Rather than being entirely dismissive of practical knowledge, Giroux reworks a more nuanced view of technical knowledge which he inherits from Gramsci:

For Gramsci, the learning of skills, discipline and rigor were not in and of themselves valuable. They were meaningful when seen as part of a broader project and performative politics, one that embraced authority in the service of social change, and culture as the terrain in which such authority became both the object of autocritique and the basis for social analysis and struggle. (Giroux, 1999, p. 15)

Confronting such realities, for Giroux—as for Gramsci— requires recognizing that critical literacy is a capacity which cuts across class lines as it fosters egalitarian and dynamic democratic cultures (Giroux, 2001). According to Giroux this requires that “pedagogical approaches do more than make learning context specific; they [need] to challenge the content of the established canon as well as point to the need to expand the range of cultural texts that inform what counts as ‘really useful knowledge’” (Giroux, 1998, p. 49). Thus, the distinction between technical and liberal education, as well as the notion that civic education should be excluded from practical educational outcomes, risks depoliticizing education and represents a substantial setback in the struggle to ensure the continued viability of “strong” democracy.

Despite his theoretical acuity, however, Giroux has been subject to criticism for his lack of attention to concrete classroom contexts; his difficult language; and, his failure to integrate esoteric critique and real life teaching practice (Gore, 1993). Although he is clear about Gramsci’s contributions to our understanding of a public critical pedagogy, Giroux does not emphasize the capacity of his pedagogy to provide a model for crossing borders—not only between disciplines—but also, across diverse (e.g., collegiate and professional) educational settings. Thus, despite the enormous influence of Giroux and his invaluable contribution to a more sophisticated understanding of popular culture, we might begin to ponder the relationship of culture to specific—sometimes neglected—sites of schooling. Taking Giroux and his analysis of Gramsci to inform our discussion, how can transformative intellectuals contextualize their own participation in the knowledge and socially reproductive practices which occur within “pragmatic”, technically orientated educational institutions?

In many respects, the work of Michael Apple, writing from a neo Marxist perspective, helps us to reformulate such questions in relation to the complex politics of official knowledge. If Giroux’s idea of culture as a text provides a basis for border crossing both within and between collegiate and university contexts, Apple’s work provides a much needed emphasis upon the ways in which cultural practices play out within specific historical, political, and socio-economic settings. Although not forgetting the broader pedagogical implications of culture, Apple acknowledges the need to examine the structural dynamics of public spaces as he attempts to define the tacit and formal limits of liberal ideals such as freedom and equality within democratic communities.

Primarily, Apple’s analysis is rooted in the idea of hegemony, which emphasizes the importance of political and economic factors without falling back into a reductive base-superstructure model. For Apple, examining an institution requires careful examination of both the micro-and macro-levels as its local effects and broader socio-economic function are assessed and compared. Apple maintains that Marxist critique requires careful critical analysis and “empirical” investigation alike, given that the alliances and outcomes fostered by ideology and capital are often unexpected, and, upon the surface, contradictory. What Apple terms a relational analysis, then, is sensitive to cultural hegemony but recognizes that hegemonic relationships are embodied in specific economic and political practices:

This process of explanation can be accomplished in two ways. One can explain the conditions of existence of X within an institution, focusing 'internally' on what supports or contradicts action in the immediate environment in which this X is found. Or, as I would like to do....one can focus on the relationship between this

X and the 'external' modes of production and ideological and economic forces in which X is embedded. My focus, hence, will be structural. It will seek to uncover the connections between the creation and imputation of such things as certain kinds of deviance in schools and the unequal economic and cultural conditions that might give a number of the reasons for the existence of these kinds of conditions in these institutions. This is not to deny the importance of internalistic appraisals of schooling; nor is it to assume the structural analysis of school life... can explain everything. In fact micro-social descriptions of our common-sense practices are essential for those who want to take a macroeconomic perspective, if only to make us remember what is brought out in the work of Gramsci and Williams. As they continually remind us, ideological hegemony, as a part of the actual workings of control, is not something one sees only on the level of macro-social behaviour and economic relations; nor is it something that resides merely at the top of our heads, so to speak. Instead, hegemony is constituted by our very day to day practices. It is our whole assemblage of commonsense meanings and actions that make up the social world as we know it, a world in which the internal curricular, teaching, and evaluative characteristics of educational institutions partake. (Apple, 1995, pp. 36, 37)"

Through his emphasis upon the political role of educational institutions in effecting hegemony, Apple's work provides a comprehensive account of formal and hidden curricula and their respective influence upon social reproduction and individual mobility. In some sense, this requires us to distinguish between "substantive" knowledge, curricular practices and the state power which serves to legitimize select canons of cultural practice. Refining our understanding of the relationship between power and knowledge, Apple argues that the politics of official knowledge (that is, what knowledge is selected as being important or worthwhile and how it is taught) is fraught with social implications as educational institutions mediate human capital through their productive and allocative functions (Apple, 1995, p. 39).

Primarily, though, understanding official knowledge involves a consideration of global capital and its relation to the state as a complex site of struggle that forms and expands through conflict (McLaren, 2005; Foucault, 1980, p. 125; Pozo, 2007). Thus, within the context of the contemporary conservative modernization, a key role for the state is the "socialization of costs and the privatization of profits" (Apple, 1995, p. 49). This means that calls to keep schooling focused on the "practical" aspects of knowledge ignores the significant social investments made by the state in the very institutional structures which powerful hegemonic interests seem intent upon depoliticizing. Insisting on the efficiency of markets ignores the complex ways in which state power has been used to promote conservative values, and to discipline competing emancipatory ideals. In light of such structural realities, Apple cautions that dialogue alone cannot ensure effective praxis since dialogue in the absence of ideological critique can lead to hegemonic retrenchment. As he notes, "when people are (sometimes rightly) dissatisfied both with the ways the state is organized and the roles it establishes for them, the manner in which they interpret their dissatisfaction is often based on the ideologies which circulate most powerfully in a society" (Apple, 2003, p. 13).

More pertinent, perhaps, from a vocational perspective, is Apple's position that technical knowledge reflects the ways in which schooling functions to effect social stratification and to

meet the demands of capital. Specifically, Apple contends that – all pretences of equality aside – schooling is indifferent to the distribution of technical knowledge provided that it is able to meet the demands of capital. However, this function must also be seen within the larger context of the relationship between capital, labour and a managerial class of technocrats and experts. According to Apple, this sometimes creates tension between competing ideological and economic functions since “the school does not only respond to the ‘needs of capital’, but must also preserve its own legitimacy to its other clientele” (Apple, 1995, p. 50). Indeed, understanding this tension requires assessing the “specific conjunctures of interests between the requirements of industry in the production of cultural capital and the interests of a large portion of the new petty bourgeoisie in their own mobility” (Apple, 1995, p. 50).

For Apple, the stratification of knowledge into liberal and vocational streams, then, ensures a concomitant hierarchical social ordering. And yet, because the educational system presents itself as meritocratic, schooling is seen as fair, and impartial even as students internalize the individualistic, competitive values vital to exploitative capitalist cultures (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1996, p. 81). Predominantly, then, the ideological aim of the conservative modernization is dependent upon a protracted political struggle aimed at “redefining the borders between public and private.....[and] demonstrating how a people’s common sense can be shifted in conservative directions during a time of economic and ideological crisis” (Apple in Zipin, 2003, p. 114).

Thus, given that the enacted curriculum reinforces the orthodox view that relations between capital and workers are premised on the principle of equality of opportunity, “official knowledge” tends not to value critical thought with its emphasis upon social solidarity, and struggle. Instead, within officially funded or sanctioned “educative” environments, the teacher’s role is cast—not as a facilitator of critical dialogue—but, as a transmitter of discrete technical knowledge, as teaching at all levels becomes increasingly intensified and deskilled. Rather than narrowly confining the role of educators to existing institutions, then, Apple argues that it is necessary to create allegiances between schools and communities, right and left, as a means of counteracting the powerful forces of neoliberal, neo conservatism, authoritarian populism, and their respective cadres of technical or managerial professionals (Zipin, 2003, pp. 112, 113).

In light of such ideological influences, Apple, like Gramsci and Giroux, maintains that, even when portrayed as exclusively technical, neutral and pragmatic, knowledge remains inherently political. This includes not only its allocative function, but also in the ways in which it tends to reinforce existing class structures by “helping maintain a distinction that lies at the heart of the social division of labor—that between mental and manual labour” (Apple, 1995, p. 46).<sup>4</sup> This process is not confined to schools but continues within the parameters of vocational working places where technical knowledge serves to prompt the possibility of developing more egalitarian, democratic workplaces. Accordingly, the bifurcation of technical and administrative knowledge serves primarily to create “experts of various sorts at all stages of the production process help[ing] to legitimize the subordination of labour to capital, by making it appear natural that workers are incapable of organizing production themselves” (Wright in Apple, 1995, p. 47).<sup>5</sup>

The production and dissemination of technical knowledge, then, are closely related to the historical and economic forces of production and the fractured hegemonic alliances whose weaknesses and tactics can be glimpsed through their contradictory, often contingent, nature



(Zipin, 2003). As a result, Apple maintains that “just as the economy is organized not for distribution but for accumulation, so too are schools in a complex and often contradictory way, roughly organized, not for the widespread distribution of cultural commodities, but, for their production and accumulation by a corporate class and the new petty bourgeoisie” (Apple, 1995, p. 52). Thus, a key strategy of an emancipatory pedagogy is to reveal the ways in which dominant cultural constructs emerge from and reinforce structural inequalities within society. Towards such an end, Apple follows Giroux in taking up the theme of the organic intellectual—which, as an organizing principle, has the potential to “open...up an entire terrain of questions concerning the ways in which struggles over social meanings are connected to the structures of inequality in society” (Apple, 2003, p. 6).<sup>6</sup> Thus, Apple believes that critical pedagogy must renew its efforts to create concrete strategies of intervention (Apple, 2003; Zipin, 2003) through “critical literacy...which enables the growth of genuine understandings and control of all the spheres of social life in which we participate” (Apple in Pinto, 2007, p. 206).

However, Gramsci’s influence on Apple does not end with his concern with hegemony or his focus upon the relationship between ideology and the state. More recently, Apple credits Gramsci’s idea of the subaltern as the inspiration for his “attempt to trace encounters between elite and subaltern groups in the field of education with the intent of making more visible possibilities for transformative action” (Apple, 2006, p. 6). This consists of analyzing the prevailing social *doxa* to discern the ideological roots of specific class interests as a means of occasioning collaborative action by organic intellectuals (Apple, 2006, p.5). Significantly, such a critique troubles prevalent assumptions regarding the validity of conventional representative discourses which determine the “complex questions about who speaks and how they speak, who remains silent or is silenced, and who speaks for whom” (Apple, 2006, p. 8).

Such questions are unavoidable in an era in which technical education and vocationalism are increasingly emphasized, while an increasing number of employers seem wary about the relevance of “education and skill requirements” (Lewis, 1997, p. 481). Indeed, skepticism about conventional vocationalism garners further support in light of the fact that, presently within America, “only about one in ten positions has been designed to require highly skilled workers” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1996, p. 80). In such an environment, critical thought, far from being superfluous, represents an important tool for the worker to discern the true nature of his or her own interests in a competitive, often exploitative, workplace (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1996).

For Apple, then, subaltern politics requires a reconsideration of our class and ideological investments given the ever present temptation of ideological imposition. Within the context of contemporary vocationalism this requires re-examining the conventional hierarchical relationship between university and collegiate institutions, as well as, the related distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge. For Apple, the contradictory ideological and socio-economic functions of educational institutions include “accumulation by producing both agents for a hierarchical labour market and the cultural capital of technical/administrative knowledge” along with the need to “legitimate ideologies of inequality and class mobility, and make themselves be seen positively by as many classes and class segments as possible” (Apple, 1998, pp. 52, 53).

More generally, perhaps, Apple’s neo Marxism requires us to consider the public importance of an expanded role for civic education in an era confronted with the economic realities of

“extended adolescence” and “life-long learning” (Jarvis, 2008, pp. 5, 6). Drawing distinctions between secondary and postsecondary education in terms of their “voluntariness” (Lewis, 1997, p. 486) means little, once the coercive nature of globalism and contemporary corporate capitalism are understood – along with the types of false consciousness created by hegemonic institutions. Neither jobs nor the institutions which purport to educate students “about work” (Lewis, 1997), then, are creatures of accident, but, always represent some set of normative assumptions about the way wealth and opportunities to produce and share wealth, are distributed. In the words of Jarvis (2008), much of contemporary vocational education reflects the naked truth that “capitalism needs workers and consumers who can accept in an unquestioning manner its ideology and so it colonized the education and learning processes – both institutional and non institutional” (Jarvis, 2008, p. 5). Thus, it would seem appropriate that those most directly affected by such choices should be given the opportunity to examine the allocation of educational resources and the systemic influences which make such allocations appear to be in their collective interests.

Within Apple’s work, consequently, we see the Gramscian themes of hegemony and the organic intellectual being tied explicitly to the issue of knowledge production and political representation – both in relation to the state and civil society. And yet, despite his practice orientated pragmatism, at times Apple seems to lack the broad, often subtle cultural sense of the contemporary which, in Giroux, is so preeminent. What I am suggesting, then, is not a narrow partisan preference of one scholar over the other, but, rather that both contemporary theorists offer uniquely, and profound insights when read against each other. More specifically, from a dialogical, pragmatic perspective, Apple’s materialistic, historical analysis offers an instructive counter point to Giroux’s uncanny understanding of the seemingly innocuous, but politically charged, aspects of contemporary culture.

In some ways the aims of this paper have been predominantly political as critical pedagogues seek new ways of finding common grounds in the hopes of furthering an egalitarian, democratic social consensus. Looking at the work of Apple and Giroux collectively then, we see that critical pedagogy has taken up and redefined the relationship between intellectual activity, the personal and the political, in a number of complex, intersecting ways. Most notably, these include: i) its constructivist epistemology which situates technical knowledge within the context of intensely political, individual meaning-making practices; ii) the challenges it poses to reification of expert knowledge such that teachers as well as students become researchers and knowledge producers (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998); iii) its questioning of conventional schooling’s rigid dichotomy between the personal and private spheres and a reluctance to treat personal experience as a pedagogical text; iv) its emphasis on the inter-relationship between power and knowledge which challenges methodological claims to neutrality or objectivity; v) and, finally, its notion of critical consciousness which sees conventional logic and technical rationality as closed to the possibility of the valueladenness of knowledge and the social nature of human learning.

Taking our cue from critical pedagogy’s diverse intellectual background, then, it is important that critical scholars remain wary of dismissing the need for practical or technical knowledge, despite the close relationship such epistemic practices have with capitalist modes of exchange and production. As Agnello and Lucey (2008) note in their recent critical study of economics education, many technical discourses present powerful opportunities for social change, meaning



that to ignore their importance would be to forgo the benefit of tools needed to effect a far-reaching egalitarianism (Agnello & Lucey, 2008). More fundamentally, an openness to practical knowledge can and should be paired with the critical recognition that, “knowledge of skills and concepts lack meaning unless the learner can connect them with his or her background or environment or exercise agency” (Agnello & Lucey, 2008, p. 120).

Taking Gramsci’s tactical syncretism as a model, the task that remains for critical pedagogy is to apply the theoretical tools provided by Apple and Giroux within concrete (and sometimes neglected) vocational contexts as we attempt to proliferate democratic ideals and critical consciousness. It is, as Zipin (2003) notes, an undertaking which requires us to reconstruct our own conceptions of who or what a critical educator is as the conception of organic intellectual, “circulates new ways of understanding our identities so as to radically alter who we think we are and how our major institutions are to respond” (Apple in Zipin, 2003, p. 113)

This means that, as responsible scholars we must consider how such pragmatic vocational discourses relate to schooling’s propensity to “divert attention from the ownership and control of international, national and local assets, justifying inequality based on ownership as an earned right based on merit” (Agnello & Lucey, 2008, p. 124). In conventional academic settings this is perhaps an educational project that cannot be completed without substantial risk and considerable difficulty—but it is one, which is, for all that, necessitated by civic principles and the survival of vital democratic interests alike (Flecha, 2008).

### **Conclusion: Towards an Integrative Critical Vocationalism**

How do educators formulate a democratic, pragmatic model of “higher” education in an era when the university is in crisis and colleges appear burdened by an increasingly narrow, regimented conception of their educative function? (Pinto, 2007; Grubb & Lazerson, 2005). Despite widespread assumptions there is no clear assurance that the availability of technical skills will enhance employment opportunities for such forms of employment within the relevant market nor that educational institutions can be sufficiently responsive to a rapidly changing workforce (Lewis, 1997; Rehm, 1989; Seinberg & Kincheloe, 1996). Following critical vocationalists such as Rehm (1989), we would emphasize that the parameters of work and social life are often not so readily parsed as many proponents of “practical” education would like to assume. Instead, along with other democratic pragmatists, we would insist upon recognizing that work is not simply an economic activity but one with significant existential, cultural and political aspects (Kovacs in Rehm, 1989, p. 117).<sup>7</sup>

The fact that work is both an individual pursuit and a social endeavor, then, raises complex questions about the inter-relationship between education, liberty and equality. In large part, answering this challenge requires us to recognize that a responsive pedagogy, in addition to fulfilling the dictates of particular institutions, must remain attuned to a society’s broader civic and cultural life. As noted by Stone (2004), “higher education is defined in relation to the culture that houses it, and, if it is to survive as a useful institution it has to be supple enough to shape itself to an evolving culture” (Stone, 2004). Increasingly, this means meeting the demands of students in a way which furthers the interests of both particular communities and democracy.

The nature of critical pedagogy's conception of the intellectual forces us to confront our own positioning as scholars within bourgeois educational institutions as we recognize that, before, perhaps, we can claim that our work is "radical", we must consider our own complicity in the commodification of knowledge and the proliferation of bourgeois values (Flecha, 2008). Taking this juncture as our starting point, the concept of the organic intellectual forces us to confront critical pedagogy's position in relation to the university's autonomy and its ongoing evolution in relation to sometimes conflicting interests of democracy and capital.<sup>8</sup>

However, in defence of critical pedagogy's contemporary formulations, perhaps being "troubled" is not necessarily synonymous with ignorance or indecision but is a necessary state of tension if we are to move beyond the seemingly immovable and self evident nature of hegemonic knowledge. Thus, to view education as centered in the demands of either the state or the "consumer" (Skolnik, 1998, p. 643), ignores the need to balance competing interests in a manner which is pragmatic as well as civically responsive. Far from being a panacea, in many ways a critical pedagogical framework offers a means of supplementing vocational education with a much needed reflexivity just as university education can benefit from a less dichotomized conception of the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge.

In addition to placing an emphasis upon functional literacy standards and scientific, or technical, knowledge, pragmatic education must also recognize the utility of a critical civic ethic (Pinto & Hyslop Margison, 2007). No longer can we see civic education as something which is the exclusive purview of university education or that can be relegated to the tattered margins of once autonomous bourgeois publics (Giroux, 2001, 2005, 2006; Kincheloe, 2004). From the standpoint of critical pedagogy, then, the project of reclaiming and interrogating "pragmatic" educational space must become a central focus of teacher education and critical citizenship alike (Kincheloe, 2004; Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1996). Rather than naturalizing class stratification, which is in part a result of schooling, critical pedagogy seeks to dispel the myth of ideological neutrality as organic intellectuals confront the primary texts of power and culture.

Contrary to existing vocational forms of education centered in an ostensible epistemic neutrality, Gramsci's claim that "all men are intellectuals" requires us to re-evaluate the conventional categorization of postsecondary education. Thus, those concerned with the plight of contemporary democracy, must move beyond an outmoded conception of vocational education which sees the role of colleges as simply one of promoting "work-specific and performance-orientated" forms of training (Tarrant & Tarrant, 2004, p. 112; Skolnik, 2003). The assumption that it is possible to promote social mobility through pragmatic knowledge reinforces a false dichotomy between polity and economy which has become detrimental to contemporary democracy's continued viability (Pozo, 2007). This means that the cultural dimensions of hegemony require educators to appreciate the unique strategic positioning of vocational education as a space which can counteract the growing disjunction between narrow economic interests and an overarching conception of the public good.

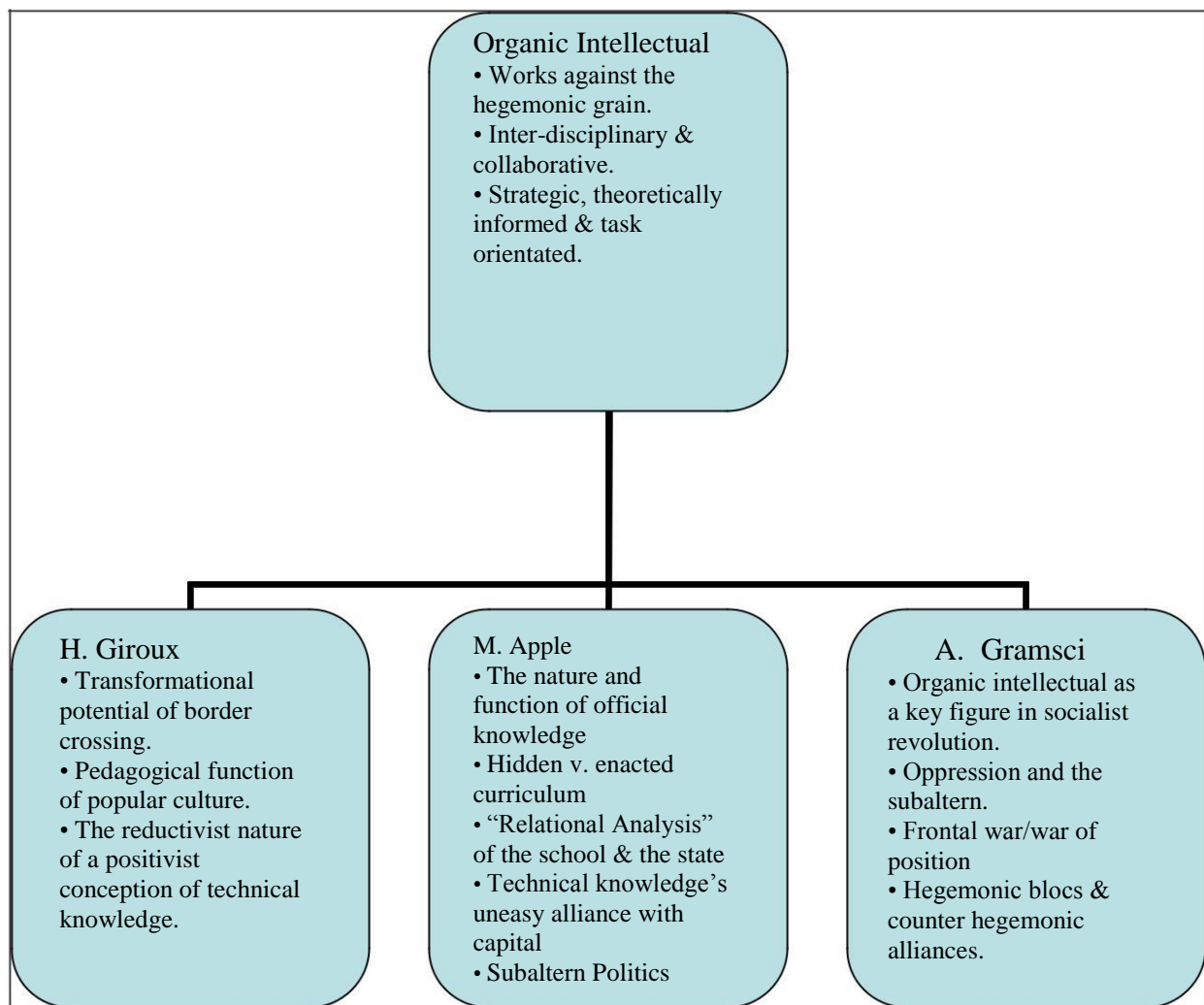
As Giroux and Apple remind us, the public intellectual is someone who believes in the importance of critical dialogue as a necessary precondition to democratic life. This subject role is not tied to any particular institutional context except to say that it reflects the need for institutions which engender public discourse. Indeed, such values emphasizing the need for empathy, dialogue, freedom of choice and the respect of persons are inherently attuned to what Bell Hooks

( ) calls “education as the practice of freedom” – or Rorty describes as a solidarity “grounded” in contingency. These are perspectives, then, which implicitly relate the issue of work to “questions of power sharing and social justice” as opposed to a corporate model in which “the short term becomes the only future worth planning for” (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 1996, p. 82).

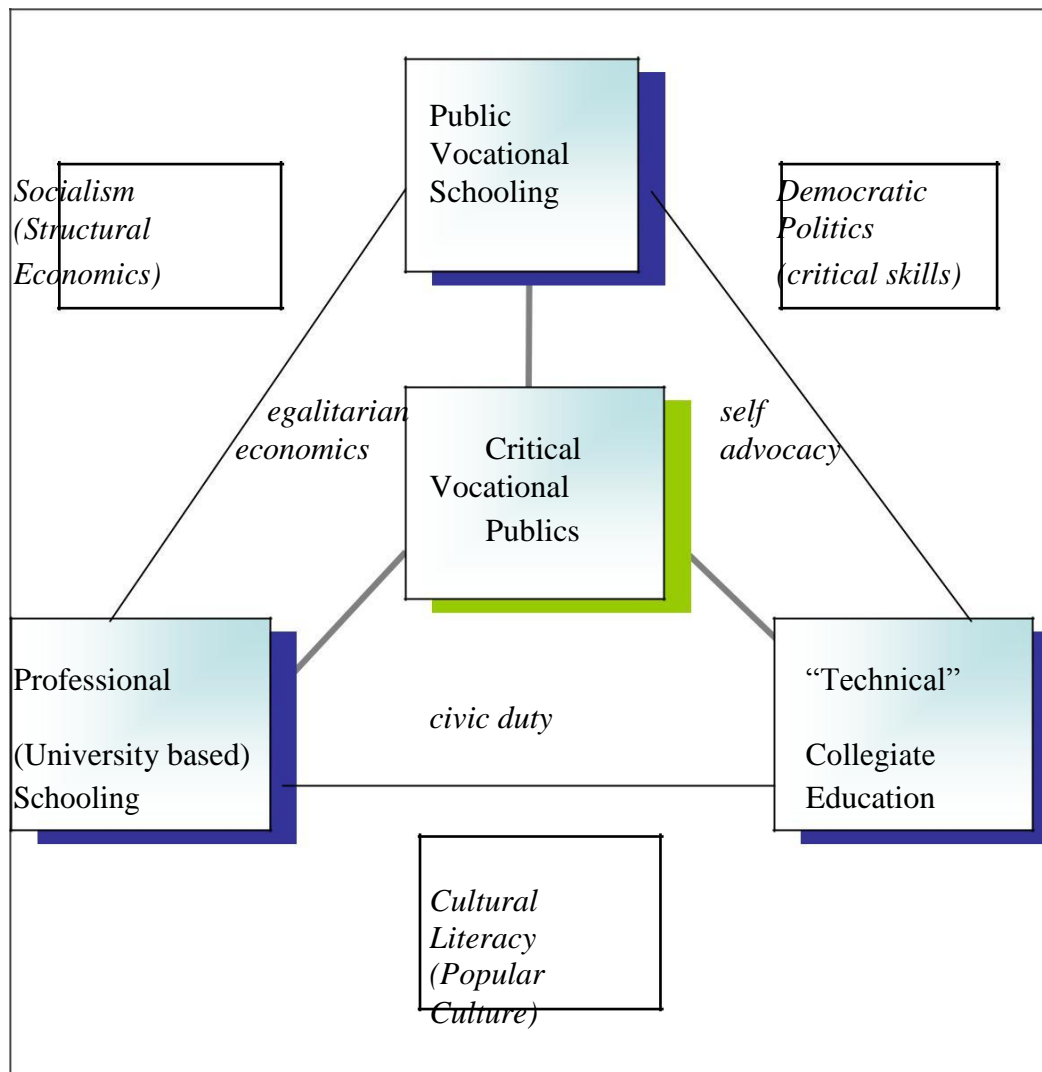
While positivists or modernists might see such an educational project as an ideological imposition, education which is decontextualized and insular itself represents “a[n] abstract form of estrangement that has real concrete effects on the lives of working people” (McLaren, 2005, p. 145). In contrast, critical pedagogues open to the transformative possibilities of vocationalism recognize that knowledge is diverse and socially constructed since “the education knowledge base involves the recognition of different types of knowledges....including but not limited to empirical, experiential, normative, critical ontological, and reflective-synthetic domains” (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 52). Given this epistemological diversity and the dynamic nature of social needs, critical approaches provide a timely reminder that commodified educational institutions lack the ability to transmit critical literacy practices and democratic values as a means of coordinating competing social interests (Dewey, 1944).

Despite critical pedagogy’s aversion to positivism, effective counter – hegemonic movements require engagement with pragmatic, technical forms of knowledge as the discipline begins to see the potential inherent in transformational work within educational spaces situated outside of public schools and universities. In this vein, a critical vocationalism recognizes the need for a concerted response to the increasing inequality of globalism, which, for today’s youth, have garnered only spiraling debt and waning employment prospects (Lakes, 1998; Stone, 2004). As the work of Giroux and Apple suggests, through a reformulated exploration of the particular cultural, political and embodied aspects of vocation an imaginative critical pedagogy can provide the context for the contestation of corporatized commodified cultures and educational institutions. Without abandoning either pragmatic instruction or critical knowledge, an engaged critical vocationalism allows students to explore their respective selves and communities, thereby permitting the development of the type of situated critical knowledge which Dewey found to be so instrumental to the creation and maintenance of a healthy, vigorous democracy. Following the traditions of progressive and radical democracy in an era of “rationalization” within secondary education, then, (Skolnik, 1987), critical pedagogy lends us the audacity to propose a vision of education as a site of contestation and liberation that the organic intellectual strives, in solidarity, and with hopeful longing, to achieve.

**FIGURE A: TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE, HEGEMONY & THE ORGANIC INTELLECTUAL**



**FIGURE B: ENVISIONING CRITICAL VOCATIONAL PUBLICS**



<sup>1</sup> “What are the “maximum” limits of acceptance of the term “intellectual”? Can one find a unitary criterion to characterize equally all the diverse and disparate activities of intellectuals and to distinguish these at the same time and in an essential way from the activities of other social groupings? The most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature

of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations. Indeed the worker or proletarian, for example, is not specifically characterized by his manual or instrumental work, but by performing this work in specific conditions and in specific social relations (apart from the consideration that purely physical labour does not exist and that even Taylor's phrase of "trained gorilla" is a metaphor to indicate a limit in a certain direction: in any physical work, even the most degraded and mechanical, there exists a minimum of technical qualification, that is, a minimum of creative intellectual activity.) And we have already observed that the entrepreneur, by virtue of his very function, must have to some degree a certain number of qualifications of an intellectual nature although his part in society is determined not by these, but by the general social relations which specifically characterize the position of the entrepreneur within industry.

<sup>2</sup> "Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organizers of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc. It should be noted that the entrepreneur himself represents a higher level of social elaboration, already characterized by a certain directive [*dirigente*] and technical (i.e. intellectual) capacity: he must have a certain technical capacity, not only in the limited sphere of his activity and initiative but in other spheres as well, at least in those which are closest to economic production. He must be an organizer of masses of men; he must be an organizer of the "confidence" of investors in his business, of the customers for his product, etc. If not all entrepreneurs, at least an *élite* amongst them must have the capacity to be an organizer of society in general, including all its complex organism of services, right up to the state organism, because of the need to create the conditions most favourable to the expansion of their own class; or at the least they must possess the capacity to choose the deputies (specialized employees) to whom to entrust this activity of organizing the general system of relationships external to the business itself. It can be observed that the "organic" intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development, are for the most part "specializations" of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type which the new class has brought into prominence." (Gramsci, 1971, p.3)

All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals." (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 8, 9)

<sup>3</sup> "Gramsci's work does more than challenge the reduction of intellectuals to corporate clerks; it also broadens the meaning and role of intellectuals in terms of their social functions and individual capabilities. Changes in the mass media, modes of production, and socioeconomic needs of the state have enlarged the role that intellectuals play in exercising authority, producing knowledge, and securing consent. For Gramsci, intellectuals play a crucial political and pedagogical role in integrating thought and action for subaltern groups as part of a broader project to assert the primacy of political education far beyond the limited circle of party hacks or university academics. Moreover, Gramsci is not just suggesting that marginal groups generate their own intellectuals; he is also broadening the conditions for the production of knowledge and the range of sites through which learning for self determination can occur. This is an important issue because it legitimates the call for progressives to create their own intellectuals and counter-public spheres both within and outside of traditional sites of learning as part of a broader effort to expand the sources of resistance and the dynamics of democratic struggle" (Giroux, 1999, p. 18)

<sup>4</sup> "The focus on the production of technical knowledge allows us to see how schools help maintain a distinction that lies at the heart of the social division of labor—that between mental and manual labour. Those students who are identified as being able to produce—through their later surplus labor—important quantities of technical/administrative knowledge are increasingly 'placed' on the mental side of this dichotomy. This is done internally by the natural workings out of the curricular and guidance program of the school, a trajectory that allows surplus labour to be extracted from them later on in the form of service and/or manual labour." (Apple, 1995, p. 46)

<sup>5</sup> "In Wright's words 'experts of various sorts at all stages of the production process help to legitimize the subordination of labour to capital, by making it appear natural that workers are incapable of organizing production themselves. In essence, because of the extensive division between mental and manual labour, to a large extent workers are ultimately excluded from the knowledge necessary for both understanding and directing important aspects of the production process. The corporate accumulation and control of technical knowledge is tied in intimately with this division, a division that, as we have seen, is critical to the accumulation and control of economic capital as well" (Apple 1995, p. 47)

6 “The concept of hegemony....refers to the ability of dominant groups in society to establish the ‘common sense’ or the doxa of a society, the ‘fund of self-evident description of societal reality that normally go without saying; (Fraser, 1997, p. 153). Hegemony is both discursive and political. It includes the power to establish legitimate definitions of social needs and authoritative definitions of social situations. It involves the power to define what counts as legitimate areas of agreement and disagreement. And it points to the ability of dominant groups to shape which political agendas are made public and are to be discussed as possible. As a concept it has enabled us to ask how alliances are formed and what effects such as alliances have. It has opened up an entire terrain of questions concerning the ways in which struggles over social meanings are connected to the structures of inequality in society” (Apple, 2003, p. 6)

7 “Work is neither a blind mechanical process nor a form of mere business as a means of distraction from existential boredom and despair; it is a way of self-creation and a mode of forming and transforming the world and nature. The individual is being socialized and educated through the performance of work; he [or she] learns discipline and acquires the regard for the will and needs of others. The nature of work is collaboration” (Kovacs in Rehm, 1989, p. 117).

8 It also raises a number of related and challenging questions. How are critical scholars organic intellectuals and what might such a status entail? To what degree can we expect post secondary educational institutions and/or individual teachers to deal with critical themes in the curriculum when many students may see such approaches as no more than an unwarranted—and unwanted—ideological imposition? Can we rely solely on a utilitarian justification our advocacy on behalf of critical perspectives or some other broader conception of civic duty? What does a conception of civic responsibility look like outside of the bounds of its conventional liberal underpinnings? Clearly these are difficult questions which require further analysis.

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## **Chapter 7: Lost dogs and forgotten towns: Reclaiming the narrative self through research**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the place of narrative within the contemporary academy through a pedagogical and epistemological stance informed by critical theories of teaching and learning. Drawing on my own experience as a teacher-educator and beginning researcher, the author calls for a re-examination of the way narrative knowledge is conceptualized as part of a broader re-organization of formal knowledge producing institutions in the digital age. Rather than being seen as secondary or incidental to the pursuit of “hard core” empirical knowledge, the author argues that narrative practice should be placed at the center of research that emphasizes democratic values and the pursuit of social justice. Creating communities where narratives can be shared and critiqued is a central aspect of this integrative project in an era of increasing corporate and authoritarian influence within the university.

### **Lost dogs and forgotten towns: Reclaiming the narrative self through research**

I have a rather bright friend who likes to refer to the academy as “the monastery”. At first I didn’t quite know how to take his comments, but eventually I began to see his point, and, in fact, I later learned that others have made a similar argument (Boone, 2003; Cantor & Schomberg, 2003; Hubbell & Homer, 2002; Ritchie, 2002). It is not hard to see why since the institution is populated with so many recluses who equate devotion to silent meditation and late night scribbling with a sort of elusive preternatural virtue. In this world, knowledge is thought to be found in solitary retreats far from the maddening crowd, so to speak. To extend the metaphor, there are also cardinal sins and unassailable hierarchies. The first cardinal sin is to question the premise that the best knowledge is to be found in the monastery through discipline and personal meditation. Of course, there are many types of monks. We have, for example, those who devote themselves to the scientific orders. For these people, truth seeking is largely a matter of devotion to a method. Paul Thomas (2004), here draws a fictional allusion to illustrate the complex way in which scientific knowledge is often deployed for authoritarian ends:

It was written in the 1950s, and its fiction, I admit. But within the world created by Kurt Vonnegut (1980) in *Player Piano*, eerie parallels exist with the modern political wrestling match we call American public education. One exchange captures ideas important to us here: The main character, Paul, questions another character, Lasher, about the harsh treatment of manager and engineers compared to the apparent ignoring of the scientists; Lasher points out that scientists only give society knowledge so they cannot be held accountable for the way we apply that knowledge. As with much of Vonnegut’s work, in the world of *Piano Player*, a great deal of scientific knowledge is being applied in the worst possible ways.

In Vonnegut's world, most workers have been replaced by machines, the worth of every human determined by IQ tests that label each person for life, the data stored in a centralized personnel system that regulates what people can and cannot do for their jobs. Tests scores are graphed, and everything revolves around economic efficiency. If machines save money over human workers, then machines it is! (p. 1)

Thomas (2004) here emphasizes the need for aims talk in relation to our knowledge producing institutions. As Thomas points out in his book, the problem is not simply numbers, it is how they are used, all too often to silence people, to restrict their freedom to talk and limit sharing knowledge with others. In this regard it is important to remember that critical approaches to teaching and learning are not anti-scientific. Rather, critical approaches are against ways of teaching and learning that isolate and alienate people under the guise of dispassionate neutrality. In a world of increasing technological complexity, critical pedagogy insists that what we need is a conscious effort to create spaces where people can reclaim knowledge and to have learning experiences that traverse the limited and facile boundaries of traditional disciplinary spheres. This is a world that requires imagination and critical thinking to bring scientific knowledge and the arts together in discussions about such fundamental questions as the nature of the good life, the purpose of democratic society, and the place of critical knowledge workers in the public sphere.

But it is not simply misguided scientists who take refuge in the role of the expert. Many of us perhaps remember a literature professor who alienated or belittled students, who force fed them knowledge even when they threatened to gag on the version of reality that they were being compelled to consume. At the heart of the matter, is a sort of hubris that itself verges on ignorance, a stance that portrays the teaching of knowledge as doing something *to* rather than *with* someone. Climbing the ladder of success becomes a substitute for genuine engagement with people in the search for social justice and for finding ways to express those voices that have been pushed to the margins. Research grants become simply another feather in the scholar's cap reducing him or her to becoming part of a vast monolithic machinery that standardizes learning experiences, often at the expense of curiosity and wonder (Doyle and Hoben, 2011).

Just as the printing press threatened the powerful position of the medieval scribes, today's digital technologies cause us to question whether we, in fact, need so many monasteries, or even whether we should be listening to monks with medieval mindsets. Just as early printers paid close attention to lists of books banned by religious or state authorities in order to determine the most profitable volumes to print, so too today we have a proliferation of technologies that are difficult to regulate and that put an enormous amount of information in the hands of the masses (Powers, 2010). This dirty word, "the masses" in fact is what much of the trepidation over standards is all about (Singh, 1980). Elitists dislike masses and even more than that, they dislike ways of thinking and talking that allow the masses to undermine the positions of the powerful, or even worse, that allow the masses to become empowered themselves (Singh, 1980).

I remember having a conversation with a law-school friend who used to work in the restaurant industry to make ends meet. One day we were sitting at a professional seminar when she looked at me and said: "You know it's funny, I have the exact same views and opinions I had when I

was a waitress but now because I am a lawyer, they suddenly are supposed to matter more?” The irony of her statement was very much apparent to me because I too felt the same way. For various reasons, we had both sought the stamp of approval of an elite social institution. This is how, perhaps, complicity is born. As Michael Apple (2000) has argued, “one of the most interesting historical dynamics has been the extension—gradually but still graphically—of the direct or indirect State authority over the field of symbolic control” (p. 63). As Apple (2000) emphasizes, “these institutions of course have often been sites of intense conflict over whose symbols should be transmitted and over whose principles should organize this transmission” (p. 63). Education, research and scholarly writing all evince this deep rooted conflict and constitute a particularly important part of the field of symbolic control. Very often we encounter gatekeepers in these fields since the strategic stakes in these fields are high. Thus, although scholarly institutions and research bodies purport to be neutral arbiters of knowledge, neither can escape the ideological, class and personal interests that make such cultural spaces so intensely political. This is also why it is important to contextualize the act of research and to use stories as the basis for a broader dialogue about the aims of universities and research institutions.

### **First Steps as a Researcher: Lost Dogs and Lawyers**

Yet, if we are to be realistic I think it is necessary to acknowledge that because we are social beings, we need the recognition and mobility afforded by dominant institutions. Gramsci himself reminded us of as much when he spoke of the shifting nature of hegemony and the need to strive for change from the margins. Margins themselves, are sites that are at once very vulnerable but that provide access to borders, gateways and the foundations of unstable hierarchies. For the same reason, those things that are transgressive or illegitimate often hold their own hidden virtues. In a scholarly world obsessed with intellectual pedigree, illegitimacy is also an opportunity to pursue countervailing values and to seek our friendships and alliances outside of conventional norms. Illegitimacy foregrounds new forms of parentage and causes us to question the whole range of ways of seeing that foster a great deal of waste and pain in our world.

“Ours is a perishable age”, writes Julia Cameron (1998), “writing is old fashioned but it helps us to survive and connect in a modern world” (p. 93). I often start off my course on teaching and learning by telling my class that I want them to learn how to do two things: i) tell a story and ii) make an argument. Of course, in modern western society, narratives are not valued very highly as authoritative knowledge forms. From the dominant perspective, narratives are a curiosity, a refuge from the lifeless data and smug inscrutability of empirical data—a form of entertainment almost. To become knowledge narratives require strict formalized procedures such as those provided in a court of law whereby stories become “evidence”. Or they may provide the basis of an expert’s account, in the case of an anthropologist’s fieldwork, for example. In a knowledge universe dominated by conventional empiricism, to compare teaching and story telling, or to seriously suggest that narratives themselves should be taken seriously as a form of genuine knowledge is often denigrated as mere romantic fantasy.

But is this necessarily so? Kieran Egan (1996) has argued that the arts, rather than the sciences should be seen as the true basics of education. Egan (1996) rightly points out that not only do we “begin as story tellers” but that stories allow us to engage in a form of empathetic inquiry



whereby we can overstep the bounds of our physical and temporal selves and to enter the personhood of another breathing, thinking human being. No other form of knowledge, and no other form of human technology is able to mimic the nature of human episodic consciousness in the same way. Stories combine the phenomenological complexity of human emotions, thoughts, ideas—and, yes, data—in a way that no other nounmenal form does. Stories in this sense are the stepping-stones upon which knowledge seekers journey closer together in their search for authentic engagement and community building. Because of their importance in everyday life, being able to tell stories and to test them by critical thinking are important educational skills. Stories are the ways in which we write ourselves into existence. In this way one could say human beings are made up of stories just as atoms make up physical matter. Because we are signifying and temporal creatures just as much as we are “rational”, stories are indispensable to our daily lives.

While Cameron (1998) takes care to emphasize the importance of interpersonal connection provided by writing even to the point of suggesting that it is a tool for survival, these are rarely words we hear within the research context. Indeed, my own personal research narrative is one of happenstance and ambivalence. In the second year of my doctoral program I received a three year fellowship to study teacher perceptions of free speech. This was a topic that I had gained an interest in during a well-publicized incident where two teachers from our province were disciplined for making frank comments about the state of professional development during a teacher workshop on stress. I was shocked by the heavy-handed treatment of the teachers and by the relative silence of the legal community on the issue. Even if the school board was within its legal right to discipline the teachers why did they feel the need to do so? What message was this sending to students who doubtlessly knew that those same teachers who taught them civics classes felt like they could not speak freely in public about the topic which ostensibly meant a great deal to them, namely public education?

Finding it initially very difficult to recruit subjects, perhaps because of the sensitive nature of the subject, I eventually did speak to nearly two-dozen teachers about the subject. While I felt that the research was valuable as it gave a voice to some who felt a degree of trepidation about speaking in public, the fact that I was doing research in such a small province meant that confidentiality concerns forced me to leave many details out of my research report. I also wondered why more people were not interested in this topic and how this research fit into my career plans as a whole. Meanwhile, real life continued on its course: we had two children and since my wife was self-employed I spent a fair amount of time caring for newborns. I also became interested in other writing projects. Research seemed to be a lonely experience that was disconnected from everyday experience. I enjoyed teaching and writing more, and slowly began to wonder why these other forms of academic activity seemed to be valued increasingly less within the contemporary university.

I talk, therefore, I do not exist alone. To me it was incredible that teachers felt so censored since to me talking and arguing was synonymous with what good teaching was all about. My parents and many of my relatives and their friends were teachers in rural areas of the province. I remembered many late night arguments between teachers about history or Newfoundland society at warm, glowing cabins as a child. Teachers talked about ideas, they joked, they argued and they

sometimes drank. Most of all they talked, talked, talked. To keep a teacher from talking was like clipping a carrier pigeon's wings, it was an affront against nature of some sort; one that harmed

not only the pigeon but also the countless people who waited on those undelivered messages—messages of loss, of gain, or sorrow, of hope—but messages all the same, and ones that helped to better orientate people to the world in which they lived, in which we all lived. They were people, I now realize, who were passionate about ideas and who wanted in some way to understand their little narratives in relation to the stories about history and literature and science and art that they told daily in schools—ones that they were mandated to tell because they were part of the official curriculum. In those impromptu conversations I saw an authenticity and a connectedness that is often missing from university teaching and research. They humanized these big stories about the abstract or the “universal” by relating them to the particular in a way that formal institutions of learning often fail to do:

When I hear stories like this—and almost every school has its stories of inspired and devoted adults who reach out in ways that change people's lives—it occurs to me that we educators and social scientists have not yet found a way to capture what we hear and see. When we try to synthesize what has inspired us, to generalize from these individualized stories and draw them into a theory or a technique, the images don't survive, like certain wildflowers that won't bloom if you try to transplant them. We boil the stories down into their essences but their power slips away. (Fried, 2001, p. 15)

Research and much of academic work, seems to me to be a part of this process of trying to distil things into their essences even though living things don't readily distil into anything resembling their solid, breathing selves. While some seem to take this as an inevitable corollary of doing research, I like to believe that more empathetic, critical and attentive forms of inquiry exist. Just as a particular discipline can create a language to discuss problems and concepts that are unique to its own demands, so too can we try to create forms of research and ways of writing about research that are more attentive to particularity, difference and place. Like writing itself, research is a practice that forces us to take upon the stance of an inhabited self, it implies a subject that engages in the epistemological activity that has created the product we see before us when in actuality the lines between object and self, activity and cognition are much more interconnected that we have been led to believe.

I write, therefore, I exist. Since I left rural Newfoundland and taken on sort of a hybrid identity, this has been the unspoken, sometimes unconscious proposition that drives me into a compulsive obsession with writing and the written world. Having grown up in a place where people seemed to live on the margins of the larger world, I saw writing as a way of claiming a voice that mattered. Understanding a hierarchy of writing, of publishers and of writers themselves was far removed from my consciousness. I wanted to write in a way similar to that of a child who wants to play, it is just a way of being in the world that gives satisfaction and meaning to the moments and places in which we live. I had no such understanding of research, a practice as foreign as some abandoned orphan in a Dicken's novel or some fictional sailor who

has washed up on a far off beach. The idea that I would need to appropriate the knowledge or stories of others in order to be able to say something did not really occur to me. Sadly, it does occur to me now.

Why do we need to take on the status position of “expert” in order to have a meaningful conversation about teaching or education? Is it to distance our selves from the teachers at whom so much research is directed and that is used to control them and diminish their experience and insight? How much of the teacher’s voice actually comes across in our research or in our scholarly forums? In part these questions point us to the growing need to have a serious discussion about the place of teachers in educational research and the growing divide between professional researchers and “ordinary” teachers. Even more than that it requires us to think about what educational problems are most worthy of our attention as we strive to find some degree of pragmatic consensus in an era of deepening ideological divides (Hoben & Tite, 2008).

Indeed, before I started to study education, I did not write much about myself, my family history or the place I was from. One of the things I liked about teaching and writing itself was the importance of place, and of the way teachers often related their knowledge to each other through stories. The best stories for me were ones that seemed to draw the storyteller and his or her audience into a new shared experience. A good story was also one that changed the listener’s perception of the world somehow, that even made the world seem enchanted or even haunted by the past in some way. In this vein, I remember a story my father told me while we were visiting the area on the Burin Peninsula where he grew up. It was a story that I wrote as a poem in a course on narrative and education that I myself would later teach:

### **What was lost**

My father took me  
back through the tiny towns  
where, in his mind,  
he played out  
all the memories of his  
childhood            days:  
Lamaline,        Rushoon,  
Point a Gaul, Mortier—  
their names  
like worn pebbles  
on my rough north  
shore tongue.

I remember  
just after Garnish  
when our car swept along a  
grand arc of rocky beach;  
the waist high grass

swaying wildly in the August wind  
that drove in

for miles across  
the churning cove.

‘This’, he said,  
pointing to a sunlit meadow  
just off the winding road,  
‘was where Uncle Esau  
left his blind dog. She  
wandered around for days  
trying to catch his scent.  
We could hear  
Her whining, getting weaker  
And weaker;  
Until later we  
buried her  
In a small pit we dug  
There by that brook.  
The old man drowned years later  
fell through the ice  
crossing the barasway”.

For a while,  
We could hear only the  
Low growl of the car’s motor  
And the hard moan of  
The biting wind;  
Then suddenly,  
I knew:  
Somehow it was his dog;  
He had claimed  
And then abandoned her;  
So now he was circling back,  
Hoping to find some lost trace  
Of the way home,  
Searching for the elusive hint  
Of those timeless days.

I was trying to write a poem about memory and attachment. While we often think of research as being related to memory, it is not central to it, in the same way it is with narrative. Narratives encapsulate memories. Likewise, because someone tells them, they also often speak to the storyteller’s attachment to another person, a time or a place. Conversely, in research, attachment

is often something we hope that can be cured by the proper application of method. But, of course, there is nothing natural or inevitable about this search for epistemological distance. In fact, this reification of distance and formality is also a recurrent theme within teaching lore—who, for instance, has not heard the old adage about not smiling before Christmas? The nature of research is entirely open to negotiation and change.

At one time, Alberto Manguel (2008) reminds us, silent reading was uncommon and virtually unknown. Reading aloud was the near universal norm in part because texts were expensive and they often had to be shared. Reading aloud in this social setting made sense: in an era in which illiteracy was widespread, those who could read were in short supply and so it was useful for some “learned” person to read and provide commentary on a text. Silent reading in a sense, opened up a whole new mental and cultural space, one which was related to the social changes wrought by the printing press, much in the same way perhaps as the internet has already begun to change human thinking in ways that we have not even begun to apprehend. For all these reasons a university based on a model of epistemic scarcity whereby knowledge is created and disseminated by a few privileged authorities in highly centralized institutions does not really accord with the new social realities, nor perhaps with the way human consciousness is evolving in the fluid, fast paced and distributed networks of the future.

Sometimes when I teach aspiring teachers, there is the feeling that they believe I possess some secret equation that will make teaching easy once they have internalized it. Their understanding of teaching is formal and technical rather than dialogical and personal. They seem to think there is some secret function that will ensure appropriate outputs once the right conditions exist. This is the temptation, of course, once we have advanced in some realm of social life, to pretend as though we have arrived at a position of enviable certainty, that we do in fact hold a certain skill with the divining rod that allows us time and time again to find water where countless others have failed. It is another manifestation, I suppose, of the desire to feel needed, or perhaps, if we want a more cynical take on it, of the ability of animals to hide the weakness of illness from other predators or those who would challenge their pack status. This is the temptation that we must continually resist if we are to remain civilized and especially if we aspire to be caring humane teachers and researchers who pursue equality and social justice.

I do not believe that this means that the university cannot survive, nor that it will become irrelevant. I do believe, however, that contrary to orthodox belief, the university’s most important function lies within its ability to teach critical thinking as well as to serve as a unique connective node for like-minded knowledge workers in the emerging age. Students in the new digital world will need to know how to focus and apply knowledge just as they will need to know how to contextualize it within the particular narrative of their own lives and the interconnected lives of those people who live within their particular culture (Powers, 2010). For all these reasons the university must evolve from a centralized into a distributed network form or it risks becoming simply the hapless tool of authoritarian corporate interests or modern digital bureaucracies.

Freire (2000) reminded us that you cannot expect education to be empowering if you create classrooms that treat students like objects who sit passively waiting to be filled with knowledge.

Research, like learning, is an activity that requires critical engagement with the world around us. Both are also activities that are meaningless without a critical and attentive audience. It is for this reason that critical writers like Joe Kincheloe (2012) have long emphasized the need to see students and teachers as knowledge workers and researchers who can create as well as consume new knowledge. The act of knowledge creation, cannot in a democracy reside solely in the hands of judgmental, experts who serve an instrumental and corporatized state apparatus.

Where does this leave us? I am a firm believer in that it is important to be actively critical of those things that mean the most to us. I think that research is vitally important. But I am also wary of two diametrically opposed tendencies that are prevalent within educational discourse today. To return to Thomas (2004), these are a radical postmodern scepticism towards anything scientific and a narrow empiricism that ignores the insights of the conventional humanities and the demands of democratic society:

Since the rise of Taylorism in the business world at the turn of the century, education has been driven by a belief in empirical data, the belief that we can objectively generate meaningful numbers from standardized tests to assess both individual students and entire educational systems—from individual schools to school districts to state-by-state comparisons to the public school system as a whole. Within the last few decades, the academic and scientific communities have simultaneously developed a sceptical if not somewhat cynical postmodern attitude that such objectivity is a delusion, or at least misleading and oversimplified: Gould (1996) expresses his embracing passion as a scientist and offers a postmodern view of objectivity: “Objectivity must be operationally defined as fair treatment of data, not absence of preference,”(p. 36) or any absence of humanity I would add.

The result has been that educators function under a Jekyll and Hyde personality, both gathering and displaying huge amounts of empirical data on educational performance while often discounting much of that data as biased or only relatively true; we often explain that the findings are far too complicated for mere politicians, journalists, and parents to understand while we bash journalists for displaying that data in overly simplistic formats, thus misleading that unaware public and fuelling political agendas. In short, the majority of Americans still accept the objective truth of empirical data while the intellectual elite harbour a cynicism toward objectivity—though they continue to produce large amounts of experimental and quasi-experimental studies that still carry the greatest weight in the world of research (and has recently received the stamp of approval from the federal government?) (pp. 49, 50)

Thomas (2004) calls for a “new honesty in education”,(p. 50) a project that is very much akin to that envisioned by this issue of the *Morning Watch*: the search for new critical positions that take a hard look at some of the institutional and socio-cultural conditions that often restrict teachers and researchers in what questions they can ask and how those questions can perhaps be reframed.



I recognise that there is nothing new in such a call for reform, what is new is the present here and now and the place from which we begin our own engagement with the tensions and inequalities inherent in research. This requires stepping outside the safe and closed spaces of the traditional monastery. It requires examining those false emblems of authenticity and to consider our own complicity when we consider the larger questions of fairness, openness and social justice and how they are often absent from the contemporary academy. It means pushing outwards in the messy, smelly dirty world, hoping to find a lost talent in the muddy street, or better yet, the ungrudging compassion of an old forgotten friend. Can we conceptualize a form of educational research that is like an earnest conversation between old estranged friends? I believe so. Even a lost dog can find his way home, if he has a guiding hand.

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## Chapter 8: Youth as Knowledge Constructors and Agents of Educational Change

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### Abstract

In this paper we examine how youth are making a difference in our educational community. Drawing from previous and on-going research and change initiatives with marginalized youth, we attend to three central themes. First, we explore the importance of situating youth voice and engagement within a social justice conceptual frame. Second, we discuss our understandings and experiences of youth as knowledge constructors and theorizers. Third, we articulate how youth are active agents and change-makers. In positioning youth as ‘knowers’ and ‘actors’ in educational change-making, we argue that deficit-based perspectives of youth facing forms of marginality become interrogated and challenged. As educators, we cannot become leaders of social justice education reform without embracing the leadership of youth who are experiencing the very inequalities we are trying to remove from our schools.

### Introduction

There is a growing recognition and commitment in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador to address forms of social, economic, cultural and educational disenfranchisement faced by youth in our communities. Initiatives within government, the community, and K-12 and post-secondary education systems are seeking to address inequities so that *all* youth and their families are able to successfully navigate the complexities of our current societal contexts. Four examples of such initiatives include the provincial government’s *Poverty Reduction Strategy*, the federal government’s *Vibrant Communities Initiatives*, the Coalition for Educational Opportunities and Eastern School District’s (ESD) collaborative efforts to create an alternative school for marginalized youth and Memorial’s Faculty of Education’s *Meeting the Challenge* report which proposes diversity and social justice as a guiding orientation to teacher education in this province.

Certainly, for those involved in social justice work in education, these initiatives are welcome because they strive to further justice and equality. However, in order to assess the meaningfulness and success of these projects, we need to consider how youth voice and engagement (as students, citizens, leaders and partners) are taken up in these initiatives. Youth facing forms of social and educational marginalization have the greatest stake in social justice and democratic change and their contributions to educational change should not be underestimated. As university and community-based educators we seek to expand marginalized youths’ involvement in educational reform to ensure that they are part of decisions which affect their lives.

## Goals and Contexts of This Paper

In this paper we draw from our previous and on-going research and educational change initiatives with youth to articulate how they are making a difference in our educational community. Examples of these initiatives include two participatory action research studies funded by Memorial University and youth involvement in the *Coalition for Educational Opportunities*.

The *Coalition for Educational Opportunities* (CEO) is a multi-stakeholder coalition spearheaded by the Community Youth Network. Created in 2001 to identify solutions to youth who have left school and/or are disengaged in their learning, the CEO views youth as central stakeholders. The CEO's report, *All Youth Learn....All Youth Succeed*, is a proposal created in collaboration with youth voices. This proposal calls for the creation of an alternative school within the Eastern School District (ESD).

The participatory action research study called, *In Good Hands: Youth Envisioning Curriculum*, engaged youth in the educational change processes of envisioning curriculum for the proposed alternative school and disseminating this vision to local educational stakeholders. A second study, *From Transformative Vision to Transformative Practice*, involved youth at the Murphy Centre (a community-based educational program) in the design and implementation of changes to aspects of their learning environment.

In drawing from these educational change engagements with youth, we attend here to three central themes. First, we explore the importance of situating youth voice and engagement within a social justice conceptual frame. Second, we discuss our understandings and experiences of youth as knowledge constructors and theorizers. Third, we discuss how youth are active agents and change-makers. In positioning youth as 'knowers' and 'actors' in educational change-making, we argue that deficit-based perspectives of youth facing forms of marginality become interrogated and challenged. As educators, we cannot become leaders of social justice education reform without embracing the leadership of youth who are experiencing the very inequalities we are trying to remove from our educational contexts.

## Contexts of Youth, Voice and Participation

The influence of schooling on the lives of youth in Newfoundland and Labrador cannot be overemphasized. Schools are sites where possibilities for inclusion, democracy and justice are both exercised and constrained via school governance, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. As studies document social and educational inequalities, it is ever more apparent that we need to reconfigure schools as sites of democracy and social justice. Experiences of inequality and oppression based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability and other aspects of students' subjectivities are connected to many students' experience of marginality and lack of success, agency and voice in school (Taylor, 2007; Archer, Halsall & Hollingworth, 2007; Arnot & Reay, 2007; Bhimji, 2005; Wotherspoon & Schissel, 2001). In addition to literature which documents inequalities, there is a growing recognition of the synergistic relationship between justice and democracy in schools and justice and democracy in civic society (Loder, 2006; Bolmeier, 2006; Davis, 2003; Gale, 2003). Specifically, youth who experience democratic practice in school are better able to address issues of democracy and social justice in their community engagements.

As educators become attentive to youth's investment in contributing to democratic and social justice educational change, the need for rigorous study of youth voice and engagement becomes critically apparent (Yohalem & Martin, 2007; Checkoway & Richard-Schaster, 2006). This is not an easy task for researchers. The breadth of justice and democratic issues in education, and their contested meanings, create a complex terrain on which to examine youth voice and engagement. Many researchers are also striving to avoid homogenizing youth, ignoring their complex life worlds or constructing idealized or simplified notions of youth engagement (Archer, Halsall & Hollingworth, 2007; Torre & Fine, 2006; Fine, 1991).

In 2006-2007, five peer-reviewed journals devoted special issues to explore youth voice and involvement in school, community and civic contexts (e.g., *Educational Review*, 58(2); *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 9(4)). Recent collections exploring youth as social-educational change agents contrast notions of 'disaffected' youth reliant on adult visions and practices of justice and democracy (Ginwright, Noguera & Cammarota, 2006; Checkoway & Gutiérrez, 2006). Case studies of youth participation in educational change report benefits to youth, schools and the community (Gardner & Crockwell, 2006; Osberg, Pope & Galloway, 2006; Bolmeirer, 2006; Brown Easton, 2005; Morrell, 2006; Checkoway & Richard-Schaster, 2006; Suleiman, Soleimanpour & London, 2006; Nygreen, AnKwon & Sanchez, 2006; Ginwright, Noguera & Cammarota, 2006; Checkoway & Gutiérrez, 2006).

Reports of increased youth academic success and school attendance as well as youth's strengthened sense of empowerment, hope and leadership relay benefits to youth from their involvement in educational change. Schools and the community benefit from youth voice and engagement in change. These contexts recount, for instance, enhanced awareness of youth issues, creation of new innovation programs, strengthened sense of community and youth participation, prevention of problems and enhanced program effectiveness.

Examples of youth voice and participation in educational reform are located within broader educational landscapes which often fail to involve youth in such initiatives. Accounts document the paucity of student voice and power in educational reforms which prioritize the access, participation and contributions of adult stakeholders (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2006; Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2006). Exclusions of youth are supported by educational discourse which assumes that youth lack the skills capacities and/or entitlement to play such participatory roles. Education systems relay lack of time, resources, structures, policies and capacity to engage youth in educational reform (Ginwright, Noguera & Cammarota, 2006). Uncertainties in how to incorporate youth engagement and potential adverse ramifications further dissuade change (Golombek, 2006; Jennings, Parra-Medina, Messias & McLoughlin, 2006). There are also accounts that youth get offered minimal or token input. Youth are not positioned as authentic partners who are afforded decision-making power in educational change (Angus, 2006; Osberg, Pope & Galloway, 2006; Guajardo, Pérez, Guajardo, Dávila, Ozuna, Saenz & Casaperalta, 2006). Unsurprisingly, many youth also relay that their attempts to engage educational change have been met with resistance by educators, governments and the community (Ginwright, Noguera & Cammarota, 2006).

## Youth Voice and Engagement in Educational Change: A Social Justice Issue

Our partnerships with youth strengthen our resolve that youth have the right and capacity to be engaged as partners in educational change. We witness how the education system affects the life long development of youth. And we recognize how crucial it is for youth to be fully engaged, not only in the process of being educated, but also in processes of educational delivery and policy/program development. Youth voice and engagement are irrevocable social justice and human rights issues within our current political, social and economic contexts. To address these issues effectively youth need to be positioned as ‘knowers’ and ‘actors’ who have the right to participate as students, citizens and partners in educational policies, practices and reforms.

Youth, themselves, also recognize their participation in education reform as a justice issue. Our experience shows that, contrary to common-sense notions that youth are ‘apathetic’ and ‘disengaged,’ when given the opportunity to collaborate as partners and leaders, they show clear understanding of themselves as knowers and actors. Youth explicitly identify their motivations for participating in action research and change initiatives. Their desires are grounded in their beliefs of a better education system for themselves and their siblings, their children, and peers who also face multiple forms of disenfranchisement.

Youth who experience ageism, violence, homelessness, poverty, sexual exploitation, addictions, disruptive family contexts, mental health issues and other life challenges, are often aware that they, and their needs and strengths as learners, do not ‘fit’ in mainstream education systems. Typically, however, youth who experience marginalization do feel there are avenues to have their voice heard, to tell their story, or become agents of educational change. They are often keenly aware that they are not safe to fully disclose their complex lifeworlds because their lives do not fit dominant societal and educational norms and expectations.

In conjunction with youth, we experience the continual reliance on deficit- based notions of *individual need* within education and social service contexts. As youth well know, this frame requires them, as individuals, to articulate that there is something wrong “with me,” “with my family,” or “with my life.” Youth, for example, poignantly relay their stories that they work hard to cover up the fact that they cannot read or write. They report being afraid of their teachers finding out that they do not live at home or being embarrassed that they cannot continue to attend school full-time because they need to support themselves or their families financially. One youth who participated in an action research project spoke of living on her own at sixteen, and how her teacher could not understand this. Her teacher repeatedly asked questions like, “What do you mean you don’t live at home?” or “Where are your parents?” This lack of understanding sent a clear message to the young person that she could not voice her complex lifeworld. By framing this student’s reality through a deficit- based and individualized lens which did not take into account her context and agency, her voice became further marginalized. In our effort to ally with youth we recognize that promoting youth voice and engagement needs to be framed as a social justice issue. Youth voices are often systematically excluded due to the lack of understanding and accompanying judgement of their lifeworlds. As educators, it is our responsibility to create in partnership with youth, a truly safe and vibrant learning environment where youth can be authentically and fully engaged in the context of where they are and where they want to go.

In our partnerships with youth, we see how the meanings and priorities for educational change vary by, for example, race, class, gender, age and sexual orientation. Youth are not a homogeneous group. In our collaborations with youth, this has meant considering the diversity of youth while we strive to re-create, with youth, an education system that reflects their varied lifeworlds. In this way, framing youth voice and engagement in its *diversity* has become an important social justice dimension of our collaborative education change initiatives.

Engaging youth as educational change makers through a social justice lens requires the education system to embrace inclusion in all its complexity. It means, as a starting point, attending to the complex and inter-related processes of the need for youth to have adequate income, shelter, equity, human rights, access, ability to participate, valued contribution, belonging, and empowerment (see for instance, the model of inclusion of Health Canada's Population and Public Health Branch, Atlantic Region). Attending to a model of inclusion is more than an intellectual project; it offers insights on a practical level. Concepts of inclusion strengthen our capacity to critique current practices of youth engagement, as well as allow us to develop increasingly meaningful strategies to engage youth at all stages in the education change process. Youth passionately relay that superficial notions of voice and participation are not enough to ensure their equitable inclusion. We recognize that youth opportunities for voice and engagement must be accompanied by supports, resources and approaches which reduce their barriers to participation. To support meaningful engagement, youth need access to transportation, child care, food, computers and phones. Youth have the right to forms of involvement which draw from their strengths and acknowledge their multiple commitments and responsibilities. Most importantly, youth need to be partners in the decision-making processes taking place within a reform initiative.

Through their experiences of difference and marginality, youth often report that their voices become further silenced, ignored and/or disciplined by education systems. In partnering with youth, we become aware of the multiple and nuanced ways youth 'knowing' and 'acting' are taken-for-granted and depoliticized within education, when in actuality, youth 'knowing' and 'acting' are crucial social justice and human rights issues. Making this visible is central to educational change in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Youth Knowing: Youth as Knowledge Constructors and Theorizers of Educational Change**

In partnering with youth in educational change and research initiatives, we witness youth engage the terrains of their lived experience to construct knowledge and theorize educational change. In doing so, we recognize the importance of discourse which positions youth as 'knowers' and 'partners' in educational reform. We can attest to the ways youth are expert meaning-makers of their lives who know what they need as learners. We have experienced their intellectual competence and qualifications to interrogate and re-constitute dimensions of schooling and their lives. We have observed the unique and varied ways youth conceptualize and make apparent the need and possibilities for educational change. And we recognize the many ways their "lived theorizing" affirms current education scholarship.

While education systems often assert their adoption of constructivist learning, marginalized youth often relay they do not experience school as a site for their active inquiry and knowledge



production. Many recount feeling like passive recipients within an epistemological world *not* of their own making (Berry, 1998, see p. 42) or re-making. Within these systems of knowledge, many youths share their feelings of being framed as ‘not knowers’ - as ‘dumb’, ‘problem learners’, ‘non-achievers’ and ‘non-academic’. Similarly, while there is literature centring marginalized youth’s experiences as starting places from which to theorize educational change, there are few

studies which position youth themselves as the theorizers of their school experiences and desires for educational change.

Through our collaborations with youth, we have learned the importance of youth’s own theorizing and knowledge production in their struggle against social -educational exclusion and injustice. Via inquiry and meaning-making, youth create spaces to critically examine their educational contexts and subjectivities as learners. In the spaces they weave they re-engage their experiences and re-vision their relations to school in ways which empower and draw forth their own subjugated forms of knowing and knowledge construction; that is, knowledge not taken up in school (such as their social and cultural capital and curriculum lived and created outside of school). In doing so, youth become active agents of their own meanings and theories of learning, schooling and educational change. Within these meaning- making processes, we witness how youth re -constitute their visions, subjectivities and lifeworlds as school and learning *strengths* rather than as mainstream educational problems.

In our reflections we have come to position critical knowledge production and theorizing as constituting a transformative pedagogy and educational politics for youth who are marginalized in school. In doing so, we are mindful of the disjuncture between this transformative project and the currency of many education practices which do not embody this work. For instance, youth often report skills-based learning, non-academic streaming, expulsion, assessments which focus on their deficits and behavioural management as prescriptions approaches for their lack of ‘success’ in school. As youth allies, researchers and educators, we believe this disjuncture needs to be centrally positioned within post-confederation education reform discussion and debate. In particular, our work suggests that as educators we need to move from the *rhetoric* of viewing learning as embedded in students’ active, complex knowledge-production to the *reality* of its deep and meaningful embodiment in education practice for *all* students. Our experiences tell us that this shift cannot occur without positioning youth as our partners and allies. Through their strengths, experiences, insights and passion, youth facing forms of marginality have too much to offer. We, as educators, cannot do it without them.

One contribution we offer this project is to make explicit, in partnership with youth, the ways in which youth are knowledge constructors and theorizers of educational change. To develop our analysis of youth knowledge production, we begin wherein knowledge is viewed as discursively framed and socially constructed. Here the meaning-making of youth is seen to occur within the complex dynamics of their ever-emergent subjectivities, voice and agency which are situated and informed by their socio-cultural contexts and ‘language’d realities.

We view youth theorizing and knowledge production as their “attempts to understand and act on the social world, critiquing social practices and relationships and providing explanations and answers to real social dilemmas (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994)” (Wilson, 1998, p. 23). Here youth engage in “lived theorizing” (Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2004) by actively creating and re-creating



systems of interpretation and meaning which make sense of experiences, phenomenon and events in their lives (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2000). In this regard, we position theorizing as the active engagement of meta-cognitive and meta-multi-modal processes. Some of these processes include, for example, culling, creating, sorting, organizing, mapping, connecting, assessing, conceptualizing, integrating and synthesizing.

Youth's knowledge construction and theorizing is evident throughout our collaborative research and changing-making projects. Youth engaged in diverse, rich conversational meaning-making. Expressing and assessing their experiences of school, we have watched youth organically ignite their textures of curiosity, observation, creativity, comparison, critical reflection, doubt, sense-making, decision-making and action. Across these interactions we have been struck by the ways youth insights are grounded in their complex lived experiences and astute assessments of social and educational systems. On many occasions we have discussed with youth the ways their meaning-making echoes prominent theoretical scholarship in education; we have also listened to youth make these connections for themselves. We have seen youth's capacity to attune to and conceptualize aspects of educational change which we, as educators, have been unable or unwilling to notice due to our privileges of age, income, position and so on. We have, in turn, listened to youth articulate new possibilities to educational challenges as well as envision forward-thinking educational futures which stand in relation to educator's best thinking and efforts.

Illustrations of youth's educational change knowledge-construction and theorizing make explicit the need to move towards a transformative pedagogy and educational politics for youth. For instance, in the *In Good Hands: Youth Envisioning Curriculum* study, youth's knowledge construction of their curricular experiences reveal an ecological model of curriculum. Specifically, in defining curriculum as more than what they learn, youth became actors of curriculum innovation and educational change. In critically examining their experiences in and out of school, they saw that curriculum needed to be re-constituted and expanded to include how, why, where and with whom they learned. Further still, curriculum involved, in their view, not just what happens in the classroom but also what occurs in the hallways, school yards and auditoriums; it involves what happens to them on the streets and in their homes, neighbourhoods and communities. While residing in education systems too often structured to separate or ignore these complexities of lifeworld within curriculum development and delivery, youth's subjugated experiential and intuitive knowing reveal this separation is not possible.

In alignment with youth, many curriculum theorists posit such an 'ecological' view. These theorists articulate conceptual visions and frames which are increasingly (ecological or) inclusive of students' diversities, complex lifeworlds and subjectivities (see Slattery, 2006; Doll & Gough, 2002; Kincheloe, Slattery & Steinberg, 2000). Youth need to be acknowledged for the sophistication and complexity of their "lived theorizing" and for the ways it both resonates and also furthers educators' understandings. In living and experiencing the non-separable realities between home and school and between dimensions of schooling, youth possess a depth, nuance and complexity of experience guiding their knowing which we, as educators, do not possess. Many youth have knowledge, for instance, of bus systems, family systems and of street, cyber and youth cultures -- and the ways they are linked to schooling and their education experience -- in ways which we, as educators, can only glean at a cursory level. Our research with youth make

explicit that only through partnerships with youth can this kind of complex lived theorizing shape needed curriculum change in a meaningful and an on-going basis.

### **Youth Action: Youth Agency at Work**

Parallel to educators who outline the centrality of praxis (i.e., theory and practice), many youth embody a deep understanding of the inseparability of knowing and acting. In particular, for many youth who have experienced marginality and injustice in school, to ‘know’ what is not working in school is accompanied by a desire to ‘act’ on this knowledge. Through collaboration, we witnessed youth’s passionate and competent translations of their knowledge into action as they inform and create change. We have noticed, moreover, the consistency with which youth strive to challenge the disjuncture embedded in school systems which often separates their knowing from their ability to be actors of this knowledge in school.

It can be difficult for people in education systems to position youth who are dis-engaged in school as actors and educational change-agents. Youth in these situations are often seen as lacking ‘follow through’ and motivation as learners. Educators often narrate their experiences of youth’s incomplete assignments, their lateness for class and lack of class attendance; they recount youth’s lack of engagement in class discussions and non-participation in school activities. And when, in fact, youth do act in school and in their lives, their actions often become framed by educators as acts of impulsiveness, defiance and resistance, rather than in terms of ‘agency’ for educational change.

In listening carefully to youth’s educational narratives, and in creating contexts for partnership and educational change, alternative narratives of youth as educational partners and leaders emerge. These narratives become further strengthened by paying attention to youth’s agency and action. Through our work with youth, we have become increasingly aware of youth’s interplay of spontaneous and planned actions which create complex and sophisticated understandings of educational change-making.

Agency involves the capacity to initiate and create change. While drawing from this notion, we further position youth agency within a politicized context of power relations and issues of difference. Specifically, we use the terms actor, agency and change-making to refer to the multiple ways youth act to minimize, challenge, subvert and/or transform unjust and disenfranchising material and discursive conditions in their lives. By material conditions we refer to basic amenities (such as food, shelter, clothing, transportation, safety) as well as the structures and practices which comprise our societal and education systems. Discursive conditions refer to the array of educational and societal discourses, policies, ideologies and narratives about youth, education, schooling, being ‘at-risk’ and so forth. These material and discursive conditions in youth’s lives are intimately connected processes shaping their lives and forms of knowing and agency.

### **Youth Agency as Action Researchers**

Youth’s agency to challenge and change inequities they experience in school, and in their lives, is situated and complex. Our two action research initiatives have served as one site from which to witness and explore, with youth, their experiences and enactments as change-agents. These

projects centre youth voice and participation, using cycles of action and reflection, to create more democratic and just educational contexts for youth who have experienced marginality in school. Consistently youth have shown passion, commitment, focus, creativity, resourcefulness and expedience when they experience authentic openings to become change-agents. Having decision-making power, working in democratic partnership with educators and working on

projects that can affect tangible change are key features of youth's understanding of meaningful involvement. In the *Good Hands* study, youth became passionate curriculum-builder actors knowing their vision could inform the curriculum in the proposed alternative school in their community. Youth in the *Transformative Vision to Transformative Practice* study became involved because our central research mandate is to effect concrete changes within their present schooling context.

Youth resonate strongly with action research because it is embedded in action. Action research serves as a mirror which affirms and reflects back to youth their care and desire to be learners in empowering contexts and their ability to be central players in making change happen. Many youth express the significance of being able to make a difference so that their siblings, children and other youth do not encounter the same kinds of disempowerment they experienced in school. They recognize that while they are our future, they are also our present. They express their desire to contribute now. As powerfully relayed by one youth action researcher, "I have ideas NOW. I have dreams NOW. Why wait until I'm a so- called adult to fulfill my dreams. I am living in the present and I have ideas for the present. By the time I'm older my ideas may be obsolete to the new generation, just as the ideals of the present education system were manufactured for the generations past."

In this vein of energy and determination, we have watched youth become fearless actors in expecting success in their initiatives -- and they have experienced real success. For instance, the Coalition for Educational Opportunities (CEO) formally adopted youth's curriculum vision as part of their alternative school proposal, which in turn informed the Eastern School District's (ESD) curriculum design for the proposed alternative school.

Inclusivity and representation are central themes within youth's subjectivities as change-agents. Acutely aware of their own experiences of exclusion, these youth allocated significant time and resources to soliciting, representing and being informed by a diversity of youth voices. In our action research projects youth created open youth forums, youth feedback sheets, conducted interviews, solicited the views of other youth on blogs, visited classrooms to engage youth in discussion, posted on graffiti walls and created feedback boxes. Youth are keenly aware of the need for multiple and on-going strategies to reach their peers and often they express feeling very energized and engaged by this aspect of the research process. This sense of commitment to represent a diversity of youth voices is matched by youth's desires to ensure that their peers' ideas are put into practice. For instance, youth often choose to develop multiple strategies to represent and communicate their findings. They traverse boundaries between the logical -linear and the creative -metaphoric to create forms of outreach and dissemination which are multi-media blendings of power point, poetry, visual arts, music, journaling and graffiti walls. Effective representation, however, is not viewed as an end in itself, rather it is viewed by youth as a tool they can use to strengthen their access, power and ability to implement their findings. Putting their findings into practice are framed by youth as acts of hope, as demonstration of the relevancy of their peers' ideas and as evidence that change is possible. Here again, for youth to

‘know’ means to ‘act’. Youth live and create understandings of research which are deeply tied to acting on knowing.

In our work with youth, we have also witnessed youth’s agency as persistent problem-solvers and reflectors-in-action. In tackling barriers they encounter we have remarked on the ways they often treat obstacles as opportunities. Youth have, for instance, responded to the constant movement and shifting in their own, and in their peers’ day- to-day educational lives by re-orienting and shifting plans to connect to the realities of the present-moment context, atmosphere, possibilities and audience. Here youth have been leaders in positioning research within a model of continual action -- action that is initiated through planning, but then informed in its implementation by the present-moment.

### **Youth Agency in the Lives of Youth**

Our understanding of youth agency has been enhanced by listening to youth share their navigation of inequities which present themselves across their day -to-day contexts -- actions youth often take-for-granted because they are so familiar to their own daily lives. Just as youth’s knowledge was rooted in their experiences of inequities, challenges and strengths, so too, was their action. Youth’s understandings and practices of action were often shaped by forms of agency they engaged in relation to these issues in their daily lives.

Youth relayed a variety of experiences of educational change actions, such as: a) standing up to teachers and peers when negatively labelled; b) advocating for appropriate supports and resources for themselves and their sibling and/or children; c) challenging school administrators on inequities within school policies and practices; d) proposing ideas and solutions to school barriers they face; e) providing forms of social support for students who are treated disrespectfully at school; f) creating spaces in school to improve feelings of belonging; and g) leaving mainstream schools to find educational contexts which better reflect their strengths, needs and visions as learners.

As seen here, youth’s actions to minimize, challenge, subvert and/or transform unjust and disenfranchising practices and ideologies in school can be seen, at least in part, as normative aspects of their school relations. These acts are often isolated and lost in the shuffle of larger school power relations. Action research provides a site from which youth can re-claim and re-constitute their histories of advocacy. Further, it gives value to the ways in which youth’s current educational change initiatives draw from these experiences of action.

### **Conclusion**

By forming partnerships with youth in educational change projects, educators have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of youth as ‘knowers’ and ‘actors’. Educators stand to gain first-hand experience of youth’s competency, passion and leadership as agents of educational change. Currently our education system fails to position youth, and in particular, marginalized youth, as key partners in educational change initiatives in this province. Material and discursive conditions in education still (predominately) position educational reform as something that is enacted by adult stakeholders (e.g., educators, parents, business and community leaders) on youth’s behalf. As educators, policy-makers and administrators, however,

we must realize that we cannot become leaders of social justice reform in education without embracing the leadership of youth who are experiencing the very inequities we are trying to remove from present-day educational contexts.

Through our action research and coalition partnerships with youth we have had the privilege of transforming our own understandings of educational change. In this paper, we have offered our own experiences with youth as ‘knowers’ and ‘change-agents’ as one illustration of the need for transformation within our education system. Youth, and in particular youth who are not thriving in school, need to become our partners and allies in conceptualizing and enacting educational change. In doing so, our ability as educators to embody our commitments to democracy and social justice in education will become deepened and energized.

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## **Chapter 9: Living Lives Between Borders: Interdisciplinary Academic Work and the Search for Transformative Openings**

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In many respects being a PhD student is about learning—sometimes simultaneously— the dangers and limitations of boundaries as, individually and collectively, we try to come to terms with an academic “tradition”, but one which is by its nature eclectic and ever changing. Writing from the standpoint of new scholars and teachers, we come with an openness to new approaches and insights as our generation makes its way into an academic culture and a world which is at once exciting and—in the best and worst senses of the word—*troubling* (Butler, 1997).

Inspired by Henry Giroux’s idea of border crossing, the present issue of *The Morning Watch* represents an effort to find an approach to academic work which is at its heart collaborative, but also, nuanced and engaging. First and foremost, we have begun our undertaking with the recognition that “the concept of border crossing not only critiques those borders that confine experience and limits the politics of crossing diverse geographical, social, cultural, economic, and political borders, it also calls for new ways to forge a public pedagogy” (Giroux, 2005, p. 6). It is this transgressive exploration of the politics of the personal as political that Giroux’s work shares with his mentors, and peers: cultural workers such as Paulo Freire, Joe Kincheloe, Shirley Steinberg and bell hooks.

Indeed, shortly before this issue went to press we were met with the sad news of Joe Kincheloe’s passing. Inspired by his work, in particular his notions of the bricoleur, and post formalism, but perhaps more so his remarkable humility and passion, we take on this task with a heightened sense of the urgent need to create new ways of being, thinking and living in the dynamic, sometimes constrictive space we come to know as the contemporary Academy. For us, all of the aforementioned teacher-educators are concerned with an educational approach which is rooted in dialogue, criticality and compassion – that is, each of the aforementioned writers seeks to unite theory with the “real lives” of students in ways which relate the political to the personal, the imaginative to the critical.

In many ways, then, we see Joe’s passing as reaffirming the need to claim each opportunity for living and learning as activities which define us and our capacity to love more fully. Taking strength from his wisdom and insight, we see this type of work as the site of a rare wisdom which combines human caring with an undying resiliency. Indeed, for us, as for countless of his peers, friends and students, Joe was, and remains, the embodiment of such a spirit: a thinker who combined the consummate skill of the, skilful, but rough and ready, artisan with the poet’s imagination and passion.

With such a vision in mind, as guest editors we have welcomed works which deal with desire, power, knowledge, freedom, their relation to the cultural politics which makes education at once a construct of historical memory and a forward looking, transformative desire. Indeed, speaking from our own particular institutional vantage point, we perceived that *The Morning Watch* provided a space to give voice to those works over the course of nearly three decades.

In this issue we have sought to bring together the work of students and professors who collectively recognize the tentative, often exploratory, nature of human knowledge. In doing so, we have reaffirmed our belief in the need to make the university more open to the needs and aspirations of those marginalized by our culture's dominant power structures as we strive to make the world a more compassionate place. In some ways, each of the essays in this issue deals with the fundamental tension, between hope and loss which reminds us that we cannot truly transform the world without knowing the depth of its despair and its longing.

Perhaps to some extent the borders our institutions are designed to create separating the able and the unable, demonstrates the lack of a significant emotive dimension within contemporary institutional realities as educators forgo experiencing the sometimes remarkable depths of human love and compassion. Building on this theme, for Elizabeth Yeoman in her review essay of Barbara Coloroso's *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide... And Why It Matters*, the links between genocide and bullying reveal both the transformative promise of education and the arbitrariness of human suffering. Yeoman's reading of Coloroso displays her mistrust of simple binarisms, as well as the intimation that the starkness of this contrast between human love and suffering is, in itself, a pedagogical insight – one which underscores the underlying need to foster a more critical conception of human agency. Although one might conclude that “[p]erhaps Coloroso has it right and the antidote to destructiveness is...simply doing good” what does goodness mean in a complex, postmodern world of fragmentation and uncertainty? Yeoman's nuanced perspective leads the reader to ask what this desire to “do good” might look like in specific human contexts, namely the varied, contested, individual life worlds and communities where concepts are embodied and thereby take their form and being?

While impossible to answer in the abstract, this question leads us to the realization that sometimes the link between specific forms of pedagogy and transformative practice is mired in our preconceptions about certain “types” of people. In some respects, these primary borders frustrate our attempts to transform learners since they are built into the fabric of any subsequent pedagogical project which is not reflexive or radical enough to challenge them. In this vein, Morgan Gardner, Ann McCann and Angela Crocker see the often taken for granted vitality and exuberance of youth as a means of forming strategic alliances through participatory action research which builds on the pedagogical aspects of youth culture and identity. For Gardner and her colleagues, much of what we see as the shortcomings of youth from conventional educational standpoints in essence reflects a preoccupation with effecting critical, often emancipatory, forms of collaboration and change. In their words, “as educators, policy-makers and administrators...we must realize that we cannot become leaders of social justice reform in education without embracing the leadership of youth who are experiencing the very inequities we are trying to remove from present-day educational contexts” (p. 11). As such, Gardner's project reminds us that being critical often means being willing to embrace the counterintuitive with steadfast courage.

Similarly, for Clar Doyle in his exploration of graduate education and educational research, the contemporary backdrop of a global economic crisis reveals the precarious underpinnings of a society which worships the expert's promise of certainty as a diversion from more textured, nuanced forms of life. Instead, for Doyle, imaginative pedagogies recognize that much of the generative and transformative potential of aesthetic and critical forms of education rests in their

propensity to re-examine and recreate the liminal, and, often indeterminate, aspects of human culture. As he succinctly puts it: “[R] recognizing the illusion of certainty is a healthy academic exercise” (p. 1).

Doyle, like Gardner, then, challenges us to recognize that listening to students can be a transformative act which reinvents the everyday in ways which are radical by virtue of their very embodied imaginativity. By reflecting on his experiences as a lifelong playwright and educator, Doyle comes to realize the importance of helping students by “building on their own ideologies and experiences” as they “move toward realizing that critical research can often be the best approach for dealing with the complexities of educational, social, and cultural life” (p.1). Towards such an end, Doyle urges us to recognize that, in spite of the sometimes rigid borders of academic research, life remains ready at hand, in all of its beauty, richness and wondrous complexity.

Bridging the concerns of Doyle and Gardner, Melody Ninomiya asks whether educators have allowed conventions and stereotypes to typecast sexual education for contemporary youth in a curriculum which seeks to hide or mask the complexities of gender identity and the experience of erotic pleasure. Reflecting on her research as a graduate student, Ninomiya contends that “sexual health education remains rooted in the simplistic idea that it exists primarily to regulate teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)”(p.1) What are the costs, she asks, of such a limited view of human sexuality and desire? In grappling with this question, Ninomiya’s work provides a timely challenge to the dogmas and neuroses of contemporary lifestyle education, as she invites us to consider the implications of an educational system in which “educators are rarely exposed to problematic and oppressive qualities of curriculum documents and materials, particularly as they relate to SHE, where there is a need for radical changes and critical thinking” (p.7). Difference, Ninomiya implies, collapses into the stifling constraints proffered by the artificial borders of a safe but blinkered heteronormative reality.

In an era of resurgent authoritarianism, how do we position the "intellectual" in a way which is both ethical and responsible in light of our society's democratic heritage, its progressive dreams, and its colonial inheritance? While, for many, such a question is beyond the pale of a technical rationality which is the proper realm of expert academic knowledge, for Amarjit Singh they are an inescapable aspects of what it means to work and struggle within the contemporary academy. Like Hoben, Singh cautions against the influence of neo-liberal values and institutional practices within university cultures as well as within broader society itself.

Indeed, for both writers, the foreclosure of hybrid spaces for dialogue and praxis, which has seemed to go hand in hand with the proliferation of utilitarian discourses of efficiency, has meant the wholesale erosion of democratic cultural capital as a source of innovation and inspiration. In many ways, both authors suggest, the confluence of market ideologies with hierarchical conceptions of work relations are by no means accidental, but are suggestive of a set of more complex, underlying hegemonic relationships.

Understanding the plight of democracy in the contemporary academy as well as within the broader culture, requires both a commitment to public discourse and a willingness to challenge the dogmas of neoliberal desire in its subtle, and sometimes disarming, guises. Any war of position against managerial discourses of surveillance and control, then, must take into account

the strategic possibilities for collaboration across public spaces as well as across conventional boundaries within the academy itself.

All of the essays in this volume, then, are about negotiating borders by listening, both critically and imaginatively, to the world of those whom we, as educators, wish to change. Without exception, the authors recognize that transformative education is not about objectifying the unquantifiable ethical and personal dimensions of human love and compassion. Rather, it is about working together, as we empower people to work through loss and despair, *for themselves*. As such, border pedagogy is rooted in a democracy of the everyday, as life is re-read in ways which makes the familiar simultaneously dangerous and captivating. In this shared public of little spaces then, we come to see that borders are constructs, which, no matter how seemingly imposing, can be redrawn, or, at last instance, removed. Always then, border pedagogues remain aware of the fact that the first step towards transformative change is the earnest conviction that a better world lives on, awaiting, in the immanent realm of human possibility.

Thus, quite simply, the search for an effective border pedagogy is the attempt to embody, through our lives and teaching practice, what Giroux has elsewhere called the broader effort to “link democracy to public action and to ground such a call in defence of militant utopian thinking as a form of educated hope” (Giroux, 2001, p. xiii). In a border ridden world, then, we are looking for the unexpected or, rather, hoping that the unexpected will cause us to cross boundaries, as, in continually reinventing the educative project, we come a little closer to finding each other, through our ongoing search for transformative openings, in the very flesh and fabric of our non unitary lives.

## **Chapter 10: Translated Lives**

Elizabeth Yeoman

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### **Abstract**

The stories we tell and the ways we tell them have a profound impact on our lives and societies. For example, the story that spokespeople for NATO told about the areas in Labrador where they tested weapons and trained fighter pilots -- that no one lived there -- is the same story that has been told over and over through hundreds of years of history and into the present with devastating consequences to the people who did and do in fact live there. According to Thomas King, stories are all we are (2003: 63). In this article, I reflect on some of the stories I grew up with -- stories about language, history and nationhood --- and how they shaped my research. I also discuss the value of research that does not ask clear questions or find definite answers, but rather takes a narrative approach to understanding the world.

### **Where I come from:**

It begins like a fairy tale: Two little girls, one fair and one dark, met in a forest. The dark one said to the fair one, “I can speak French and English” (her opening words and this alone tells us much about the location of this particular forest). The fair one answered that she could speak five languages, and proceeded to speak them one after the other. Although this article is a memoir, this is not, in fact, my memory, although I can see this scene vividly in my mind and I know the exact glade where they met, the smell of spruce and fir, the call of bluejays, and the precise way the sun sifted through the branches of the birch trees. My memory is of meeting the same girl again years later at university where she told me about the encounter. Her grandmother lived on what was known as the Back Road, and it could be accessed by walking along a grassy path through the woods behind our house. I walked along that path at least once a day circumnavigating our five acre property, a property that had once been the estate of a wealthy Loyalist family, of whose former grandeur there were still traces. The path included a flight of stone stairs, now tumbled and moss covered, almost buried, leading to what was once a lily pond with swans on it, which we called the Frog Pond, more a marsh in some seasons but good for skating in winter. I had no recollection of the encounter and yet I was certain the little girl who spoke five languages was me. I didn’t really, but I longed to desperately and I had memorized phrases of Hindi, German, French and Spanish that I begged from people who spoke them (or in the case of German, read in an old textbook of my mother’s). In a sense that was my first research project.

My family home and the forest were in New Brunswick. Nouveau Brunswick. Acadie. X. X because as I write this I realize I don’t know the Mi’kmaq name for the place where I grew up, though they were there first, supplanted by French Acadians who dyked the land and farmed it, and who later were deported by the English Loyalists in 1755. There was an old French fort near where we lived, Fort Beauséjour - a windswept hilly place with long views out across the Tantramar marshes (the Tintamarre - an old French word for a lot of noise, perhaps because of all the birds on the marsh) and Shepody Bay, where the

English sailed in and won a decisive battle for control of the territory. As children we loved the old fort and were regularly taken there by our father, released to run wildly up and down the hills and in and out of the batteries and underground magazines. Once I said to him confidently, believing that loving a place makes it one's own somehow, "If we had lived back when it was a fort we would have been on their side, right?" "Well, actually", he responded, "we probably would have been on the other side." How could that be? It was an early realization of the random irrationality of war. I still had not figured out that most of our friends would have been on the opposing side. There is also the thorny issue of the two sides, neither of which were the original owners of the land, the Mi'kmaq - though some of them were among the people huddled desperately inside the fort. But we say it was a war between the French and the English, as if the Mi'kmaq weren't anywhere at all.

Waves of displacement, and yet the descendants of all these people were still there in the village of my childhood, their children in the same classrooms, skating on the same pond, hanging out in the village square or the old hay barns on the marsh, swimming at the same beach. The Acadians made their long and arduous way back from Louisiana where they were deported, and the Mi'kmaq simply moved closer to the forest on the edge of the village and hung on. I could look up the Mi'kmaq name for the place instead of indicating it with an X but I want to make my ignorance visible here. It too is part of how I became a researcher. I know my childhood home so intimately, the cadences of peoples' voices, the patterns of the tides, the best place to buy fried clams or pick blackberries, the sites of my ancestors' graves. But in some ways I don't know it at all, and I don't even know its name. That X is another research project.

### **Language and ideology:**

New Brunswick. Nouveau Brunswick. Acadie. X. Driving there from Toronto via New England, a friend and I discuss the slogans on license plates. New Hampshire's "Live Free or Die" and Quebec's "Je me souviens", whose origins no one seems quite sure of, though it was in use as far back as 1883 when Eugène-Étienne Taché included it in his design for the provincial parliament building (Justice Québec, 2008). As we cross the border into New Brunswick, we are still talking about language and ideology. Looking at license plates reading "New Brunswick" above and "Nouveau Brunswick" below the numbers, I say "no ideology here, just the translation". "Of course it's ideology", says my (Welsh) friend. And I am transported back to a visit to another friend at the University of Wales in the 1970s and the debates about language there. I remember mentioning to someone that it felt just like home. At the Université de Moncton, where I was a student at the time, the arguments about things like the language on road signs were the same, ours having recently been made bilingual. "Ah!" he interrupted, "but which language comes first on the signs?" Even when the language is publicly recognized, the order is ideological. And Mi'kmaq is still invisible in most public spaces where I come from<sup>1</sup>.

Later I came to work at Memorial University and my work included teaching courses in Labrador. The federal government does recognize two Indigenous languages there, Innu-aimun and Inuktitut, to some extent, along with French and English in the signs it posts. But the order is still ideological, and the information conveyed reflects conditions



imposed from outside: a warning not to take more than a limited number of fish because of mercury poisoning; another about low level flying (see Figure 1). For thousands of years people took fish whenever they needed them, and they and the animals were undisturbed by low level flying, until NATO began to test bombs on Innu land and train jet fighter pilots there. The explosive roar of the planes sweeping up the valley of the Mishta-shipu terrified children and disrupted the migratory patterns of the caribou, according to the Innu who lived there. According to NATO, no one lived there.<sup>2</sup>

The research questions I had from childhood were about language but as I got older I realized that language is closely connected to power and this raised many more research questions. It also led, eventually, to learning new theoretical languages, the language of poststructuralism for example, and with the new language, new ways of thinking about the world. How, for example, did binary oppositions such as English/French, Settler/Native, settled land/uninhabited land shape our understanding of history and the present, of who matters and who doesn't, of what is important and what isn't? How do discursive practices such as the wording and placement of signs and license plates affect our ways of thinking and our actions? And how do these things change over time and from place to place?



Figure 1. Sign in Goose Bay, Labrador (Photo credit: Elizabeth Yeoman)

### **Belonging:**

I'm listening to Georges Dor's heart breaking song of love and loss and longing, *La Manic*, on *Espace Musique*. It's a song that has become a classic of Québécois folklore, sung more recently to huge acclaim in Montreal by Leonard Cohen, and I'm transported back to my youth: "Si tu savais comme on s'ennuie à la Manic, tu m'écrirais bien plus souvent à la Manicouagan..."<sup>3</sup> Much of the soundtrack of my youth is Québécois or Acadian - Robert Charlebois, 1755, Zachary Richard, Diane Dufresne, iconic on an album cover, naked but for the Québec flag painted on her torso... Memories of a winter carnival - everyone singing at the tops of their voices, "Chu dedans! Chu dedaa-aa-ans", an evening in a student bar listening to



the plaintive refrains of Véronique Sanson, road trips belting out folk songs: *L'arbre est dans ses feuilles*; *O chante l'alouette*; *Dans la prison de Londres*. I remember singing this last one with my friend Johanne Kérouac, a cousin of the more famous Jack, and a group of French musicians around a campfire in Brittany. We all knew the same song or almost the same, but while we, the visitors from Canada, sang “in London prison”, they sang “in Nantes prison”: a small yet significant difference. In Canada, the prison where the narrator of the ballad is held has morphed into an English one - a dramatic opposition, a French prisoner in an English prison. When I hear those songs now, they take me back to a place and time not shared by most people where I live now. It was a particular time and confluence of people and events. Two years earlier, lonely and far too young (sixteen and fresh from convent boarding school), I had dropped out of university at the more prestigious Mount Allison, spent a few months holed up in the library reading before admitting to my parents that I had in fact dropped out, then worked summer jobs and spent the money on a ticket to Paris. I wanted to learn French.

Novelist and essayist, Nancy Huston (2002), has written about her experience moving to France and learning French:

[T]he French language... was to me less emotion-fraught, and therefore less dangerous than my mother tongue. It was cold, and I approached it coldly. It was a smooth, homogeneous, neutral substance, with no personal associations whatsoever. At least at first, the fact that I was blithely ignorant of the historical, psychological and social backdrop against which I was writing gave me a heady sense of freedom in my work (p. 49).

In her memoir of becoming a researcher, *French Lessons*, American writer Alice Kaplan (2008) tells her story of working indefatigably to turn herself into a “French person”, perfecting her accent, mannerisms and cultural knowledge over a period of years, beginning during adolescence when learning a new language and taking on a new culture became a way of escaping from an unhappy home life. Reflecting on the memoir later, she described it as being “about one aspect of myself: the self who wanted to escape into another language, who wanted to leave home” (p. 100). Ironically, I didn’t really have to leave home to “escape into another language”, as Huston and Kaplan had done. Or I did and I didn’t. I could already speak French in a way, having heard it around me all my life. But people tended to switch to English when I stumbled so I decided to go to a place where they couldn’t (or wouldn’t) do that. When I returned home with a new more confident identity in the language, I went to the nearest francophone university, l’Université de Moncton.

Moncton, a dusty railroad town on a bend in a tidal river bordered by marshes and mud, at the time was in the middle of language wars. The struggles and demonstrations over language are depicted in the NFB film *L’Acadie, l’Acadie* (which can be seen online at [http://www.onf.ca/film/acadie\\_acadie](http://www.onf.ca/film/acadie_acadie)). I still cringe, all these years later, watching the anglophone mayor humiliate the francophone students as they made a presentation to City Hall advocating for French language rights. The students were radicalized by the experience and my father said, only half jokingly, “Don’t go there! They’ll turn you into a radical.” I think I was already a radical, however, and in some ways so was he (he wrote some of the legislation that made New Brunswick officially bilingual only a year after the student demonstrations) but the

university changed me in other ways. I developed a different set of cultural and emotional referents than I would have if I had stayed at Mount Allison.

I belonged but I didn't. My accent was a bit odd, a mixture of "France French", Acadian and English. I had many friends but "les anglais" came up regularly in casual conversation as a symbolic other, the source of oppression, problems and difficulties. I tried not to take it personally, and it wasn't meant personally but it was a constant reminder that, as I had first realized at Fort Beauséjour, I came from the opposite side of our shared history. And yet I was at home.

It's a strange feeling, this belonging and yet not belonging, but it's very familiar to me. In Newfoundland, where I've lived for over twenty years, people assume I'm a tourist as soon as I open my mouth. It can be annoying when they offer to give me directions or explain things I know perfectly well. Yet, at the same time, that minor discomfort of being taken for an outsider, that liminality, feels like home to me. And when I hear the French of south eastern New Brunswick, of Shediac, Moncton, the Memramcook Valley, the songs of Marjo Tério and Lisa LeBlanc that sounds like home to me too, even though it's not my first language. Like Nancy Huston and Alice Kaplan, I "escaped into another language". But I did it at home.

In *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Michael Ignatieff (1993) wrote about an encounter with a man in Trois Rivières: "We cannot share a nation -- we cannot share it since I am English and he is French... Because we do not share a nation, we cannot love the same state" (p. 134). Ignatieff went on to suggest that perhaps this is a good thing, perhaps "a fierce shared love of a nation state" is dangerous. And perhaps he is right. But my experience was different. This leaves me with more research questions: who can share a nation, what does it mean to do so, who can belong, and on what grounds?

### **An encounter with Nancy Huston:**

Nancy Huston was one of the special guests known as "Big Thinkers" at the 2010 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Congress at Concordia University. The Congress describes itself as "the premiere destination for Canada's scholarly community". They sponsor an annual conference for researchers in the humanities and social sciences and each year it is in a different city. That year it was in Montreal and Nancy Huston was billed as "a Canadian writer of both fiction and non-fiction, who has moved back and forth between French and English [and whose] writing has had much to do with negotiating both borders and identities" (sshrc.ca). Her session was presented in French.

Slim and graceful, Huston spoke about her life in France and how living as a foreigner makes one humble in a way that she considers healthy. She recognized that she could not equate her cultural difference and disadvantage with that of, say, a Cambodian or a Senegalese in Paris, but nevertheless having constantly to reflect on how to communicate, on whether the nuance is right, the syntax perfect, has a bracing impact and prevents one from becoming complacent. She expressed, articulately and eloquently, so much of my own experience and values. But then, suddenly, her gentle erudite tone changed to anger as she recounted being lost with her children in the mountains of the Basque country, driving frantically on and on through remote countryside as night fell, unable to find her way because the Basques had painted out all the French directions (or Spanish - it wasn't clear which part of the Basque country they were in) leaving

only the Basque. She said that Basque culture is sclérotique - intransigent, hidebound. I was struck by the sudden change in tone and perspective and wondered why she described this experience so differently, as if it stood apart from her general analysis, when the exact same thing, the painting out of road signs, had been so common here in Québec when we were young. The roads of New Brunswick too (or should I say the roads of Acadie?) were dotted with signs on which the English was painted out and French added - often in dripping blood red letters, though this and other symbolic acts were pretty much the extent of the violence in Acadie, unlike Québec where there were kidnappings, bombings, and an assassination.

At the end of the talk, the moderator called for questions, still speaking French but reassuring the audience that we could use either language. I longed to ask about the Basques but I had seen that change in tone suggesting it was a delicate subject to say the least. I hesitated for a long time but finally I went to the end of the queue at the microphone. When the moderator called me forward, she said it would be the last question and please keep it short. (A question about language and politics in Quebec and please keep it short!) “J’ai beaucoup aimé votre discours. C’était très émouvant...” I began by saying how moving I had found her talk, how insightful and inspiring. I spoke French. If my point, like hers, was about the salutary effect of living in a language not one’s own, I thought I should. “On a vécu la même chose ici...” We had the same experience here (see Figure 2). Our signs were painted out in exactly the same way (I thought I heard a faint gasp from the audience - because I was comparing Québec’s quiet revolution to the militant campaign in which the Basque separatist group ETA claimed responsibility for hundreds of killings<sup>4</sup> - or perhaps I imagined it) and I think you’re right, it was good for us anglophones to learn a little humility, to struggle to express ourselves, to learn what it is like to be dépaycé - homesick and lost - in our own home. Your examples and your stories were fascinating. I laughed and I wept. And I agreed with all of it. Except. What about the Basques? What is so different about them and their language struggles?

“Madame!...Ce n’est même pas une language européenne!” She was indignant, furious though controlled, hautaine. Not even a European language? Of course, technically, Basque - the ancient indigenous language of the Pyrenees and the Bay of Biscay - is not an Indo-European language but surely it is, at the same time, one of the oldest European languages. And anyway, is that the point? Euskaria, the Basque country, is not a nation state but neither (I would not have dared to say this aloud) is Québec. It was through just such a struggle that Canada became bilingual, although not in an Indigenous language. What about indigenous languages here? A Yupik teacher from Alaska once told me how inspired she was by a visit to Ottawa where bilingualism was the norm. That norm began with a campaign that included, among other things, painted out signs. I wanted to ask Nancy Huston these questions because I truly wanted to hear what she thought. However, between the vehemence of her response and the moderator’s request to keep it short I thanked her and sat down, and she swept off the stage.

Not a European language? What do we say about our indigenous languages here, and the histories and presences they mark, the knowledge they convey? What kinds of research, what activisms, what teaching strategies, what creative acts can begin to address the ramifications of this question? Where do we end up if “not a European language” is where we start?



Figure 2. Basque road sign with Spanish painted over (Photo credit: Vladimir Menkov, Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike license <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Leaving-Arrasate-Mondragon-4623-section.jpg>)

### **“Places where language touches the earth”:**

A binary opposition: two official languages. Both European. I wish we had more, including Indigenous languages, inconvenient and time consuming though it can be in practice. But even two languages can have a symbolic value. For some people it says there can be more than one way of doing things. Coast Salish actor and physician, Evan Adams, commented after the Quebec referendum of 1995, in which 49.42% supported sovereignty, that he felt devastated because he had always believed that if there was room for two peoples and languages that meant that there could be room for others as well, but if French and English Canadians couldn't live together, there seemed to be no hope for Indigenous people (in Annau, 1999)<sup>5</sup>.

Indigenous Canadians in central Canada often say “meegweetch” at the end of a speech or announcement in English, in a gesture towards a lost language. Lost, at least, for up to 80% of Canada's Indigenous peoples according to Statistics Canada's 2006 census (though some groups fare much better than others linguistically and most Innu, for example, speak fluent Innu-aimun). Some theorists argue that just as ecological diversity is essential for the survival of the planet, so is linguistic diversity (for example, Skuttnabb-Kangas, 2008; Homer-Dixon, 2001). Languages carry with them vast bodies of knowledge and tradition: knowledge of potentially life saving medicines; of the cosmos; of history - including ancient history, which can be understood and



analysed through patterns of language, language shifts; poetry, songs, stories. So much is lost when the last speakers of a language die.

Someone has said that language is to Canada what race is to the United States. Though the parallel falls down in all sorts of ways, there is truth to it too. Our languages underscore histories of struggle and conquest, of power, loss and passionate love. As well, the link between language and the land resonates among Indigenous peoples around the globe. There are stories that can only be told in specific places on the land, and much to be learned from stories attached to certain places (see, for example, Basso, 1996; Momaday, 1998). “Where language touches the earth, there is the holy, there is the sacred”, wrote N. Scott Momaday (124).

What kind of research would protect the “places where language touches the earth” or, at the very least, enable people to understand something about the value of such places? During a presentation about the website [www.innuplaces.ca](http://www.innuplaces.ca), a website that allows visitors to explore Innu history and culture through maps, place names and stories, a member of the audience commented that “[t]his is the last thing you should be doing if you want to protect the culture. You’re talking about two completely different knowledge systems.” This provoked almost as strong a reaction as my question to Nancy Huston, yet the speaker had a point. It is by living on the land that we give meaning to place names in the sense Scott Momaday was talking about. A website is a valuable resource - I disagree that it is “the last thing” one should be doing - but intimate knowledge of the land comes only from living on it over time, through cycles and seasons. How do you translate the language of the land? (I have sometimes been accused by reviewers of asking research questions that couldn’t be answered and this paper is not intended as a model for how to become a researcher. That is probably obvious by now.)

### **Stories are all we are:**

I’m working now with Innu elder and environmental activist, Elizabeth Penashue, on transcriptions and translations of the diaries she has been keeping in Innu-aimun since the early days of the Innu protests against NATO low level flying and weapons testing on Innu land in the 1980s and nineties. (For readers interested in knowing more about Elizabeth, her blog can be seen at <http://elizabethpenashue.blogspot.ca/> and there is also a new film about her, Meshkanu: The Long Walk of Elizabeth Penashue by Andrew Mudge, which can be viewed online at <http://vimeo.com/57346500>. There is also an older, but still very relevant, NFB film in which she is featured: Hunters and Bombers by Nigel Markham and Hugh Brody.) Elizabeth is well known both within and far beyond the Innu Nation. The recipient of a National Aboriginal Achievement Award and an honorary doctorate from Memorial University, she has been a subject of documentary films, books and numerous articles.

Every year Elizabeth leads a walk of several weeks on snowshoes in nutshimit, a word which has been variously translated as “the bush”, “the wilderness”, “the country” and “the land”. The word has a broader meaning than any of these and I think for many Innu, it could simply mean “home”. Certainly for Elizabeth it is where she is most at home, and it is what was threatened by NATO, partly destroyed by the Churchill Falls hydro development and threatened with further developments now (though this time the Innu Nation was consulted). The iconic image (see Figure 3) of her figure walking on snowshoes pulling a toboggan is widely recognized and has clearly inspired others such as Michel Andrew who led a walk of young people from Sheshatshui

to Sept-Îles and Stanley Vollant, an Innu surgeon who has invited people to walk with him from Labrador to James Bay, and a group of young Innu from Natuashish who walked from Natuashish to Sheshatshui this year in memory of Burton Winters, a young boy who died on the ice last winter near Makkovik. (Information on these walks and their meanings can be seen at [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2009/02/11/andrew-walker.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/story/2009/02/11/andrew-walker.html) and <http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/8thfire/2012/01/dr-stanley-vollant.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10151297556121556.1073741832.634701555&type=1> .)



Figure 3. The iconic image of Elizabeth walking on the land (Photo copyright: Jerry Kobalenko)

I first met Elizabeth about ten years ago when I interviewed her for a CBC Ideas documentary on the theme of walking. I was in St. John's and she was in Goose Bay. It was the first interview she had ever given in English and she had brought her daughter to help her. As she described the walk and its meaning in relation to her quest for environmental justice and cultural survival for the Innu, she wept ... and so did I. Somehow across our vast cultural and linguistic difference and through our tears, we connected. The next year I joined her on the walk, and not long afterwards she asked me to help her produce a book based on her diaries. Her request was soon followed by the arrival of a large and slightly tattered cardboard box on my doorstep, brought down from Labrador by a mutual friend and containing a pile of scribbles and a sheaf of papers, all of them covered in scrawly writing in Innu-aimun, the only language Elizabeth reads and writes. Someone from Heritage Canada had actually contacted me earlier to see if I would be

interested in working on the project but I had said no, thinking that it would consume my life. However, now that I knew Elizabeth, I could not refuse. As I anticipated, it has consumed a fair bit of my life these past few years but it has also brought me extraordinary opportunities to experience a way of life utterly different from my own and from that of most Canadians, one that we should know more about, and to work with Elizabeth's moving and eloquent stories so that others can read them too.

Finding ways to tell these stories to the world is exciting and fascinating, but far from simple. Vanessa Andreotti, Cash Ahenakew and Garrick Cooper discuss some potential challenges, arguing that "scholars and educators working with indigenous ways of knowing are called to translate these into the dominant language, logic and technologies in ways that are intelligible and coherent (and, very often, acceptable or palatable) to readers and interpreters in the dominant culture" (2011: 44). I have discussed some of these challenges in a recent article (Yeoman, 2012) available online at <https://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/jcacs/issue/current>. Mi'kmaq scholar Marie Battiste (2004) uses the term "culturalism" to describe attitudes and practices that homogenize indigenous and western cultures and construct indigenous cultures as deficient. It is not an exaggeration to say that culturalism underpins colonization, land theft and genocide. And it is difficult to avoid since such attitudes are so embedded in our language and our narratives. The stories that we tell and the ways that we tell them matter. They matter terribly. For example, the story that spokespeople for NATO told about the land where they tested weapons and trained fighter pilots, that no one lived on the land, is the same story that has been told over and over through hundreds of years of history and into the present with devastating consequences to the people who did and do in fact live there. In *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*, award winning writer and scholar Thomas King shows how the stories we tell shape our societies and the ways we live our lives. According to King, stories are all we are (2003: 63).

In retrospect, my research questions have almost always been impossible to answer, except in a narrative way, or with more questions. I felt for a long time that this was a problem, that research was supposed to provide clear analysis and find answers. A great deal of research does that of course, and some of it is enormously valuable. But there is enormous value too in talking about questions that can't be answered, and in narrative answers. Finding the best ways to tell the stories that matter most has been, and will be, a long struggle. But I have finally realized, after many years of trying to do the sort of research that I thought was expected of me, that this is all I can do.

As Thomas King (2003) would say, "don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now" (p. 151).

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>However, the first PhD thesis in Mi'kmaq was recently defended at York University. See <http://alumni.news.yorku.ca/2010/11/29/phd-student-defends-thesis-in-migmaw-language-a-york-first/>

<sup>2</sup> A NATO spokesperson in the NFB film *Hunters and Bombers* said the testing was acceptable because there were no permanent settlements there. But the Innu were nomads and, although they now live in “settled” communities, they still continue nomadic practices such as hunting, fishing and gathering on the land of their ancestors. And it is still their land.

3 “If you knew how lonely I am in La Manic, you’d write me far more often, in La Manicouagan.” At the time the song was written, a huge hydroelectric dam was under construction on the Manicouagan River and the narrator is a construction worker on the project. The song evokes the loneliness of people forced to leave home to find work.

<sup>4</sup> Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, or ETA, declared a ceasefire in 2010 which has been upheld since then.

<sup>5</sup> This is one view of Canada’s bilingualism, and clearly it is shared by some Indigenous people, including Adams and the Yupik teacher I mentioned earlier. However, another perspective is that, on the contrary, our official bilingualism explicitly and implicitly serves to exclude Indigenous and other languages and cultures. Eve Haque, in her recent book, *Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race and Belonging in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2012) has made a detailed and compelling case for this second perspective.

## Chapter 11: Sexual Health Education: Silenced by Diplomacy and Political Correctness

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### Abstract

*My exploratory Master's thesis research examines how teachers of 'sex ed.' in Newfoundland and Labrador perpetuate problematic assumptions as they relate to sexual health. Sexual health education remains rooted in the simplistic idea that it exists primarily to regulate teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Educators' diplomatic thinking and pedagogies expose how fear and discomfort have served to silence topics such as pleasure, desire, homophobia and gender identity. This article challenges educators (and those who support them) to cross over the border of political correctness and diplomatic relations by first examining their own notions of gender, sexuality, curricular/pedagogical objectivity and privilege.*

*Transforming the conversation of sexual health in the classroom offers possibilities for challenging dominant culture and assumptions. For example, educators can re-define safe sex as the practice of fostering a culture of safety for all sexual and gender identities. Considerations related to the complexity of single-sex versus co-ed classrooms, abstinence, sexual pleasure, media representation and pornography, merit attention if we want to cross the borders instilled by fear and ignorance.*

A society that is unwilling and struggles to engage in dialogue with children about love, desire and commitment has seemingly turned to schools to teach sex education. It is often argued that educational institutions are overburdened by the demands to “solve the problems of a society unwilling to bear its burdens where they should be properly be shouldered” (Noddings, 2004, p. 167). This instrumentalist approach attempts to use curriculum as a tool, responding to the real or imagined crises of teenage pregnancy and STIs (Case & Tudiver, 1983; Diorio, 1985; Moran, 2000; Prentice, 1994). Sex education today, though more cautious in its claim for effectiveness, is still viewed as an agent working against STIs and teenage pregnancy (Moran, 2000).

This essay, drawing on my qualitative Master's thesis research, highlights how sexual health education (SHE) is largely shaped by teachers' conscious and unconscious fears, discomforts and values. All too often teachers choose silence on issues that are perceived as controversial while also touting progressive inclusion (i.e., acknowledging that there is nothing wrong with “homosexuality”). Based on a survey of the pertinent literature and my own critical -qualitative study using open ended questionnaires, I argue that teachers must examine how SHE may serve to oppress more than it equips youth to better understand their identities, values and choices. It is time for teachers (and those who support them) to re-invent SHE through critical thinking, further education and counter-hegemonic pedagogies.

## Defined by Dominant Cultures

For a sex-obsessed culture it seems reasonable to ask *why such a silence about sex?* Prentice (1994) writes that “we regularly talk about sex in order to argue we should not discuss it: we display it as proof we should not see it” (Prentice, 1994, p. 3). A conservative agenda of protecting and limiting sexualities in public settings is arguably untenable (Patton, 1996). Prentice (1994) writes about the insidious nature of sexual regulation:

Sexual regulation in all its forms produces a number of effects: it builds the ‘right’ character in citizens; it shapes the ‘right’ sorts of families; it harnesses libidinal energy and restricts its expression; it affirms those who are ‘normal’ and it punishes those who are deviant...without imagining conspiracies or reducing sexual discipline to a mere ‘effect’ of capitalism, racism or sexism, one can point out how useful it is to a consumer society to have a well-disciplined, relatively predictable citizenry who self-regulate...like other forms of social organizing, sexual regulation works in the service of ruling. It is accomplished through a nexus of formal and informal procedures and sanction, managed by a network of professionals inside and outside of the state: social workers, teachers, early childhood educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, public health nurses, licensing officials, corrections officers, social service administrators, religious leaders and the like. (Prentice, 1994, p. 7)

Canada is no exception in re-asserting a commitment to heteronormativity, gender binaries and hegemonic models of gender roles (Frank, 1994; Prentice, 1994). We do not need to look far to see how much sex is relational, shaped by social interaction, understood by historical context and assigned cultural meanings (Weeks, Holland, & Waites, 2003). Many people know that the words *sex* and *gender* are no longer synonymous and yet many struggle to understand why anyone would ever want to change their sex or gender. And while social codes of clothing and behaviour can no longer always be clearly defined by gender, how do we understand that people tolerate boyish girls and pity girly boys?

There is irony in the lack of service and protection offered to queer<sup>1</sup> youth in a society that offers many social service programs based on an uncontested child-saving concept. Is it easier for society to see the seventh grader as asexual rather than lesbian, gay or transgendered? If society views children as a product of their parents, how can we talk about a young person’s right to forge their gender identity (Talbert, 2004)? Prentice (1994) states that gender socialization is sex education. Recognizing that linguistics and gestured signs don’t just *mean*, but they *do*, informal sex education is ongoing throughout a child’s life (Haims, 1973; Patton, 1996). This informal sex education can be held accountable for the fear and violence directed towards anyone considered “deviant.” Imagine the term “safe sex” used to describe the absence of threat to those who deviate from any sexual norm – someone who represents a tension between a longing to be a citizen and a struggle to survive (Patton, 1996).

## Divorcing the Trinity of Biology = Gender = (Hetero) Sexuality

Prentice (1994) described the problematic multiple meanings for the word “sex”, a frequently unchallenged package of what *is* and what *ought*. In general, people have come to believe that

sex both is and should be exactly what it seems to be (Diorio, 1985). This ambiguous sense of sex poses a particular problem when token inclusion of non-heterosexual-identified people is used to symbolize support and tolerance - also something for which the non-heterosexual-identified are expected to be thankful (Kumashiro, 2002). Despite increased visibility of stereotypical “gay characters” on television shows and films, we are caught in a time when youth are reluctant to “out” themselves while media is busy constructing new cultural blueprints for the sexual identity that they are coming “into” (Fine, Anand, Jordan, & Sherman, 2003).

Fraser (1993) argues that there is advantage in creating *counterpublics*, a term signifying explicit alternatives to publics that exclude the interests of potential participants, to oppose stereotypes that cause shifting in one’s own identities, interests and needs. Ironically, the space to form counterpublics comes out of our exclusionary practices of the public sphere with hopes of reconstituting new identities (Fine et al., 2003). For example, Michael Warner as a queer theorist who writes about the possibilities for counterpublics, would argue that marriage is an extension of politics that “confers status on people rendering sex invisibly private and presumptively normative....giv[ing] people that status at the expense of others, while pretending merely to honor their private love and commitment” (Jagose, 2000).

It is necessary to critique and deconstruct terms such as sex, marriage or parenting that “marry” assumptions of gender performances, biological sex and heterosexuality. Until people are able to “divorce” themselves from such assumptions, they will not be able to think inclusively about the meaning of terms as it relates to all genders and sexualities.

### **Troubling Sex Education and Curriculum**

In a societal pedagogy that presumes language can transparently communicate and ignores how it excludes, polices and incites SHE and its chosen curriculum, a good antidote is to think of sex as multiple vernaculars (Patton, 1996). Getting in the way of multiple vernaculars is the issue of power and identity in schools, a concentrated source of contestation. SHE is a relatively narrow intervention that is expected to address an entire range of cultural responses to a complex social dynamic (Talburt, 2004).

The challenge lies in the question “how might curriculum begin to assert itself into the tangled web of ignorance that currently exists in and around discourses about sexuality” (Sumara & Davis, 1999, p. 200)? In theory, SHE would be incorporated and explored in all subject areas, fostering a deeper understanding and freeing adolescent sexuality from its inherited boundaries (Moran, 2000). These boundaries are profoundly influenced by notions of morality that preclude any neutral zone to “discuss the ‘facts’ of sexual reproduction, sexual attitudes or sexual behaviors” (Adams, 1994, pp. 60-61). Our moral views unquestionably alter our understanding of even the most scientific information (Adams, 1994).

The language of sexualities is complicated. Gilbert (2004) writes that “prohibiting and controlling what can or cannot be said about sex also determines what can be said about the self and its desires, dreams, and fantasies” (Gilbert, 2004, p. 111). The contradiction between knowledge as power and sexual knowledge as private and dangerous is the source of much debate around SHE. How can one teach about the dangers while also exploring the pleasures of

sex? What language does sexuality speak? How do we, as a society, learn to pose sexuality as a question? Gilbert (2004) suggests that these questions become the grounds of SHE conversations with adolescents. Most school curriculum assumes a transparent language that translates perceptions of sexualities into thought and fact. This assumption may indeed mark the limit of education in its current forms and practices (Gilbert, 2004).

### **Objective Curriculum?**

Looking at Newfoundland and Labrador's provincially mandated curriculum objectives for Human Sexuality units, the key messages have central themes of understanding puberty changes, reproductive anatomy and physiology, pregnancy and consequences of STDs and HIV/AIDS, awareness of sexual expression, responsible decision -making, and outcomes of sexual intercourse (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1993). It should not be shocking then, that teachers in a questionnaire distributed as part of my Master's thesis research, answered in ways that assume teaching SHE is about disseminating factual information that will discourage teenagers from having sex (i.e. practice abstinence). The majority of teachers in my study indicated a religious affiliation and in several cases made reference to the fact that their school was formerly Catholic and, consequently, exists in a predominantly Catholic/Anglican community. It would be remiss to not consider how church attendance may correlate with values taught in SHE. Marsman and Harold (1986) found in their Ontario-based study that frequent church attenders did not approve or disapprove of SHE but rather were more likely to favor conservative values *in* SHE.

Looking at the objectives of SHE, as mandated by the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2007a, 2007b), it is clear that the 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum is "organically connected to the sex education of the previous century" (Moran, 2000, p. 217). The objectives of the current SHE are organically connected to the previously denominationally Christian-based schools.

### **Teachers Assume Objectivity**

"Teachers are more likely to teach topics they consider important" (Johnson Moore & Rienzo, 2000, p. 59)

Looking at teachers' responses to topics covered, most important topics, measures of success and definitions of abstinence, there is an assumption that factual information needs to be covered while topics of controversy which risk offence (and, therefore, defense) are considered optional. Teachers emphasized and expressed concern for students' lack of understanding around *real world* consequences. To give an example, comments like those from teachers below were common throughout many of the open-ended answers.

*"[my main concern is that I] correct misinformation."*

*"[my main concern for students is] technical information, risks, consequences."*

*"Main concern is that information doesn't get through to students."*



*“The feedback I get from students allows me to evaluate their comprehension of topics we have covered.”*

*“[I emphasize abstinence] a great deal, but I feel students think this is preaching and do not believe that there is so much risk.”*

The combination of my teachers’ perception that health education at large is not an academic subject and that SHE is built on a medical framework intended to prevent and alert students to the dangers and difficulties of sex - facilitates *questioning* youth to work against each other (Allen, 2005; Bragg, 2006; Measor, Tiffin, & Miller, 2000). By neglecting critique and complicating relationships, identity, pleasure, power and desire, SHE loses integrity as an academically challenging and engaging subject area.

Responses from teachers in this study suggest that they unknowingly perpetuate neutral, natural and status quo forms of sexuality while simultaneously believing that curriculum content is relevant to diverse sexual identities. For example, several respondents who prioritized and defined abstinence in heteronormative<sup>2</sup> terms also felt that students of all sexual identities would (in theory) be respected and that curriculum content was appropriate but needed an updated appearance. Such inattentiveness to the silences and unspoken values in curriculum would be indicative of how SHE fails rather than protects its students by not attending to the development of the sexual self (Fine, 1988). Gate-keeping by teachers is inescapable and is frequently misunderstood as the mere selection and simplification of some prescribed curriculum content (Thornton, 2001). In this way, the same material resources will be construed differently depending on individual teachers and their understanding of any given topic.

Bragg (2006) argues that teachers fear too much that SHE be “inappropriate” or “too explicit” and consequently do not offer young people experience or skills in critical media consumption. Explicit and inappropriate information is undoubtedly accessible and pervasive in television, internet, advertising and magazines. Youth are then left to negotiate sexual media culture and become participants in this “private” sphere that is less objective and more objectifying. Interestingly, teachers in this research study did not identify or comment on the importance of critiquing media representation of sexualities and sexual behaviors.

Teachers responded with comments that identified themselves as generally comfortable, mostly competent with a desire to get training, if it were available, honest, open to diversity and in tune with what students “need” from SHE. Schultz and Boyd (1984) writes about how teachers’ self-perceptions as liberal, tolerant, politically correct and doing the “right thing” tows a middle line so as not to upset anything can hardly be called *liberal*. There is much work to be done for teachers to see that what they consider “liberal” is often disguised oppression to those students who don’t fit into the metaphorical heterotrophic space in the classroom.

### **Crossing over the Border of Political Correctness and Diplomatic Relations**

A critical analysis of teachers, their pedagogies and perceptions in this research is framed mostly by what teachers were not saying. In other words, the critique primarily lies in the silences and the lack of awareness around the oppression that this silence serves. Teachers in formal

educational institutions are in a position to directly address the discomfort and fear associated with the nature of sexualities and related practices. Problematic and silent topics such as pleasure, desire, homophobia, gender identity and media critique are undeniably real and have the potential to be liberating or devastating. If there is desire to empower and foster a sense of moral autonomy, then issues of power must be woven throughout SHE (Measor et al., 2000). Careful examination suggests teacher education is key to making SHE necessarily reflective, critical and transformative but not without experiencing discomfort and grappling with the complexity of sexualities.

At the foundational level, gender and sexuality norms uncover a host of issues like regulation, discipline, fear and control. I believe that schools are yet another site for systemic oppression to exist; however, there is hope in exploring ways to foster critical thinking. Questioning sexual and gender identity is not only complex but can also challenge the very core of what it means to align oneself with a certain category. Similarly, gender and sexual identities are complicated by politics, religion and stereotypes. Mediating theoretical and conceptual ideals with daily realities of violence (of any kind) is indeed a huge challenge. In this way, educators are in a unique and influential role that can offer a chance for transformative, reflective and critical thinking – all of which are much needed in the conversations around sexual health.

So what then counts as successful health education? There appears to be a contradiction between how educators currently measure success and how these measurements serve to meet disguised hegemonic, political and often times oppressive criteria. Frequently, success is defined by tested knowledge, performance and completion as suggested by teachers who participated in this research study. Theorists and researchers offer that successful SHE troubles the concept of gender identity, questions the root of fear when one talks about multiple sexualities and provides youth with skills and language to negotiate sexual participation through pleasure and desire.

Teachers and youth in small communities across Newfoundland and Labrador face the challenge of feeling discouraged from going to outside help for fear of having their identities, questions or concerns exposed to other community members (Johns, Lush, Tweedie, & Watkins, 2004; Shortall, 1998). This research further highlights the ways in which SHE still operates in a heteronormative, gender oppressive and fear-inducing metaphorical space that is silent on topics like pleasure and desire; that in fact, do not offer alternative ways of thinking, being or educating.

### **Possibilities for Transformative Border Crossing**

Teachers, as the curricular- instructional gatekeepers, can construe the “same” content quite differently (Thornton, 2001). Educators struggle with a range of student maturity, experience, shyness, and knowledge in a context where there is also an attempt to avoid controversy for fear of becoming vulnerable, dealing with parental complaints and attracting any media interest. It is important that teachers understand the pedagogy of SHE as a critical and transformative practice. Teachers have choices. We can hear and observe what is being covered but what about the things that are not being covered?

Theorists and researchers offer that successful SHE not only troubles the concept of gender identity but also questions the root of fear when one talks about multiple sexualities - providing youth with skills and language to negotiate sexual participation through pleasure and desire. Educators are rarely exposed to problematic and oppressive qualities of curriculum documents and materials, particularly as they relate to SHE where there is a need for radical changes and critical thinking.

It is important that teachers consider how SHE is not entirely objective, how single and mixed-gender classes serve different purposes, what heteronormativity means and excludes, how gender is performed, how abstinence relies on defining “sex” and why female pleasure is completely overshadowed by the messages of victimization, fear, possible pregnancy and vulnerability. If there is a desire to promote positive sexual health attitudes and practices that provide youth with the knowledge, resources and skills to make informed choices then, it is possible. In this context, it is key that teachers be educated. Perhaps we now need to acknowledge that the *process* by which people try to find answers to difficult questions is more paramount than the answers themselves. We need to invest in a process for educators to help transform the oppressive nature of SHE into one that offers understanding and informed choices to our young people.

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## ENDNOTES

6. Queer is a term that is considered by some to be offensive and reclaimed by others to describe a sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression that does not conform to heteronormativity. Queer is often used as a catch-all category that is often bracketed as including lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, questioning and straight allies (LGBTQS).
7. Heteronormative describes situations where heterosexuality is assumed as *the* norm (overt, covert, or implied) and variation from heterosexuality is marginalized, ignored or persecuted through beliefs, policies or social practices (Lovaas & Jenkins, 2006); assumes

heterosexuality as “natural, universal and monolithic” and binary constructs of woman/man, straight/gay, feminine/masculine (Hennessy & Ingraham, 1997, p. 279).



## **Part 2**

# **Educational Leadership and Administration**

- 1. The Value of Educational Law to Teachers in K-12 School System**
- 2. Passing the Torch: Emergent Scholars of Canadian School Leadership**
- 3. Politics and Education: Decision-Making**
- 4. From the Bureaucracy to the Academy: Reflections on Two Communities**
- 5. Decision Making and Depth of Knowledge**
- 6. Leadership Practices in the Role-Negotiation Process Facilitate Learning**
- 7. Educational Supervision in A “Transformed” School Organization**
- 8. Effective Management of the Informal School Organization: A Modest Proposal**
- 9. Measurement Models of the Quality of School Life**

## **Chapter 1: The Value of Educational Law To Teachers In The K-12 School System**

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Today we are living in a highly litigious society and more so than ever before, our citizenry is quite keen on their individual rights and very prepared to advocate for those rights. Technological advances especially with respect to the use of the internet and the media in general have facilitated individuals becoming informed as to what those rights are and what they should do if they perceive those rights to have been violated.

What is the significance of these fairly recent developments for today's educators? Today's schoolhouse is a collection of individual persons who bring with them daily into their classrooms an array of highly complicated issues, ranging from low self-esteem to peer pressures regarding drugs and sex, just to mention a few. On a day to day basis incidents happen in schools and it is little wonder that many of those happenings evoke and often necessitate legal or quasi-legal responses from teachers and school administrators.

The study of educational law represents an attempt to provide new and experienced educators with the appropriate knowledge to deal effectively with these many challenges that occur regularly in our school systems.

### **Intent of Paper**

The intent of this paper is to report on the findings of a study conducted by the author which examined the impact, if any, educational law has had on the everyday practice of educators. For the past several years the author has taught two courses in Educational Law (see Appendix B) in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland: an undergraduate course, Education 4420 (Legal and Moral Issues in Education) and a graduate course, Education 6335 (The Legal Foundations of Educational Administration).

Qualitative in nature, the study involved an online survey being administered to students in the last 5 classes of each of these courses (see Appendix A for the actual survey). These classes were taught from 2004 to 2007.

### **Study Objective**

This study had two main objectives: firstly, to determine what positive impacts/influences, if any, these courses have had/are having on the everyday practice of those students who are now teachers; and secondly, to determine what negative impacts/influences, if any, these courses have had/are having on their everyday practice as teachers. A tertiary objective was to determine if students perceived these courses to be of significant value to undergraduate Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) programs and to graduate programs (M. Ed.) in Educational Leadership/Educational Administration.

A total of 73 former students completed and returned these qualitative surveys.

### **The Literature**

Although there is no dearth of writing on educational law, there appears to be a gap in that literature on exactly how educational law affects the daily practice of educators. Much of the current literature in educational law emanates from the United States but other countries (e.g., Australia, Canada) are beginning to develop significant bodies of literature as well.

The existing literature especially from the United States is highly preoccupied with this whole area of litigation. Wagner (2007) offers this observation:

It can be argued that public school litigation has had an important impact upon education. In the previous century, lawsuits were influential in ending segregation, protecting the First Amendment rights of all students, and expanding the public education opportunities for children with disabilities. Presently, there are lawsuits seeking to change schools (e.g., school funding challenges, school choice, and the No Child Left Behind Act). While it can be argued that education lawsuits have had an important impact upon education, others argue that there are too many school lawsuits and that matters could be resolved in other non-litigious ways. (p. 2)

Taylor (2001) avers that, in this twenty-first century, this vast amount of legal action requires educators to possess a basic understanding of the laws that impact them and the concerns that frequently arise in education law. Dunklee and Shoop (1986) opined that teacher programs often do not prepare teachers to understand the relationship of the constitution, statutes, and judicial decisions to the daily process of delivering instruction and providing supervision. Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs and Thurston (1992) have suggested that school administrators may have a larger responsibility than other professionals to understand the legal process as well as the substantive requirements of certain landmark decisions and their effects on school policies.

In Canada and other countries (e.g., Australia) there appears to be a pre-occupation with the “legal literacy” of educators especially school administrators. Legal literacy refers to the knowledge level that administrators have with respect to educational law and how it impacts on the governance of their schools.

Several studies (e.g., Daresh & Playko, 1992; Findlay, 2007; Hewitson, Stewart & Whitta, 1992; McCann & Stewart, 1997; Peters & Montgomerie, 1998); Stewart, 1996; Thomas & Hornsey, 1991) have been conducted to determine the knowledge level of principals. Findlay (2007) best summarizes what these studies have concluded: that “The data suggest that principals, based on their median score, may not be the best source of legal information for their vice-principals or their staffs” (p. 197). She further elaborated:

Although the administrators with the greatest amount of experience were able to answer more of the test items correctly than the other respondents, they still did not answer even 50% of the questions correctly. The respondents appeared to rely heavily on learning from experience, which may be a cause for concern, although experience is of value and can inform decision making. If administrators’ legal decisions are not based on accurate knowledge, it would appear that even those with extensive experience are at risk of encountering legal difficulties. . . The tendency of

school administrators to make decisions based on experience or intuition could lead them into legal difficulty. (p. 197)

Given that there is a paucity of literature on how educational law actually impacts the everyday practices of educators, it seems quite timely and appropriate that a study on this topic be undertaken.

## **Research Method**

This study was qualitative in nature and surveyed students, now practicing teachers, taught by the researcher in two educational law courses, one at the undergraduate level and one at the graduate level. The survey was conducted online and involved 73 former students. The results reported here are “information-rich” (Patton, 1990) in their description of the various impacts these law courses have had on the subjects participating in the study.

## **Research Questions**

### *Primary Questions*

The two primary research questions that drove this study were:

- As a result of your having studied a course in Educational Law in your university studies, have there been any positive impacts/influences on your everyday work as an educator? Please list any of those impacts/influences and any practical examples that you might recall.
- As a result of your having studied a course in Educational Law in your university studies, have there been any negative impacts/influences on your everyday work as an educator? Please list any of those impacts/influences and any practical examples that you might recall.

### *Secondary Questions*

Three secondary questions were also included in the study:

1. Do you think a course in Educational Law should be a compulsory course in every Bachelor of Education program in Canada? Please elaborate.
2. Do you think a course in Educational Law should be a compulsory course in a Master of Education program in Educational Leadership/Educational Administration in every university across Canada? Please elaborate.
3. Please list any additional comments/points you would like to make about the usefulness or lack of usefulness of a course in Education Law in a Bachelor of Education program.

## **Emergent Themes**

Qualitative data analysis begins with identifying the various themes that emerge from the raw data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A number of themes were identified.

#### Primary Research Question Number One

In the data collected from primary research question number one, four major themes have been identified:

- The heightening of awareness, understanding and sensitivity with respect to the various legal issues confronted by educators in today's schools;
- The facilitation of sound and responsible decision making when dealing with various legal issues in schools;
- The fostering of a certain degree of professionalism; and lastly,
- The raising of teachers' self-confidence levels.

#### Primary Research Question Number Two

The data from this question have suggested four themes:

- The potential for paranoia;
- The potential to impede/inhibit teacher risk taking;
- The potential to increase teachers' stress levels; and lastly,
- No negative impacts.

### **Findings**

This section provides a sampling of the various participant responses categorized under each of the themes identified above.

#### *Primary Research Question # 1*

##### Heightening of Awareness, Understanding and Sensitivity

- Mary, currently a first- year teacher in Kindergarten to Grade 9 school, commented that "I am more conscious of my own rights as a teacher as well as the fact that I am more conscious of my own actions. An example was a student asked me for a ride home; the humanitarian in me wanted to say "yes", just hop in, no problem? If I had not done the Educational Law course, I would have done just that. Since doing that course, I knew that I could not give this student a ride without going through the proper steps. Basically, it saved me from future and unnecessary trouble".

- James, a teacher in a large senior high school, stated that “The discussion of specific examples of how the Criminal Code of Canada clarified the limitations as to what can and cannot occur with respect to the relationship between students and teachers”.
- Sarah, who teaches in a large grade 4 to 6 school, felt that she had a more conscientious attitude towards teacher liability concerning students in the classroom and on field trips.
- Allison, a senior high teacher, offered the following commentary: “I once ran into students from my school at a bar. Due to my having taken Legal and Moral Issues, I felt that I needed to let the bar know that the students were under-aged. I approached one of the bouncers and pointed out the students in question. Later that week I spoke privately with the two girls concerning why I felt that I had to tell on them. Although I don’t think they completely understood my reasoning, I knew that was what I had to do. Had those students continue to consume alcohol at the bar and later gotten into an accident or some other form of trouble, I would have felt terrible and perhaps might have even gotten into trouble myself”.
- Marie, an elementary teacher, stated that she has now become more aware of her role especially that relating to “in loco parentis” (i.e., in the place of the parent) as well as the roles and responsibilities she has in terms of legalities when she’s in charge of students in school and during out of school activities including various field trips.
- William, a Physical Education teacher in a senior high school, stated: “Due to the knowledge gained in the Ed Law course I have become more safety conscious in my classroom (gym). Safety was always uppermost in my mind when carrying out activities in the gym but this course has reinforced the need for classroom safety even more so”.

#### *Facilitation of Sound and Responsible Decision Making*

- Gloria, teaching in a large senior high school commented that “The courses I have completed in Educational Law have helped me in so many different ways. As a new teacher, there are many things that you wish someone would tell you and Education Law has done exactly that. For example, when a student ‘hit’ on me in the hallways and tried to spread around rumors that we were dating, I immediately remembered the many case studies that we had discussed in class. I was afraid that my job would be on the line and I wanted the matter cleared up immediately. I wrote up the incident and I reported to the administration. I then insisted that ‘Joe’ make an apology to me and in front of the principal as well”.
- A senior high teacher, Wilson stated that having studied Educational Law made him aware of the importance of obtaining administrative assistance when the situation warrants such assistance. Specifically, he was referring to areas such as child abuse and school attendance.
- Another senior high teacher, Edward spoke of the need to document any disciplinary incidents. “I bought a \$2.00 notebook to document, document, and document. One thing



emphasized in the Law course was the importance of documenting incidents with students because you may need certain facts later that would be almost impossible to recall from memory.”

- Junior high teacher Arthur pointed out the value of case studies in this regard: “It’s great to have had the chance to learn from case studies and learn from the mistakes of others, instead of having the misfortune of making some of these mistakes ourselves and then having to learn from them the hard way”.
- Paul who is a senior high teacher commented on the value of Educational Law to his classroom management practices and extra-curricular involvement: “The impact of having completed an Educational law course is not seen so much in my classroom teaching practices but more so in my classroom management and extra-curricular involvement. I have paid more attention to school and board policies re things such as student travel and the handling of money. In doing so I will not register my students for any extra-curricular activities or curriculum-related field trips without revisiting the policy and ensuring that the appropriate paperwork is documented. This was something that I would normally do anyways but knowing that there are some teachers who may “ignore” some of the paperwork, it makes me very stressed as to what could possibly happen.
- Neil, a senior high teacher, opined that: “In my short time as a high school teacher I have benefitted from completing an Educational Law course during my undergraduate degree. I feel this course has made me more aware and has allowed me to make better decisions. Perhaps the most significant topic for me in the course was the NL Schools Act which provided me with a lot of valuable information”.

### *The Fostering of Professionalism*

- A substitute/supply teacher in 7-12 schools, Jason had this to say: “All in all, having knowledge of specific, real-life cases and knowing the laws in practice in the classroom have better equipped me to have longevity in this career and to maintain a truly professional demeanor”.
- Monica, an elementary teacher, stated that the course in Educational Law that she studied, provided her with a awareness of professional boundaries with parents and care-givers. Specifically, she referred to her being able “to maintain a professional and calm nature when addressing sensitive issues with parents”.
- Monica also pointed out that the course provided her with an awareness of teacher rights with respect to relationships with colleagues especially in the areas of harassment and suspicious or questionable behavior.
- Primary teacher Colleen commented that “I consider the 2 courses that I did in Educational Law to have been among the more useful and enjoyable courses I have completed as part of my teacher training. I believe they have aided me in becoming a more diligent and effective teacher. They have also made me a more trustworthy and effective employee”.

- Jacinta who works as a principal in a K-6 school had this to say: “As part of my ongoing professional growth and development I have taken a course in mediation. Having done a course in Education Law I am now better able to ascertain the objective criteria from which I draw in conducting mediation sessions. I feel I also have a better understanding of the collective agreement under which my staff is governed. For example, when a teacher asked me recently how many days she would get to attend her grandmother’s funeral I knew the answer without having to look it up and I was better able to deal with teachers on a more personal level, being more sympathetic etc. because I was not fumbling through a document to find the answer. Another example was when I had to address serious attendance concerns with a parent. I was able to explain what the Schools Act says about parental obligations regarding attendance. Overall, having done an Education Law course, I feel I am more aware of legal implications surrounding my everyday work”.
- K-12 vice-principal Greg offered this viewpoint: “Having completed a course in Education Law is an eye-opening experience that informs teachers of the many do’s and don’ts in the teaching profession. Our world is becoming more litigious so as teachers we must be informed of all the legal implications that may and do occur. It certainly changed my perspective and made me a better teacher/professional in the long run”.

### *The Raising of Teachers’ Self-Confidence Levels*

- Neil, who teaches in a Kindergarten to Grade 6 school, stated that “This course has given me personal and invaluable insight into participation, I felt a great sense of involvement with legal issues and I feel very competent to deal with administrative practices in school today”.
- Philip is a junior high teacher in a northern school. He offered this perspective on having done a course in Educational Law: “It’s been very helpful for me as an educator in a Northern school, I am teaching junior high and it has been beyond anything I could have possibly imagined. It has been very helpful to know the law and the ins and outs of the Collective Agreement. I have been in constant meetings with parents, students, principals because of discipline problems and it has been very helpful to know my rights”.
- Elementary teacher Jillian, echoed similar sentiments when she states that the course provided her with an “extensive knowledge of the Schools’ Act which was extremely useful when dealing with irate parents and caregivers”.
- Junior high teacher Gail said that “educators work closely with children and parents. We spend hours with students everyday where we are their primary caretakers. We must know how to keep them and us safe. Knowing you know how to handle yourself can bring a sense of confidence to an educator”.
- Marilyn, a substitute/supply teacher in K-12 schools, had this to say: “In the course I took we discussed a variety of case studies where teachers were questioned about their actions and how the situations had concluded for them. This opened my eyes to many different things that could happen in the school setting if a teacher did not make a conscious effort to

ensure the safety of students. I became more aware of what to look for when supervising students on the school property and the proper way to act professionally around students”.

- Industrial Arts teacher Malcolm commented: “Sending home safety sheets to inform parents of what their children will be involved with in the Industrial Arts shop and having them sign those sheets to ensure they have read the document have helped me feel more self-confident. Although I know this does not alleviate myself from liability issues, it does indicate that an effort was made to inform both parents and students of the harm and injury that can be caused by inappropriate behavior and misuse of tools in an Industrial Arts classroom”.

### **Discussion**

These various themes speak to the positive impacts/influences former students have experienced from having done a course in Educational Law, either at the undergraduate or graduate level. At first blush a typical reaction to these responses is that these themes are all of the commonsense variety. There is no argument with that perspective but upon further reflection and perhaps closer scrutiny, one might conclude that common sense is exactly what we want our teachers, both new and seasoned, to utilize in their classrooms.

Although there is a paucity of research on the importance of educational law in the practice of today’s educators, one need only peruse the various issues currently being written about in the educational law literature in Canada to get an idea as to the gravity of those issues. As limited as that literature is, consider the following titles in such publications as CAPSLE Comments, Educational Law Reporter, the Educational Law eBulletin, the Education and Law Journal, the Ontario College of Teachers’ *Professionally Speaking* magazine, and the British Columbia College of Teachers’ *TC Magazine*:

- “Facing Facebook”
- “School Boards Liable for Students’ Loss”
- “Readers Weigh In on Off-Duty Conduct”
- “Expulsion”
- “Leave to Appeal Knife-Carrying Student Refused”
- “Professional Misconduct”
- “Where Was That Line?”
- “Best Laid Plans: From Field Trips to Extracurricular Explorations – Preparation Counts”
- “Principal and Teacher Win Defamation Case”

- “Educators Successful in Internet Defamation Case”
- “Student Threats With BB-Gun”
- “Teacher Convicted for Inviting to Sexual Touching With Lollipop”
- “Injunction Granted to Allow Same Sex Prom Date”
- “Violent Confrontations With Principals”
- “Criminal Conviction for Groping Classmate” and lastly,
- “Court Refuses Injunction Against School’s Drug Detection Program”.

Although this is a limited and somewhat cursory listing of those various issues, it does point out the nature of such issues being faced by educators, both teachers and administrators, in the classrooms across Canada. It appears that the number and variety of legal problems being confronted by teachers are on the rise. Gullatt and Tollett (1997) offer this perspective, albeit American, as to why this is so:

The legal problems facing teachers are the same problems of society at large. As society changes, so must laws change to accommodate newer values and to protect the rights of individuals. What was taken for granted for many years, such as the teacher’s word, discipline issues, and rights of the student, is no longer taken for granted. Instead of depending on legislative bodies to implement change, citizens often turn to the courts, partly because it may be quicker and partly because court rulings may reflect social changes. (p. 131)

This researcher suggests that this American perspective is highly congruent with that of our Canadian situation.

Johnson (1994) has stated that principals and teachers are often involved in the legal system through actions or inactions related to the performance of their duty. This would seem to imply an obvious ignorance of the law as it pertains to the professional performance of educators. Teachers new to the profession lack experience and judgment and Samuelson (1994) contends that a background in educational law might help them avoid the bad judgment(s), indiscretion(s), and honest mistake(s) that have the potential to ruin their careers.

An examination of the various themes emerging from the participants’ responses to primary research question number two follows.

### *Primary Research Question # 2*

#### *The Potential for Paranoia*

- Junior high teacher Sally commented that the only negative thing she found about doing the Educational Law was that it “makes you more cautious and sometimes I think this could lead to paranoia. I think that a classroom has to be made as comfortable as possible for the teacher and the students and knowing too much information could hinder this from happening”.
- Another junior high teacher, Genevieve talked about balancing paranoia with reality: “Initially you get a little paranoid that everything that happens can have significant legal repercussions, but quickly you balance the focused study with a dose of reality and realize that the main point of the course is to raise awareness in educators of the importance of considering the implications of actions and decisions in the daily running of the school”.
- Elementary teacher Carolyn offered this perspective: “There may be a somewhat ‘loss’ of comfort and loving manner with younger, primary students. Due to potential ‘misunderstandings’, what was once a comforting hug from a teacher has now become a suspect of teacher molestation”.
- Supply/substitute teacher Amy had this to say: “As a result of the Law course I’ve learned that you cannot prevent students from getting hurt but, if you are responsible and proactive, the situation will be resolved. It is when you are reckless and irresponsible that the consequences will present themselves”.
- Jennifer who is a supply/substitute teacher in K – 12 schools stated that: “The only thing I would comment on for negative impacts/influences is that I am often worried I will be approached about something I have not done as a result of someone telling a lie. I thought about this a lot in the year I was responsible for driving students. I was always worried that someone could make up a lie and that it would be hard to prove the truth. Fortunately, everything went fine and nothing came up”.
- Grade 7 – 12 teacher Megan reflected on her sense of paranoia: “At first I felt somewhat paranoid about legalities. I was afraid that I might get myself in trouble with a slip of the tongue, over a misunderstanding or because of carelessness. However, as I gained real classroom experience, I realized that my knowledge of Educational Law was not meant to cause paranoia but rather to inform me about what actions are least likely to lead to legal difficulties, what the law requires of me as an educator and what rights and responsibilities I have. Overall, my experiences with Educational Law have been positive”.

### *The Potential to Impede Teacher Risk Taking*

- Senior high teacher Denise offered this point of view:
- “I was recently asked to take part in a downhill skiing field trip and I immediately remembered the many legal issues we discussed in our classes. I realized that I would be taking on a huge responsibility, especially with a lot of the rougher kids signed up for the trip. Because of the possible implications/accidents that may have occurred, I decided to

turn the opportunity down. Instead, I opted for bowling, which seemed a lot safer for both me and the kids. I guess if I had not taken the course, then I may have gone. But I do believe I can make more informed decisions now and that would be considered a positive thing on my part”.

- Jennifer who teaches in a Kindergarten to grade 12 school mentioned that “Perhaps the only negative impact, if you could even call it that, is the constant worry that something may happen in the classroom and that perhaps in certain instances the learning is placed second to the ‘watchful eye’ so to speak”.
- Primary school teacher Sandra expressed this concern: “The only negative I can think of is that it has made me more apprehensive about doing certain activities with children, especially anything extra-curricular or activities involving school trips. Sometimes the possible repercussions are just not worth the effort. This may limit the educational experiences school children can be involved in”.
- Elementary school teacher Marion speaks to the need for preplanning with respect to field trips: “The only influence it has had on me is that it has made me more cautious of activities that I plan in the class and certain types of field trips that I take. I try to make sure that any action or activity planned is safe as possible and that if there were ever any injuries it would not have been because of neglect or oversight but because sometimes accidents happen and I was acting in loco parentis.
- Junior high teacher Courtney speaks to this concern:
  - The only influence it has on me is that it has made me more cautious of activities that I plan in the class and certain types of field trips that I take. I try to make sure that any action or activity planned is safe as possible and that if there were ever any injuries it would not have been because of neglect or oversight but because sometimes accidents happen and I was acting in loco parentis.
- Geoff who teaches senior high students makes an interesting point about the actions of colleagues: “The only negative impact would be in discussions with teachers who have not had the benefit of this type of course. Often such teachers do not fully understand their rights nor their responsibilities as educators. Such teachers occasionally take either too cautious or too liberal a stance when dealing with students and in either case either forfeit learning opportunities or place themselves in undue risk of reprisal. An example of a teacher putting him/herself at undue risk would be when teachers enter into “Facebook” forums with groups of students. Although the teacher may conduct him/herself appropriately, they are still entering into outside-of-school social contact with the students and may become privy or be subjected to inappropriate conversation, content and information”.

#### *The Potential for Heightened Teacher Stress Levels*

- Tim is a teacher in a Kindergarten to Grade 12 school and he pointed out that “sometimes hearing about scary legal situations forces you to overthink or be overly nervous”.



- Stacey, a teacher in a very large urban school in mainland Canada, commented that “The only negative aspect is that sometimes I think more about what I cannot do than what I can do. Sometimes it feels like you always need to look over your shoulder. It can also be stressful when organizing field trips and events. I also worry that students sometimes do not take the legal side of their actions very seriously, especially in a large urban setting where my school is located. It does not seem to faze some students that their actions can have serious consequences, whether it be with the school administration or the police”.
  
- Judith, a supply/substitute in Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools, stated that “The only thing that I would comment on for negative impacts/influences is that I am often worried I will be approached about something I have not done but a lie that someone may tell. I thought about this a lot in the year that I was responsible for driving students. I was always worried that someone could make up a lie and that it would be hard to prove the truth. Fortunately, everything went fine and nothing ever came up”.
  
- Elementary teacher Angela offered this listing of concerns:
  1. a more pre-occupied attitude with respect to teacher liability (e.g., leaving the room for 2 min.);
  2. a somewhat “loss” of comfort and loving manner with younger, primary students; due to potential “misunderstandings”, what was once a comforting hug from a teacher has now become a suspect of teacher molestation;
  3. the fear of becoming too “caught up” in all the red tape & bureaucracy of “what to do” and “what not to do” in your daily teaching;
  4. realization and fear of the high levels of liability of taking students off school grounds (e.g., field trips, playing outside, going on a walk off property)
  5. added stress to an already “full” professional responsibility (e.g., filling out accident and behavior forms); this leaves minimal time and effort for creative curriculum planning.
  
- Martin who works in a junior high school comments that “While not a specific experience of mine, I could see how someone could become rather stressed when faced with a variety of legal and moral issues that could crop up in an educational setting”.
  
- Carol, who teaches in a K – 12 school offers this perspective:  
 Although the liability aspect of the course has made me more conscientious, it has also made me a little hesitant in my interactions with students. I sometimes feel reserved in what I want to say in class discussions because I am fearful of potential misinterpretation. For example, I am teaching adolescence and sexuality this year. This course lends itself to misinterpretation so I am extra cautious of what and how I present the course material. There is potential for stress here but this is the nature of the system in which we teach and not necessarily a fault of the course.

### *No Negative Impacts*

- “I really do not think there have been any negative repercussions from taking the Ed Law course. I enjoyed it and found it useful and interesting. I would be very surprised to find that anyone thought there were any negative impacts/influences from having taken the course” is how one participant responded to the second question in the survey.
- “None that I can think of.” (Jennifer, senior high teacher)
- “No, there have been no negative influences. All influences have been positive.” (Melanie, K – 6 principal)
- “No negative impacts/influences. I feel that it is essential to know and understand the law and how it applies to teaching. It is something that I believe every educator should have to do and also take a refresher course now and again through professional development.” (Janice, senior high teacher)
- “I can honestly say there have not been any negative impacts or influences on my everyday work as an educator due to my taking a course in Educational Law. If anything, it has given me valuable information and has shed light onto various topics and subjects that I was ignorant of before. (ESL teacher, Catherine)
- “I cannot think of one negative impact from this course, it was such a positive experience! I did the course in the middle of a Newfoundland summer and I didn’t even mind giving up 6 hours weekly of sometimes good weather to attend class.” (Elementary teacher, Danielle)

### **Discussion**

It is important to acknowledge the use of the word “potential” in three of the four themes that emerged from responses to research question number two. Potential is defined by the New Illustrated Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language (1992) as “anything that may be possible; a possible development” (p. 759). “Potential” conveys a high degree of subjectivity and, as can be inferred from the sample quotes given above, the degree of that potential is idiosyncratic to the individual educator. In the majority of responses respondents acknowledged the value of what had been learned from the Educational Law courses, in spite of the potentials which were of a negative nature.

The possibility of creating a certain degree of paranoia was obviously a dominant theme in certain respondents’ comments. Considering the nature of the school setting, it is not surprising that fear of negligence and liability can cause educators to become paranoid. Brown (1998) offers valuable insight into this concern:

A little fear is perhaps a good thing because it forces us to take a preventative approach. However, an unreasonable or unfounded fear not only creates stress but also results in limitations upon the programs which are conducted in our schools (p. 101).

Significant throughout many of the responses was the theme of “no negative impacts/influences”. Ideally, this would be the objective of any Educational Law course at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

### Secondary Questions

The survey also included three secondary questions, two of which asked whether or not Educational Law should be a compulsory course in a Bachelor of Education program and in a Master of Education program (with a concentration in Educational Administration/ Educational leadership). The third question asked participants if they had any additional comments they would like to make.

An overwhelming majority of respondents expressed the viewpoint that Educational Law should be a compulsory requirement in the Bachelor of Education program. Comments such as this one from Philip, a substitute teacher in Grade 7 – 12 school, were typical:

This is a vital course to teach anyone who is going to become an educator. The laws both in and outside the classroom is far-reaching and even the most informed citizen cannot know them all. Seeing as this is the job of our future, a career we hope to last 20+ years, it is imperative that we have this knowledge before we step foot in the classroom and not only after going through some awful experience. This course also can shed light on if being a teacher for a career is one we want to and can handle doing.

In the last question on the survey Philip further emphasized the importance of including such a course in a B. Ed. program:

Again, just to reiterate, I think it is an absolute necessity that this sort of course is offered in a B. Ed program. Students coming from various backgrounds may not currently possess the knowledge about the law in and out of the classroom and could find themselves in jeopardy at some point. Having come from a Political Science background I had an advantage here, but not everyone is on top of the law, especially when it comes down to the omnipresence of the Charter! This is an issue that affects all educators past, present and future.

As to whether or not Educational Law should be compulsory in a Master of Education program in Educational Administration/Educational Leadership, there was also an overwhelming consensus in the affirmative among respondents. Comments such as this one from Jonathan, a senior high school teacher, were quite common:

Those who take the Educational Leadership/Educational Administration graduate program often aspire and gravitate towards administration position positions within schools. School administrations represent both the first and last line of defense when it comes to ensuring the safety and well-being of both teachers and students within a school setting. It is imperative that persons in these position of responsibility have adequate legal education training.

Marion, an elementary teacher, was even more emphatic and somewhat animated in her perspective on the importance of Educational Law to aspiring school administrators:

Absolutely! All future administrators need a course in Educational Law and after they are hired as an administrator they should be mandated to do further training at the local district level. I reiterate that administrators need to be informed and they need the knowledge and expertise from experts in the area of Educational Law. We are seeing more and more these days by way of human rights complaints, court cases, advocacy group actions, parent support groups etc. pressuring educators to make any number of decisions in favor of any one group of students. The world of administration and the decision-making process have become as diverse as the learners in their care. It is crucial to prepare administrators to become good managers, excellent instructional leaders, and strong leaders through a sound knowledge base in Educational Law. It is my strong opinion that all education personnel have a knowledge of educational law to protect the teacher, the student, and to manage the barrage of external influences/pressure that permeate schools today.

The final question in this survey gave respondents an opportunity to provide any additional comments. Although there were several respondents who had nothing further to add, many respondents did avail of this opportunity to further elaborate on how they perceived the importance of a course in Educational Law to both new and seasoned teachers. A sample of those comments are included here for the reader's consideration:

- Some people may argue that an Educational Law course is a waste of time as you can find the literature and learn about the laws yourself. However, I believe that it was a useful tool that has secured my future as a teacher. The course was very practical. Being exposed to hypothetical situations and probable consequences and/or avoidances has made me aware of the importance of educational law as well as my responsibilities as an educator.
- Simply put, educational law courses should indeed be compulsory. The ironic thing about it though, is that you need to do one before you fully realize that fact and as already referenced—ignorance is bliss!
- The course I took in Educational Law was both very useful and enjoyable. We discussed educational law and theory and then analyzed and discussed actual case studies that involved real teachers and students, and real situations where these laws and theories had to be applied to the behaviour of teachers and/or students. We also had the opportunity to discuss our own experiences and ideas and how legal issues came into play. To see how educational law is applied in the real world was a very practical learning experience, and, as a result, I feel that myself and my classmates were much more prepared for life in the classroom and much more aware of the rights and privileges of student and teacher under the law than if we had simply read about legal educational theory from a text book. I

learned a lot from the course I took in Educational Law, more than I have in most other courses.

- I feel that a course in Educational Law is very useful and all students should be required to take it, especially since a teacher has many roles and since the first couple of years can be overwhelming with all there is to learn. By taking such a course, they would have an understanding of what is expected of them so they are aware of what they legally can and can not do. It is important to understand the code of ethics as well which is also discussed in this course as sometimes when you may not know what to do in a certain situation, this is a good guide to follow.
- I would highly recommend that the educational law course(s) be made mandatory in the Bachelor of Education program. I have no hesitation in stating that it was the one course that I thoroughly enjoyed and one that was actually useful in my teaching career.

### **Conclusions**

The data gathered in this study has prompted this researcher to arrive at the following conclusions:

1. Taking a course in Educational Law either at the undergraduate or graduate level has a number of positive impacts/influences on their everyday practice as educators. These include but are not necessarily limited to the following: a heightening of awareness, understanding and sensitivity with respect to the various legal issues confronted by educators in today's schools; the facilitation of sound and responsible decision making when dealing with those issues; the fostering of a certain degree of professionalism; and lastly, the raising of teachers' self-confidence levels.
2. Taking a course in Educational Law could result in a number of negative impacts/influences which might include: the potential for paranoia; the potential to impede/inhibit teacher risk taking; and the potential to increase teachers' stress levels.
3. As a result of their having taken a course in Educational Law, both undergraduate and graduate students perceive Educational Law to be a very valuable and necessary component of their pre-service and in-service education.
4. Undergraduate students perceive that Educational Law should be a compulsory requirement in their Bachelor of Education programs.
5. Graduate students pursuing programs in Educational Administration/ Educational Leadership consider Educational Law a vital component in their preparation to be future leaders and administrators in the K-12 school systems across Canada.

### **Concluding Comments**

As can be seen from the various commentaries provided in the above text, those former students of Education 4420 and Education 6335 who participated in this study are quite emphatic and, in some cases, rather animated in their endorsement of these courses as valuable components in both the Bachelor of Education and Master of Education (Educational Administration/Educational Leadership) programs.

Unfortunately, as a number of participants pointed out, they did not realize the value and utility of these courses until after having done them and then gone on to become teachers or school administrators. As one participant stated “ignorance is bliss” but we all know that ignorance of the law, in this case, educational law, is no excuse for teachers acting unprofessionally or inappropriately. Such a defense would obviously not hold up in a court of law.

Sydor (2006) most eloquently sums up the importance of including a course on Educational Law in teacher education programs:

When teacher education includes instruction about the legal context of schooling, teachers are better prepared to do their work. They have a better understanding of what is required of them from a legal perspective and are consequently less likely to misstep in their professional duties. Teachers who understand the boundaries of their roles with pupils, parents, colleagues and administrators are less likely to be intimidated by the actions of others and more likely to exercise their authority with reason and perspective. From a practical standpoint, the knowledge that teachers gain in the study of education law contributes to an efficient and orderly functioning of schools because they accept responsibility for their practice as professionals and not simply as employees (p. 936).

Sydor’s comments are congruent with the results of this impact study and it is this researcher’s contention that faculties of education across this land have an obvious duty of care to their students to provide them with the requisite preparation to be true professionals in their everyday practice as educators.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **EDUCATIONAL LAW: ITS IMPACT ON THE EVERYDAY PRACTICE OF EDUCATORS**

#### **TEACHER SURVEY**

##### ***PAGE 1***

#### ***SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION***

Please complete the following:

1. Please check off which of the following Educational Law courses you have completed:
  - a) Education 4420 (Legal & Moral Issues in Education) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Education 6335 (The Legal Foundations of Educational Administration) \_\_\_\_\_NOTE: If you have done both courses, please check off both.)
2. I am currently working as a(an)
  - a) substitute/supply teacher \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) replacement (term) classroom teacher \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) permanent classroom teacher \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) guidance counselor \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) assistant/vice principal \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) principal \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
3. I am currently working at the following grade levels:
  - a) primary (K-3) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) elementary (4-6) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) intermediate/junior high (7-9) \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) senior high (10-12) \_\_\_\_\_(NOTE: If applicable, you may check off more than one grade level.)
4. The student enrolment of my school is in the following range:
  - a) 025 – 200 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) 201 – 400 \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) 401 – 600 \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) 601 – 800 \_\_\_\_\_

- e) 801 – 1000 \_\_\_\_\_
- f) 1001 – 1200 \_\_\_\_\_
- g) 1200 + \_\_\_\_\_

5. I am:
- a) female \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) male \_\_\_\_\_

[Please do not mark in this space: *Survey Number* \_\_\_\_\_.]

## **PAGE 2**

### **SECTION B: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:**

1. As a result of your having done a course in Education Law in your university studies, have there been any positive impacts/influences on your everyday work as an educator? Please list any of those impacts/influences and any practical examples that you might recall.
2. As a result of your having done a course in Educational Law in your university studies, have there been any negative impacts/influences on your everyday work as an educator? Please list any of these impacts/influences and any practical examples that you might recall.

## **PAGE 3**

3. a) Do you think a course in Educational Law should be a compulsory course in every Bachelor of Education course in Canada? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Please elaborate on your answer in 3a above:
4. a) Do you think a course in Educational Law should be a compulsory course in a Master of Education program in Educational Leadership/Educational Administration in every university across Canada? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Please elaborate on your answer in 4a above:
5. Are there any additional comments/points you would like to make re the usefulness or lack of usefulness of a course in Educational Law in a Bachelor of Education program?

Please use extra page(s) if necessary.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

## **APPENDIX B**

***EDUCATION 4420 (LEGAL & MORAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION)***  
***EDUCATION 6335 (THE LEGAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION)***  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION, MUN**

### **Topics:**

1. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms
2. Provincial Education Acts
3. Teacher Collective Agreements
4. Due Process
5. Teacher Liability and Negligence
6. Corporal Punishment
7. Sexual Assault
8. Duty to Report
9. The Youth Criminal Justice Act
10. Teachers' Codes of Ethics
11. Copyright Law
12. Workplace Safety in Schools
13. Educational Policy as a Legal Instrument
14. Legal versus Moral Dimensions of Education

### **NOTE:**

Although the list of topics is the same for each course, there is an obvious difference in the treatment of these topics and in the various strategies utilized in each course. At the graduate level (M. Ed.) these various topics are studied in much greater depth. For example, in the graduate course, students do group presentations on real-life case studies. These case studies are also used in the undergraduate course but because of large class numbers, time does not allow such group presentations.

## **Chapter 2: Passing the Torch: Emergent Scholars of Canadian School Leadership**

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### **Abstract**

*The rise and fall of separate departments focused on educational administration has given way to units with other larger and more diverse structures. This less specialised and more diverse setting leads to a question as to who is focused on educational administration in Canada and what types of research and writing are being produced? In answering this question, while linking established and emerging scholars of Canadian educational leadership (Anderson, 2010), this paper shares the ideas around the substance and dissemination of the concept emerging Canadian scholars in school leadership.*

The first Department of Educational Administration in Canada started at the University of Alberta over 50 years ago. To my knowledge, the last remaining and distinct Department of Educational Administration is at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education. The rise and fall of separate departments focused on educational administration has given way to units with other larger and more diverse structures. In this less specialised and diverse setting this leads to a question as to who is focused on educational administration in Canada and what types of research and writing are being produced? Answering this question led to the compilation of an edited book called *The Leadership Compendium: Emerging Scholars of Canadian Educational Leadership* (Anderson, 2010), herein called the Compendium.

This paper shares the ideas around the inception, substance and dissemination of the concept emerging Canadian scholars in school leadership. First I would like to share a little of the history of Educational Administration (and Leadership) in the Canadian context. Second I offer some discussion as to how the established and emerging scholars were linked in generation a list of emerging scholars. The is followed by a discussion of what the emerging scholars are writing about and finally I conclude with some issues and concerns I see in light of this process as well as my own experiences in academia.

### **The 1980's as a Starting Point for Canadian Scholarship in School Leadership**

In 1981, Drs. Stephen Lawton and Richard Townsend from the *Ontario Institute for Studies in Education* (OISE) at the University of Toronto edited a book titled: *What's so Canadian About Canadian Educational Administration?* It was a collection of essays on the 'Canadian' tradition of school administration. It served two key roles. First, it was used to discuss the influence of the large number of American professors in Canada (of whom Lawton and Townsend were cases in point) and the relative distinctions between US and Canadian scholarship in educational administration. Second, it gave a platform to a number of Canadian based scholars, many of whom were or were to become the preeminent scholars to shape the context of educational 'leadership' for the next generation. While Lawton and Townsend's book, typical of the term

educational administration, reflected a broad selection of the writers, they were mostly mainstream, male, and some did hint about the complexity of issues raised when we write and speak of education 'leadership' today. Some of these writers have broadened our understanding of educational administration and enabled our transition from management to leadership. Many in this group created, inspired, or became the current established scholars in Canadian educational leadership. Lawton and Townsend's book reflected the emergence of Canadian scholars from the science of educational management or administration, to the post modern and complex arena reflective of the use of the term, educational leadership.

This initial call to reframe the study of school leadership research, from management to leadership, is apparent in the writing of Thomas Greenfield's contribution to Townsend and Lawton's book: *Who's Asking the Question Depends on What Answer You Get*. As a benchmark in the history of Canadian philosophy and intellectual thinking about school leadership, Thomas Greenfield is arguably a good place to start. In the 1980s to 1990s, Thomas Greenfield shook the academic world with the argument that a science of educational administration was not possible (Greenfield, 1986, 1991). Greenfield challenged the conventional wisdom of mainstream educational and organizational theorists, arguing that an objective or value free model of science for educational administration was neither possible nor desirable as it leans too much into logical positivism which "discourages historical inquiry, and so puts to flight any notion that scholars of administration should know their intellectual origins and the assumptions on which their field rests" (Greenfield, 1986, p. 61). Citing value distinctions and their related assumptions, Greenfield also challenges us about the use of the term 'North America' in Canadian educational research and writing. He clarifies that, "in their patterns of language and culture, Canada and the United States are not North America... research in educational administration ... . Has been too quick to promulgate a universal set of truths about organizations and how they work" (Greenfield, 1975 as cited in Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, p. 26).

While Greenfield's writing still challenges the world and Canadian scholarship as to how we see educational leadership (Harris, 2003 and Macmillan, 2003) many Canadian (and other) scholars can be seen as rising to the challenge to expand our concept of educational administration as leadership with a critically inspired edge. Greenfield called for the use of critical theory in educational administration as a means to better understand the contextualization of our intellectual roots (Greenfield and Ribbons, 1993). Ironically, even Greenfield is subjected to this test as Beth Young (1994) questioned some of the values and relative truths evident in Greenfield's work. Young offers *Another Perspective on the Knowledge Base in Canadian Educational Administration* as a feminist response to reframe Greenfield. She also challenges Canadian scholars, "to make visible the Canadian schools and schooling that earlier theorizing had rendered invisible" (p. 364).

Reflective of Young, an entire generation of Canadian scholars has followed or expanded the Greenfield legacy and are producing significant contributions to the Canadian, United States, and world community. It is in the work of Greenfield and Young that we see examples of how the previous generation of scholars are linked to the established Canadian scholars that occupy the regional, national, and international scene. Again we see the increasing complexity and

depth of intellectual rigor in the application of research and writing, in what most now call educational leadership, coming through in the writing of a new generation of scholars.

### **Linking the Established and Emerging School Leadership Scholars in Canada**

The identification of an *emerging scholar* was linked to a nomination from an *established scholar*. To identify the (post Greenfield) established, Canadian focused, school leadership scholars, a simple, purposeful and informative strategy was used. First, I searched university Faculty of Education websites with the help of colleagues. Second, I looked at the membership list of the Canadian Association for Studies in Educational Administration (CASEA) in consultation with another colleague, an established Canadian scholar in school leadership, who worked across Canada, who is also active in CASEA and knows the field very well.

The combination of sources produced a list of almost 40 established scholars. As a group, they reflect a broad national and international cross section of scholars whose research and writing was rooted in Canadian scholarship. A limitation of this process may be that I have omitted some notable persons, a very small number chose not to participate, and others may not be active in CASEA, or not apparent on their university websites. But first let's look at a starting point in the discussion of Canadian educational administration and leadership.

Somewhat of a surprise was the outwardly positive and encouraging reaction from this group. Each established scholar was asked a simple question: who have you worked with that you feel will be influential in shaping school leadership in Canada for the next generation; in other words, who are the 'emerging' scholars in Canadian school leadership?

### **Who Are The Emergent School Leadership Scholars in Canada?**

Each of the above established scholars nominated emergent scholars and agreed to assist them in preparing a paper for the Compendium, all were open reviewers and a few as co-authors, as well as agreeing to write a page or two introducing the emerging scholar. In this way there is a link between the efforts of Townsend and Lawton (1981), the post Greenfield generation of established scholars, and the emerging scholars as the primary contributing writers in this Compendium. While I did not get all emergent scholars, I did get a list which is significant and spans the country. In two cases the emergent scholars were outside of Canada, either studying or working. The emergent Canadian scholars who were nominated and agreed to participate are:

Mike Corbett (Acadia University) by Dr. Carol Harris  
Jacqueline Ottmann (University of Calgary) by Dr. Charles Webber  
Bonnie Stelmach (University of Saskatchewan) by Dr. Rosemary Foster  
Paul Newton (University of Alberta) by Dr. Keith Walker  
Dave Burgess (University of Saskatchewan) by Dr. Larry Sackney  
G.B. Henderson (Royal Roads University formerly a School Administrator  
in Regina, Saskatchewan) by Dr. Rod Dolmage  
Shawn Northfield (University of Nottingham, UK) by Drs. Meyer &



Macmillan

Claire IsaBelle (University of Ottawa) by Dr. Claire Lapointe Ken Brien  
(University of New Brunswick) by Dr. Barbara Gill

Rolene Betts (University of New Brunswick) by Dr. Barbara Gill

Roseline Garon (University of Montreal) by Dr. Claire Lapointe

Elizabeth Costa (University of Prince Edward Island) by Dr. Gerry Hopkirk

Doug Furey (Memorial University of Newfoundland) by Dr. Jean Brown

Michèle Schmidt (Simon Fraser University ) by Dr. Andy Hargreaves

Robert White (St. Francis Xavier University) by Dr. Andy Hargreaves

Denise Armstrong (Brock University) by Dr. Paul Begley

Erica Mohan (University of British Columbia) by Dr. Carolyn Shields

Catherine Hands (University of San Diego) by Dr. Paul Begley

### **The Emerging Scholar Selection, Writing, and Peer Review Process**

The nominated candidates were invited to submit a scholarly paper reflective of their research and future directions. Each paper was subjected to a mentor peer review of the emergent scholars' writing by the established scholar, as well as, a blind peer review by a panel of two reviewers for each contribution.

### **What Are the Emergent Scholars Writing About?**

An emergent, sometimes divergent, pattern was anticipated and indeed emerged. This allowed the writing to be placed into loosely associated groups as applicable. The collection and design is very much a grounded or emergent process reflective of a deliberate effort by me to 'not' contain or constrain this writing under pre-determined themes. As such, the diversity of themes within the individual nature of the researchers, reflect a complex web of relationships which is expressed in ideas that will often cross the threshold of each section. My desire was that the writing reflect the overarching theme of the Compendium which is to find and share the works of emergent scholars on Canadian school-based research relevant to school-based leadership. Topics included are leadership, leadership in the context of diversity, globalization, school stakeholder involvement and partnerships, and issues of technology. There are five loosely connected areas which seem to capture the essence of the direction for the emergent scholars. These five 'themes' and a description of the writing are outlined below:

*Section-Theme 1: Changing realms for school administrators:* The first paper in theme 1 is written by Michèle Schmidt (Simon Fraser University). Michèle writes about the mixture of accountability and marketization issues related to principals as they lead in the context of globalization. The second paper is written by Jacqueline Ottmann (University of Calgary). She is one of a significant and growing group of emerging First Nations scholars. In her paper she discusses a First Nation person's perspective on leadership. The third paper is written by Elizabeth Costa (University of Prince Edward Island and the University of New Brunswick). She outlines the school reform process in Prince Edward Island and the challenges faced by teacher and school leaders. Ending theme 1 section is a paper written by Paul Newton. Paul wrote his paper from his 'principal's chair' having taking up the principalship after completing a PhD, an interesting twist in an academic life as he discusses the theory/ practice divide.

*Section-Theme 2: The emerging role of the vice- principal:* This is a theme which is easy to delineate in the context of leadership scholarship as it is distinctive and specific role of the vice principal. In the *Compendium* there are three scholars writing in this area. The first paper is co-authored by Shawn Northfield (Nottingham University, UK) with Robert Macmillan and Matthew J. Meyer. Shawn reveals the development of trust relationships between principals and vice principals related to the successful (or not) succession of principals and the critically important role that a vice principal plays in supporting the success (or failure) of a new principal. The second paper is authored by Ken Brien (University of New Brunswick) highlights the intersection of issues surrounding the often legally ambiguous and role-centric duties of the vice principal. The last paper along this theme, the vice principalship, is by Denise Armstrong (BrockUniversity) who was nominated to the *Compendium* by Paul Begley. Denise discusses the complexities and contrasts faced by new vice principals as they become immersed into their new role.

*Section-Theme 3: Teacher development and resiliency:* There are three papers focusing on teacher education and sustainability (resiliency) in schools. The first paper by Rolene Betts (Department of Education) uses hermeneutical phenomenology to deepen our understanding of the plight and learning experiences of Long Term Supply (LTS) teachers as new teachers in New Brunswick. This paper seems all the more pertinent given the cancellation of New Brunswick's Beginning Teaching Education Program on 2008. The second paper is written by Mike Corbett (Acadia University). Mike's paper is an example of those that cross the threshold as it could have been easily placed in another section. The first half of the paper discusses how the conventional style of leadership is challenged in the pursuit of social justice. The second part of the paper brings the issue to teacher education and this supports its place in theme 3. The third and last paper in theme 3 is written by Roseline Garon (University of Montreal). Her participation brings to the *Compendium* a side of Francophone scholarship that many Anglophone scholars do not get to read. Roseline takes us in the direction of a more thorough understanding of resiliency factors for teachers with specific reference to the influences for school administrators and researchers.

*Section-Theme 4: Expanding the boundaries of school development:* This section contains four papers in which the authors seek to expand the traditional boundaries of school devolvment as it relates to influence within and beyond the school. The first paper is written by Catherine Hands (University of San Diego, US). Catherine writes about the many roles principals assume in the development of community partnerships to enrich student learning opportunities. This section's second paper is written by Bonnie Stelmach (University of Saskatchewan). Bonnie deals with the illusive role of parents and students in school improvement planning. She gives voice to a group who, while often referenced, are not as often consulted in meaningful ways regarding their role in the school improvement process. The third paper in this section is a critique of Saskatchewan's School<sup>Plus</sup> community school's initiative. In this paper G.B. Henderson (Royal Roads University) uses Complexity Theory to frame his discussion. The fourth and final paper is written by Robert White (Saint Francis Xavier University). In this paper Robert shares a case study revealing the multiple and interactive influences involved in the dynamics of a working partnership between a school and a commercial enterprise.

*Section-Theme 5: Moving forward and the ramifications for school leaders:* The final Theme is shared through five papers drawing on matters related to educational leadership. The first paper is written by Douglas Furey (Memorial University). Doug writes about organizational change to K-12 programs using distance education as transformational leadership. The second paper is co-authored with Claire IsaBelle (University of Ottawa) as first author with H       Fournier (The Institute for Information Technology National Research Council Canada-New Brunswick), **Fran       Desjardins, and Phyllis Dalley** (University of Ottawa). A unique contribution to the Compendium as this paper was first written in French and then translated into English. Claire’s paper provides Anglophone scholars with another the opportunity to access Francophone scholarship. Claire and her colleagues discuss the results of a large study of Francophone school administrators and their “Ethnolinguistic vitalization practices” in Francophone schools. Theme 5’s third paper was written by Erica Mohan (University of British Columbia). Erica discusses the changing face of Canadian schools in terms of multicultural inclusivity. The concluding paper with the moving forward theme written by Dave Burgess (University of Saskatchewan) aptly looks at the emerging trends which may impact our practice and the theoretical direction for educational leadership in the future.

As the reader can attest there is much to celebrate in the active research and dissemination of scholarship for educational leadership in the Canadian context. As a Newfoundlander whose sense of identity is well entrenched, I continue to seek that sense of a Canadian identity. Having lived in 6 provinces and travelled to all of them, I believe that much of what you see above shares that Canadian essence which is hard to pin down as we seek a sense of national identity. In concluding this discussion of Canadian leadership scholarship, I will share my concerns and hopes as I discuss the context of what is Canadian about the Canadian educational leadership.

### **Conclusion: What is so Canadian about Educational Leadership in 2010?**

In this section I will discuss some concerns related to my experiences as framed on three operational (largely experiential) levels and aswell as a result of reflecting on some of the *Compendium* papers in asking and answering the question: what is so Canadian about Canadian education administration and leadership today?

The Canadian scholarly community in educational administration, as Greenfield (1981) and Young (1994) advocated, has been moving forward in advancing research and writing both at home and internationally. Another generation of scholars is emerging. The question remains: what is so Canadian about Canadian educational leadership?

The answer is, in part, an obvious recognition that, with support from the initial stimulus of the *Greenfield debates*, Canadian educational administration scholarship has broadened into a more inclusive and comprehensive field more indicative of the term educational leadership. The answer is also, in part, reflected in the significant efforts by the Canadian Association for Studies in Educational Administration (CASEA) and similar groups to build a Pan-Canadian sense of a scholarly community.

Townsend and Lawton (1981) questioned the feasibility a Pan-Canadian scholarly group given the Canadian communities relative smaller sizes within North America. This significant gain is limited; however, as I believe the answer to my question is still laden with concerns along what I see as three related ‘operational-experiential’ perspectives.

It is within these perspectives that I have growing concerns about the challenges to our distinctive contributions to the field of educational leadership. These perspectives are based largely on my personal and professional experiences which I group as: 1) university training and work, 2) international development, and 3) responses from colleagues and publishers about the ‘feasibility’ of this Canadian leadership compendium.

***University training and work:*** As a student having studied at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the University of Toronto (OISE/UT) and then as a professor at three Canadian universities (Saskatchewan, Calgary, and now New Brunswick), I am challenged to see distinctively Canadian perspectives in the midst of the use of US references and materials. To our credit, our universities, international development agencies, and publishing mediums are more prevalent than at any time in our history and, I argue, are second to none. Each Canadian university has a core of scholars in educational administration and its postmodern extension of educational leadership.

Greenfield (1986) may have heralded the demise of the science of educational management and administration but, as noted in Young’s feminist critique of his work, even he was not fully aware of the complexity and richness of what is now the study of educational leadership (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). Thus, Canadian scholarship is rich in variety and texture as reflected in this leadership compendium, but is it intellectually distinctive to our society? Is there a Canadian society to reflect? Are we seeking this knowledge?

Perhaps reflective of the post 1980’s ‘free trade’ economic trends, I am somewhat dismayed by the seemingly dominant ‘North-South alignment’ of our institutions and our researchers. Emerging writers in the West, Central, and East do not seem aware of each other’s writing or research. Are our graduate students finding Canadian scholarship outside their own university community? In my teaching and reading I see too many graduate students and scholars who, contrary to Greenfield’s reproach on the use of the term North America, accept that saying North American and using almost all sources from the United States is contextually and intellectually valid in the Canadian context—it is not.

In the case of this Compendium there are many examples of a tendency to ‘source out’ an issue using US sources which may not be the best choice contextually. For example, in one instance, in an earlier version of a paper the author references a racist comment made by a school administrator in Alabama as a “case in point” in the discussion (Anderson, 2010). This illustration may have been applicable in raw emotional and intellectual understanding of the topic of racism, but my question in a discussion of the context of Canadian schools is that surely there is a Canadian principal who said something equally as inane? If ‘we’ are to better serve issues of race and inclusivity in a Canadian context and not over exploit the miseries of others, maybe Alabama should be spared in this instance. Perhaps a reference to Sylvia Hamilton’s film: *The Little Black School House* which deals with segregated schooling in Canada would be

a better source. As Canadian scholars, we must make this effort, if we are to reflect the reality as it exists in our context.

Another and more general example is reflective of this tendency; another author cites leadership using a reference to the United States Congress (Anderson, 2010). And my view is again—Why the US Congress? Is there not a Canadian senate committee, member of parliament, or provincial representative that made similar statements which serve this interest? I wonder in the future about the many references from Canadian sources which will celebrate the end of Bush's presidency and the rise of Obama, while ignoring the rich complexity and distinctions between Stephen Harper and Michael Ignatieff. It is in this way that we cause many positive and negative aspects of our community to disappear while reinforcing a largely US centric world view. In a few exceptional cases, Canadian sources are being used, but largely due to their success in the American and international markets. Hence, Canadian scholars seem to have to do an 'end run' outside of Canada and then back into the Canadian community to bridge our internal gaps in publication and dissemination.

***International development:*** As a trainer of school leaders and teachers in Canadian funded international development work, the bulk of material used tended to be American with scant few Canadian sources. It is not that there is anything wrong with these American sources, or the work we did, but unless Canadian sources were specifically referenced by a team member we would go 'by default' to a data set that was largely American. As Canadians, our 'default' source seemed to be too readily reflective of US based sources; a tendency which, in my opinion, reflects two key things: 1) the global influence of American commercial interests supporting such materials in the marketing and production, and 2) the relative ease of access to these materials. The blending of Canadian materials within that global American system and our immersion in this milieu distorts and hinders relative access to Canadian materials. Canadians, as evident in this compendium, have significant things to say (and are saying it), but much of this is more relevant to our context than the US materials to which we too often defer. The overuse of US materials is part of a message as our shrinking distinctiveness which seems to be blurred in an ever increasing default to sources that are largely reflective of US global interests.

***Publishing and dissemination:*** In an attempt to feature emerging Canadian scholars in this Compendium, it was a surprise to me that the first concern raised in a research forum presentation in Calgary on this topic was a question from a senior professor as to whether there was a "market within Canada" to support it? My naive response was that the purpose of this Compendium is to seek out emerging Canadian scholars and share their work, and that furthermore, as a country with a healthy size scholarly community, surely such an idea was feasible. The depth of this concern was driven home to me in a subsequent discussion about publishing the Compendium with a Canadian publishing house: the publisher questioned me about whether the Compendium could be made more attractive to an American audience. When I stressed that this book is an unapologetic attempt to showcase emerging Canadian scholarship, the publisher then led me into a discussion of possible grant sources. This compendium has found its way to publication, but like many other sources of Canadian scholarship that are 'out there', can scholars, practioners, and graduate students actually find it?



Finally, a question to challenge us all: are we clearly identifying our work in a distinctive manner or are we ‘blending in’ with the larger North American market? Are we, contrary to Greenfield’s assertion, running the risk of ignoring our intellectual roots and origins as we construct and propagate another reality? The answer to this ongoing concern seems to be that we are writing more. There is no shortage of research and writing.

The deeper question is to whom are we ‘marketing’ our philosophical renderings? Who is our audience really?

I believe we are falling prey to a tendency to erase the ‘Canadian-ness’ in our texts, as we try to appeal to the “North American” market (not the Global Village) which is a source of misrepresentation of ourselves. We are, in some cases, deliberately hiding our distinctiveness. Having said this, I need to be clear; we have many similarities to Americans. We have much to learn and share with them. We are also very different. This duality and distinction was evident in the work of Townsend and Lawton (1981) and is also evident in this Compendium. Finally, given that much of our knowledge and writing is value-laden (Hodgkinson, 1991), we must remember that if we do not assert our identity in the context of our values, then whose identity and values are we asserting? I think I have found part of the answer.

### **The Last Words Are the Wisdom of Saul**

And for those who come after, here is another part: John Ralston Saul recently released his book *A Fair Country: Telling truths about Canada*. In this discussion of Canadians, Saul suggests that the sense of who we are has been decontextualized into a French-English-North American narrative which masks our distinctive Canadian character. He states that “We are not a civilization of British or French or European inspiration.... We never have been” (Saul, 2008, cover page). He argues that we derive our sense of ourselves and our related values from the blending of Aboriginal and newer peoples. Whether readers agree or disagree, his assertion that Canada is “far more Aboriginal than European” and should be considered a ‘*Métis nation*’ is intriguing. This reflects much of what I believe but have not been able to articulate in such a clear and distinctive manner. It also has ramifications for scholars in Canada, thus, I give thanks to JR Saul for his wisdom and look forward to future insights into the truth of who we really are.

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### **Chapter 3: Politics and Education: Decision-Making**

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An old clergyman in rural Newfoundland, some years ago, commented that the only vice that Newfoundlanders did not take kindly to, was adVICE. There are some words that educators do not take kindly to, one being 'theory', which graduate students often dismiss as being non-relevant even when introduced as explanation of practice. Another is 'politics' and it is not uncommon to hear it being said that education and politics don't mix. Perhaps, both words, and particularly, 'politics' suffer from lack of a clear definition. If an association test were given to 100 people to state what comes to mind when they hear the word 'politics', more than likely there would be 100 different responses.

A definition from Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics>, September 18, 2010) removes the mystique of the word by defining politics as a process by which groups of people make decisions. This involves social relations involving authority or power, and methods or tactics to formulate and apply policy. So, in actual fact, politics permeates most, if not all, of our daily living, and certainly our education system. There is no doubt that under politics, people raise such issues as rights, immigration, homelessness, unions, poverty, inclusion, funding, social justice, activism, etc. When words like "rightwing", "leftist" or "radical" get thrown in, some people shy farther and farther away.

However, the bottom line is that all acts of group decision-making in the education system are political. Owen (2006) reminds us that in the late 1960's, the term micropolitics of education was coined by Laurence Iannoccone, and defined as 'politics that take place in and around schools (p. 5). Shor (1999) notes that classrooms are labs for social justice (p. xiii). I would prefer to rephrase that to read classrooms are labs for the best possible learning and life experiences, which of course, would include social justice. I agree with Shor that teachers who speak out for what is best, while seemingly critical of the status quo, may not last long in maintaining any such public position.

Owen (2006) notes that "Educational politics, like politics in general, revolves around three entities: people, values and resources" (p. 7). Resources entail knowledge. Freire (1982), perhaps, the best well known advocate of the relevance of education, was critical of how decisions were made regarding the experiences which children encountered. He wrote: "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués, and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the banking concept of education" (p. 5). However, the big question is why do teachers do this? Macedo (2006), a strong supporter of Freire, reiterates one of Freire's tenets that the text is only a small indication of the big world and to read text, one must be able to read the world (an act of being political). Text is understood as any body of knowledge on which a person may act, such as choosing the experiences (curriculum including printed texts) that children are to encounter. The issue is the degree of teachers' understanding of the process by which such decisions are made, and the

teachers' roles and participation in the process. Macedo notes that sometimes in schools, there is a "choiceless choice" (p. 165), choice being "part and parcel of a language of management that celebrates testing, privatizing, and competition" (p. 165).

To begin to have choice, to participate in the decision-making process of schooling in helping shape the experiences that children will encounter, one must have knowledge of the key people who have power affecting these decisions. To gather some information, 14 graduate students in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador were asked to share their thoughts in response to a number of questions. These were all experienced teachers (all more than five years) and covered a range of grade levels from kindergarten to high school. They were to think over their experiences in the past two years in responding. Questions and results are as follows:

### **Beyond the School Context: Knowledge and Action**

8. About how well would you say you are informed of who in Government affects education:

Not at all informed – 2	Somewhat informed - 10	Very informed - 2
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4. About how well are you informed of day to day issues of Government:

Not at all informed -	Somewhat informed - 13	Very informed – 1
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- Name one Government issue that has caught your attention in the past two years:

Most referred to economic development or health issues. Three referred to education: implementing a new math curriculum, teachers' salaries, and how principals are chosen for high schools.

- To what extent are you likely to speak out at a public meeting on a topic of interest to you:

Not at all - 5	Somewhat likely - 8	Very likely - 1
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- Have you written a local newspaper on an educational matter:

No - 13, Yes - 1 (reply to a teacher bashing article)

- Have you communicated with your professional organization over an educational concern:

No - 10, Yes - 4 (hiring process, teacher assessment, educational leave)

- Have you communicated with the School Board:

No - 9, Yes - 5 (hiring process, employment support, public exam regulations, English Language Arts course)

- Have you communicated with officials in the Provincial Government:

No - 12, Yes - 2 (scoring rubrics for school tests, public exams)

- Who inspires you most as an educational/political leader:

(Governor General, President of the United States, PM of a foreign country [by a student of that country], colleagues in the Master's program, parents or other relatives)

### Comments

Overall, teachers seem to reflect Macedo's (2006) view of having a choiceless choice. Few felt very informed on who in Government affects education. There were some contacts with Government, media, and professional organizations but these all dealt with some aspect of teacher welfare rather than with providing the best experiences for children. A first reaction is why complain if there is no need to complain or raise issues. The teachers were asked the next questions and the responses are given.

- How satisfied are you with conditions of teaching (classroom resources, student allocation, professional development, administration, etc.)

Not at all satisfied - 2	Somewhat - 11	Satisfied - 1	Very – 0
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- Are you a member of any Professional

Organization: No - 13, Yes - 1

- Are you an active member of a Special Interest Group of your Provincial Professional Organization:

No - 13, Yes - 1

No one was very satisfied with existing conditions in the school, and two were not at all satisfied. They did not see people beyond the school as an avenue for making conditions more satisfying. They did not name any leader who had made a great contribution to improving conditions for schooling for children. For those teachers at the early childhood level, there was no concern for the nature and range of experiences for children entering school, especially children from low-income neighbourhoods. A political decision of a previous Provincial Government was to de-focus the role of the home and community in providing early learning experiences by not funding resource people from Family Resource Centres who might work at the community level, but instead put emphasis on initiating parents and children into the school system through experiences that might be considered deficit rather than asset based - a controversial edu-political stance among early childhood educators. Rather than believing in, and enhancing and enriching the experiences that parents of all social classes provide for their children, the emphasis of their approach was on telling parents what they must do and need to know about entrance into kindergarten. What is surprising is that only one teacher was a member of a professional organization, that being English as a second language organization. The teaching of reading is one of the main expectations of schools and the International Reading Association, represents over 100,000 individual members and over a hundred countries as institutional members. In some provinces, such as Alberta, there are several provincial and local councils of this professional organization, both for general teacher participation and for reading specialists. However, none of the teachers in this sample was a member yet the graduate course they attended was literacy focused.

### **Within the School Context: Knowledge and Action**

- Have you spoken to your school principal/vice-principal on a matter of educational concern:
  - No - 6, Yes - 8 (classroom size, teacher evaluation, student transfers, magazine subscriptions, discipline, workload, at risk students, assessment, one's own professional development)
- Do you get together with other teachers (2 or more) to discuss educational issues:
  - No - 2, Yes - 12
- Do you express concerns from these get-togethers to educational authorities: No - 9,
  - Yes - 5
- What materials/resources do you use in teaching reading/writing/literacy:
  - (A range were listed)
  - How were these chosen:

- (through years of practice/experience - 1, through professional development – 2, by Government/School Board/were there - 11)

- When you think of professional development, what comes to mind:

beneficial/professional growth and development applicable  
 hands on/teacher driven teachers sharing opportunity to learn new skills  
 contact with other professionals teaching the teacher helping students understand  
 how they learn  
 not enough time to engage in profitable discussion  
 not enough time to share with teachers in similar situations need to be meaningful  
 sometimes a waste of time  
 "talk shops" which don't often lead to action

## Comments

Teachers were more likely to be involved at a school level in expressing opinions, seeking change. The starting point for such initiative was a get together with other teachers. While most topics were under school control, some dealt with issues over which outside forces (Government) had control - classroom size, teacher evaluation. What may be considered disturbing are the reasons behind choosing materials/resources for teaching reading/writing/literacy. In almost all cases these were determined from without or were accepted without question. This confirms Owen's (2006) conclusion that "Frequently, districts become closed in their decision -making activities by default when the stakeholders decline to participate" (p. 77). One avenue when teachers get together is through professional development experiences. Most of the comments refer to benefits of sharing and learning with/from other teachers. Five of the comments were not positive and felt the professional experiences could be more profitable. Discussion with some of the participants showed that there was never any controversy, or any questioning as to why particular decisions were made re teaching and resources, and in almost all cases, the professional development experiences were led by other teachers who shared what was successful in their classrooms.

A group of 15 colleagues (not the participants in this study) were asked if they were able to choose a speaker/facilitator for an educational conference, whom would they choose. These were all experienced educators, with 5 working at a university/college and 10 within the school system. All named a person who was an expert in their field of teaching. No one named a person known for his or her political stance on education. In recent years, simultaneous with my involvement in education, I have engaged in another line of activity - municipal politics and am currently mayor of a town. There are many similarities in the politics of both institutions including funding, resources, decision-making and control from without. There are also levels of professional involvement, from the municipal government to the provincial organization to the national organization. This past spring I attended the annual convention of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (FCM). Among the key speakers were the current Prime Minister, the former Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the NDP, and the Green Party, and former Cabinet ministers. Municipal government was important enough to them to participate, through presentation, questions and interaction afterwards. How is municipal

government more important to the well being of the nation than education - universities, colleges, schools? In my experience with educational conferences, someone from Government usually brings greetings on behalf of Government and then hastily makes their retreat. They do not seem to think there is anything worth learning, even from the opening presentation! And they do not seem to have a message or argument of the priority of education among other responsibilities of Government and how they are addressing or plan to address this priority. Also, they are not challenged by educators to do so. Educators do not seem to have goals which they want to achieve from Government and the strategies to best achieve them. One of the major speakers at the FCM Conference strongly emphasized the value of selective lobbying - of finding out the background of MHA's or MP's whose background is in municipal politics and focusing the lobbying on them. Elected Government representatives with similar backgrounds to the lobbyists have a better understanding of the issues and are likely to try and move the agenda forward, sometimes making it their agenda. In the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, many elected members of Government are former educators, so there should be a large lobbying body.

## **Discussion**

Simply, politics is group decision-making so it affects most of what goes on in schools. It applies to big issues such as how to provide for children who come to school hungry, about inclusiveness versus separate teaching for children with various mental or learning challenges, but it also deals with such academic issues as how children shall be taught to read and write. It affects how to help those children who are not learning to expectation and in identifying the level of expectation of children's learning. In the case of early childhood education, it relates to whether the school subscribes to an asset or deficit approach. It relates to deciding what counts as research including the credentials of all those who write articles, or develop school programs as researchers. It relates to accepting more than the number of recommended students for class size (soft cap), selecting the first on the list for enrollment in French immersion, or a draw out of the hat as to which students will get into Intensive Core French? Ironically, this is similar to a process in municipal government, where a tie for mayor is decided by a draw out of hat, or other container! It relates to opportunities in providing input to Government policy.

Recently there were Government announcements calling for input into a new early childhood policy. This was carried in a column in the local newspaper on September 4, interestingly under the heading: Education/Politics, noting that Government was to hold hearings on early childhood strategy learning. I saw no other information regarding this until the paper reported on September 17 under a column "Education" that the hearings had been held in the St. John's area. One wonders how many educators or people in general were involved? One wonders why the times for hearings were not widely publicized. There are about 280 municipalities in the province which can be easily contacted by their provincial body (the provincial body actually sends out a flyer to all municipalities each week) which could be used as an avenue by the Department of Education to notify stakeholders. Sometimes the challenge is about having an opportunity for getting involved in decision-making.

Politics as decision-making is about knowing who are the controllers of what goes on in the classroom. While the teachers are the actors, they are not necessarily the directors. Politics in education calls for a different kind of knowledge on the part of teachers. As Jipson (2000) states,

"knowledge (must be) valued in terms of its potential to contribute to progressive social change and social justice" (p. 173). And progressive social change and social justice include all of the decisions referred to above.

But when it comes time to bell the cat, who will do it, or who should do it? Should the university, as the training ground for teachers, help instill an understanding of politics and participation in decision-making as an important part of teaching? Nieto's book, *"Dear Paulo: Letters from those who dare to teach"* provides interesting insights into teachers developing political sensitivity. Should school leaders promote such a stance in addressing school issues? Should school board officials capitalize on time for professional development to address not only what we should do on Monday morning, but also why we should do it, based on who said so? Should those who set up educational conferences invite politicians from all levels of government to address their philosophies and support for education? Municipal governments are often left out of the picture as significant partners, yet the current school system in Newfoundland and Labrador is based on a community model, and the municipal government represents the community of which the school is a part. How should school councils be most effectively run and how can they address political (decision-making) issues that may be sensitive to the relationship between school and School Board? How many school councils invite the MHA for the district in which they are located, for a discussion on educational issues?

Data from this study showed that while teachers are not likely to be knowledgeable of, or involved with authorities outside the school in decision-making, they do take advantage of times they can share amongst themselves to address educational issues of importance to them. The school leader must take advantage of this and not only encourage this kind of interaction but provide for such discussions working their way through the school to affect decisions that regulate the operation of the school, including curriculum choices. As Diaz Soto (2000) points out, face-to-face networks have potential and should not be replaced by having power and decision-making authority rest in one or a few. Owens (2006) reminds us that "education is supposed to be about 'what is best for kids'" (p. 5) and therefore all stakeholders must share in decision-making, Diaz Soto (2000) perhaps best sums up this goal: "Only when we dream our dreams in solidarity with multiple voices will diverse children, families and communities experience social justice and equity in our lifetimes" (p. 208).

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## **Chapter 4: From the Bureaucracy to the Academy: Reflections on Two Communities**

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### **Abstract**

Government policymakers are often criticized for failing to utilize educational research. Some researchers believe they have had their voices over-ridden by political actors, a position consistent with that of some education policy critics in Canada. In this paper I consolidate some of the literature on governance, research and policy, examine the role of public servants in mediating policy evidence and explore the challenges associated with mobilizing academic research in a political environment. I draw on research completed in 2006 with senior public servants and university-based researchers to suggest how the research and policy communities might be brought closer together.

### **Introduction**

When Nathan Caplan (1979) published his seminal work on two communities' theory, I was a newly minted teacher. Like most of the new teachers with whom I work today, I had little concern for research on knowledge mobilization or research utilization, as the field was originally termed. But life takes unexpected turns. Some years later, after I left classroom teaching to work in a ministry of education, knowledge dissemination became part of my stock-in-trade. During much of my tenure in government I worked in the areas of assessment, research and planning. This meant responsibility for the usual work associated with monitoring and reporting on provincial educational outcomes, but there was also a primary and more immediate role – that of feeding the Minister's office key information, statistics, comparisons and talking points in defence of government's position on any given educational issue.

In government, when a minister speaks s/he is, in effect, stating the government's policy. The Minister is the voice of the government and when s/he "goes out publicly" on any policy issue, any and all information and resources are brought to bear – with remarkable efficiency. In a government environment, the rules and conventions are entirely different from those of schools and district offices, and perhaps from any other public agency. There is an old adage that holds "any would-be government's first priority is to get elected and their second priority is to get re-elected". In my experience, senior bureaucrats – the ones who survive successive governments – understand these rules very well. But as "permanent" public servants, they must find a balance in their interactions with elected officials. On the one hand they must mediate their policy advice and direction through a public interest lens, but in order to gain the trust of the Minister, senior bureaucrats must stay close to the politics of policy-making. However, too far towards the political can paint an official as partisan, while a rigid focus on public administration processes

can earn them the reputation of being inflexible and rules-bound. One of the ever present conflicts, therefore, in the life of any senior public servant is maintaining a legible delineation between the politics side and the public administration side.

The migration to a university environment has taken me away from the day-to-day machinations and pressures of life as a senior public servant. This has not only been physically and mentally invigorating; it has enabled me to reflect on how my practice as a policy advisor could have been different – driven less by political pressure and need to deal with the immediate problems of the day and more by sober reflection and research evidence. In this paper I consolidate some of these reflections, review some of the literature on governance, research and policy, examine the role of public servants in mediating policy evidence and explore the challenges associated with mobilizing academic research in a political environment. I draw on research completed in 2006 with senior public servants and university-based researchers to suggest how the research and policy communities might be brought closer together.

### **Life as a Bureaucrat**

The question of whether senior bureaucrats play an active role in policy development or whether their influence is more limited – even an impediment to the will of elected ministers – is contested. On one hand, there is a view that politicians set the policy agenda of government with the bureaucracy represented entirely as the agency of the elected government (Aucoin, 1995), or in some instances a ‘necessary evil’ for enacting government policy (Barzelay, 2001; Lynn, 1996). Other literature positions the bureaucracy differently, suggesting a more authoritative and direct role in policy formation including a duty to protect the public interest (Aucoin, 2004; duGay, 2000; Goodsell, 1986).

### **Public Servants as “Servants”**

While not responsible for setting policy directions in education, Saïdi (2001) maintains that public administrations cannot be circumvented because they are the main providers of policy advice, therefore, “...any policy decision taken by politicians would be very fragile if it were not supported by a strong qualitative preparation by the administration” (p. 109). However, Saïdi (ibid.) argues it is the Cabinet and the Minister of Education who are responsible for the actual “formulation of educational policies, their options, the political accuracy and timeliness of their priorities, objectives, strategies and plans” (p.109). The casting of politician as policy leader is born out of the notion that any public servant, senior or otherwise is just that – a ‘servant’ to the public, but more to the point, a servant to the Crown, as represented by the Minister. This view depicts senior public servants as instruments of political processes but with a severely limited role in policy formulation (Wilson, 1999). This orientation is also consistent with new corporate management ideologies that are believed to foster a greater separation between public

administration and politics. As Cohn (1997) suggests, under such arrangements ministers rely on deputies and other senior administrators to provide direction and advice on policy, but the actual decisions are made at a political level. In framing policy development in this way, there is some recognition of the role of the permanent public service, but it is one of implementation, stopping short of policy formation.

The problem with this paradigm is that changes in public management accountabilities have also created greater risk for public servants. The alignment of government departments with corporate managerial principles tends to restrict opportunities for public servants to provide frank and independent advice to politicians in the formulation of policy decisions, while placing more direct accountability for the execution of such decisions in the hands of bureaucrats. Under such arrangements, bureaucrats share the risk associated with failed policies without necessarily having had much input into their formulation. This governance model also serves to marginalize the public service and casts doubt on the value of their professional knowledge.

Du Gay (2000) suggests that popular anti-bureaucratic sentiments are confused and contradictory. Vernacular phrases like ‘the faceless bureaucrat’ and ‘paper pusher’ are thought to create a perceived low standard of government service that Goodsell (1985) claims has not been demonstrated in the literature, except in isolated cases. Hood (1976) has argued that there are limitations to what can be achieved by any administrative agency; nevertheless, enthusiastic critics set standards for public administration that could never be met. Such portrayals, according to Lynn (1996), enable the various publics to exaggerate the limitations of bureaucratic structures while understating their benefits and achievements. They also reinforce calls for smaller government operations, less interference in the free market, and a non-regulatory, laissez-faire approach to governance. For example, the notion that those in the bureaucracy could be, at once, cunning enough to initiate regulations and controls over private citizens in order to retain and cultivate bureaucratic power while performing the marginalized role of political functionary, or simply wasting time or watching the clock, is somewhat paradoxical. Furthermore, the idea that any reluctance on the part of the public service to immediately embrace new politically-generated policy directions as a struggle for power is open to question. Du Gay (2000) suggests that such orientations are more likely to be a manifestation of caution rooted in the bureaucracy’s role as servant of the public interest than any form of power play: “one inescapable part of the ethical role of the public bureaucrat, as a bureaucrat, is to serve the interests of the state” (p. 138) and not to see itself only as a neutral instrument of management.

Some researchers have suggested that anti-government critics have used creative language to pigeonhole the bureaucracy as a “visible and appealing scapegoat for numerous discomforts” (Goodsell, 1985, p. 13), a notion that has been largely taken up and reinforced in society. According to Lynn (1996) bureaucrats are besieged from all sides by citizens and taxpayers, advocacy groups, ministers and other elected politicians:

...public managers have been the experimental white mice... forced to seek routes to accountability through shifting and ever more elaborate mazes of constraint. Administrators of public policies face pressures that test and often defeat even the most skilled among them.... (p. 11).

### **Alternative Perspectives on the Role of Public Servants**

Du Gay (2000) has argued the Westminster form of government (used in many Commonwealth countries, including Canada) has traditionally afforded a robust policy development role to non-elected senior officials. While civil servants remained anonymous from a public accountability perspective, du Gay (*ibid*) notes that the “convention of ministerial responsibility never required that ministers should be the policy-makers and officials merely the advisors and administrators” (p. 90). In major departments of government, he argues, it would be a practical impossibility for ministers to know and actively participate in all policy decisions. Thus, the traditional role of the bureaucracy was not simply managerial – the real constitutional check or ‘sober second look’ occurred as a result of a permanent, independent public service, whose function was to serve the interests of the public and not to be beholden to any political party or faction. Du Gay (*ibid.*) writes:

Public bureaucrats work within a political environment: that is their fate. Most of what they do has potential political implications, even activities of an apparently routine nature. [...] Awareness of the political nature of their work, an expertise in the dynamics of the political environment within which they have to operate, is a crucial competence they have to master. However, this political dimension does not make them partisan political actors in their own right. [...] The public bureaucrat may be a political beast but she is not a party political beast. This is a crucial difference (p. 141).

Bah Diallo (2001), a former minister of education in Guinea, says that politicians can only effectively initiate policy change with the cooperation of the bureaucracy. Administrators identify for ministers not only what is needed to effect change, but also the appropriate pathways to implementation:

Administration constitutes the passage oblige, the gateway, the bridging link between policy and practice, between political intent and the hard reality of day-to-day business. As such it plays the difficult role of reconciling the need to maintain the system and the need to lead the changes and the reforms. [...] administrators have a tremendous influence on the system processes and the policy-makers’ capacity to decide because administrators can influence action where it counts the most, that is, in the field, where things happen (p. 22).

The traditional role of the senior civil service in Westminster systems has not, therefore, been to simply execute policy, but to play a “significant role in governing the country” (du Gay, 2000, p. 141). Ministers come and go and their actions are mediated by political interests, but the bureaucracy is permanent. Its operation and ethos is governed by different parameters and different values. The most significant of these is respect for public versus political interests.

### **The Research-Policy Divide**

While many social science researchers seek to influence public policy, there is a perception that public policy making is resistant to the influence of research-based knowledge, particularly that which is derived from qualitative inquiry. A significant body of work addresses this issue; it has been extensively discussed in the social science literature since the early 1970s and is commonly described as the ‘research-policy divide’ (Levin, 2001, 2003a, 2003b; Neilson, 2001; Slavin, 2002, 2003; Stone, Maxwell & Keating, 2001). Several theories have been advanced to explain why research does not figure more prominently in informing education policy which fall under the broader title: knowledge utilization theory. These include a number of critical perspectives on the research-policy divide as well as several political-cultural models.

Critical models associate the problem of low research impact with researcher/policymaker responsibility and place accountability for infusing research into education policy decisions either with policymakers – for acquiring research-based evidence and using it in their policy practice; or with researchers – for doing more to promote research and for making it more relevant and accessible to decision-makers.

Political-cultural models, meanwhile, are less inclined to place responsibility for improving research impact with any one group of policy actors and focus on broader political, societal and cultural schisms. Early investigations into the impact of research on public policy (e.g., Caplan, 1979; Lindblom, 1980; Weiss, 1977) questioned the direct influence of research-based evidence on policy, claiming instead that research utilization is indirect, long term and circuitous. Both researchers and policymakers have been criticized for walking separate paths. Some investigators claim that education research – with the possible exception of commissioned research – does not provide the answers that policymakers are seeking when deciding among policy options (Lindblom and Woodhouse, 1993; Neilson, 2001; Pring, 2000; Stone, 2002). Researchers have been accused of ignoring important policy areas in education. Yet, there is little to suggest that elected policymakers pay much attention to independent research, even if it is available and accessible. As Levin (2001) comments, “[t]he political world is ...shaped by beliefs more than facts” (p. 14). In what is described by Bell (1973) as a post-industrial<sup>1</sup> society, many scholars believe that knowledge claims based on research evidence are losing their privileged status (Beck, 1994, 1997; Giddens, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2003; Stronach & MacLure, 1997), as alternative forms of evidence have become legitimized (Levin, 2001; McDonough, 2001). Some authors charge that policymakers take their lead from local pressures such as political and practical considerations, public opinion, the media and anecdotal stories (e.g., Black, 2001;

Kwok, 2003; Leicester, 1999; Levin, 2003b; Stone, 2002; Ungerleider, 2003a; Weissberg, 2002). A few theorists include idiosyncratic factors such as dependencies, loyalties, associations, self-interest, personal values, beliefs, experiences, biases and fears (*e.g.*, Majone, 1990; Stone, 2002).

## **Government and the Policy Process**

There is a wealth of literature that concentrates on governance and public management. Birkland (2001) places responsibility for the study of modern government with Thomas Hobbes, who in 1651 published *Leviathan*, in which he explored the conflict within civilized society between liberty and security. On one hand, people seek freedom to act and express themselves without restrictions; on the other hand, they desire personal security – each being traded off against the other. Hobbes theorized that “people are naturally aggressive and that they naturally want to acquire things for themselves” (Birkland, 2001, p. 156), thus, individuals in society, in the ‘state of nature’ will fight with each other for wealth and power. To enable humankind to coexist and flourish and to prevent a constant “war of man against man” (*ibid.*), Hobbes argues, we establish the ‘leviathan’ (the government), an authoritarian system to protect us from one another. Under such a system citizens confer political power to a smaller group of individuals to make rules – policy decisions and legislation – on their behalf; decisions that are expected to foster the public good. Ostensibly, government authorities use principles such as equity, efficiency, security and liberty as criteria against which to establish rules that act to create that public good (Stone, 2002).

But some researchers have questioned the integrity of the current educational policy-making paradigm and tagged it as erratic and impoverished. Levin and Riffel (1997, p. 9) charge that in education “[c]hanges are adopted and then abandoned with a startling frequency, and many of those that are put into practice are said to be badly thought out and have pernicious consequences”. In a study of the policy-making practices of Canadian education ministers, Galway (2006) reported that, relative to the range of other forms of evidence – political considerations, such as public opinion and media reports were highly valued while external (university-based) research had very marginal standing in informing policy. Although policymakers say that research should play a greater role in education decision making, its influence appears more mediated than direct. Ministers trust ministry-based research, but perceive the work of education researchers to be somewhat foreign and detached from the policy questions that are important to government. Moreover, they object to the critical stance taken by some researchers on education issues. These findings confirm that the marginal impact of research on government policy Caplan described almost three decades earlier is still valid in the Canadian educational context. Caplan (1979, p. 465) noted that:

In addition to the government reports and staff-supplied information typically relied upon so heavily for micro-level decisions, the meta-level decisions were influenced by information acquired independently by policy makers by diverse sources independent of government... Rarely,



however, were these sources cited when respondents were questioned on the use of ‘empirically grounded’ information.

One way the education policy process could be different is if there were a more robust and trusted channel through which independent research evidence could enter into the policy development process. A promising avenue through which this type of change could be accomplished is by researcher engagement with the mid-level and senior-level education bureaucracy. Although there appears to be no agreement on the extent of policy involvement, many authors agree that bureaucrats, either overtly or tacitly, play a significant role in policy development (Birkland, 2001; Galway, 2008; Goodsell, 1985; Majone, 1989; Lynn, 1996; Levin, 2003; Stone, 2002).

## **Research Methods**

Two focus group interviews were conducted with (1) senior ministry of education public servants and (2) university researchers. Interviews were structured to generate discussion on how key informants represent the relative roles of education ministers and public servants in the policy development process. Group 1 participants were education program and policy professionals who were working in the government departments of education, and youth services and post-secondary education in Newfoundland and Labrador. Eight participants – the mid-range of the optimal focus group size – were selected for this focus group, based on their experience, classification level and availability to participate in the research. Group 2 participants were education researchers from Memorial University’s Faculty of Education. Participants were selected based on their status as active researchers. The focus group protocol for this research was based on methodology adapted from Morgan, (1998), Krueger, (1998a, 1998b) and Stewart and Shamdasani (1998).

## **Research Findings**

These findings describe the representations of education experts (senior ministry of education public servants and university researchers) with respect to how they represent the policy roles of ministers and senior public servants and how they perceive their place in the policy development process. Both senior public servants and researchers were unequivocal in their belief that, to a great extent, the bureaucracy helps set the education agenda for government. While, at an operational level, public servants are charged with implementing the education policies of government, these actors also exert considerable influence over how ministers arrive at those policy decisions. Education experts represent bureaucrats as policy entrepreneurs who do more than present policy options to politicians in a rational and disaffected manner. Experts suggest

that senior public servants perceive themselves as having a responsibility to deliver policy options that lead to ‘good’ policy decisions. One participant observed:

*I think most civil servants will go to the minister and in a very objective way and say, “Now here’s the good and here’s the bad”.*

*But sometimes, I think you’re put in a position where you’ve changed three ministers in four years, and you know this issue and you know how dangerous it can be... so I think you try to colour it for the best outcome for the province, because the Minister has such little history in it and such little background in it.*

*Now, that’s taking a lot of power away from the Minister, I realize that, but, I’ve seen it happen because they are just not in the portfolio long enough to know the damage can be done, by a quick decision on something.*

Public servants claim that they and their superiors are selective in the evidence they bring forward and may exclude or emphasize certain factors in order to manage policy outcomes. Most notably, in unstable political or governance environments, where ministers change frequently – as often as two to three times in a four year term of office– senior bureaucrats may gain considerable authority and control over the policies of government. This may result in a slow-moving policy agenda; however the public servants I interviewed were more concerned about the ‘damage’ that can result from hasty policy decisions made by transient and poorly-informed politicians than they were about delays in policy actions brought about by a sluggish public service.

Education researchers define a dual role for senior public servants within government; they are represented as operational and implementation leaders but, more substantially they are seen as policy advisors and policy developers. None of the participants in these sessions suggested that the role of the senior bureaucracy was restricted to the administration of policy formulated at the ministerial level. In fact, the lines between policy maker and departmental administrator are acknowledged to be interwoven and ill-defined. The following excerpt exemplifies the view of researchers:

*I think in recent years there has been more of an intermixing of [policy and operations]. My own sense is that policy formulation now is very much a part of the deputy’s role and operations have moved away.... I think that policy making now is more mixed into the bureaucratic process and so the operations and policy have become kind of muddled, so that it’s sometimes hard to distinguish who is the policy maker and who is the operations person. As I see it the deputy ministers and assistants are the people who actually... read the research...and inform the minister so now they’re into policy making.*

Researchers also identify a substantial policy development role for mid-level bureaucrats such as policy analysts. The interpretation of research occurs, to some extent, at the policy analyst level, where research accounts may either stand on their own or be summarized and synthesized before they reach executives and political decision makers. Almost exclusively, mid-level bureaucrats are the ones who write the initial drafts of policy documents; thus they have an important role in the ‘translation’ of research. The policy options and recommendations that have been developed by bureaucrats may be critically interrogated at the political level; however, they are more likely to be accepted. The researchers interviewed also noted that mid-level bureaucrats have opportunities to shape the analysis and presentation of research on any given policy issue:

*The first thing that came to my mind was who reads the research? And typically it starts at a very low level in the government bureaucracy in terms of its interpretation and reading the basic documents and then it moves upwards. By the time it reaches the level of which we are talking, there can be a considerable amount of personal influence on that research result and the interpretation of the results. So by the time you get upward to recommending to a deputy minister or a minister making policy decisions based on research, goodness know what’s happened to the results....*

Senior bureaucrats also have considerable opportunity to be selective, emphatic and/or restrictive in the research they admit into education policy discussions. Mid-level policy advisors, and the senior bureaucrats to whom they report, may exert influence over policy outcomes by attempting to prescribe to ministers what they consider to be ‘good’ policy decisions. The following exchange between two participants was in response to a question regarding the influence of policy advisors on the decisions of politicians:

*P1: Sometimes I read briefing notes [and] when I read the recommendations and the pros and cons, it’s clear what direction you’re hoping [the Minister will] take. Here are the good things that could come out of it (gestures a moderate number). Oh, and here are the bad things (gestures a large number) (Laughter). And sometimes I don’t think we provide all the information, you know. I think we provide what we want them to know.*

*P2: Oh sure, absolutely. A certain amount of personal bias comes into it as well.*

*P1: I’ve seen it happen sometimes where [a deputy] will say - they tell Ministers, “well OK, we only want to keep to the tops of the trees; you know we want to keep this simple,” and we provide just enough information to support our own views on [the issue], and maybe not all of it, you know, or wording it in a certain way that doesn’t really provide a true sense of the picture. I’ve seen that happen.*

Researchers represent the senior public servants of today as substantially more sophisticated than the stereotypical bureaucrat. They characterize the ‘new’ senior public service less as traditional administrators and more as quasi-academics – well positioned and capable of interpreting and

synthesizing research findings that can be called upon in crafting the advice they provide to politicians:

*I've lived through several generations of deputy ministers and there is absolutely night and day difference between the deputy ministers of today and the deputy ministers of ten or twenty years ago with respect to how close they are to research.... The most obvious tendency, it seems to me is [that] people that find themselves in ADM positions and deputy minister positions are either researchers or what we might call quasi-researchers in the sense that they've had substantial – many of them have doctorates, or are close to doctorates.... It's quite interesting to see that happening in education.*

Notwithstanding some measure of concern relating to the filtering of research evidence, researchers recognize public servants as the principal conduits for flowing research knowledge into policy debates. Researchers establish the role of senior public servant as knowledge gatekeeper and identify avenues whereby deputies and assistant deputies can circumvent or marginalize competing political policy evidence and shape the attractiveness of research-based policy options. The following excerpt is a segment of a dialogue in which researchers are discussing how policy decisions are made by politicians and ways that senior public servants might infuse research evidence into the process. Here, one researcher acknowledges the political nature of policy development; but suggests that senior bureaucrats, as managers of policy evidence can either subvert or amplify the importance of any particular brand of evidence in the way they frame policy issues for consideration by ministers and political decision makers:

*Political policy decisions are obviously made and probably desirably so, on the basis of many things other than research. Everything from political ideology to lobbying and advocacy to guesswork; you name it – it all goes into the mix at the political level. I guess that I would make an argument that at the policy analysis level... research could or ought to play a much bigger role. Those who are in the business of public analysis or advising the policymakers could logically use research to a much greater extent [...]. Certainly, at the bureaucratic level, even though you better keep an ear to the ground with respect to the lobbying and political influence and instincts, and ideologies of a political nature, that be you can certainly set some of this aside while you're developing your Cabinet paper. You can make your Cabinet paper more on evidence. More often than, ultimately the Cabinet would base a decision on [this] evidence...*

## Discussion

I have argued elsewhere that well-organized special interests, new communications technologies, social networking, and a vigilant media have led to a kind of ‘democratization’ of public education policy whereby political decision makers feel considerable pressure for immediate and demonstrable change from an increasingly restless and vocal set of constituencies (Galway, 2006). In these circumstances political decision makers seem to have become hyper-responsive to pressure from external agents for frequent changes in education systems leading to an impoverished policy-making paradigm. While this kind of scenario might be viewed by the academy as a form of educational vandalism, it might be more accurately characterized as evidence of a struggle for legitimation (Giddens, 1992).

The findings from this research are consistent with a theoretical stance that explains the diminutive effect of research on education policy in terms of the risk associated with external research and a cultural separation between researchers and policymakers, whereby the contexts of knowledge production and policy development/implementation are independent from one another. Caplan’s (1979) early work on two communities theory suggests that political actors and researchers operate in two worlds, where their values, accountabilities and motivations are entirely different. While the generation of research knowledge is integral to the work of academics, it has only marginal relevance for political decision makers (Galway, 2006). Their world is consumed with the more immediate problems of governance – sustaining the economy, providing (and being seen to provide) high quality public services, avoiding and deflecting criticism and maintaining the support of a fickle public.

This paper raises questions about current policy development practice. When politicians heed the voice of the people – without reference to research-based evidence– considered and systematic policy change may be abandoned in favour of an erratic policy agenda that is always in a state of flux. Weissberg (2002) says that public opinion is fluid, uninformed and notoriously difficult to measure, since it is often either driven by special interests, shaped by media reports, or, in the case of public opinion polls, influenced by the nature of the questions. Moreover, media attention to particular policy issues is fleeting (Levin, 2004), and when policy is mobilized to effect solutions to one set of special interests, there are others in the queue, sometimes with opposing positions, vying for policy reversal. For example, in Mawhinney’s (2001) review of theoretical approaches to special interest groups she notes that “conflict among interests is now much more complex than it was previously” (p. 201). This kind of populist approach to educational decision making was identified as a problem by the mid-level policy advisors and researchers interviewed in this study. Their representations suggest that a fluid policy agenda – driven by the strength of special interests and the volume of public opinion – leads to a reactive policy development scenario that is characterized by continuous reform and readjustment.

This begs the question: What actions from knowledge producers might help bridge the two communities? I suggest that if researchers are genuinely interested in seeing their work applied in policy environments, there needs to be active engagement with political actors. One of the most direct avenues for the flow of research into policy discussions is through the mid- and senior level ministry staff. Galway (2007) showed that Ministers and senior bureaucrats value policy-relevant knowledge that emerges from their own ‘community’ – that which is produced or compiled by the ministry bureaucrats and presented in government-friendly language. Such knowledge, while frequently originating in research studies, can be repackaged in the form of staff advice, which is more trusted and valued by ministers as ‘authentic’ and relevant knowledge. In short, education decision makers place highest value on the research that has been produced or validated by insiders, a finding consistent with Majone’s (1989) suggestion that the policy analyst plays a pivotal role in determining what evidence is considered by policy elites and how that evidence is presented.

## Conclusions

This research supports the notion that public servants play an integral role in shaping the education policy decisions of government. While, at an operational level, bureaucrats are charged with implementing the education policies of government, these actors very directly shape the kinds of evidence considered in policy debates. This study suggests that third or fourth level ministry staff (consultants/analysts) represent an important access point for academics in reaching higher political or senior bureaucratic levels where key education decisions are made.

*Acknowledgements: The author acknowledges the support of the Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Memorial University of Newfoundland in undertaking this research.*

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<sup>1</sup> The term ‘post-industrial’ is attributed to the American sociologist Daniel Bell (1973) who originally used it to describe a trend in the evolution of modern industrial economies whereby fewer people were being employed in core manufacturing activities, including agriculture.

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## **Chapter 5: Decision Making and Depth of Knowledge**

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People are constantly making decisions. When these decisions impact the lives of others, they have great significance and those making the decisions have an awesome responsibility. While I have a background of many years in education, it was when I changed roles to an elected municipal official that I began to analyse the basis on which decisions are made. Municipal officials are faced with decision-making, some of crucial importance, on a continuous basis and it is easy to observe decision making in action. By being one of the elected officials, I also had the advantage of knowing what information might be available to assist that decision making. I also realized the similarity of the process of decision making in the fields of municipal government and education and used the framework I developed to analyse educational episodes, and in teaching a graduate course at Memorial University.

### **A Decision Making Framework**

To develop this framework I worked from a "bottom-up" approach and during the decision making and in retrospect started to identify the factors that were brought into play. Any help at interpretation came from older publications. Mayer's (1989) model and the work of Freire and Macedo (1987), Johnson (1981) and Prawat (1993) were helpful. Mayer's work provided an overall framework of Material, Method, Participant, Outcome, and Performance. We need to know what material is available, how this is presented or attained (small group discussion, read, etc.), what is the orientation of the participants, and their background knowledge of the issue, the cognitive and/or affective outcome on the participant, and performance or what happens afterwards. These were easily analysed. For example, an application for a permit to build a dwelling contained information on the location, size, etc. The Municipal Plan and Development Regulations contains information on land use, where dwellings can be built, distances that must be observed from road boundaries, other buildings, waterways, etc. This information is usually read by the councilors who may have varying degrees of interest or prior knowledge of the matter. The applicant may have spoken to some or all of the councilors. After discussing the application in terms of land use regulations, a decision is made and depending on how neat a fit the application is to the regulations and considering extenuating factors, councilors may vote for or against and may have different feelings when the decision is made. If it is favourable for the applicant, then he/she is notified and construction on the dwelling may proceed.

But in spite of being in receipt of similar information, there was often considerable variation in the arguments put forth by participants (or silence) which seemed to relate to the level at which they were processing knowledge. This led to further analysis and a framework for rating depth of knowledge on a 5 point scale, 5 being the highest, was developed.

1. SHALLOW - an awareness/heard of it; read about it in a literal manner but with mistakes in comprehension, told/advised to do it.
2. SUPERFICIAL - heard about it in a factual, literal way; read it in a factual/literal manner; knows the bits and pieces in sequence.

3. **WITHIN TEXT** - recognizes text type; summarizes information; infers; classifies/ categorizes; organizes information; compares; contrasts; distinguishes fact and opinion.
4. **AUTHOR/TEXT AUTHENTICITY** - understands purpose for text, qualifications of author; publisher information; date written/ published.
5. **BEYOND TEXT** - generalizes; hypothesizes; explains by connecting to information from other sources; determines its applicability to other contexts in terms of problem solving, resolves issues, etc.

While materials, method of input, outcome, and performance can be rather easily described in terms how they relate to depth of knowledge, understanding the participant is more complex. The participant, of course, engages in processing knowledge at different depths, but the challenge, almost like understanding the black box, is understanding what knowledge, and biases, the participant brings to processing knowledge. This interrelates with the level of processing for it is difficult for a participant to engage Levels 4 and 5 without relevant prior knowledge. This is evident in beginning teachers or beginning municipal councilors, who are trying to understand some of the key concepts of their field. Unfortunately, biases, too play a part, for it may occasionally happen that a councilor may not be willing to entertain full knowledge in deciding if a resident will get a permit for a dwelling, or a teacher may not want to fully understand the situation of a particular child. Collins et al (1975) are harsh in their description of such people:

It does not trouble people much that their heads are full of incomplete, inconsistent, and uncertain information. With little trepidation they go about drawing rather doubtful conclusions from their tangled mass of knowledge, for the most part unaware of the tenuousness of their reasoning (p. 383).

Understanding what knowledge a participant brings to a decision making event invokes a plethora of literature of schemas and frames that became prominent in the 1970's and 1980's through the Centre for the Study of Reading, at the University of Illinois, with such publications as: *A Schema Theoretic View of Reading* (Adams & Collins, 1977), *Prior Knowledge, Connectivity, and the Assessment of Reading Comprehension* (Johnson & Pearson, 1982) and *The Nature and Functions of Schemas* (Brewer & Nakamura, 1984). Freire and Macedo (1987), perhaps best highlighted the relationship between what is known and what needs to be known by their writing on 'reading the world and reading the word'. It is their assertion that in order to read the word, or what needs to be known, a person must have read the world, in terms of what is known.

### **Application 1 - Understanding an Educational Episode**

Material. Individual Student Support Plan (ISSP) reports of a grade 3 child, initial IQ report, re-administered IQ report, school program, volunteer program.

Method. Small group discussion at the school involving parent, parent-advocate (volunteer), homeroom teacher, special education teacher, principal, counselor.

Participant Characteristics. The school was aware of and operated within the strict guidelines of the ISSP model and regulations from the school board. These were to be accepted, not questioned. The schemas represented by the school personnel suggested they knew what was best for the child, in spite of the child being a non-reader after four years in school, and "outsiders", including the parent advocate who was a psychologist and reading specialist and a member of teacher organizations in two provinces, were not welcome. This parent advocate, whose background was working with children with challenging learning problems, had demonstrated in another setting (community centre) that a special program developed for the child, worked.

### Processes/Depth of Knowledge.

School Position: The initial IQ test administered when the child was in kindergarten indicated the child was experiencing many problems and according to the test manual, the child was labeled "borderline" with little expectation of learning, based on an understanding of "borderline" (Level 3). When the volunteer asked the school counselor if he had considered the standard error of measurement in interpreting the IQ test scores, it was obvious that this concept was not understood (Level 1). The child's program was phonics based and by grade 3, the child was still confusing the letters of the alphabet, only to be drilled more on these in isolation. This was used to confirm the

"borderline" conclusion (Level 2). The school personnel refused to accept the results of a recently administered IQ test by the parent advocate (qualified psychologist) as they claimed it had not been endorsed by the school board (Level 1). They produced samples of the child's writing which were used to affirm the borderline status (Level 2). The parent advocate offered to work with the child during the time she spent in a special education room using a program that had been especially developed for the child in a community centre and was shown to be producing results. This was immediately opposed by the principal who stated that it was against Board regulations for volunteers to tutor children (Level 1). When the volunteer suggested making it a research project in partnership with the special education teacher, which would fit the Board's guidelines, this too, was rejected (Level 1).

Parent Advocate Position: The PA pointed out that at the time the child was administered the IQ test in kindergarten she was experiencing social, emotional, physical, and home problems, and skipped school frequently (Level 3). A brief talk with the child showed her to be very outgoing, talkative, with a wide range of vocabulary, and with definite views on various issues (Level 5). The validity of the lower-cut off points of the IQ test, which was normed on children in the US, was questionable (Level 4). If the standard error of measurement was taken into account in interpreting the scores on this early test, in spite of the failings of the test and the circumstances of the child, the child could be performing in the low-average range (Level 5). The results of the re-administered IQ test (normed on Canadian children) showed that considering the standard error measurement the child could be functioning in the average range of intelligence (Levels 4 and 5). The PA concluded the child was so confused about information presented in isolation, she suffered a mental block when presented with more of this meaningless material, namely, letters and sounds in isolation (Level 5). The PA pointed out a comment by the child's teacher that the child wasted time in school by passing notes to other children and asked how this could be reconciled with their conclusion that the child could not write (Level 5). (There was no

response.) The PA showed results of the child's success on a program especially developed for her at a community centre (Level 5).

Outcomes. The school personnel disregarded all input from the Parent Advocate and continued with the work they were doing with the child. The parent advocate and parent went away discouraged. The child did not make any progress and continued to become more frustrated.

Performance. Decision making in this case was mainly based on shallow and superficial knowledge (Level 1 and 2). Everything continued as was. ISSP forms were still signed by the parent, educators, and health specialists and life continued for all, while the child was headed for a future of academic failure.

## **Application 2 - Teaching a Graduate Class**

The class was focused on understanding the role of home, school, and community in the early learning of children. There were 14 students. At the beginning of the course the students were introduced to the Depth of Knowledge Framework and to give them a better understanding, one of their assignments was:

Based on a discussion of decision making through depth of knowledge, from your personal experience, or from knowledge of others, describe: (a) an educational decision that was based on shallow or superficial knowledge OR b) on Levels 3, 4, and 5 (c) What are the implications of using various levels of knowledge in making decisions affecting early childhood learning? Indicate the focus of the decision, the people involved in the decision making (pseudonyms of names, positions, and location), the outcome, and performance. Paper will be graded on awareness of depth knowledge in decision making.

This produced rather interesting results with a range of issues from the closure of a primary school to completing report cards being addressed. It was clear that all understood the relationship of depth of knowledge to decision making. Two students commented that they had never fully understood how a decision had been made until they retrospected from a framework of decision making, including depth of knowledge.

I have long used Journal Writing in classes but this time phrased it within the decision making model. The directions given were:

One or two things I learned in class today (Level 3)  
How did this relate to previous learning? (Level 5) What  
were my reactions from what I learned? (Level 4) Questions  
that come to mind (Level 3, 4 or 5)  
Implications – how might this affect my future involvement with young  
children's learning? (Level 5)

Below is one response from one student:



One thing I learned today : *Fluency is the ability to quickly, expressively and correctly read materials. Because of its association with oral language, its significance has been somewhat sidelined over the years because we tend to diminish oral reading once we have 'mastered' silent reading.*

*Fluency is somewhat akin to automaticity in that focus on words becomes second nature; with fluency there is fluidity in reading. The connection between fluidity and comprehension is integral and complex. Without one, the other collapses. Furthermore, fluency cannot be gauged just by the speed by which one reads; it must consider how the child uses all graphophonic cues and how meaning through expression supercedes all the others.*

### Relation to previous learning

*We have discussed the increasing gaps in student learning - the more able or gifted learners develop their own strategies from different learning activities and develop fluency and comprehension. Those who are challenged learners fall farther behind, unless specifically taught the strategies for success (The Matthew effect). This is something I see with boys who have been pushed into high school without mastering some key skills for reading and writing. Silent reading then becomes a mask; there is little to indicate fluency and comprehension in such a forum. Oral reading and choral reading with purpose may assist these students to gain the confidence to continue the necessary skills.*

### Reactions

*Understanding the relationship between fluency and comprehension must take into consideration how the child learns. The child must be understood from a pedagogical and a psychological point of view. From a pedagogical point of view we have distinguished 'activity' from 'action' learning, where the first is immersing children in a learning environment with a broad topic, focus on social learning, and enjoyment. Intended learning is directed informally versus formally. The context describes the learning situation. Action learning, on the other hand, is all about strategy development, enabling of a child to control a learning situation and move on to its application. Just having children read as part of an activity project will not likely develop fluency for a number of students. Helping students develop fluency means planning for mental or cognitive action to make this happen. The desired and achievable outcome is progression from the teacher-directed stand to independent self-direction. Development and application of strategies makes this desired goal quite soundly possible.*

### Questions

*At what point do fluency and comprehension interact? Or in other words, at what point does comprehension become bogged down without fluency, or fluency bogged down without comprehension?*

*What strategies are in place in elementary language arts programs to assist struggling readers to become fluent readers?*

## Implications

*Unless we bridge the gap between the fluent readers (who may also be referred to as 'af-fluent' readers and those who struggle, much may be lost within the increasingly visually directed society of the modern world. We must recognize that a key characteristic of an accomplished reader is fluency. I look forward to trying out some of the strategies we discussed.*

## **Discussion**

Decision making is an integral part of our lives and is especially key when the outcome affects other individuals such as in an educational or municipal setting. The challenge of good decision making is aptly phrased by Luchins and Luchins (1970):

Why is that some people, when they are faced with problems, get clever ideas, make inventions and discoveries? What happens? What are the processes that lead people to such solutions? What can be done to help people to be creative when they are faced with problems? (p. 1)

Adopting 'All About Phonics' program for grade 3 children just because the school counselor recommended it is not good decision making. Voting for a candidate because you know his wife, is not good decision making. Operating on Level 1, 2, or 3 knowledge, only, does not lead to good decision making.

In the discussions with the graduate class, perhaps the most challenging Level of Knowledge to address was Level 4, especially the Author/Text Authenticity. The students were often unaware of the process by which a curriculum/materials program was adopted by the school, and were less knowledgeable of the credentials of the authors of these programs. Frameworks for analyzing writing, and miscue analysis, for example, are adopted by the schools. I find these questionable in terms of the theory/practice relationship. When challenged, as a point of argument, why the author of these should be right and I should be wrong in our decision making, or vice versa, the students were ill equipped to argue their points.

Because of the relevance of prior knowledge and credentials, it is crucial that participants who can engage in Levels 4 and 5 of depth of knowledge should be engaged in decision making. For example, in the original ISSP/Pathways Program in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador there was a listing of 37 specialists who may play a role in helping children with challenging needs. These ranged from Addictions Counsellor to Secure Custody Services. There was not a single mention of a Reading Clinician or Clinical Reading Specialist, yet a large majority of children who are relegated for support within the ISSP/Pathways Program experience reading/writing problems. I have never seen a diagnosis in an ISSP file by a reading clinician/clinical reading specialist. I pointed this out in my submission to the Government when the Program was being revised. In *Focusing on Students: A Report of the ISSP and Pathways Commission* (2007) which included recommendations for the future of this program, what is important is who were involved in decision making about the future of children with challenging learning needs. Those acknowledged include: 1 Commissioner, 1 Vice-Commissioner, 2

Research and Administrative Support, 1 Writer, 8 Advisory Committee Members, and 98 Key informants for a total of 111 individuals. What is perhaps more important is who was not involved in decision making, for not one of the above was a reading clinician/clinical reading specialist. As a contrary example, in 1978 when special funding was made available in the Province of Alberta for support for learning disabled children, reading clinicians were initially excluded from being hired with this funding. As a group they organized and not only demonstrated that their expertise not only lay in working with children with challenged reading and writing needs, but also with children who were learning disabled (personal involvement). A group formed the Northern Alberta Reading Specialists' Council, which is one of the most highly recognized professional organizations in Canada. Furthermore, Alberta students score among the highest in Canada in terms of reading and writing levels. The decision made is only as good as the decision makers!

## **Implications**

The obvious implication is that good decision making cannot be made at a shallow or superficial level of knowledge. Decision makers must engage in Levels 3, 4, and 5. Since individuals cannot attain instant knowledge, this means including qualified people in the decision making. When this is not possible such as with beginning teachers or beginning municipal politicians, efforts must be made to provide the level of knowledge necessary.

The Decision Making Framework, Levels of Knowledge can be used to retroactively analyse decisions and hopefully to change those that were not made on basis of all levels of knowledge.

The Framework outlined has been shown to be a viable instructional tool in university classes. This framework may be used in other decision-making settings as well, for as Bereiter (2006) says, "... the pursuit of deep understanding is not something that comes naturally as an expression of normal curiosity." (p. 12).

Decision making should not be taken lightly. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges is when individuals do not know what they don't know. If they don't know information within Levels 4 and 5, they will not make good, informed decisions. This places an onus on leaders within the different fields, education, municipal government, and others to provide appropriate leadership in this area. An unfortunate assumption is that the title or position provides the knowledge rather than vice versa and leaders find themselves in positions for which they may not be qualified to make proper decisions.

One student's evaluation of the graduate course perhaps best sums up the importance of good decision making:

Teaching is not just about doing; nor it is just about inspiring and motivating. It is about decision making, the continuous process of decision making, both for big decisions and small ones. Unless one engages in a valid decision making process, all the rest is by chance.

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## **Chapter 6: Leadership Practices in the Role-Negotiation Process Facilitate Learning**

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### **Abstract**

A qualitative study of six elementary schools in two districts in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, identified principals' leadership practices, the role-negotiation process, and various shared learning supports that facilitate teachers' learning. When principals negotiated each teacher's learning role preferences and supported his or her leadership needs, teachers through dialogue and action transferred their learning throughout the school, students' learning outcomes improved, and organizational learning was propelled. When learning roles were not negotiated, teachers privatized their practices, inhibiting organizational learning. This study suggests that positive personal and professional relationships built on inclusion, fairness, trust, and respect critically effect shared learning. It has implications for a different kind of leadership training and professional development at the university, teachers' associations and school board levels.

### **Introduction**

Demands for enhanced school growth, heightened awareness of social injustice and equity issues, technological advances, and intense accountability are triggering educators and researchers to seek change in the educational system (Blackmore, 2006; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006). One initiative that is being suggested as critical to school improvement is organizational learning. Such learning, it is argued, has the potential to effectively propel schools toward enhanced student learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Marks, Seashore-Louis & Printy, 2000). In order to heighten student learning, teachers must become immersed in their own learning (Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton & Kleiner, 2000). But how is this teacher learning promoted within schools? One answer to this question points to actions and conditions of school leaders.

The importance of principal involvement in any school change process is abundantly documented (Brown, 2006; Blase & Blase, 2000; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). However, Murphy (2001), (as cited in Brown, 2006), criticized traditional leadership preparation programs as "bankrupt" suggesting that principals need updated skills to work effectively in today's socially diverse and fast changing educational settings. Yet there are different perspectives about what these skills should be. Somech & Wenderow (2006) suggest that by using a participative approach with some teachers and a directive approach with others, principals can promote enhanced teacher performance. Others believe that principals have a moral responsibility to motivate, encourage and support the participatory learning and leadership potential of all teachers (Sheppard, Brown & Dibbon, 2009; Starratt, 2004). Devereaux (2004) contends that

using this approach within a negotiated learning role process heightens individual and organizational learning.

## **The Problem**

This study was conducted to extend our knowledge about how leaders can foster individual and organizational learning in their schools through role-negotiation and the challenges they face in doing so. The following questions guided the research:

1. What practices do leaders use in their negotiation of roles with teachers?
2. To what extent and in what ways do principal role negotiation practices differ depending on teachers' in-group and out-group membership in the school?
3. Do such differences in principals' role negotiation practices result in different forms of role taking, role making and role routinization?
4. Are these differences associated with either single-loop or double-loop learning on the part of teachers?

## **A Teacher Learning Framework**

The conceptual framework was based on a series of constructs and relationships, illustrated in Figure 1 below. Existing research describes a path model among leadership practices, leader-member exchange theory, role negotiation, and loop learning. This study draws on a view of leadership that contests the belief that effective principals use a blanket approach to teachers that treats them all the same. This premise is replaced by the theory that to promote learning transfer to the organization, principals must use an individualized approach with each teacher, based on learning and leadership needs.

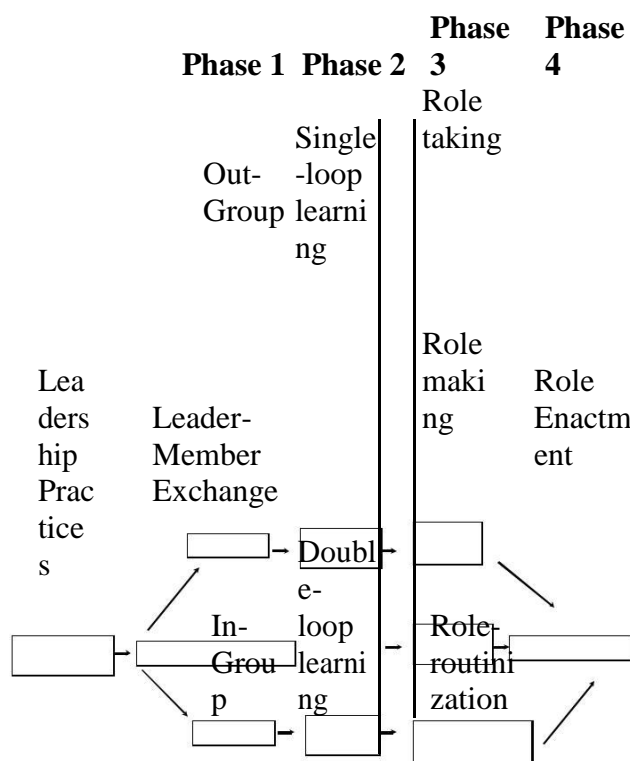
## **Role Negotiation**

Katz & Kahn (1978) suggest that role behavior is motivated by, learning the expectations of others...and fulfilling them- primarily for the extrinsic rewards of membership, although...there is intrinsic satisfaction in the...successful meshing of our own efforts with those of others (p. 188).

Graen (1976) extends the role theory model into the concept of a “negotiated” role adding the idea that teachers and principals may not always go along with each other’s perspectives and roles can be contested. They may have different expectations, values and motivations that prevent any smooth reconciliation of expectations, so both dyadic members are vital to investigation of the leadership process (Dansereau, Cashman & Graen, 1973; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975).

Graen & Scandura (1987) present the role taking, role making and role-routinization stages depicted in Phase 3 of Figure 1 below. Devereaux (2004) extended the role negotiation process to include a fourth and final phase called role enactment. In the initial role taking stage, the principal might ask a teacher to take on a school council teachers' representative position that requires evening meetings. The teacher may accept this extra-role learning task or reject it. However, the principal has created an opportunity to ask the teacher about his or her particular interests and through this process learns the teacher's motivations and talents and what kinds of tasks to offer him or her in the future. During role making, the principal and teacher begin to define their dyadic relationship. Graen & Scandura (1987) suggest that at this stage, the principal may or may not choose to support a teacher's learning through sharing:

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Teachers' Learning**



1. Information – gathered from sources unavailable to the teacher;
2. Influence - the degree of and what kinds of decisions a teacher is involved in;
3. Tasks – for professional growth/accomplishment or failure/frustration;
4. Latitude - long periods without reporting or having to report often;



5. Support – the degree to which, or whether or not to stand behind a teacher’s activities lessens performance risks;
6. Attention - concern for a teacher’s professional development, valued most by those who desire quick professional growth and advancement.

The principal might approach a teacher with a literacy specialization and ask that individual to be lead grade-level language arts teacher and thus distribute specialized knowledge to grade level colleagues through shared curriculum development and implementation. The principal offers an attractive “task” accompanied by “support” and “attention” as described above as well as more curriculum resources that would be necessary to successfully accomplish this extra learning task.

In role -routinization the principal and teacher’s behaviors become functionally interdependent. There are relational dimensions of trust, respect, loyalty, liking, intimacy, support, openness, and honesty and either of them can initiate a learning role sequence. The principal might ask a teacher to chair parents’ meetings and deliver information on curriculum and school programs at various times throughout the school year. The teacher might ask the principal to designate him or her as spokesperson for all media -related school events. Such extra learning role tasks that are assigned or assumed can fill the teacher’s learning and “leadership needs...to develop beyond his/her organizationally defined work role or position and reflect a desire to accept (or reject) more responsibility for areas outside one’s task domain, as organizationally defined and required” (Graen, Novak & Sommerkamp, 1982, p. 111).

### **Role Enactment**

Role enactment extends the role- making, role- taking, role-routinization process. When successful role-negotiated individualized learning has occurred, each teacher joins with the others to actually perform a variety of shared extra-role learning tasks that are beyond their contractual classroom obligations that drive organizational learning to a higher level. Thus, individual learning is shared and, through dialogue and action, becomes part of collective teachers’ learning. And when viewing learning through a negotiated roles lens, principal’s practices that motivate all teachers to transfer their learning to the organization would critically influence school growth and development.

### **Leader/Member Exchange (LMX)**

Dienesch & Liden (1986) present two categories of LMX, “the in- group (characterized by high trust, interaction, support, and formal/informal rewards) and the out-group (characterized by low trust, interaction, support, and rewards)” (p. 621) and contend that almost all principals differentiate between teachers in this way. They argue that, because principals have scarce resources, they develop a close relationship with only a few key teachers to whom more is given for performing tasks beyond their basic job description. These become “in-group;” while others are “out-group.” Driver (2002) suggests that teachers can be alternatively grouped by assigning the label low LMX to out-group and high LMX to in-group relationships. In this case out-group or low LMX individuals perform basic “in-role” job description learning tasks while in-group or

high LMX perform innovative, “extra-role”, outside their everyday learning tasks. Thus, LMX provides a window to a routinely occurring leader-member dynamic where two different forms of learning exist.

LMX theory is underpinned by the belief that there is an organizational understructure (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1976) and by assuming individual tasks within the organization, learning is viewed as an organizational activity where any structural learning deficiencies are filled through individually negotiated roles (Cashman et al., 1976; Dienesch & Liden, 1986; Graen & Cashman, 1975). This study investigated LMX theory with learning as the outcome variable and attached the in-group/out-group LMX labels to each teacher’s learning role.

### **Organizational Learning**

Argyris & Schön (1978) suggest that, “when individuals learn to interact with one another...to carry out shared tasks, one can speak of the group itself as learning” (p. 321-22) and “organizations are...small societies composed of persons who occupy roles in the task system” (p. 28). They claim that organizational learning, involves the detection and correction of error. When the error detected and corrected permits the organization to...achieve its present objectives, then that...process is single loop learning.... Double loop learning...involve[s] the modification of an organization’s underlying norms, policies and objectives.... Most organizations do quite well in single loop...but have great difficulties with double loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978, p. 2-3).

Driver (2002) suggests that for organizational learning balance, single-and double-loop individualized learning roles may necessarily coexist.

### **Sample and Research Methodology**

This research attempted to “interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, p. 2). Cross-case analyses were chosen because when studying educational innovations, evaluating programs and informing policy, this method “has proven particularly useful” (Merriam, 2001, p. 41). Open-ended questions informed by *The Leadership and Management of Schools* (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997) and *Learning and Leadership in Organizations* (Driver, 2002) survey instruments allowed “us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (Patton, 1990, p. 196) . Data collection sought “maximum variation” (Merriam, 2001) because even “a small sample of great diversity” produces “important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (Patton, 1990, p. 172).

Transcribed data were coded by conceptual framework research strands, and the questions that framed the study. Continuous data comparison, analysis and reanalysis, and revisiting the literature brought conclusions based on emphasis in the text and comparing/contrasting the principal and teachers’ responses. Observation, field notes, reflections, and school-related

documents were used to validate and cross-check findings. All participants received pseudonyms.

## **Findings**

### **Case Study #1: Inner City School**

This is a K- 6, 360 students and 20-teacher school with minimal staff turnover, where Constance, a new principal says “if you’re going to get a teacher that doesn’t do,”

very much to...do something...if you go that little extra mile...you would have won that teacher over, and they would have gained some confidence in...their own abilities.... If...they had completed [a task], it needs to be acknowledged...celebrated...and that would be somebody else...I would seek out...for more demanding tasks or other variety tasks.

Cyril says Constance asked him to teach enrichment math and “I had no problem doing it,” and she gives “me freedom and confidence,”

instead of...breathing down my neck.... I have enough respect and confidence in her eyes to implement whatever I want to do.

Cyril says he’s starting a new sports club and Constance’s supports are “adequate for me.” He seems to receive and appreciate the “latitude” and “tasks” Constance gives him. He appears to be challenged, motivated, involved, and can send or receive roles.

Cindy asks Constance “about programming, and other aspects of school life.”

She says she feels “free to make suggestions” and Constance is “very willing to lend a hand and offer opinions. It’s wonderful to have a principal up-to-date on programs, and can...answer any pertinent questions.” As part of this group, Cindy says she has, “learned a lot of...academic and social skills” and she has been involved with the,

marking board for the grade 6 CRTs...helped other staff members learn how the marking board works, especially with regards to the analytic and holistic rubrics.

Cindy appears to receive “attention” and values Constance’s program knowledge that she shares with her. She seems to transfer her knowledge to the staff and enjoy involvement.

Cecelia says that regarding extra-role tasks Constance,

seems to have a way of approaching the people that...will comply, or maybe, she feels we’d do the job best. I’m not sure what her rationale is.

But regarding task involvement Cecilia says, “if I was left to volunteer...I wouldn’t be quite as eager. We’re all overworked ...if anyone has a chance...they might cop out.” She says that Constance makes “sure that when we do ask for something,” she comes up with it... She must

feel comfortable coming to me to ask for ... tasks to be carried out, because that's what I see happening.... I'm willing to try whatever is suggested to me...[so] I do learn new things, whether I want to or not."

Cecilia says that Constance is, "supportive when extra tasks are put upon us" and she, "will come into the classroom... help out with the running records...by reading to the children to free us up" and Constance is "supportive of anyone who wants to...do a little more and try new things. Cecilia initiated an animal rights club and it brings students' "awareness of the proper treatment of ...pets." Cecilia appears to receive Constance's "attention" and valued "support" to complete extra-role tasks as she deals with what she describes as her in -role "heavy load of mixed problems" put in place before Constance's arrival. It appears that Constance has opened extra -role tasks to each of these teachers and she appears to have delivered attractive personal and/or positional resources to motivate each of them. The "motivational factor" coupled with resources that are "attractive to the members and capable of being mediated directly and immediately by the superior alone" (Graen & Scandura, 1987, p. 186) seem to be in place here.

Constance appears to exhibit the leadership practices shown in Table 1 below. She says that, "the best way you can ...instill trust is to practice it yourself" but adds that, "I do have some that gripe...to me and so if they gripe to me, they'll probably gripe about me, when I'm not there." However, with the exception of Cecilia, who refers to a veteran/new teachers "slight distinction," there was no reference to out -group divisions in this data set. And, Cecilia adds that even though, "I'm fairly new, I've fit in well," and she didn't "mean a division in a negative way...we're all closely knit" and, "I have learned from everyone...you do learn from the teachers who've been around the longest."

Constance says that she tries "to have an inclusive model, where all teachers are encouraged to participate" and "sometimes I have to...do some encouragement...to get them to take part." She claims that even though she and her teachers "may not agree with one another...we can dialogue...see each other's perspective," and she's in the copying room, cafeteria, and "I'm...in their space and they know that I'm available." Her teachers all agree that Constance asks them to take on extra- role tasks and Cecilia adds that, "it's much easier to say, "No" when you're not approached individually."

Constance says that because students here are reading below grade level, she approached teachers about taking on guided reading, to try to improve their scores.... The teachers...[asked], "Why are you so involved with curriculum and instruction... Their perception might be that a principal has to be in the office to take care of the management things.... I believe...the role is to be an instructional leader. So...I teach...and it would be easier for me not to become involved with that...challenge.... We did a spelling...reading...vocabulary...comprehension test, and there was some outcry... "Why all this assessment?" and...I said...because we need to see where are the students' strengths and needs, and then we have to look at our instruction... They're beginning to see the value...but...I could feel the vibes.... They didn't agree with it...so it was a challenge...being new...to continue with that, this year.

Cecilia contends that the greatest risk Constance has taken is "coming into a school that"

has been established for...many years ...and...trying to integrate new ideas into an old staff.... That could've not been well received.

Constance declares that she tries to ensure teachers learn that their tasks are “rewarding, beneficial, something that they can use in their practice,” and to,

grow professionally ...challenge...might be good... help them to use ... talents and gifts...they don't even realize...they have. I hope...there will be camaraderie ...they'll learn to nurture...get along with ...give and take with one another.

And she adds that when a teacher finishes an assignment, she acknowledges, “the teacher's efforts and work,” and “I praise them for their achievement,”

congratulate them...share it in the faculty bulletin...at a staff meeting.... These staff...clap...cheer for...celebrate one another's victories... I'll see the staff here hugging...or tapping one another on the back.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Each School**

<b>School</b>	<b>Inner City</b>	<b>Over-Expansion</b>	<b>Realignment</b>	<b>Out-Migration</b>	<b>Controversial</b>	<b>Multi-Stream</b>
Context	K-6, 360 student, 20 teacher, urban	K-8, 757 student, 47 teacher, rural	K-6, 360 student, 22 teacher, rural	K-9, 300 student, 23 teacher, rural	K-6, 510 student, 34 teacher, urban	K-9, 355 student, 24 teacher, rural
Principal	Constance	Bob	Emma	Anna	Frances	Donald
Teachers	Cyril Cindy Cecelia	Bill Becky Bertha	Eileen Ethel Elizabeth	Allen Allanah Alicia	Freda Flora Fern	Darlene Desmond Della
Fosters Open Communication	Constance	Bob	Emma	Anna	Frances	Donald
Ensures Professional Growth/Development	Constance	Bob	Emma	Anna	Frances	Donald
Promotes Learning Focus	Constance	Bob	Emma	Anna	Frances	Donald
Creates a Shared Vision	Constance	Bob	X	Anna	Frances	Donald
Supports Shared and Distributed Leadership	Constance	X	Emma	Anna	Frances	Donald
Promotes Collaboration	Constance	X	X	Anna	X	Donald
Builds Trust	Constance	Bob	X	X	X	X

Provides Individualized Support and Encouragement	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
Ensures Inclusion	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
Talks About Giving Supports	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
Models high Performance Expectations	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
Maintains Visibility	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
Models Involvement	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
Focuses on Maximizing Student Outcomes	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
Ensures Adequate Sharing Supports	Constanc e	X	X	Anna	X	X
In-Group Teachers	Cecilia Cyril Cindy	Becky Bertha Bill	Ethel Elizabeth	Allen Allanah Alicia	Freda Flora	Desmond Della
Out-Group Teachers	X	X	Eileen	X	Fern	Darlene
Double-Loop Learning	Cecilia Cyril Cindy	Bertha Bill	Ethel Elizabeth	Allen Allanah Alicia	Freda Flora	Desmond Della
Single-Loop Learning	X	Becky	Eileen	X	Fern	Darlene



Role Taking	X	X	Eileen	X	Fern	Darlene
Role Making	X	Becky Bertha	X	X	X	X
Role-Routinization	Cecilia Cyril Cindy	Bill	Ethel Elizabeth	Allen Allanah Alicia	Freda Flora	Desmond Della
In-Group/Out-Group Staff Divisions	X	Over-Expansion	Realignment	X	Controversial	Multi-Stream
Adequate Sharing Structures	Inner City	X	X	Out-Migration	X	X
Role Enactment	Double-Loop Learning	Single-Loop Learning	Single-Loop Learning	Double-Loop Learning	Single-Loop Learning	Single-Loop Learning

**Key: X means not found**

Cyril agrees that this staff seems “very close,” and Cindy says that here, “our main aim is to get these children through school as best we can, to the best of their abilities.” Cecelia adds Inner City “can be seen as...a special school, based on its location, and the type of clientele we have” so what they have is a school that is “very big on self-esteem” and,

there’s...after-school clubs...support for families.... It is a product of what people have experienced as a result of working here. Everyone has put their energies together to try to make it a better place.

Cyril appreciated the “latitude” and “tasks” Constance gave him, was challenged, motivated, involved, and could send or receive learning roles. Cindy received “attention,” valued Constance’s program knowledge, transferred her knowledge and enjoyed involvement. Cecelia received Constance’s ‘support’ to complete extra-role tasks as she dealt with her in-role “heavy load of mixed problems” put in place before Constance’s arrival.

The “motivational factor” coupled with principals’ resources that were “attractive” to the teachers (Graen & Scandura, 1987) were in place here. These data show in-group relationships that are delineated into high and low quantity amounts of support as necessary for high quality (in-group) LMX Interaction as required by each individual teacher to facilitate his or her individual learning that results in double-loop learning categories within negotiated roles. They suggest that periodic high quality principal/teacher exchanges that motivate, challenge, and engage, coupled with frequent high quality exchanges for those teachers who require that level of support, propel teachers’ learning. Inner City seems to be experiencing “double-loop” learning that “is related to

the non-routine, the long-range outcome” (Argyris, 1983, p. 116). Constance’s introduction of the new testing procedure and her leaving the office to become directly involved in teaching and learning requires a “re-examination and change of the governing values” (Argyris, 1983, p. 116) and by doing this, she appears to have created a transformational learning organization.

## **Case Study #2: Out Migration School**

This is a rural K-9 school with 300 students and 23 teachers. Anna, a principals’ leadership development facilitator, says the best way to get teachers to take on tasks is to,

have shared responsibility...input...[about what]our priorities are.... Plus...if you set the example yourself of being involved... people appreciate that.... I’m really fortunate...People just don’t turn you down.

She says that when a teacher comes to her and has an idea about a learning

initiative that would benefit the students...and they wanted to go with it, yes, definitely,...but some... would require more supports than others.

Allen says that, “if you’re not doing your job [Anna will] let you know that,” and she doesn’t appreciate mistakes made due to “neglect.” He says he has sufficient resources for his coaching task because, “it’s not that difficult,” and by taking it on he has learned that, “the extra-curricular stuff is very relaxing after all day in the classroom.” He says that his grassroots project “ was ...praised by the principal... Everyone who does something...that’s how they’re treated, not only by the principal, but by other staff members.” Allen says that he

has organized elementary math competitions and adds that “I would develop [a task], and if I needed any help I’d go to” Anna. Allen appears to have “support” and “attention” from Anna and his “tasks” seem suited to him.

Allanah says that, “when I first came here I was...shyer” and thought Anna,

could handle things a little bit differently when she approached someone, but...now I’m not as introverted ...as I was, and...I’m all there to help out.

Allanah feels she has enough resources to perform her extra-role tasks and because she does not have the responsibility of constant student supervision, she says that she can help Anna in times of emergency and that,

there are times...principals may be...stuck...need someone to do this for them.... I wouldn’t want to be...trying to get a delegate to work out, so, I’m fine with that.

She adds that Anna supports her in “continuing to do my special education degree,” and she feels free to contribute her ideas to make learning contributions here, adding that,

the peer-tutoring program is run by us.... I think it's a major contribution.... If I could see a different way of doing it, I'm sure I would be free to explore.

Anna appears to give Allanah "attention" regarding finishing her degree and in return Allanah supports the principal in any way she can.

Alicia says Anna is "supportive in that any trouble I have or anything that I need she'll try to get it," and when Anna wants her to take on tasks, "she'll ...explain what's involved, and then ask if I'm willing to take it on." Alicia adds that,

our opinions are always asked for.... We're always given the opportunity...to tell the principal and the other staff what we think, and I'm sure if we wanted to start up something different in the school...there would be no problem with that at all.

Alicia seems to receive "attention" and support from Anna. It appears that Anna has opened extra-role task assignments to each of these teachers and she seems to effectively use her personal and positional resources to support and motivate each of them. Anna appears to exhibit most of the leadership practices shown in Table 1 above. Regarding building trust she says that, "I trust everybody in some capacity"

but...you'd be naïve to think...everybody's supportive of you all the time, because they're not.... It just can't [happen].

Anna also believes that "there's a certain group of people who'll rise to the top" and,

they're your natural leaders. Some others, you've got to go and get it from them.... So, if I want something done, I'll go to the people who I know are the best at doing it...But have I gone to people that don't go to the top? Yeah.

She adds that, "you just hope that people know that you're fair and reasonable" but,

we've got a job to do for the students ...and should teachers be happy while they're here doing that? Well, sure they should be. But...it's got to be student-centered...If teachers see that your decisions are around that...they're fine with it.

Anna says that teachers here "multitask" and adds that she is not,

painting the perfectly rosy picture...but there's very few here who...don't give outside the call...but when I started here...I would go ask people to do things, and they would tell me, "no."

Regarding in-group/out-group divisions, Anna says,

I dealt with that years ago where I had more than just a couple of teachers that were ...resistors.... They will lobby for each other.

But Allen adds that, "I don't think you'll find that here," and Allanah claims that,

people here know who's going to do their share, and who you don't ask to do anything.... [But] we're really after getting a stronger relationship among staff.

Anna also explains that one year the Grade 3's here didn't do well in the CRTs but,

the primary teachers worked as a group. We did very well on them last year in Grade 3.... Then, your Grade 4 teacher receives those ...students, so then you got analyses of results that lets her know what things she's got to work on.

Anna says that the current board approach to CRT tests is, "the results are down,"

so what was going on with that particular group? And then, what kinds of things are you putting in place to address it?... [The new director] provides a lot of leadership in this area.... [Our district] has improved a lot.

It appears that trust spreads from the district level into this school, and Allen says there is a team approach to CRT preparation and it "started about three years ago" when,

our results weren't the best...so we, as a staff ...with the guidance of the principal, undertook to do a study...an analysis of our results, and to put it into our school improvement program.

As a direct result of this new collaborative approach, Allen proudly verifies that this year,

our results, not only in Grade 3 but in Grade 6, were...above the board and above the province. The Grade 9's were, as well.

Allen says that Anna "encourages all the staff here not to be afraid to take on something for the first time," and Anna says that teachers here "learn to take charge of situations,"

themselves so they're developing their own leadership skills, but there's no lack of leadership here...It's just a matter of giving them an opportunity to use those skills.... If you go to people to take a situation and to go with it, they do.

Allen's support was a "personal resource...under the control of the [principal] to offer or withhold" (Graen & Scandura, 1987, p. 184). Anna uplifted Allanah's self-esteem thereby heightening her leadership skills; and although Alicia was on probation she and Anna had a mutual agreement of reciprocal help and support. Out-Migration appears to be double-loop learning, and working with the board to make improvements in teaching and learning. Anna, by her own admission, is not a big risk-taker but seems to be changing the school's procedure for how they use CRT results by encouraging creative risk-taking, collegiality, input and collaboration in her staff.

## **Transformational Schools**

At Inner City and Out- Migration Schools, Constance and Anna appeared to embrace individuality and diversity on their staffs and the interviewed teachers seemed to be in-group, at the role-routinization stage of negotiation and double-loop learning. Constance and Anna established unique positive relationships with each teacher, prevented disengagement and negotiated extra-role involvement by using their resources to satisfy individual interests, learning and leadership needs. Constance involved all teachers in student assessment which helped them to address and eliminate academic weaknesses with individual students in their classrooms and thus within the school. She modelled high performance expectations through curriculum, instruction, teaching and learning involvement; Anna through school development, standardized tests, and teachers' personal and professional growth plans. Both ensured inclusion, shared and distributed leadership, promoted collaboration, effectively provided individualized support and encouragement to ensure heightened teachers' learning. They focussed their shared vision on increased student learning outcomes, especially on students' achievement. These principals had also set up structured and unstructured sharing supports such as presentations, mentoring, coaching, modelling, shadowing, department heads, committees, staff meetings, in-school/after school grade level meetings, across grade level meetings, staff newsletters, school community newsletters and social gatherings for individual learning dispersion. They both appeared to have double-loop learning organizations and transformational schools.

### **Case Study #3: Over-Expansion School**

This is a rural K- 8 school with 757 students and 47 teachers in a high growth area and Bob who has spent 4 years as principal and many years as a teacher here says that here “people do choose not to become involved and that, of course, is their choice.” When asked if he has the same type of relationship with all teachers on staff, Bob says,

No...I do treat some people differently. Some people are more approachable than others.... I do socialize with some people outside.

Bill says that Bob is “fair” but “my dealings with him are often limited” however,

I...can speak to him...will get his understanding, respect, his time and vice versa...[However]...we don't really talk a lot about personal things... Over the years, it kind of went in that direction, and that's the way it's continued.

Bill feels he gets enough support from Bob and says he is “more comfortable,”

with an administrator that checks in but doesn't... oversee every step...more comfortable with that distance there...so that fits into the way that I like to do things.

Bill says he feels free to contribute his ideas here, “because of the hands -off approach...I certainly don't feel suffocated, or feel like I have tight reins.” And he says that Bob asks him to take on tasks “if there's no response to a request, he may personally ask whether or not I would like to partake in a particular activity.” Regarding resources, Bill says Bob is, “very understanding that sometimes there's money to be spent.” Bob and Bill's dyadic relationship appears to suggest

that when relationships have formed with Bob and become developed, they remain constant over time (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Liden & Graen, 1980). Bill enjoys “latitude,” and in return, he performs extra-role tasks when Bob needs him to. He appears to be at the role- negotiation stage and double-loop learning. But, Bill also says that he knows “from listening to teachers that there’s groups, or cliques,” here but he is “middle ground.”

Becky says, “I feel quite comfortable with [Bob] at the top of the totem pole.” But she believes she has more potential than is being realized or utilized here, stating that, “I would like to think that to some extent I am having an influence, but it’s not as great of an influence as I would like to be able to have.” She says that “nothing [Bob] has ever asked me to do has been so hard that I couldn’t do it. I haven’t needed a lot of support.” It seems that Becky’s tasks are not challenging her and she exhibits leadership needs that are not fulfilled. Becky seems to be role making and appears to be single-loop learning. Becky also believes that here “certain people... congregate towards one another...I flow between...groups...I’m a friend to everybody.”

Bertha says that, “I’m able to speak to [Bob]...and he’s able to speak to me,” but “he’s a busy man...people don’t see him.” She says that she does “not always” get the support she needs from Bob for completing extra-role tasks, for example, “if I’m doing up a web page, and I need support...putting on the html...I have...to figure out a lot of stuff on my own.” When Bertha brings forward her ideas to Bob, she says, “he’s ... willing to allow you to try,” but she sees inequity in science resources here and wants to spend money she has generated in her expertise area. However, she says that Bob will not support this idea. Bertha appears to be at the role-making stage with Bob, is performing extra -role tasks but seems to feel that she is not yet receiving enough support from him. Yet she seems to be experiencing double-loop learning here because of her staff in-group connection. For example, in contributing her ideas at this school, Bertha says that as an untenured teacher her “fear is that [she] may be seen by administration as a go-getter, but...may be seen as a threat to other people.” Bertha says that a staff division, “ does exist” here, and adds that, “I have a tendency to speak with, work with people who...have new ideas... five or six teachers,” and

we would be considered an out-group because...we...do things together and... things outside.... Some people...don’t like that and have voiced very strong opinions.... It doesn’t really bother me.... The only way...to get good solid ideas is that people... share.... And there’s so many people who don’t do that. I think I’m in an in-group, but other people think I’m in an out-group.

She says that being part of her particular group she has,

learned more...has more resources,...confidence, because now...I have people to talk to.... I’ve grown...I have so much more than that first day I...walked into...my classroom.

As shown in Table 1 above, Bob appears to not exhibit all of the leadership practices. There seems to be no division between Bob and each of the interviewed teachers, but there appears to be staff cliques. Bob seems to accept a teacher’s disengagement as something he says he “can’t change” and appears to not spend time *talking about supports* he can give them for taking on extra -role

tasks. He may not always try to *ensure inclusion*. Even though Bob *publicly praises teachers* who contribute, he says it “sometimes backfires” and “it comes from teachers who”

haven’t contributed as much as someone else, and I’ll hear a comment made, “Oh, he hasn’t mentioned my name yet...what am I?”.... I like to recognize their... contribution and if that’s slighting someone who hasn’t been as involved .... You’ll hear snide comments...so and so is only doing that to get recognized or she’s not tenured or that sort of thing. That’s...unfortunate, because the praise ...is meant as encouragement...to have teachers continue their involvement... but... that negative comment...is far more discouraging than the positive comment was encouraging...to the ...person who...has been involved, and...they’ll say to themselves... “I don’t need that kind of negative publicity.”

It seems that Bob’s public praise of individuals is counterproductive here, yet he continues to employ this method rather than taking a private individualized approach to giving this support. Bob appears to allow the large school population to restrict him to the routine office management tasks and seems not to *maintain visibility* or *model involvement* in teaching and learning. Also, Bertha says that Bob “sticks within ...procedures set down by the board.” However Bob says he has risked moving,

teachers from their set grade levels.... That sometimes can cause dissension ...often teachers think... selfishly...and having a teacher comfortable in a certain position doesn’t necessarily meet the needs of the children that we’re teaching.

When questioned if he feels he gives all teachers the freedom to make significant learning contributions, Bob says that, “there are responsibilities that have to be carried out, and it’s my responsibility to ensure that they’re done, and it’s not up for discussion...[and]...teachers find that difficult to accept.” These data suggest that Bob appears not to *promote collaboration* and not *create shared and distributed leadership*.

Regarding whether this school is a product of what the staff knows and have learned by doing their work, Becky says that, “compared to having taught in other schools, I find that the expectations are not...as high.” She adds that, “I don’t think the expertise is being challenged across the board.” This seems to suggest that Bob does not model *high performance expectations*. When asked if she thinks this school reflects teachers’ knowledge and on-the job experience, Bertha answers “yes, and no,” and explains that, “you see the school changing teachers are coming in who are willing to,”

use new ideas...[but] that final product ...the CRT results end up being the same ...because everyone uses...this is what I’ve done...for the last ten years.... Parts of the product become a little bit better than the product that existed before.... Our product isn’t changing...as much as it should... you get set in your ways.

She also clarifies that here “this massive turnover of staff that occurs every year” is



it's own problem.... You have new people coming in and...there might be new ideas...but those people got to settle in...with staff. The kids don't know you...are not in comfort zone, so a lot of changeover...is not good either.

Bob appears to accept disengagement as something he “can’t change.” Bertha did not want to risk being ostracized as she underwent two interrelated processes, developing an LMX relationship with Bob while socializing into the organization (Dienesch & Liden, 1986), but having visible support from Bob could lessen her performance risks (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Although no interviewed teacher appeared to be out-group with Bob, Bertha said she was part of an in - group/out-group staff division and because Becky desired more influence and Bertha more support with her extra-role task that was not offered, they felt insufficiently supported by Bob and were at the role making stage.

The data suggest that this school is “single-loop” learning, whereby things are done according to board policy, and teachers’ expertise appears ineffectively mined. “Because organizations are strategies for decomposing complex tasks into task/role systems, error detection normally requires collaborative inquiry” (Argyris & Schön, 1978, p. 19). At Over-Expansion there seem to be many teachers who are unwilling to carry out such collaboration, but the school is in transition and it is a goal. This error has been detected but not yet corrected, and as Argyris (1976) contends,

one factor that inhibits organizational learning is “the receptivity to corrective feedback of the decision-making unit- that is, individual, group, or organization (p. 365).

#### **Case Study #4: Controversial School**

This is a K-6 urban school with 510 and 34 teachers and there is unrest here because the board proposes reorganization. Frances, the veteran principal says that getting teachers to take on tasks is, “one of the most difficult jobs I have,” and adds that, “I have to really approach [it] with caution.... Some people are far more receptive than others. Personalities are different.” She said that ensuring teachers share their learning, “really comes back to personality...because, sometimes, someone is a really giving, caring, kind, sharing person, and they do it out of habit.” It is interesting that, as previously indicated in Case Study #2, Anna appeared to see personality differences as a natural diversity occurrence, while Frances appears to see them as a constraint to shared learning.

Freda says her relationship with Frances is, “good” and Frances sees “the value in my background.” She says that she chairs the language arts committee on “recommendation by the principal” and Frances gives her “personal support ...encouragement... faith...the belief that you can do it...moral support as opposed to something you can...touch.” She says that being part of the in-group with Frances has affected her learning because “it’s different when someone has confidence in you” and “you have to be comfortable in risk-taking” and,

a lot of people aren’t.... I do feel comfortable.... So, it actually helps me to grow...as a learner...and that’s... reflected...in what I do in the classroom.

After only a few months here, Freda received the assistant principal's position left open by Frances' sick leave and is now enjoying this new challenge. Freda appears to have influence, attention and to receive individualized support and encouragement from Frances. She seems to be at role-routinization and double-loop learning.

Flora feels that Frances "can be a friend," and "I admire her...feel...she values me as a teacher.... We...go for coffee." Flora says she has, "grown professionally and personally" here and adds that when she saw a "need for early intervention" and approached Frances, "there was indication of supports" and then she applied for and received a grant. From performing this extra-role task, Flora says she has learned how to "apply for grants for some of the projects that I've put on." She says that Frances gives her "verbal praise" and task development "would...be asked of me," and "some direction would...be given...but it would be minimal." Flora seems to enjoy influence, latitude and individualized support and encouragement from Frances and , appears to be at role-routinization and double-loop learning.

Fern says that her relationship with Frances "could be...more of a partnership" but "when it comes to administration of a large school...it's...hard to meet all the needs of all the staff.... It's ... an area where I still feel we need improvements. She says that Frances does not talk to her about providing supports for taking on different tasks and adds, "I don't know if I've really had a lot of that kind of interaction with her" and

that can be...frustrating. There are times when you are called upon individually ...but I haven't had that much interaction on that level.

By completing assigned tasks Fern says she has learned that as a Kindergarten teacher, "I have many responsibilities...sometimes I feel weighed down by it," because of a big safety issue here." She elaborates that she has "concerns with...supervision" because

if my children are here in the classroom...I need to be here to supervise them, but I also have to...get the children off the bus. You can't be...in two places.

She adds that in completing this task, "I have been given no resources other than,"

the fact that you need to let the office know you're going to be out of your classroom... I don't know if that's perceived as being a big concern. I feel it is.

Fern also feels that Frances is "a mechanism for disseminating information" and "office management things take up time" and "there's not adequate appreciation of what's,"

going on in the classroom.... Principals...are not always partners in our learning and teaching situations.... We're in separate entities.

With regard to how Frances has affected her learning, Fern says that "principals",

need to create more empathy with teachers [because] the demands placed on us...have become phenomenal, and we're feeling the stress of it.

She seems to be feeling inundated by her task and learning appears to be constricted by her incessant concern about her supervisory responsibility. Fern appears to be out-group with Frances, inhibited by lack of support, role taking and single-loop learning. Fern's task is impossible to achieve independently and she was not offered the necessary support to successfully accomplish it. This caused her to disengage from Frances and she became overwhelmed and apprehensive about her unworkable task and her accountability if something goes wrong. Within this preoccupation, extra-role school issues paled in comparison and Fern appeared to be approaching burnout.

As shown in Table 1 above, Frances seems to not exhibit all of the leadership practices. She says it is "unreasonable" to trust all teachers to support her because

given the nature of people...sometimes they're supportive...sometimes they aren't.... I can be the same way.... What is important is how or what we say, when we are not supportive.

However, it appears that Frances *does not ensure inclusion*, *provide individualized support and encouragement*, or *talk about giving supports* to Fern and she says that she reacts differently with some teachers when they finish a task because, "the reactions have to be different. You try to be fair...consistent, but the personalities are there." Frances says that, "in terms of having them take on extra-curricular...there seems to be only a few people that often do that" and Flora adds that, "this school, it is so large, it's very difficult to get to know people directly.... This has been a long-term problem."

Freda seems to believe that there's an in-group/out-group staff division and says that "I do have some acceptance and some, or maybe some perceived that's not." Both Freda and Fern expressed their concern about not having enough grade level meetings here and when asked why she thinks there is division, Freda says,

the same shared doesn't go on...so it's on your own...whereas if it was a...deliberate set time you'd probably get more. So, I don't think that they're unwilling.... The opportunity is not there for them.

Frances appears *not to promote collaboration* and regarding the in-group/out-group division, Freda says that with

the ones that I feel accepted by, it makes me feel that I can [and]...have a lot to contribute.... I find here more of a possessive thing about their things, but ...when you feel in-[group] ... you're all out for the same end result.... Then it really doesn't matter whose idea it was, or who it belongs to. If it's a good idea you use it.

She adds that, "to those that I feel might be an out-[group], it has affected my learning in that I probably share less with that group" because "I feel there's less doors open there" and "I should make...an effort to open those doors, as opposed to withdrawing... so...that we're all benefiting from the same."

Frances appears to have allowed administrative issues in this large school to hinder her from *maintaining visibility* and *modelling involvement* in teaching and learning. She says that, “the sharing at some grade levels is phenomenal” however “at other grade levels, it’s not like that.” But, Freda seems to feel that Frances *does not promote high performance expectations* because she does not ensure sharing structures for dialogue and shared learning and she says there should be “promotion of meetings to discuss outcomes, however the administration may feel,”

the staff would not accept these extra meetings...but...things... happen...that you mightn’t get everything covered.... So, unless you have those communications... amongst teachers...grade levels, you don’t have that continuity and that flow.

Fern also adds that by completing committee tasks “I’ve learned that,”

we’re going in different directions.... The principal...hasn’t sat in to observe...direct us and let us know that...we need to...look at our goals and...see if our action plan is moving along.

Freda says that, “When our CRTs came back...the Grades 3s were really low” and,

I was surprised...considering the background and the clientele. I thought they would’ve been higher.... When I looked at the results...I noticed...some schools that I did not perceive as being better than this school...did do better.

Regarding school improvement here Freda adds that the process has begun but the plan, “needs to be revised... revisited...revamped, so that it connects more to what the results are saying.” And, Flora says that, “to some degree” this school is a product of what the people who work in it know, and have learned by doing their jobs, stressing that,

I don’t think just coming here, and teaching every day, and closing your door, and not discussing anything with anyone...you’re going to be the best that you can be.

And Fern says that, “the combining of the experienced people ...with the new teachers coming in, have made for a much better, effective processes...in the school.”

Single-loop learning appears to be controversial. The process of teachers sharing is evolving, but there have been concerns expressed by Frances, Freda and Fern. Teachers have suggested setting up structured grade level meetings, but no new processes appear to have been introduced to address this concern. The school seems to be starting to analyze and focus on improving students’ low CRT results. Currently, as staff moves towards sharing processes and structures, and a student outcomes focus, the school appears to be in transition.

## **Transitional Schools**

The principals At Over-Expansion and Controversial schools appear not to use all the leadership practices shown in Table 1. Both of these schools seemed to have staff divisions or cliques who were privatizing their teaching practices by not sharing with those teachers who they considered

out- group. Although there were no interviewed teachers at Over-Expansion who, appeared to feel out-group with the principal, one teacher at Controversial School did feel out-group with her principal and this affected her relationship with her principal and dialogue became vanished. As Table 1 indicates, differences in principals' practices with in-group and out- group individuals in these schools produced different forms of role taking, role making and role-routinization that were directly associated with either single-loop or double-loop learning on the part of teachers. Teachers at role-routinization were double-loop while those at role taking were single-loop learning, and teachers at role- making could be single-or double-loop learning depending on their relationships and shared learning with small groups. For example, Bertha's learning was propelled to double-loop because of her affiliation with a small teachers' group who collaborated and shared amongst themselves. In these cases, insufficient or underdeveloped principal practices, such as promoting collaboration with all including the principal were breeding out-group and/or staff cliques, and these divisions impacted the level of individual learning and confined organizational learning.

Table 1 also illustrates that in schools with in-group/out-group principal/teacher divisions, role negotiation was within role-routinization for in-group and role taking for out-group teachers. Freda, who referred to herself as in-group with some teachers and out-group with others but in-group with Frances, was at role-routinization. Principals' practices also differed with in-group and/or out-group school membership and this seriously impacted the level of organizational learning. In these schools with in -out groups, principals did not model involvement, model high performance expectations, maintain visibility, ensure collaboration amongst all including the principal, focus on maximizing student outcomes or ensure adequate sharing supports. However, both of these schools appear to be moving towards improvement are in transition.

### **Case Study #5: Realignment School**

This is a rural K-6 school with 360 students and 22 teachers. It recently changed from a 3-stream to 2-stream and there has been significant staff turnover. When asked what she tries to ensure teachers learn by performing their tasks, Emma, a veteran principal here says, "I don't know if I want them to learn anything" and adds that,

I think it's what they determine they need to learn. I have not consciously thought about what they would learn by doing any of those things.

Emma says she doesn't have the same type of relationship with all teachers here because,

some are much more open...others are not.... Some I feel I can have a good conversation with, some I just don't know how to get the conversation going.

Eileen says her relationship with Emma is "good," but regarding "early intervention...I think that would be negative" and it is,

the sorest point in our relationship. We're not on the same page, with regards to that. So, that makes the relationship, at times a little bit more strained.

Eileen says, “I don’t look for praise from no one,” and she says that she is “somewhat” free to contribute her ideas to make significant learning contributions, but regarding,

early intervention...it’s taken a lot of convincing for people to really realize that we’re serious,...and this is what we need. So sometimes, it takes more determination and preservation than what we’d certainly like it to be.

Eileen says that, “I enjoy learning new things, so I don’t need to be part of either group to help me enhance my learning. That’s something that I do on my own,” and she adds that, “I look for my own self-approval... praise. It just doesn’t matter to me if I’m in or out.” Yet she says,

“I don’t think we get enough support with, the children and I’m fighting to get extra help for the at-risk kids that I’ve identified...and the support is just not there, that I think is necessary.

Eileen says that she feels these students should receive extra help and learning supports from the special education teacher or she should be freed “up...so that I can work with these kids that I’ve identified,” and she has been given, “a little bit of support, through our determination, but it’s still not what these kids need.” Eileen clarifies the factors that she uses to determine an at-risk Kindergarten child advising that,

if they don’t recognize any of the letters by the end of January, then that child, I would identify as being at-risk.... If they’re not...identifying the letters by the end of Kindergarten, then it poses problems for reading later on.

Eileen says her tasks are developed by a committee and are “overseen by the principal” but there’s no mention of her being approached by Emma to take on an extra-role task. However, by volunteering for the school improvement committee, Eileen has learned the critical importance of giving her Kindergarten students a solid foundation for future learning. She now realizes the error that is occurring here and recognizes the effect this uncorrected error will have on these students’ learning and on the school’s future student achievement results. However without Emma’s support, she cannot affect the changes her new school growth and development learning illustrates as being necessary. She appears to be dismayed, but is not yet ready to give up on this concern. Eileen seems to be out-group with Emma, at role taking, inhibited by lack of support, and confined to single-loop learning.

Ethel says that she and Emma have a, “mutually supportive” relationship but “I don’t see her very often,” yet “if there’s something I need to discuss,”

I know she’s going to listen...because she’s got professional support from me, and my opinion.... She has a lot of respect for me.

Ethel says “there’s lots of opportunities for me” to contribute ideas. She says that she developed the Safe Schools Policy and regarding task assignments, Emma will ask her,

if I'd be interested in being involved.... I would be asked to think about it...and then I'd...give my opinion and make a decision about what I wanted to do.

Ethel feels that with her in-role tasks, she's, "definitely not" given all the supports "we need in the classroom, she's not able to...do that," because this year "in terms of,"

a teaching task...we have three new programs...and the number of outcomes we have to cover is unbelievable. It can't get done in the...time they're asking us.

Ethel appears to be in-group with Emma, at role-routinization and double-loop learning.

Elizabeth says her relationship with Emma is based on a "mutual trust" and, I don't see the relationship as being one of competition or conflict... It's a very mild type of relationship. She's there when I need her, and I think it works both ways.

Elizabeth says that with Emma,

I wouldn't feel at all that I was out-group...[and]...feeling that I'm part of the in-group would make me more confident...to voice my disagreement or...my support... When it comes to my own learning...I get more out of being part of what's considered to be a comfortable...an in-[group] situation.

She says she feels "very free" to contribute her ideas here and Emma "asked me specifically to do tasks within the school district," and Emma,

said that maybe I should volunteer when she got a call from the math coordinator looking for someone who might have potential.... The coordinator...helped me with the implementation of the program and...in-servicing of the teachers at the district level.

But, when asked what happened when she returned to her school, Elizabeth says that,

basically...I worked with the other teacher at the grade level. I don't see a big carry over to the whole school in terms of what I did. If anything, for these nine days that I was involved in the in-servicing, having a substitute obviously was putting more of a burden on the school. And the principal was very supportive that way and when anything arose I had the backing to deal with it.

Elizabeth says that "I have a lot of freedom to develop my own agenda," and, "I have...confidence... never feel as though I'm...being closely monitored." Elizabeth appears to receive information, influence, attractive tasks, latitude, support and attention from Emma, seems to be at role-routinization and double-loop learning.

As shown in Table 1 above, Emma appears not to use all the leadership practices. According to the data presented above, she seems *not to ensure inclusion, practice collaboration or provide individualized support and encouragement* to Eileen. And Ethel says that she is a "floater" and



although she can “sit with any group of teachers and be very comfortable and be included” but adds that,

on all staffs that I’ve been on there have been in-groups and...out-groups.... If I had the staff list I could...make out some groups in the staff this year.

When asked if she can trust all teachers to support her, Emma says that,

I have no idea what they’re saying when I’m not present. I’m sure its not all sweetness and light. So, no, I’m sure I can’t trust everybody to support me even when I’m not there.... I have to do things, or say things, sometimes that people don’t particularly care for. Most people would support most things, but I don’t think everybody would support everything.

Emma says that she’s, “not much of a risk-taker,” and Ethel corroborates that stating that she, “can’t think of any” risks Emma has taken. Emma says that she does not “often go to [teachers] meetings...because I think that they’re professionals, and they have the autonomy to do what they want to do” and Elizabeth adds her belief that,

the principal’s role in the office...[is]to handle situations, so that I don’t have to handle them myself.... It’s comforting...to know that there’s that buffer zone that’s there...that keeps me from that big bad wolf sometimes. And, yeah, you need that.

Regarding how she reacts when a teacher finishes an assignment and presents the results to her, Emma claims that, “I don’t have people presenting results to me.” It appears that there is not much opportunity here for Emma to talk to each teacher about supports she can exchange for extra-role tasks, and she appears *not to maintain visibility or model involvement* but remains hand-off in an effort towards what she seems to consider autonomy.

Emma says she tries to ensure teachers share what they have learned through staff meetings and committees and Elizabeth adds that, “a team approach here has always been strong,” but as Sheppard (2000) contends, “the existence of committees and teams [is not] a sufficient catalyst for change” (p. 25). Yet, Eileen says she thinks this school is a product of the teachers’ knowledge and on-the-job learning and this school,

wouldn’t be what it is unless we had dedicated teachers, and there’s always... weak links in the system and...we don’t have too many...but the ones that we do, ...certainly do make an impact on the school.... And, I think the kids get what they need from us.

Ethel believes “to some extent,” the school is a product of what the people who work in it know and have learned by doing their jobs, and Elizabeth adds that, “what I know now as an educator versus what I knew when I first came in the building, it’s like totally different scenarios.” She contends that,

if I were in a different school, my way of knowing what I know would... have changed and been influenced by different people. Principals with different philosophies would probably have made me a different teacher than what I am.

In addition to the negative affects of confining teachers to role-taking, danger can happen in role-routinization and this requires the principal to effectively balance individual and organizational learning supports. At Realignment, Emma supported Elizabeth's professional growth when this negatively impacted the school. She said she felt "very free" to contribute ideas and Emma "asked me specifically to do tasks within the school district," but when asked what happened when she returned to Realignment, Elizabeth said, "I don't see a big carry over to the whole.... If anything, for these nine days...having a substitute obviously was putting more of a burden on the school." Elizabeth said, "I have a lot of freedom to develop my own agenda," and, "I have...confidence...never feel as though I'm...being closely monitored." She received information, influence, attractive tasks, latitude, support and attention from Emma and was at role-routinization.

It appears that single-loop, routine learning is happening at Realignment, however, the data set at this school appears contradictory and to some extent makes clarity elusive. For example, Eileen seems to have learned how at-risk students' learning inequity will impact their academic success and the school's future CRT results. She insists that she's "fighting to get extra help for [them]...and the support is just not there." So Emma appears *to not model high performance expectations* or *focus on student outcomes* and "the detection and correction of error produces learning and the lack of either or both inhibits learning" (Argyris, 1976, p. 365). But, Eileen also says that, "I think the kids get what they need from us." Additionally Elizabeth, who has gone to the district level to train teachers in a specific curriculum area dialogues about teamwork here, yet does not appear to "see a big carry over to the whole school in terms of what I did." Instead, she believes that it "was putting more of a burden on the school." So, except for her grade level teacher, there appeared to be no transition of her individualized double-loop learning to her school. Also, Ethel calls attention to in-group/out-group staff divisions here. This school appears to be maintaining the status quo.

### **Case Study #6: Multi-Stream School**

This is a rural single-stream and multi-aged combination K -9 school with 355students and 23 teachers. Donald says that when he assigns tasks he tries to ensure that teachers "recognize that by all working collaboratively we can make this...a...better place," and regarding relationships with teachers he says that,

you treat everybody with the same degree of respect but your interaction with different people changes with the personality you're dealing with.

He adds that, "we try not to set off adversarial relationships with anyone" and regarding in-group/out-group divisions, he adds that,

when you're seen to treat people fairly, then you do a lot to diminish that. You don't provide the right opportunity for it to fester.

Donald seems to feel that he gives all teachers freedom to contribute their ideas here but says that, “some people grasp that opportunity more than others...are more confident.”

When asked about her relationship with Donald, Darlene says that “even though I may disagree ...see things differently.... I try to work within the principal’s guidelines.” And she says that with Donald, “I can’t say I’m part of an in-group”

I can’t say ‘in’, so I would have to say, ‘out’, right. But...I don’t see that anybody else is an in-group. I think we’re all out-group, if that makes sense.

Darlene says that she tries “to make learning contributions to the school,” but adds that, “I’m a bit cautious on saying that I’m free to do it,” and she,

would be hesitant that I wouldn’t take too much on...because...somebody would have a problem with it and ... it...knocks the winds out of your sail.... I proceed very cautiously...with new initiatives...and I’m sure that I’m clear about where I’m going before I go there.

When asked who holds her back, Darlene says that, “the administration” and when asked what she has learned through task completion, she says that she has learned, “to respect ...the administrator, as the person who’s ultimately responsible.” Darlene seems to feel that being out-group with Donald has affected her learning because she says that,

we’ve had some cautions.... You can...understand that it’s an administrative decision but when it personally affects you, you...need to know why.... I...try not to let things bother me personally.... I may not agree with certain leadership styles but I have to respect that style...[but] it’s not where you’d come from as a

person.... So, it can lead to problems.... You need to work things out...rather than, “this is the way it is and let’s move on”. I’ve moved on bitter ...and...had to say that, “This is not just worth it to me because I’m not that sort of person,” and ...you can...give up on what you’re doing...because you do put your heart and soul into a lot of what you do and then when you have conflict... you just feel helpless to make a difference.

Darlene clarifies that being part of the out-group with Donald,

can and has affected [her learning but it doesn’t any more. I’ve actually gotten to the stage where I’ve...had to rise above the in- group, or the out- group, and I...do what I do because I know it’s best for the kids, and I get a lot of satisfaction from learning...testing and getting involved, but it can...directly affect your motivation and your interest in teaching.

She says that Donald has asked her “to serve on committees...and do different things that are within my job description.” She also says that teachers here, “have to make sure that the principal

is informed about...everything...we do and the way that we do it,” and she receives resources for doing in-role work because as a special education teacher she has,

a flexible schedule, so he’s quite supportive of changing my times around...to help fit in ...tasks that I have to do.... If I need to see a parent...it’s no problem for me to call them in during the day.

Darlene appears to be out-group with Donald, role taking, and single-loop learning.

Desmond says that his relationship with Donald is “personal” and “professional,” and he is “comfortable...sitting in the office...having a little joke...conversation on something that’s not related to school at all.” He says that with Donald he feels, “very accepted...valuable,” and, “in-group...if I have a suggestion, it’s respected,” and he also feels “strongly supported in the different tasks” he takes on, for example,

when you’re talking about policies...you need someone to give you clarification on the... issues.... Where’s the school board on this?... The administration would have more insights...and...would provide us with supports in that area.

Desmond adds that when performing assigned tasks “you learn a lot because you’re more involved.... It’s very important for you...to be very well informed,” and he says that being part of the in-group with Donald has affected his learning in that,

being as comfortable as...I am...I’ve learned...the ropes of administration, why they make the decisions that they do...and understanding...their perspectives.... If I was...going into administration, I feel that because I am connected with them...[it] would be a real benefit for me.

Desmond says that he took on an extra-role district level conference task on “the school leadership committee which was one that I was approached on.” Desmond appears to receive information from Donald. It appears that “information...is...shared on a need-to-know basis with his...collaborators on unstructured tasks (Graen & Scandura, 1987, p. 182). Desmond appears in-group with Donald, double-loop learning and at role-routinization.

Della says that she “can go and talk to” her principal “about just about anything and it goes no farther.... We have a very good relationship” and, “I think I could be in-group.” Della gives her view that out-group division, “really puts in barriers in a staff,” but in-group to her is, “the fun group, but it’s just because of your personality.” Della says that she’s, “not really” given all the supports she needs to perform the various tasks she takes on, and she refers to her in-role, “Kinderstart program.... You don’t get any extra prep time,” but she adds that she has not asked Donald for this support. Regarding having freedom to make significant learning contributions here, Della says that, “I’m free if I wanted to.” She says that she coaches basketball and volleyball and does, “anything that needs to be done, if they’re short, then I fill in, in different areas,” and says if she needs, “extra support, then I just go to our principal.... I find he’s very supportive in anything that you want.” Della appears to be in-group with Donald, double-loop learning and at role-routinization.

As shown in Table 1 above, Donald appears not to exhibit all the leadership practices. Donald says he trusts all teachers to support him even when he's not present,

because...we've established a culture of sharing...caring. I...ensure that people put children first, but...we always help, and take care of and support each other.

However, Darlene, who feels out-group with Donald, *appears not to trust* Donald because he does not inform her about decisions that she says "personally affect" her and she believes that this lack of partnership can "directly affect your motivation and your interest in teaching." Donald also appears *not to ensure inclusion or provide individualized support and encouragement* to her. Darlene feels that she is "in-group" with the teachers here but adds that there is,

a small group that...stay to themselves...I think they've...gotten frustrated with things in the past, and it just may be easier to...do their job and leave at the end of the day, than it is to start any ripples.

Darlene says that Donald, "tends to do his own thing, and that there's some...in-[group], some...out-[group], different cliques" and he "makes the decisions" and,

teachers have said..."What are we even meeting on this for? If you're going to do it you're going to do it.".... A lot of teachers just give up.... I've...done that...but...you can go on then for twenty years like that, and...there's a few people on staff here that...get...that attitude when it comes to trying to make change.... They do the best they can do...with their kids, but when it comes to the overall atmosphere and their relationship in the school, it's a job. And...you ...want [your work] to be more than punching time on the clock.... I've seen a lot of that...experienced it myself so you...need to work it out for everybody.

And Desmond says that even with committee work "no matter what we'd come up with...we'd always have to present it...to the administration for approval, for revision...and then...we would revisit it...to completion." Yet, Donald says that, "if we...have a good relationship with each other, personally and professionally, and...ensure...people are doing subjects where they need to collaborate" getting teachers to take on tasks here "has become...easy to do" because,

I've made it a point...to accommodate the personal and professional needs of teachers.... People are...willing to take on a reasonable amount of responsibility.

Darlene and Della think this school is a product of what the people who work in it know and have learned by doing their jobs. However, Desmond says, "there's a lot of sharing but maybe there is room for improvement."

Donald says that his biggest risk in running Multi-Stream was taken,

about ten years ago...we...decided...a multi -age education.... It is...now a part of what we do, no one questions the merit of it.... There are other ways to deliver education, rather than the straight, graded approach.

Yet, when questioned if there is any evidence that would be gathered from CRT results or other assessments that would show similarities or differences in students' achievement in the regular stream versus the multi-age setup, Donald says that, "it's really difficult to do a definitive assessment.... I haven't taken it on." When questioned further about this being a possibility Donald says, "oh yes, there is a way, if we wished to do it" adding that,

we could take out the criterion referenced testing and isolate it for both those ... groups.... It would be quite interesting to do because the stats would be there.

Darlene seems to not see Donald taking risks in program delivery and says that he,

just tries to walk the straight and narrow, and tries to keep things running as smoothly as possible, without too many hills and bumps along the way.

She also says that, "a lot of the focus tends to go to the junior high" here because the administrators have elementary and junior high backgrounds and with regard to the primary division CRTs,

I'm not sure they...see the demands of that on the students...teachers...and the realities of where the kids are and their ability to do the tests... I think it's not that they don't give it. They just don't see it to give.

Regarding cliques at Multi-Stream, Donald said when, "you're seen to treat people fairly...you don't provide the right opportunity for it to fester," and he would "never want anyone...to feel...not...valued as much as someone else." But Darlene said that being out-group with Donald affected her learning because although "I'm working hard...doing the best I can do...we've had some cautions," and this can "become frustrating," because when an administrative decision "personally affects you, you...need to know why." This unilateral decision-making barred Darlene's opportunity to present her relevant information and viewpoint, thus silencing her "voice" (Elicker, Levy & Hall, 2006). Darlene said, "you can...give up on what you're doing based on that" because, "you do put your heart and soul into...what you do and then when you have conflict...you just feel helpless to make a difference" and "a lot of teachers just give up." Principal/teacher interdependence seemed elusive, but Darlene maintained a positive, interdependent relationship with the teachers. However, being out-group with Donald seriously limited her opportunities for personal and professional accomplishment. Darlene explained that when teachers tried but Donald

curtailed their input, terminal apathy set in. Having experienced this herself, she said this constraint can "directly affect your motivation and your interest in teaching."

According to Della, Donald appears *not to have high performance expectations* regarding challenging teachers to take on extra- role tasks, because she says that, "if you don't want to



volunteer...that's your choice because this is not something that you have to do," and it seems that Donald *does not spend time talking about supports* he could give her for taking on these tasks. Donald appears to have been a risk taker in the past however he seems to be currently experiencing single-loop individual learning within this environment. He seems to instill teachers' collaboration yet appears not to model partnership or involvement himself. At Multi-Stream, there appears to be sharing through informal structures and Donald's goal of collaboration seems to be happening amongst the teachers, but not between him and the teachers. The school seems to lack focus on how to affect increased student outcomes. Therefore, single-loop learning appears to be happening here. The single stream/multi-age instructional delivery has now become a routine activity and the traditional status quo is being maintained. However, this school has the interesting possibility, with this instructional set-up, to enable measurement of students' achievement in regular streaming versus multi-aged educational delivery through a simple procedure. The learning that is occurring here appears to remain stable and to be "single-loop" and "the norms themselves-for product quality...or task performance-remain unchanged" (Argyris & Schön, 1978, p. 19).

## **Traditional Schools**

Realignment and Multi-Stream Elementary schools appear to be retaining the status quo and single-loop learning. At Realignment, in-group teachers had many principal supports and this propelled their learning to a double-loop level. This gave them freedom to initiate roles to generate and drive their desired learning level, and to satisfy their leadership needs. However, at Realignment, it seemed that the principal, Emma's leadership became uninvolved and laissez-faire. Then, her personal leadership and the level of organizational learning appeared to regress. When Emma was asked what she wanted teachers to learn by completing the tasks she assigned them she said, "I don't know if I want them to learn anything" so there appeared not to be a shared vision for teaching and learning.

At Realignment, it appears that Emma over-supported one teacher's individual learning to an extent where it taxed the school's resources to the degree that the teacher was concerned that it could put the organization in jeopardy. Yet, there appeared to be no advantage to the collective learning and improved student outcomes in the school. Elizabeth explained this saying, "I don't see a big carry over to the whole.... If anything, for these nine days...having a substitute obviously was putting more of a burden on the school." Conversely, a teacher who appeared out-group with the principal here seemed to be role taking, unsupported and confined to single-loop learning. Emma seemed to not create a shared vision for teachers' learning and Eileen said "I don't need to be part of either group to help me enhance my learning. That's something that I do on my own." She added, "I don't look for praise from no one.... It just doesn't matter to me if I'm in or out," but, "I'm fighting to get extra help for the at-risk kids that I've identified...and the support is just not there." Eileen said her tasks were developed by a committee and "overseen by the principal" but there was no mention of her being approached to take an extra-role task. However by volunteering for the school improvement committee, Eileen realized the error that was occurring and recognized the effect this uncorrected error would have on her students' learning and on the school's future student achievement results. Eileen was inhibited by lack of support and confined to single-loop learning because "the detection and correction of error produces learning and the lack of either or both inhibits learning" (Argyris, 1976, p. 365). She



appeared to resort to using “self-management” as a “substitute for leadership” (Yukl, 1998, p. 167) rather than depending on Emma to motivate her. Data from this case study suggest that when sharing and distributing leadership with teachers, principals must retain and exhibit strong, involved, democratic leadership that’s supportive of increased student learning outcomes within their school. This also appears to be an area where principals must ensure individual and organizational learning balance.

At Multi-Stream, Donald exhibited a hierarchical, top-down leadership approach (Devereaux, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 1995) and his decision-making was unilateral. Darlene explained that at Multi-Stream, Donald, “makes the decisions...and whether you’re in, or you’re out...the buck stops here.” Yet Donald said he wanted teachers here to “recognize that by all working collaboratively we can make this place a...much better place.” It appears that Donald’s espoused value of collaboration conflicted with his actions (Devereaux, 2003). Darlene, who had a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership, and apparently believed in a different approach to leadership, seemed constrained from contributing her ideas and fearful that doing so would cause clash with Donald. Darlene then began to use “self-management” as a motivator (Yukl, 1998), and she used the satisfaction she got from teaching as her stimulus. She was not provided an avenue for growth and knowledge sharing, therefore in this case, the failure of role-making [led] to a return to role-taking” (Graen & Scandura, 1987, p. 179).

## **Conclusions and Implications**

This study strives to move closer to “complete leadership acts” (Burns, 1978) that display honesty, equality, responsibility, the honoring of commitments, liberty, fairness, and justice because,

in the billions of acts that comprise the leadership process...a pattern can be discerned...that in turn would underlie a general theory and serve as a guide to successful practice of leadership (Burns, 1978, p. 427).

In so doing, the “Learning-Infused Leadership” approach has emerged. Learning-Infused Leadership is an ethical, collaborative, change oriented process of motivating interdependent learning through individually negotiated learning roles and dispersion of knowledge and efforts. It focuses on learning and thus derives its foundation and understandings from the individual knowledge and the aggregated learning of many researchers and practitioners. Because of its learning focus, it opens awareness to possibilities for further enhancement as knowledge accrues. It merges communities of practice, identifying essential but non-exclusive guiding principals’ practices, the role-negotiation process that motivates, engages, and facilitates individual learning, and varied critical sharing structures that ensure learning transfer to the organization. It concentrates on improved learning for all school stakeholders, including principals, teachers, students and others.

This study indicates that for principals to ensure heightened individual and organizational learning their underlying leadership practices should be alike but they must also establish a unique but collaborative, collegial relationship with each teacher that takes into account individual’s interests, and the types of resources necessary for maximum learning, and leadership needs. This is supported by the Dansereau, Graen & Haga (1975) claim that “management of an organizational

unit clearly involves dealing with the entire set of members” yet “leadership can occur in the ...[principal/teacher] dyad” (p. 76). Research (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997; Sheppard, 1996; Devereaux, 2004) and Others (Refer to Table 2 below) validates leadership practices found within the learning role-negotiation process in this study. As well, this research indicates that heightened organizational learning results from high quality individual leader-member exchange (LMX) that embraces diversity and provides individualized assistance that results in equitable teachers’ and students’ learning outcomes. Additional research (Devereaux, 1995, 1997; 2000; 2002; 2003; 2004; Sheppard & Devereaux 1997; Devereaux, White, Collins, Farrell & Piercey, 2007) that lends credence to Learning-Infused leadership was conducted in excess of twenty schools and spans more than a decade of merging theory with more than three decades of educational practice.

This research study unveiled dyadic relationships that facilitate or inhibit individual and organizational learning. In schools where individual learning roles were negotiated with teachers, each individual was in-group, at role-routinization, and motivated toward individual double-loop learning. The resultant relationships based on trust, high quality interaction, support and formal/informal rewards for taking on extra-role learning tasks, coupled with solid structured and unstructured knowledge and shared discourse supports, facilitated individual learning dispersion to the collective group. This created double-loop school learning organizations. Conversely, when learning roles were non-negotiated, individual principal/teacher dyadic relationships became out-group and based on doubt, low quality of interactions and no formal or informal rewards. These out-group individuals remained at or regressed to role-taking, and single loop individualized learning roles that privatized classroom practices were evidenced, and when these were combined in practice with double-loop negotiated roles, where learning is shared amongst small groups, the organizations maintained the status quo. Consequently, in our current educational world of flux and faced with challenging contemporary policy (Hoy & Miskel, 2006) and educational change issues, it is critical that we have double-loop learning individuals who through individual learning dispersion build double-loop learning organizations. This research indicates that a combination of negotiated and non-negotiated learning roles with individual teachers that inhibit learning versus negotiated learning roles with all teachers that facilitates learning was happening in schools at a disturbing ratio of 2 to 1.

As this study indicates, in-group membership is critical to inquiry, risk-taking, discourse, relationship-building, social learning and knowledge sharing. Out-group must be eradicated, and excessive LMX with one individual needs monitoring and prudent use of resources to balance and equitably share between individual and organizational learning. Lind (2001) corroborates these claims contending that feelings of injustice go deeper than perceived fairness and involve “whether the [teacher] is given an opportunity to voice concerns and needs...is treated with respect and dignity” (p. 59) and is included or excluded from the principal’s in-group. It should be clarified that eradicating the out-group category of relationships does not equate to eliminating or limiting the critical individual and group inquiry and discourse (Lavié, 2006) so badly needed to bring about educational innovation and change.

**Table 2: Principals' Leadership Practices that Support Teacher Learning**

1.	Creating a Shared Vision	Carl, 1999; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Cowan & Capers, 2000; Dyer & Carothers, 2000; Hord, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Laine, 2000; Larson-Knight, 1998; Leithwood, 1994; Neuman & Simmons, 2000; Schauer, 2000; Sheppard & Devereaux, 1997; Tichy & DeRose, 1996; Ucelli, 1999; Van Meter & McMinn, 2001, Wallace, Engel & Mooney, 1997
2.	Building Trust	Brown, Boyle, & Boyle, 1999; Courtney, 1998; Davidson & Dell, 1996; Harrison, 2000; Kaplan, 1996; Louis & Miles, 1998; Schauer, 2000; Thomas, 2000; Tichy & DeRose, 1996
3.	Promoting a Learning Focus	Ash, 1997; Blase & Blase, 2000; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Schauer, 2000; Taylor, 1999; Thomas, 2000; Van Meter & McMinn, 2001
4.	Encouraging Collaboration	Blase & Blase, 2000; Brown, Boyle, & Boyle, 1999; Dyer & Carothers, 2000; Leithwood, 1994; Schauer, 2000; Thomas, 2000; Van Meter & McMinn, 2001
5.	Supporting Shared/Distributed Leadership	Coffin, 1997; Cowan & Capers, 2000; Dyer & Carothers, 2000; Huffman & Hipp, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Portin, 1998; Sheppard & Devereaux, 1997; Sheppard, 2000; Taylor, 1999; Van Den Berg & Slegers, 1996
6.	Advocating Open Communication	Biott & Rauch, 1997; Blase & Blase, 2000; Brown, Boyle, & Boyle, 1999; Daft & Langel, 1998; Guzman, 1996; Harrison, 2000; Huffman & Hipp, 2000; Laine, 2000; Louis & Miles, 1998; Schauer, 2000; Ucelli, 1999
7.	Ensuring Professional Growth and Development	Bell, 1996; Bennett, 1997; Biott & Rauch, 1997; Blase & Blase, 2000; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Coffin, 1997; Cowan & Capers, 2000; Guzman, 1996; Hord, 1997; Horton, 1995; Huffman & Hipp, 2000; Laine, 2000; Larson-Knight, 1998; Louis & Miles, 1998; Tichy & DeRose, 1996; Van Den Berg & Slegers, 1996
8.	Providing Support and Encouragement	Belcher, 1996; Blase & Blase, 2000; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Cowan & Capers, 2000; Huffman & Hipp, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Larson-Knight, 1998; Leithwood, 2000; Sheppard & Devereaux, 1997; Taylor, 1999
9.	Focusing on Maximizing Student Learning Outcomes	Belcher, 1996; Blase & Blase, 2000; Clement & Vandenberghe, 2001; Cowan & Capers, 2000; Huffman & Hipp, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Larson-Knight, 1998; Sheppard & Devereaux, 1997; Taylor, 1999

Thus, heightened organizational learning is the process of sharing individual learning and collectively combining efforts to enhance organizational knowledge. It is undergirded on relationships that are professional and are characterized by inclusion, fairness, mutual respect, collegiality, integrity, trust, collaboration and support based on needed resources for successful work completion, and encouraged innovation wherein both principal and each teacher work together to challenge and actively drive individual and organizational learning to higher levels. Within Learning-Infused leadership, the principal's leadership is directed at building positive relationships and organizational learning capacity throughout

the entire professional organizational stakeholder learning community, including staff, students, parents and others, always remaining humbled and mindful of the fact that in order for anyone to lead, there must be those who will choose to follow. Therefore, a leader must always remain cognizant that there are situations in which the principal leads, while in other instances, depending on knowledge, skills and interests in certain areas, others are encouraged and enabled to lead heightened individualized and organizational growth and development (Devereaux, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Sergiovanni, 2005).

Principals must be brought to awareness of their old frame of reference in order to learn a new one (Argyris & Schön, 1978) and this study indicates that this double-loop individual principal's learning or wakefulness can come through school board initiated change, leadership training, and/or self-generated learning. Then, when this knowledge is put into practice, double-loop learning organizations result. Initially, this inquiry was geared toward learning if coexistent single- and double loop individual learning are necessary for effective organizational learning. This study suggests that non-negotiated learning roles produce single-loop learning, while negotiated learning roles ensure double-loop learning. And when single- and double-loop individual learning co-exist the result is single-loop organizational learning. Double-loop organizational learning happens when each teacher, through dialogue and action is encouraged to share his or her specialized knowledge with the collective group. Thus, heightened organizational learning is the process of sharing individual learning and combining human efforts to enhance organizational knowledge.

All teachers are invaluable change agents who deserve respect, and in this time of heightened sensitivity to inclusion and social injustices, both principals and teachers must be taught to understand the value of and embrace diversity. And through this awareness, the appropriately responsive principal "insists on both the human respect and the civil respect that are the due of his or her colleagues" (Starratt, 2004, p. 79). In this instance, the hierarchical, supervisor-subordinate power approach to leadership wherein teachers follow the principal's agenda or rules and regulations changes to a leader-follower shared leadership approach in which in different circumstances either the principal or teacher can take the leader or follower role.

In this study, principals who led double-loop learning organizations were female. Additionally, this research suggests that in some schools, teachers whose learning was constrained were female, and (Rusch, 2004) supports this research in suggesting that this issue needs to be addressed in leadership preparation programs. It is also noteworthy that in other schools it was found that teacher learning was constrained by both male and female principals and thus, we are all called upon to exercise responsible agency (Habermas, 2007) and work together to eliminate social injustices. Erdogan, Liden & Kraimer (2006) corroborate this study, stating that, "organizational justice is socially constructed" (p. 404).

This research study extends our knowledge of Leader/Member Exchange theory in relation to individual, small group, inter-group and organizational learning outcomes. By adding to our understanding of what facilitates or inhibits learning, it raises awareness of the need for all stakeholders to accept and share responsibility and accountability for learning outcomes. It promotes inquiry, reflective thinking and understandings about how we, as change agents, can lay the groundwork for truly continuous improvement by learning how to learn (Argyris, 2002). The

findings implicate the need for a different kind of leadership training. Educators must be brought to awareness that learning can be constrained by a principal's relationship with each teacher and/or by the relationships teachers have with each other and this must change. Only then can researchers and practitioners make the difference to the philosophy of helping each child reach his or her full learning potential that we espouse.

Graen, Hui & Taylor (2006) support this study's finding in contending that, "leadership is a professional relationship; friendship is a personal relationship, and the two should not be confused or traded off" (p. 458). They claim that to ensure that these do not conflict, teachers need training to learn to keep them in their appropriate domains and principals need training to be brought to awareness that they must not exhibit preferential treatment with individuals. Instead, they must establish collegiality, camaraderie and shared responsibility for increased student outcomes with all educational stakeholders. This shared common moral purpose of schooling energizes each individual and all teachers toward their full individual and shared learning and teaching potential. Leadership is about realness – accepting personal and professional responsibility, and enacting inclusive, democratic equitable learning values (Devereaux, 2003) and this inquiry is an attempt to integrate both. It has implications for training leaders at university, professional development centers, school boards, and indeed throughout many different types of organizations and learning contexts.

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## **Chapter 7: EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION IN A "TRANSFORMED" SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

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### ***Abstract***

*This paper examines the learning organization dimension of schools to identify implications for specific components of supervision, namely, knowledge, interpersonal/technical skills and task areas. Following from a relevant literature review and collegial experiences, a sample of implications is generated and couched in the form of impacts on role-related responsibilities of teachers and principals. The supervisory process is argued to be significantly affected by a learning organization presence, creating additional leadership role responsibilities. Most importantly, this paper suggests a transformation in understanding of the supervisory process in "transformed" school settings if supervision is to continue as the helping force it was designed to be.*

Educational change abounds and nowhere is this more noticeable than in the transformation of many schools into learning organizations (Razik & Swanson, 2001; Leithwood, 2001; Fullan, 1995). Less obvious, however, are the implications this transformation holds for the helping force termed "educational supervision". For those educators whose role responsibilities include teacher supervision, there is a need to understand this person-oriented process in a setting emphasizing empowerment, needs satisfaction and role effectiveness. This paper explores the learning organization dimension of schools to identify implications for specific components of supervision, namely, knowledge, interpersonal/technical skills and task areas.

To examine the learning organization impact on educational supervision, it is important to understand what a learning organization orientation means. Senge (2006) provides a conceptual definition of this orientation by referring to a learning organization as a setting "...where people continuously expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continuously learning how to learn together" (p. 3). From an operational perspective, educators might attribute this description to that of a school "in which teachers and students have ongoing opportunities to experience success, innovative learning is supported and encouraged, group potential is recognized and utilized, and cooperative effort is embraced and practised" (Treslan, 2008).

Notwithstanding the fact that many schools currently demonstrate this orientation, it can be assumed that these schools place educators in critical leadership roles requiring effective supervisory assistance. But what form of supervision is most effective in this setting?

Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2005) propose that developmental supervision has much to offer here. Defined as the application of "...certain knowledge, interpersonal skills and technical skills to the tasks of direct assistance, group development, curriculum development, professional

development, and action research that will enable teachers to teach in a collective, purposeful manner uniting organizational goals and teacher needs and provide for improved student learning" (p. 9), this view of supervision represents a paradigm shift from mere inspection of people as subordinates to encouraging collegial interactions. Although this supervisory approach involves working with teachers directly to impact student learning indirectly, it is tantamount to suggesting that yesterday's practices fall short of meeting current educator needs!

Table 1 presents a sample of learning organization implications across three vital components of developmental supervision, namely, knowledge, interpersonal/ technical skills, and task areas. These implications are couched in the form of impacts on role-related responsibilities of educators working in this setting. Information in this table has been gleaned from a review of the literature along with the experiences of this writer and educational colleagues.

## **Discussion**

Expanding capacity to create truly desired results (i.e., ensuring that teachers and students have ongoing opportunities to experience success) reflects needed changes in existing school and classroom functioning. Bureaucratic expectations must be transformed from restricting to facilitating shared decision making, creating a welcoming environment supportive of innovation and experientialism. This involves freeing or relaxing rigid curricular guidelines and facilitating student and teacher exploration of knowledge applications (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993). To accomplish this, teachers need assistance in honing interpersonal skills and overcoming communication barriers, allowing them to assume their effective teacher leadership role (Sergiovanni, 1999). This is necessary not only to encourage cooperative student-teacher dialogue but also to help teachers maximize their role empowerment. The end result should be transformation of classroom and school into a laboratory, and enabling teachers to serve as action researchers in classroom settings characterized by effective pedagogical practice.

The supervisory challenge lies in adopting an appropriate supervisory approach that can be embraced by teachers, viewed as collaborative, and considered to contribute to professional development. From a practical perspective, fostering of collective action to bring about these changes is the very essence of collaborative supervision which is premised on participation by perceived equals in the making of instructional decisions. Those in supervisory positions should remember that collaboration is both an attitude and a repertoire of behaviors, where the outcome becomes a mutual plan of action. Since teachers are professionals, it would be prudent for any supervisory assistance to emphasize collaboration and be as non-directive as possible. In so doing, teachers can acquire increased classroom control over decisions essential to them and their students.

**TABLE 1**  
**Learning Organization Implications for Developmental Supervision**

<b>Learning Organization (Definitional Dimensions)</b>	<b>Developmental Supervision Components</b>		
	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Interpersonal/Technical Skills</b>	<b>Task Areas</b>
Expanding capacity to create truly desired results ( <i>i.e., teachers and students have ongoing opportunities to experience success</i> )	Change Bureaucracy Decision making	Exercising interpersonal skills Overcoming communication barriers	Teachers as action researchers
Nurturing new and expansive learning patterns ( <i>i.e., innovative learning is supported and encouraged</i> )	Innovation/experimentation Self-directed learning Beginning teacher potential	Stakeholder effectiveness and efficiency Facilitating student/teacher inquiry Exercising technical skills	Effective curricula development Teacher professional development
Freeing collective aspiration ( <i>i.e., group potential is recognized and utilized</i> )	School effectiveness Supervisory approaches Student/teacher empowerment	Fostering effective communication	Deploying constructivist pedagogy
Learning how to learn together ( <i>i.e., cooperative effort is embraced and practised</i> )	Collaborative effort Learning process Developmental supervision phases	Collaborative and/or non-directive supervisory approaches Creating a new learning perspective	Teacher career/school goal pursuit Teacher group development Teacher membership in collective staff endeavours

Nurturing new and expansive learning patterns (*i.e., where innovative learning is supported and*



encouraged) suggests that as learning organizations, schools emphasize the how, not the what, of knowledge acquisition. Glickman et al. (2005) believe that this environment pre-empts testing knowledge understanding via specific test criterion in favour of a more constructivist pedagogy. To achieve the goal(s) of this challenging environment, teachers can use assistance from the supervisory process in better understanding the phenomenon of innovation/experimentation, self-directed learning, and the tapping of beginning teacher potential. This assistance could include stressing the importance of experience in comprehension, and helping students to question, examine, hypothesize and conjecture.

Supervisory assistance in facilitating effective and efficient classroom/school leadership and communication is crucial to the management of this learning environment, given that teachers are required to facilitate the inquiry process. As a result, teachers need to hone their assessment, planning, observation, research and evaluation skills. Working to overcome deficiencies in these areas will require supervisors to play a major role in assisting teachers to become effective curricula developers and contribute to teacher professional development. This assumes that interpersonal skills will be revisited and effectively utilized by all concerned. However, supervisors will need to accept teachers' professional judgements concerning what is best for student learning in order for supervisory assistance of this nature to be seen as non-judgmental.

Freeing collective aspiration (i.e., recognizing and utilizing group potential) implies freedom in stakeholder-institution interactions. Extended to the classroom, this can mean being empowered to accept responsibility for decisions made and acts performed. For supervisors, this means knowledge of school effectiveness, instructional empowerment initiatives, and understanding the range of supervisory approaches best suited to realizing these goals. In particular, supervisors need to appreciate the critical role of communication in group functioning, since tapping group potential is central to deployment of constructivist pedagogy and associated knowledge discovery.

Classroom teaching utilizing group potential can result in a need for assistance in the form of professional development activities. Materials dealing with effectiveness criteria, empowerment, and releasing group potential will be much in demand by those practising constructivist pedagogy and learning. Here astute supervisors should choose an intervention based on teacher readiness and need, apply the chosen approach in a collegial manner, and foster teacher development while gradually increasing teacher choice and decision making responsibility. Interestingly, this can be an ideal occasion for supervisors to assess the developmental levels of the teachers they work with to effectively match supervisory assistance with individual needs.

Overall, this particular aspect of schools operating as learning organizations lends itself to the nature of developmental supervision with its emphasis on individual and group interactive dynamics for goal achievement. Freeing collective aspiration focuses on minimizing over-zealous rules and regulations, de-emphasizing formality, and stressing the person, as prerequisites for goal achievement. It becomes clear that teachers profit professionally from receiving supervisory assistance supporting this environment, including collaborative supervisory interventions embracing full development of teacher and student potential; opportunity to learn from failure; and provision of praise for activities well done (Glickman et al., 2005).

Learning how to learn together (i.e., embracing and practising cooperative effort) contradicts the more traditional belief that learning only occurs when small packets of knowledge are presented to a learner who, through recall and testing, displays understanding (i.e., learning) of those concepts. Learning organizations provide a propitious setting to re-examine this practice simply because an entirely new approach to learning is encouraged (Fosnot, as cited in Reagan, Case & Brubacher, 2000). In these schools freedom of expression, opportunity to explore, encouragement to create, and willingness to view failure as a learning experience defines a new paradigm of learning (Senge, 2006). Concomitantly, this approach to learning is particularly dependent on group activities. To be effective in these classroom settings, teachers can benefit from supervisory assistance aimed at positioning student knowledge acquisition first and foremost in a list of pedagogical priorities. It is also worthy of note that this learning organization dimension, when applied to the school, implies effective collaboration between home, school and larger community.

Effective assistance to teachers here will require those in supervisory positions to have extensive knowledge in the areas of collaborative effort, the learning process, and phases of developmental supervision. This is particularly important as teachers redesign the traditional learning environment through emphasis on constructive pedagogy and learning. Creating this new learning perspective should also bring with it awareness and acceptance of the fact that experience plays a major role in guiding the learner's mind. Thus supervisors need to appreciate that at the heart of this exercise lies the fact that teachers need to create an environment of encouragement for their students. Owens (2004) states that new learning requires an environment free from the confines of formality, impersonality and efficiencies currently found in many schools and classrooms. With supervisory assistance teachers can demonstrate that learning how to learn together constitutes a rich new learning experience for their students. Professionally, this can result in teachers needing to experience participation in collective staff endeavours focussing on innovation and experimentation, career fulfilment, and addressing the learning needs of students.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has examined implications for educational supervision in schools functioning as learning organizations. It is apparent that the definitional dimensions of a learning organization significantly affect the supervisory process through creation of additional leadership role responsibilities for those responsible in delivering effective supervisory experiences. An important fact quickly emerges, that being the need for a transformation in understanding of the supervisory process. While effective supervision includes working with teachers (adults) directly so as to impact on student learning indirectly, it assumes a more developmental perspective in schools functioning as learning organizations.

The four definitional dimensions of a learning organization reveal a need to understand and utilize both interpersonal and technical skills to ensure supervisory effectiveness. This is due to the fact that learning organizations excel at advanced, systemic and collective learning while employing a distinctive set of learning strategies, making it important for teachers to receive assistance when necessary in their leadership responsibilities. Specifically, effective communication needs to be mastered, along with the deployment of empowerment, collegiality, democracy and collaboration. This is important when one considers that supervision should help teachers participate effectively

in maintaining their schools as learning organizations, reinventing schools around learning, not time; fixing current design flaws; establishing a [meaningful] academic day; keeping schools open longer; giving teachers the time they need; investing in technology; ...and sharing responsibility (Fullan, 1995).

It is also important to remember that effective supervision necessitates knowledge of adult education and the various types of supervisory approaches that can be used when working with teachers directly so as to positively impact students indirectly. Selecting the most effective intervention will always be critical to effective supervision, with specific attention paid to collaborative and non-directive supervisory behaviors. Glickman et al. (2005) state that “when supervisors listen to the teacher, clarify what the teacher says, encourage the teacher to speak more of their concern, and reflect by verifying the teachers’ perceptions...the teacher is in control” (p. 99) – a non-directive/collaborative interpersonal approach. Attaining the ultimate goal of educational supervision (i.e., unification of organizational goals and teachers’ needs to achieve effective student learning) means that the task areas of supervision must be understood by those in supervisory positions. Provision of direct assistance to teachers, group development, professional development, curriculum development, and action research activities are essential to the realization of pedagogical effectiveness.

Ultimately, supervision in schools functioning as learning organizations should enhance the teacher leadership role in improving student learning. The challenge is to facilitate a “paradigm shift” to collegiality both in school operation and leadership responsibility. In this way, educational supervision will continue as the helping force it was designed to be in our nation’s schools.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Interpersonal Skills:**

- Listening
- Clarifying
- Encouraging
- Reflecting
- Presenting
- Problem solving
- Negotiating
- Directing
- Standardizing

### **Technical Skills:**

- Assessing and planning
- Observing
- Research and evaluation

### **Task Areas:**

- Direct assistance to teachers

- Group development
- Professional development
- Curriculum development
- Action research

**Source:**

Glickman, C.D., Gordon, S.P., & Ross-Gordon, J.M. (2005). *The Basic Guide to Supervision and Instructional Leadership*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

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## **Chapter 8: Effective Management of the Informal School Organization: A Modest Proposal**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper addresses three leadership challenges associated with effective management of the informal school organization and offers practical suggestions to principals wishing to enhance this dimension of school operation. Working from the premise that informal organization is an outgrowth of bureaucratically oriented formal organization, effective management of an ever-present bureaucracy may hold the key to improving the effectiveness of informal school organization. Four bureaucratic components are examined for their impact and potential contribution in this regard--division of labor and specialization, impersonal orientation, hierarchy of authority, and rules and regulations. Suggestions for utilizing these components is intended to help principals develop the „people dimension“ of their schools and, in so doing, support them in their structural leadership role.

Managing today's schools is a challenging undertaking involving two interactive organizational dimensions identified by Getzels and Guba nearly sixty years ago, namely, people and structure. While much has been written about the centrality of structure to attainment of goals and fulfillment of educational plans (Knezevich, 1984; Hoy and Miskel, 2001), less attention has been paid to the fact that schools are also peopled organizations (Lippett, 1991; Hansen, 1991; Owens, 2004), suggesting that there is more to organizational structure than tangible lines of authority, superior-subordinate roles, rules and regulations, and other bureaucratic formalities. In fact there should be a flourishing informal organization present, capable of influencing both human and organizational goal attainment. For principals attempting to maximize their schools' effectiveness, enhancing the informal organizational presence requires serious leadership consideration (Owens, 1970). This paper identifies three challenges associated with this leadership exercise, and offers practical suggestions principals might consider for enhancing the informal organizational dimension of school operation.

As a starting point imagine that one has been tasked with examining and making recommendations for enhancing the informal organizational dimension of his/her school. An immediate challenge is where to find evidence of the presence of this phenomenon. Such becomes less of a challenge if one recalls that potential for informal organization resides within the formal organization (Knezevich, 1984; Kimbrough and Nunnery, 1988) and in the day-to-day groups of people within the school structure--for example,

teachers with the same planning period meeting in the staffroom to develop professional reports; administrators whose offices are in close proximity discussing school-related matters; and students meeting in small groups to share assignment ideas and interests. Since there are many such groups in a school and it is from these roots that informal organization derives, principals should endeavor to tap their potential as a source of informal organizational presence (French and Bell, 1990; Hoy and Miskel, 2001).

A second challenge arises when one queries which dimensions of formal organization contribute to this informal school dynamic. Silver (1983) posits that certain dimensions of formal structure (means) give rise to specific types of outcomes (ends) which impact not only the school organization per se but also those within. Since schools are assumed to be bureaucratic in nature, it is likely that specific components of bureaucracy serving as means actually contribute to defining, limiting, creating and/or modifying the invisible, often intangible informal school organization (Silver, 1983; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). These formal bureaucratic means will include division of labor and specialization, impersonal orientation, hierarchy of authority, along with rules and regulations.

For an already overworked administrator there is yet a further challenge--the need to examine various definitions of informal organization to better understand its critical components. A sampling of definitions is presented here, beginning with Simon (1957) who writes that informal organization refers to those interpersonal organizational relationships that impact the decisions made therein but are frequently omitted from the more formal scene. As Knezevich (1984) puts it, the informal organization grows out of interpersonal transactions deriving from the many clusters of informal influence groups having either a positive or negative impact on the formal organization itself. In fact, Owens (1987) believes these interactions to be prime determinants of the behavior of people in that organization, suggesting that from a school perspective both teacher and student performance is significantly impacted by the ever-present informal organization.

Kimbrough and Nunnery (1988) state that within a formal organization many interactions occur that are not planned; communication networks are built; ways of behaving are defined; and cliques emerge/disappear. Here the informal organization is portrayed in those human aspects of the enterprise not always described in organizational charts.

French and Bell (1990) view informal organization as beliefs and assumptions, perceptions, attitudes, feelings, values and group interactions deriving from the more formal dimensions of goals, technology, policy, products and resources. This definition falls in line with that proposed by Hoy and Miskel (2001) where they depict the informal organization as a system of interpersonal relations that forms spontaneously within all formal settings. It is the natural ordering and structuring that evolves from the needs of interacting participants.

Owens (2004) argues that the informal organization relates to relations between people in that organization. For this reason, he refers to the informal organization as the „human side“ of an organization, revealing itself when one attempts to involve people more fully in making decisions that affect them; attend to their emotional needs more adequately; and increase collegiality and collaboration through team effort.

Other definitions of informal organization (Hansen, 1991; Hoy and Miskel, 2008) closely follow those already described, namely, the interlocking social structures that govern how people work together in practice; the network of personal and social relationships that arise as people associate with others in a work environment; and aspects of organization undefined in the formal structure including human relationships, actual power versus formal power, communication and social networks.

From these definitions it becomes clear that school principals wanting to understand the critical elements of informal organization should focus attention on those interpersonal relationships



emerging from the formal organization itself. These human aspects include beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, attributes, feelings and values associated with people's needs. Comprising this „human side“ of the school organization, these personal forces form the interlocking social structures governing how people work together, as well as networks of personal and social relationships, and other organizational aspects of the formal structure. Given that schools are bureaucratic in nature (Lane, Corwin and Monahan, 1967; Hoy and Miskel, 2008; Treslan, 2008), effectiveness of their informal organizations will hinge on the extent to which the ever present bureaucracy (implicit in formal organizations) is understood and effectively managed, more specifically these four bureaucratic components: division of labor and specialization, impersonal orientation, hierarchy of authority, and rules and regulations.

### **Division of Labor and Specialization**

Schools like other organizations function by having certain “activities required for the purposes of the bureaucratically governed structure distributed in a fixed way as official duties” (Gerth and Mills, as cited in Hoy and Miskel, 2008, p. 90). Tasks such as teaching, leadership, supervision and decision making (to name but a few) are complex--too complex to be performed unilaterally. This results in a need to divide this labor among others in the school setting--teachers, vice-principals, principal and others. When observed through the specialized nature of schools this division of labor seemingly applies directly to teachers and administrators. Yet ways and means can be explored to capitalize on the decisional contributions of other stake holders, namely, students, parents and other external individuals/groups (Owens, 1987; French and Bell, 1990). In so doing, organizational specialization can be enriched through the knowledge and expertise contributed by those now engaged in these processes. Interestingly, division of labor and specialization can have a positive impact on school operation; yet, such is seldom the case simply because little time or attention is paid to this bureaucratic dimension (Hoy and Miskel, 2008).

What implications might a focus on division of labor and specialization have for the informal school organization? Schools harbor a vast untapped human potential comprised of talents, abilities, feelings and interactions (French and Bell, 1990; Hoy and Miskel, 2008). These are “people” qualities, not elements of an organizational chart.

These intangibles are present in both those who administer the bureaucratic presence in schools and those who are governed by that presence. Consequently, tapping this potential can contribute to both school efficiency and effectiveness. But herein lurks a problem--too often we as administrators fail to recognize this talent pool at our doorstep. So it is not uncommon to find principals unaware, not necessarily unwilling, of the need to build on this human potential in their schools by developing outlets for this potential to be realized in daily school management. Examples of possible administrator action in this regard might include:

- reviewing standing school committee compositions to ensure the presence of students, parents, teachers and community where necessary (viz., school councils),
- encouraging collaborative input in critical administrative exercises such as decision making, assessment and leadership,
- revisiting the concepts of shared decision making, empowerment, and collegial management relative to stakeholder participation,



- redefining educational role responsibilities to include significant others in the current school community when necessary,
- facilitating understanding of bureaucracy and the individual's role therein, and
- developing a structural vehicle for facilitating staff and student decisional input (e.g., see Treslan, 1977).

### **Impersonal Orientation**

It has long been believed that the reality of a functioning bureaucracy is provision of an impersonal orientation (Weber, as cited in Hoy and Miskel, 2008). However, when viewed in practical terms within organizations (schools included) this frequently translates into coldness, inapproachability, aloofness, and/or lack of feeling on the part of organizational constituents (French and Bell, 1990; Hoy and Miskel, 2008). Teachers, for example, are required to make decisions based on facts, not feelings, creating a „stand off“ atmosphere in many classrooms (Sergiovanni, 1999; Hoy and Miskel, 2008). Other school constituents are obliged to treat everyone alike when there are often goodly reasons for not doing so. For principals truly concerned with tapping the non bias and fairness of this bureaucratic dimension for the betterment of their schools“ informal organization, there is a need to consider ways and means of transforming an often sterile environment in which people sometimes serve as “non persons” into one of collaboration and cooperation. Possible administrator action here could include:

- recognizing teacher and student accomplishments via home-school communication,
- emphasizing fairness and objectivity based on relationships rather than selective decision making and rankings,
- emphasizing equality when dealing with all school stakeholders,
- encouraging activities designed to warm the classroom/school climate,
- viewing seemingly idle conversation as potential for valuable informal cooperation, and
- accepting that the very irrationality one tries to minimize can contribute to the foundation of effective informal organization.

### **Hierarchy of Authority**

As with most organizations, schools are vertically structured, that is, each office/role within is arranged so that every lower office/role is under the control and supervision of a higher one (Owens, 1987; Hoy and Miskel, 2001). This gives rise to the hierarchy of authority displayed in standard organizational charts. The downside of this formal arrangement in schools is that teachers and students are located at the bottom of this „pyramid--on the receiving end of orders and rarely having occasion to input ideas to the governance process“. While it might be argued that this hierarchy ensures superior-subordinate relations, it also guarantees disciplined compliance to superior-dictated directives (Lane et al., 1967). This in itself is detrimental to the morale and dignity of all who interact with the school organization, since the very core of informal organizational structure--individuals--are denied the basic ingredients of their participation--freedom, empowerment and trust (Owens, 1987; Hansen, 1991). To ensure that the hierarchy of authority in schools will enhance rather than detract from informal school organization, administrator action could include:

- minimizing coordination through order-giving,
- engaging stakeholders and encouraging their involvement regardless of their position in the decision making process,
- assisting all school members in overcoming their reluctance to communicate with perceived “superiors”,
- providing information sessions for all organizational members on how their school is “really managed”,
- making existing school structure more user-friendly, and
- helping stakeholders understand the meaning of individual-institutional interaction.

## **Rules and Regulations**

Schools are notorious for their plethora of rules and regulations in which the “administration of law is held to consist in the application of these rules to particular cases” (Weber, as cited in Hoy and Miskel, 2008, p. 91). Those who work in schools can find several valued functions ideally served by rules and regulations: (1) they serve as explications of policy limiting options; (2) they are a form of communication; (3) they perform a screening function between superiors and subordinates; (4) they create public evaluation standards facilitating a remote control function; and (5) they provide a sense of legitimacy for punishing people.

However, teachers and administrators alike recognize the fallibility of rules and that this fallibility, while consequential to all stakeholders, is particularly detrimental to the informal school organization (Lane et al., 1967; Norton, 2005; Hoy and Miskel, 2008). Meant to function as general guides in specific situations, rules require interpretation. Rules by their very nature encounter organized resistance because both their meaning and relevance depend on those applying them. Rules also contribute to the preservation of apathy because of their standards-establishing function, usually specifying a minimal level of performance. And herein lies a dilemma--while rules and regulations are designed to account for the routine and the typical, the world of reality is not entirely foreseeable. Thus rules violation is inevitable because of their nature, their place in the school organization, and the very nature of the school organization itself (Lane et al., 1967). Principals need to realize that because of the resistance and resentment rules create, overall effectiveness of the informal school organization can be reduced by proliferation of rules and regulations which potentially limit or constrain the informal organizational structure (Hoy and Miskel, 2008). In light of this information, administrators might undertake the following actions to facilitate effective rule and regulation development and deployment in their schools:

- creating a multi-stakeholder committee to review and/or draft new rules and regulations when needed,
- establishing a „rules and regulations“ school committee to vet all rules and regulations prior to implementation,
- ensuring that rules and regulations are genuinely fair and that there is a rational reason for their existence,
- ensuring that any departure from existing rules and regulations is handled in compliance with due process,
- examining the necessity for specific rules and regulations, and their impact on the informal school organization, and

- ascertaining the „goodness of fit“ between specific rules and regulations and school goals.

In summary, effectively managing an informal school organization is an important leadership responsibility for school principals (Owens, 1970; Lipham, Rankin and Hoeh, 1985). Doing so necessitates understanding of the close association between the more tangible formal organization and the less tangible, yet critical, informal organization (Owens, 1987; Knezevich, 1984). Armed with awareness of the role challenges identified in this paper and the bureaucratic path provided for maximizing the effectiveness of informal school organization, principals can truly embrace the Hoy and Miskel (2001) belief that since schools are „peopled“ organizations, there is undoubtedly the presence of an informal structure related to (interactive with) the formal school organization. This means that every effort should be made to facilitate these interactive forces within the school, and tap the consequential potential of this interaction for the benefit of the school as a whole. Suggestions advanced in this paper for doing so are aimed at assisting principals in enhancing that human side to every bureaucratic action and, in so doing, to minimize any dysfunctional nature imbedded in the four bureaucratic elements focused on. These suggestions represent practical considerations for busy principals interested in enhancing the „people“ dimension of their schools through awareness of the bureaucratic presence in school operation and an understanding that bureaucracy can be groomed to the advantage of the informal organization.

This will necessitate structural leadership on the part of principals which, according to Lipham, et al. (1985), includes taking immediate action on urgent decisions; exercising clear and decisive delegation; stressing outcomes; developing clear philosophy as a basis for decision making; monitoring; and maintaining positive relations with stakeholders. Emerging from these activities should be knowledge that effective management of informal school organization equates with those essential functions of informal structure proposed by Barnard, (as cited in Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 88), years ago—“an effective vehicle for communication; a means of developing cohesion; and a device for protecting the integrity of the individual”. Hopefully, this paper might assist principals in achieving this understanding.

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## **Chapter 9: Measurement Models of the Quality Of School Life**

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### **Introduction**

In recent years, bullying has become one of the most troubling issues facing school systems in Canada. A. Wayne MacKay lead a task force study on bullying for the Province of Nova Scotia that is one of the best researched and most reasonably developed works in this area. His report entitled “Respectful and Responsible Relationships: There’s No App for That” framed the task force report on bullying and cyber-bullying for the Province of Nova Scotia. MacKay (2012) noted that 225,000 cases of bullying occur each month in Canadian high schools.

Bullying has existed for as long as we have had school. More recently, the labeling of bullying behaviours among adults has become more common providing evidence that these behaviours are not confined to youth. Bullied students are often those who differ from other students; the differences could be gender, sexual orientation, disability, racial origin, or anything else that sets them apart from the main stream. These feelings of isolation are exacerbated by being bullied (MacKay, 2012).

The present study presents a model that was developed by the authors and one that draws heavily on previous research by Williams (1981) and others. The model has been used by a number of Eastern Canadian Provinces to determine how connected students are to their schools. This kind of research needs to be resurrected and extended to provide schools with needed information to make our school environments more inclusive and welcoming, safer places for all of our students. WE need to expand the traditional approach to bullying to include the vast unsupervised playground of cyber-space. The model put forward here can form a basis for expansion into that space. The notional concept of pro-social behaviours being necessary to develop meaningful relationships based on positive interactions has to form part of schooling and home-based approaches to student socialization. The increased use of social media for communication, particularly among our youth, makes supervision of this “cyber-playground” an almost impossible task. Thus the long term solution lies in the development of increased social responsibility and respect for one another rooted in increased development of acceptable pro-social behaviours. The present model can be used as a base to devolve new measurement approaches to help gauge how our students feel relative to their schooling experiences and to others within their schooling environment.

### **Theory**

Most quality of school life (QSL) research has been completed by psychologists in the schooling satisfaction tradition. The basis for their work was job satisfaction theory as developed by Herzberg (1962). Herzberg argued that productivity is responsive to the morale of the workers. This argument has been successfully applied to the relationship between the morale of students and their schooling outcomes. Much of the research in this area has used sociological variables in a research paradigm similar to the Guthrie (1988) model for conducting research in educational finance. Schibeci (1989) found causal relationships to exist between schooling achievement in science and student attitudes toward science. Other research identified relationships to support the

argument that school achievements in mathematics and reading were responsive to students' attitudes toward schooling (Bulcock, 1988; Bulcock & Whitt, 1989; Hurley, 1995; Whitt, 1988). Da Costa (1995) identified a negative relationship between personal teacher efficacy and pupil attitudes but in the same study found a negative relationship between pupil attitudes and schooling achievement. The identification of these relationships and the inconsistencies of some of the relationships underscores the need for more accurate measurement of the effects of student attitudes toward schooling.

The theory underlying this version of the quality of school life (QSL) instrument was developed by the Australian educational researcher, Trevor Williams; and is available in the Australian Council for Educational Research monograph series (Number 12, 1981). Williams in turn drew on the work of Talcott Parsons (1953) and Spady and Mitchell (1979). Parsons held that every social system had to deal recurrently with four problems or functional imperatives; namely, adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency; and that these problems were paralleled by lower order organizations. For example, schools are organized to address aspects of the integration function of society. At this level of the social order the four imperatives, paralleling those at the societal level, may be identified as societal expectations for schooling; namely technical competency, personal development, social integration, and social responsibility. The schools are organised in such a way as to address each of these responsibilities; hence, schools develop (i) certification structures concerned with standards, (ii) instructional arrangements concerned with the curriculum, (iii) socialization concerned with the internalization of educational goals and values, and (iv) supervisory structures concerned with social control and school discipline. From the perspective of the student, however, these school structures are experienced as (i) the opportunity to learn, (ii) the usefulness or relevance of schooling, (iii) identification with the student role, and (iv) self-perception of one's status or prestige as a student. The parallelism of these structures from the societal level to the school level through to student perceptions of these structures is shown in Figure 1.

Societal level structures	Societal expectations for schooling	Parallel school structures	Student experiences of schooling
A. Adaptation (the economic system)	Technical competency	Certification (standards)	Opportunity to learn
G. Goal attainment (governance)	Personal development	Instruction (the curriculum)	The relevance or utility of schooling
I. Social integration (social solidarity)	Social integration	Socialization	Identification with the student role
L. Latency (tension management)	Social responsibility	Supervision	Perception of own status as student

**Figure 1. A simplified version of Williams' model of student experiences of schooling**

Here, our purpose is twofold: to identify the extent to which the Williams' model fits the data on grade 6 students in Newfoundland, and to assess the psychometric properties of the model components. It is argued that in a valid model, the student experiences of schooling, or their



perceptions of these experiences will constitute a measure of the quality of their school lives, and that this quality will govern their schooling satisfaction and dissatisfaction. For this purpose, we use a modified version of the Williams QSL instrument. Williams pretested his instrument on year ten students in several Melbourne high schools, then on a national sample of 14 year-olds. Bulcock (1989) simplified the instrument in order to administer it to elementary school children. The sample consisted of all the children in Newfoundland's grade 6 classrooms in the Fall (October) of 1991, N=8670. The data, however, was ill-conditioned. Of the 43 variables in the data set 13 had between 30 and 32 per cent missing data. Thus, the analysis was restricted to the approximately 5500 students, some 63 per cent of the total, who provided answers to each QSL question. See Appendix A for information on the frequencies and missing data, and Appendix L for the questionnaire.

### **Exploratory Factor Analysis, Stage One: A Principal Axes, Six Factor Solution with Iterated Communalities, Rotated to Varimax Criteria**

For the past 6 years the Division of Evaluation, Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland, has used the Williams QSL instrument to assess the quality of school life, and the satisfaction with schooling, of students in grades 6, 7, 8, and 12. The findings of these studies have been reported using essentially the same classification as that developed by Williams; namely, five QSL domains (opportunity to learn, usefulness of schooling, identification with the school, perceived status as a student, and perception of teachers), and two affective outcomes (general satisfaction with schooling, and schooling dissatisfaction). This was also the classification identified by the present writers following an analysis of the grade 8 QSL data in 1989. The present analyses of the grade 6 data confirm the presence of two outcome variables, but support for the QSL domains is restricted to three, not the five that have usually been reported by the Department. These differences need not be regarded as problematic. Continuing research is likely strengthen the original instruments and result in theory modification accordingly. Some of the differences in the findings over the past 14 years are illustrated by Figure 2.

Williams #1, 1981	Williams #2, 1981	Bulcock #1, 1989	Bulcock #2, 1995
General affect	General affect	Schooling satisfaction	General satisfaction
Positive affect			
Negative affect	Negative affect	Student dissatisfaction	Student dissatisfaction
Status	Status	Student status	Student status
Identity	Identity	Identification w school	
Adventure in schooling		Usefulness of schooling	
Opportunity to learn	Opportunity to learn	Opportunity to learn	Opportunity to learn
	Perception of teachers	Perception of teachers	Perception of teachers

**Figure 2. The domains of schooling as depicted in separate analyses from 1981 to 1995**



The first step in the analysis was exploratory; designed to provide some preliminary information on the latent structure as postulated in the 1989 analysis of grade 8 students in Newfoundland. As shown in Table 1 six factors, using the eigenvalue greater than one criterion (Kaiser, 1958), emerged from the principal axes solution, rotated to Varimax criteria: the two affective outcome factors (general satisfaction and student dissatisfaction), and four QSL domains (student status, opportunity to learn, perception of teachers, and an embryonic identification with school factor). Only loadings greater than 0.3 are reported on the grounds proposed by Minnally (1967: 357) that at least ten percent of a factor's variance should be explained by an item. While there were five loadings greater than 0.3 on the sixth factor, with but one exception they were minor loadings; that is, had loaded higher on other factors. See Appendix B for details. In view of these findings the data was reanalyzed, only this time five factors were specified, not six.

### **Exploratory Factor Analysis, Stage Two: A Principal Axes Five Factor Solution, with Varimax Rotation**

In the first exploratory factor analysis the solution was considered inadequate because the sixth factor was a singleton; that is consisted of only a single unique item. In this second exploratory analysis a five factor solution, using Varimax rotation was used. As before 43 items were analyzed. The results indicated that there were five clearly defined factors with factor loadings greater than 0.3, as shown in Table 2. The loadings ranged from .772 for Q20 on Factor 1, to -.303 for Q2 on Factor 4. The items with minor loadings on other factors are also indicated in Table 2.

Given Table 2 findings it seems reasonable to claim that contrary to the 1989 grade 8 data with its seven dimensions, the 1991 grade 6 data provided support for five dimensions: the two affective outcome dimensions (satisfaction and dissatisfaction), and three QSL domains (student status, perceptions of teachers, and the opportunity to learn). There was no support for perceived utility of schooling or student identification with the school, both of which were identified in the 1989 data. The former utility of schooling items were clustered in the schooling satisfaction dimension for the grade 6 sample; and the former identification items as found by Williams had either to be dropped because the loadings were too modest, or were to be found located in the student status domain.

Table 1. Factor Loadings from the First Exploratory Analysis

Item	Label	Loading	*
<hr/>			
	Factor 1, Positive Affect/Satisfaction with Schooling		
Q1	...I like to be	.673	
Q4	...I learn new things	.431	
Q8	...get enjoyment	.550	
Q9	...I find work interesting	.542	
Q13	...I feel great	.711	
Q14	...I feel bored	-.514	*F5
Q16	...I like all my subjects	.594	
Q20	...I really like to go	.775	
Q23	...I am genuinely interested in my work	.529	*F4

Q27	...learning is a lot of fun	.653	
Q34	...I feel happy	.622	
Q37	...my friends and I get together	.357	
Q41	...I am proud to be a student	.515	
Factor 2, Perception of own Student Status			
Q6	...people think a lot of me	.594	
Q11	...people come to me for help	.458	
Q17	...I have a lot of friends	.442	*F6
Q18	...I feel important	.539	
Q24	...I get along with everyone	.364	*F6
Q25	...people credit me for what I do	.472	
Q32	...teachers help me to help out	.337	
Q39	...people think I can do a lot of things	.504	
Factor 3, Perception of Teachers			
Q7	...teachers treat me fairly in class	.606	
Q12	...teachers listen to what I say	.514	
Q19	...teachers are usually fair	.483	
Q26	...teachers give me the marks I deserve	.396	
Q33	...teachers help me to do my best	.437	*F6
Q40	...I like my teachers	.494	*F1
Factor 4, Opportunity to Learn			
Q3	...I am happy with how well I do	.410	
Q15	...I know how to cope with the work	.429	
Q22	...		
Q	...I get satisfaction from the work I do	.447	
29	...I feel good about my work	.501	*F1
Q36	...I can handle my school work	.506	
Q43	...the work I do is important to me	.373	*F1, F6
Factor 5, Negative Affect/Dissatisfaction with Schooling			
Q21	...I feel sad	-.517	
Q28	...I feel lonely	-.551	
Q35	...I get upset	-.544	
Q38	...I sometimes wish I were different	.416	
		-.435	
Q42	...You are bossed around too much		
Factor 6			
		.404	
Q30	...I learn the things I need to know		

---

\*Indicates item with minor loading on other factors, as shown.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis, Stage Two: A Rotated Principal Axes Solution for 43 Items'

Item	Factor Loadings	$h^2$
Factor 1, Positive with Affect/Satisfaction		
Q1 ...I like to be	.671	.513
Q4 ...I like to learn new things	.423	.330
Q8 ...I get enjoyment	.547	.397
Q9 ...I find my work interesting	.537	.441
Q13 ...I feel great	.708	.626
Q14 ...I feel bored	-.509	.410 *F4
Q16 ...I like all my subjects	.590	.437
Q20 ...I really like to go	.772	.670
Q23 ...I am genuinely interested in my work	.523	.475 *F5
Q27 ...learning is a lot of fun	.647	.556
Q34 ...I feel happy	.616	.575
Q37 ...My friends and I get together	.352	.250
Q41 ...I feel proud to be a student	.507	.503 *F2
Factor 2, Perceptions of Teachers		
Q7 ...teachers treat me fairly in class	.543	.385
Q12 ...teachers listen to what I have to say	.519	.354
Q19 ...teachers are usually fair	.461	.269
Q26 ...teachers give me the marks I deserve	.439	.283
Q30 ...I learn the things I need to know	.445	.313
Q33 ...teachers help me to do my best	.565	.441
Q40 ...I like my teachers	.524	.488 *F1
Q43 ...the work I do is important to me	.395	.419 *F1, F5
Factor 3, Student Status		
Q6 ...people think a lot of me	.583	.376
Q11 ...people come to me for help	.447	.228
Q17 ...I have lots of friends	.485	.330
Q18 ...I feel important	.545	.455
Q24 ...helps me to get along with everyone	.415	.300
Q25 ...people credit me for what I can do	.483	.345
Q32 ...teachers ask me to help out	.356	.283 *F2
Q39 ...people think I can do a lot of things	.502	.337

Factor 4, Negative Affect/Dissatisfaction with					
Q2 ...I feel restless					
1 ...I feel sad					
8 ...I feel lonely					
5 ...I get upset					
8 ...I wish I were different					
Q ...you are bossed around too much					
Factor 5, Opportunity to Learn					
Q3 ...I am happy with how well I do					
Q5 ...I know how to cope with the work					
Q2 ...I get satisfaction from the work I					
2 do					
Q29feel good about my work					
Q3					
6 ...I learn to handle my school work					
Proportion of total variance	14.4	6.9	6.2	4.1	4.2
Proportion of common variance	40.2	19.3	17.3	11.5	11.7

1. Three items with loadings less than 0.3 were dropped from this analysis; namely, Q5, Q10, and Q31. See Appendix C for details. \* Denotes items with minor loadings on other factors as shown.

## Measurement Models

Following this second exploratory analysis there is sound support for the existence of five dimensions to the quality of school life data. Moreover, the dimensions are grounded in the theoretical perspective underlying this investigation. Effectively, the exploratory analyses have helped to refine the item pool; though only three out of the 43 original items had to be dropped. The analyses under this heading (measurement models) take the remaining 40 items and use them in more exact tests of the fit of the model to the data, along with estimates of the validity and reliability of the scales.

Table 4 analyses were conducted scale by scale in order to generate a series of measurement models. The form of each model is the same; namely, a single latent variable or hypothetical construct is considered adequate for accounting for the covariation among the observed indicators of the scale. In other words, each latent construct accounts for, or causes, all of the covariation among the indicators; that is, contributes to the variance of each indicator. Effectively, we are assuming that the variation in each indicator is divisible into two components, a common part associated with the posited construct, and a specific part attributable to unrelated influences including measurement error and unspecified system noise. The model is illustrated with reference to one of the five constructs -- perception of teachers -- in Figure 3.

*Insert Figure 3 about here.*

Table 3 provides the statistical information for the final models, but see Appendices D, E, F, G, and H for the details. We used a maximum likelihood estimator for each of the five dimensions for the grade 6 population. Each theoretical domain is presented separately along with the factor

loadings for each indicator. Each loading may be interpreted as a validity coefficient for the item; that is, as an index of the magnitude of the association between the item and its associated construct. Note that three additional items were eliminated at this third stage of the analysis because their inclusion lowered the reliability estimates for the measurement model concerned. While the magnitude of the factor loadings would suggest an acceptable fit to the data, the chi-square goodness-of-fit statistics do not support this interpretation since large chi-square values correspond to a bad fit. Unfortunately, the chi-square goodness-of-fit index is extremely sensitive to sample size. Thus, for large samples small discrepancies in fit may be deemed statistically significant as is the case here. For this reason we follow the advice of Pedhazur and Schmelkin (1991: 667) who caution "against undue reliance on and indiscriminate use of indices of fit," as does Norusis (1993: 62).

**Table 3. Maximum Likelihood Measurement Models for the Five Scales Generated by the QSL Data**

Item	Item-total Correlation	Factor Loading	Error Variance
<b>Positive Affect/Satisfaction with Schooling</b>			
...I like to be	.670	.708	.499
Q4 ...I like to learn new things	.517	.535	.714
Q8 ...I get enjoyment	.588	.623	.612
Q9 ...I find my work interesting	.624	.648	.581
Q13 ...I feel great	.742	.783	.386
RQ14 ...I feel bored	.543	.573	.672
Q16 ...I like all my subjects	.627	.662	.562
Q20 ...I really like to go	.750	.794	.370
Q23 ...I am genuinely interested in my work	.628	.652	.574
Q27 ...learning is a lot of fun	.704	.739	.454
Q34 ...I feel happy	.708	.748	.440
Q41 ...I feel proud to be a student	.634	.667	.556
Chi-square = 769.09 df = 54p = .0001			
Alpha reliability = .911			
<b>Perception of Teachers</b>			
Q7 ...teachers treat me fairly	.575	.669	.552
Q12 ...teachers listen to what I have to say	.520	.606	.633
Q19 ...teachers are usually fair	.480	.556	.691
Q26 ...teachers give me the marks I deserve	.457	.528	.721
Q33 ...teachers help me to do my best	.534	.619	.617
Q40 ...I like my teachers	.550	.644	.585

Chi-square = 78.03 df = 9p = .0001  
Alpha reliability = .774

Student Status			
Q6 ...people think a lot of me	.507	.596	.645
Q11 ...people come to me for help	.394	.449	.798
Q17 ...I have lots of friends	.438	.507	.743
Q18 ...I feel important	.573	.672	.548
Q24 ...helps me to get along with everyone	.445	.507	.743
Q25 ...people credit me for what I do	.512	.592	.650
Q32 ...teachers ask me to help out	.419	.473	.776
Q39 ...people think I can do a lot of things	.501	.582	.661
Chi-square = 273.63 df = 20 p = .0001			
Alpha reliability = .773			

Table 3 (cont'd.)

Item	Item-total Correlation	Factor Loading	Error Variance
Negative Affect/Dissatisfaction with Schooling			
Q2 ...I feel restless	.295	.353	.875
Q21 ...I feel sad	.461	.607	.632
Q28 ...I feel lonely	.434	.570	.675
Q35 ...I get upset	.476	.622	.613
RQ38 ...I wish I were different	.322	.387	.850
Q42 ...you are bossed around too much	.414	.510	.740

Chi-square = 60.06 df = 9 p = .0001  
Alpha reliability = .675

Opportunity to learn			
Q3am happy with how well I do	.450	.544	.704
Q15 ...I know I can cope with the work	.442	.526	.723
Q22 ...I get satisfaction from the work I do	.499	.610	.628
Q29 ...I feel good about my work	.553	.684	.532
Q36 ...I can handle my school work	.497	.594	.647

Chi-square = 143.25 df = 5 p = .0001  
Alpha reliability = .729

1. For the statistical details related to each of these dimensions of the QSL data refer to Appendices D, E, F, G, and H. Items with the prefix R were reverse scored at this stage of the analysis.

## Validity

It has already been noted that in one sense validity may be defined as the correlation between the latent variable and the item composite. These relationships are presented in Table 4. See Appendix J for details.

**Table 4. Correlations between Latent Variables and Unweighted Composites**

Relationship Latent Variable	Composite Variable	Correlation (r)
Satisfaction	UWsatisfaction	.996
Opportunity to learn	UWopportunity	.995
Dissatisfaction	UWdissatisfaction	.879
Student Status	UWstatus	.992
Perception of Teacher	UWteacher	.996

While the kind of validation reported in Table 5 which focuses on the internal structure of measurement models is usually considered a necessary element of construct validity, it is not considered sufficient. Instrument validation calls for the integration of evidence from several sources. Thus, in addition, we need to know something about the relationship between a construct and other constructs. In this case between the five dimensions of the QSL data. We can hypothesize on the basis of the theory, for example, that the two constructs student satisfaction and dissatisfaction with schooling, will be negatively correlated. As shown in Appendix J this is the case:  $r = -.499$ ,  $p < .0001$ . Similarly, given the theoretical framework, we can argue that the affective outcomes (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) will prove responsive to changes in the quality domains of schooling (student status, perceptions of teachers and the opportunity to learn). Which as shown in Table 6 is indeed the case.

**Table 5. Correlations between the Quality Domains of Schooling and the Affective Outcomes of Schooling'**

Domains	Satisfaction	Dissatisfaction
Student status	.530	-.369
Teachers	.583	-.415
Opportunity	.603	-.418

1. See Appendix I for details.

It can also be hypothesized that the quality domains will compose a composite in their own right (i.e., as a second-order factor), and as such will also be associated with the outcomes of student satisfaction and dissatisfaction. As shown in Appendix I the correlations are .689 and -.480 respectively. Note that the second- order factor had an alpha reliability of .774. These relationships are depicted graphically in Figure 4.

*Insert Figure 4 about here.*



The foregoing efforts at establishing content validity, while congruent, may still not be sufficient evidence for the skeptic. It is desirable, therefore, to go beyond the relationships among the constructs themselves. This can be achieved by examining the relationships between the constructs and observed variables. In the present case we can examine relationships between selected latent variables and region and gender as observables -- a procedure known as the known groups approach. We have no reason to suppose, for example, that the latent constructs have anything to do with regional residence. In Newfoundland, the students attending school on the Avalon Peninsula regularly outperform students from other regions on tests of school achievement. Does this mean that these students are likely to find schooling more attractive than students from other regions of the province? We think not. In the case of gender, however, we believe on the basis of prior evidence (e.g., Bulcock, Whitt and Beebe, 1991) that girls are likely to define the quality of their school lives more favourably than boys. The results are presented in Table 6, and the statistical details presented in Appendix K.

**Table 6. Correlations between Three Quality Domains of Schooling and Two Objective Variables, Avalon and Gender**

Domains	Avalon	Gender
Perception of Teachers	.005	.168
Satisfaction with Schooling	-.049	.233
Dissatisfaction	-.035	-.141

Finally, we conducted a cross-structure analysis (Campbell, 1960). We hypothesized on the basis of the theory that satisfaction and dissatisfaction as outcomes of schooling would be responsive to changes in student perceptions of the quality domains; and, further, that the covariation between the outcomes would prove responsive to the quality domains as common causes. The results are reported in the following path diagram, Figure 5, while the details may be seen in Appendix I. Note that all the hypotheses embodied by the model were supported and that 48 per cent of the covariation between the outcomes was accounted for by the quality domains as common causes of that covariation.

*Insert Figure 5 about here.*

### Summary

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that some students experience their school as a lively, even exhilarating place to be, while for others the school is a depressing, even unhappy place. Yet schooling is mandatory in most nations. For example, in Newfoundland and Labrador students spend some 11 to 13 years in school, one sixth of the average life span. While there have been thousands of studies focusing on the achievement outcomes of schooling and while the concepts of achievement such as aptitude, intelligence, and cognitive ability are common language terms, the same cannot be said of the affective outcomes -- that is, whether or not students are happy, whether or not they like school, whether or not they experience satisfaction with their schooling, and whether or not they get along with their teachers. The concepts associated with the quality of

school life for students are seldom defined and almost never measured. It was this research imbalance between the cognitive and affective outcomes of schooling which prompted Williams to address the problem in the first place. Extending the older study to include the MacKay (2012) task force report shows us that this area probably requires closer attention than any time in the recent past.

Those familiar with Williams' quality of school life research will recognize that this study draws heavily on both his conceptualization of QSL and on the methodology he used for measuring the quality domains of schooling. Our starting point like his was an exploratory factor analysis of the indicators of the quality domains in order to identify their latent structures. Concurrently, we were interested in refining the item pool, which we accomplished by reducing the data instrument items from 43 items to 37. Those items which did not contribute to the definition of the main clusters or factors were eliminated. Factor analyses of the remaining items resulted in five emergent factors which were readily interpretable; and, more important, were consistent with, but not identical to, Williams' theoretical structure. The two affective outcome variables identified by Williams remained unchanged as student satisfaction and student dissatisfaction respectively, though some might quibble about the fact that different analysts have given them different labels even though they are synonymous. Three of the five quality domains postulated by Williams emerged in the present analysis. Remember that Williams' samples were 14 year-olds, while Newfoundland grade 6 students at the time of instrument administration were mostly 11 year-olds; and remember, too, that the grade six data was ill-conditioned for unknown reasons so that when using a list wise deletion procedure the returns of almost 40 per cent of the population could not be used.

There is no way of knowing whether the approximately 5,500 cases which were analyzed were representative of the population of 8670 grade 6 students. Whether the data departed from theoretical considerations, or whether the differences between the present findings and those of earlier findings by Bulcock et al. (1989) -- see Figure 2 -- were attributable to differences in data analysis is unknown. Effectively, we do not know whether it is the theory or the data that are responsible for the discrepancy in the number of quality domains identified. Since grade 7 and grade 12 Newfoundland samples are still to be analyzed it is likely that subsequent replications using these data sets will go some distance toward resolving the issue. In the meantime let it be said that there is no ambiguity about the fit between the five constructs identified here and their indicators. The discrepancy is certainly not such as to undermine the theory; rather, the reader should feel reasonably confident that the theory in holistic terms is being upheld. The present study seen in this light is but one brick in the building block known as theory building. Many more bricks will be in place a decade from now.

What have we found? We have found that grade 6 students experience generalized feelings of satisfaction with their schooling experience. They find their school work interesting, that learning can be a lot of fun, and that most are proud to be students. At the same time they experience some disaffection for schooling. They can feel lonely; they say they are bossed around too much; and they sometimes get upset. These two affective outcomes proved responsive to student perceptions of their schooling experiences -- in terms of their status as students, their perception of teachers, and their perceptions of the opportunities they have to learn. Student status was derived almost exclusively from their perceptions of how they were treated by others. It depended, for example, on whether people credited them with what they can do; whether they were able to get along with others, both teachers and peers; and the extent to which others looked up to them for help. The teacher factor would seem to demonstrate that the quality of student-teacher interactions is

important -- a fact that is hardly surprising since such interactions dominate the greater part of a school day. The opportunity to learn or stimulus to learning factor has emerged in every QSL analysis since research on the Williams' model began in 1981. It is construct which seems to capture students' feelings of confidence and competence in what they do in school. Thus, they report that they are happy with how well they do; are confident they can cope with the work; and that they feel good about what they do in school. Figures 4 and 5 amply demonstrate that both these three quality domains govern overall student well-being.

In terms of the psychometric properties of the QSL model, it would appear that by formulating a few additional questionnaire items to the teacher, opportunity, and dissatisfaction domains, and/or by modifying those items with loadings less than .05, the reliability estimates are likely to be strengthened. Before doing so, however, it would be prudent to replicate the present analysis on the as yet unanalyzed grade 7 and 12 populations. Note that the alpha reliability is an unweighted procedure which assumes that each item in a construct has unit weight; hence, can be regarded as a lower bound estimate. Thus, we are inclined to regard reliabilities for affective items in questionnaire instruments of .75 or higher as perfectly satisfactory. Nevertheless, the above suggestions, if acted upon, would improve matters. The validity of the model is surely not in question. Both the construct and concurrent validities were found to be congruent with the theory, even though, as is always the case, there is room for improvement. Let it suffice to say that the present analysis provides substantial support for the Williams' model of the quality of school life. Five quality dimensions of schooling previously identified by Williams were unambiguously defined and measured in the present replication. In short, the data demonstrates that each domain has both empirical and theoretical validity.

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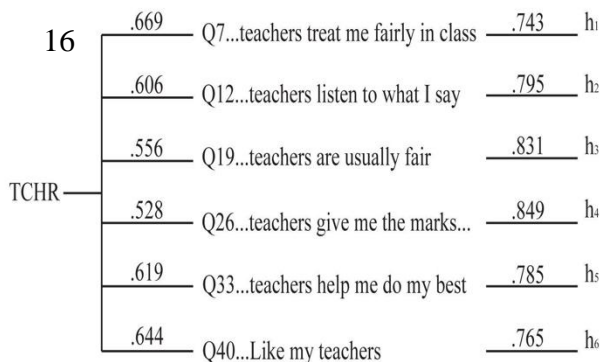


Figure 3. Perception of teachers measurement model

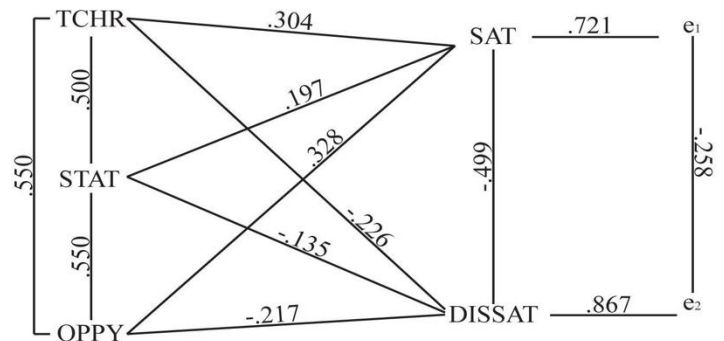


Figure 5. Conceptual model of the responsiveness of affective schooling outcomes to three domains of schooling (grade6, N = 5637)

# **Part 3**

## **Educational Technology**

- 1. Hope is Waning: Linking Debates on Privacy of On-line Information to Distance Education Online Delivery**
- 2. The Impact of Collaboration Tools on Student Engagement**
- 3. Examining Enrollment Trends in Schools Participating in Online Learning in Newfoundland and Labrador**
- 4. Script for a Critical Reflection in Audio-Visual on The Future of learning Institutions**
- 5. Using Electronic Gaming to Support Problem-Based Learning**
- 6. SITI (Summer Institute of Technology) Articles**
- 7. Script for a Critical Reflection in Audio-Visual on the Future of Learning Environments**
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- 18. From Railcars to Virtual Schooling: A History of Distance Education and E-Learning in Newfoundland and Labrador**
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## **Chapter 1: Hope is Waning: Linking Debates on Privacy of On-line Information to Distance Education Online Delivery**

Seitebaleng Susan Dintoe

### **INTRODUCTION**

Technology has brought with it new ways of securing information. Such information ranges from confidentiality, authenticity, integrity and availability. These types of information can now be stored and shared through the Internet, i.e., websites, emails and e-books. All of these electronic formats can be accessed without restrictions. However, issues of privacy, personal or confidential information still have to be assured. Thus, people utilize user-names and passwords as a means of protecting their personal information. As time passed, the hope that people had for these security measures waned out with evidence indicating that they can be penetrated through hijacking, phishing, pharming, data theft, malware, spyware, adware, spam, denial-of-service (DoS) attacks and scanning.<sup>1</sup> These cases necessitated some interventions like legal protection, technological tools and awareness-training programs. The legal protection, among other things, refers to government policies, regulations, legislation, international organizations actions and public education.

Public education mainly refers to the contributions of private and non-private organizations in the fight against insecurity of information with emphasis on personal information, whereas, technology refers to tools or software hijacking and the protection of online privacy. The interventions mentioned above indicate that people in different areas were concerned about unauthorized access and many are now losing hope about the security of information disseminated through technology. This paper, thus, uses evidences and cases of hijacking to illustrate its claim that it is hopeless to still believe that online privacy can be fully achieved.

The paper starts by describing what online privacy entails and the nature of challenges affecting it and then moves to discussing the online privacy with implications for distance education (DE). The paper concludes with a summary and recommendations for future research and practice.

### **BACKGROUND**

As technology has advanced, the way in which privacy is protected has changed along with this advancement. Online privacy on the “Internet is a major concern to users thus divided into the following concerns:

- Information that can or cannot be shared
- Whether messages can be exchanged without anyone else seeing them
- Whether and how one can send messages anonymously.<sup>2</sup>

There is a concern about privacy on personal information because technology is prone to hijacking even if protected for example through passwords. It was noted in a survey conducted by the Graphics, Visualization and Usability Center of the Georgia Institute of technology that 70% of Web users were concerned about privacy as the main reason for not registering; it was further noted that 86% wanted to control their personal information and 78% users in a study surveyed by



TRUSTe (Online trust and safety) would be more likely to provide information to sites that offered privacy assurance.<sup>3</sup> The information privacy is thus protected with a username and password. However, the user name and passwords are said to be prone to hijacking.<sup>4</sup>

Hijacking as a means of stealing information online, can be linked and associated with fraud. For example, it is an attempt to fraudulently acquire sensitive information, like usernames and passwords by masquerading as a trustworthy person or business through emails or phishing websites. Hijacking is a type of network security attack in which the attacker takes control of a communication.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, hijacking occurs when a third party gains unauthorized access to a user's service account breaking into user-names and passwords. For instance, usernames and passwords are used to authenticate an account when completing online forms. These forms could be an application for admission into higher education or buying books online or responding to an advertisement about schools or jobs, or as a student accessing online materials. Once an individual completes personal information online, the authenticated activities can now be easily hijacked and redirected to a different site. Once in the hands of a hijacker, the user names and passwords could be hijacked through phishing. Therefore, user names and passwords protecting personal information is not safe as hijackers can easily manipulate the technological tools used for safety of online privacy.

## **SAFETIES TO ONLINE PRIVACY**

Safety refers to the state and condition of securing by protecting personal information with a username and password against actions that threaten and deprive it of its intended purpose.<sup>6</sup> The username and passwords are technological tools used as safety tools to protect online privacy. For example, when the owner authorizes his/her username, his/her personal information cannot be accessed with a username without the password. Therefore, usernames and passwords are very important technological tools protecting online privacy unless hijacked.

### ***Technological Tools***

Technological tools refer to communications and mobility. These tools have since been developed and used with the hope of protecting personal information.<sup>7</sup> For example, first to check your online information, you enter your username, once the website identifies you, then it will request for your password to authenticate your account. Then, once the website accepts and identifies you with the username and password, you then can access your personal information. However, Peltier (2002) further noted that for the past years, the technological tools for Internet users and for safe computer using have greatly expanded. There are various software tools, for example, user name and password for securing information and these can still be hijacked as an indication of how online privacy can vanish or be dispersed online.<sup>8</sup>

A username is a name you create or want to be identified with for online privacy.<sup>9</sup> Firstly, a username is created online in such a way not to be easily cracked by malicious codes or hijacked. For instance, the online sessions will identify you with your username. You enter your username for the system to identify you with. Then once identified, you can easily access your online material. The user-name is used to identify the owner and thus has to be confidential. Confidentiality implies that the name cannot be easily known and copied by unauthorized hijackers. However, the hijackers can attack the username and its password.



One of the important factors of online protection is the password that tells who the user is and how the system is protected.<sup>10</sup> It becomes very important to safeguard the usernames and passwords as they are a key to accessing online activities. Anyone who has or can guess a password can easily access personal information and can damage the entire system. For instance, if a password is shared and or created with words that can easily be manipulated, the password can be used by anyone to access personal information. However, phishing or scams as a means of hijacking can use usernames and passwords without the owner's knowledge. The hijacking usually takes place online when filling out forms for applications for a job, school or buying online products or responding to anonymous scam or phishing emails. There is a high risk associated with using usernames and passwords on online activities.

## **RISKS TO ONLINE PRIVACY**

Individuals in today's technological world are subject to privacy threats.<sup>11</sup> Risk refers to threats or means of hijacking a username and password. For instance, an individual responding to an advertisement or applying for a job or admission into school will fill out a form online. The online activity involves personal information like usernames, passwords and other sensitive information. Once the personal information is online and usernames and passwords authenticated, it can easily be stolen and spread to more malicious acts like hijacking through phishing.<sup>12</sup> Hijacking is discussed as one of the risks to online privacy.

### ***Hijacking***

The intruders use ill-gotten privileges as a means of hijacking to tap into a system's software accessing or controlling the behavior of the local TCP (Transmission Control Protocol).<sup>13</sup> Ill-gotten privileges are ways and means of using technology to unlawfully access information without owners' knowledge or concern. In the case of *R. v. Cole* (2009)<sup>14</sup>, the teacher's laptop was accessed through user-name and a protected password. As a teacher with additional roles to monitor school network, the teacher accessed students' accounts, which were protected with their usernames and passwords. In addition to unauthorized access, UK government protested that Egypt hijacked their text network, which means that their usernames and passwords were used for texting.<sup>15</sup>

### ***Usernames***

The username as an identity into an account protects all online activities though can easily be vulnerable to hijacking through phishing.<sup>16</sup> For example, an email can be sent by a familiar name, or can be an advertisement to respond to or can be an email informing you of some danger or money that you have won, like the prize or money scams. For instance, an anonymous email will be sent with a message stating that you have won a prize or that money is in the account with no identity. Therefore, by receiving an email and authorizing them to deposit the lump sum of money into your account is risky. Once you respond to one of these threats, you send out all your personal information. Your personal information like your username will be exposed to these scams and thus your information easily hijacked and redirected it to another website. In this case all your personal information will be hijacked and can be openly accessed by anyone, thus exposing your personal information to risk and automatically affecting your password too.

## ***Passwords***

A successful hijacking enables an attacker to borrow or steal an open connection (say, a telnet session) to a remote host for his/her own purposes. Hijacking is associated with fraud that occurs when a third party gains unauthorized access to a user's service account into the username and password. The unauthorized access may occur through a phishing attack, used by someone close to the victim or who is able to find out his or her username and password, or some other illicit tactic. In the likely event that the sincere user has already (been) authenticated to the remote host, any keystrokes sent by the attacker are received and processed as if typed by the user.<sup>17</sup> Virus spreading through the computer can attack the false processing.<sup>18</sup> A study was conducted where a keylogging hijacking software was installed on rental computers at 14 Kinko's stores in New York. In the store, the software monitored keyboard input and recorded it to a log file. However, login information was captured from 450 people and unauthorized access was liable for hijacking passwords.<sup>19</sup> This proved that passwords could easily be hijacked through new technological tools.

The Internet space where all types of hijacking takes place occurs mostly on websites and through emails. However, email hijacking is very common and easy for unauthorized access on personal information. For example, listing email addresses publicly or posting it on social networking sites like Facebook opens it to hijacking threats. The other thing is, one password for all your online activity is susceptible to these online threats. You are also vulnerable to threats whenever you respond to spam messages or offers for deals sent to your email. This type of spam constitutes a phishing hijack attack in which hijackers attempt to gain your personal information.<sup>20</sup>

It is not safe to back up your Gmail account to G-Archiver for your personal information.<sup>21</sup> For example, your personal information once backed into a saver like G-Archiver, will swipe your username and password hard coding it into a source code. Then every time you add your account to the program to back up data, an email will automatically be sent with your username and password to your personal email box. Once you are in your inbox, you will receive emails from everyone who has used this software.<sup>22</sup> This is hopeless and risky for online privacy as Gmail hijacks usernames and passwords without the owners' knowledge. However, unauthorized access into all online activities has been proposed as a mandate for Internet service providers (ISPs) with police to track secured information due to surveillance issues.<sup>23</sup>

## ***Tracking of online activities***

Tracking is the process of policing online activities.<sup>24</sup> It was noted (Schmidt, n.d.) that Canadians are not aware of how closely they are tracked by companies. For example, global policing of all online activities are accessed freely without the owner's consent, due to unknown killings through bombs or commercial advertisements sent to consumers. What this implies is that the usernames and passwords of everyone, even innocent victims, will be hijacked. The victims or online users will not be aware of this unauthorized access racking into their accounts. However, the trade-offs for this free policing of online users accounts had been authorized collaboratively by international organizations due to increasing surveillance issues, to protect the people at large.<sup>25</sup>

However, some complications arose on authorized access intercepted without a warrant by police, which led to a complex intended use. For instance, the police intercepted without a warrant accessing students and teachers' personal information not permitted.<sup>26</sup> It was held in a court case where Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) sued the giant telecommunications for violating

privacy laws by collaborating with National Security Association (NSA) for illegal wiretapping and data mining of American's communication.<sup>27</sup> This was emphasized by incidences that were tracked due to September 11 US terrorist attacks.<sup>28</sup> The terrorist tracking led to the US introducing the mandate of Internet service providers (ISPs) to police by tracking and accessing personal information and giving it to police without the individual's knowledge due to surveillance issues.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Surveillance Mandates***

In the above discussions, there were exemplary cases cited to indicate that online security is waning out and people are losing hope in it or is being hopeless. This hopelessness is mainly due to many attempts and success to gain unauthorized access by surveillance. Surveillance refers to monitoring the behavior, activities, or other changing information, usually of people often in a surreptitious manner: watching over,<sup>30</sup> hijacking usernames and passwords. According to Geist's blog, Investigative Powers for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (IP21C) would allow lawful access for mandated surveillance of Canadian Internet service providers (ISPs) that would force them to disclose user information to authoritative sources.<sup>31</sup> In other words, the ISPs were obliged to freely access all online activities and pass it to the police. It was evidenced by Geist (2009) that a bill was proposed for surveillance mandate in Canada, allowing the ISPs to freely access personal information of all online users and giving it to the police without the owner's knowledge.

The U.S. are said to be the great supporters of surveillance since the September 11 terrorist attack.<sup>32</sup> The US Patriotic Act, (2001) enhances more on surveillance provisions so that authorities need not go through proper protocol to gather intelligence via electronic devices. The worst case is the surveillance of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) in US Elementary Schools policing the students' personal information like the GPS (Global Positioning System) systems monitoring cell phone activities. The schools in Japan and England implemented the RFID (Radio Frequency Identification).<sup>33</sup> The FRA Act of Sweden proposed to hook all phones and Internet together to police and track all cross boarder online activities.<sup>34</sup> This surveillance mandates led to another loophole of hijacking usernames and passwords. In this case, surveillance openly accessed all online activities as discussed above. Online activities are username and password protected. The technological tools used by surveillance to hijack online activities are tools developed in another version to protect personal information with usernames and passwords. This provided stronger evidence for the hopelessness of online privacy due to surveillance acts being supported collaboratively by governments and international bodies. However, having evidenced the waning out of online privacy, the government and international organizations intervened, establishing, legislations, regulations and public education hoping to help in responding to the online privacy risks.

### **RESPONSES TO RISKS**

Hijacking demonstrated as discussed and evidenced above that people can penetrate usernames and passwords. There came a need to attack methods, therefore, a number of means were proposed or devised like national and international strategies as noted above with the hope of protecting online privacy with usernames and passwords.

### ***Government legislation/Regulations***

The government regulations are the first to be considered when it comes to taking actions on making changes to information security. Online privacy laws are developed and proposed at government level. In a 2004 study published by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, it was estimated that almost two million American Internet users experienced unauthorized access.<sup>35</sup>

The unauthorized access refers to hijacking of personal information as noted in Appendix B with the highest cost. In this article it shows that no matter how secured the information is it can still be hijacked. As noted by Lennon, a new online “Ad hijacking scheme” was discovered.<sup>36</sup> The author said that ad hijacking is a new highly sophisticated advertising fraud scheme targeting online video, display and search ads. The question one would ask is, is there hope on online privacy and security information? As new hijacking tools have been discovered, there is a need for global cooperation on securing information. For example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published the “OECD Recommendation on Cross-Boarder Co-operation in the Enforcement of Laws against Spam” in 2006.<sup>37</sup> Even though international organizations are co-operatively working together for securing information, it was stated in “the News of the World that a phone hacking scandal had catapulted the former volley ball player in spotlight”.<sup>38</sup> Is there hope as new technology tools to protect online privacy face risks of being freely hijacked?

In Canada, the Privacy Act of 1980<sup>39</sup> first attempted to legislate protection of citizen’s data. Currently data in Canada is protected under the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) supervised by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, focusing on commercial activities exploiting consumers.<sup>40</sup> The Access to Information & Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA) protects personal privacy by preventing the unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal information by public bodies in Canada.<sup>41</sup> The U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) required that student account information be private and protected. To meet this requirement, Peirce College in U.S. needed SSL encryption for all registration activities.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, in the US, distance education (DE) and colleges encrypt to protect students’ personal information in compliance with the U.S. Privacy Acts. However, data privacy in the European Union (EU) governed by the Data Protection Directive states that the individuals collecting the personal information must give consent to the owners as to the collection and purpose of accessing their data.<sup>43</sup> Although, all measures are taken with the hope of securing information, there are still ways and means of going around the security measures. The Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) was passed by U.S. Congress in 1998, and came into effect in 2000.<sup>44</sup> The act states that personal information cannot be collected from children younger than 13 years without parents’ or legal guardians’ permission and sites must post clear privacy policy. A case in U.S. court held that Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) was violated against warrantless wiretapping because it was abusing personal privacy.<sup>45</sup> However, with government legislations and regulations, the information security was not coping with the fastest advancement of technological tools that led to hijacking and thus international organizations actions were established.

### ***International Organizations actions***

The international organizations, as explained above, collaboratively worked together to come up with common rules and laws to be applied globally for online privacy. The collaborative actions mandates for example, naming the few like the privacy international (PI) in UK, OECD, APEC, to aim for securing online privacy.

Privacy International (PI) “is a UK-based non-profit organization formed in 1990, as a watchdog on surveillance and privacy invasions by governments and corporations”.<sup>46</sup> PI aims and mandates have remained largely unchanged since its inception. Its objectives were to defend personal privacy and protection from intruders. PI works at national and international levels monitoring and finding ways through which IT can be used to protect privacy.<sup>47</sup>

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD’s) main focus was on collaborative co-operation forums for online privacy threats. It helped develop guidelines and policies on privacy issues.<sup>48</sup> Also, the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was also active in addressing privacy issues.<sup>49</sup> It encourages international co-operation with Canada, U.S., UK and other countries in addressing issues on online privacy risks. Online privacy was discussed at all levels to educate the public at large.<sup>50</sup> I observe that countries through collaboration, as noted by researchers above, were able to trace individuals causing problems like accessing information from computers and, for example, killing innocent people. On the other hand, as noted by the research above, since technology is non-neutral, there is no privacy.

### ***Public Education attempts***

Public education refers to means and ways of educating the public to be aware of online privacy laws.<sup>51</sup> For example, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canadian (OPC) mandate provides educational materials online to the public at large. They develop an awareness on online privacy issues for understanding risks and making choices about whom and how to share personal information.<sup>52</sup> For instance, one of the US Electronic Privacy Information Centre’s (EPIC) focuses on educating the public on information privacy issues.<sup>53</sup> The EDRI-gram in Europe also provides bi-weekly updates for the ongoing Internet and online laws and legislations that impact the European populace.<sup>54</sup> The majority of information provided include items for anonymous use, privacy policies, online tracking, protection levels for social networking sites (especially for minors), rights and freedoms for users, action recommendations, accountability and liability measures, copyright infringements and issues surrounding basic human rights and the parameters to protect all from harm while online.<sup>55</sup> Although there had been a lot of attempts at different levels, online privacy is still waning out. It thus becomes important to look at it (on-line privacy) in the context of distance education.

## **LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION (DE)**

DE refers to flexible on-line learning delivered to individuals accessing materials online and submitting their completed work on-line to instructors. It is a mode that surpasses all other educational delivery arrangement with its use of on-line with secured information using usernames and passwords.<sup>56</sup> For example, the tutor communicates online with the students sending them assignments, instructions, course outlines and examination results. The students access all online materials with their usernames and passwords. For example, at Memorial University (MUN) in Newfoundland and Labrador, the DE (Distance Education) students use their usernames and passwords to access online courses and register for courses online.<sup>57</sup> They login to MUN with their student numbers to create usernames and passwords. The DE tutor or instructor of the course sends assignments and assessments online to students. Students, can, however, reset their passwords if they had forgotten them. The question is how secure is their personal information? Who gives them a temporary number?



There is ample evidence in the literature suggesting that passwords and usernames are hijacked. A case in point is that of *R. v. Cole* (2009),<sup>58</sup> where the teacher and students' personal information was accessed without their concern and police intervention without a warrant. Students too can commit technology crime to reverse mathematics equations during assessments.<sup>59</sup> The question is how students are able to hijack a system that has been encrypted and which can only be authenticated by the authorized owner? As is evidenced by the case<sup>60</sup> where a student accessed confidential information at the University of Alberta, there is clear evidence that usernames and passwords can be easily hijacked. The student in this case can change his/her marks or even access other sensitive personal information without the consent of the owner, in this case, other students.

In distance education (DE), students constantly come up with new ways to hijack into their Facebook/Myspace accounts at school, bypassing the school network's firewall even though protected with authenticated encryption (AE) for online privacy.<sup>61</sup> This enables unauthorized access and or modifications to suit their needs without teachers' knowledge. The students are able to modify and also intrude Facebook personal information of others due to the way a virus is transmitted into the computer;<sup>62</sup> this can be referred to as part of the dark side of the computer/Internet. Kim, Ok -Flan, Kim & So (2011)<sup>63</sup> described the dark side of the Internet attacks, costs and responses as the bad things the Internet has brought about – elements... that are illegal or unethical or at least reprehensible and prone to hijacking through phishing usernames and passwords.

It was argued that in the current online environment due to phishing and hijacking attacks even when best security practices are met, like user-names and passwords, there is no guarantee that online users like distance learners (students) would enjoy a safe online privacy environment.<sup>64</sup> Instead of us requiring users like students to maintain a malware -free, like from Trojan Horse viruses in their personal computers (PCs), and be able to detect complex phishing scams, we designed a technique that will largely protect user's information security even when the user performs sensitive Internet tasks from a compromised PC, and is uninformed regarding semantic attacks.<sup>65</sup> For example at MUN, Distance Education and Learning Technologies (DELT) uses McAfee software tool to protect students' online personal information. The McAfee is a software tool that automatically detects any malicious unacceptable activities into MUN's network.<sup>66</sup> However, technology tools like McAfee in MUN have been used to secure information from hijackers. Therefore, government, legislations and regulations with international organizations and public education played a part to collaboratively develop a means of hoping to protect privacy, but there was an evidence that it was waning out. As noted by *Kyllo v. United States* (2001),<sup>67</sup> devices that can reveal unknown information without warrant violate privacy.

This paper has emphasized that people who use technology such as e-books, etc., are concerned with issues of personal privacy. In this context, issues of privacy, personal or confidential information still have to be properly addressed. People hope to be assured that their privacy is protected. This paper has provided evidence that this hope is waning out. This is so because private information can be hijacked due the following policy initiatives that are being taken in many countries. This paper points out that such initiatives will have serious implications for Distance Education (DE).

The legislations and regulations authorized online activities to be tracked.<sup>68</sup>

- International organizations with different jurisdictions allow surveillance mandates to freely police all online activities.<sup>69</sup>
- New ways of technological tools like ad hijacking were discovered and used to hijack online activities.<sup>70</sup>
- For example, the way usernames and passwords are created leads to hijacking.<sup>71</sup>

Therefore, there is no hope for the security of on-line DE information, since what is considered secured information can now be accessed without owners' concern as far as the global surveillance laws are concerned. As noted by Geist, (2009), the proposed Canadian Bill on surveillance laws, allows ISPs free access on users' personal information, and to pass it to the police. As also noted by, US, RFIDs and Europe, the Sweden FRA Act on surveillance mandates to freely access all online activities.<sup>72</sup> The surprising thing is that in spite of all the attempts with strategies collaboratively made by different jurisdictions and awareness mandates, some do not comply with the Human Rights Acts of Canadian Charter and European Human Rights Acts as discussed above.<sup>73</sup> The free access of users' personal information, due to surveillance issues, increases scamming thus, watering down the hope for online privacy. In addition to that, new technological tools are advancing very fast, thus leading to hijacking of online activities. For example, the new sophisticated technological ad-hijacking tools for attacking online activities was recently discovered as noted above.

No software program is perfect; errors are made, even if the errors have a low probability of occurring. Software manufacturers knowingly ship buggy products. These buggy products involve users who commit computer crimes and or abuses.<sup>74</sup> The abuses could be in the form of a hijacking like spam. Spam is unsolicited emails and leads to hijacking. While spam is a tool for identifying thieves, phishers, malware distributors and other fraudsters, it is also a tool for marketers.<sup>75</sup> For instance, in a study, it was estimated that unsolicited email comprised 90% of all email sent in 2007 – up from 50% in 2003 and only 10% in 2000 (Industry Canada, 2004).<sup>76</sup> Unsolicited commercial email spams everything from pharmaceuticals to directories. The economics of spam provide a strong incentive to spammers to continue the behavior. The cost of distributing spam is negligible; accordingly, it only takes a tiny number of email views to make the venture worthwhile. All these processes, decreases out online privacy and the question is, what next can be done?

## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above discussion provided evidence that hope for online privacy has waned out. The technological tools used to protect online privacy like usernames and passwords are prone to hijacking. The main problem is that, as security measures on software tools are developed, at the same time the malicious hijacking tools are developed. In addition to that fact, the law enforcements, government regulations and legislations with public education, at the same time come up with laws that threaten online privacy. The question now is what next can be done?

Therefore, based on the discussions and evidences from case, the following recommendations were suggested:

- The surveillance mandates need to be addressed again because this was found to be one of the loopholes leading to username and password hijacking.



- Technological tools are developed by commercial organizations to attract consumers into buying their products. It is therefore of high importance for the different organizations and jurisdictions to collaboratively monitor and access the way the software is developed and used.
- Collaborative attempts to deal with the growing number of reported hijackings need to be continued. These could include legislation, user training and technical measures.
- There is need for ongoing training, assessment, protection, monitoring and detection, incident response and repair, documentation and review.
- The username and password creation needs to be looked into, because information protection with them is still prone to hijacking.

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## APPENDICES

**Appendix A:** Computer Crimes – Destructive Code. See Fig. 9.13, How a Computer Virus is Spread, © 2008, Pearson Education Canada. Thus, this figure is not included here.

**Appendix B:** Unauthorized Access. Thus, see: Survey by Computer Security Institute *Information Systems Today, 2/C/e, 2008 Pearson Education Canada*  
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## Appendix C: Leading Surveillance Societies in the EU and the World 2007: The 2007 International Privacy Rankin

Privacy International																		
National Privacy Ranking 2007 - Leading Surveillance Societies Around the World																		
	Constitutional protection	Statutory protection	Privacy Enforcement	Identity Cards and Biometrics	Data-sharing	Visual surveillance	Communication interception	Communication Data Retention	Government Access to Data	Workplace monitoring	Surveillance of Medical, Financial, and Movement	Border and trans-border issues	Leadership	Democratic safeguards	Total	Last Year's Ranking	This Year's Ranking	Change
																		
European Union																		
GREECE	4	3	4	3	-	3	1	-	3	-	3	-	4	2	3.1	-	-	-
ROMANIA	3	3	4	-	-	-	2	3	2	-	-	-	2	4	2.8	-	-	-
HUNGARY	4	4	4	4	3	1	1	4	3	2	2	3	1	4	2.9	-	-	-
SLOVENIA	4	4	4	2	3	4	2	1	2	4	2	-	2	3	2.8	-	-	Improving
PORTUGAL	4	4	3	2	2	2	-	-	-	3	3	-	2	4	2.8	-	-	-
LUXEMBOURG	2	3	3	2	2	-	2	3	-	4	4	-	1	4	2.8	-	-	-
GERMANY	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	1	3	2	4	2	1	4	2.8	-	-	Deteriorating
ITALY	4	4	4	2	-	3	1	1	2	4	2	3	3	3	2.8	-	-	-
ESTONIA	3	3	4	2	-	-	2	4	3	-	3	-	2	3	2.8	-	-	-
BELGIUM	4	4	4	1	1	-	2	2	3	4	3	2	1	4	2.7	-	-	Deteriorating
CZECH REP.	4	3	4	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	3	4	2.5	-	-	-
FINLAND	3	3	3	2	1	-	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	2.5	-	-	Deteriorating
IRELAND	2	3	4	2	2	-	3	1	2	3	3	2	1	4	2.5	-	-	-
MALTA	2	4	3	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	2	2	2.4	-	-	Deteriorating
POLAND	3	4	3	1	3	2	1	1	2	-	2	-	3	3	2.3	-	-	Deteriorating
SPAIN	3	4	4	1	-	2	1	2	2	3	-	-	1	4	2.3	-	-	-
AUSTRIA	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	4	2	-	3	3	1	4	2.3	-	-	Deteriorating
CYPRUS	3	3	3	2	-	2	1	-	-	-	2	2	2	3	2.3	-	-	Deteriorating
EU	3	2	3	2	2	-	-	1	2	-	3	2	2	3	2.3	-	-	-
LATVIA	3	2	2	2	2	-	2	-	2	3	2	2	2	3	2.2	-	-	Deteriorating
NETHERLANDS	2	4	4	1	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	2	1	4	2.1	-	-	-
SLOVAKIA	4	3	3	1	-	-	2	1	1	-	2	-	2	2	2.1	-	-	-
SWEDEN	3	2	3	3	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2.1	-	-	-
DENMARK	3	2	2	4	1	3	2	1	1	-	1	1	2	3	2.0	-	-	Deteriorating
BULGARIA	3	2	3	1	-	-	1	2	2	-	2	-	2	2	2.0	-	-	-
LITHUANIA	3	3	2	1	-	1	1	3	-	1	-	-	2	3	2.0	-	-	Deteriorating
FRANCE	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	1	1	-	2	1	1	4	1.9	-	-	Deteriorating
UK	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	3	1.6	-	-	Deteriorating
England & Wales	1	2	2	1	1	1	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	2	1.6	-	-	-
Scotland	1	2	2	3	3	2	-	-	3	-	2	-	3	4	2.5	-	-	-
INTERNATIONAL																		
CANADA	4	4	2	2	2	2	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	4	2.9	-	-	Deteriorating
ARGENTINA	4	4	2	-	2	-	2	2	-	-	2	-	4	3	2.8	-	-	-
ICELAND	4	4	4	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	1	2	4	2.7	-	-	-
SWITZERLAND	4	4	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	-	2	1	3	4	2.6	-	-	-
NEW ZEALAND	2	2	3	3	2	-	1	3	2	2	2	-	2	4	2.3	-	-	-
SOUTH AFRICA	4	1	1	2	2	-	2	1	-	-	4	2	-	4	2.3	-	-	-
JAPAN	3	1	1	2	2	2	3	4	3	-	3	1	1	3	2.2	-	-	-
AUSTRALIA	1	2	3	3	2	-	2	4	2	3	1	1	2	3	2.2	-	-	-
ISRAEL	4	3	3	2	2	4	2	2	1	-	1	1	2	3	2.2	-	-	-
BRAZIL	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	1	2	3	3	2.1	-	-	-
NORWAY	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	1	1	2	4	2.1	-	-	-
INDIA	3	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	2	4	1.8	-	-	-
PHILIPPINES	3	2	1	1	-	-	1	2	1	-	2	-	2	3	1.8	-	-	-
US	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1.5	-	-	Deteriorating
THAILAND	2	2	2	1	-	2	1	2	1	-	1	-	2	1	1.5	-	-	Deteriorating
TAIWAN	2	2	1	-	-	-	1	3	2	-	1	1	1	2	1.5	-	-	-
SINGAPORE	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	1	3	2	1	1	1.4	-	-	-
RUSSIA	3	2	1	2	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1.3	-	-	-
CHINA	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	2	-	1	1	1.3	-	-	-
MALAYSIA	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	-	1	1	2	1	1.2	-	-	-
GRADE																		
5	no invasive policy or widespread practice/leading in best practice						FINAL SCORE		4.1-5.0	Consistently upholds human rights standards				CHANGE		Improving Country has improved since last year		
4	comprehensive efforts, protections, and safeguards for privacy								3.6-4.0	Significant protections and safeguards						Deteriorating Country has dropped by one category		
3	some safeguards, relatively limited practice of surveillance								3.1-3.5	Adequate safeguards against abuse						Decaying Alarming rate of fall in protections		
2	few safeguards, widespread practice of surveillance								2.6-3.0	Some safeguards but weakened protections								
1	extensive surveillance/leading in bad practice								2.1-2.5	Systemic failure to uphold safeguards								
									1.6-2.0	Extensive surveillance societies								
									1.1-1.5	Endemic surveillance societies								

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## **Chapter 2: The Impact of Collaboration Tools on Student Engagement**

Latha R. Chandrasekar

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to examine the impact of collaboration tools on student engagement in an online educational context by analyzing current research and their results on the topic. The paper explores student engagement and its three levels namely behavior, emotion and cognitive. It further explores its relationship to collaboration to analyze the impact of such tools on all the three levels. The overall impact of collaboration tools on student engagement was found to be positive and they do help foster student engagement in an online setting. The findings also show that teacher intervention is essential for successfully achieving student engagement.

Information technology has become an inevitable part of education. Its advancement and innovation in computer hardware, software and communication technologies have enabled more universities and schools to conduct online programs and the number is increasing rapidly. A study conducted by Sloan Consortium (2009) reports that: (1) over 3.9 million students were taking at least one online course during the Fall 2007 term, a 12 percent increase over the number reported the previous year; (2) the 12.9 percent growth rate for online enrolments far exceeds the 1.2 percent growth of the overall higher education student population; and (3) over twenty percent of all U.S. higher education students were taking at least one online course in the Fall of 2007.

Many students choose online learning due to the benefit of being able to learn anytime at anyplace. But this separation of time and space may make the learner isolated and disengaged from learning. To overcome this problem, teachers create an environment inside the learning management system where people may interact and build relationships while participating in learning activities. As part of their course delivery method, online educational programs use collaboration tools like discussion forums, wikis, blogs, chat messaging, web/video conferencing, and online collaborative work spaces like Google Docs to enable student interaction and engagement. These tools provide a centralized location for students who are separated by distance and time, to work and learn online in a collaborative manner. Owing to the increase in the inclusion of collaborative activities in online courses, it is important for the educators to understand the effectiveness of these tools in achieving learning outcome. Do these collaborative tools succeed in properly engaging students in the learning process? This is an important question as students who are engaged in learning persist, despite challenges and obstacles and take a visible delight in accomplishing their work (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995).

The purpose of this paper is to examine the question: how do online collaboration tools impact student engagement? This question is examined by analyzing current research on the topic to provide a reasonable answer. The paper will: (1) define computer mediated collaboration also known as collaboration tools; (2) analyze the relationship between online collaboration and student engagement; (3) define student engagement and its different levels: namely, behavioral,



emotional and cognitive engagement; (4) analyze the impact of collaboration tools on these three levels of engagement; and (5) finally present the findings.

### **Computer Mediated Collaboration**

Computer mediated collaboration can be defined as a ‘group activity’ where people who are separated by distance and/or time work together towards a common goal using computers and the internet. In the case of education, this can be a ‘group activity’ where students work together using the internet towards completing an academic task to promote learning. Computer mediated collaboration has become the primary method of interaction between student-to-student and student-to-teacher in online courses. This collaboration may vary from using a simple asynchronous communication tools such as email or discussion forum, to using synchronous tools such as instant messenger, web conferencing or audio/video conferencing. An asynchronous tool enables any-time, any-place collaboration, enabling the learners to participate in collaborative activities at their own time and space. A synchronous tool, on the other hand, enables real time collaboration providing immediacy to the learners. The tool referred here may be a piece of hardware, application software and computer networks that enable remote collaboration. Most learning management systems such as Blackboard, WebCT, Angel, and D2L include some form of collaboration tool or the instructor may suggest an external tool such as a wiki, blog or GoogleDocs. These tools as a communication medium, provide learners with the opportunity to exchange ideas and receive feedback from their peers. In a typical educational context, these tools allow learners to contact instructors individually, collaborate with peers and instructors, exchange resources, share experiences and ideas, provide feedback to each other, raise questions, and participate in debates and discussions. At the same time, they allow the instructors to contact their students individually, address them together, provide feedback and answers to individuals, facilitate collaboration activities, and provide reminders to deadlines. A good collaboration tool should promote communication; share a diagram, photograph, paper, or similar objects; allow natural interactions; and be easy to use and learn (Lomas, Burke, & Page, 2008).

### **Online Collaboration and Student Engagement**

Teachers constantly strive to create an environment where students are actively engaged in the learning process. Student engagement is essential for motivating them to acquire knowledge. When a study raised a question about the kind of work that engages students and teachers the most, both of them responded overwhelmingly that the most engaging work was often collaborative as it allowed for creativity, sparked curiosity, and resulted in a feeling of accomplishment (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995). Students often collaborate to solve problems or achieve more effective learning through cooperation (Johnson & Johnson, 1998). Even shy students may be very active and engaged online, as there is no time restriction or interruption for their online participation in class activities (Harasim, 1990). One of the best ways to achieve a deeper understanding, or a higher level of learning, is through online collaborative learning (Klemm & Snell, 1996). This is in agreement with Vygotsky’s (1978) zone of teaching proximal development which focuses on cognitive development and presents the view that learning in a social context enables learners to refine their thinking, building or ‘constructing’ new ideas from their existing knowledge and achieving a deeper understanding than if they were learning alone. Educational research suggests that interaction is one of the most important components of



teaching and learning experiences (Moore, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978). Online educational environments use collaborative tools to facilitate interactions by providing an arena where the learners can interact with peers or mentors who challenge and scaffold their learning. Instruction ideally occurs in an environment where learners use socially mediated and intellectual tools to achieve cognitive development (Rogoff, 1990). Before delving into the impact of collaboration tools on student engagement, it is essential to understand student engagement in detail.

### **Student Engagement: Defined**

Early studies often assessed 'student engagement rates' based on time-based indices (Fisher, Berliner, Filby, Marliave, Cahen, & Dishaw, 1980; McIntyre, Copenhaver, Byrd, & Norris, 1983; Brophy, 1983). Motivation and engagement are used synonymously and the words are used interchangeably (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004). Student motivation is defined as "student's willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process," (Bomia, Beluzo, Demeester, Elander, Johnson, & Sheldon, 1997, p. 3). Students must be actively engaged in the learning process rather than passive receivers of knowledge. Newmann (1992) describes student engagement as "psychological investment in learning" (p. 3). He also characterizes 'meaningful engagement' as "active involvement, commitment, and concentrated attention, in contrast to superficial participation, apathy or lack of interest" (p. 11).

### **Levels of Engagement**

Research suggests that engagement in the context of student learning happens at multiple levels or domains. It is conceived as the interaction or fusion of behavior, emotion and cognition in the process of learning (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Skinner & Belmont (1993) foretold the same as children who are engaged in learning show sustained behavioral involvement in learning activities accompanied by a positive emotional tone. Therefore research portrays student engagement as a multifaceted construct and divides it into behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement. However, Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, (2004) consider that these factors are dynamically interrelated within the individuals and that they are not isolated processes.

Finn (1993) identifies behavioral engagement as regular participation in classroom and school activities. By participation, he means, paying attention to the teacher, responding to directions or questions initiated by the teacher, and initiating questions and dialogue with the teacher. He also emphasizes positive conduct such as effort, persistence, concentration and attention and concludes that negative conduct such as inattentiveness or withdrawn behavior will lead to detracting from learning. Behavioral engagement also concerns involvement in learning and academic tasks, and includes behaviours such as effort, persistence, concentration, attention, questioning, and contributing to class discussion (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Finn, Pannozzo, & Voelkl, 1995; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Thus behavioral engagement may be summarized as rule-following, adherence to norms, participation, attention, and persistence.

Emotional engagement refers to students' affective reactions in the classroom, to classmates, learning and school, including interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety (Connell & Wellbom, 1991; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). Affective reactions include student attitudes towards learning, and sense of belonging in school. Emotional engagement can range from simple liking to

deep valuing of, or identification with the institution (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Identification refers to a sense of belonging and value with the institution. Therefore emotional engagement can be summarized by positive and negative reactions emoted by students in the classroom such as interest, anxiety, and boredom.

Corno and Mandinach (1983) argue that cognitive engagement is observable when the learners are giving sustained, engaged attention to a task requiring mental effort, and authentic useful learning is produced by extended engagement in optimally complex cognitive activities. Further, they suggest that the highest form of cognitive engagement is self-regulated learning, where learners plan and manage their own learning and have a high degree of personal control and autonomy. This means that the student is looking at a learning task or problem and plans to solve or complete the task strategically.

Therefore, cognitive engagement can be summarized as a student's investment of time, self-regulated learning strategies, and mental efforts put forth willingly to interpret difficult and productive tasks or learning activities in order to achieve deep understanding and expertise.

### **Collaboration Tools on Behavioral Engagement**

Participation in an online environment is often thought of as mere posting in discussion forums. However, actual participation involves actively taking part and exchanging dialogue. Evidence of participation includes paying attention to the teacher, responding to directions or questions initiated by the teacher, and initiating questions and dialogue with both the teacher and fellow learners. Learner participation is considered as an essential component for active and engaged learning by researchers. Collaboration tools enable learners' participation by engaging the teacher and learners in high levels of interactivity, while simultaneously maintaining freedom of time and place. By analyzing data from online discussions using the method of content analysis, student behaviors during the learning process can be demonstrated.

Zhu (2006) noticed two types of interaction in asynchronous online discussions: namely, star and interconnected. The star type of interaction was centralized. One person either a student or instructor who proposed a discussion topic or question acts as the point of centrality and connects members in the network while others remained isolated. The interconnected web type of interaction had more members with centrality. This type of interaction allows students to exchange, elaborate on, and challenge each other's ideas more frequently. Zhu concluded that while interaction can benefit learning and teaching, it needs to be nurtured carefully in accordance with course goals and learning objectives. Dennen (2005) also argues that discussion participation will not just happen on its own and that learners look to instructors to shape their interactions. This study examined how the design and facilitation of different types of asynchronous discussion activities impact student participation in terms of quantity, quality, timing, and nature of messages posted using a case study methodology on nine different online courses. The study indicated that: (1) interaction was higher when the instructors were actively involved in the discussion; (2) lack of structure in assignments affected student participation; (3) students did not know how much they had to contribute; (4) instructor feedback played an important part in students' motivation to participate in discussion; and (5) students showed motivation to interact when grade was attached.

Hara, Bonk, and Angeli (2000) observed that asynchronous conferencing was mostly student centered when the instructor forced students to assume the roles of teacher and discussion participants. However, most students posted just one message per week in order to satisfy the minimum course requirement. Most students did not make extensive use of the conferencing tool, but participated in this online discussion primarily to meet a course requirement.

Wang (2004) investigated the relationship between graduate student online visibility where visibility refers to the student's cognitive, social and emotive presence (measured as number of Blackboard discussion postings) and final course grades. The collaborative setting in this study included discussion board, live online chat, email and online profiles. A strong correlation was reported, suggesting that students with high academic visibility outperformed students who were less asynchronously active. On the contrary, Johnson (2005) found that even though students with fewer number of discussion postings predicted the lowest student achievement; students with higher numbers of discussion postings did not predict the highest student achievement.

However, Johnson speculated that the limited asynchronous postings may have affected student achievement by reducing active involvement in e-learning. One of the negative aspects of asynchronous computer-mediated collaboration is the lack of continuity. Learners are often frustrated by the low frequency of participation or even non-participation by other members (Smith and Vanecek, 1988; Dufner, Hiltz, & Turoff, 1994). Dufner et al. (1994) even calls this "login-lags" and comments that it tends to create confusion and dissatisfaction among team members.

In another study, Chou (2002) scrutinized patterns of learner-learner interaction in a distance learning environment and compared interactions in synchronous and asynchronous systems. Students spent more time in task-oriented interaction in asynchronous discussions than in synchronous mode. While synchronous communication showed more spontaneous frequent interaction, students in asynchronous communication mode gave more information than just asking questions.

Similarly Mabrito (2006) observed that asynchronous sessions were more effective for collaborative writing than synchronous sessions wherein students spent less time focusing on course tasks. This study focused on examining the amount, pattern, and focus of interactions, as well as assessing students' attitudes toward communicating in the two different environments. The amount of interaction was more in synchronous communication where new topics were discussed with little or no follow up. However, in asynchronous sessions the students conversed less but ideas were more fully explored and students spent a longer time providing supporting evidence to other student's initial claims. The asynchronous interaction was also more productive compared to the synchronous interaction. This same argument is also echoed by other researchers who agree that discussions using asynchronous collaboration tools, such as discussion forums and email, are more serious, on task, and useful for group interaction than do synchronous tools such as online chat (Aitken & Shedletsky, 2002; Honeycutt, 2001).

When comparing two courses delivered asynchronously, while one was complemented with instant messaging, Hrastinski (2006) noticed that the class which used only asynchronous communication operated with higher levels of participation. However, when comparing students

that adopted the instant messaging system with those that did not within the other class which had optional use of instant messaging system, it was found that the adopters operated with a higher level of participation. Therefore, the findings were inconclusive.

Many researchers find using both asynchronous and synchronous collaboration tools in an online class yields better participation results. Locatis and his colleagues (2003) concluded that it is technically feasible to simultaneously stream videoconferences to large audiences and expand participation by chat. The participants connected using a multipoint video-conference that was webcast live and communicated with conference panellists and with each other via synchronous chat messaging. The videoconference, webcast and chat were entirely done over the internet. Ohlund, Yu, Jannsch-Pennell and Digangi (2000) also indicate that combinations of asynchronous and synchronous online discussions can maximize personal engagement. This study also concluded that those who used both modes of communication were also most likely to complete the required course activities.

Studies examined so far demonstrated that collaboration tools can foster behavior engagement. However, its effectiveness may be increased when the teacher is involved. The teacher may utilize many techniques to achieve this. Some of them may include: (1) planning and incorporating 'interconnected web' type of interaction; (2) aligning interaction in accordance with course goals and learning objectives; (3) actively involving in interaction with students by posting questions that raise curiosity; (4) providing feedbacks; (5) attaching rewards with interaction to increase motivation; (6) monitoring login-lags or low participation frequency by being a model; (7) steering interaction towards productive tasks; and (8) understanding when and how to use asynchronous or synchronous tools during the course.

### **Collaboration Tools on Emotional Engagement**

In internet terms, expression of emotions such as interest, boredom, sadness, anxiety, mood and other feelings can be described as social presence in online communities. Positive conduct is fundamental in cognitive organization, decision making, and thought processes. It also plays an important role to improve creativity and flexibility in thinking and problem solving (Isen, 1993). Previously, it was believed that collaboration tools do not have the capacity to support social and affective interaction, especially in text based asynchronous tools where the absence of visual cues was thought to reduce the possibilities for socio-emotional expressions. However, this argument has been disproved in later studies. While examining the kind of communications emerging during a graduate seminar in which the discussions were conducted using a listserv, Weiss and Morrison (1998), who initially expected a dry dialogue devoid of emotions, were surprised to find several instances of humor (54 instances out of a total of 464 messages), and some episodes of hurt feelings. Although the number of messages with emotion was small, this study proved that emotions were revealed in the communications.

Rourke (2000) explored the relationship between asynchronous, text-based forms of social communication and students' perceptions of the social climate of computer conferences. This study, a 21-item questionnaire, was administered to 74 students from 4 faculties. The study noted an increase in the perceived frequency of social expression, leading to positive ratings of social environment. Similarly, Hara, Bonk, and Angeli (2000) explored the frequency of social cues or acknowledgement in message transcripts from an online conference using asynchronous

conferencing tool by content analysis. Social cues analyzed include a self-introduction, expression of feeling, greeting, closure, jokes, the use of symbolic icons, and compliments to others. The study showed that social cues were highest in the beginning weeks of the course and decreased as the course progressed and learners engaged in more intense online discussion and were highly focused on task. The early social cues helped participants feel more comfortable working together and to build common ground. This ability of the collaboration tools to create a social presence in an online learning environment remains central in forming an online community.

Collaboration activity can help to develop a sense of community, enabling the creation of an environment in which further collaborative work can happen. The relationship between collaboration and community are cyclical in nature where collaboration supports the creation of community and community supports the ability to collaborate (Palloff & Pratt, 2005). This is important as individual success or failure on the course depended upon the extent to which students were able to cross a threshold from feeling like outsiders to feeling like insiders (Wegerif, 1998).

Rovai (2002) determined in a study that there exists a relationship between sense of community and cognitive learning in an online educational environment. The study proved online learners who had a stronger sense of community and perceived greater cognitive learning felt less isolated and had greater satisfaction with their academic programs and possibly resulted in fewer dropouts. Collaboration tools integrated into the learning management system can prove to be essential for establishing a sense of community among online learners. While student using these collaborative tools strived to develop similar social relationships to those found in face-to-face classrooms, such relationships take longer to establish electronically (Hara, Bonk, & Angeli, 2000).

Johnson (2005) identified three types of alienation: peer alienation (i.e. I should get along with others better than I do); course alienation (i.e. the workload in this course is excessive, in this course, the marking system is unfair); and learning alienation (i.e. I get discouraged in school). In an investigation sought to understand the relationships between college students' alienation, academic achievement, and use of WebCT, he concludes that as peer alienation increased, all measures of student use of WebCT tended to increase. Apparently, as students experienced disconnection from peers, they sought virtual connection with course content using WebCT. As course alienation increased, students were less likely to utilize WebCT. Students alienated from the course may have been generally resistant to involvement with course materials and learning activities which included WebCT. As learning alienation increased, student use of WebCT tended to decrease. Students who rated themselves as discouraged in school accessed WebCT less than students who were not estranged from learning processes. Peer alienation and course alienation were not significantly correlated with any measure of academic achievement; learning alienation appeared most critical to student achievement, although all categories of alienation were related to student use of WebCT.

Wang and Newlin (2001) advocate simultaneous use of both asynchronous and synchronous communication for an online course to be successful. However, they indicate that the use of synchronous communication in web-based instruction can have a positive impact on the social interaction of the students and decrease the isolation felt by them in online classes. They: "...believe that online chats fulfill the promise of computer--mediated communication: it offers



the opportunity for people who are geographically distant to feel interpersonally close to one another” (p. 3). They found that student interaction frequency for instructor query correlated significantly with final grades, and vice versa. Further, they note that instructors should monitor the frequency and type of chat room activity in order to predict student performance.

An investigation on the use of synchronous e-learning tools (Elluminate Live was used in the study) as a supplement to existing methods and strategies in online courses showed that the tool allowed educators to build connections with and among students more efficiently and increased the potential for interaction in online classroom (Schullo, Venable, Barron, Kromrey, Hilbelink, & Hohlfeld, 2005). Over ninety-one percent of the participant felt that the interactions with their classmates and/or instructor were effective when using the synchronous software. The study also revealed that the level of technical skill of learner’s and the availability of technical support impacted the students’ perceptions about their ability to use the tool’s interface. Also, the participants felt that the technology used enhanced their learning experience and did not seem to be resistant to it. The findings also attributed the success to the well planned structure of the session with clear learning objectives. These findings are in agreement with Schwier and Balbar (2002), who also confirmed that synchronous communication contributed to continuity and sense of community, but also concluded that these tools were less effective in dealing with content.

In his study, Chou (2002) observed a higher percentage of social-emotional interactions occurred in synchronous mode than in asynchronous mode. In synchronous mode, encouraged by the immediacy of message exchange, participants asked more personal questions and revealed more about their frustration or need for help with less hesitation. However, the social emotional interaction gradually reduced after the initial state of getting to know each other and concentration turned towards the task at hand.

Social presence, the degree to which participants in online environments feel affectively connected to each other, may also influence student satisfaction and ultimately lead to their success in the course. Student satisfaction in a collaborative learning environment can be described as the degree to which a student feels a positive association with his or her own learning experiences. It may have an effect on how they work together, such as whether everyone does his/her part of the work, whether group members can work with each other, whether group members remain on the task and whether there is a good working atmosphere in the group (Gunawardena, Nola, Wilson, Lopez-Islas, Ramírez-Angel, & Megchun-Alpi’zar, 2001). In general students using asynchronous collaboration tools were quite satisfied with learning collaboratively (Dewiyanti, Brand-Gruwel, Jochems, & Broers, 2007). Dewiyanti and her colleagues in a study measured students’ experiences with collaborative learning and assessed students’ satisfaction after the course. The study results indicate that the average scores for all satisfaction variables are above the midpoint.

Swan and Shih (2005) explored in greater depth the nature of social presence and how it develops in online course discussions. Their study combined quantitative analysis of survey results from students enrolled in four online graduate courses, and qualitative comparisons of students with the highest and lowest perceptions of social presence.

Results from both quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed significant correlations between perceived social presence and satisfaction with online discussions. The findings indicate that the

perceived presence of instructors may be a more influential factor in determining student satisfaction than the perceived presence of peers.

Summarizing the facts presented in this section, despite earlier beliefs, the collaboration tools including asynchronous text-based tools promote emotional engagement. It was also established that synchronous tools were better at promoting emotional engagement than asynchronous tools. Some of the revealed emotions include self-introduction, expression of feeling, greeting, closure, jokes and compliments. These emotions in turn: (1) created a stronger sense of belonging; (2) increased social presence; (2) eliminated isolation among learners; (3) increased student satisfaction; and (4) encouraged participation.

It is recommended that teachers may use synchronous tools in the beginning of the course to increase social presence, relationships and to avoid learner alienation. He may use asynchronous tools in later stages to increase on-task course activities.

Simultaneous use of both kinds of tools is also suggested by some researchers to achieve the same results. It is also suggested that teachers make sure that all students are trained in using the tools earlier in the course. They may also make sure that resources such as training materials for the tools are accessible to the students. Lastly, the studies also suggest that presence of teacher during on-line education increases student's satisfaction.

### **Collaboration Tools on Cognitive Engagement**

According to Zimmerman (2000), meta-cognitive strategies are prerequisites for self-regulated learning and are achieved in cycles consisting of (1) forethought, (2) performance, and (3) self-reflection. Meta-cognition and self-regulated learning are related and can be used synonymously. Meta-cognitive activities include planning how to approach a given learning task (strategy use, investment of time), monitoring one's understanding (self reflection on comprehension), and evaluating progress towards the completion of a task. This is basically the same as strategically approaching a problem which forms the basis for self-regulated learning.

Do collaborative tools foster the above qualities in learners? Self-regulated learning in a traditional teaching setting has proven to improve academic achievement (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1998). Does the use of online collaborative tools achieve the same results by fostering cognitive engagement? Using quantitative data analysis, Dabbagh and Kitsantas (2005) confirmed that collaborative and communication tools specifically email and discussion features embedded in learning management systems, support self-regulated learning processes such as goal setting, time management, and help-seeking. Further qualitative analysis amended the above findings with self evaluation and self monitoring. The study focused on different kinds of learning tasks, such as exploratory, dialogical, and collaborative learning tasks, and investigated the effectiveness of different web-based pedagogical tools embedded in learning management systems using quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Students perceived that collaborative and communication tools were primarily useful in supporting the self-regulated learning process of help seeking while completing assignments involving dialogical learning tasks and supported self-regulated learning processes of time planning and management and help seeking while completing collaborative learning tasks. The discussion feature allowed students to seek help in understanding the suggested readings by viewing others' postings, self monitor their understanding of the



readings by reflecting on their progress during the discussion period, and articulating their understanding of the readings at their own pace.

The process of reading and reflecting was also foretold by Harasim (1990) that asynchronous learning networks can facilitate self-pacing and self directed learning and increase the time spent on task by reading and rereading a message and formulate a comment. It follows from this study that one size does not fit all, and that different learning tasks call for different types of pedagogical tools. Teachers as facilitators of learning should take this into consideration when planning activities on web based environments.

In a field experiment on undergraduate students to determine the joint effects of communication medium and teamwork, Benbunan-Fich and Hiltz (1999) found that the use of an asynchronous learning network enhances task performance, due to deeper reflection in asynchronous work. Here “asynchronous learning network” refers to the use of computer-mediated communication systems such as computer conferencing or news groups via the internet. The students were asked to develop a report solving an ethical case scenario with and without an asynchronous learning network. Quality of report was judged by clarity and organization of the ideas, concept application, correctness of the answers to the questions, and effectiveness of the recommendations. The studies show that the groups using an asynchronous learning network submitted better and longer reports than their manual counterparts. The use of the asynchronous learning network system enhanced task performance at the objective level (length of the final report) due to the ease of entering and editing the reports, and at the subjective level (quality of reports), due to the in-depth analysis and reflection of topics in an asynchronous environment. Also the combination of work in groups with the use of system resulted in higher perceptions of self-reported learning. Evidently asynchronous collaboration tools support self reflection of knowledge acquired, organization of ideas, student investment of time on task (evident from the length of report) and helps learners enhance task performance.

While examining collaborative learning as a process of knowledge construction in four studies involving different tasks, students, tutors and computer mediated collaboration systems, Veerman and Veldhuis-Diermanse (2001), found out that asynchronous media can provide student groups with more options to think and reflect on information, to organize and keep track of discussions and to engage in large-group discussions compared to synchronous media. Students using synchronous media underwent technical difficulties and had a hard time carrying out the tasks while the user friendly and transparent asynchronous media helped students exchange more constructive messages.

Does working in collaborative tools have an impact on cognitive processing? Schellens and Valcke (2005) confirm that interaction in asynchronous electronic discussion groups is very task-oriented, and reflect high phases in knowledge construction. The study observed that the proportions of task-oriented communication were larger when learners were given clear guidelines about discussion behavior expected of them and when discussions were monitored and evaluated by a teacher. It was also evident in the groups with a higher discussion activity with more messages performed at qualitatively higher level of knowledge constructions. This implies that stimulating students in asynchronous discussion forums may lead to better learning results.

Individual levels of cognitive engagement may be influenced by the instructor's encouragement and discussion facilitation, as well as by intrinsic motivation (Corno & Mandinach, 1983).

Investigating collaborative learning among non-proximate team members interacting at the same time by using desktop video conferencing, Alavi, Wheeler, and Valacich, (1995) observed that the distant teams showed higher critical skills and more commitment to their groups. One possible explanation for these effects as confirmed by them is the motivation derived from being able to interact in a rich collaborative environment with remote learners. Learners mentally engaged and educated each other through voice, video and shared software using the collaborative tool.

In a face-to-face learning environment cognitive engagement is observable when learners give sustained attention to a task requiring mental efforts. One way to identify sustained attention to task in an online learning environment is by examining the messages from asynchronous discussion forums for cognitive efforts such as attention to specific information, interpretation of concepts, analysis and synthesis of information, critiquing and reasoning various opinions and arguments, and making decisions. In a study of four university online classes, using content analysis (examining messages from online discussions) as a method of measuring cognitive engagement, Zhu (2006) found the levels of cognitive engagement ranged from low to high. The discussion messages providing explanation, analysis, and evaluation of course content showed higher levels of cognitive engagement. The activities of analysis and synthesis that are based on information and facts are evident in the transcripts. In contrast, the discussion messages providing or retrieving factual information, demonstrated predominantly low levels of cognitive engagement and surface level of information processing. Zhu also observed that the action of social sharing and knowledge construction did not come naturally because of the online discussions or the online learning environment, but because of the careful planning of learning activities and facilitation during the learning process. Further, for online class discussion to be effective, the discussion activity, as any other learning activities, has to be closely connected with student learning goals and course objectives.

A review of the studies examined in this section state that the collaboration tools, particularly asynchronous text-based tools support cognitive engagement in an online learning environment. Some of the aspects of learning process aided by these tools are goal setting, planning activities, time management, help seeking, self monitoring, self evaluation, self-pacing, deepening reflection, organization of ideas, and group discussions. These studies also suggest that the above stated aspects were further improved when the teacher carefully plans the learning activities and sets clear guidelines on the expected student behavior.

## **Conclusion**

Advances in technology have changed the way today's world communicates and socializes. This is very relevant to the field of education too, and learners have adapted to new ways of researching, organizing, and processing information using technological tools. In response to this change, educators are changing their educational environment and almost every institution has invested in learning management software with integrated collaboration tools. Knowing the impact of these pedagogical tools can be critical to the overall success of integrating them in course delivery to achieve educational success.

Although, some of the findings in this paper were inconclusive towards the impact of collaboration tools on student engagement, overall the findings suggest that these tools cultivate behavior, emotional and cognitive engagement in an online educational environment. The finding recommends choosing the right kind of collaboration tool in accordance to course needs as different tools are better in achieving different engagement levels. The findings are important as this will help us in identifying the gaps in the current tools and development of better tools to further improve student engagement. Another important aspect of the finding is to understand the teacher's role. Most of the studies prove that student engagement will increase with the use of collaboration tools if the instructor was present on the scene. It concludes that the collaboration tools provide an enriched play ground for online learning by improving student engagement. However, it is the responsibility of the teacher to plan and guide the learner to a deeper level of processing and understanding.

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## **Chapter 3: Examining Enrollment Trends in Schools Participating in Online Learning in Newfoundland and Labrador**

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### **Introduction**

In their review of the open-source literature related to K-12 online learning, Cavanaugh, Barbour and Clark (2009) described how much of the research in the field had focused on comparing student performance of online students with the performance of students in the traditional brick-and-mortar environment in an effort to “prove” that K-12 online learning was as effective as traditional schooling. However, historically, distance education programs were primarily designed for a select group of students, specifically those with higher aptitudes, higher achievement, and greater aspirations for post-secondary education.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI), the organization responsible for K-12 online learning (virtual schooling), began operating in 2001-02 with a limited pilot program and became available to all students during the 2002-03 school year. It is designed to meet the needs of rural students. Two thirds of the province’s approximately 300 schools are located in these rural areas, with nearly half designated as necessarily existent<sup>1</sup>. CDLI has attempted to break from this pattern as more rural schools rely on its services. As such, they have aimed to deliver more courses suited, not only to those with higher aptitudes, higher achievement, and greater aspirations for post-secondary education.

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether there was a greater percentage of rural students enrolled in basic-level courses at schools where the only option for academic-level courses was through the CDLI. In Newfoundland and Labrador, students who graduate with only basic-level courses are ineligible for college or university acceptance without taking remedial courses at the community college level. For this reason, the issue of whether students have access to academic-level courses is an important one.

### **Literature review**

#### ***Comparisons of K-12 face-to-face versus online learning***

As Cavanaugh et al. (2009) observed, there have been many studies examining the effectiveness of K-12 online learning compared to the face-to-face classroom environment. For example, in their evaluation of several Alberta-based programs, Ballas and Belyk (2000) found the performance of virtual and classroom students in Alberta were similar in English and Social Studies courses, but classroom students performed better overall in all other subject areas. Barker and Wendel (2001) examined the performance of students in six virtual schools in three different provinces, and concluded that these students performed no worse than the students from three brick-and-mortar schools (i.e., one school per province) used as a comparison point. In this synthesis of studies examining distance education programs spanning a kindergarten to adult

audience, Shachar and Neumann (2003) found a statistically significant positive effect in favour of the distance education programs.

That same year, Ungerleider and Burns (2003) examined studies of student performance in only networked and online distance education program at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. They reported no statistically significant differences in student performance. In a research study with the Florida Virtual School (FLVS), Cavanaugh et al. (2005) found that FLVS students performed better on a non-mandatory assessment tool compared to students from the traditional classroom environment. In a similar study, McLeod et al. (2005) found that FLVS students performed better on an assessment of algebraic understanding than their classroom counterparts.

These types of results have been replicated in larger studies of student performance. Cavanaugh (2001), in her meta-analysis of studies related to student performance in K-12 online learning environments, found “a small positive effect in favor of distance education” at the K-12 level (p. 73). Meta-analysis is a statistical technique that combines the results from previous studies that examine the effectiveness of a particular tool or pedagogy (i.e., in this instance the use of K-12 distance education) to report an overall effect. In a follow-up meta-analysis three years later, Cavanaugh et al. (2004) found a small negative effect size for students enrolled in K-12 distance education environments. However, it should be noted that the studies included in the 2001 meta-analysis did not control for existing performance differences between students and the studies included in the 2004 meta-analysis had other methodological limitations (e.g., failure to adequately describe the treatment conditions).

Bernard et al. (2004) conducted a more restrictive meta-analysis using 232 studies comparing student performance in online and video-based distance learning environments at the K-12 and post-secondary levels. These authors found a small positive effect size in favour of the distance students, although the authors did note that the distance education group also had lower retention rates. In one of the most comprehensive, and methodologically rigorous meta-analysis, Means et al. (2009) examined the literature from 1996 to 2008 for “experimental and quasi-experimental [studies that] objectively measured student learning outcomes” (p. xii). This search identified 176 studies, of which only 46 were sufficiently rigorous and detailed to be included in their meta-analysis. These authors found that students in online environments out-performed those who took the same course in a face-to-face environment. However, the authors also reported that the results were not statistically significant for the five K-12 studies included in the sample.

### ***Methodological limitations of these studies***

It is important to identify potential methodological limitations of these types of comparative studies, as Means et al. (2009) have tried to control for, because these limitations can potentially skew results from these comparisons. For example, both Cavanaugh et al. (2005) and McLeod et al. (2005) found FLVS students performed better than traditional classroom-based students. However, Cavanaugh et al. speculated that the virtual school students who took the assessment may have been more academically motivated and naturally higher achieving students. McLeod et al. indicated that student performance was due to the high drop-out rate in the virtual school

courses, i.e., the lower performing students had already self-selected out of their virtual school course.

Similar limitations exist in relation to the findings reported by Barker and Wendel (2001). These authors noted that classroom students out-performed virtual school students in all but English and social studies; however, participation rates in the assessment among virtual school students ranged from 65%-75%, while 90% to 95% of classroom-based students participated. The potential for methodological limitations depends on which students complete these assessments and the nature of students enrolled in these distance education programs. This point is notable given that some virtual school programs report drop-out rates as high as 50% or more (Clark et al., 2002; Elluminate, 2006).

In their 1999-2000 evaluation of the FLVS, Bigbie and McCarroll (2000) reported that the online program had a 73.6% completion rate. However when taking into account students who dropped out during the 28-day trial period, completion rates fell to 53.5%. In the case of the FLVS, Bigbie and McCarroll also reported that over half of the students who completed FLVS courses scored an A in their course and only 7% received a failing grade. These findings have been similar to other evaluations where virtual school students have been described as typically A or B students, honors or college-bound, and advanced placement or academically advanced (Espinoza et al., 1999; Kozma, Zucker & Espinoza, 1998; Mills, 2003; Watkins, 2005).

Others have described virtual school students as independent, high achieving, motivated, self-directed, self-disciplined, technologically savvy, (Clark et al., 2002; Haughey & Muirhead, 1999; Roblyer & Elbaum, 2000). This difference in the type of student calls into question the validity of many of these no significant differences findings, as the K-12 students enrolled in the distance education programs appear to be naturally stronger students (and yet they often only do as well as the classroom-based students, who include the full range of ability levels). This result has led some to speculate whether online distance education is suitable for all secondary-level students (Mulcahy, 2002).

### ***Comparisons of K-12 face-to-face versus online learning in Newfoundland and Labrador***

The province-wide virtual school in Newfoundland and Labrador, CDLI, was designed to provide online learning opportunities for K-12 students of all ability levels. In examining student performance in CDLI courses, Barbour and Mulcahy (2006; 2007; 2008) found no significant differences in the performance of classroom-based students and web-based students in both standardized end-of-course exams and final course marks. However, because the authors were unable to compare the overall grade point averages (GPAs) of classroom-based students and web-based students, they questioned whether their sample of web-based students contained students from the same range of abilities as would be found in the classroom. The authors observed that, unfortunately, the manner in which the provincial Government maintains the data (and the associated security concerns related to student identifications) makes it impossible for researchers like them to investigate that potential.

In a study of three face-to-face rural schools in coastal Labrador, Mulcahy, Dibbon and Norberg (2008) found that two of the schools had a higher percentage of students enrolled

in basic-level courses. For the students in Mulcahy et al.'s study, the only choices offered through their course selection was between an academic-level course or a basic-level course, and the CDLI was the only option for many of the academic courses. These findings suggested one avenue to investigate the nature of students enrolled in CDLI courses was through an examination of the proportion of students enrolled in basic level courses at schools where the CDLI provides the only academic option.

## **Methodology**

Using data published annually by the Ministry of Education in the *Education Statistics: Elementary-Secondary* and *K-12 School Profile System* (see Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2008a; 2008b for an example), the researchers were able to obtain the enrollment on a school-by-school basis of students in each of the courses offered in the provincial curriculum. The researchers isolated the courses in English language arts and mathematics, as these are the only course sequences in the curriculum that have recognized basic, academic and advanced (in the case of the mathematics) course options. These subject areas were further coded based on the geographic location of their school. The geographic designation (i.e., urban, suburban, and rural) were based on the Statistics Canada definitions; which defined urban as a population of 5000, suburban as a census track that partially falls into an urban area or if 50% of the population in the census track works in the urban area or if 25% of the employees in the census track live in an urban area, and rural as all other jurisdictions (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2008a).

Isolating these variables allowed the researchers to determine the percentage of students enrolled in these three levels of courses and compared them based upon four variables:

1. the percentage of students enrolled province-wide;
2. the percentage of students enrolled through the CDLI; and
3. the percentage of students enrolled in rural schools;
4. the percentage of students enrolled in rural schools through the CDLI.

The focus was placed on schools in rural jurisdictions because, as Mulcahy et al. (2008) noted, for students attending rural schools, the CDLI was almost always the only means of enrolling in academic or advanced courses.

The data used in this study included the 2003-04 to the 2007-08 school year. The data from the 2008-09 school year were not available when the study began, and the scope of the study did not permit the inclusion of the 2002-03 school year.

These data will be added to the study in the future. As the researchers had access to the complete population of data, the results were based upon a simply comparison of percentages. These results are presented in the following section.

## **Results and discussion**

Mulcahy et al. (2008) noted that schools in their study had a higher percentage of students enrolled in basic-level courses, and hypothesized that this tendency might be due to the fact that the only option to take an academic-level courses was online through the CDLI and that students were opting for the basic-level courses to avoid taking courses online. Table 1 illustrates the percentage of students enrolled in basic-level math courses from 2003-04 to 2007-08.

Table 1

*Percentage of Students Enrolled in Basic-Level Math Courses*

Year	Province-wide	All Schools using CDLI	Rural	Rural Schools using CDLI
03-04	23	29	28	29
04-05	24	25	29	32
05-06	24	23	29	28
06-07	23	25	30	33
07-08	23	25	30	35

Interestingly, the percentage of students enrolled in basic-level math courses in rural areas was higher than the provincial average by 5% or more in each year. Additionally, with the exception of the 2005-06 school year, there was a further increase in the percentage of basic-level math students in rural schools that relied on CDLI for some of their academic-level offerings. Table 2 shows similar percentages of students enrolled in basic-level English courses from 2003-2004 to 2007-2008.

Table 2

*Percentage of Students Enrolled in Basic-Level English Courses*

Year	Province-wide	All Schools using CDLI	Rural	Rural Schools using CDLI
03-04	23	33	28	59
04-05	24	19	28	42
05-06	24	18	29	30
06-07	24	18	30	33
07-08	24	20	30	26

Again, the percentage of basic-level English enrollment in rural schools was higher than the provincial average by 4% or more in each year (and the gap had actually been increasing, as opposed to the mathematics, where it remained relatively constant). Further, while the percentage of students enrolled in basic-level courses in rural schools that relied on the CDLI for some of their academic-level curriculum began significantly higher than the proportions for the other categories. However, gap between these categories has decreased steadily. In fact, during the

2007-08 school year, the rural schools that relied on the CDLI for some of their academic-level programming had a lower percentage of students enrolled in basic-level English courses compared to the overall rural school average (although still a little higher than the provincial average).

These higher proportions of basic students in schools that relied upon the CDLI for the delivery of part or all of their academic-level programming potentially confirm the Mulcahy et al.'s (2008) hypotheses. Barbour and Mulcahy (2006, 2007, 2008) were unable to determine if they were comparing similar populations of students because they were not able to access the students' performance in their other courses. Similarly, it is impossible to attribute the results of this study to the delivery model (i.e., the trend of a higher percentage of basic level students in rural schools that relied upon the CDLI for part or all of their academic curriculum may not have anything to do with the CDLI).

Conversely, Table 3 illustrates the percentage enrollment for the advanced-level math courses from 2003-2004 to 2007-2008.

Table 3

*Percentage of Students Enrolled in Advanced-Level Math Courses*

Year	Province-wide	All Schools using CDLI	Rural	Rural Schools using CDLI
03-04	20	22	19	23
04-05	19	26	18	24
05-06	20	26	18	28
06-07	21	28	19	23
07-08	20	19	19	21

As may be expected, given that the percentage of rural students enrolled in basic-level courses is slightly higher than the provincial average, the percentage of rural students enrolled in advanced-level courses is lower than the provincial average. However, in rural schools where the CDLI provides the only option for advanced level courses, the percentage of students enrolled in advanced level courses is higher than the provincial average (although this percentage declined to an even level in 2007-08).

While rural schools that use the CDLI for part or their entire academic curriculum have slightly higher percentages of students enrolled in basic-level courses, those same schools also have a higher percentage of students enrolled in advanced-level courses. This should not be surprising; Haughey and Muirhead (1999) found that K-12 distance education in Canada has needed to provide equal educational opportunities to students in rural areas, particularly in advanced-level courses. In addition, the majority of literature also supports the use of online learning as a medium for students who would enroll in, and be capable of success in, advanced-level courses (Clark et al., 2002; Espinoza et al., 1999; Kozma, Zucker & Espinoza, 1998; Mills, 2003; Roblyer & Elbaum, 2000; Watkins, 2005).



## Conclusions and implications

Schools in rural areas have slightly higher levels of enrollment in basic-level courses than the provincial average. Further, the percentage of students who attended rural schools that relied upon the CDLI for some or all of their academic programming had even higher levels of basic course enrollment (although this was decreasing in English language arts, but increasing in mathematics). While this finding does not confirm Mulcahy et al.'s (2008) hypothesis that students are taking basic-level courses to avoid the online academic-level courses, it does indicate that there is a difference in basic-level enrollment in these schools that is worthy of further investigation. Since we did not conduct any tests for significance, we do not know if these differences are significant or occurred by chance.

Analysis of the percentage of students enrolled in advanced courses revealed that the CDLI was fulfilling a mandate of providing access to advanced-level opportunities similar to many other virtual school programs. The percentage of students enrolled in advanced-level courses through the CDLI, both province-wide and in rural schools, was higher than the provincial average. This result was consistent with findings from numerous other studies that found that high-achieving students performed well in online learning.

As noted, further research is needed to investigate why rural schools in general, and specifically rural schools that used the CDLI for their academic-level courses, had higher percentages of students enrolled in basic-level courses. The original intention of the CDLI was to change the paradigm of K-12 distance education so that it was accessible to students beyond those who are naturally academically successful. Further, there is an increased reliance of rural schools on the CDLI to offer all of their academic-level programming through online learning. Given these realities, there should be concern that students who may be capable of moderate success in academic-level courses could be electing to take the basic-level courses to avoid online classes. If this is the case, then changes must be made to ensure that rural students are not limited to a non-college preparatory curriculum simply because they want to avoid online courses. More research is needed to determine if this is indeed the case.

However, beyond simply the issue of the nature of students being served by these distance education environments, the percentages showed that greater numbers of rural students were enrolled in basic-level courses and fewer numbers of rural students were enrolled in advanced-level courses. This two-tier education system; one of quality and opportunity for urban and suburban students, and a separate and lesser system for rural students needs to be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> A term used to describe schools that cannot be closed because they are located so far from another school that it makes bussing the students not feasible due to distance.

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## **Chapter 4: Script for a Critical Reflection in Audio-Visual on The Future of learning Institutions**

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Learning institutions have changed far more slowly (Davison, Goldberg & Jones, 2009) than the personalized, collaborative, and informalized learning processes offered by emerging technologies (Davison, Goldberg & Jones, 2009; Redecker et al, 2011). Future learning institutions will re-event themselves in a world of globalization as flexible, open and adaptive infrastructures, engaging all citizens (Redecker et al., 2011) while adopting technology in an evolving learning landscape as an important tool to expand their global connections and advance their pedagogical effectiveness (Hung & Jeng, 2013).

Physical learning spaces will be reconfigured for optimal learning (Thomas, 2010) as virtual and physical boundaries of institutions blur with technology immersion, personalized learning, knowledge skills, and global integration converging to create a transformational paradigm (Anderson, Boyles & Rainie, 2012; Rudd, Davia, Sullivan, 2009). Virtual learning institutions of the future will bring about a shift in instructional practices (Choi & Back, 2011) by adopting settings where students can learn, create, and explore information collaboratively and individually (Reid, Aqui, & Putney, 2013; Shin, Biocca & Choo, 2013). The decentralization of information from institutions, as well as developments in mobile communications and cloud computing, will lead to the erosion of institutional boundaries (Facer, 2009), allowing access to vast amounts of socially constructed knowledge, connections to large clusters of learners, and constructivist learning spaces (Antonacci & Modares, 2008; Pineteh, 2013). These virtual learning spaces will have a built-in memory that learners will use to create and manipulate knowledge and environments and reconstruct and control them elsewhere (Thomas, 2010).

Three-dimensional virtual learning environments will give rise to new forms of learning opportunities to accommodate the needs, preferences and interests of learners (Shin, Biocca & Choo, 2013). Massive multiplayer online virtual game environments will create communities of learners who will learn through social experiences and collaboration (Paraskeva, Mysirlaki & Papagianni, 2010). In using multi-user immersive simulations, learners will experience cognitive dissonance while engaging in problem—based activities exploring virtual learning worlds (Tuomi, 2005). In these virtual worlds, learners will investigate past, present and futuristic environments while actively participating in diverse scenarios (Tuomi, 2005).

Emerging ICT technologies will provide mass-customized learning (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2008; Tuomi, 2005) and enable a smooth educational continuum that is centered on the learner, not the institutions (Redecker, 2011). Learner-centered institutions will actively engage students (Keengwe, Onchwari, & Onchwari, 2009) while creating personalized and appropriate learning opportunities that will address specialized training needs by utilizing a range of tools and applications to facilitate individual and collaborative learning practices inside and outside school and in diverse contexts (Redecker et al., 2011). Learning institutions of the future will motivate learners (Masoumi & Lindstrom, 2012) based on the foundation of self-regulated learning

(Redecker et al., 2011) where Individuals will be guided by their preferences and priorities when accessing knowledge (Thomas, 2010). Software, mobile technology and context—aware devices will contextualize learning experiences by adjusting knowledge they provide to the context of the learner (Héikkinen & Hamalainen, 2012) and delivering content when the need, significance and value are highest (Wang & Shen, 2012). Learners will manage information themselves rather than accessing it through institutions (Facer, 2009).

Learning institutions of the future will be borderless (Pineteh, 2013) taking advantage of the collaborative and collective approach to learning (Redecker et al., 2011). They will shift to include unique methods of online learning, hybrid learning, and collaborative models (Johnson et al., 2013) where knowledge will be de-centralized and based on collective efforts (Redecker et al., 2011). Learning institutions will view themselves as global ecosystems characterized by open learning systems where their roles will involve open collaboration, cooperative resource creation, evaluation, and sharing (Knowledge Works Foundation, 2008).

Institutions of the future will be thought of as mobilizing networks that emphasize flexibility, interactivity, and connectedness where learners and teachers can access any learning resources at anytime and anyplace (Davidson, Goldberg & Jones, 2009; Dawson, 2010). Open collaborative-networked learning will change how we think about institutions by continuously modifying and readjusting the network activity with new emerging possibilities for learning (Davidson, Goldberg & Jones, 2009). Advances in mobile communication and social media will create socially networked collaborative learning institutions that will be committed to cooperation, interactivity, cohesion, and social engagement for learning (Davidson, Goldberg & Jones, 2009; Dawson, 2010; Hakkinen & Hamalainen, 2012; Scanlon, 2013).

Cross-institutional and cross-industry learning programs will become a reality of the future (Reaz, Hussain, & Khadem, 2007; Rudd et al., 2009). The emergence of the cross-institutional personal learning paths will provide a collective approach to student life—long learning experiences and accomplishments (Rudd et al., 2009). Learners will require diverse learning experiences from numerous institutions into a totaled and cohesive learning program that meets their needs (Rudd et al., 2009). Institutions will prepare for this transformation by promoting strategic cooperation through open technology infrastructure and open environments for integrated data and processes while creating a network of collaborative and shared services through open research and learning (Rudd et al., 2009).

Institutional change will not easily be accomplished inside established learning institutions (Davidson, Goldberg, & Jones, 2009; Tuomi, 2005). Human imagination is often constrained by deeply established practices that continuously reproduce and regenerate social institutions (Tuomi, 2005). No technology is capable of overcoming underdeveloped educational philosophies (Lim, Zhao, Tondeur, Chai, & Tsai, 2013). Institutional change only becomes a reality when our "collective imaginations change and reorganize our world and our interactions with others" (Tuomi, 2005, p. 5). However, the rapid and significant change in technologies has already begun to reorganize our world (Facer, 2009; Tuomi, 2005). As a result, learning institutions of the future will be challenged by learners (Facer, 2009; Tuomi, 2005) to transform from traditional, authoritative, top—down, teacher—centered institutions to creative, collaborative, self-regulated learner-centered spaces (Davidson, Goldberg, & Jones, 2009; Lim et al., 2013; Rudd et al., 2009).



Learning institutions of the future will experiment with new learner- centered formats and strategies for teaching and learning made possible by emerging technology offering meaningful, effective and challenging learning experiences (Redecker et al., 2011). As technology continues to drive change in our society (Lim et al., 2013), future learning institutions must continue to reorganize and renew their modes of learning to better meet the needs of learners (Davidson, Goldberg, & Jones, 2009).

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## **Chapter 5: Using Electronic Gaming to Support Problem-Based Learning**

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Problem-based learning (PBL) is a constructivist-learning model of instruction, whereby the teacher acts as a facilitator to students engaged in self-directed learning based on a specific problem (Curtis, 2002; Savery & Duffy, 2001). First developed in the early 1970s, PBL was used almost exclusively in medical education (Savery & Duffy, 2001), as it results in the development of problem-solving skills (Fardanesh, 2006). PBL is meant to engage the learner in behavior that is expected within a field of study through cognitive stimulus, which is often an authentic problem (Savery & Duffy). Because the problem is authentic, learning is also authentic (Murphy, 2003). Authentic learning does not necessarily require that the learner be immersed in an actual problem. Rather, as Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005) found, the simulation of real-life situations allows for knowledge-implementation in genuine ways.

Annetta, Cook and Shultz (2007) argued that the power of video games (electronic games) can be harnessed and used as PBL scenarios, as there are natural ties existing between video game creation and PBL. Walker and Shelton (2008) found that much of the work that exists in educational games bears a strong similarity to the field of PBL, making the two a natural fit. Due to advancements in technology, electronic games are rich digital worlds that go beyond traditional action games (Annetta, Cook & Schultz, 2007; Squire, 2003) and have grown to include simulations, action games, strategy, role-playing sports, puzzles and adventure (Squire, 2003).

Simulations are of particular interest in the educational environment, as they model physical or social systems (Annetta, Cook & Shultz; Squire). McLaughlan and Kirkpatrick (1999) defined simulations as PBL experiences that are set in motion by an authentic problem; they familiarize participants with the complex nature of decision-making and negotiation, thereby better preparing them to deal with these processes in the real world. Therefore, simulations can be used as a tool within the educational environment to enhance curriculum delivery and to allow students to become closely acquainted with the curriculum through active engagement as they play games and solve puzzles (Huffaker, 2003).

Annetta, Cook and Shultz (2007) argued that, in order to obtain the benefits of video games in the classroom, a well-designed technology program needs to be grounded in sound pedagogy. Moreover, the authors argued that natural ties exist between video games and PBL, linking video games and pedagogy, and because video games are rich in storyline, games can be created for teaching purposes while adhering to the principles of the PBL model. Because PBL theory considers learning a social process (Annetta, Cook & Shultz), electronic games, such as simulations, encourage learners to communicate, cooperate and build consensus, thereby developing shared knowledge (McLaughlan & Kirkpatrick, 1999). Squire (2003) found that video games further supported PBL in that they allow users to manipulate variables that are routinely unalterable, view information from new perspectives, and observe behaviors over time. Therefore, electronic gaming allows students to approach a problem from numerous perspectives in order to build knowledge.

Edutainment video games, with both educational and entertainment qualities, can be powerful learning tools, as they allow learners to manipulate variables not possible in reality, view problems from new perspectives, observe system behavior over the long term, and compare simulations with current understandings of a system (Squire, 2003). Annetta, Cook and Shultz (2007), in their study of PBL and online game creation, observed that student engagement was continually elevated throughout the study. Additionally, Walker and Shelton (2008) found that students who played educational games assumed more responsibility for learning, as they “are designed to be an engaging way to improve educational outcomes using multimedia virtual environments for teaching and learning science” (Teachers as Facilitators Section, ¶2). Kanet and Stöblein (2007) confirmed these findings, arguing that electronic game play significantly facilitates learning.

Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) identified four intended outcomes for PBL, which include self-directed learning skills, content-knowledge that is structured around problems, problem-solving skills and increased motivation for learning. Walker and Shelton (2008) noted that examples of each outcome can be found within electronic simulation games. Self-directed learning skills and content knowledge that is structured around problems are both evident in games where players make decisions that impact the simulated communities and environments (Walker & Shelton). Furthermore, they argued that, in simulated games, players are faced with issues that have multiple solution paths, which forces them to focus strategy while paying attention to the environment, thereby developing problem-solving skills. The authors argued that “Learners are self-directed, have freedom of actions and live with their decisions, which impacts the environment around them” (Problem Solving Skills Connected to Content Knowledge Section, 4).

Finally, Walker and Shelton noted that electronic simulation games result in increased motivation for learning. They observed that the games challenge students, resulting in intrinsic motivation to achieve problem resolution, and have an element of relevance, as students are able to connect why a reasoning process is necessary in learning.

In conclusion, electronic gaming supports PBL by providing authentic tasks that encourage ownership of the problem, interactivity, collaboration, decision-making skills, and engagement while retaining, or even improving, student learning (Annetta, Cook & Schultz, 2007; McLaughlan & Kirkpatrick, 1999; Virvou, Katsionis & Manos, 2005). Virtual reality games, including simulations, can be very motivating for students while retaining, and even improving, student learning (Virvou, Katsionis & Manos). Walker and Shelton (2008) argued that game-like activity that is aligned with learning objectives is educationally meaningful and motivating. Electronic games have the potential to meet the expanding needs of the diverse student population (Annetta, Cook & Schultz, 2007).

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## Chapter 6: SITI (Summer Institute of Technology) Articles

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When Dr. Singh first approached me about the idea of dedicating an edition of the *Morning Watch* to TESIC's Summer Institute of Technology (SITI), I was delighted by the prospect. One of the primary mandates of the Technology Education Special Interest Council (TESIC) is to provide professional learning to our membership and SITI represented one of our biggest initiatives to date. The opportunity to further communicate the good work of our members and partners to the wider educational community was not something I was going to turn down.

SITI was conceived during the winter and spring of 2014. Based on the feedback we had received concerning our professional learning sessions over the last number of years, the executive council of TESIC felt that a summer institute could meet a need within our community. Over the last few decades, educational technologies have penetrated every facet of school life. In particular, the last decade has seen an explosion of diverse and rich technologies that have stretched the idea of normal, not only in school, but in society. As schools and teachers try to re-conceptualize and integrate this new normal into their everyday practice, TESIC finds itself in a unique position. Our members have an intrinsic interest in technology and its impact on teaching and learning. They deal with these issues on a daily basis and come up with ingenious solutions to otherwise insurmountable problems. As they integrate technology in a positive manner, they also deal with many potential negative concerns both skillfully and professionally. Technology is a means of implementing new teaching methodologies that are reflective and progressive. With these things in mind, SITI was an attempt to help our membership and other stakeholders continue the dialogue, discussion, and discourse around these issues within a collegial and supportive environment.

In its genesis, SITI was conceived as a conference for teachers by teachers, but to leave it as such would be naïve. The classroom is like the tip of an iceberg as there are many internal and external forces that affect the focus of the day-to-day activity that defines classroom life. Therefore, the executive of TESIC reached out for partnerships with Memorial University's Faculty of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, The Department of Education, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, and various industry leaders. These partnerships allowed TESIC to increase the scope of our audience and allowed these various stakeholders to have their perspective heard through the dialogue created at SITI. The executive was very grateful for the relationships developed with the Faculty of Education. Without their support SITI would not have been possible. From facilities to logistics, the Faculty's staff went above and beyond to accommodate this initiative and we look forward to working with them for many years to come.

SITI 2014 was held on the weekend of July 25<sup>th</sup>. With over 100 attendees, 37 breakout sessions, 25 facilitators within 6 concurrent streams it was an intense, but paradoxically relaxed and informal event. Sessions covered everything from research to policy to technology teaching practice within a collaborative and mostly hands-on environment. This informal relaxed

conversational style was one of the key factors that attendees pointed out as making SITI a very positive and rewarding experience. The cross pollination of ideas and best practice that was cultivated by SITI is a great example of how diverse groups of educational stakeholders can share and learn from each other. There was a great sense of ownership exhibited throughout the weekend as individuals and groups interacted, networked, and learned from each other. In the end, SITI embodied the idea that our diverse groups don't need to be isolated, and by working together we can have a greater impact on influencing the direction of our education system. Collectively, we have the skills and knowledge to effect positive change and it is through equal and collegial partnerships, such as SITI, that we can continue to refine our focus as we move forward in this venture.

Within the pages that follow are several textual representation of a cross-section of the sessions from SITI 2014. Whether the articles discuss the development of technology-rich, project-based activities, technology-enhanced inclusive educational practices, assistive technology, technology-aided literature circles, professional development, or the barriers to integrating technology; they all deal with the central theme of technology's ever present pressure on teaching and learning. Each of the articles in this edition are presented from different perspectives; the teacher, the researcher or the graduate student. Just like the sessions at SITI, these articles all have their place within the conversation on the impact of technology within education. Hopefully, as you read this edition, some of the ideas and thoughts shared by the authors will give you cause to stop and reflect on your own practice as many of them caused me to this very thing. As I close this brief introduction, I'd like to again thank Dr. Singh for the opportunity to extend SITI's reach in this manner and I look forward to future opportunities to share, learn and grow within the educational community of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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### **Guest Editor's Note**

With the exception of Nadeem Saqlain's article entitled *Actualizing Virtual Teaching* all of the articles in this edition are based on presentations from TESIC's 2014 Summer Institute of Technology Integration held at St. John's campus of Memorial University's Faculty of Education. As Nadeem's article gives a historical overview of the development of distance learning in Newfoundland and Labrador it is complementary to the themes presented at the conference and therefore it was included in this edition.



## **Chapter 7: Script for a critical reflection in audio-visual on The Future of Learning Environments**

David Smart

We live in an exciting new age of rapid global change with no sign of slowing down. Consequently, fundamental and rapid technological changes that are reshaping our world will motivate educational institutions to work towards meeting new economical, social and pedagogical demands (Tuomi, 2005). As a result, learning environments of the future will shift the educational paradigm from an industrialized teacher-centered statically authoritative prescribed knowledge process to a student-centered, creative, open and global forum (Rudd, Davia, and Sullivan, 2009). Of course change within established educational institutions will not occur rapidly or easily, but it is already in progress (Davidson and Goldberg, 2009).

Future learning environments will be inclusive learning spaces (Punie, Cabrera, Bogdanowicz, Zinnbauer and Nava\*, 2006). Ubiquitous mobile communication devices, for example, promise to lead the way in changing the educational landscape (Rudd, et al., 2009). Affordability, popularity and versatility of mobile devices such as cell phones and tablets will make them an attractive tool for both educators and learners (Johnson, Adams, and Cummins, 2012 ). Studies have found that students enjoy the versatility and freedom mobile learning devices provide them (Chih-Kai, and Ching-Kun, 2011; Swan, Hooft, Kratoski and Unger, 2005). Teachers and schools will use inexpensive, feature-rich mobile technologies to facilitate constructivist learning principles (Lan, Sung and Chan, 2009; Johnson et al., 2012 ). Mobile technologies will also promote lifelong learning opportunities alongside other wireless technologies (Punie et al., 2006). The future will be about learning anywhere, anytime with anyone (Punie et al., 2006).

Future learning environments will promote collaborative open networking that harnesses the strengths of peer review, information sharing, and divergent thinking among a global audience (Davidson and Goldberg, 2009). Such environments will encourage social networking that takes learning beyond classroom walls. These social networks will be highly mobile, flexible and innovative (Davidson and Goldberg, 2009). In the future, education will depend less on rigid hierarchical learning processes. Instead, learning will be peer to peer where digitized information is shared between learners in real time across wireless and mobile global social networks (Rudd et al., 2009). Teachers will remain in the periphery playing the role of coach and cheerleader (Mitra and Dangwal, 2010).

Meaningful, higher-order learning takes place when learners are active participants collaboratively solving relevant problems rather than passively receiving information to be stored and used at some later date (Cheaney and Ingebritsen, 2005). Blending online distance learning with face-to-face classroom time will be an ideal way for many learners of the future (Scripture, 2008). Understanding student learning needs is crucial to preparing effective problem-based learning (Scripture, 2008). Future learning environments will be tailored to match individual needs, providing students with relevant learning opportunities (Prince, Moyer, Scheerer, and Feltner, 2011). Learning analytics will assist teachers in real time on how to determine what those needs are, and organize lessons and assessment accordingly (Johnson, Adams, and Cummins, 2012).



Future learning environments will be creative, fun and student-centered spaces. Student-centric environments coupled with ICT tools promote critical thinking and creative problem solving skills (Punie et al., 2006). These learning spaces will be both virtual and physical, modeled on learner-centered principles (Punie et al., 2006). Virtual classrooms or multi-user virtual environments (MUVES) will offer learners' a safe space to actively participate within an array of interesting scenarios such as debating ethical issues, examining theories or practicing what otherwise could be dangerous endeavors for novice students (Tuomi, 2005; Morrison and Dede, 2004). Researchers have already noted the learning benefits of massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs), single-player computer simulation games and virtual playgrounds (Davidson and Goldberg, 2009). These computer enhanced environments will promote collaboration and improve active problem-solving skills. The 2012 NHC Horizon Report stated "open-ended, challenge-based, truly collaborative games are an emerging category of games that seems especially appropriate for higher education" (Johnson et al., 2012, p. 19). Meanwhile, physical classrooms will be places where students can congregate, collaborate and work towards solving meaningful problems using a variety of traditional and ICT tools.

Future learning environments will be "open and reflexive spaces" (Punie et al., 2006, p. 12). ICT tools will continue to provide easy and interesting ways for learners to connect, express themselves, share, and manage information (Rudd et al., 2009). With open learning environments, educators act as guides for students who are self-regulated, responsible, reflective life-long learners (Mitra and Dangwal, 2010). Learning environments will be open to diverse cultural and socio-economic groups (Rudd et al., 2009; Keengwe and Onchwari, 2009). The low cost of ICT equipment and software, especially mobile devices, and the affordability of distance education will provide educational opportunities to groups otherwise unable to participate (Greville Rumble, 2007). Future learning environments will be truly global in scope. This vision of the future will not come to pass easily (Tuomi, 2005). Nevertheless, the tide of technological progress is quickly eroding traditional learning environments and constructing new ones. As ICTs continue to improve and drop in cost, learning environments will exist wherever learners wish them to be. Classrooms will evolve into open, flexible, learner-centered communities. Individuals will gravitate towards spaces sharing personal interests and goals. A future learner will construct knowledge that is meaningful to him or her as an individual or as part of a socially constructed network. A future student will navigate through ill-structured problems on his or her own, with a partner or as part of a group. These spaces, whether physical or virtual, will provide a diverse population with a safe setting to explore share and learn.

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## **Chapter 8: Student Response Systems for Feedback and Review during Lectures**

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### **Opportunities for feedback and review during lectures**

This position paper argues in favour of the need to improve opportunities for timely feedback and review during lectures with the integration of a Student Response System (SRS). Traditionally, many higher-education courses have been delivered in large lecture theatres where an instructor presents or explains key knowledge-based concepts or skills to a large number of students (Chen, Whittinghill, & Kadowec, 2012; Roselli & Brophy, 2006). In this environment, feedback has typically been given to learners through assignment, quizzes, and examinations, yet, unfortunately, these methods often delay opportunities for feedback and review (Chen et al., 2012). Roselli and Brophy (2006) found that many students' misconceptions and misunderstandings of concepts could go unchecked and unresolved until one of these feedback methods had been completed, typically at the end of the course. The authors also found that learners do not always grasp every concept presented in a lecture as intended by the instructor and there is little point in continuing to the next concept or topic if the previous has gone largely misunderstood.

According to Chen et al. (2012), "providing feedback to students of their current level of understanding of concepts is critical for effective learning" (p. 159). The majority of students surveyed in their study wanted rapid feedback on their level of comprehension and felt that their overall performance in the course would be affected negatively without it. The authors found that, for students, there was a lack of timely feedback and opportunities for review to improve learning before graded examinations. For faculty, the challenges related to identifying which concepts were being understood and which were proving to be more difficult to comprehend.

### **Student Response Systems for providing feedback**

Student Response Systems (SRSs), (also known as clickers) offer two-way (instructor-students) communication that can have an increased positive effect on student learning and retention (Terrion & Aceti, 2012) and enhance and assist many traditional pedagogical approaches (Trees & Jackson, 2007). They "offer feedback to both instructors and students as to how well concepts are being understood" (Kay & LeSage, 2009, p. 242). Kay and LeSage (2009) suggested that, without the use of a tool similar to an SRS, it is difficult for faculty to assess the overall student comprehension of topics discussed and presented in a lecture. With the use of an SRS, each student is encouraged to provide a response to every question and, as a result, there is an increase in the number of opportunities to respond to questions designed to assess their comprehension (Blood, 2012). Such devices have been embraced by university faculty to augment and support lecture based pedagogy (Kay & LeSage), particularly in large classes in science education (Lin, Liu, & Chu, 2011).

Terrion and Aceti (2012) found that students perceived that SRSs foster engagement in otherwise passive lectures and, more importantly, they believed that SRSs had a positive effect

on their comprehension and retention of course material. In addition, Ioannou and Artino (2010) found that students favored the integration of an SRS in the classroom and considered it to be an effective tool for gauging their understanding of material and concepts presented and discussed in class. Students have also reported that an SRS was their preferred way to review the course material, which, in the end, reinforced their learning (Fike, Fike, & Lucio, 2012). Ioannou and Artino suggested that “receiving immediate feedback and monitoring student understanding was the most highly-cited benefit” (p. 320) of the use of SRSs in the classroom.

Findings from Terrion and Aceti (2012) indicated that students recognized that instructors were responsive to the feedback from the SRS identifying the lack of understanding of the current concepts. This real-time feedback can prompt instructors to provide further instruction and discuss any misconceptions in a quick and timely manner, reassess, and, if satisfied with the level of understanding, continue (Stav, Nielsen, Hansen-Nygård, & Thorseth, 2012). Moreover, Terrion and Aceti found that once students had indicated their level of understanding, instructors responded by modifying the class activities to focus on areas that the students did not achieve an acceptable level of understanding.. Blood (2012) also found evidence that supported that review and feedback supported by SRS had a positive effect on long-term retention of information. Ioannou and Artino (2010) reported that such results were evident due to the “unique affordances” (p. 321) that SRS contributed to classroom pedagogy.

### **Obstacles to use of Student Response Systems**

Ioannou and Artino (2010) reported that several students thought that the SRS was time-consuming and wasted instructional class time. These findings were also supported by Lin et al.’s (2011) study in which students expressed concern that using SRS was resulting in too much repetition during class and, as a consequence, instructors were rushing to complete the lecture in time. While Blood (2012) reported positive findings for the increased opportunities for students to respond to questions, some students found stressful the expectation to give responses to all questions. Some students also felt that they were excited initially with the technology; however, they eventually found that the SRS became a distraction (Ioannou & Artino, 2010). Blood found that students’ interest and engagement during lectures using a SRS was higher at the start of the course, however, over time, the novelty of the new technology diminished for some students and they became disengaged and uninterested.

Trees and Jackson (2007) suggested that students may begin to lose interest or react negatively “if they do not see the use of [SRSs] as necessary to an instructor’s pedagogical style” (p. 35). It is important for students to be aware of the relevance, benefits, and role of the questions, SRS, feedback, and review to the overall instruction and learning (Trees & Jackson). Thus, successful integration of an SRS, as proposed by Trees and Jackson, depends less on faculty and more on the student’s acceptance of the technology and its potential effectiveness.

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## **Chapter 9: Promoting Academic Integrity in Assessment in Online Distance Learning**

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Universities face challenges to ensure academic integrity in online distance learning (DL) (Kitahara & Westfall, 2007). Kennedy et al. (2000) surveyed approximately 300 faculty and students at a mid-sized university in the American northwest and found the general perception was that academic dishonesty is more prevalent in online DL versus in a traditional face-to-face classroom. A 2002 study by Scanlon and Neumann (as cited in Roberts, 2006) found that, in a survey of 700 undergraduate students in nine U.S. colleges, 25% of respondents had engaged in acts of plagiarism such as copying of online material without citing sources. Another study by McCabe (2003) reported that 36% of respondents voluntarily reported one or more instances of “cut-and-paste” plagiarism from Internet sources. Baron and Crooks (2005) concluded that the increase in plagiarism may be attributable to recent advances in technology which allow for greater access to information, as well as the proliferation of digital “paper mills”. However, as Baron and Crooks (2005) asserted, without any real quantitative evidence, such perceptions are harmful to an institution’s reputation, and diminish the value of credits and/or degrees earned through online DL.

A study by Rogers (2006) found that many faculty using online testing are concerned about cheating, but are not proactively implementing security measures provided in the courseware tools. Olt (2002) and Rowe (2004) argued that another issue with assessments in DL is that it is hard to ensure that all students take them simultaneously, thus making it easier to share answers. Most courseware products have the ability to randomize large question pools to ensure that no two students take exactly the same assessment (Olt, 2002). If exam collaboration is suspected, IP addresses can be traced to see how physically close the machines are to each other and time logs can be viewed to see when each student was logged in (Eplion, 2005).

Barron and Crooks (2004) suggested that the curriculum be modified each term and include randomized application-based questions. These questions take longer to process and are more difficult to find in a textbook because the answers require a synthesis of information as opposed to a simple recitation of a fact (Eplion, 2005). Biometrics is also now available to detect academic dishonesty in online assessment. To utilize some of these technologies, institutions should update their software standards policy to inform the students of technological requirements (Waterhouse and Rogers, 2004). Furthermore, as Olt (2002) explained, if students are made aware that such data are available to the instructor, they may be less likely to cheat.

Heberling (2002) posited that a strong case can be made that it is actually harder to cheat online and it is easier to detect than in a traditional classroom setting. Since papers are submitted electronically in an online class, this method of submission makes it easier to detect plagiarism than in a traditional classroom because these papers can easily be analyzed for plagiarism using tools readily available on the Internet. Olt (2002) suggested that instructors require submission of a first draft of assignments, to discourage the use of “paper mills”, which typically only offer final drafts.

As Eplion and Keefe (2005) argued, totally eliminating cheating is not likely on any assessment, in-class or online. Harmon and Lambrinos (2007) compared two online courses, one with proctored exams and one unproctored. They concluded that cheating was taking place in the unproctored exams. Another study by Lanier (2006) also found that “The rate of cheating for online courses surpassed that of traditional lecture courses” (p. 258). However, Waschull (2001) found no significant differences in exam performance, whether students freely elected or were assigned to take an online course, when comparing online versus on-campus sections of the same course. Kinney (2001), quoting a study that compared exam performance in online versus concurrently run on-site sections of the same introductory psychology course, found students “enjoyed no significant advantage or disadvantage by taking their exams online versus those in the face-to-face class” (p. 20). As Howlett and Hewett (2005) pointed out, it is critical to recognize that traditional paper-based testing and oral exams are also highly susceptible to cheating.

As Carnevale (1999) argued, “the key to catching cheaters is to know the students in the class” (p. A47, ¶12). This knowledge can be gained through chats, discussions and email exchanges that can also reveal a student’s writing style (Barron and Crooks, 2004). Informal discussion with students after unexpectedly good performance on an assessment can often reveal the student’s level of knowledge (Rowe, 2004). Higher levels of interaction can provide a deterrent for cheating, but also, as Barron and Crooks (2004) noted, they have the added benefit of “bridging the gap between academia and the real world”.

McLoughlin and Luca (2001) asserted that students need to take more responsibility for their own learning, but most are not prepared to do so. According to Heberling (2002), the administration must make the school’s position on plagiarism very clear through the catalog, student handbook, and during student orientations. Kithara and Westfall (2007) concluded that the long-term solution to curtailing academic cheating “must include well-defined standards, a strong sense of accountability and properly focused community attitudes, above and beyond complex high-technology attempts to establish a secure testing environment” (Extent section, 4). As Lathrop and Foss (2006) concluded, promoting integrity is more effective than policing it.

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## **Chapter 10: Strategies of Technology Integration**

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### **Author's Note**

This submission is a product derived from a presentation that was given during the Summer Institute of Technology Integration (SITI 2014) as a means to disseminate the author's exit paper for Med (IT). SITI 2014 was held at Memorial University in partnership with the Technology Education Special Interest Council of the NLTA and the Faculty of Education, Memorial University.

### **Introduction**

Without a doubt, technology is prevalent in today's society. In Canada alone, there are an estimated 27 million mobile devices (CWTA, 2013). At the end of 2012, there were at least 6 billion mobile devices globally (ITU, 2012).

The access to information is staggering as well. Wikipedia, a popular reference site on the Internet, celebrated its twelfth anniversary on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013. In that time, Wikipedia has grown to include 30 million articles in 286 languages ("Wikipedia", 2013). Intel Corporation, a leading manufacturing of computer CPUs, noted that in one minute on the Internet there are over 2 million Google search queries, and over 639,000 GB of data are transferred (Intel Corp., 2013).

With all of the technology readily available to consumers today, it is no wonder that schools are trying to tap into this resource to help students achieve greater success. This article examines the question of technology integration in schools by using current research to define technology integration, to examine the current climate of technology in schools, to disclose the barriers impeding successful integration, and to uncover and suggest successful strategies in the integration of technology into our schools.

### **What is technology integration?**

There are many definitions that exist of technology integration. In its simplest form, it is the "quality of technology use in the classroom" (Levin & Wadmany, p. 238). The International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) is a highly regarded organization in the field of Technology Education. They have further developed the definition of technology integration through their Standards initiatives. In particular, it defines a set of guidelines in what it means to teach and learn in a technology integrated classroom. These guidelines (Standards, 2008) include:

- a) Facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity
- b) Designing and developing digital age learning experiences
- c) Modelling digital age work and learning will be fulfilled

- d) Promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility
- e) Engage in professional growth and leadership

### **Current Climate of Technology Integration Implementation**

Around the world, government agencies are making efforts to implement technology integration into their education systems. In England, the British Educational and Communications Technology Association (BECTA) guided Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives until 2010 when it was dissolved due to budgetary cutbacks. Though BECTA, computer to student ratios were reduced to better than 1 to 8 for primary and 1 to 5 for secondary students. Also, 100% of primary school and 98% of secondary schools had access to interactive whiteboards. The majority of teachers saw the positive impact on student motivation and success. However, it was noted that ICT “is still being used to support or enhance traditional ways of teaching” (BECTA, 2008, p. 5). The second phase is to develop technology confidence and is now underway.

In 2008, the Australian federal government announced the Digital Education Revolution initiative (DER). This \$2.1 billion initiative was highlighted by groundbreaking initiatives for Australia’s educational system such as broadband access for every school and a 1:1 student to laptop ratio in Grade 9 to 12 (DEAG, 2013). The student to laptop ratio was achieved at the end of 2012 (DEAG, 2013). The cost of the 1:1 student to laptop ratio was \$1.9 billion of the \$2.1 billion allocated for the DER program. There was also money allocated for teachers’ professional development (Buchanan, 2011).

The Economist Intelligence Unit, in conjunction with Pearson, published The Learning Curve (Pearson, 2012). This report compiles worldwide statistical data and gathered experts in education to rank the education systems of countries around the world. Interestingly, the countries noted above ranked 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> respectively. There is other evidence to show that infusing technology into education is not translating into student success. Research has shown that teachers are using technology in classrooms but it is for mediocre tasks such as word processing and research (Banas, 2010; Ertmer, 2005; Oncu & Dellialioglu, 2008). According to Steeves (2012): “...school boards continue to focus on training students on how to use technology instead of providing students with learning opportunities that are enhanced through the use of technological tools” (p. 4). To summarize, teachers and students are *utilizing* the technology without meaningfully *integrating* it (Banas, 2010; Smith, Higgins, Wall, & Miller, 2005).

### **Barriers to Integration**

In relation to the above noted phenomenon, the question ‘Why is this so?’ begs to be investigated and answered. There has been much research into the barriers to the integration of technology in classrooms. Ertmer (1999) suggested a categorization of first and second order barriers to integration. First-order barriers are the factors that are “extrinsic to teachers and include a lack of access to computers and software, insufficient time to plan instruction, and inadequate technical and administrative support” (p. 2). Second-order barriers are “intrinsic to teachers and include beliefs about teaching, beliefs about computers, established classroom practices, and

unwillingness to change” (p. 2). A breakdown of the first and second order barriers found in the research are outlined below:

First Order Barriers	Second Order Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Adequate hardware and software</li> <li>o Access or resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>• School Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Clear vision</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Technical</li> <li>o Pedagogical</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Beliefs</li> <li>• Teacher Openness and Willingness to Embrace Technology</li> <li>• Teacher Openness to Change</li> <li>• Teacher Confidence</li> <li>• Teacher Technological Literacy</li> </ul>

### **Strategies for Successful Integration**

#### **First Order Strategies**

Much of the focus of current technology integration plans have dealt with providing funds for school infrastructure. It is for this reason that a further investigation of other lesser discussed, impeding factors needs to be addressed.

Research has shown that if school administrators have a clear vision of what they want technology integration to mean within the walls of their school, it has a positive impact on the integration process (Dawson & Rakes, 2003). For school administrators to obtain an effective vision of technology integration, they must be in-serviced in what it means to be truly technologically integrated, or at the very least, what the school district’s vision of technology integration is. Once the vision is obtained, school administrators must define this vision through their ensuing leadership.

Support for technology is important as well. Teachers’ readiness and teachers’ beliefs are directly affected by teachers’ computer proficiency (Inan & Lowther, 2010). If teachers are supported in using the technology, their confidence to use technology in the classroom and their ability to troubleshoot problems with technology will increase. In a study performed by Lowther et al. (2008), one of the strategies used to overcome identified technology integration barriers in a school was the use of a part-time computer technician. The study found that teachers had “more positive attitudes towards technology integration and significantly more confidence to complete computer tasks” (p. 205).

#### **Second Order Strategies**

It is worth noting that the majority of the barriers identified are second-order. As stated by Dexter, Anderson and Becker (1999), “Although culture and context create norms of teaching practice... teachers can choose, within these limits, the approach that works for them. This autonomy provides teachers with choices to adopt, adapt, or reject an instructional reform” (p.



224). Since teachers play such a pivotal role in the process of decision making within their classrooms, any successful strategies toward technology integration must help teachers subscribe to change and challenge second-order barriers. According to Ertmer (1999), changes that address second-order barriers “confront fundamental beliefs about current practice, thus leading to new goals, structures or roles” (p. 2). These barriers are more difficult to overcome as they require a fundamental change in thinking from teachers and with any change comes resistance.

Hooper and Rieber (as cited in Northcote, Mildenhall, Marshall, & Swan, 2010, p. 497) proposed that teachers go through five steps when adopting technology into their classrooms. Teachers first become *familiar* with new technology; then start *utilizing* it in their classrooms. As confidence grows, teachers start using the technology more and more until it becomes *integrated* in their classrooms. At the *re-orientation* stage, teachers learn the features of the technology *with* the students. Finally, teachers *evolve* their teaching to integrate the technology in a meaningful way.

Collaboration was found to be the most effective way in teaching technology integration. According to Mason (as cited by Ertmer, 2005, p. 33) this is especially true of adult learners as they need to express their ideas, draw on experience, and try new learning with their jobs. Experiences passed on from collaboration are helpful because teachers become aware of practical ideas and the effects if recreated in their own classrooms (Ertmer, 2005). Experiences shared through collaboration are also opportunities to get feedback and refinement from their peers, as well as to develop new ideas (Smith et al., 2005). As teachers are engaged in a shared learning process and collaboration of ideas, a learning culture develops that will yield improvements and changes to organizational learning. As teachers then reflect on the process of which they are a part, this will raise their performance and consequently improve student learning and achievement. It is important, however to recognize that sustained support and collaboration is key, as learning is ongoing and so should the support for that learning (Banas, 2010).

Collaboration has been found to increase teacher confidence in technology. This rise in confidence however does not translate into true integration of technology in the classroom (Kay, 2007). A suggestion for the much needed implementation of authentic tasks would be to allow teachers observational time in classrooms that have already integrated technology successfully (Ertmer, 2005). Viewing successful implementations can increase teacher confidence in using the same techniques and will highlight the differences in pedagogy (Oncu & Dellialioglu, 2008).

### **Conclusion**

“Technology integration into classroom instruction is a slow and complex process that is influenced by many factors” (Inan & Lowther, 2010, p. 138). It is not just a matter of placing technology within schools. This author would argue that technology has very little to do with the goals of technology integration. Technology is a vehicle for the real goal of technology integration, which is, pedagogical change (Inan & Lowther, 2010; Lowther et al., 2008).

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## **Chapter 11: Improving Traditional Lectures with Personal Response Systems**

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### **Introduction**

This position paper argues in favor of integrating personal response systems (PRSs) also known as audience response systems or clickers into traditional lectures to increase student engagement, participation, and achievement.

Traditional lectures have been disregarded as an effective method of teaching and learning (Freisen, 2011). They are inferior in facilitating learning primarily because they use a transmissive form of pedagogy (McWilliam, 2008). In a traditional lecture, it is difficult to gauge the progress of students, whether they understand the material, and whether they are ready to move on to a new topic (Voelkel & Bennett, 2013). Furthermore, traditional lectures do not give students the skills needed for success such as collaborating and communicating with others and thinking critically (Terenzini et al., 2001).

Tlhoale, Hofman, Naidoo, and Winnips (2013) also found lack of student engagement in the learning process and loss of motivation to be major issues of traditional lectures. In traditional lectures, students are not given an opportunity to participate, process and integrate new and previous knowledge (Tlhoale et al.). One study found that as many as half of the 659 students in the study did not participate when the lesson was a traditional lecture format (Kay & Knaack, 2009). When students are motivated and actively engaged in the learning process, there is increased student learning, student achievement and better acceptance of challenges (Raines & Clark, 2011). Efforts are, therefore, needed to enhance the student experience through "better engagement and by providing more effective feedback to enhance learning" (Voelkel & Bennett, 2013, p. 2).

### **Personal response systems**

Whereas, in lecture classes, feedback is often very difficult to implement without technology (Voelkel & Bennett, 2013), PRSs increase opportunities for feedback as compared to a traditional lecture (Dawson, Meadows & Haffie, 2010; Pagano & Paucar-Caceres, 2013). They give students instant feedback and provide teachers with a clear indication of whether learning is or is not taking place (Dawson et al., 2010; Masikunis, 2009). The frequent and rapid feedback provided by the PRSs gives the teacher more opportunity to adjust to the needs of students, which is not always possible in a traditional lecture (Chen, Whittinghill, & Kadlowec, 2010; Woodfoode & Lopez-Zang, 2012).

Using PRSs in union with interactive activities has "a significant impact on students' performance as compared to more traditional lectures" (Tlhoale et al., 2013, p. 11). One study found that the improvement of 22.8% in test scores of the interactive lecture group (experimental) was significantly higher than the traditional lecture group (control) which showed an improvement of only 0.69% on pre- and post-tests (Tlhoale et al., 2013). Buhay and McGuire

(2010) also found a 10% increase in scores from a pre-test to the post-test as compared with only a 0.94% increase when PRSs were not used.

PRSs improve students' attention and achievement (Masikunis, Panayiotidis, & Burke, 2009; Tlhoale et al., 2013). When students interact through engaging activities with PRSs, they experience an increase in motivation that is higher than the increase in more traditional types of lectures (Tlhoale et al., 2013). Students who participate less and are not motivated in traditional classes are also more likely to participate with use of PRSs (Kay & Knack, 2009; Tlhoale et al., 2013). Kay and Knaack (2012) found that fewer than 50% of the students in their study rarely or did not participate in traditional lectures. Students also reported that they were more likely to respond to in-class questions when PRSs were used as opposed to in a traditional lecture (Pagano & Paucar-Caceres, 2013). Pagano and Paucar-Caceres (2013) found that more than 90% of students participated when PRSs were used in a lecture. Masikunis (2009) found that the introduction of PRSs facilitated and encouraged in-class interaction among students.

A study by Chen, Whittinghill, and Kadlowec (2010) found that 65% of students said their performance would decrease in a traditional lecture course versus one using PRSs. Farkas (2003) found that schools offering interactive learning instruction gave students a greater chance to succeed versus traditional instructional methods. Masikunis and Panayiotidis (2009) found when surveying students, the overall rating scores for every category that related to teaching and learning effectiveness increased by at least 5%. Voelkel and Bennett (2013) found that students valued the interactivity of the lessons and felt that it gave them a greater opportunity to think through questions and feel engaged in the lessons. These positive reactions may be due to the fact that, as Lane (2012) observed, use of PRSs creates a sense of community by allowing students to engage and participate in their classes.

### **Obstacles to use of personal response systems**

The effectiveness of technology depends on pedagogy (Russell et al., 2003). Therefore, PRSs need carefully constructed content and teaching methods to achieve their potential (Tlhoale et al., 2013). Alone, PRS technology will not improve students' performance, but in co-operation with engaging instructional approaches, it can be effective (Tlhoale et al., 2013). Professional development should focus on effective teaching strategies for the integration of technology into constructivist classrooms rather than traditional classrooms (Chen, 2008).

The training and set-up of a PRS can be time-consuming and difficult (Volekel & Bennett, 2013). The use of a PRS takes more preparation time and requires more class time than traditional lecture formats (Tlhoale et al., 2013). However, one study found that the majority of teachers showed an accepting attitude towards PRSs (Agbatogun, 2012). The initial set-up cost of a PRS can also be high and often prevents the prevalent use of these systems (Miller, Ashar & Getz, 2013; Volekel & Bennett, 2013). Alternative approaches, such as the use of SMS-messaging via mobile devices, can be a cost-saving measure for implementing PRSs into lectures or into any class with Internet access (Volekel & Bennett, 2013).

Although PRS technology is easily mastered by a diverse group of students (Pagano & Paucar-Caceres, 2013), not all students respond positively to PRSs (Kay & Knaack, 2009). In one study, males remained more self-confident when using technology than females (Colley and Comber,

2010). However, Kay and Knaack (2009) found that there was no statistically significant difference between males and females using the PRSs and that the majority of students enjoyed and learned better with PRSs.

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## **Chapter 12: Technology Mediated Learning to Sustain Rural Schools: Personal Reflections on an e-Learning Project**

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### **Introduction**

In many countries, there is a policy issue related to the provision of educational opportunities in small rural communities to ensure the opportunities are comparable to those available in urban areas (Hawkes & Halverson 2002; Multani, 2007). The issue is one of economy of scale as it is expensive to provide specialized areas of the curriculum, on-site, to small numbers of students. The enrolment of senior rural students in boarding schools, providing instruction by correspondence based on print and audio and bussing them to larger, sometimes urban institutions, have traditionally provided solutions to this problem.

In recent decades, technology-mediated learning has provided new solutions for those who are educated beyond major centres of population. An example of how this solution has been implemented is provided by the case of high-school education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. In particular, a project in the former Vista school district of Newfoundland and Labrador changed the nature and scope of rural education and, in doing so, provided a possible template for other places where people are educated in small and isolated communities (Stevens, 2007).

The Vista Project was designed to explore ways of academically and administratively linking rural schools in dispersed communities, thereby creating collaborative, Internet-based teaching and learning structures for senior high school students. Following the creation of an initial intranet based on eight small rural schools, other communities joined the Project before the provincial government called for a ministerial inquiry into the emerging practice of what was referred to as distance learning in schools (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000). After extensive analysis of student, teacher, parent and school submissions, the Project was extended to include almost all schools in the province through the provincial government's creation of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI).

The purpose of this reflection is provide an overview of the Vista Project and to illustrate how it led to the development of forms of K-12 distance education that exist in the province today. The reflection highlights the advantages of the project for the province, in general, and for students, in particular.

### **Background to the Vista Project**

With continuing out-migration, most small schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are decreasing in size and, during the last decade, many have closed.

Furthermore, there has been consolidation of provincial school boards from ten to four and, in 2013, from four to two (an English and French district), reflecting the reduction in size, location and number of schools in the province. The changes that have taken place in the organization and administration of education in rural Newfoundland and Labrador have influenced classroom structures and processes.

In 1998, when the Vista intranet was established to academically and administratively integrate eight small rural schools through the local school board, teaching and learning in selected senior classes could, for the first time, be shared between the dispersed sites. The eight participating schools had to coordinate senior classes in those areas of the curriculum that were taught across multiple sites if they were to be able to work together. Some schools received instruction for senior classes from teachers located on other sites (schools) within the network.

Classrooms that had previously been closed to one another began to open to classes located in other parts of the district network for both teaching and learning. The autonomy of teachers within their own classrooms as well as their isolation from other members of the profession were challenged by this initiative. Students were required to discuss their work with peers they did not know and who participated in shared lessons taught from other locations. The traditional closed, or autonomous, model of the school was challenged by an increasingly open teaching and learning environment in which the sharing of teaching resources and collaboration between both teachers and students was facilitated and encouraged.

Four Advanced Placement (AP) web-based courses in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics were developed. Each of the four subject areas was organized by a development team. A lead science teacher in each discipline was paired with recent graduates in each of the disciplines of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics who possessed advanced computer skills including web page design, Java and HTML. The lead teacher and the graduate assistant were advised from time-to-time by Faculty of Education specialists at Memorial University of Newfoundland in each curriculum area and, where possible, scientists from the Faculty of Science.

Most course development took place through interaction between lead teachers and the recent graduates. This model enabled the four courses to be developed over a sixteen-week summer recess period in time for the 1998-1999 school year. All schools involved in the project had DirecPC satellite dishes installed to provide a high-speed down-link. In most rural communities in this part of Canada, digital telecommunications infrastructures do not enable schools to have a high-speed up-link to the internet (Stevens, 2003).

The initial intranet in the Vista school district challenged the notion that senior students in small schools had to leave home to complete their education at larger schools in urban areas. By participating in open classes in real (synchronous) time, combined with a measure of independent (asynchronous) learning, senior students were able to interact with one another through audio, video and electronic whiteboards. On occasion, they met for social interactions and to spend some time with their science teachers in person.

The initial electronic linking of eight sites within a school district to collaborate in the teaching of AP Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics initiated a series of open classes in rural Newfoundland. The creation of the first intranet was an attempt to use information and communication technologies to provide geographically isolated students with extended educational and, indirectly, vocational opportunities. This initiative was part of a broader pan-Canadian initiative (Information Highway Advisory Council, 1997) to prepare people in Canada for the Information Age (Ertl & Plante, 2004). The development of the first intranet within a single school district involved the introduction of an open teaching and learning structure to a closed one. Accordingly, adjustments had to be made in each participating site so that administratively and academically, AP classes could be taught.

The structural changes that have taken place in Newfoundland and Labrador since the inception of the first intranet, within which initial AP courses were developed and taught, has advanced to become a system that provides online instruction to almost all schools in the province. Following the provincial government's ministerial inquiry, links between schools were considerably expanded through the creation of CDLI as a division within the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education. CDLI develops and administers online learning that complements traditional classes in schools throughout the province.

Awareness of what was taking place in the delivery of education in the province had to be introduced to pre-service as well as practicing teachers who had traditionally been prepared to teach in autonomous, or closed, teaching and learning environments called classrooms. While many members of the profession will continue to provide instruction in traditional closed environments, an increasing number will teach in open, collaborative, internet-based learning spaces (Craig & Stevens, 2011).

### ***Reflections on the Vista Project***

It is timely to reflect on what was achieved by the technology-mediated learning that the Vista project provided for selected rural Newfoundland students. By networking small rural schools within intranets, schools that were physically small in terms of the number of teachers and learners on-site, became, in effect, much larger structures that were able to offer extended teaching and learning opportunities.

Teachers in the Vista intranet had been appointed to traditional schools but, through this project, some taught in the space between participating sites. Principals in participating Vista schools had teachers who were not members of their staff entering and leaving their schools at pre-arranged times of the school day which presented a lack of control over this new organization. Nevertheless, by fostering collaborative learning and teaching within extended networked structures, culminating in the creation of CDLI, educational opportunities were enhanced for many of the participating senior students.

A double first was achieved. Advanced Placement science and mathematics were, for the first time, made available online to rural students within the Vista intranet and, for the first time, AP courses were taught online rather than in traditional face-to-face mode. This was particularly significant for senior high school students in rural schools in the province, who, like their rural counterparts in other developed societies (e.g., Australia, New Zealand, Iceland) traditionally

have not had the range of subjects available to them, on-site, that their urban counterparts take for granted.

Viable rural schools are essential for the resourced-based Canadian economy and are an integral part of it. In Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Iceland, Norway and other parts of the world, a considerable part of national wealth lies beyond urban areas in fishing, agriculture, horticulture, forestry and mining. It is difficult to attract professional middle class parents to small rural communities in resource-based economies like these if they believe their sons and daughters will be disadvantaged through lack of learning opportunities. By adding AP subjects to local school curricula through the Vista Project, a considerable advance was made in extending learning opportunities for rural students.

In the Vista Project, traditional rural educational concerns about school size and location were addressed through technology-integrated learning. Eight schools were academically and administratively linked with one another, facilitating collaborative teaching and learning made possible by the Internet. Geographical isolation receded as an educational consideration as schools shared resources and learning opportunities expanded. Schools within the initial intranet became, in effect, sites within a teaching and learning network.

### **A model of technology-mediated learning for rural schools**

As access increases to the Internet, the provision of education in rural Newfoundland and Labrador that is increasingly based on technology provides a useful model for other parts of the world. The structures and processes that have been implemented in this province have provided enhanced educational opportunities for students and have extended teacher expertise to larger numbers of learners than traditional classrooms permit. The Vista Project provided the catalyst for the provincial government's ministerial inquiry (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000) and a platform for the creation of the CDLI.

The provincial government has sustained this early Project through changes in the teaching profession that include the appointment of e-teachers, on-going technological adaptation to changes and the expansion of CDLI to manage and further develop e-learning in schools. A feature of the sustainability of this Project has been the close relationship that has developed, in pursuit of the shared goal of providing quality high school education in rural communities, between teachers, university researchers, policy-makers and administrators and technology providers. Ultimately, the Project has been sustained for cultural reasons: it provides support, through enhanced educational opportunities, for the many rural communities that are part of the cultural identity of people in this province. Where else would one find such close integration of a school system, the Department of Education, a university Faculty of Education and diverse rural communities?

Rural schools in Newfoundland and Labrador have been changed by technology-integrated teaching and learning initiated by the Vista intranet. Today's classes in the province's schools that are located beyond major centres of population are increasingly open places based on structural integration through CDLI, within which e-teaching and e-learning have flourished. The new structures and processes of technology-based education have enabled the province of

Newfoundland and Labrador to meet the challenges of distance and isolation and extend learning opportunities regardless of the location of teachers and learners. In doing so, the province has implemented a solution to the perennial rural educational problem of economy of scale. Small student enrolments in dispersed, isolated communities are no longer barriers to extended curriculum opportunities.

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## **Chapter 13: A Review of the Literature on Online (e) Assessment**

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### **Introduction**

Gaytan and McEwen (2009) defined online assessment as a system for evaluating students' academic achievement in an electronic environment. Walker, Topping and Rodrigues (2008) noted that the purpose of online assessment is to monitor student understanding, improve academic programs, and enhance student learning. The authors observed that e-assessment is an important theme for researchers because the use of online assessment is increasing rapidly yet research surrounding its use is limited. According to Dermo (2009), e-assessment is widely recognized as a key issue in improving the quality of students' e-learning. Gaytan and McEwen argued that it is incumbent upon teachers to become knowledgeable about online assessment as current educational reform movements place increased demands for accountability, improvement, and achievement on online practitioners.

This paper presents a review of ten studies on online assessment. The review includes analysis and critique of the findings of the 10 studies as well as implications, and limitations of the analysis. The paper begins with an overview of how the studies were selected and reviewed.

### **Methods**

Studies were identified by conducting keyword searches in academic indexes using both Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) and Google Scholar. Because sources were selected from educational technology journals and books, all included an electronic medium. The analysis only included sources with the words "online assessment", "e assessment", or "web assessment" as part of the title. To figure as part of the analysis, the journal sources had to include research participants. This means that meta-analyses, book reviews etc were excluded. A number of sources were excluded because the primary focus was not on student assessment in online environments (e.g.,: comprehensive geriatric assessment online). Due to the emerging nature of e-assessment, more recent studies were favored for inclusion over older studies. The studies selected ranged from 2004 to 2011 and were taken from the peer-reviewed journals listed in Table 1.

Table 1

*Journals Included in the Literature Review*

Number of studies	Journal Name
1	Educational Technology & Society
1	Innovations in Education and Teaching International
1	Computers & Education
1	British Journal of Educational Technology
2	The American Journal of Distance Education
1	Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology
1	Journal of Distance Education
1	Learning, Media and Technology
1	Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning

The studies were conducted in the USA, United Kingdom, Turkey, Australia, Algeria and Taiwan. Seven of the studies used undergraduate student as participants, three used graduate students, and two used University faculty members. There was a broad range in the number of participants involved in the research. Two studies used less than 20 participants, five studies used between 30 and 52 participants, and four studies used in excess of 200 participants. Four studies used a quantitative approach, three used qualitative, and three used mixed methods. Table 2 describes the studies.

Table 2

*Descriptive Characteristics of the Studies*

Authors	Country	Sample size	Participants	Method
Bouzidi & Jaillet (2009)	Algeria	242	Undergraduate students	Quantitative
Chen & Tsai (2009)	Taiwan	52	Graduate Students	Quantitative
Costa, Mullan, Kothe, & Butow (2010)	Australia	43	Undergraduate students, faculty members, and graduate students	Quantitative
Dermo (2009)	UK	30	Undergraduate students	Qualitative

Gaytan & McEwen (2009)	US	2028	Undergraduate students and faculty members	Quantitative
Li, Steckelberg, & Srinivasan (2008)	USA	38	Undergraduate students	Mixed method
Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli (2004)	Turkey	46	Undergraduate students	Qualitative
Walker, Topping, & Rodrigues (2008)	UK	15	Undergraduate students	Qualitative
Yates & Beaudrie (2009)	USA	850	Undergraduate Students	Mixed method
Yilmaz (2010)	Turkey	14	Graduate students	Mixed method

The studies were analyzed to identify similarities and differences, patterns and themes. The analytical review of the literature was consistent with a qualitative meta-synthesis method that uses findings from existing studies as data to build new understanding (Zimmer, 2004). Zimmer added that the method allows for, “the identification of consensus, hypothesis development, and investigation of contradictions in patterns of experience across studies” (p. 312).

## Findings

Four themes emerged from the findings of the 10 studies as follows: perceptions of e-assessment; validity and reliability of e-assessment; supporting students in e-assessment; and the benefits e-assessment. Each theme is reported on separately below.

### *Perceptions of e-assessment*

Seven of the studies inquired into student perceptions and attitudes towards online assessment. Dermo (2009) found that students perceived e-assessment positively in most categories including reliability, security, validity, accessibility, and as adding value to their learning. Demo concluded that the perception of e-assessment was consistent regardless of the participants’ age and gender. Participants perceived as unfair the assignment of random questions from an item bank as they did not feel that the questions were of equal difficulty.

Dermo (2009) and Walker, Topping, and Rodrigues (2008) both noted that students perceived formative e-assessment as less stressful than alternative formats while demanding a

similar cognitive level. Costa, Mullan, Kothe and Butow (2010) found that, overall, 67% of participants perceived some benefit from using online computer-based assessment with 58% of participants agreeing that they enjoyed using the method.

Ninety-two percent of post-graduate participants completed at least one online quiz suggesting that they perceived formative online assessment as beneficial.

Ozden, Erturk, and Sanli (2004) found that the majority of students perceived formative online assessment as fair, as capable of providing effective feedback, and as a stimulus that caused them to reflect on their learning. Eighty percent of participants perceived online assessment as more contemporary and systematic than conventional assessment methods. Participants were dissatisfied that it was not possible to edit prior answers since they were hidden on completion to prevent cheating.

Walker, Topping, and Rodrigues (2008) studied student perceptions of formative e-assessment. Findings revealed that participants perceived formative e-assessment as a useful tool that allowed them to assess personal progress and identify learning needs. A minority of participants perceived e-assessment as a more mechanical tool to achieve outcomes and improve grades. Participants felt that allowing unlimited assessment attempts was ineffective and promoted shallow learning. Unprompted questions such as fill in the blanks were perceived as unjust as they required too great a degree of perception. The majority of participants accepted e-assessment as a useful learning aid, saw it as less stressful than alternative forms of assessment, and felt that it required the same cognitive level as conventional tests. The presence of feedback during e-assessment was viewed positively as it reinforced learning and provided deeper insight.

Chen and Tsai (2009) and Li, Steckelberg, and Srinivasan (2008) studied the use of online peer assessment in higher education. Chen and Tsai found that students' attitudes towards online peer assessment were generally positive prior to, and following peer assessment. Although the study did not show an increase in favorable attitudes following the treatment, participants' positive attitudes were statistically maintained. Participants in the Li, Steckelberg, and Srinivasan study also expressed positive perceptions of online peer assessment. The majority of students felt that peer assessment was a worthwhile activity, that they benefited from peers' comments, from marking the work of their peers, and that their projects improved because of peer assessment. Some participants in the study felt that anonymous peer assessment encouraged overly critical comments. The authors found that students had a positive perception of online peer assessment when peer pressure was controlled, feedback was accessed in a timely manner, and when sufficient training and a marking key were provided.

Yilmaz (2010) studied student perceptions of peer assessment as a model for evaluating online group work. The authors found that peer assessment was positively perceived for its ability to foster collaboration, promote effective feedback, and illustrate the diversity that exists within the class. Gaytan and McEwen (2007) administered surveys to faculty and students to measure which assessment strategies were perceived as most effective. Faculty

members identified effective assessment strategies as rubrics, peer evaluation, threaded discussions, online chats and timed quizzes, portfolios, and self-assessment. Students perceived the most effective e-assessment tools as self assessments and practice tests, threaded discussions, weekly assignments with immediate feedback, the use of rubrics, and portfolios. Students indicated that e-assessment could be improved by providing meaningful and timely feedback, utilizing a well-designed rubric, and employing a variety of assessment techniques.

### ***Validity and reliability of online assessment***

Four of the studies examined the validity of online assessment. Bouzidi and Jaillet (2009) noted that, individually, students are not considered as reliable assessors. The authors conducted a study to determine if several students would collectively constitute a valid assessor. They found a high correlation between teacher assessment and peer assessment. The evidence confirmed that peer assessment is valid when it is applied to exact science fields and when the assessment is marked by more than four peers. The study also revealed that the validity of peer assessment could be improved by grading students' participation in peer assessment and by combining online peer assessment with self assessment.

Chen and Tsai (2009) studied the validity of online peer assessment. Their findings were consistent with those of Bouzidi and Jaillet who noted that peer grades were highly correlated with instructors' scores. Yates and Beaudrie (2009) studied the impact that unsupervised online assessment has on student grades to determine whether the results differ from those acquired by online students taking exams in an in-person, proctored environment. The authors found no significant difference in grades between the two conditions suggesting that the online results are as valid as those conducted in person. Yilmaz (2010) found that, to eliminate problems with reliability and validity, students must be provided with detailed rubrics, training, and support mechanisms so that they know what is expected of them and are equipped with the tools required to fulfill their responsibility.

### ***Supporting students in e-assessment***

Six of the studies found that students require ongoing support to facilitate their participation in online assessment. Bouzidi and Jaillet (2009), Chen and Tsai (2009), and Walker, Topping, and Rodriques (2008) found that quality marking criteria are critical for the success of online peer and self-assessment. Since students have little experience in the role of assessor, teachers must provide support in the form of clear marking instructions and detailed rubrics. Yilmaz (2010) found that some participants lacked the critical assessment skills required to assess their peers and identify their shortcomings. As a result, they focused on the mechanics of writing only and avoided more contentious issues. Yilmaz concluded that students must be provided with assessment tutorials and instruction related to constructive criticism and timely feedback in order to prepare them as partners in e-assessment.

Li, Steckelberg, and Srinivasan (2008) found that participants preferred to remain anonymous. The authors noted that instituting anonymous peer assessment maintains confidentiality, promotes more honest feedback, and eliminates the effects of peer pressure. Participants recognized the positive influence of training on peer assessment and commented that they benefited from learning how to conduct critical assessment and implement peer feedback.

In researching the use of online formative assessment systems, Ozden, Erturk, and Sanli (2004) found that low-attaining students and those with reduced computer access might experience anxiety before adapting to online assessment systems. The authors noted that students should receive training to ensure that they have assessment tool familiarity. This prerequisite ensures that students can focus on the content of formative e-assessment without being distracted by an unfamiliar interface.

### ***The benefits of e-assessment***

Four studies found that online assessment improved the quality of student work.

In researching the effect of online peer assessment, Yilmaz (2010) found that students benefited from evaluating the work of their peers as it caused them to evaluate and reflect on their own work. The online peer assessment process provided participants with an enriching experience that promoted deeper understanding and a better appreciation of their own strengths and weaknesses. Chen and Tsai (2009) analyzed assessment scores after a series of online peer assessment activities. The authors found that scores increased after each round of assessment indicating that participants benefited from both peer and expert assessment. The authors concluded that there was a positive relationship between online peer assessment and the quality of students' work.

In researching the use of online formative assessment systems, Ozden, Erturk, and Sanli (2004) found that immediate feedback and scores motivated students and contributed positively to their achievement. Walker, Topping, and Rodriques (2008) found that the majority of students used formative assessment as a pro-active diagnostic tool to gauge their knowledge and identifying areas for further revision. Participants used analytical techniques to answer questions and indicated that formative e-assessment reinforced their learning and allowed them to test higher-level thinking skills. Participants noted that detailed feedback was required to reinforce their learning and to identify misconceptions in their understanding.

### **Discussion**

The seven studies on student perceptions of online assessment yielded consistent results. With few exceptions, students had positive perceptions of online formative assessment. Participants perceived online formative assessment as fair (Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli, 2004) reliable, secure, accessible, and as adding value to their learning (Dermo, 2009; Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli, 2004). Students believe that computer based assessment is contemporary, (Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli, 2004) less stressful, (Walker, Topping & Rodriques, 2008; Dermo, 2009) enjoyable, (Costa, Mullan, Kothe and Butow, 2010) and capable of identifying their learning needs



(Dermo, 2009; Walker, Topping, & Rodriques, 2008). Perceptions of online formative assessment remained positive regardless of the age and gender of the participant.

Students also perceive online peer assessment positively (Chen & Tsai, 2009; Li, Steckelberg, & Srinivasan, 2008; Yimaz, 2010). Participants felt that online peer assessment fostered collaboration, promoted effective feedback, illustrated diversity, (Yimaz, 2010) that they benefited from peers' comments, and that their work was improved by the process (Li, Steckelberg & Srinivasan, 2008). The positive perception of peer assessment was a consistent finding across multiple studies.

Researchers discovered opposing viewpoints regarding the suitability of anonymous peer assessors. Students in the Chen and Tsai (2009) study felt that anonymous peer assessment promoted overly critical comments. Students participating in Li, Steckelberg, and Srinivasan (2008) study expressed a belief that peer anonymity reduced peer pressure, maintained confidentiality, and allowed for more constructive and honest feedback.

Despite the overall positive perceptions of online-assessment, negative perceptions of online assessment were also observed. Students took issue with the use of fill in the blanks, the process of allowing unlimited attempts, (Walker, Topping, and Rodrigues, 2008) the assigning of random questions from an item bank, (Dermo, 2009) and the inability to edit responses during online formative assessment Ozden, Erturk, and Sanli, 2004).

Multiple authors found that students require support mechanisms to facilitate their participation in online assessment. These mechanisms include rubrics, (Bouzidi & Jaillet, 2009) clear marking criteria, (Chen & Tsai, 2009; Walker, Topping & Rodriques, 2008) assessment tutorials, instruction related to constructive criticism, (Yilmaz, 2010) and critical assessment (Li, Steckelberg, & Srinivasan (2008). Training is required so that students are familiar with online formative assessment systems before the process of testing begins (Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli, 2004). These findings are consistent with strategies that are widely accepted as best practices for assessment in face-to-face environments.

This literature review revealed that online assessment can be a valid strategy to monitor student learning. Online unsupervised exams are as valid as those conducted in in-person, proctored environments (Yates & Beaudrie, 2009). Peer assessment has a high correlation with teacher assessment indicating validity (Bouzidi & Jaillet, 2009; Chen & Tsai, 2009). The validity of peer assessment can be improved by grading students' participation in the assessment process, combining online peer assessment with self-assessment, by using at least four peer assessors, (Bouzidi & Jaillet, 2009) and by using rubrics and training (Yimaz, 2010).

This literature reviews also identified the benefits of online assessment. For the majority of students, formative e-assessment was motivational, (Ozden, Ertuk, & Sanli, 2004) encouraged higher order thinking, reinforced learning, and served as an effective method to identify gaps in their knowledge (Walker, Topping, & Rodriques, 2008). For the majority of students, online peer assessment promoted deeper understanding, encouraged the evaluation

and reflection on their own work, and provided them with a better appreciation of their own strengths and weaknesses (Yilmaz, 2010). Online peer assessment had a positive impact on the quality of students work (Chen & Tsai, 2009). Students have positive perceptions of both formative online assessment (Chen & Tsai, 2009; Li, Steckelberg, & Srinivasan, 2008; Yilmaz, 2010) and online peer assessment (Chen & Tsai, 2009; Li, Steckelberg, & Srinivasan, 2008; Yilmaz, 2010). Online assessment can promote higher level thinking and deeper understanding, (Yilmaz, 2010) allow students to identify gaps in their understanding, (Walker, Topping, & Rodriques, 2008) and improve the quality of their work (Chen & Tsai, 2009).

## **Limitations**

This review was limited by the small number (n=10) of studies included. In addition, the reliability of the findings of the studies reviewed may be affected by their small sample size. Li, Steckelberg, and Srinivasan (2008) noted that their research on peer assessment was based on the results of only 38 participants. Walker, Topping, and Rodrigues (2007) cautioned that only 15 participants were involved in their investigation of formative online assessment. The generalizability of the review is also limited. Yates and Beaudrie (2009) cautioned that their research into the validity of online grades involved participants from distance-education courses in a single college. The authors noted that the use of a specific population makes it difficult to generalize the findings. Since all studies used in the literature review were conducted at the undergraduate and graduate level, the findings may not be relevant to K-12 environments.

## **Implications**

To support students in their role as assessors and improve the validity of the assessment, teachers should provide sufficient training, (Li, Steckelberg, & Srinivasan) rubrics, (Bouzidi & Jaillet, 2009) scoring criteria, (Chen & Tsai, 2009; Walker, Topping & Rodriques, 2008), and instruction (Yilmaz, 2010). As in traditional classroom, assessment, students expect fairness (Dermo, 2009) clarity, (Chen & Tsai, 2009; Walker, Topping & Rodriques, 2008) timely feedback, and meaningful responses (Gaytan and McEwen, 2007) so that assessment can have a positive impact on their achievement. Assessing students online appears to be as valid as assessing students in a proctored in-person environment (Yates & Beaudrie, 2009).

Students acting as online peer assessors should be provided with ongoing support to eliminate problems with validity, control peer pressure, and improve their capacity for critical assessment. Students should also be provided with adequate training, (Chen & Tsai, 2009; Li, Steckelberg, & Srinivasan, 2008) detailed rubrics and marking criteria, (Yilmaz, 2010; Chen & Tsai, 2009; Bouzidi & Jaillet, 2009; Gaytan & McEwen, 2009) exemplars, and technical assistance (Bouzidi & Jaillet, 2009). To ease anxiety associated with providing peer feedback, instruction on team dynamics and conflict resolution should be provided before project work begins (Yilmaz, 2010).

When implementing formative e-assessment systems, practitioners should ensure that students are familiar with the assessment environment prior to its use (Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli, 2004). Teachers should be trained in preparing questions for e-assessment so that they measure the intended level of knowledge (Ozden, Erturk, & Sanli, 2004) and should perform an item analysis of random test questions to ensure a similar level of difficulty (Dermo, 2009). To encourage deep thinking, teachers should provide adequate feedback and limit the number of attempts permitted (Walker, Topping & Rodrigues, 2008). To ensure that students are engaged in online formative assessment, teachers should take steps to motivate students and pilot e-assessment systems to ensure that they enable learners (Costa, Mullan, Kothe, & Butow, 2010). Instructors should adopt a variety of e-assessment tools including the evaluation of emails, discussion boards, quizzes, projects, portfolios, self-tests, and peer assessments (Gaytan & McEwen, 2009).

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## **Chapter 14: Providing Support to Struggling Readers using Technology-Assisted Reading**

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### **Struggling readers**

According to the Canadian Education Association (2004) Canada has ranked first over the past 11 years on the United Nations Human Development Index in regards to low-literacy rates. Those who are most susceptible to fall within the group of low literacy are the poor, disabled persons, aboriginal people, those whose native language is not English or French and those who live in rural and isolated areas. Furthermore, due to advances in technology and demands for higher skill sets, those with poor literacy skills continue to struggle to find work which can leave them even more isolated from the rest of the population that can read. The Canadian Education Association recognizes illiteracy as a significant problem in Canada and has called for action to remedy the problem. Likewise, Aist (2002) argued that there is a need for more support for literacy development.

Wyk and Louw (2008) found that students who struggled with reading had a more negative outlook towards their education. They also found that teaching reading is one of the main challenges that teachers face and teachers often miss or misunderstand the behaviors of low-level readers as mere disobedience. In general, educators are challenged to provide constant and additional support for students who are learning to read (Blanchard, McLain, & Bartshe, 2004).

### **Technology-assisted reading**

Researchers have recognized the impact technology can have on improving an individual's ability to read (Knezek & Christensen, 2007). Technology-assisted reading is an effective tool to encourage children to read and become more skilled in their reading (Juliebo & Durnford, 2000). Juliebo and Durnford (2000) reported on a study of a program called On-line Webstories for Learning (OWL) that provided students with reading support both at home and in school. OWL allowed students to work online and at their own pace. In addition to online support, OWL provided students with access to teacher support whenever needed. OWL allowed teachers to offer support either online or directly to their students. The authors noted that OWL helped children build literary concepts and encouraged them to apply their skills.

Blanchard, McLain, and Bartshe (2004) conducted a study using web-based K-12 reading sites such as [www.AOL@school.com](http://www.AOL@school.com), [www.Scholastic.com](http://www.Scholastic.com), and [www.rif.org/readingplanet](http://www.rif.org/readingplanet). The authors found that these sites supported struggling readers of all ages and of all reading levels. They noted that, due to the evolution in literacy development, these web-based sites offered schools and households more choice when seeking reading instruction. Web-based

reading sites are becoming increasingly popular due to the simple fact that they provide additional support and practice for any reader (Blanchard, McLain, & Bartshe, 2004).

Aist (2002) found that a computer-based program called *Reading Tutor* helped children learn to read. *Reading Tutor* listens to children read sentences and corrects them whenever they make an error. The program fosters visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. Aist concluded that "...the help that the *Reading Tutor* provided balanced the student's immediate goal of reading the word or sentence with the longer-term goal of helping the student learn to read" (p. 151).

Voogt and McKenney (2007) examined the effect of a technology-supported environment called *PictoPal* on the development of literacy and communication skills of kindergarten students. They found that *PictoPal* helped children in the areas of reading, writing and authentic experiences. Overall, Voogt and McKenney reported that "...regular and frequent use of technology can have a positive learning effect on literacy development in 4-5 year olds, at least in cases where adult facilitation is present" (p.93).

### **Obstacles to technology-assisted reading**

Wyk and Louw (2008) reported that many educators have reservations regarding the use of technology to foster literacy development. They found that lack of technological skills poses a problem for some learners as they may find it difficult to achieve their educational goals. The authors also found that assistive technology does not remedy or eradicate the learning difficulties associated with reading. Instead, technology-assisted reading provides extra support and instructions to those learning to read. Technology-assisted reading does not provide face-to-face feedback; however, it does provide teachers with the data needed to help assess and support students struggling to read. Online feedback provides readers with immediate feedback which helps increase motivation and confidence. The authors argued that it is critical for teachers to choose technology assisted reading programs that will provide readers with the best chance for success.

Another obstacle associated with technology-assisted reading stems from the lack of research (Blanchard, McLain and Bartshe, 2004). Blanchard et al. (2004) noted that there are few documented benefits of technology-assisted reading programs. However, they also observed that the lack of research in the area stems from the fact that technology is always changing which makes it difficult for researchers to investigate advances in educational technology.

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## **Chapter 15: Damming Education: Blocking the Flow of Information into Schools**

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Under the banner of protecting minors from harmful material such as pornography, graphically violent images and hate propaganda, Internet content filtering software is being used in homes, libraries and schools (Meeder, 2005). Content filters can be purchased, downloaded, or provided by an Internet service provider and typically limit access to an “approved” list of sources or block “inappropriate” materials containing features that are identifiable and objectionable (Kaiser, 2000). Yet, it seems difficult to ascertain what is to be considered “inappropriate”. According to Kean (2007) “In countries with Web censorship, scholars must circumvent government filters just to write papers on human rights or study HIV transmission” (p. A29).

Around the world, governments are making decisions about what online information students should be able to access. In the United States, the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA, 2000) has mandated that all schools and libraries receiving federal funding employ such filtering software. The Australian government has imposed mandatory content filtering in all schools at the Internet service provider level (Simpson, 2008). Xin (2009) noted that the Chinese government requires all personal computers in schools to use the controversial “Green Dam” content filtering software that blocks access to websites such as the Wall Street Journal. Officials from University of Toronto’s Citizen Lab reported that 40 countries were using some sort of Internet filtering (Kean, 2007).

Governments are adopting filtering tools for use in educational institutions in spite of the fact that use of these tools has not yet been proven effective. The lack of effectiveness is largely due to the fact that filtering cannot accurately discriminate between allowed and forbidden content. Thus, both over-blocking (restricting relevant materials) and under-blocking (neglecting objectionable materials) occur (Resnick, Hansen, & Richardson, 2004). Sobel (1999) compared Internet search engines that use filters and found that 90% or more of relevant materials were blocked on searches for phrases such as “American Red Cross” “San Diego Zoo” or “Christianity”. In some cases, 99% of materials that would normally be available without filters were prohibited.

The US-based National Coalition Against Censorship published a report detailing results of more than 70 studies on over- and under- blocking of websites. The report demonstrated relevant, blocked materials on HIV/AIDS, sexuality education, gay and lesbian issues, political topics, human rights, art and literary websites and, ironically, websites about censorship (Cho & Heins, 2001). Palfrey and Zittrain (2008) noted that

government-level filtering is easy to implement on a simple level, but very tricky (or perhaps impossible) to do thoroughly. They cautioned that it could be used by some governments because they are concerned that their citizens will learn what their state does not want them to learn. Yan (2009) found that the primary filtering strategy of CIPA in the United States did not have a significant positive effect on the Internet safety knowledge of high school students, even though there are mandated “awareness” strategies included in the act. Akcay (2008) argued that:

Filters may help protect young students in elementary school settings, but filtering should be used less in middle and high schools. Instead, having educators available to guide students through the use of the Internet, answering their questions and addressing safety concerns, would be more meaningful than relying on a static software program. (p. 123)

Akcay’s (2008) proposal that educators participate in student Internet activities and teach them about the dangers of the Internet is not unique. Schrader (1999) championed the adoption of acceptable use policies that explicitly state the rights and responsibilities for acceptable Internet behaviour. He argued that these policies combined with parental education and regular training for teachers and librarians would develop “net safe” communities of users. “If the goal is to produce adults who can think and decide for themselves what is appropriate, students need practice and guidance along the way to make decisions and learn about the possible choices they will face” (Perry, 2008, p.108).

Resnick, Hansen and Richardson (2004) asserted that, although the methodology of testing the over- and under-blocking of websites by filtering products has improved, significant concerns remain, and they suggest that other approaches such as student education, privacy screens, honour codes, and adult monitoring should perhaps be employed. Neumann and Weinstein (1999) discussed website self-rating as another popular alternative to government intervention. Sobel (1999) identified a concern that commercial media operations would dominate a self-rated Internet, thus homogenizing the environment.

Technical limitations, particularly over- and under-blocking, have been established as a chief criticism of content filtering (Hall & Carter, 2006). Another major problem with Internet filtering is that decisions must be made about what constitutes inappropriate content, and it is not clear on what basis such decisions will be made (Simpson, 2008). Brown (2008) asserted that restrictions on media and technology use in school inhibit learning. She suggested redirecting efforts from restricting access to educating youth to make safe, productive and informed choices. “Use of filters takes this choice away from educators and puts it in the hands of people who have no relationship with the students, parents, or teachers” (Kaiser, 2000, p.10).

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## **Chapter 16: High-School Students' Perceptions of Effective Online Course Design**

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### **Introduction**

The medium and mode of distance education have undergone a variety of advancements. Many of these advancements have been reflected in the nature of K-12 distance education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Historically, in this province, K-12 distance learning was delivered through a telecommunication audiographics system known as the Tele-medicine/TETRA/ system (Barbour, 2005a). In many instances, assessments were submitted on paper using facsimile technology.

Near the end of 2000, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) was established to help modernize the delivery of K-12 distance education. By 2008, the number of course registrations had increased by 69% and courses offered had jumped 100% (Howard, 2008). Barbour (2005b; 2005c; 2007) conducted a study of effective online course design by examining the perceptions of course developers, teachers and administrators at the CDLI. The study resulted in seven recommendations for effective course design as follows:

- a) prior to beginning development of any of the web-based content, plan out individual lessons and specific items to be included;
- b) keep the navigation simple and to a minimum, without presenting the content the same way in every lesson;
- c) provide a summary of the content from the required readings or the synchronous lesson and include examples that are personalized to the students' own context;
- d) ensure students are given clear instructions and model expectations of the style and level that will be required for student work;
- e) refrain from using too much text and consider the use of visuals to replace or supplement text when applicable;
- f) use multimedia to enhance the content and not simply because it is available; and
- g) develop content for the average or below-average student, while including enrichment activities for above-average students.

There was no follow-up to the original Barbour (2005b; 2005c; 2007) studies to determine if the course design recommendations were actually applied in practice or whether students performed better in courses that applied these recommendations. Nor were there any studies that investigated if students' perspectives were congruent with these recommendations. The

purpose of the study reported on in this paper, therefore, was to examine student perceptions of effective online course design in the CDLI. This study was guided by the following research question: What are student perceptions of effective online course design? Their perceptions were identified through interviews and a focus group.

This paper begins by examining the limited research that has been conducted into online course design in K-12 online learning. This examination is followed by a description of the methodology, and the interviews and focus groups that were conducted. The results' section is grouped into four themes of students' perceptions of effective online course design. These themes are compared with the seven recommendations identified through a study of the perceptions of teachers, and administrators.

## **Literature review**

The use of K-12 online learning has advanced through Canada and the United States (Barbour, 2012; Watson, Murin, Vashaw, Gemin, & Rapp, 2012) and there is a growing literature based and focused on the delivery of K-12 online learning (e.g., Davis & Roblyer, 2005; DiPietro, 2010; DiPietro, Ferdig, Black, & Preston, 2008; Ferdig, Cavanaugh, DiPietro, Black, & Dawson, 2009; Lowes, 2005; Murphy & Rodríguez-Manzanares, 2009a, 2009b; Nippard & Murphy, 2007; Smith, 2009). However, there has been much less research conducted into the design of K-12 online learning (Barbour, 2013).

During the past decade, online course design was often not a primary consideration and was often copied directly from the face-to-face model of education. Many early online courses relied strictly on e-mail, chat rooms, and discussion boards (Gibson & Herrera, 1999; Perrin & Mayhew, 2000). The online courses dispensed their information using the traditional manner of speech and text, with the only difference being the fact that the delivery medium was online. Further, larger and better-funded K-12 online learning programs, such as the US-based Virtual High School Collaborative (VHS), saw the benefits of guiding teachers through course construction. One of the ways the VHS guided teachers to focus on online course design was to require all of their teachers to complete a 26-week graduate level program that includes a strong component – both theoretical and practical – in online course design (Zucker & Kozma, 2003).

In terms of research on online course design, one line of inquiry (e.g., Barbour & Cooze, 2004; Cooze & Barbour, 2005; 2007) examined the online course design through the lens of learning styles. Data from these studies indicated that visual, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial and assimilator K-12 learners adapted most easily to online learning. This research suggested that online course designers should focus specifically on the students who did not possess these learning styles, as students who did possess these characteristics were performing well in the online environment regardless of the online course design. However, it should be noted that research into learning styles has been found to be methodologically unreliable (Coffield, Moseley, Hall & Ecclestone, 2004), so many might question the usefulness of this scholarship.

In 2007, the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) released their *National Standards for Quality Online Courses*. The standards were eventually updated in 2011 but the original document provided a rubric that graded courses on a four-point scale in six general areas: content, instructional design, student assessment, technology, course evaluation and management, and 21st century skills (iNACOL, 2007, 2011). Under each of these areas, iNACOL listed specific guidelines that should be followed. This rubric was adopted from an earlier set of standards released by the Southern Regional Education Board, with some additions made based on iNACOL's involvement in the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. Even though several states have adopted the iNACOL standards for the purpose of reviewing their K-12 online courses (Bridges, Smith, & Lewis, 2013), there is actually no published research to date that examines the reliability or validity of these standards.

To date, one of the few systematic research initiatives that have explored effective online course design has been the Quality Matters initiative. Originally created by MarylandOnline in the early 2000s, the Quality Matters program is a not-for-profit, subscription-based company that can now be found in 46 states. The program is designed to help guide online courses at all levels with a wide array of services (i.e., grades 6-12 and higher education). One such service is a peer-review for online courses through a research-based, validated rubric (Greenberg, 2011). The rubric includes eight general standards:

- a) course overview and introduction,
- b) learning objectives (competencies),
- c) assessment and measurement,
- d) instructional materials,
- e) learner interaction and engagement,
- f) course technology,
- g) learner support, and
- h) accessibility. (MarylandOnline, 2013)

In addition to these eight general areas, the rubric included 41 specific standards. The peer-review process begins with an initial four-to-six-week review during which feedback is provided to help the institution continually improve their course. Further, Quality Matters also provides training through workshops in using the Quality Matters' rubric, designing online courses, using appropriate media, and becoming a peer reviewer. However, what was still absent – even in the development of this reliable and valid instrument – was the student voice. This study aims to partially fill this gap.

## **Methodology**

We asked ten principals from rural schools to identify students who were articulate and who had taken multiple courses through the CDLI. In essence, we were requesting a purposeful sample or participants who were “capable of articulating accounts, descriptions, and evaluations in many ways, from more than a single position of perspective, responding in more than one voice...” (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p.74). The principals identified six



students who they believed met these requirements. The six participants were from four different schools. Five of the participants were grade twelve students, while one was a grade ten student. These six individuals had completed a total of fourteen CDLI courses and were six weeks away from completing another thirteen at the time of this study. All names are pseudonyms.

### ***Data collection***

The six students were divided into two groups: one group of two students with whom the lead author conducted interviews (i.e., Becky and Lori) and a group of four students who participated in a focus group (i.e., Kari, Jenni, Carla and Annette). The interviews and focus group were conducted during the spring of 2005.

The purpose of the interviews was consistent with Seidman (1998), who indicated that interviews are useful “to concentrate on concrete details of the participants’ present experience in the topic area of study” (p. 12). More specifically, we were interested in their experience using the asynchronous content in the courses that they had taken with the CDLI, including what they found useful and not so useful with those course materials. We wanted them to describe their “stories about their experiences in school as a way of eliciting details” on the topic (Seidman, p. 12). The interviews were between 30 and 60 minutes in length and were conducted over the telephone using a semi-structured protocol.

We also used an online focus group along with interviews. Barbour (1999) described how focus groups are just one part of a multi-method strategy to collect data on the topic. The intention was to allow us to increase the number of students from whom we received input, but also to focus that input by using actual asynchronous content as the focus of our semi-structure focus group protocol. The focus group was conducted using *Elluminate Live*. The *Elluminate Live* allowed for two-way voice over the Internet, a shared interactive whiteboard, instant messaging, application sharing, breakout rooms, and interactive quiz and survey management. During the focus group, the two-way voice over the Internet and instant messaging were the tools primarily used along with some use of the whiteboard and the application sharing features.

The focus group consisted of four of the six students, two of whom were present at the beginning, one who joined the session after twenty minutes (she had been experiencing technical difficulties in getting into *Elluminate Live*), and the fourth student who joined the session for the final twenty minutes.

### ***Data analysis***

Both the interviews and the focus group were recorded and transcribed, using pseudonyms for the participants’ names and other identifying information, incorporating any notes took during the interview or focus group into the final transcription in a different font to indicate their status as observer’s notes. A second individual independently checked each transcript for accuracy. After the content of the transcript was verified as accurate, we provided the students with the opportunity to member check their transcript. We did not receive any

changes or even acknowledgements that the transcript was received. We took this to mean that the transcript was either acceptable or simply not read.

We analyzed the data using an inductive analysis approach. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) described this approach as scanning the data for categories and relationships within individual transcript and between transcripts. Ezzy (2002) described the constant comparative method, the form of inductive analysis that we utilized, as developing and identifying codes that can be compared for similarities and differences. These “comparisons allow data to be group and differentiated, as categories are identified and various pieces of data are grouped together” (p.

90). Due to the lead author’s personal experience with the CDLI, other virtual schools and the previous study, we were attentive to potential categories and groupings. Using this method, we searched for emerging themes across interviews (Kvale, 1996) and specific statements supporting or dismissing these themes (Shank, 2002).

## Results

We have grouped the results into four themes. The themes are: lack of use of asynchronous web-based content; the need for multimedia; the need for content beyond the text; the need for self-assessment tools. We discuss each one separately using verbatim quotes from students.

Participants in that study felt that the students would skip the “you will learn” and “you should know” sections of the course content altogether, and only use the other sections of the course in varying degrees. However, two of the students stated that they “hardly used” the web-based content, while one student said that she only used it “one out of five” of her offline classes. Two of the three remaining students made similar use. When they did use the asynchronous web-based content, students preferred that it deal “with the content that [they] learn” (i.e. the content of the real-time, online interactions in *ELive* with students). The students found the web-based content, “really good for studying” or when they couldn’t “find the answer [or] an explanation.” There was one student who simply didn’t use the asynchronous web-based content at all, instead choosing to use the multimedia learning objects associated with the course.

According to the students, one of the barriers that prevented them from using the asynchronous web-based content was the type and amount of work that teachers assigned during offline time.

“Teachers always have lots of questions or assignments for you to do, we’re never short of work,” commented one student, who recommended, “more time for students to look through the web [asynchronous web-based] material.” As one student pointed out, “sometimes we do lessons like the one you have there on the board [a sample lesson from the asynchronous web-based content], but other times she [the teacher] just assigns questions from the book.” Another student stated that her teacher “rarely” took assignments from the asynchronous web-based content. One student indicated that she used her “book a lot more than the web.” She also noted that the course content might not “be explained as good [sic] as the book.”

Another added, “I’m not sure if I trust what is on the web.” One student suggested that teachers should “remind students that it [online content] is there and to use it.”

The students indicated that simply providing text-based lessons on the web was not useful. “Text is alright, but sometimes it’s not really useful,” stated one student, who wanted “more than just reading through text.” Instead, students were more interested in lessons that used the various media that the Internet could offer. This media included “links...because they take you [to] other really useful sites”, “videos...so you can actually see what they are doing,” and “pictures and things in his own words.” As one student summarized it, media like these are “really interesting and a lot better than sitting down and reading the book.”

Students also wanted media based on its usefulness and not simply because the CDLI was capable of including it. Specifically, the students in this study appreciated diagrams (static and interactive) “that could actually show you and let you see how it works.” They also found the multimedia learning objects that had “the information in there all done for you exactly what you have to do” useful. Overall, they wanted videos, interactives, and diagrams that provided them with “a different way of understanding concepts.”

Students wanted their web-based content to provide a good set of notes. As one student stated,

“you need a good set of notes to follow.” She noted, “I don’t even use my textbook because he [her teacher] has such a good set of notes.” This statement was consistent with another student’s, who said, “if there’s [sic] good notes, it’s easier to study.” A good set of notes was explained by a student as containing “a lot of step-by-step things to explain it to you and show you how to do it.” A second student added that good notes included “examples about things like that in a different kind of explanation than what your book gives you.” This was one point with which all six students were in agreement.

Five of the six students also indicated that “the test yourself is really helpful.” The “test yourself” feature was a java-scripted self-assessment where students were given a series of multiple-choice questions and clicked on the radio buttons to select their response. Once completed, students would click submit and the correct answers would be displayed. These assessments were not recorded by the course management system, and were strictly for student use. One student noted they enjoyed these items “because they really give you an idea of what it is going to be like for the test and they help you remember.” Another student expressed a similar comment, saying the “test yourself” feature “let you know if you’re on track, if you understand what the lesson’s about.” A third student found them “really good for studying...for a lot of people [i.e., students] they didn’t know how to review.”

## **Discussion**

We compared students’ perspectives with Barbour’s (2005b, 2005c, 2007) seven recommendations as follows:

- prior to beginning development of any of the web-based material, plan out the course with ideas for the individual lessons and specific items that they would like to include;

This relevance of this recommendation is highlighted in students' preference for a more careful consideration of the type of content to which they are given access. Particularly, the recommendation relates to students' preference for access to notes as well as their tendency to ignore much of the content that the course had been initially designed with.

- keep the navigation simple and to a minimum, without presenting the content the same way in every lesson;

This recommendation pertaining to a need for variation in the content may be relevant to students' comments about not using the web content. We can hypothesize that students may have used the content more if were presented in different ways with each lesson.

- provide a summary of the content from the required readings or the synchronous lesson and include examples that are personalized to the students' own context;

The first part of this recommendation reinforces students' comments pertaining to the preference for "good notes." However, students wanted more than merely summaries, they wanted further explanations of content. This preference for content is supported by Anderson's (2004) finding that student-content interaction is important to success.

- ensure students are given clear instructions and model expectations of the style and level that will be required for student work;
- f develop content for the average or below-average student, while including enrichment activities for above-average students.

There was no congruence between recommendations 4 and 7 and any of the results of this study. Students' comments referenced more so the consumption of knowledge. They did not refer to any styles or levels of student work. Students did not reference having access to content differentiated by student level. They did, however, refer to the need for content that was in different formats or that explained things in different ways.

- f refrain from using too much text and consider the use of visuals to replace or supplement text when applicable;
- f use multimedia to enhance the content and not simply because it is available;

We can consider the above two recommendations together. Both are congruent with students' comments. The students indicated that text was not useful. Students wanted links, videos and pictures. They wanted something beyond an experience of reading and they wanted to be able to visualize the phenomena being studied, and see how it worked. This preference for multimedia was not only to make learning more interesting but to make content more comprehensible by explaining content in different formats. Although, as Fox (2010) claimed,

multimedia by itself does not yield better results than text, with careful integration and affective pedagogy, integration of multimedia may better support students' preferences for learning online.

Although most of students' comments were referenced in the recommendations, one category of comments (i.e., regarding self-assessment tools) was not. Students appreciated having tools that they could use to check their understanding, keep them on track and reinforce their learning. The addition of such tools to online course design may represent a recommendation that could be added to the seven already proposed. The addition of such a tool would also be consistent with Hatzia Apostolou et al.'s (2010) argument that stresses the significance of an online feedback tool that is timely and associates with the assessment

## Conclusions

The purpose of the study reported on in this paper was to examine student perceptions of effective online course design in the CDLI. Analysis of interviews and focus groups with six CDLI students resulted in the identification of four categories of perceptions of the course design. These categories pointed to a lack of use of asynchronous web-based content; the need for multimedia; the need for content beyond the text and the need for self-assessment tools. We compared these four categories of students' perceptions with seven recommendations for designing online courses identified through a study of the perceptions of teachers, and administrators by Barbour (2005b; 2005c; 2007). There was no congruence between recommendations 4 and 7 and any of the results of this study. All other recommendations were supported by students' perceptions.

The student perceptions provide some insights for online course design including more careful consideration of the type of content to which students are given access; provision of notes that explain content; the need for content in different formats and that explains concepts in different ways, incorporation of links, videos and pictures. Although most of students' comments were referenced in the recommendations, one category of comments (i.e., regarding self-assessment tools) was not. Students appreciated having tools that they could use to check their understanding, keep them on track and reinforce their learning. The addition of such tools to online course design may represent a recommendation that could be added to the seven already proposed.

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## **Chapter 17: Actualizing Virtual Teaching**

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K-12 online distance education is growing rapidly in Canada. According to Barbour (2013), approximately 25, 000 students enrolled in online distance courses during the 1999-2000 school year, while, the enrolment reached 284, 963 during 2011/12 school year. 251 programs are offering online distance courses to K-12 students in Canada. Some provinces and territories such as Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan have more than one program, while others, such as Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon Territories and Northern Territories rely on one program. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) is the only institution providing equality of educational opportunities through Internet-based courses to high school students, especially from rural communities. The CDLI was established by the Department of Education in December 2000 piloting 10 Internet-based courses. Currently, the CDLI offers 40 online courses to more than 1000 high school students in the province. Virtual teaching has the potential to transform traditional teaching (Rice, 2012). Teachers use an online mode of delivery in the CDLI. Some literature has been written on virtual schooling in NL such as the evolution of online distance education (Barbour, 2005; Barbour, 2008; Boone, 2008; Mulcahy, 2007; Press, Galway & Collins, 2003; & Saqlain, 2013), the integration of technology in rural schools (Sheppard, Boone & Stevens, 2001), and the effectiveness of distance education (Crocker, 2007). Similarly, some research studies were conducted on cyber schooling such as the impact of high school online distance education on rural students' university achievement and persistence (Dodd, Kirby, Seifert & Sharpe, 2009), perceptions of distance education (Johnson, 2011), the role of on-site facilitators (Barbour & Mulcahy, 2009) and the need of change in teaching (Stevens, 2006; Stevens; 2007). Less has been said about virtual teaching through the CDLI in the province. This paper will provide its readers a broader understanding of teaching and learning through the CDLI.

### **Teaching and Learning**

In 1988/89, a grade ten advanced mathematics course was offered to students from 13 schools through the Telemedicine Education and Technology Resource Agency (TETRA) network, located at the Health Sciences Centre, in St. John's. A telephone -based conferencing system was used to join the classes. Mics and speakers were placed in the classrooms and in the teacher's office. Everyone in the class could speak and be heard. A telewriter system was used to display the teacher's writing. The telewriter system used a large graphics tablet for input and a computer monitor for output. The teacher would write on the tablet and it would be sent to students over the teleconference network. The students could have the same capability to write, as needed during class time.

The students had the same number of classes as they would have had, were the course offered face to face. For most of the courses, half of those classes, every second period, would be an "online class" using the system and the remaining half, often called "offline classes" were times in which the students completed in -class activities. For French, typically 70% of the

classes were online, though, owing to the need for frequent oral communication. A teacher could not see the students, instead he or she could hear them and see what they were writing. One of the major advantages of the tele-teaching was that a teacher could not judge the students on the basis of physical appearance, family background and previous experience with the subject. If there was a requirement of any demo, the demo was videotaped and copies were sent to each school.

The labs were done, onsite by the students, through the latest digital interfacing equipment. Besides the regular real-time (synchronous) classes, the students also had the benefit of print resources tailored to each course. Distance education handbooks were prepared for the students. One handbook was prepared per unit of study. The students were expected to read the lesson and complete the assigned exercises. The teachers would make sure that students read the contents. Sometimes extra support would be provided to students in need. Tests and assignments were prepared a year in advance and sent to the schools. Written work of the students was faxed to the teacher and then, marked and faxed back to the students. To engage students and to make teaching more interactive, teachers would use many strategies such as using a question answer style of teaching, asking follow up questions, being a good listener, and maintaining communication with onsite administration.

In 1998/99, four advanced placement courses (Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics) were offered to students from eight schools through the Vista School Project. An early version of WebCT as well as several assorted asynchronous tools were used to deliver courses. The Learning Management System (LMS) had content management tools, student email, online testing tools, a drop box for assignment submission, a discussion forum and a grade book. Netmeeting was used as a synchronous tool. Netmeeting provided two-way voice, video, and a whiteboard. A couple of months later, MeetingPoint was also used to enable Netmeeting to connect more than one school at a time to the instructor.

In 1999 the provincial government created a ministerial review panel to reexamine various aspects of education, including Distance Education. Chapter 6 of the document “Supporting Learning” (Sparkes & Williams, 2000) contained numerous recommendations regarding Distance education, the most important of which was the creation of a “Centre for Distance learning and Innovation.” This recommendation was acted upon almost immediately and in 2000 the CDLI was created. It immediately went to work planning for a pilot year in which it would field-test ten new courses.

It was decided to continue to use WebCT but the course content was created as stand-alone-web content and was imported into the LMS once completed. Templates were created for the courses and developers were seconded or contracted, provided with equipment, training and support and began creating the content, which was placed within a standard course content template. The courses were based on the standard course offerings for the province. Courses were divided into units, in accordance with the organization used in the official Curriculum Guides. If needed, Units were further subdivided into sections. The basic stand-alone course organizer, though, was the lesson, which was a portion of the course which could be

completed, typically, in one to three class periods, as appropriate for the material. Each lesson was divided into five components. The content templates had five tabbed pages:

1. **You Will Learn:** A list of the curriculum outcomes for the lesson but re-worded so that they would be understandable to students. Curriculum outcomes from guides are written for teachers and often contain jargon; the developers used language that students would be expected to understand.
2. **You Should Already Know:** A list of items that students were expected to know before starting the lesson. This was not an effort to reteach content that was expected to be previously taught. Mostly this section listed the items and, perhaps, linked back to the lessons where they would have been addressed, if appropriate.
3. **Lesson:** The actual learning content. Typically this consisted of text and graphics. In grade 11 physics, for example, the developer included objects created using Macromedia® Flash™ as well.
4. **Activities:** As the name suggests, these would include additional items the student would do. In the grade 11 physics course, for example, these tended to include practice questions and problems.
5. **Test Yourself:** A short self-assessment. In many of the courses, including Physics, this would be an interactive multiple choice quiz powered by an open-source Javascript engine the developers had come across.

Recruiting virtual teachers was another major challenge. First, the CDLI administrative staff created a general profile for e-teacher's characteristics. Then, an online point-based application process was used to accept applications and to see the appropriateness of the e-teachers. Teachers would be interviewed, shortlisted and three referees were contacted. Short listed candidates were rank-ordered according to the score. Then the directors would approach the school district and ask permission to appoint the highest ranked teacher for each job. One thing is noteworthy, that all the teachers had traditional teacher training.

From the CDLI side, every possible effort was made to support online learners. Each student was provided a computer and her/his own login. A disk cloning process was used to set up the computers. In this system, all the necessary software was installed and configured on one computer. Then, the disk drive was cloned to all other computers. In each school, an 'all-in-one' printer/scanner with a document feeder was also provided. Online learners were free to use it. They could print off their work and upload their handwritten assignments to the WebCT drop box. For synchronous classes, each computer was equipped with a graphics tablet. Each student was provided his/her own headset-microphone. For the science labs, digital interfacing equipment such as Vernier LabPro with Logger Pro software was used.

Online learning cannot gain success without onsite teacher support. At the school level, online students are supported and supervised by a mediating team (m-team) or a mediating teacher (m-teacher). M-teachers choose these responsibilities voluntarily or they are assigned these

responsibilities besides their usual work. Principals select and register students for online courses. They make sure that there is an appropriate place for online students to work at the school. They also liaison with the CDLI about the latest updates. M-teachers supervise tests and labs, communicate with the e-teacher and make sure that students are on task. Peers provide basic training to their fellows. Technical issues are solved by the district technician with the support of the M-teacher.

Many readers are eager to know about labs in the CDLI. Before the Internet in 1992, the handbooks, with technical assistance, were written. The slides were used on the telewriter. Each student was given a handbook with detailed instructions. Each school was also provided with VHS videos with demos for each unit. Schools were expected to provide the traditional lab equipment to the students and the Department of Education provided, free of charge, kits containing the necessary digital interfacing hardware and software as well as a computer. Students were expected to do the labs under the onsite teacher's supervision. Students were encouraged to work in groups. It was made sure that the students had adequate supervision for their labs at school. Teacher also visited the sites as needed and assisted students. The system used today by the CDLI is a variation on this. Schools are still expected to provide the traditional equipment and the interfacing equipment is all provided by the CDLI. The detailed instructions are still present but are now embedded within the learning content in Desire2Learn. As always, students are expected to perform the lab activities at their own schools, under the supervision of a member of the M-team. The CDLI also has personnel dedicated to the support of the lab activities. Lab support works in cooperation with the online teachers and provides assistance, as needed, both onsite as well as virtually through videoconference.

The growth of virtual schooling is rapid. To be sure the advancement in virtual schooling in Canada is less than the United States. But it is more than in any other country around the world. Barbour (2013) mentions that 5.2% of the total K-12 population take online courses in Canada. Due to the expansion of the Internet, decrease in prices of software and hardware, and different learners' needs, virtual schooling may continue to increase. In the Newfoundland and Labrador context, mainly rural students in smaller schools take online courses with the CDLI. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2013) anticipates that there will be over 70,000 job openings in the province by 2020. It is expected that most of the professionals who will move to Newfoundland and Labrador will bring their families. It follows that many urban students will also start taking online courses as it is happening in the US and in some other provinces of Canada. It is time to think, are we ready to teach the twenty first century skills to our learners? Many universities in the US are offering teacher training in virtual learning environments. Some free introductory courses such as Foundation of Virtual Instruction, Emerging trends and Technologies in the Virtual K-12 Classroom, Advanced Instructional Strategies in Virtual Classroom are offered by the University of California, Irvine through massive open online courses (MOOCs).

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Dr. Dennis Mulcahy and Mr. Maurice Barry for their expert advice and encouragement with this paper.

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## **Chapter 18: From Railcars to Virtual Schooling: A History of Distance Education and E-Learning in Newfoundland and Labrador**

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### **Introduction**

The area of Newfoundland and Labrador is 155,000 square miles while the population is only 505,000 (Barbour & Mulcahy, 2009). Half of the population lives in the capital and the other half lives in small rural communities many of which are coastal and remote. Providing K-12 education in such a large area with isolated and remote communities has been a challenge.

Distance education was introduced under necessity to cope with the geographical and demographical challenges of the province, while, in the United States distance learning for elementary and secondary students represented a solution to many other problems such as crowded schools, a shortage of secondary courses for remedial and the challenges to accommodate the students who need flexible schedules (Cavanaugh & Clark, 2007).

This paper outlines the development of distance education and e-learning in Newfoundland and Labrador. Primarily, it focuses on how Distance Education evolved in a geographically large but sparsely populated province, why this approach to education developed and the challenges and historical events that led to the development of e-learning and distance education.

### **Early efforts in distance education: A school on wheels**

The concept of distance education is not new in Newfoundland and Labrador (Crocker, 2007). Riggs (1987, p.1) identified two types of delivery of education for isolated communities in the province. First, the Department of Education, the Newfoundland Railway and the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company launched a plan to open a school on a railcar. The main purpose of the “School on Wheels” was to teach children who lived in small, remote communities without schools but close to railway tracks. The Department of Education provided a teacher, curriculum materials and equipment. The Anglo Newfoundland Development Company donated a railcar (Noseworthy, 1997).

The Department of Education established the Correspondence Division in 1938 (Riggs, 1987, p.1). Noseworthy (1997) reported that the School on Wheels program was attached to the Correspondence Branch to operate correspondence courses instead of a regular curriculum (p.115). The railcar was used for educational purposes from 1936 to 1942. Meanwhile, some schools were opened in rural areas which led to low enrolment in the railcar program. Eventually, the railcar service was discontinued.

## Report of the Small Schools' Study Project

The second effort made to provide distance education in the province was in 1956 when the Department of Education introduced correspondence courses in 50 small schools at grade 9, 10 and 11 (Riggs, 1987, p.2). A committee was established under the direction of Frank Riggs in 1987. Riggs (1987) identified various issues in small rural schools such as limited curriculum, insufficient staff, inadequate guidance and lack of instructional material. Besides these issues, he also identified the most critical problem which was teacher recruitment and retention in remote communities. Riggs submitted his report, "Report of the Small Schools Study Project" with recommendations on many issues. One of these issues was distance education:

- 3.4 That by direct classroom teaching or by distance education, all senior high schools should have the ability to offer all courses which are prerequisite to entry into post-secondary institutions and the ability to accommodate particular course requirements of small numbers of students.*
- 3.5 That measures be taken to ensure that a course in high school chemistry level 2 [Grade 12] and a course in high school physics level 2 Grade are available to small high schools by September 1987. Consideration should be given to delivery by computers, audio-video tapes or by other means of distance education.*
- 3.6 That greater use of technology be made in program delivery in small schools; especially in small high schools.*
- 3.7 That a Distance Education School be established and a principal and teachers be employed to assume responsibility for the development and administration of distance education courses.*

## Telemedicine and Educational Technology Resources Agency (TETRA)

In response to the Riggs' report, the Department of Education planned to develop a "Distance Learning Model" for remote schools (Boone, 2010). For this purpose, Telemedicine and Educational Technology Resources Agency (TETRA) was used. TETRA was established in 1977 for research development programs and service delivery in the fields of education and health in Newfoundland and Labrador. TETRA relied on an audiographics' system to conduct teleconferences (Barbour, 2007). It was decided to use the TETRA network to deliver courses to senior high school students in small rural communities (Johnson, 2011).

In 1987, "the Small Rural Schools Distance Learning Project" was established by the Department of Education (Boone, 2010). In the first stage, distance courses in advanced Mathematics and Calculus Readiness were designed for senior high school students who wanted to attend post secondary institutes (Barbour, 2011).

The courses were successfully delivered through the TETRA network. Later, in 1988, the TETRA network with the collaboration of NewTel Communications Inc. was expanded for distance education to 13 rural communities. In the first cohort, 36 students from

communities across Newfoundland and Labrador studied Advanced Mathematics 1201. The delivery of courses through the TETRA to rural students was an important step in distance education in the province.

In order to meet the increasing demands of distance education, eight regional networks were created by the TETRA (Boone, 2010). Besides the regional networks, there were also three networks for schools. These school district networks were established for schools by the Telemedicine Centre at the request of school districts. The main purpose of the Small Rural Schools Distance Learning Project, which was established in 1987 by the Department of Education in the area of Advanced Mathematics, was to provide opportunities to rural students to enrol in courses such as math and science, which were prerequisites for enrolling in post-secondary institutions. There were many issues such as high cost, scheduling and administrative constraints, which had significant impact on the delivery of courses through distance education to senior high school students in small rural schools.

### **East West Project**

In 1996, the East-West Project was launched to produce a course-based information technology curriculum for high school learners by the governments of British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Alberta (Barbour, 2005; Boone, 2010). Each province produced a module dealing with predefined topics such as web publishing, graphic design, telecommunication networks, telecommunications and computer applications. Later, individual school districts started delivering distance courses.

### **Vista School District**

In 1997/98, Wilbert Boone submitted a report, “A Partnership Model for Distance Education in Newfoundland and Labrador” to the Program Development Division of the Department of Education. He recommended a partnership model for the administration and coordination of distance education in the province. As a result, the Telemedicine Centre regionalized the TETRA Network to parallel the new school district's boundaries. These networked school districts, which were nine at that time, led the Department of Education to implement a partnership model for distance education in Newfoundland and Labrador. These school district networks enabled the Department of Education and school district offices to carry out a partnership model collaboratively for the administration and coordination of distance learning in the province (Boone, 2010).

### **Networking: The Lighthouse School Project and the use of STEM~Net**

According to Boone (2010), networking of primary, elementary and secondary schools is another important event in the history of distance education in Newfoundland and Labrador. Stevens (2007) noted that, in 1990, the Department of Education launched the Lighthouse School Project (computer networks in schools). Thirty-one lighthouse schools were established all over the province. Most of the schools were in larger urban centres. These lighthouse schools offered senior high school programs. The lighthouse schools were

provided computer hardware and software to establish computer labs that included a local area network. As a result, all lighthouse schools established a local area network using digital technologies.

Another project the “Striving Towards Excellence in Learning by Linking Activities and Resources (STELLAR)”, was launched in 1990. In this project, a fibre broadband cable was used for networking which allowed school networks to transmit videos, sound and graphics in a full multimedia, networking environment (Boone, 2010).

Another important event in the history of distance education was the use of STEM~Net in the province. In 1993, STEM~Net: Educational Networking in Newfoundland and Labrador was launched as a computer network for Science, Technology Education and Mathematics teachers. Later its circle was enhanced to all primary, elementary, secondary and college instructors and even small rural school teachers. Overall, more than five thousand teachers were connected through this network (Stevens, 2007). The main intention of STEM~Net was to integrate technology into the curriculum of schools at all levels. STEM~Net was also used to establish SchoolNet in early stages. SchoolNet was established to connect all schools to the Information Highway throughout Canada.

Newfoundland and Labrador was the first province in Canada to have all its schools connected to the Information Highway. STEM~Net was also used to provide communication and connectivity services of school (Boone, 2010).

### **Delivery of advanced placement courses in rural communities**

In 1997/98, the Centre for TeleLearning and Rural Education with the partnership of Vista School District and STEM~Net designed and developed the content of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology for delivery on-line to students in rural areas (Boone, 2010). In 1998, the Centre for TeleLearning and Rural Education with the help of Vista School District and STEM~Net established Vista School District Digital Intranet. During the 1998 -99 school year, Stevens (2007) reported that, for the first time, 55 students were enrolled from eight schools within the vista school district. The students were enrolled in A) Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. AP courses are a well established feature of senior secondary education in Canada and the USA. Many north-American universities provided credit in the first year of the program depending on the standard of pass obtained. The main purpose of Vista School District Digital Intranet was to provide extended educational opportunities to students in remote areas.

### **The Center for TeleLearning and Rural Education**

In the report “Our Children, Our Future”, it was recommended that the Faculty of Education establish a centre to address the problems of small schools. As a result, the Center for TeleLearning and Rural Education was established and Dr. Ken Stevens was appointed the chair of the centre in 1997. The centre was established to conduct research and to promote

tele-learning in teacher education in remote schools in the province. Many research projects were conducted, facilitated or coordinated by the Centre for TeleLearning and Rural Education (Boone, 2010).

### **The Virtual Teacher Centre**

In 2001, the Virtual Teacher Centre was established by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association (NLTA) to enhance professional development of elementary, primary and secondary school teachers through online learning in the province Boone (2010). In 2003, funding was provided to NLTA by federal and provincial governments to launch a pilot project to deliver online professional courses for rural teachers and community leaders to enhance their professional development through information and communication technologies. Eventually, a website was prepared to give access to learning materials. Teachers could access these resources from anywhere and at any time.

### **The Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI)**

In 1999, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador appointed a Ministerial Panel on educational delivery in the classroom. The Sparks-Williams Ministerial Panel recommended that the Department of Education establish a Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation in the province. As a result, in December 2000 the provincial Department of Education established the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI). The main purpose of CDLI was to increase learning opportunities and career options for students especially in rural areas. CDLI delivers online courses (virtual schooling) to senior high school students in rural areas as well as in urban areas throughout the province. The vision is outlined on the CDLI website as follows:

1. Provide access to educational opportunities for students, teachers, and other adult learners in both rural and urban communities in a manner that renders distance transparent;
2. eliminate geographical and demographical barriers as obstacles to broad, quality educational programs and services;
3. develop a culture of e-learning in our schools which is considered to be an integral part of school life for all teachers and students.

The target students for CDLI are those from small and remote communities (Boone, 2010). In its first year, CDLI offered 10 courses in Advanced Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and French to 200 senior high school students from 76 schools through the TETRA network (Barbour, 2007). In 2002/03, eighteen senior high school courses were offered to 74 small rural schools in the province. Some communities in the province did not have access to broadband at that time. In 2010, CDLI offered 38 courses to 103 schools mainly in rural and remote communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Barbour (2011) explained that CDLI is the only institution that provides online courses to high school students in the province. It is operated within the Primary, Elementary and Secondary Branch of the Department of Education.

Funding is provided by the provincial government. Currently, CDLI is offering 40 courses in Art, Career Education, English Language, French, Mathematic, Advanced Mathematics, Science, Music, Social Studies and Technology Education & Skilled Trade. Approximately one thousand students from 112 schools, mainly from remote communities, are taking online courses. Fifty seven staff including 35 e-teachers is working with CDLI. All 34 full-time and one part-time e-teachers teach from different places throughout the province. There are four management points in each of the following centres St. John's, Gander, Corner Brook and Stephenville. There are more than 1350 computer workstations and more than 150 videoconferencing units. The following learning tools are being used by CDLI

1. Desire 2 Learn (Learning Management System)
2. Elluminate Live (Web Conferencing Tool)
3. CDLI Learning Portal/Website
4. Polycom Videoconferencing Technology

Videoconferencing is used for multiple purposes such as one-to-one chat, to deliver instructions for skills' trade courses, to teach piano and art. The main server is at Memorial University. Elluminate Live is another important tool used by CDLI. Barbour (2007) reported that, using Elluminate Live software, students can very easily interact with their teachers. Moreover, using instant messaging, application sharing, interactive whiteboard, and interactive quizzes, teachers deliver instruction as in a conventional classroom. Students and e-teachers can communicate in real time. On site, students are supported and supervised by a mediating teacher (m -teacher) or mediating team (m-team). One guidance counsellor is working full time with CDLI to support and help the online learners. CDLI is provides a wide range of subjects to rural and remote school students. As a result, the enrolment for senior high school courses is growing (Crocker, 2007).

### **The Killick Centre for e-learning research**

According to Boone (2010), the Killick Centre is a community university research alliance (CURA) which was established in 2006 to carry out research, provide training and generation of new knowledge in the field of e-learning at elementary and secondary school levels particularly in rural areas. Barbour (2011) noted that the CURA has three main goals e.g. capacity building, increasing the amount of high quality research in E-learning and more effective knowledge exchange in e-learning. The main focus was on e-learning at the K-12 level. The alliance consisted of 15 co-investigators, 10 community collaborators and 12 community partner organizations.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper has been to outline the development of Distance Education and e-learning in Newfoundland and Labrador. The scale of schooling and the continuing decline in student enrolment necessitated this initiative by the government of the province. There is



some evidence of the use of distance education in the province before 1949 when a railcar was used to provide schooling. The first milestone was in 1987 when, upon the recommendation of Riggs' report, distance senior high school courses were offered to students in remote and isolated communities. Then, the involvement of TETRA, networking of school districts, networking of schools, and networking of teachers supported e-learning to flourish in the province. Some other projects were also instrumental in the history of virtual learning in Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of them are Lighthouse School Project, Stem Net, Vista School District Digital Intranet (VDI), The Virtual Teacher Centre, The Killick Centre for E-Learning Research and The Centre for TeleLearning and Rural Education. The most important event is the establishment of CDLI. Through CDLI a large range of senior high school courses are offered to more than one thousand students in 112 schools throughout the province. Thus, e-learning has opened new vistas for students in remote communities to have access of quality education in the province.

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank Dr. Dennis Mulcahy for his valuable support with this article.

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## **Chapter 19: Learning to Blog and Blogging to Learn: One Teacher's Personal Reflection**

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### **Introduction**

That students in the 21st century are different learners requiring different approaches to prepare them for futures as yet unknowable has been a position taken by many and reflects, in particular, the role technology now plays in society and in education (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; Partnership for 21st century skills, 2003). I have come to realize in order to be able to effectively teach, teachers like me need to reflect on their pedagogy around new literacies, become informed about the possibilities, and participate in ways that will promote technology-enabled lifelong learning. Teachers need to engage students and themselves, in purposefully-integrated Web 2.0 technologies that will permit myriad opportunities to communicate, create, connect, collaborate and think critically with "anyone in the world"—all hallmarks of the 21st century literacies (Collier, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2007; NCTE definition of 21st century literacies, 2008).

Blogging is one such technology-mediated activity that I undertook myself and with my students, an activity that I believe has transformed my teaching and learning more than any other. "I love the discussions we have with each other in our blogs. I can talk to people online, in school and when I am at home!" It is this observation from a student that hints at the transformation possible for students and teachers when they venture into blogging and the digital world. Just as many deep discussions may begin with a simple and familiar greeting, the conversation, or practice of blogging, may also start with something similar to what is known. If the journey into that world of Web 2.0 and all it has to offer is begun with blogging, then becoming comfortable with the "new technical stuff" while reflecting upon the "new ethos" *can* also be made gradually (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007).

This personal reflection highlights my journey of integrating classroom blogging and describes the impact this integration had on my teaching practice. This journey took various side trips. Along the way, I considered my own role and that of students, thought about the expanded notions of reading and writing, and began to realize the potential of blogging for collaboration and knowledge construction within, and outside, the four walls of my classroom.

### **Getting dirty**

"Teachers need to get their hands dirty (at least figuratively) by working with the tools, platforms and processes...to fully understand the value and significances of these practices"

(Jenkins, 2010, p. 232). This statement about technology integration became increasingly meaningful for me as I began a parallel journey to my students with blogging. My personal adventure began as an assigned project when I was asked to share my learning digitally for a graduate course; I chose to set up my own blog called "Blogging From The Edge." Earlier that year, I had also begun incorporating blogging within my Grade 5 classroom.

My thoughts about technology-mediated teaching and learning changed over time as I became more familiar with the tools and went from chronicling the establishment of a class blogging experience to writing for myself and my audience and their feedback rather than for the grade my graduate-course instructor was going to assign. I gradually realized that the practice of blogging could [or should] be quite different from simply putting an essay on the screen and hoping for comments, something I truly did not understand until I also engaged with the tools to connect, share my thinking and reflect on my own posts. I also began to abandon the fear of putting myself and my students "out there" as I learned we could all "do it in safe, relevant and effective ways"

(Richardson, 2011, p. 44).

### **Learning to blog: A classroom In transition**

In the beginning, I merely wanted to expand my repertoire of current practice with technology. Starting with a move from familiar paper-and-pencil writing activities to the medium of digital screens seemed easily achievable (Huffaker, 2005; Morris, 2012; Poling, 2005; Ripp, 2012). I felt traditional classroom writing activities such as journaling or reading responses could easily be continued as blogging. DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl and Hicks (2010), authors of "Because Digital Writing Matters" would understand the thoughts I began to have as I considered the integration of blogging in my classroom. In moving to include blogging, I felt I understood how to teach it by continuing to use the writing process, having used the word-processing features on computers for many years with my students. The pleasure and ease of being able to revise and edit quickly, and having a publishable quality product would be continued in the blog-hosting services provided. I did see blogging as an opportunity to enhance the writing in our classrooms; it would promote ongoing peer response and provide easy access to the potential audience of family I hoped to invite to view my students' writings.

"Writing instruction appropriate for the worlds today requires us to reconsider what new skills and dispositions students might need for the digital age" (Devoss et al., 2010, p. 11). I initially planned to focus on the new technical skills that needed to be introduced as we began to blog. I felt then that all we needed to do was become familiar with the features of the site and what we could do with them to 'write'. I rightly assumed that blogging would complement the activities already underway by increasing authenticity for our writing endeavours. I had not entirely thought through or envisioned what was embedded in the process of becoming bloggers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I had few preconcieved ideas of what we could create, or what different dispositions would be needed, let alone how different we could/would become as teachers and learners in the blogging world. My sense of the journey my students and I were about to undertake was not at all fully imagined.

## **Blogging modelling**

One of the blunders I made as I set up blogging was assuming that it was simply a change in how their pieces were going to be presented. I took for granted that students would transfer their understanding of paper-and-pencil formats to the screen. However, teaching how to write quality blogs requires explicit instruction and modelling, teaching students the ‘how to’ and also the ‘whys’ of blogging effectively (Ferriter, 2009; McGrail & Davis, 2011; Morris, 2012; Penrod, 2007; Waters, 2009). As with other skills expected of students, they need to see exemplars of quality blogs and connect with the characteristics of these blogging sites. By connecting with other teachers via Twitter, I was able to find these blogging exemplars and have my students pay attention to the bloggers: How old are they? Do they share their personal information? What is noticeable about their writing topics? What kind of links are in the blog? What else have they done that catches your attention? Was it effective?

## **Beyond the first Step: Learning to comment**

Even if teachers only feel comfortable [at first] establishing the give-and-take of students responding to each other within the closed classroom blog, they cannot underestimate the importance of teaching students how to provide feedback. Positive feedback often extends the sense of respectful community already established within the classroom to a “healthy digital ecology” (DeVoss et al., 2010; Lapp et al., 2010-2011). While it is also true for any peer feedback given during a writing workshop, conferencing or other classroom activity, “blogging students need to know how to thank people, how to answer their questions, and most importantly, how to ask questions back” (Ripp, 2011, para. 5).

Teaching these commenting skills can even be done with young children. Kathy Cassidy, an experienced Grade one teacher in Saskatchewan, has been a pioneer in blogging [and other digital literacies] with her classes. She works with her students to develop a sense of what commenting does for them, and how they can move beyond “I like your blog” to connect with their readers. Composing an anchor chart with the children each year to be put on display as a reference, Cassidy works with these students to demonstrate the power of the conversation.

One of the common issues to address in commenting is the difference between social and academic commenting. Students should be asked to consider the purpose of commenting and build an understanding of how to engage in a respectful and constructive commenting discussion. Mrs. Yollis’ Grade three class created a video about how to comment effectively that is available to assist anyone wishing to provide a quality model (Yollis, 2011a). It is clear that her students understand that the commenting is driven by the blog post and will connect the writer and the reader in further discussion.

## **Threads of comments**

As a direct result of the feedback feature of blogs, it is possible to follow ‘threads’ or a picture over time of a conversation resulting from a particular post. This feedback has an essential role to play in the educational intent of classroom blogging as teachers and students use the comments received to shape responses, revisit (and possibly revise) the blog commented upon, possibly impacting future posts (Blackstone et al., 2007; Cassidy, 2012; Lapp et al., 2010-11; Penrod, 2007; Waters, 2009). Being able to provide an audience that allows extended threads of conversation and writing beyond the typical one-draft piece for the teacher (whether it is assigned or not) is a powerful aspect of the blogging platform. The back-and-forth nature of blogging comment threads allows for “familiarity among the conversationalists and a sense of community to build” (McGrail & Davis, 2011, p. 417).

## **Having an audience of your peers**

When I first began blogging with my students, I had yet to grasp the full impact of an audience outside our classroom and so only established a classroom network of readers and responders. I thought that encouraging comments from their peers would at least expand their audience beyond me, and perhaps lessen that sense of writing for the teacher, and the feeling of this is merely 'school work.'

The critical development of audience awareness that can be more acutely constructed with blogging rather than with in-class publishing or writing for the teacher was observed and documented in a case study conducted with second grade bloggers (see Lapp et al., 2010-11). Unlike much work submitted to their teacher, blogging provided almost immediate feedback on their posts. This feedback reinforced for the students that someone had read and thought about their blog; “they heard the voices of their audience in direct response to their writing” (p. 41). This feedback also resulted in an increased willingness to revise and edit the blogs, a disposition many teachers strive to emphasize in mini-conferences and whole class discussions during literacy/language arts blocks of writing instruction. In fact, at the end of the project, 93% of the students surveyed indicated that they would make changes to their writing before sharing it with an audience. Also, the purpose of writing “for others” moved from 21% to 79%, indicating a significant sense of their audience.

## **Blogging to learn: In the beginning**

Taking on the management of such digital projects as blogging can appear to be an add-on until the teacher recognizes the meshing of best practices of traditional literacies with the potential of the new. As I set up blogs with my Grade five students, I recognized some of the “potential for learning, including the built-in opportunity to practice writing in an authentic way, the chance to reflect upon one’s thinking and that of others in an online community” (Hewitt, February 13, 2011). My purposes and initial intentions were not significantly different from those suggested for teachers wishing to integrate blogs into their practice: as a class website, to support my independent reading program, and as an online filing cabinet of student work or a portfolio of showcased student works, and most importantly a personal



space to write well in authentic ways for authentic purposes (Boling et al., 2008; Huffaker, 2005; Leu et al., 2011; McGrail & Davis, 2011).

Like Redekopp and Bourbonniere (2009), I was struck by the opportunities that blogging would provide my reluctant students who, for various reasons, do not speak up or contribute voluntarily. This was an opportunity to give them a voice and a chance to show their learning and engage in ‘discussion.’ The posts allowed all students a forum to consider their argument and interact. Several of my students became more involved in sharing their thoughts about what was happening in school and in their lives as a result of blogging.

Many educators use blogs in the classroom to gather, archive and showcase the learning that students are producing, and to which they are contributing (Cassidy, 2012; Huffaker, 2005). During 2011-12, my students blogged about a variety of topics across the curriculum in the class blog called "Our Learning Scrapbook." Using an iPod touch, they documented the process of learning how to needlefelt, a dry technique of working sheep's wool. They uploaded photos of the works in progress and the final display and wrote corresponding text to share what occurred in our classroom. Their research into the life of the Beothuk, an extinct people native to our part of the world, was also the focus of some blogging and the resulting posts demonstrated students teaching and learning together. Having posts such as these available outside school hours was also a bonus for working parent families who could not easily visit their child's classroom.

### **Next Step: The collaborative potential of blogging**

Rosenthal Tolisano (2010b), a blogger of the website “Langwitches,” describes the different levels of collaboration made possible with blogging and outlines the movement from the least to the most connected classroom. She characterizes the latter as having:

Two-way communication between the class and the world, with the teacher and students actively looking to connect with peers, mentors or experts around the world. Additionally, these classrooms connect learning to authentic opportunities and audiences and make contributions to the learning of others.

To be of assistance, many educators have shared their experiences with collaborative blogging on their own blogs (e.g., Cassidy, 2012b; Hewitt, 2011b; Morris, 2012; Ripp, 2012b), or through journal articles and other published texts (e.g., Penrod, 2007; Peters, 2009; Richardson, 2006).

Online blogging projects as the Global Read Aloud, where students around the world listen to the same book, support working together on a wide variety of follow-up activities. Founder Pernille Ripp's hope is then realized; “Global collaboration is necessary to show students they are part of something bigger than themselves” (Ripp, 2012). For my students of 2011-12 the contacts and conversations made through blogging with Grade five students in the United States, Argentina, and Switzerland opened up their eyes to the purposeful possibilities afforded via the Internet and deepened their sense of

being like other children yet with different life experiences. Blogs such as these provide an extended audience for students and illustrate the potential of Web 2.0 pedagogy in action.

### **Changed role**

There is little doubt that engaging in 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies impacts many aspects of the classroom dynamic, not the least of which is the role of the teacher. Taking a close look at what can be accomplished with blogging and other new literacies has to be integral to the reflective pedagogy of teaching, particularly in today's society. As Lindsay and Davis (2012) indicated by participating in the fullness of blogging's global collaboration, we provide opportunities for "building bridges, forging new pedagogies, and questioning current education systems that place value on content above process and individual output and gain rather than on collaboration and community learning for understanding"(p.16). We change our role in the classroom significantly as we move from the being captain, always at the front of the ship, to allowing students to become valued crew members who can teach their peers, and indeed guide others to familiar and exotic places anywhere in the world.

Richardson (2011) suggested that teachers must reflect deeply about the ethos that underpins their choice of what and how to integrate technologies. He is concerned that teachers have yet to embrace the notion that students should be prepared to create new learning networks and that self-direction, the 'learning to learn' that is integral to teaching 21<sup>st</sup> century skills is not sufficiently at the forefront of teacher pedagogy. Most importantly, he argues that teachers must model what students are being asked to take on. He points out that students need to see teachers not just as "engaged teachers but as engaged learners...that as educators we have to shepherd our students into a much more complex, much messier, and much more profound world of learning" (p. 108).

### **My journey: A blogging classroom still in transition**

It is one thing to read about the integration of technology, the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies and even the impact of blogging, yet another thing to put it into practice. It can be daunting to think of global connections in a rural community where many students have yet to travel one hundred kilometres in any direction and where not all own home computers. But I jumped aboard and started small, building in some of the 'new technical stuff' as I thought more about the 'new ethos' that I was becoming aware of through my own readings and reflection. I certainly understood the pedagogical rationale for moving beyond having students writing only for their classmates. I gradually realized that, when blog posts are shared with other readers and contributions to a body of knowledge about a particular subject are distributed, the impact of belonging to a community of bloggers becomes evident. It is through that network and community of practice that bloggers gain what is afforded by engaging with the technology.

"Can we blog next year?" That was one of the most repeated questions from my outgoing students these past three years. I certainly hope they do. I hope my bloggers, and their teachers build on what we started together and that they continue discussing topics in their

blogs that excite their passion for further learning and move them deeply, from home and school. If my students continue to blog, tweet, create and share various digital text forms, read other bloggers and respond to what they have read on line, then they will have demonstrated the skills and the dispositions that are indicative of the paradigm shift in my teaching, indeed that being discussed by many educators (Penrod, 2007; Yancy, 2009; Zawilinski, 2011). This generation of students will know what it is to use the new media available collectively as well as individually within, and in spite of, the four physical walls of a classroom.

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## **Chapter 20: THE EFFECT OF FAIR DEALING FOR DIGITAL CONTENT IN CANADIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM – DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Susan Dintoe

### **ABSTRACT**

The presentation is about copyright reforms in Canada and how it affects distance education. Distance educators develop course content, course books and digital material, which become available on the Internet. These educators need to be aware of copyright laws because by accessing information, they may be unknowingly stepping upon legal boundaries. The paper refers to the CCH (2004) case, which established that fair dealing encompasses the use of copyrighted material for educational purposes. Bill C-32 tabled in June 2010 contains new exceptions to copyrighted material for parody, satire and educational purposes. The presentation explores Bill C-32 and fair dealing for educational purposes.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper is about Canada's move towards copyright reform and how it affects Distance Education. Copyright affects education in many ways since faculty and students use books, articles, and other information that fall under the Copyright Act. Technology allows us easy access to huge amounts of copyrighted material. Distance education depends on the technology that allows us this enormous access, and it depends on telecommunication and digitalized content. Therefore, it is important that students and instructors involved in online courses are aware of copyright laws and clearance procedures (Wallace, 2004).

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Distance educators are the developers of academic and course content for this form of education. They should be fully aware of copyright laws as well as their rights according to fair dealing. The CCH (2004) case established that fair dealing encompasses use of copyrighted material for private study purposes. Bill C-32 takes matters further by including education under fair dealing thus aiding distance educators in compiling course materials. However, Bill C-32 contains provisions that prohibit the use of materials in digital formats, which are digitally locked. These provisions are detrimental to distance education as they exclude legal uses of copyrighted material due to digital locks (Guest, 2010; Chan, 2009). Based on these developments, distance educators and instructors should make sure that they and their students do not violate the complicated copyright laws by circumventing digital locks. This paper focuses on the consequences of copyright laws and fair dealing on digital content and distance education with reference to the CCH (2004) case. It covers TRIPS/WIPO influences on Canadian Copyright Laws, the analysis of Bill C-32 and the link between distance education and digital content. This paper outlines how copyright issues and the recent developments will affect course developers and course content.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the concept of fair dealing and the implications for Distance Education.



### *Research Questions*

1. What is Canada's copyright reform in context?
2. Why has Canada moved towards a "fair dealing" concept?
3. What is the effect of fair dealing on distance education?

Distance education is a field of education that relies on technology to provide education to those who cannot be physically present in a traditional classroom or campus. The evolution of technology, a changing workplace and the advent of contractual work has resulted in distance education becoming a vital tool in providing personal attention and communication to students internationally. In Canada, distance education is important due to Canada's vast area and an unevenly distributed population (Shale, 2002). Distance education in Canada has different setups.

Distance education in Canada takes many forms; there are universities that provide only distance education through the Internet and video conferencing; there are universities offering both distance and conventional forms of education and then there are universities that prefer the conventional classroom and campus education but also offer distance education (Education, 1999). "Shared" programming has been developed (Shale, 2002). It assists in the transfer of course credits and formalises articulation of programs to bridge the college/technical institute and university gap. The Canadian "open universities", Athabasca University, the Open Learning Agency, and the Tele-university, have had mechanisms in place to support this kind of activity. The University of Northern British Columbia is mainly campus based, regionally as well as centrally. It is an example of the traditional style of distance education, but with well planned execution to facilitate the transfer of previously earned credits and to articulate programs with colleges in the northern British Columbia region (Shale, 2002). Distance education involves the use of technology to educate students and most course materials are considered digital content.

Digital Content denotes any information that is published or distributed digitally. This includes text, data, sound recordings, photographs, images, motion pictures, and software. In distance education, course materials make up digital content. This leads to issues related to copyright and intellectual ownership. Selling courseware makes money. In distance education there is this issue regarding who gets paid what as well as what courses and what material should be developed by faculty members. There is intense debate regarding the legitimacy of the concept of commercialization in higher education (Shale, 2002). Instructors and course designers make great use of digital content in distance education, as the primary means of communication is digital delivery. As digital content is an integral part of distance education, copyright issues emerge.

## **CANADA'S COPYRIGHT REFORM IN CONTEXT**

Copyrights are rights granted to the author or creator of an original work. They include the exclusive rights to make changes and distribute the work. The Copyright Act of Canada was first passed in 1921 and amended in 1988 and 1997. In 2005, an attempt to amend the Canadian Copyright Act was made, but Bill C-60 did not pass into law. The Parliament was dissolved in November 2005. Another attempt was made in 2008, but Bill C-61 was dissolved due to elections in September 2008. Bill C-32 was passed in June 2010. The Copyright Act gives exclusive rights to the copyright owner regarding reproduction of the work. Copyright becomes a question when the work is created until the author dies. An exception exists in the case of photographs as the copyright last for fifty years from the end of the year in which it was taken. Moral rights are protected under the Copyright law; it is the author's right to stop the work from being changed or used in any manner. They remain with the author even when the work or copyright has been sold (Kerr, 2007). The exception to the exclusive copyrights are fair dealing laws that protect public interest.

Fair dealing is an exception to the copyright laws. It allows use of copyrighted material in specific cases. The Canadian concept of fair dealing is a part of the Canadian Copyright Act (Wilkinson, 2010), which allows users to carry out activities related to research, private study, criticism, review and news reporting. The user must mention the source of the material, and the name of the author he cites (Wilkinson, 2010). Fair dealing is an important issue for the public as it allows use of copyrighted material without purchasing licenses. It is especially important for education, as students and institutions bear high cost of licenses that add to the cost of education. It is important to focus on where the law stands on fair dealing as it is of great importance in distance education.

## **CANADA'S MOVE TOWARDS A FAIR DEALING CONCEPT**

Where is the Canadian Copyright Act on fair dealing?

The Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC) is a statutory, non-profit organization. The Great Library at LSUC provided photocopying services to its patrons. These included students, members, and the judiciary and authorized researchers. Single copies of legal articles, statutes and decisions were available to those who needed them and visitors were allowed to make copies of works in the library as well. Canada's three largest law publishers sued LSUC for copyright infringement in its photocopying activities. They claimed copyright for these works and a permanent injunction was passed, stopping the library from reproducing published works. The Law Society was of the view that the services did not infringe the publishers' copyrights by providing copies or by allowing access to photocopiers. It argued that these works were not easily accessible and these services were necessary to provide equal access to the library's collection. This case exemplified the concept of fair dealing in Canada (CCH Canadian Ltd. v. Law Society of Upper Canada, [2004] 1 S.C.R. 339, 2004 SCC, 2004).

The court stated that fair dealing exception is an important part of the Copyright Act and is not merely a defence. Any activity that is within fair dealing is not an infringement of copyright. It is necessary to maintain a balance between the users' and the copyright owner's

rights. The Court held that the Law Society did not infringe any copyrights when single copies of decisions, statutes, regulations, etc. were made by the library or by its patrons. The court ruled that the publishers' materials were protected by copyright but the Law Society's activities fell under 'fair dealing'.

The court stated the criteria for fair dealing that has become the norm for fair dealing:

*The Purpose of the Dealing*; if it is for review, research, criticism and private study, it is within the user's rights.

*The Character of the Dealing*; how many copies were made, whether they were widely distributed and if it were the industry's norm to do so.

The Amount of the Dealing; how much work was used and in what context.

*Alternatives to the Dealing*; was it necessary to do so or were other alternatives available.

*The Nature of the Work*; copying from confidential work would not be fair. If copying a private work (that is not confidential) would promote it in a good way, then it could be considered fair.

*Effect of the Dealing on the Work*; is it likely to affect the market of the original work?

These criteria made it clear for the courts' stance on fair dealing exceptions. The Copyright Act states that the copying should fall within the fair dealing exceptions and the use itself should be fair to ensure that there is no copyright infringement. In the case of *Robertson Vs Thomson*, (2006) the court ruled that *The Globe and Mail* ("Globe") could not republish freelance articles in separate databases. The right to reproduce a collective work under the *Copyright Act* does not include the right to republish freelance articles as part of an entirely different collective work. On the other hand, CD-ROMs were considered as a part of the Globe's right to reproduce its collective work. The CD-ROMs can be viewed as a collection of daily newspapers in a way that databases cannot (*Robertson v Thomson Corp.*, 2006). The exceptions of fair dealing are considered the right of the users and copyright reform was expected to strengthen these rights. Bill C-32 was the newest Bill for copyright reform after the failure of Bill C-60 and C-61.

Bill C-32 tabled in June 2010, contains new exceptions to copyrights that includes use of copyrighted material for parody, satire and educational purposes. After the CCH (2004) decision the scope of fair dealing was broadened. In Canada, fair dealing was never a defence; it was always an exception. What CCH (2004) introduced was the rational criteria approach, rather than narrow exceptions. Fair dealing was established as the right of the users. Bill C-32 now encompasses more areas under fair dealing that has led to backlash from the content industry. They are unhappy with the inclusion of education under fair dealing (Trosow, 2010). In addition to the inclusion of education under the fair dealing exceptions, Bill C-32, (2010) has other provisions that affect educational institutions.

Education is a broad term that includes formal and informal learning in any institution. Although provisions to other sections in the copyright acts limit the positive aspects of this inclusion, it is still a step in the right direction. Some positive provisions include the allowance of reproduction of any work on the premises of an educational institution, which is solely for the purpose of imparting training and educating students. This includes performances, sound recordings and broadcasts. But this is not applicable if the works are 'commercially available'. Educational institutions are also allowed to take works freely available on the Internet and communicate them to an audience that consists mainly of students (Lithwick, 2010). This also comes under the broader fair dealing provision that if the work is publicly available with no digital locks, and if any party apart from the defined educational institutions use it for educational purposes, it would be allowed. Thus, course designers and instructors will have more resources at their disposal. Libraries, archives, museums and educational institutions are allowed to make digital and backup copies of works under this amendment. The special exemption for lessons provides authorities to use copyright works for lessons, tests and exams. But at the end of the course, the lessons must be destroyed, whether they are with the instructor or the students. This exemption is unrealistic as instructors cannot be expected to keep making and destroying lessons and students may need to refer to the course content at a later date (Wilkinson, 2010). This will affect course designers in distance education as they will need to destroy their lessons at the end of every line semester and they cannot control the use of digital content by the students after the term is over. Other amendments in Bill C-32, (2010) are not directly linked to education.

The issue of digital locks is addressed in Bill C-32. Bill C-32 makes it illegal to evade digital locks even for most legitimate purposes such as fair dealing exceptions, library preservation, and the copying of content for which there is no copyright (facts and information) or if copyright has expired. People with perceptual difficulties are allowed to use digital content but only in a way that does not impair the technological protection measure (TPM); Section 41.16(1) (Lithwick, 2010). Digital locks cannot be removed and then restored after a different format has been created. Even in the exception provided to educational institutions, libraries, archives and museums regarding usage of work available on the internet, the presence of technical protection measures (TPM) or a notice prohibiting usage will restrict user rights to that content (CLA, Protecting the Public Interest in the Digital World, 2010). Owing to this amendment, authors can restrict course designers from using their material without copyright. On the other hand, instructors in distance education can implement TPMs to prevent unauthorized use of their copyrighted productions by students and other users. With the passing of Bill C-32, another matter that comes to light is the role of collectives and licensing.

Access Copyright is the main collective rights of owners' writings and academics. In January 2004, Access Copyright reached multi-year licensing agreements with Canadian educational institutions. The agreements expired in 2007 and were extended till August 2010. Payments were kept at the 2006–07 rates of \$3.38 per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student plus 10 cents per page for materials in course packs. Although this rate is considered an educational fee, it is passed on to the students as per page pack charges when they purchase a course pack (Board Copyright, Canada, 2010). The license grants non-exclusive rights to the institution to reproduce works that come under the collective and they are indemnified by the collective

(Wilkinson, 2010). Educational institutions and public libraries have had agreements with Access Copyright (The Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency, 2010). These licensing agreements were based on negotiation but recently the licensing process has been changed due to Access's actions.

On 30 March 2010, Access Copyright bypassed negotiations and went straight to the Copyright Board for the broad imposition of tariff, which is applicable on all educational institutions (under the copyright act's definition) and government libraries except in Quebec. Under the tariff the rate will increase from \$3.38 per FTE to \$45 per FTE for universities. The tariff is lower for primary and secondary educational institutions. The scope of the license will be expanded to include scanning, faxing, e-mailing, uploading, displaying and projecting (Access-copyrights-post-secondary-school-tariff-filing, 2010). On the other hand, Bill C-32 will also allow these activities under section 30.02(1) for educational and training purposes. But Bill C-32 has conditions that only allow an institution that has a reprographic reproduction license with a collective to do. The institution would also have to pay royalties where they would have been applicable if a print copy was made and comply with license regulations (Trosow, 2010). These tariffs will affect the cost of distance education as well through the cost of course materials. Course designers and instructors who are employed by the institution with licenses will have wider use of materials, whereas those that are not will be restricted. The effect of the tariff and the amendments has not been positive.

These amendments give rights to users with so many conditions that it effectively superimposes license agreements. Following the appeal against the tariff by the educational institutions, the Federal Court of Appeal upheld the Copyright Board's decision regarding photocopying and using works for general classroom use and ordered the review of the number of copies used for examination purposes that are not commercially available (to be deducted). This reduces the initial amount of the tariff but maintains the imposition of tariff (Wilkinson, 2010). The framework of the Bill C-32 provisions has been greatly affected by international trade agreements thus, it is important to understand how they operate.

### *Influence of International Trade Agreements: TRIPS and WIPO*

The international trade agreement that Canada has ratified or is going to ratify, influence the formation of laws. The copyright laws have to comply with the guidelines set by these agreements. The World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) concentrates on the global system of rules, institutions, and practices governing the ownership and flow of knowledge, technology, and other intellectual assets. The conclusion of TRIPS represents a big step in the history of Intellectual Property protection (Deere, 2009). The UN created the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 1967. The WIPO copyright treaty act extends copyright protection to digital work, technology and software. It requires every signatory to ratify a law that protects works in digital formats. The WIPO Internet Treaties provide rights and protections for authors, for makers and performers of sound recordings and audio works, and for reinforcing the existing international guidelines found in the Berne and Rome conventions (Khurana, 2008). Major trading partners of Canada such as the EU, USA and China have already ratified

these treaties (Questions and Answers, 2010), and Canada is also in the process of ratifying them.

Canada was a founding member of the World Trade Organization and thus, is bound by the *Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement [TRIPS]*. TRIPS give right owners protection from copyright infringement. It gives the three-step test for copyrights; that the exceptions to the exclusive copyrights should be limited to special cases, actions that do not constitute exploitation of work and those that do not jeopardize the right holders' interests. *TRIPS* includes the provisions of the *Berne Convention* 1971, that state the right owners have the exclusive right to authorize reproduction of their works and that each country's respective legislation can establish their own special cases as long as they are not in conflict with the three-step test (Wilkinson, 2008,). Thus TRIPS has an influence on domestic policy.

These international trade agreements restrict the government while trying to balance user rights with the right owners' in legislation. Amendments in copyright laws now need to be considered in the context of trade. As these treaties focus on Intellectual Property rights rather than the public's rights to fair access, their ratification enhances copyright holders' rights rather than giving exceptions to those rights. The existence of strong collectives, the power of the publishing industry and the presence of foreign publishers in Canada constrains domestic policy from establishing exceptions to copyrights that would 'not be unreasonably prejudiced to the legitimate interests of the author' (TRIPs article 13) (Wilkinson, 2008). The government policy in turn affects education and distance educators by placing limitations on copyrighted content. The effect of TRIPS on domestic policy has been revealed in the provision of Bill C-32.

Bill C-32 is affected by TRIPS in the sense that, though it has broadened fair dealing to include education, the Bill still has many caveats that limit the use of copyrighted material for education. The Bill differentiates between various institutions on the basis of ownership, thus giving some more access to works than others. In the proposed amendment regarding the telecommunication of works in an educational set up and the conversion and communication to digital formats, the rights' owners can use technological prevention measures to restrict access under this measure. Bill C-32 establishes distribution rights for real goods and the 'making available' right and protects rights managing information. It also provides legal protection for technological protection measures (TPM). The TPM provisions are consistent with TRIPS and WIPO, which require legal protection and effective legal solutions against the circumvention of TPMs.

According to Sookman (2010) Bill C-32 has exemptions for security testing and research, and reverse engineering. The Bill allows people with perceptual abilities to access work and assists consumers in protecting personal information. Two new exceptions that did not exist in Bill C-61 are for temporary recordings made by broadcast activities and unlocking wireless devices. The bill is flexible in retaining and enhancing those exceptions that serve public welfare (Sookman, 2010). The bill generally benefits education but the TPMs provisions are



detrimental. Although TRIPS has influenced the new Bill greatly, the concept of fair dealing remains beyond its guidelines.

TRIPS and WIPO require that member countries follow their regulations on intellectual property rights but it is the country's legislation that decides on the exceptions to those rights. Thus fair dealing exceptions fall entirely under Canadian copyright law. TRIPS and WIPO oppose enhancement of special exceptions to copyrights and advocate the right holders' interests regarding all forms of their work and the three step test required under TRIPS may come into conflict with the fair dealing exceptions in the Copyright Act (Tawfik, 2005). TRIPS and WIPO opposition affects education adversely by making copyrighted material more elusive. Instructors and course designers in distance education, who are involved in creating material that is their copyright, benefit as the agreements advocate their rights. Instructors and institutions face conflict regarding copyrights in work created under contract. WIPO and TRIPS encourage copyrights rather than exceptions to them. The Supreme Court of Canada advocates the balance of user rights and rights owners' interests compared to the biases towards rights holders' interests signaled by the mandatory language in the *Berne Convention*, *NAFTA*, and *TRIPS* agreements and fair dealing falls under its jurisdiction (Wilkinson, 2008). But, as these agreements are pro-authors' rights, they have enabled Access Copyright to apply for a higher tariff and succeed.

International trade organizations regulate copyright issues to protect the authors of works from being exploited. Access Copyright Tariff was influenced by these organizations as they provide the right to digital locks to prevent access to digital content. Access Copyright provides works to academic institutions and the collective represents foreign authors as well. Under WIPO and TRIPS, the authors must receive remuneration on the use and reproduction of their works. The concept of user rights does not exist in these agreements and only specific exceptions are allowed. The Copyright board approved the application of tariff by Access Copyright as it must comply with the international trade agreements and ensure that the interests of the authors are protected (Wilkinson, 2008).

TRIPS and WIPO affect the Canadian education system adversely. WIPO's restriction on use of digital content limits educational institutions, students, and the public from accessing material freely available on the Internet. While TRIPS outlines copyright infringement generally, it increases the cost of knowledge and educational texts required by students. These treaties move domestic copyright laws from a broad view of exceptions to a closed view. This can be seen in the inclusion of education under fair dealing; the stipulations regarding this differentiate between types of educational institutions and specific situations rather than being generally applicable. Instead of facilitating education and development these treaties promote restrictions on content and protect right owners' profits (Wilkinson, 2008). This affects course content and designers by complicating copyright issues. Thus designers face uncertainty regarding copyright issues while creating course content. Distance education has been influenced by these treaties and the tariff to a greater extent as copyright issues are more complex when it comes to digital content.

## THE EFFECT OF FAIR DEALING ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

The copyright laws have a direct effect on distance education. Distance education greatly relies on digital content and delivery of course materials. Thus copyright laws on digital content can greatly harm or benefit distance educators and students. In order for delivery of course content to be efficient, digital content must be copied and distributed such as text, diagrams and lectures. But the laws are confusing and burdensome, thus, unawareness about them may lead to copyright infringement putting the institution at risk. Owing to the complex nature of the laws that govern copyright, instructors and designers may unknowingly be stepping on legal boundaries (Wallace, 2004).

The outcomes of Bill C-32 for digital education are directly related to the extent of the effects on the quality and cost-effectiveness of the course content available (Trosow, 2010). Firstly, the inclusion of education under fair dealing is beneficial to distance education as the copyrights issues are complex and this allows general use of content. Distance education mainly involves the use of telecommunication and digital formats. Under this amendment students and institutions can use and transfer works for educational purposes more easily. Section 30.02(1) of Bill C-32 would allow an educational institution to make a digital reproduction of a work and communicate it by telecommunication for educational purposes; this would facilitate distance education by decreasing the cost of course content. It would enable course designers to use copyrighted content more freely. But, it only applies to educational institutions that are non-profit and have reprographic reproduction licenses with a collective society. The institution will, however, have to pay royalties for the reproduction and communication of the digital copy if it would have been applicable on the print copy of the same. This amendment does not hold any major positive implications on distance education and course designers generally due to its many limitations. Course designers and instructors working for private educational institutions do not enjoy the positive aspects of these provisions. Other provisions that affect libraries, archives and museums have an effect on distance education as well. Libraries would no longer be obligated to distribute interlibrary loans in paper form; electronic delivery of works such as journal articles would be allowed (Trosow, 2008). This would aid distance learning as course designers will be able to disseminate content more easily and students will be able to access it easily. Section 30.04 would create an exception for educational institutions to reproduce, perform and communicate through telecommunication works that are publicly available on the Internet. This would give course instructors easy access to data and the ability to use numerous works in their lectures. This should have a positive outcome for distance education but again the stipulations regarding this provision limit its effectiveness. This does not apply to work and websites where there are digital locks in place or a notice prohibiting use. The stipulation for digital locks encourages authors to use them to limit access to their work online. However, the clarification of the legality of accessing material on the internet may pave the way for more relaxed usage of the available content by educational institutions, instructors and students, thus aiding those involved in distance education (Lithwick, 2010).

Distance education and digital content fair dealing is a complex issue as Bill C-32 enforces the right of digital locks over the use of digital content. Digital content is an integral part of

distance education. Course content, quizzes, assignments and other materials are communicated in digital form. The fact that right owners just have to put digital locks on their works to make their usage copyright infringement, even if they are available on the Internet freely, violates the rights of the users under fair dealing (CLA, Protecting the Public Interest in the Digital World). Fair dealing provides exceptions to the rights of the authors for specific users, and, regardless of the presence of digital locks the work should be accessible. According to Michael Geist, the new bill establishes that a digital lock, on any work trumps all other rights of the users (Geist, 2010). Digital locks adversely affect instructors and students as they limit fair access to work and increase costs through license requirements. Digital locks and license agreements favouring authors are advocated by the international agreements TRIPS and WIPO (Edmonds, 2006; Chan, 2009; Hobbs, 2010).

Distance education is affected by international agreements on intellectual property as they pertain to digital content and copyright laws. TRIPS affects distance education as it inhibits the government from widening the exceptions to copyrights. NDP MP, Charlie Angus, who believes that the TPM amendments limit Canadians' legal rights to access, argues the contrary. According to him the government is giving the impression that this unyielding approach to digital locks is essential to bring Canada in line with WIPO and the Berne Convention. He believes that the government is setting contradictory rights. Bill C-32 offers rights that consumers will not be allowed to exercise. This makes the claim that the bill is balanced and pro-consumer, invalid (Geist, 2010). These restrictions that are in line with international agreements hinder the growth of distance education by limiting access to content that is not easily available to remote users. Course designers and instructors face obstacles in using copyrighted material and thus enriching the learning material for students. It also impedes the fair dealing exceptions by giving greater rights to the copyright owners and collectives rather than users (Geist, 2010). These rights help collectives such as Access Copyright demand greater tariffs for licenses.

The digital locks issue works in favour of collective societies, specifically the Access Copyright, (2010). The increase in tariff and the increase in scope of the word 'copying' to digital copies affect educational institutions. Bill C-32 provides for making digital copies for educational purposes but a license is necessary. Thus, it basically reinforces the need for having a licensing agreement with Access Copyright in distance education. It also requires educational institutions to take measures to ensure that the student (Alberta (Education) v Access Copyright, (2010) does not make more than one digital copy. These amendments combined with the increase in tariff and the end of negotiable agreements will decrease the cost effectiveness and diminish the ease of distance education as course content will be more expensive. In cases where course designers and instructors create their own copyrighted material, they will be able to stop the institutions from using their material without licenses. This will have an unfavourable impact on the future of distance education and fair dealing.

Many proposed amendments of Bill C-32 may need to be reviewed to assess their impact on user rights. Fair dealing exceptions are immensely important for distance education, as they will make more content and material available to users all over Canada. This will increase the ease of access to education for those in remote areas. It will enable instructors and teachers to

use copyrighted data without fear of copyright infringement. The inclusion of education under Bill C-32 promises to promote distance education by balancing users' rights with the authors', whereas digital content seems to be locked securely under WIPO regulations and Bill C-32 amendments. It is very important for the Bill C-32 to amend the policy on digital content not to be locked for those who are legal on the terms of fair dealing. This will enable the distance education to expand rapidly in the future.

### *THE FUTURE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN CANADA*

Distance education is facing rapid growth in Canada. Canada requires educated and trained manpower to compete with the globalized economy. Distance education reaches to students that do not have easy access to education due to logistical, financial and other reasons. In order for distance education to become mainstream education, it needs to be far-reaching and profitable. Higher education institutions are in a situation where distance education seems logical and profitable. Most of these institutions and colleges are developing programs that enable them to operate as dual mode institutions. The learning institutions are now expanding their distance education departments (Shale, 2002). The expansion of distance education is dependent on growing technology tools as a means to deliver education to anyone anywhere. Distance education materials are usually in the form of digital content. Online access to databases, emails and digital content comprise educational materials in distance education. Delivery of course content through postal mail is now on the decline. Although the fair dealing exceptions and their scope as demonstrated by the CCH (2004) case were a positive step for distance education and user rights, a lot of debate has arisen on the issue of Access Copyrights' tariff and Bill C-32; as they give contradictory rights for educational purposes. Copyright laws and digital locks are some of the complex issues, which will determine the future of distance education in Canada:

The explosion of technology and the importance of the Internet as the premier mode of communication will greatly expand distance education. Distance education has become a feasible and profitable method of education for universities and learning institutes. It has also developed as cost-effective and flexible means for students. Easy access to knowledge as well as effortless dissemination of information through the Internet has been beneficial for distance education (Shale, 2002).

The inclusion of education to the fair dealing exceptions will increase the use of varied resources in distance education. Course content will encompass diverse sources and references due to no threat of copyright infringement.

However, the digital locks provision will enable copyright owners to restrict legal access to their works (even for educational purposes). This will be damaging for distance education, as it will limit access to content and increase the need for licences.

Access Copyright's new tariff is detrimental to all educational institutions as well as distance educators. It will increase licensing costs drastically while placing increased restrictions on digital copies. Bill C-32 superimposes Access Copyright's licensing agreements on educational institutions thus making it necessary for them to attain licences.

In Canada, distance education systems should always be aware of the debates and decisions by policy makers, as they determine their future. TRIPS and WIPO also affect distance education directly. Canada has to follow international treaties on intellectual property rights, which advocate stricter copyright laws.

The progress of distance education is going to be hindered due to complicated copyright laws. The contradictions in the Bill will make educators more hesitant and unsure of the legalities involved. However, the acceptance of education as a fair dealing provision will give the required freedom of content usage to a certain degree. It will allow digital courses to incorporate important works under the new law. The future of distance education is dependent on the ratification of international treaties and the power of copyright collectives such as Access Copyright. Currently, distance education stands to gain from Bill C-32 but not to a great extent.

The future of digital content from the perspective of the instructional designer is that, due to digital locks, more authors will use TPMs to prevent fair dealing usage of their works, however in the absence of TPMs, course designers will be able to use copyrighted material without the need of licenses.

As a result of these provisions and their effect on distance education, course designers will be able to develop course outlines that include varied resources available on the Internet, however they must make sure that they do not contain digital locks. Course designers should firstly familiarize themselves with the complexities of the copyright law in order to avoid infringements. They should be aware of the nature of their education institute, as there are separate laws for non-profit educational institutions. Once the course designer is familiar with the nature of these things, it will be easier to work in the parameters defined by them. If the distance education institution is non-profit, then there are more resources available due to copyright relaxations. However, if it's a private institution, then there is a definite need for a licensing agreement. As the laws and the institute policies limit course designers, their course designs' structure and resources are limited as well. The resources they use in developing courses might come under the Access Copyright's tariff and licensing or their communication over the Internet may not be allowed. A major aspect that affects course designers is the provision that enables institutions to make copies for lessons, tests and exams; however, the copies must be destroyed after the course is over. Literally, it means that course designers will have to destroy their material, which have copyrights at the end of the term, and then create it again at the beginning of the next term for new students. Course designers should make sure that they are either licensed, or are exempted or they should just refrain from using the

material. The course designers should use copyrighted material in such a way that it comes under fair dealing and repeated infringement does not take place. For example, a presentation of a topic sent to students may contain digital locks that disallow them from copying, pasting or editing the document. Thus, the course will contain the required material without stepping on laws.

On the other hand, when course designers and instructors create material, it becomes their intellectual property and not the institution's. The new copyright laws will favour the course designers in protecting their material through digital locks. In the case of distance education, copyright infringement is common as it is easy for students to break codes, and use the abundant data online. However, now instructors can prevent their material from being used by unauthorised users through TPMs. The course designers should use digital locks if they feel their material needs to be protected.

## **CONCLUSION**

Copyright laws in Canada are in the process of being amended. Fair dealing in Canada gives users the right to copyrighted material and this has been upheld by the Supreme Court in the CCH case (2004). There have been several attempts to modernize Canadian copyright laws but they have failed. Bill C-32 has been proposed which broadens the realms of fair dealing exceptions but limits the effectiveness of the enhancement by creating unnecessary stipulations. It provides for digital locks on digital content to supplant fair dealing exceptions thus placing the power with the right holders and the collective societies. This affects distance education directly.

Distance education is largely dependent on digital content to be copied and distributed. Students are in different geographical areas and communication is mostly through the Internet. Course content is sent through email or fax. In Bill C-32, education has been included under fair dealing; which means that distance educators and students are free to use copyrighted material for education purposes. This will facilitate the transfer of knowledge and information in distance education. The risk of copyright infringement has lessened and this will encourage the use of resources available on the Internet. However, the digital locks provision will inhibit this progress.

Under Bill C-32 it has been deemed illegal to circumvent digital locks; distance educators will not be able to use information available on the Internet that has digital locks. The imposition of a higher tariff by Access Copyright will increase costs for institutions and students. Different rules for different types of educational institutions, libraries, archives and museums are not beneficial for the public users. The copyright reforms are contradictory and it is difficult to judge whether they will benefit or harm distance education. Instead of creating a balance between user rights and copy owners' rights, the bill is decidedly in favour of the copy owners' rights.

Fair dealing has become synonymous with user rights in copyright law. The enhancement of the exceptions that come under fair dealing such as education and parody/satire is a positive



step that will aid distance education in the delivery of digital content. It will also help course designers in using the abundant material available, which was not legally accessible before. Advocates of user rights and innovation all over the world to combat exploitation by copyright owners have championed the concepts of fair use and fair dealing. The prohibition of circumventing digital locks, even for fair dealing exceptions, is a negative development for distance education. It will constrain the rights under fair dealing and encourage right owners to use TPMs on their digital content. This will limit access to information and increase licensing costs. It will allow copyright owners to prevent access to material even for legal uses such as education. Copyright laws and Bill C-32 needs to be reviewed in order to maintain a fair balance of rights; presently it does not offer substantial advantages to distance education.

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# **Part 4**

## **Effective Teaching & Classroom Management**

- 1. Classroom Management - You Are in Charge!**
- 2. How High School Students Perceive Effective Teachers**
- 3. Classroom Management: Do's and Don'ts for New Teachers**

## **Chapter 1: Classroom Management - You Are in Charge!**

Pauline Finlay-Molloy\*

### **Do**

1. Be consistent as much as is possible. If you know a child has ASD or Conduct Disorder or a diagnosed learning disorder then you might have to modify your reaction to what is happening. Read about each child in the first month of school so that you are aware of all strategies used with each child. Make your own notes to remind you of each child's strengths and needs and if there were behaviour issues in prior years.
2. Consult other teachers for assistance when you are in doubt. You can't be expected to know it all. They may have much more experience than you do.
3. Listen carefully and calmly and ask questions if you are unsure.
4. Do plan so that all learning styles and needs are met.
5. Use nonverbal cues when necessary as they are less stressful on a child and less distracting for other students.
6. Speak to parents and/or guardians and get their take on things. Usually whatever way he/she is behaving at home he/she is doing the same in school.
7. Read books and journals on Classroom Management.
8. Find out what the motivators are. Each child is different. Ask parents if you can't figure it out. Just ask the child and he/she will tell you what interests him/her.
9. Try small behaviour charts in an agenda or a sticker once a day or even one for morning behaviour and one for afternoon behaviour. It won't take you too much time, nor will it take children and parents long to see progress. Children do like to see a visual representation of their progress.
10. Arrange your class so that children have an opportunity to work with a variety of classmates. I try many different arrangements every year. I give them choice sometimes and other times I decide. I like to have two boys and two girls in each group but that is not always possible. I have lots of group work so boys will end up working with two or three other boys at times and the same for girls.

11. Give choices: you can do your work quietly and have some time for drawing or you can go down to the green table and do the work. Choices let the children think they are in control and they have to make a decision so they can handle making what is believed to be the best decision for them.
12. Get children up for a few minutes exercise every hour. It can tie in with their work. If you know how to spell this work, spell it and do five jumping jacks. If you do not know how, listen very carefully then do three squats.
13. Do use creative teaching strategies so neither you nor the students are bored. There is no excuse for a teacher not to have a load of different strategies. They are everywhere, in books and on the internet and presented on PD (Professional Development) days.

### **Don't**

1. Be hasty to jump to conclusions and condemn children before they have had a chance to explain.
2. Call home for every incident. Pick your battles. Depend on the seriousness of the incident. Did the child bite? Did the child throw a desk at another child?
3. Give up on a child. He/She needs one adult who cares. You may be that adult!
4. Tell a child you are disappointed in him/her. Good self-esteem and self-mastery are key components of success in school. You are an advocate for him/her so if you give up on a child, you are not helping make matters better.
5. Discuss the child with all teachers in attendance in the staff room or in a grade level meeting. Other teachers do not need to hear you rant. Discuss the child with the principal, guidance counsellor or special needs teacher-someone who can help you and him.
6. Emphasize all the negatives during ISSP meetings. Parents need to hear the good as well and each child has something good. Find it before the meeting.
7. Put the child down in front of peers. Take him/her aside and speak in a cool and calm voice and explain what you need clarification on.



8. Assume the parents will help. Most will but you will get some who are so busy or too preoccupied with marital problems or other to worry about homework or a little mishap at school. You take the parent's place so deal with it. Inform the parent, of course, but remember that they don't expect you to solve problems that occur at home and you can't expect them to handle problems that occur in your domain. They do need to be informed though. That is your responsibility. If anger and physical aggression are a part of the incident, an ISSP meeting may need to take place. If the child is in danger of being given detention or is expelled, the parents will need to understand what is going on. Most minor incidents you need to handle on your own, with help from the administration, special needs teachers and/or guidance.
9. Assume the prior year's teacher got the problems with the kid. Sometimes there are personality clashes and a teacher will not always listen or understand. Most teachers do understand but there is a handful who do want the upper hand and feel they do not have to help the kid, if the child is being rude or disrespectful. You may be the one teacher who gets the kid, understands him or her. You may make a difference in his/her life!
10. Stay on a lesson that is not working. Change it, modify it, or go to something altogether different.
11. Be embarrassed if a kid doesn't like you or asks to be moved to another class. It may be just a bad day or something may have happened at home that morning to upset him/her.
12. Forget that every child can be successful, to some extent, if motivated. So work on motivating him/her right from day one. I always tell my class "If you're not having fun, then I'm not having fun" and try to include at least two fun activities every day. It makes all the difference if learning is fun.
  - a. Give up easily. There will be kids who will try your patience so don't lose it. By remaining calm you stay in control. Don't let a small child make your day miserable. You are the adult. You have been trained. You remain in control and at the top of your game by having a bag of tricks to use no matter what comes your way!

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\* Pauline Finlay-Molloy is a tenured teacher and has been teaching for more than two decades. Teacher Interns are very interested in the subject of classroom management. The fact

is that the interns want to know “practical things” which can help them to manage classrooms. In our own studies (Singh, A, et. al. 2001, *Classroom Management: a reflective perspective*, New Delhi: Kaniksha Publishers. See Chapter 5, “Voices of Teacher Interns *Do’s* and *Don’ts* in Managing Classroom”, 77-92) in this area, we observed that “in a self-reflective manner they [the teacher interns] wanted to know: what are the sources of their fear? What made them so fearful [of classroom management]? What should they *do* to survive the Internship semester? What should *not be done* if teacher interns want to survive the Internship? In this chapter, the Interns with whom we worked (all levels of schooling), identified more than 50 sources of phobia/ nature of phobia, more than 180 things teacher interns should *do* to survive the Internship and about 70 things the Teacher Interns *should not do* to survive the Internship. The Interns in our studies also thought that classroom management skills at primary/elementary levels of schooling are very different from skills required for managing classrooms at the high school level of teaching. The Teacher Interns we taught in 2009, also have the same observations. Therefore, I asked Pauline, and Jeanette Laaning and Carmen Rowse , to write down a few *do’s* and *don’ts* of classroom management at the primary/elementary level of schooling based on their long years of teaching. (Amarjit Singh).

## **Chapter 2: How High School Students Perceive Effective Teachers**

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### **Abstract**

Traditionally high school students have not been given many opportunities to offer their insights and comments on education and schooling. This paper reports on a study which asked students to list the top five characteristics of effective teachers. Their perceptions are congruent with the literature and one of the several conclusions is that teachers, administrators and other stakeholders in education should pay attention to what students have to say about the characteristics of effective teachers.

There appears to be a dearth of information regarding high school students' perceptions of the characteristics of effective teachers. In fact, according to SooHoo (1993).

Somehow educators have forgotten the important connection between teachers and students. We listen to outside experts to inform us, and, consequently, we overlook the treasure in our very own backyards: our students. Student perceptions are valuable to our practice because they are authentic sources; they personally experience our classrooms first hand. . . As teachers, we need to find ways to continually seek out these silent voices because they can teach us so much about learning and learners. (p. 389)

Providing teachers with feedback about their teaching, whether it be from colleagues, administrators or students, is an important aspect of school improvement. Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace (1996) noted the potential role that students might play in school improvement:

Those bent on improvement in schools might usefully start by inviting pupils to talk about what makes learning difficult for them, about what diminishes their motivation and engagement, and what makes some give up and others settle for a "minimum risk, minimum effort" position – even though they know that doing well matters. (p. 31)

These researchers went on to say that

. . . pupils . . . had quite a sophisticated understanding of those aspects of the school system which obstructed their learning and those aspects that were supportive . . . [they] all had their own concerns about school, even those who were achieving well across the curriculum. Their comments showed they had ideas about how schools should be, that they were prepared to explain their views, and that teachers could learn from consultation with them." (Rudduck et al., 1996, p. 85)

In this area of effective teaching the voices of students, specifically, high school students, have been particularly silent. There have been studies conducted which involved university students but for those keen on improving the skill set of high school teachers, those results are not all that relevant.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to give voice to high school students by facilitating their participation in a survey which investigated what they considered to be the most important characteristics of effective teachers. 451 senior high school students (Grades 10 – 12) in eight high schools throughout four school districts in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada participated in the study (see Appendices A, B, & C for specific demographic information). The study used a questionnaire (see Appendix D) which asked students for various demographic data (page one); page two involved a three column format which asked students to list the five most important characteristics of effective teachers (column one) . In column two students were asked to give a reason for choosing that particular characteristic and column three asked students to rank each characteristic from one to five with one being the least important and five being the most important. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to tabulate and analyze the results.

### **The Literature**

There were two aspects to this study: giving voice to high school students and secondly, determining their perceptions of the characteristics of effective teachers.

As mentioned above, most of the studies in this area have focused on university students. Recent studies on effective teaching have provided students with the researchers' understanding of the applicable characteristics. Marsh and Roche (1997) looked at students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness as a means of enhancing university teaching. Ryan and Harrison (1995) investigated how students weight various teaching components in arriving at their overall evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

More recently, Ralph (2003) conducted a study on teaching effectiveness using how well students learn as the criterion. This study took place in a Canadian university and students represented four different instructional settings: Business, Sociology, Education, and Physical Education. The students were given 32 hypothetical instructor profiles and were asked to rank nine selected teaching factors developed by Marsh and Bailey (1993) . Ralph identified five attributes of effective instructors: commitment to learners; knowledge of material; organization and management of the environment; desire to improve; and collaboration with others. Ralph concluded that "exemplary teaching is identifiable and the quality of its constituent components can be assessed" (p. 53).

Similar studies provided students with a set of characteristics from which to choose. Clark (1995) identified cognitive and affective goals of effective teaching at the university level. He developed a questionnaire covering a wide range of teaching activities associated with

effective instruction and the achievement of cognitive and affective objectives. The questionnaire, administered at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, identified qualities of effective university teaching determined by the researcher. These included four cognitive components: knowledge, organization of instruction, clarity of expression, and quality of presentation. In addition, there were four affective components: student interest; student participation and openness to ideas; interpersonal relations; and communication and fairness. Many course evaluation questionnaires administered at university campuses across Canada, including Memorial University, include these qualities. Students are asked to identify how each course/instructor ranks in each of these qualities.

There are few studies that focus on students' perceptions at the post-secondary level and at the high school level. Devlin (2002) examined the strengths and weakness of a survey used at the University of Melbourne to identify students' perceptions of their learning environment.

The Perceptions of Learning Environment Questionnaire (PLEQ) was first used in 1994 and was developed as part of a larger project, Teaching and Learning in Tertiary Education at Queensland University of Technology. Devlin argued that the PLEQ failed to sufficiently identify student perceptions in depth. The design of the PLEQ forced students to focus on and comment on the behavior of others and "does not allow them to communicate their views on how they themselves are contributing to their learning" (p. 293). Devlin suggested that this approach was contrary to the PLEQ design to report on good teaching and contains none of the "constructivist views of learning that emphasize that learners actively construct knowledge for themselves" (p. 297). Traditional course evaluation questionnaires, she argued, assume the "student as listener-follower" (p. 298) point of view and transmission model of delivering courses. While students may have been aware in the past of their own behavior and how it helped or hindered learning, the standard course evaluation questionnaires simply did not provide the means to demonstrate or express that awareness.

This study conducted in Newfoundland and Labrador left open-ended the characteristics of effective teaching. Students were free to identify the characteristics and give their opinion as to why they considered these characteristics to be important.

## **Study Findings**

Students listed a total of 74 characteristics (see Appendix E for a list of these characteristics). For purposes of brevity and convenience, this paper will report on the top five characteristics which were determined as a result of totaling the various weights assigned their characteristics by each of the 451 students. In descending order, those characteristics were:

1. knowledgeable;
2. humorous;
3. respectful;
4. patient; and
5. organized.

One can see that these characteristics along with the other 69 are from a combination of both the cognitive and affective domains. In the following paragraphs the writer examines the various student comments as well as the overall themes that have emerged from those comments.

***Student Comments*** Under knowledgeable, students cited such reasons as the following for listing this characteristic as an important attribute of effective teachers:

- A teacher has to know about what they are to teach; they can't teach something they don't know.
- If a student finds that their teacher does not completely understand the material, there is doubt, loss of respect, and disinterest.
- Teachers should know a lot and not just about their own subject. They shouldn't be dead-beats who are only book smart. It's nice to see teachers who know what's going on with their students' culture.

The Category, Humorous elicited these comments:

- If they are humorous, it sets a more relaxed environment and also makes the students interested.
- Kids respect a teacher and will actually listen to them, if they are funny and nice. Nobody likes an old stiff!
- Teachers who have a sense of humor generally have a better relationship with students.

The following provided insight as to how students perceived the importance of respect:

- For students to respect a teacher, they need to be respected.
- Students smell fear. If you can't look us in the eye, it's all over. No respect!
- It is important for a teacher to be respectful because if the teachers give respect, they will receive respect from the students. A respectful environment will make students enjoy coming to class and learning.

Characteristic number four, patient, elicited these viewpoints:

- Patience is a major factor in teaching. If the teacher has no patience, then they're going to find the job difficult because being a teacher can be very stressful.



- Students like to feel like it's o.k. to not understand something and they can go to their teachers for help.
- It is very hard for a student to go to a teacher for extra help if the student thinks the teacher will most likely lose his temper/patience.

And lastly, students stated that a teacher's being organized was important for the following reasons:

- It's really bad when a teacher loses your work. It is also horrible when they can't give you organized notes or they write really messy on the board and expect students to pick out what is written.
- An organized lesson plan and teacher in general can make the difference between students passing and failing a course.
- Organization makes learning a whole lot easier. Students know that an organized teacher means getting the work done and done right.

### ***Emergent Themes***

Standard in most qualitative studies is the emerging of various themes as a result of analyzing the data collected. This study came up with a number of themes for the top five characteristics identified by the students. A listing of those themes follows along with a brief discussion on the significance of each.

#### **Knowledgeable**

By having a teacher who is knowledgeable students build up a sense of self-confidence.

#### **Humorous**

A teacher who uses humor in the classroom helps students pay more attention to what is being taught.

#### **Respectful**

Students emphasize the reciprocity notion of respect (i.e., you give respect, you get respect).

#### **Patient**

Students being taught by a patient teacher are more inclined to ask questions if they don't understand something, thus decreasing frustration levels.

## Organized

Teachers who are organized have a certain *credibility with students*.

Each of these themes represents a positive aspect of school life for students at any grade level but especially so for those enrolled in senior high classes. Self-confidence is an important issue for high school students and this particular perspective identified in the data is one not necessarily associated with the “knowledgeable-ness” of the teacher(s). However, upon further reflection, it does make considerable sense that if students are being taught by teachers whom they perceive to be knowledgeable in their subject area, it stands to reason that there could be an increase in their self-confidence levels, pertaining the specific subject(s) being taught. When thinking about the humorous characteristic, this researcher found this theme of “students paying more attention” to be quite novel and most intriguing. It was the researcher’s perception that students enjoyed teachers having a sense of humor but that was as far as its significance went. However, students are most insightful here and the more one thinks about this aspect of humor, the more credible this perception becomes.

Perhaps the one characteristic that was most congruent with the researcher’s own perceptions was the theme emanating from the respectful characteristic – that of the notion of reciprocity: you give respect, you get respect. A basic concept in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, respect is universal and certainly not unique to the needs of high school students.

In their comments on the patient characteristic, students made the point that, if they were being taught by a patient teacher and did not understand something, they would be more inclined to ask questions, thus decreasing their frustration levels. This is an extremely important characteristic for all teachers because it hits at the very core of the teaching process - having students understand the material being taught. Not understanding the material can have huge consequences for students ranging from disruptive behavior in the classroom to grade failure to eventually dropping out of school.

The fifth characteristic identified by students, organized, at first blush, would appear to most to be “motherhood” to the teaching profession. However, we all know that this is simply not so. Students were of the opinion that teachers who were organized had a certain credibility with students. Levin, Nolan, Kerr and Elliott (2009) talk about the four teacher power bases: referent, expert, legitimate and coercive. Credibility permeates the two most desirable power bases, i.e., referent and expert and is a major factor in promoting positive classroom management.

## Discussion

The results of this study are highly congruent with the literature on effective teaching. Three decades ago Medley (1979) proffered the following five successive conceptions of the effective teacher:

- possessor of desirable personal traits;

- user of effective methods;
- creator of a good classroom atmosphere;
- master of a repertoire of competencies; and
- professional decision maker who has not only mastered needed competencies but learned when to apply them and how to orchestrate them. (pp. 11-27)

More recently, McCabe (1995) stated that students' best teachers were those who

- cared not only about their subject matter but the students as well;
- integrated the affective & cognitive domains of teaching & learning;
- were interested in their students as persons;
- respected them & were respected by them;
- were positive role models;
- had high expectations but were flexible;
- engaged them in a variety of learning activities;
- students felt a connection with;
- came across as very human yet very professional at the same time;
- were organized & prepared;
- were subject-centered but also student-centered; and
- who had a sense of humor. (p. 125)

According to Stronge (2002), many interview and survey responses about effective teaching emphasize the teacher's affective characteristics, or social and emotional behaviors, more than pedagogical practice. This was quite evident in this study as a considerable number of all the characteristics listed by students (see Appendix E) were in the affective domain or specifically concerned with social and emotional behaviors (e.g., humorous; respectful; patient; approachable; caring; compassionate; personable; kind).

Rudduck and Flutter (2004) concluded that students perceive good teachers as:

1. human, accessible, reliable and persistent;
2. respectful of students and sensitive to their difficulties;
3. enthusiastic and positive; and
4. professionally skilled. (pp. 77-78)

The above comments gleaned from the literature on effective teaching are further confirmed and validated by the results of this study. The research cited above has covered a considerable period of time and it is encouraging to be able to state that the perceptions of good or effective teaching have not really changed that much over the years. In spite of the tremendous advances in today's technology, good teaching is still good teaching.

## Conclusions

As a result of this study, the researcher has arrived at the following conclusions:

- that high school students have worthwhile and insightful comments to make about the characteristics of effective teachers and are very eager to make those comments;
- that the characteristics they list to describe effective teachers are a combination of those found in both the affective and cognitive domains;
- that teachers, administrators and other stakeholders in education should pay attention to what students have to say about teaching and schools;
- that students' perceptions of the characteristics of effective teachers are highly congruent with what the literature is saying;
- that these student insights provide valuable and helpful information not only for beginning teachers but also for experienced teachers; and lastly,
- that in light of these findings, beginning and experienced teachers might find it helpful to their classroom practice and to their overall role as teachers to reflect on the various behaviors they exhibit and the various strategies they utilize on a daily basis.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**Gender Breakdown of Study Participants**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	197	43.7
Female	254	56.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>100</b>

**APPENDIX B**

**Grade Level Breakdown of Study Participants**

**Grade Level**

*f* Level 1 (Grade 10)

*f* Level 2 (Grade 11)

*f* Level 3 (Grade 12)

*f* Level 4 (part-time)

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	
107	23.7	
121	26.8	
216	47.9	
7	1.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>100</b>

**APPENDIX C**

**Participating Schools' Enrolments**

**Frequency                  Percent**



025-200	29	6.4
201-400	91	20.1
401-600	130	28.8
601-800	133	29.4
801-1000	0	0
1001-1200	68	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>99.7</b>

## APPENDIX D

### Survey Instrument

#### *Page 1*

Please complete the following by circling the letter of the appropriate response:

*f* I am:

male  
female

*f* I am currently enrolled in:

Level 1 (Grade 10)  
Level 2 (Grade 11)  
Level 3 (Grade 12)  
Level 4 (part-time)

*f* My current age is:

14 years  
15 years  
16 years  
17 years  
18 years  
19 years  
20 years

*f* The student population of my school is:

025 - 200  
201 – 400  
401 – 600

601 – 800  
801 - 1000  
1001 – 1200

***Page 2***

Directions: In column 1, please list the five characteristics that you believe are important for effective teachers to have. In column 2, please give a statement as to why you think this characteristic is important. In column 3, please rank the characteristics you listed in column 1 with a number from 1 – 5 with 1 referring to LEAST IMPORTANT to 5 meaning MOST IMPORTANT.

<b>Column 1</b> <b>CHARACTERISTIC</b>	<b>Column 2</b> <b>WHY THIS CHARACTERISTIC IS IMPORTANT</b>	<b>Column 3</b> <b>RANK</b>

**THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY**  
**APPENDIX E**

**List of 74 Characteristics**

1. Approachable
2. Articulate
3. Attentive
4. Authoritative
5. Available
6. Calm
7. Caring
8. Charismatic
9. Communicative
10. Compassionate
11. Competent
12. Concerned
13. Confident
14. Conscientious
15. Considerate
16. Controlling
17. Creative
18. Dedicated
19. Determined
20. Devoted
21. Disciplined
22. Easy-going
23. Effective
24. Efficient
25. Empathetic
26. Energetic
27. Enthusiastic
28. Even-tempered
29. Exciting
30. Exemplary
31. Fair
32. Firm
33. Flexible
34. Focused
35. Forgiving
36. Friendly
37. Funny
38. Helpful
39. Honest

40. Humorous

## **APPENDIX E (Cont'd)**

41. Hygienic

42. Industrious

43. Informative

44. Innovative

45. Intelligent

46. Interactive

47. Interested

48. Interesting

49. Involved

50. Kind

51. Knowledgeable

52. Level-headed

53. Motivating

54. Nice

55. Optimistic

56. Organized

57. Patient

58. Personable

59. Polite

60. Positive

61. Professional

62. Punctual

63. Reasonable

64. Relaxed

65. Respectful

66. Responsible

67. Supportive

68. Tolerant

69. Trusting

70. Trustworthy

71. Understandable

72. Understanding

73. Well-prepared

74. Wise

### **Chapter 3: Classroom Management: Dos and Don'ts for New Teachers**

Jeanette Laaning and Carmen Rowse\*

#### **Dos**

1. Try to spend time watching other teachers manage their class.
2. Be flexible in your activity planning.
3. Have backup plans when a given activity is not working.
4. Use teachable moments.
5. Plan for different learning styles (i.e., visual, kinaesthetic, audio, verbal).
6. Plan for different learning ability levels.
7. Be aware of student s previous knowledge and abilities when planning learning activities.
8. Plan activities involving movement and singing.
9. Vary the teaching environment.
10. Allow children a choice in projects.
11. Focus on the process rather than the product.
12. Let children be risk takers and make mistakes.
13. Let children figure out their mistakes.
14. Let students work in pairs or groups.
15. Assign tasks to each member of a work group (e.g., leader, helper, cleaner, recorder).
16. Establish clear simple rules, e.g., be safe, be respectful, be responsible.
17. Establish appropriate listening and speaking behaviours.
18. Allow students to suggest appropriate rules and routines.
19. Remember that children respond well to regular routines and these should be established early.

20. Start teaching children routines to be used in independent centres early, so they can use these later on in the year, e.g., work quietly, ask a friend, work together, know where all manipulatives are in a centre, complete an assigned task.
21. Praise appropriate behaviours.
22. Explain “123 Magic”.
23. Explain consequences to inappropriate behaviour.
24. Demonstrate inappropriate behaviours, have children explain what was wrong.
25. Establish looks or signals rather than drawing verbal attention to inappropriate behaviours.
26. Establish songs and actions to gain student attention.
27. Begin speaking rather than always waiting for silence.
28. Use motivating games, situations to encourage students to line-up quickly.
29. Always make your activity appear more fun than what the lingering child is doing.
30. For the first days of school, change a situation rather than force a child to join an activity they don’t want.
31. Practice routines such as fire drills in small, manageable chunks to ensure success.
32. Allow extra time for changing shoes, putting on coats, the first few days (or weeks) of school so that this activity does not become stressful.
33. Make school fun, the battle is won if the children want to go to school everyday in September
34. Stop an activity if children are tired, by Thursday they may be worn out and not willing to take on new tasks.
35. Let children explore their classroom to become comfortable with their surroundings.

### **Don’ts**

1. Overwhelm children with rules and routines the first few days of school.
2. Overwhelm children with too much talking the first few days.
3. Force children to answer too many questions or perform too many tasks.
4. Expect routines to work well the first few days.

5. Judge children by their behaviour and performance the first few days, give them time to adjust to routines and new situations.
6. Don't give too many worksheets. Allow students opportunity to complete open ended activities.
7. Leave the impression that school will be all hard work, that you have to sit all day.
8. Don't have the classroom fully decorated. Let children decide what art to put up and where it should go.
9. Leave material and manipulatives out unless you want the children to use them.
10. Have too many choice materials at each centre.

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\* Both Jeanette and Carmen are experienced tenured teachers. Jeanette has been teaching for the last two decades, and Carmen for the last twelve years. I proposed that they write a few *do's* and *don'ts* for this issue of *the Morning Watch* as Pauline Finlay-Molloy did (see my footnote to her observations). I am thankful to these three highly experienced teachers for their contributions, which should be seen as “practical tips” for classroom management from the “field”. (Amarjit Singh)



# **Part 5**

## **Indigenization**

- 1. Setting the Stage for Indigenizing the Academy**
- 2. An Institutional Case Study of One University**
- 3. First Nations Post-Secondary Education in Western Canada: Obligations, Barriers, and Opportunities**
- 4. The Case of Grenfell Campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland and Mi'kmaq Resurgence**
- 5. Confronting “Contentious Grounds”**
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- 7. Leaving Home: The Post-Secondary Transition as Seen by Labrador Metis Woman**
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- 9. The Return of the Native: Personal Perspectives of Identity**
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- 11. If we Tore Down the Barriers Would We Still Be Equal: Nunatsiavut Students and Post-Secondary Education**

## Chapter 1: Setting the Stage for Indigenizing the Academy

Kirk Anderson and Maura Hanrahan

### Four Decades of *The Morning Watch* — moving to Indigenizing the Academy?

We see this province as a special place. Both of us have lived in other provinces and countries, and traveled extensively. While we admit that all places are distinctive and special, Newfoundland and Labrador is unique in that it continues to seek its place within Canada after its relatively late entry into Confederation in 1949. Memorial University is also unique in that two key distinctions separate it from other public universities. First, the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) was created as a Memorial to those who gave their lives in World War I. However, our forbearers did not simply vision MUN as a monument to past sacrifice but as a living legacy to the future. Our creation is a testament to hope, that through education we can create a living legacy in our students and faculty to build a better future. A sense of identify that is still strong in our university community. Second we are the only university serving this province so a core mission and value is to serve our unique responsibility to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Given these distinctions of both province and university the reader might see a robust defence of our argument for this being a special place.

Given Memorial's legacy and special connection to the Newfoundland and Labrador, we in Memorial are to be the province's champion. We embrace this knowing that Canada has the highest achieving public education system in the English speaking world. Reflecting this record of excellence, Memorial University is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in Canada as a comprehensive university category (McLean's, 2013). To excel within an excellent system is cause for celebration. It honours our legacy well.

*The Morning Watch*, a scholarly journal, embedded in the Faculty of Education, is part of the distinctive legacy. In this edition, we celebrate *The Morning Watch* and its 40 year tradition of scholarship which started in 1973. It is full of many powerful pieces from scholars and practitioners. There is no other journal so deeply rooted in educational and social issues relevant to this province, and this material has merit for those far beyond our shores and boundaries.

Kirk Anderson published his first academic writing in *The Morning Watch* in 1994, a piece on success in small schools (Anderson, 1994). He was principal of Bonne Bay Academy in Western Newfoundland at the time. As Associate Dean of Education at the University of New Brunswick, he contributed a second article on the emerging scholars of Canadian educational leadership in 2010 (Anderson, 2010). Maura Hanrahan is new to *The Morning Watch* with one previous article in a special issue on the experience of

becoming a researcher. Our most recent contribution to 77ic *Morning Watch* is this 40th anniversary edition under the timely title *Indigenizing the Academy*, which we have co-edited.

A lot has changed in 40 years and some things have remained the same. In 1973, Memorial meant the Elizabeth Avenue Campus. While much of Memorial University still means the Elizabeth Avenue (St. John's) Campus, today it is much more. Memorial is now a multi-campus university which includes the Marine Institute (and its widely-scattered sites), the Elizabeth Avenue Campus (called the Valley Campus by some at the Marine Institute), the Grenfell Campus (called the campus of choice by some at Grenfell) in Western Newfoundland, and the Harlow Campus in England. Add to this a number of institutes such as the Labrador Institute in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the Marine Centre in Bonne Bay and the reader can see the degree to which this university has flourished. We have said much about locations and buildings but the people are changing as well. Besides our healthy cohort of students from Newfoundland and Labrador, our faculties, schools and divisions attract students from all over the world, many at the graduate level (in fact, our graduate school enrolment has doubled in recent years). Memorial is also drawing attention nationally and internationally as each of our campuses become a 'campus of choice' for many people seeking higher education. The *Morning Watch* is a creation of professors at Memorial University's Faculty of Education, a faculty with almost 90 years in teacher education and research. We have over 1,500 years of experience, assuming an average of 25 years of educational experience for the equivalent of 60 Faculty members. The Faculty of Education is, without doubt, the foremost authority on teaching and learning in this province. Its reach extends beyond the province as the Faculty is also highly ranked nationally and internationally.

Now 40 years old and like no other academic journal, The *Morning Watch* celebrates the ways of this province and of Canada just as it addresses salient social issues. To celebrate excellence without acknowledging grave concern for social justice is not something we can do. This special hard cover edition hopes to promote paths to celebration for a people who, to our shame, have been long left out of the Canadian success story. In particular, we highlight the resurgence of Indigenous identity as we enable a frank discussion on Indigeneity within the academy, helping, we hope, to Indigenize the academy.

This edition has two types of writing. Some of the articles deal with the theme of identity and being' Indigenous, which ranges from the search to reclaim or preserve Indigenous identities, which are not always understood or protected in the academy. Other articles deal with the more global context of what Indigenizing the academy means. We trust there are many insights and helpful ideas herein.

We start this special issue with a narrative from Kirk Anderson about personal identity and links to place and culture. Anderson's narrative on identity is followed by Jacqueline Ottmann's exemplary discourse of what Indigenising the academy means. In many ways, Anderson sets the tone for many of the personal journeys evident in the articles presented and Ottmann sets the stage for the academy, perhaps even the country. Then Sheila Carr-Stewart, Geraldine Balzer, and Michael Cottrell focus on the Western Canadian experience with a particular emphasis on the legislative aspects of First Nations education.

Following Anderson and Ottmann, we revisit Labrador in the 1970s, a region with a substantial Indigenous population on the verge of major development and change. First we flash back to Innu and Inuit perspectives which are introduced through Amarjit Singh's *Hc Morning Watch* (Singh, 1975) interview with two leaders, Bart Jack and the late Bill Edmunds. Leaping ahead to today, Jodie Lane's article brings us into the experience of young Inuit as they grapple with the challenges of post-secondary education. Lane's piece segues into Maura Hanrahan's discussion with Amy Hudson, a Labrador Metis woman who has journeyed through high school to graduate school and now works in the academy.

The final section contains articles about contemporary issues of Indigenizing the academy and the processes involved. Elizabeth Yeoman talks to two linguists, Sarah Townley and Marguerite McKenzie, who are involved in Indigenous language education efforts for the Inuit and Innu. This is followed by a powerful piece by Memorial University scholars and Nunatsiavut Government staff, which takes the reader through the story of a highly successful Inuit Bachelor of Social Work program, a partnership program delivered in Labrador. Finally, in two separate articles, Rainer Baehre and Maura Hanrahan tell the stories of Indigenization at Memorial University, identifying the steps involved as well as best practices. The case of Memorial's Grenfell Campus is particular intriguing as it is linked to the political and cultural resurgence of the Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland with the establishment of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation band after a decades-long struggle by the thousands of members of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians.

As we embark on the idea of Indigenizing the academy, we note that there have been failures yet there are some stellar success stories and all of these needs to be shared and we are pleased to do so through this special issue of the *Morning watch*.

All our relations,

Kirk Anderson and Maura Hanrahan

Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Indigenizing the Academy (Anderson and Hanrahan, 2013) A hard copy 40th anniversary special edition of The Morning Watch**

**Chapter 2: An institutional case study of one university**

Maura Hanrahan

Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Abstract:** This article explains the process through which Memorial University has been Indigenizing the academy since the establishment of the Presidential Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives and the Task Force's 2009 report. It begins with a brief overview of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq history, the purpose of which is to contextualize the Task Force, to describe the political, historical, and cultural environment into which it emerged and operated. The article concludes with some best practices identified through the implementation of the Task Force recommendations.

When I was a school child in the 1970s we were taught that there were no “Indians” left in Newfoundland; they had all been killed off by the Mi'kmaq who had been brought over by the French from Nova Scotia for just that purpose. We learned that a few settlers, such as the Peytons of Twillingate, Newfoundland, played a role in this enterprise but it was chiefly the Mi'kmaq who were culpable. The “Mi'kmaq mercenary myth,” as Jerry Wetzel (1999) calls it, is baseless. Yet the Mi'kmaq mercenary myth is embedded in Newfoundland culture and it is central to the conventional view of Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland<sup>17</sup>: that the Mi'kmaq are imported newcomers and not native to the land<sup>18</sup>. Perhaps schoolchildren are no longer taught that the Mi'kmaq killed off the Beothuk but it is still the Beothuk, not the Mi'kmaq, who are regarded as Newfoundland's legitimate Indigenous people. This conventional wisdom offers the settler regime - the provincial government - political advantages; by positioning the Mi'kmaq as immigrants to the island, the settlers become the true inheritors or owners of the land<sup>19</sup>. In contrast to the living Indigenous peoples of the province, the Beothuk have never and will never file a land claim or cause inconvenience and business disruptions by occupying a hydro-electric development construction site; they pose no threat to the political order.

**Mi'kmaq History in Newfoundland**

Before the arrival of Europeans, Mi'kmaq and Beothuk called the island of Newfoundland home. For the Mi'kmaq, the island was Ktagamakuk, part of the “foggy district.” To their kin to the west, in what is now the Maritimes, Quebec, and Maine, the Mi'kmaq were “the ancients.” This might have been a reference to the long tenure of the Mi'kmaq on the island. They practiced seasonal transhumance -moving with the seasons to take advantage of available resources, such as wood and fish. So they might spend winters in the woods near Red Indian Lake in the interior of the island and then gather at Conne River on the South Coast for salmon fishing - and trading and

match-making - early in the summer.

They also visited extended family and political allies in nearby Cape Breton or the Magdalen Islands, sailing to these places in birch bark canoes. Their economic adaptations and land-use patterns did not include year-round residences in single locales, the dominant European practice. Their residence patterns and the absence of land ownership concepts, and those of Indigenous peoples globally, have led non- indigenous people to conclude that the land was empty: *terra nullius*, a misinterpretation that became enshrined in law. But Mi'kmaq land extended for hundreds of miles into the Gaspé Peninsula and south through what is now the state of Maine and, while certain groups of Mi'kmaq were associated with particular territories, such as Ktagamakuk movement was central to their culture and survival. In the words of anthropologist Charles Martijn (1989), Newfoundland was part of the Mi'kmaq "domain of islands."

According to Mi'kmaq history, which is oral rather than written, there was intermarriage as well as the occasional skirmish with the Beothuk. The intermarriage would have been normal and pragmatic for small groups adjacent to each other whose territories probably overlapped. Exogenous marriage would have been necessary for group survival and health as well as political and economic alliances. Santu, who had a Beothuk father and a Mi'kmaq mother and lived into the twentieth century, sang a Beothuk song for anthropologist Frank Speck in 1910, providing a late example of Beothuk-Mi'kmaq intermarriage – and positive relations. There may well be Beothuk blood running through the veins of some Mi'kmaq and possibly other Newfoundlanders, as is frequently claimed, but, as a cultural entity, the Beothuk no longer exist. Theirs was the fate of many Indigenous nations in the Americas; for instance, 24 small nations died out on the Northeastern Seaboard of the United States (Benson, 2000). The Beothuk met their demise because of violent encounters with settlers who were seeking revenge for the Indigenous people's resistance to the theft of their land. They also fell prey to tuberculosis, the foreign disease that lay claim to Shanawdithit, the young woman who was kidnapped by settlers and is known and romanticized as the last of the Beothuk<sup>20</sup>. The impact of the loss of access to the coast and its abundant food sources, such as mussels and salmon, must not be underestimated; increasingly, the Beothuk began to suffer from hunger and malnutrition, which weakened their constitutions and resistance to European diseases. Interestingly, the Mi'kmaq hold that Sylvester Joe, the Mi'kmaq guide who took William Epps Cormack across the island to find any remaining Beothuk, actually made sure to avoid Beothuk encampments; Joe protected the Beothuk, as experience had demonstrated that further contact with Europeans would do the survivors no good.

In his paper, Rainer Baehre traces the contributions of scholars, especially those at Memorial's Grenfell Campus, to researching Mi'kmaq history. Baehre cites valuable work but much remains to be written. There is a plethora of work on the Beothuk (e.g. Hewson, 1975; Holly, 2003, 2000, 1980; Marshall, 1996, 1989, 1988, 1981; Pastore, 1993, 1992, 1989, 1987; Such, 1978; Winter, 1975), who are, perhaps not surprisingly, romanticized in popular song and the visual art of Newfoundland. Meanwhile, this friendly view does not extend to the Mi'kmaq; over the years I have been told stories of woods companies in Central Newfoundland forcing Mi'kmaq workers to eat their lunch outside, even in the coldest weather; they were not welcome in the warm lunchroom. In Corner Brook, it is said that the pulp and paper company refused to hire Mi'kmaq men. In a coping mechanism that Indigenous and other racialized people all over North America



adopt, Mi'kmaq tried to blend in. Mothers told their children not to tell their teachers of their origins. Men who needed work hid who they were. It became easier to do this as intermarriage with the descendants of settlers escalated and the Mi'kmaq phenotype became less common. In the urban areas in particular, notably Comer Brook, many Mi'kmaq suffered a great deal of cultural loss. Largely because of the school system, the Mi'kmaq language disappeared. But other families, especially those in rural communities on Newfoundland's West Coast, such as Flat Bay and St. Georges, retained elements of Mi'kmaq culture and continued to identify and be identified as Mi'kmaq. Elsewhere, Mi'kmaq families knowingly and unknowingly passed on Mi'kmaq culture to their children.

When Newfoundland became Canada's tenth province in 1949, the *Indian Act* was not applied (Hanrahan, 2003); the *Act* is a deeply flawed colonial document but there was no valid reason it should not have applied in Newfoundland as it was in other provinces; the government's motives for not doing so are suspect, as Wetzel (1999) has explored elsewhere, and reflect a policy thrust toward assimilation. The absence of the *Indian Act* bestowed certain advantages on the Mi'kmaq (and the Innu) but it also meant that their Indigenous rights were not recognized<sup>21</sup>. The Federation of Newfoundland Indians was established in the 1970s, alongside the Labrador Inuit Association, as we saw in Amarjit Singh's piece, as were parallel Indigenous political organizations across Canada largely in response to Ottawa's 1969 pro-assimilation *White Paper* and *Citizens Plus*, known as "the Red Paper," published in 1970 by the Indian Association of Alberta under Harold Cardinal's leadership. It was not until 1984 that the Mi'kmaq of Conne River were registered as Indians under the *Indian Act*, achieving the recognition for which the provinces First Nations had long fought (Hanrahan, 2003). It was expected that the recognition of other Mi'kmaq communities would follow in short order but this did not happen until, after a decades-long campaign, the landless Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band was created in 2011. The subsequent history of the Qalipu band is beyond the purview of this paper but it must be stated that, mainly because of the federal governments changing regulations about membership, what was once an occasion for celebration is now largely a source of division and controversy with an uncertain outcome.

Here I am delving into the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq story because, like certain other Newfoundland stories, it is my own. One happy outcome of the formation of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation was that, for perhaps the first time since colonization, people of Mi'kmaq descent felt free to publicly assert their identity. The Inna, the Nunatsiavut Inuit, and the Southern Inuit have their own stories, all replete with active ongoing attempts to minimize and even deny their Indigenous rights. For instance, the Southern Inuit land claim has not yet been accepted for negotiation, despite a wealth of archaeological, historical, and anthropological evidence and repeated government assurances that this land claim would be dealt with. Meanwhile, there is a stream of media reports focusing on the social pathologies that erupt in the Innu communities of Natuashish and Sheshatshiu, with rare attempts to contextualize these pathologies (Claxton-Oldfield and Keefe, 1999).

## **The Academy**

Unless it makes a concerted effort to do otherwise, the academy is automatically part of the



ongoing colonial project; rooted in Western values, traditions and practices and peopled by the descendants of settlers (Kuokkanen, 2007), it cannot be otherwise. We - and here I am speaking as a member of the academy - rarely acknowledge, let alone value Indigenous pedagogies and epistemology. We teach from a Western perspective, often without even realizing it. When we include other perspectives, often through a limited cultural diversity framework, we reduce Indigenous people to merely a colourful part of the Canadian cultural mosaic, ignoring their constitutional place, the relevant legislative frameworks, and their political aspirations. We also obscure the inequitable power relations that continue to characterize Canadian society (Razack, 1998).

We can tend to view Indigenous peoples as subjects of research (Clark, 2004) and in so doing sometimes cherry pick Indigenous organizations, choosing to work with the better-known or Better resourced groups or those who have been "recognized" by government (although there is no real consensus on of even understanding of the meaning of the word 'recognition' in the context of Indigenous peoples in Canada<sup>22</sup>).

There are still times when, often unknowingly, we in the academy fail to honor and respect Indigenous cultural values and practices. We may not notice when Indigenous students enter the academy in disproportionately low numbers and then drop out in disproportionately high numbers. We usually expect Indigenous students to conform to Western values, practices and expectations rather than learning from the perspectives they bring to the classroom or their theses. Somewhere along the line, many of us bought into the idea that the academy is inextricably at odds with Indigenous ways of learning and knowing, with their emphasis on ancient wisdom. The academy is, after all, the place where new knowledge I generated. But we forget that the academy is also the repository of old knowledge and that Indigenous knowledge has applicability for contemporary society. We need to go deeper than scratching the surface here, as Indigenous knowledge is difficult to translate and, when decontextualized as it usually is, it can come across as simplistic and abstract to the point of meaninglessness. Sometimes, thinking that they have unlimited resources to pay student tuition, we view Indigenous organizations as sources of wealth for us, for the academy.

### **The Presidential Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives**

They might not have articulated these things in the same way I have but the members of Memorial University's Presidential Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives recognized these issues and envisioned alternative approaches. They knew that, as Jacqueline Ottmann writes in this special issue "Building a transformative process involves a series of stages, including (but not limited to) identifying shared philosophy and values, establishing conditions and planning for change. Led by Evan Simpson, a philosopher and then Memorial's Vice-President (Academic), the Task Force included representatives from faculty, senior administration, the two Mi'kmaq organizations (Miawpukek First Nation at Conne River and the Federation of Newfoundland Indians), the two Innu bands (Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation and Mushuau Inna First Nation), NunatuKavut Community Council, and the Nunatsiavut Government. It held both internal and external consultations aimed at improving Memorials relationships with the provinces Indigenous peoples.

As the only university in the province, Memorial has a special obligation to the people of the province. Deeply aware that the university needed to do more to live up to its obligation to Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous people, the Task Force members titled their 2009 report "A Special Obligation." A specific plan for this university, I note that the Task Force report was one in a long line of reports and plans published in Canada by such organizations as the Assembly of First Nations, the Alberta Government, and others cited by Ottmann.

Throughout the Task Force report, the authors stressed the need for immediate action. Their recommendations relate to the themes of early intervention, academic programming, student support services, and the coordination of efforts. The report is not perfect; it overuses the term "success" which connotes individual ambition and goals, notions that are at odds with some Indigenous world views. The report refers to the need for a "welcoming" environment, which might imply that indigenous people are guests. The report is also focused on the St. John's Campus of Memorial University, by far our largest campus, yet we are a multi-campus university with teaching taking place at the Marine Institute in St. John's, Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook, the Labrador Institute in Goose Bay, Labrador, and Harlow Campus in Essex, England, as well as smaller sites like the Bonne Bay Marine Station in Western Newfoundland. These deficiencies in the report are easily overcome, especially as President Gary Kachanoski and Memorial's senior leadership are committed to the multi-campus model and to implementing the Task Force recommendations on all our campuses. In broadening the report's application, we are attempting to live up to the spirit of the Task Force and this goal is made more achievable by the 22 clear recommendations offered in the report.

Aware of the truism that "if everyone is doing it, no one is doing it," the Task Force called for the hiring of a special adviser for Aboriginal affairs. In 2011, became the first special adviser, responsible for initiating and facilitating the implementation of the recommendations on all our campuses. What follows is a summary of some of the mainly structural changes thus far implemented.

### *Support Services*

- The hiring of an additional Aboriginal Liaison Officer on the St. John's Campus
- The conversion of the two staff positions in the Aboriginal Resource Office from temporary to permanent positions.
- The hiring of an Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator for the Grenfell Campus
- The establishment of a highly visible Aboriginal Resource Centre on the Grenfell Campus
- MOUs between the Grenfell and St. John's campuses and two Indigenous organizations to provide housing throughout students' time at university (instead of only for the first year)
- An MOU between Student Services, specifically the Aboriginal Resource Office, and the St. John's Native Friendship Centre
- External and internal consultations and discussions with donors that should lead to the transformation of a centrally located existing building into a clearly identifiable Aboriginal Centre on the St. John's Campus

- The establishment of Indigenous student councils on the St. Johns and Grenfell campuses
- New scholarships, including the Dr. Evan Simpson Aboriginal Entrance Scholarship, named after the chair of the Task Force
- A \$500 bursary from the Faculty of Medicine for Indigenous students to assist with the costs of doing the Medical College Admissions Test
- More funding for Indigenous graduate students through the School of Graduate Studies

### *Early Intervention*

In terms of early intervention, the Task Force's emphasis was on role modeling. Planning is underway for an Aboriginal Ambassadors Pilot Project that will see Southern Inuit students in grades 6-12 introduced to engineering concepts using culturally appropriate methods. This project is a partnership with Nunatsiavut Community Council and the College of the North Atlantic. In addition, the Faculty of Education is in the process of hiring a research associate and an instructor to develop and deliver a community-based teacher education program in Labrador; other faculty members will take part. This is a partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government, Memorial's recent partner on the national award-winning Inuit Bachelor of Social Work program, eloquently described in the article by Ellen Oliver and her colleagues, and the Faculty is engaged in discussions with Mamu Tshishkutamashutau (the Innu School Board) regarding Labrador-based teacher education programming for Innu students.

### *Academic Programming*

Our academic programming initiatives include what is now the most comprehensive designated program for Indigenous students of any Canadian university. This program began with designated seats in our Faculty of Medicine. As we worked to expand the program, our deans and Indigenous leaders strongly agreed that students must meet the same admissions criteria as other students to qualify for one of the undergraduate or graduate seats in Visual Arts and Environmental Policy at Grenfell, Medicine, Nursing, Social Work, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, Human Kinetics and Recreation at the St. John's Campus, and all programs at the Marine Institute, including Nautical Science, the highly competitive Remote-Operated Vehicle program, and others. These seats are protected as a special program by the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission. Grenfell Campus' Aboriginal Initiatives Committee, made up of faculty, students and Indigenous community members, are looking at the possibility of an Indigenous Studies minor as well as an Aboriginal stream in Leadership Studies. Work towards enhanced academic programming in Aboriginal Studies is being done on the St. John's Campus.

### *Other Initiatives*

Other initiatives that follow from but go beyond Task Force, moving the institution toward cultural safety, include:

- The development of a kullik-lighting and smudging policy (the kullik is the Inuit lamp)<sup>23</sup>

- The publication of this special issue of the *Morning Watch* with its theme of Indigenizing the academy
- The stationing of faculty members at the Labrador Institute; Li shares these positions with the Marine Institute, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Medicine, and other academic units at Memorial
- The institutionalizing of honoraria paid to Elders and others in Indigenous communities as well as administrative support from Finance and Administration staff for faculty and staff conducting business in remote Indigenous communities
- A celebratory event on our Grenfell Campus which featured a visit and talk by Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, which was webcast to the St. John's Campus and the Labrador Institute
- The use of Indigenous place names on our convocation materials (e.g. Miawpukek First Nation versus Conne River, which appears on provincial maps)

As we celebrate our strengths and gains, we remain aware of our weaknesses as an institution and not all our initiatives have met or will meet with success; for instance, we have not yet been able to mount the mentoring program called for by the Task Force. Yet the university has made significant commitments in terms of resources to bring about the recommendations of the Task Force and to go beyond these recommendations. As Clark (2004) says, and as was reiterated at the May, 2013 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Summit at the University of Regina, “we resource what we value” (213). In terms of Indigenizing the academy, Memorial University is a work in progress, like most Canadian universities and, as stated previously, most of our changes have been structural and, at this early stage, not necessarily transformative. Yet a great deal of change has happened in a short time, mainly because of the commitment of individuals leading academic and non-academic units, as well as at the most senior administrative levels. Our students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, especially our student unions, have played a central role in advancing initiatives. The strong attachment to Memorial's special obligation to the people of the province is another factor in our success thus far. As I go about my work, the special obligation is referenced as a cornerstone for many staff and faculty here.

In general, we are at the initiation phase. We are at the implementation phase with some initiatives. There are some hopeful signs that we will reach the institutionalization phase - for instance, the conversion of the Indigenous support positions to permanent jobs. My goal is transformative change through which Indigenous world views and approaches would be a valued part of the education for all our students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike. In other words, I would like to see our classrooms decolonized and the people in those classrooms reconciled - big dreams and, yes, radical.

In my position, I regularly experience painful moments of encounter when the historical and cultural realities of Indigenous people are minimized or denied or faced for the first time, sometimes with a great deal of emotion. I have learned that information and awareness are themselves insufficient to bring about change. Knowledge rarely transforms people for the real problem is, as Wilson (2007) has stated, resistance to knowledge. Many people, inside as well as outside the academy, are invested in their misunderstandings of Indigenous cultures and histories and Canadian history and the intersections between these. The moment of encounter may be painful because it is stirring something in people's hearts and shaking their beliefs or

assumptions; this may lead to change but we have to admit that it might not. If our work is to be effective, we need to understand and accept this - for one thing, it will help us direct our energies to those targets which are more likely to lead to transformative change. It will also help us identify allies and supporters, necessary to continue the work. Allies will emerge. At Memorial, the student unions on all our campuses have become strong allies. Non-Indigenous and Indigenous social work students at Memorial recently produced a video in 2012 that illuminated areas this university lags in, notably the material evidence of the living Indigenous cultures of the province. Their work is helpful as we construct spaces in the academy that will honour Indigenous peoples<sup>24</sup>.

### **Best Practices identified through implementing the task Force**

This leads me to discussion of what we have learned from the journey the Task Force began. What are the best practices? What works and what doesn't? Below is some general advice that I hope will be useful; it draws on experiences at several universities and reflects my own perspective, not that of Memorial University itself.

#### *Organizational Capacity and Resources*

Recognize the differences between Indigenous organizations, especially in terms of capacity. Some organizations are full governments with ministers, departments, and appropriate staff spread through their homeland and even beyond. Meanwhile, some Indigenous organizations lack even the core staff they need and therefore might find it difficult to provide the resources needed to engage in partnerships with the academy.

We in the academy need to recognize these differences and make provisions for Indigenous organizations that are not well staffed. Ideally we should create mechanisms for them to be involved either through external grants or internal funding, creative use of existing resources, or other ways. It is incumbent upon us to remember that we are one of many, many outside entities trying to get the attention of Indigenous organizations. This list includes developers, municipalities, provincial governments, the federal government, mining prospectors, regional health authorities, educational boards, and so on. If our overtures don't get responses right away or ever, it may not mean that there is no interest on the part of the Indigenous organization -the problem might be capacity.

#### *Research with Indigenous People*

I refer readers to Jacqueline Ottmann's macro-points about Indigenous people as subjects of research. Here I would like to make a specific point about working with Indigenous communities. Most universities hold seminars and workshops on how to approach Indigenous organizations and communities - what not to do and so on - so that researchers will enhance the chances of their projects succeeding. In these sessions there is a great deal of emphasis on cultivating relationships, which is right and proper, and certainly most researchers want to do the right thing. Relationship-building, however, takes time that junior faculty working toward tenure may not have. To me the best approach for researchers is to engage in research that is of value to Indigenous peoples. If researchers can work on issues that Indigenous organizations want to tackle, then this will initiate projects and the necessary relationships will take root and grow. We are doing things backward if we come up with a research idea ourselves, present it to an Indigenous audience, and expect their strapped organization to devote time to it or even to approve it. In addition, we are better reflecting

Indigenous cultural values if we focus on community needs. Finally, the Tri-Council Policy Statement 11 calls for researchers to do work that will benefit Indigenous communities; Chapter 9 is very helpful in this regard.

### *Relationships and Communication*

Relationships are vital and should be the linchpin of everything we do with Indigenous organizations and communities. If not, it will likely be an uphill struggle for projects and partnerships. The best way to start a relationship is to respond to community needs; again the Tri-Council Statement is useful and a thorough reading of Chapter 9 on Indigenous peoples is required reading.

Ottmann asks: “How is Indigenous thought - philosophy, ontology, and epistemology - informing our policy and curriculum and how is it guiding our actions?” A first step toward such transformation is consultation and many in the academy genuinely seek Indigenous views on initiatives, etc. In terms of communication, it isn't wise to send off a letter addressed to the chief or the president asking for input on this or that university initiative and expect a response. Think creatively about other ways to get real communication going. Friendship Centres, located in many Canadian cities, are often good places to go for advice on how best to communicate meaningfully, respectfully, and appropriately. University staff working in Indigenous Affairs are also sources of advice. I have often sat down with members of various university committees or units and brainstormed with them about the best way to begin a conversation with Indigenous organizations, bearing in mind, again that the organizations are all different. An email to a particular Indigenous organization staff member might work best in one case, while another might require a phone call to request a visit. Some may have protocols or other formalities while others may not.

In meetings or teleconferences, silence is not necessarily agreement. We don't have to rush to fill the silences. “Let the silence work” was the mantra of one person I worked with. And he was right: those silent times gave people a chance to reflect, they were spaces into which innovation and creativity often began to reveal themselves.

The need to let silence work applies not just to conversations; it also relates to actual processes. Things take time. As universities work with Indigenous communities, there will be times of inaction, sometimes lengthy. We often joke about “being on Aboriginal time” as speed is not generally valued in Indigenous cultures. Often it looks as if progress is terribly slow or even that nothing is happening. But things generally come together at the right time, when everyone is ready, and this is as it should be.

### *Cultural Diversity*

Recognize the cultural diversity and differences among Indigenous peoples. Some communities, some First Nations in particular, value protocol but other communities place less emphasis on it. A little bit of research beforehand can help out here, utilizing the relevant university staff, Friendship Centre staff, or faculty who have worked with particular communities. In my experience, students may or may not want to be asked for advice; it may depend on your relationship with particular students (I will return to this point). The significant cultural differences between Indigenous cultures impact practices. For instance, both Mohawk and



Mi'kmaq smudge in circles but the latter go in a clockwise circle while the former use a counterclockwise pattern.

### *Realism and Focus*

As I mentioned, not every initiative will work. This has universal applicability but it is especially relevant when initiatives involve external partners as there are so many variables, most of them outside the university's control of even sphere of influence. When it comes to working with Indigenous peoples, change is necessary *within* universities although we tend to focus our attention outwards. We rely on various consultation processes related to specific initiatives. We could benefit by stepping back and thinking more along macro lines - about ourselves and our institutions. My advice is to keep focus inward on what we as the academy can do differently; if we continue to expect Indigenous people and organizations to conform to our agenda, we are continuing the colonial project.

Nowhere is this truer than in the classroom where we need to ask what kind of experiences we are facilitating for our Indigenous students. Here I have some simple tips for faculty and instructors. It is not helpful to ask an individual student to articulate "the Inuit position" or "the Metis experience." Students usually experience pointed questions of this nature as embarrassing and alienating. It is different if a student offers his or her opinions or if there is an existing relationship with the instructor that facilitates such discussion. Another practice that causes damage is to question the authenticity of a students' Indigenous heritage. This happens all too often to Indigenous students who do not "look" Indigenous. Even if they are judged to "look" Indigenous, students have been told here and in other Canadian universities that their culture is dead in the modern world and so on. No student should be put on the defensive in this way. Our student services staff find that Indigenous students are resourceful and resilient and can successfully stick handle the challenges of housing, childcare, academics, and finances; it is the experience of racism, subtle and not subtle, that drives them to leave the academy.

Classrooms must be culturally safe spaces but, perhaps surprisingly, many Indigenous Studies classes are not. In teaching Indigenous Studies and about Indigenous topics, instructors have to be aware of and sensitive about the interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Indigenous students sometimes feel like objects of study in class discussions; this dynamic can be avoided through careful facilitation on the part of instructors, with awareness being a good first step.

### *Acknowledgment and Celebration*

Many Indigenous initiatives, big and small, at the academy work well. Yet when this happens, the temptation is to turn our attention to the next initiative and keep our noses to the grindstone. Why not acknowledge and celebrate when things go well? The visit of Abenaki filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin to Memorials Grenfell Campus, funded by our Vice-Presidents Council, was an entirely positive event, one that drew the community to the university. Mi'kmaq men and women opened Obomsawin's talk with the Mi'kmaq Honour Song and Qalipu Mikmaq First Nation Vice-Chief Kevin Barnes said a prayer. The 200-seat room in which Obomsawin spoke was packed with standing room only. The evening and Obomsawin's time with students and faculty the next day



brought Indigenous culture into the academy, where it was clearly honoured. It gave Grenfell leadership the opportunity to celebrate the new Aboriginal Resource Centre, the Housing MOU, and other initiatives that were well underway. Acknowledgement need not always occur on such a grand scale but it ought to occur.

Related to this is the need for self-care, necessary for anyone involved in work aimed at transformative change or for Indigenous scholars and staff within the academy. This involves building and utilizing support networks and setting aside time for meaningful activities, such as drumming and singing and taking part in community activities whenever possible.

### *Students*

On a more-subtle level, with few exceptions and without even meaning to, we frequently expect Indigenous graduate students to conform to the rules of the academy, and bit by bit to leave their perspectives and approaches behind. No wonder so many capable Indigenous academics drop out (Roland, 2009). We need to understand more about this process, how it happens, and how we can change it. Fortunately, there are signs that point to new ways of doing things; Dr. Alfred Metallic, who is Mi'kmaq from the Gaspé Peninsula, wrote and defended his PhD thesis in Mi'kmaq, surely one of the true founding languages of Canada - although this was quite possibly the first time a university graduate thesis was accepted in a language other than English or French in a Canadian university (York, 2012). Metallic's thesis defense took place in his home community, attended by numerous community members, and was video conferenced to York University, an institution that is all the richer for this approach. Metallic himself has found ways to incorporate Western and Indigenous knowledge systems while benefiting his community, which is consistent with the Mi'kmaq values the Eiders expected him to uphold throughout the process.

There is a resource imbalance and a power imbalance between the academy and Indigenous peoples. As academics, we know this but we need to go further and think about what it means in terms of our working relationships on a daily basis. What are the compromises we make or the compromises Indigenous peoples are forced to make as we build relationships? How are Indigenous students altering or adapting their world views and their habits to accommodate the academy? We ought to remember that many of our Indigenous students are already bi-cultural, possessing the ability to negotiate at least two perspectives every day, when they arrive on our doorsteps. This in itself is something of value they bring to the university experience. Sometimes when I am part of the painful moment of encounter I sense peoples fear of yielding power, as Alfred Metallic's supervisors so successfully did. But, as hard as it may be, there is freedom in giving up power. What would happen if we embraced Indigenous knowledge and transformed our approach? What would happen if we decolonized the academy? How would we all benefit? It is up to the academy to keep asking these questions and searching for answers.

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<sup>17</sup> Some of it was reiterated on a CBC NL radio phone-in show on May 28, 2013 as Ingeborg Marshall disputed the Mi'kmaq contention that they did not have guns during the Beothuk decline and emphasized violence between the two peoples. Citing one Mi'kmaq story, Marshall makes the mistake of ignoring the vast rest of Mi'kmaq oral history.

<sup>18</sup> In the same radio program, Marshall also suggested that the Mi'kmaq came later to the island and pushed the Beothuk out of certain territories on the island.

<sup>19</sup> When I worked with the Quebec Mi'kmaq on their land claim, we were forced to argue against the separatist Quebec government position that the Mi'kmaq had come over from neighboring New Brunswick. Put forward by nationalist *pure laine* officials in the Quebec government, this viewpoint also positioned Mi'kmaq as immigrants who lacked Indigenous rights to the land.

<sup>20</sup> At the millennium *Telegram* readers voted her the most notable Aboriginal person in the province's history. After celebrated artist Gerry Squires saw a vision of Shanawdithit in the Central Newfoundland woods, the provincial government funded a statue in her honour

<sup>21</sup> Although Inuit are not under the *Indians Act* the omission would have similar repercussions for Labrador Inuit and their descendants.

<sup>22</sup> Does recognition mean federal funding, a settled land claim, the acceptance of a land claim for negotiation by the federal government, being named in the Constitution, or something else?

<sup>23</sup> This is the first time there has been such a policy for kullik-lighting in any Canadian university.

<sup>24</sup> The proposed Aboriginal Centre on the St. John's Campus, with its highly Visible location, should go some way toward changing this. The Mi'kmaq community in Western Newfoundland, including idle No More, regularly uses the new Aboriginal Resource Centre on the Grenfell Campus as a gathering place.

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**Indigenizing the Academy (Anderson and Hanrahan, 2013) A hard copy 40th anniversary special edition of The Morning Watch**

**Chapter 3: First Nations Post-Secondary Education in Western Canada: Obligations, Barriers, and Opportunities**

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**Abstract:** From 1871 to 1921 First Nations Chiefs and Headmen across the prairies agreed to a series of treaties with the Crowns Treaty Commissioners. The Numbered Treaties established obligations for each party - First Nations agreed to share their land with the new comers in exchange for commitments and services. One such service was the delivery of western education, which the Crown assured First Nations would not "deter" from their own Indigenous education and would enable First Nations people to "live and prosper and provide" (Morris, 1880/1991, p. 28). Today, there is a significant disparity in educational attainment between First Nations people and Canadians in general. This paper gives focus to the treaty right to education, the barriers and opportunities First Nations peoples face in pursuing a post-secondary education, and the initiatives undertaken by various post-secondary institutions to address the achievement gap.

In 2001, the International Development Research Centre published the *Wellbeing of Nations a Country by Country Index of Quality of Life and the Environment (Index)*: within this ranking of nations, Canada placed 7th out of 180 countries in relation to the quality of life and the environment within the five dimensions relating to health and population -wealth, knowledge and culture, community, and equity (p. 278). Canadians enjoyed longer life spans, better health, "better scores for. . . freedom and governance" (p. 117) and a "high standard of living" (p. 17) when compared with populations in the 180 nations. The *Index* noted that with the inclusion of equity - defined as "distribution of benefits & burdens between males & females & among households, ethnic groups, & other social divisions" (p. 278) – Canada's ranking drops from good to fair (p. 17). The inequity relates specifically to the "unevenly distributed" wellbeing between Canadians and Aboriginal peoples, specifically First Nations<sup>2</sup> peoples. Within this context, the Assembly of First Nations stated that "First Nations living conditions or quality of life ranks 63rd, or amongst Third World conditions" and First Nations people "die earlier than other Canadians . . .face increased rates of suicide, diabetes, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS; . . .face a crisis in housing and living conditions; . . .lack jobs and economic opportunities" (AFN, 2008, pp. 1-3). Furthermore, First Nations people do not attain "education levels equal to other Canadians" (AFN, 2008, p. 2). Maual & Schabus (2005) referred to the "socio economic marginalization of the Indigenous peoples in Canada as "the fourth world" inside the "first world"" (p. 223).

The division between First Nations peoples and Canadians in general is an historical one, evidenced in the policies and practices of colonialism, the history of contact and settler relationships, the Indian Act, and Canada's inability to honor pre-and post- Confederation treaty obligations. In 1969, then Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau in a speech in Vancouver stated, "I think Canadians are not proud about their past in the way in which they treated the Indian population. . . We have set the Indians apart as a race. . . They have been set apart in the relations with government and they have been set apart socially too" (Cummings & Mickenberg, 1970, p. 331).

In 2012, the United Nations “slammed Canada for First Nations treatment” as members on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination “questioned why headway has not been made in resolving the disparities between First Nations communities and the rest of the country. This problem should not continue the same way as it has in the past” (Gunn, 2012, p. 2). James Bartleman (2012), the first Aboriginal Lieutenant Governor of Ontario recently stated, “you have to provide justice to First Nations communities. . . There is no excuse in a country like Canada” (p. 1).

Canada has taken steps to address inequalities between First Nation peoples and other Canadians such as in 2011 when First Nations people living on-reserve were brought within the sphere of the thirty-year old Canadian Human Rights Act. This Act ensures equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination for all Canadians. Similarly, the *United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples* which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2007 was finally endorsed by Canada in 2010. These initiatives along with Canada’s apology in 2008 for the treatment of First Nations children in residential schools (Newfoundland and Labrador was not included in the apology since it did not join Confederation until 1949), and the gathering of First Nations representatives and the Crown in 2012 are important initial steps in building a better relationship between First Nations people, the Canadian government, and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

The purpose of this research paper is to give focus to post-secondary education as a vehicle for the attainment of individual and community goals, community self-sustainability, and self determinations. Post-secondary education is set within the context of the Numbered Treaties - signed between 1871 and 1921 - and the federal governments responsibility for First Nations education and corresponding policy and financial support for post-secondary programming and funding for First Nations people. Historical inquiry and documentary analysis is utilized to investigate the past in order to establish the scope of western educational services committed to by the Crown during the Numbered Treaty negotiations; educational services provided by the federal government since Confederation in 1867; and the growing participation of First Nations people in tertiary education and the growth of First Nations post-secondary institutions.

### **The Numbered Treaties and education**

Between 1871 and 1921, Canada on behalf of the Imperial Crown and First Nations from western Ontario to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains met at various locations to enter into treaty agreements. The meetings for each of the Numbered Treaties were about “the intention to create obligations” (Burrows & Rotman, 1998, p. 112) on behalf of both First Nations and the Crown. In entering into treaty “both parties recognized and affirmed one another's authority to enter into and make binding commitments in treaties” (p. 106). While each of the individual treaty negotiations was similar, “important matters” related to “Reserves, schools, [and] the amount of money gratuities and annuities made or secured to the Indians” were specific to each treaty (Indian Affairs, 1876, p. xi). All the Numbered Treaties refer specifically to the provision of western educational services which would not detract or “deter” from indigenous educational practices or “interfere” with their daily life (Morris, 1880/1991, p. 241). The Treaty Commissioners encouraged the First Nations people to learn from farming instructors, whose instructional

services the Crown would provide, to till the land and farm and learn other skills and thus be able to “live and prosper and provide like the white man” for their families (Morris, 1880/1991, p. 28).

The Treaty Commissioners promised the Crown would “establish schools whenever any band asks for them” (p. 58). The treaty discussions related to each of the Numbered Treaties negotiations took place over days and weeks. None of the treaty discussions were limited to schools as sites of learning for children rather the treaty discussions referenced western learning for children, youth and adults. This life-long learning focus was within the scope of Indigenous education and western educational practices of educational endeavors for children and adults as a preparation for the changing economy. The Treaty Commissioners assured the First Nations people that educational services would be provided by the Queen who was “always just and true” (Morris, 1880/1991, p. 94). Education was promised as an opportunity to learn new skills, to adapt to future economic trends and requirements “as long as the sun shines above and the water flows in the ocean” (p. 96). Asch (1997) argued that the Numbered Treaties resulted in the “successful negotiation of universal access to education for all Indigenous peoples without discrimination by age or sex” (p. 194) and reflected the Chiefs’ and Elders’ desire for their people to understand and “cope with the newcomers. . .and their way. . .[and] language” (pp. 194-195). Canadian courts in reference to matters related to specific treaty issues before them, have ruled that as in *R. v. Battiste* (1978), courts “must not assume that Her Majesty’s [Treaty] Commissioners were attempting to trick or fool the Indians into signing an agreement under false pretenses” (Isaac, 1995, p. 102). Furthermore, in *Claxton v. Saanichton Marina Ltd.* (1989), the court ruled that “The treaty should be given a fair, large, and liberal construction in favour of the Indians” and that “Treaties must be construed, not according to the technical meaning of their words but in the sense that they would naturally be understood by the Indians” (p. 104).

### **In search of the Crown's educational commitment**

Despite the Crown's treaty commitment to provide schools, education, and training through the Numbered Treaties, Canada's federal government left the provision of educational services to various religious/missionary groups. Together, religious organizations and First Nations community members built schools on reserves - sometimes receiving a contribution from the federal government after the school was built and had been in operation for a year. The educational policy of the federal government, however, determined the types of schools constructed on the reserve. Initially supporting the establishment and operation of day schools, following the 1879 review of Industrial Schools in the United States, Canada implemented a policy of residential schooling for First Nations children and youth. Particularly in western Canada, day schools were closed and replaced with residential schools. The latter were purported to provide basic education and skill training for future employment opportunities.

#### *Indian Act*

In 1876, the Canadian Parliament “consolidated the laws respecting Indians” (Venne, 1981, p. 24) and enacted The Indian Act and subsequently established a Department of Indian Affairs led by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs or Minister. The scope of the Indian Act encompassed matters related to “the control and management of the reserves, lands, moneys, and property of Indians in Canada” including defining who was an Indian, marriages, deaths,



schools, farming, employment, etc. (p. 24). While the Indian Act has been amended from time to time, the Act is still in effect today and has far reaching consequences for the daily lives of First Nations people.

### *Education & Enfranchisement*

The Indian Act determined who was and was not legally identified by the Indian Act as an Indian and also used education (among other factors) to determine who was not an Indian within the meaning of the Indian Act. Thus the Indian Act 1876 Section 86 (1) stated:

Any Indian who may be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or to any other degree by any University of Learning, or who may be admitted in any Province of the Dominion to practice law either as an Advocate or as a Barrister or Counsellor (sic) or Solicitor or Attorney or to be a Notary Public, or who may enter Holy Orders or who may be licensed by any denomination of Christians as a Minister of the Gospel, shall *ipso facto* become and be enfranchised (Venne, 1981, 46).

Thus within the authority of the Indian Act, once a First Nations person pursued western education he or she was declared by the Canadian government to no longer be a First Nations person within the context of the Indian Act. While Canada's government did not always implement its own legislation, some individuals nevertheless were enfranchised as a result of pursuing post-secondary education. The attainment of education was thus perceived or connected to losing one's identity and rights as an Indigenous person. With major revisions to the Indian Act in 1951, the link between education and enfranchisement was removed.

### **Tertiary Education: First Nations Students in the Twentieth Century**

Prior to Confederation in 1867 the British colonial government and the individual colonial governments and subsequently the Canadian government provided funding to individual First Nations students to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities in a variety of programs from agricultural and industrial skill training to nursing, education, and other university and professional schooling in post-secondary institutions across Canada. In 1929, Indian Affairs *Annual Report* to Parliament noted that "the program of free education is now extended to all Indians of Canada. The expenditure for Indian education for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1929, amounted to \$2,215,411.98" (p. 18). This amount included costs for "Indian young men and women attending collegiate, business schools, colleges, and universities" (p. 12). While the 110 students represented a national figure, nevertheless, the Crown clearly carried out its own obligation to provide educational services which included funding for post-secondary students. Canada re enforced its commitment to treaty responsibility for education and stated, "In future the education [pertaining to post-secondary education] of these Indians shall be carried on without cost to them, thus completing a system of free education to all the Indian wards of the Crown in Canada" (p. 14). Canada continued to provide tuition and allowances to all First Nations students who were accepted into tertiary educational institutions across Canada.

In 1968, Canada formalized its levels of funding and adopted a national program entitled *Post-Secondary Education Assistance*, Through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern



Development, Canada<sup>3</sup> administered the program and all students who were accepted and enrolled in post-secondary institutions were funded until graduation. Over the next four decades, Indian Affairs made gradual changes to the post-secondary funding program, including narrowing the definition of post-secondary education so that it applied only to university based programming (degree programs) and no longer funded occupational/training skills education offered in community colleges or technical institutes. In 1996, Canada also “capped” the post-secondary budget at 2% growth each year, which drastically affected First Nations people at a time of a quickly growing population and a corresponding demand for tertiary education. This measure was undertaken by the federal government during a period of government austerity. The “capped” budget resulted in a “waiting list” of First Nations individuals who were accepted into but due to Canada’s budget restrictions, did not receive funding from the federal government to pursue post-secondary studies.

### **Statistics: A widening divide**

The 1996 financial 2% control on funding tertiary education for First Nations students is in effect today, despite knowledge of the growing Aboriginal population in Canada and the importance of tertiary education. Guppy & Davis (1998), drawing upon the 1991 Census of Canada which identified 19 ethnic groups and the prevalence of university degrees within these groups, noted that

Aboriginal male and females between twenty-five and thirty-four years of age were ranked nineteenth when ethnic and age groups are compared (Table 4.8 and Table 4.9). In reference to university degree attainment, Guppy & Davis stated that not only were Aboriginal women and men well below the Canadian average, but that there was virtually no change among the groups at the bottom of the table. Furthermore, they argued that “the most entrenched inequities are experienced by First Nations peoples. . . while [they] have improved their educational level the rate of improvement is significantly behind all other groups in the country” (p. 1). Similarly, Canada’s Auditor General recommended that “the Department [of Indian Affairs] needs to urgently define its own role and responsibilities to improve” educational outcomes for First Nations’ peoples “numerous studies have stressed the importance and benefits of post-secondary education (2004, p. 2). The Assembly of First Nations (2011) noted that “61% of First Nations peoples on reserve. . . did not have a high school diploma, compared to 13% of the Canadian population. Only 4% of First Nations people. . . have a university degree, compared to 23% of the Canadian population” (p. 3). Helin & Snow (2010) in a draft document dated January 28, 2010 entitled *Free to Learn: Giving Aboriginal Youth Control over their post-secondary education*, noted that

Aboriginal educational attainment is increasing, albeit slightly. Between 2001 and 2006, for example, the rate of Aboriginals with a university degree moved from six to eight percent [but the] Aboriginal [educational] attainment is increasing very slowly, at a much slower rate than non-Aboriginal Canadians. The gap between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals is growing (n. p.).

### ***Barriers to Post-Secondary Education***

In explaining the under-representation of Aboriginal students within Canadian post-secondary institutions a significant body of research has identified an array of barriers faced by Aboriginal

learners which include historical, educational, sociocultural, geographic, person/demographic, and economic challenges (Bear Spirit Consulting, 2007; Canadian Council on Learning, 2006; Malatest and Associates, 2004; Richardson & Blanchet-Cohen, 2000). The legacy of colonial educational policies continues to negatively impact young Aboriginal people, even though few among the current university-age generation experienced residential schools personally (this inter-generational consequences of residential schooling is often referred to as residential school syndrome). While university education has been viewed by non-Aboriginal Canadians as a springboard to greater wealth and higher status, for generations of Aboriginal people western education was associated with loss of Indian status, the severing of ties with family and community, and assimilation into mainstream Canadian society. The legacy of mistrust lingers today since attending university still tends to sever young First Nations students from their communities as they travel to urban centres to attend university. First Nations students who complete their program of studies are more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere than to return to their home reserve communities. Not returning to one's home community also has the effect of limiting the number of visible role models to inspire other potential students to aspire to a post-secondary education (Canadian Council on Learning, 2006).

Educational disadvantage - almost half of the on-reserve First Nations population has not graduated from high school - constitutes another significant barrier to accessing post-secondary education. In many small northern and remote communities, the quality of local schools is uneven, resources are often scarce and many students do not have an adequate grounding in core subjects - English, Math Sciences, or cyber literacy - nor do they have instruction in their Indigenous language. Additional to the difficulty in attaining subjects and marks for university entrance, the lack of support within the community for post-secondary education contrasts with the support and encouragement that many non-Aboriginal students take for granted. Rigid post-secondary entrance requirements for such programs as law, medicine, and engineering serve as further barriers for First Nations students. Consequently, enabling success at the secondary school level is a crucial first step toward improving access to post-secondary education for all Aboriginal peoples (Mendelson, 2006).

Despite recent efforts by a variety of Canadian post-secondary institutions, universities typically remain sites where First Nations students do not see their peoples, cultures, lived experiences, or epistemologies reflected or honored. Malatest (2004) argued:

Almost all faculty are from different cultural and socio-economic groups than Aboriginal students. Most do not have any depth of understanding of Aboriginal culture, traditions and core values, neither do they recognize the diversity of Aboriginal communities or understand that not all Aboriginal students' needs are the same. There is little recognition and understanding of the different cognition and learning styles. (p.16)

Few Aboriginal people are employed in support capacities at universities, even fewer are faculty members and fewer still hold senior high profile university administrative positions. This absence of a critical mass of Aboriginal faculty, staff, and administrators typically means that many of the things that can help to attract and retain Aboriginal students (Aboriginal expertise in academic areas; infusion of Aboriginal epistemology into the curriculum, role models, mentors, and advisors for Aboriginal students, and general equity) are also absent (Bear Spirit

Consulting, 2007). The competitive and individualistic ethos of most universities also contrasts with the more cooperative, consensual, and collectivist orientation of many First Nations communities. Compounding these difficulties is the pervasive racism, often subtle and covert, which exacerbates the challenges Aboriginal students face in an intimidating post-secondary environment.

Another barrier to education at all levels is language, specifically academic English and French. The history of colonization, residential schools, and federal government educational policy has privileged Standard English and marginalized the many Aboriginal languages spoken prior to contact. This has resulted in the demise of many Indigenous languages while others are threatened with extinction. While linguists have begun to recognize English language variants that have developed in Aboriginal communities as legitimate communicative forms, educational institutions have frequently dismissed these as broken English. Genée & Stigter (2010), in their research, focused on Blackfoot English and determined that aspects of IE [Indigenous English] occurring in the speech of English-speaking Indigenous children are often one of the reasons for a diagnosis of language delay or impairment which then follows these children throughout their school careers” (p. 63). Sterzuk (2008, 2010) noted that these diagnoses lead educators to argue that Aboriginal students are language deficient and less capable of developing print literacy. These diagnoses contribute to the educational achievement gap and limit Aboriginal students' access to post-secondary institutions and programs.

The acquisition of academic or Standard English is not as straightforward as it may seem because the relationships of Aboriginal peoples to the English language is complex. Farr, Seloni & Song (2010) described English as “an alien, intrusive language - a tool for assimilation and colonization” (p. 88). The loss of language caused in large part by federal educational policy and the banning of speaking Indigenous languages in schools has resulted in generations who have lost their mother tongue or who have chosen not to speak it in order “to shield their own children from the perceived liabilities of speaking the mother tongue” (Farr et al, p. 77). Aboriginal Englishes are languages of community (Battiste, Kovach, & Balzer, 2010; Peltier, 2010) that function as “counter hegemonic discourses” (Sterzuk, 2010, p. 100) to the colonizers language. When educational institutions do not recognize the cultural validity of these variants, students are disadvantaged and further marginalized. Atleo & Fitznor (2010) described this “intercultural marginality [being caught between two languages and cultures] is typified by the experience of not feeling at home in any given situation. Aboriginal students often do not feel at home in formal educational experiences, and the outcome can be apparent lack of motivation to engage in learning” (p. 19). As post-secondary institutions come to recognize the legitimacy and richness of the language experiences of Aboriginal students and work with them to acquire competency in academic English without sacrificing their home variant, marginalization may decrease and retention rates increase.

Geography also constitutes a significant barrier for First Nations students access and success at the post-secondary level. For First Nations students living in northern communities, attending a post-secondary institution entails relocating hundreds or thousands of miles, involving significant travel and accommodation costs, and often social isolation from family and community supports (Richardson & Blancher-Cohen, 2000).

Exacerbating these challenges, First Nations students are more likely to be female, more likely to have children, tend to be older and suffer from higher rates of disabilities than the typical Canadian Non-Aboriginal undergraduate student (Holmes, 2006). Pursuing full-time post-secondary studies is thus more difficult when combined with the added responsibility of caring for young children, and childcare costs. Rising tuition and other associated costs constitute growing barriers to all Canadians seeking access to post-secondary education, but are particularly problematic for First Nations students. Without appropriate financial aid or support, post-secondary education is beyond the reach of many students. Unfortunately, most financial aid or support that is available to First Nations students is limited as a result of the federal government's decision to cap funding allotments for First Nations students (as discussed earlier in this paper) and the support that is available to them is not adequate for their real-life financial needs (Bear Spirit Consulting, 2007; Malatest, 2004). Research suggests that after family considerations, inadequate finances constitute the greatest barrier to First Nations student access and success at the post-secondary level (Richardson & Blanchet-Cohen, 2000).

### **Changing programs and delivery: Changing outcomes**

For almost half a century, Aboriginal peoples have been the youngest and fastest growing segment of Canada's population and today comprise five per cent of the total national population. To address the educational needs of a growing population, Canadian post-secondary institutions are focusing on the needs of Aboriginal learners. Richardson & Blanchet-Cohen (2000) categorized these initiatives into three approaches: the add-on approach, the partnership approach, and the First Nations control approach. Variations of these initiatives have been implemented in Canada.

The add-on approach typically involves constructing differentiated access processes for Aboriginal students to existing programs; provision of additional supports for students once enrolled in these programs; and the implementation of culturally sensitive curricular and pedagogical approaches to meet the specific needs of Aboriginal students. The Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), established in 1973 within the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan, is one such program. ITEP supports a Bachelor of Education program for First Nations students. These degree granting programs are offered both on-site at the University of Saskatchewan campus and also off-campus within First Nations communities in the central and northern areas of Saskatchewan. After almost four decades of operation, ITEP has graduated over 2000 Bachelor of Education recipients many of whom are administrators and teachers in First Nations schools. The University of Saskatchewan also offers off-campus cohort Bachelor of Education and Master of Education programs in northern areas of the province and on various First Nations reserves to ameliorate the necessity to move from their communities to distant urban centers to attend post-secondary institutions. At the University of Saskatchewan Aboriginal students currently comprise 39% of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education degree and 12% of graduate students in a variety of graduate degree programs offered by the College of Education (Preston, 2012). The University of Regina, also located in Saskatchewan, offers both an Aboriginal Social Work Program and an Aboriginal Masters of Business Administration designed for Aboriginal students. Similarly, McGill University in the 1970s established a McGill Certificate of Native and Northern Education for Inuktitut speaking teachers, and since the 1980s McGill has offered the Eastern Arctie Teacher

Education Program (now the Nunavut Teacher Education Program) in northern communities. In 2007, Nunavut Artie College entered into an agreement with the University of Regina for the delivery of the NTEP program. Similar Aboriginal teacher education programs are offered in post-secondary institutions in Canada's provinces such as the University of Manitoba and Brandon University both located in Manitoba. Memorial University of Newfoundland has offered similar programs in the past and in 2014 will offer a community" based program in Labrador. A number of Ontario post-secondary institutions offer a variety of degrees which focus on programming specifically designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal students such as the ones offered at Lakehead University and at the University of Ottawa.

Unama'ki College at Cape Breton University (CBU) in Sydney, Nova Scotia, is a partnership between the Mi'kmaw communities and CBU designed to meet the needs of Mi'Kmaq students and other First Nations students and contribute to the educational goals set by Mi'Kmaq communities. Furthermore, the Department of Indigenous Studies at Unama'ki College is devoted to programs designed to introduce all Cape Breton University students to the regions rich Indigenous culture through programs such as Integrative Science. On Canada's west coast, the University of British Columbia established the First Nations Longhouse where Aboriginal students can study and learn in a surrounding that reflects Aboriginal traditions and cultures. The First Nations Longhouse brings together a wide variety of services: it houses the native Indian Teacher Education Program and the UBC First Nations Student Association, and also enables Aboriginal peoples to share their knowledge and culture with one another, with the University community, and with the wider community as a whole (First Nations House of Learning, 2009, p. 1).

The First Nations control approach began with the 1971 takeover of the Blue Quills Indian Residential School First Nations in central Alberta. The school initially known as Blue Quills Education Centre and today as Blue Quills First Nations College offers post-secondary courses and degree programs in a variety of academic areas. In 1976, the First Nations University of Canada was established through a federated partnership with the University of Regina. its mandate is to "enhance the quality of life, and to preserve, protect and interpret the history, language, culture and artistic heritage of First Nations people" (First Nations University, 2012, p. 1). First Nations University of Canada "provides a unique opportunity to study in an environment that supports First Nations cultures, languages, and values. . .[and encourages] students to participate in and learn through ceremony with Elders as well as through classroom based on experience" (p. 1). While offering a variety of programming and degrees, it is a "unique Canadian institution that specializes in Indigenous Knowledge, and provides post-secondary education for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students" (p. 2). The university has over 800 full-time students and 3,000 alumni. While the institution has encountered a number of difficulties in the past, it is revitalizing its governance system to better serve the needs of its students.

## Conclusion

In highlighting its collaborative program with Blue Quills First Nations College, the University of Alberta cited the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: "it has been recognized for decades that having Aboriginal teachers in the classroom is the first line of change in education



of Aboriginal children and youth” (p. 1). This was reiterated by the Minister of Advanced Education in British Columbia in announcing a new bursary program to support Aboriginal teacher education students:

We need more Aboriginal teachers. They serve as positive role models and can make a difference in an Aboriginal student’s success in Kindergarten to [grade] 12, making it more likely that they will go on to post-secondary education and training. . . . Aboriginal people are a vital part of B.C.’s economic future and workforce. This fund will help train the teachers who will inspire tomorrow’s Aboriginal students to excel, building stronger communities and creating new opportunities. (Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012)

Post-secondary institutions in Canada over the last decade have given particular emphasis to changing both their delivery modes and program content. The 2009 Report of the Presidential Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives, Memorial University of Newfoundland, identified 22 recommendations including “a more welcoming environment, peer support and adequate gathering space” for Aboriginal students” as well as “appropriate educational programming, including undergraduate and graduate options in Aboriginal studies and the professional training needed by Aboriginal communities” and a “new approach to teacher education” (Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2009, n. p.). Universities across Canada such as the University of Calgary and the University of Saskatchewan have undertaken concerted efforts to hire Aboriginal faculty members in order to attract and to support Aboriginal students in accomplishing their academic goals. In releasing its *First Nations University-Wide Strategic Plan* in 2008, Simon Fraser University (SFU) in British Columbia noted “the single most powerful predictor of educational quality for First Nations students is the incorporation of First Nations faculty and Indigenous knowledge perspectives into their educational experience”. SFU embarked upon its 2008 plan to implement Indigenous knowledge perspectives in the curriculum, to increase the presence of First Nations faculty across all departments through targeted hiring practices, and to incorporate a strong First Nation student services model of success. This plan is based on eight areas: Academic program development; student recruitment; support and retention; liaison and outreach to First Nations peoples and communities; international engagement; Indigenous knowledge and resource development; infrastructure; integration and leadership development (Simon Fraser University, 2012, p. 1).

Decolonizing Canada’s post-secondary institutions is an on-going process which begins to address some of the issues such as an academically, socially, and culturally balanced environment to address the barriers facing First Nations students aspiring to accomplish their educational goals. The government of Canada must not shake off or minimize its obligation for post-secondary education it entered into when agreeing to the Numbered Treaties with First Nations Chiefs and Headmen in 1871-1921. Canada must honor its treaty commitments within “the true spirit and original intent” of the numbered treaties (Treaty & Elders and Tribal Council, 1996). There is much work to be done in addressing and removing the educational barriers facing First Nations students. In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood noted:

The time has come for a radical change in Indian education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people. We

want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education: as a preparation for total living; a means of free choice of where to live and work; as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and education advancement (p. 3).

If Canada is to address the educational barriers of participation and achievement between First Nations peoples and all other Canadians and address the two silos identified in the *Wellbeing of Nations* (2001) ranking, then the “radical change” the National Indian Brotherhood called for in 1972 must be a multi-faced implementation plan in the twenty first century.

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<sup>1</sup> Canada's Constitution Section 35 recognizes the “aboriginal peoples of Canada” which includes Indian, Inuit, and Metis peoples.

<sup>2</sup> From the 1970s onwards, the wording First Nations replaced the use of Indian and is today the preferred nomenclature though there is no legal definition for this term.

<sup>3</sup> In 2011, the Department's name was changed to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

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**Chapter 4: A case of Grenfell Campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq resurgence**

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Grenfell Campus of Memorial University of Newfoundland

**Abstract:** This paper examines several key elements in the history of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq through the Federation of Newfoundland Indians: how the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq were understood and how they understood themselves; how past government policies have influenced scholarship; and how changing relationships have been reflected in and shaped the "Indigenization of the academy" of Memorial University's Grenfell Campus in Comer Brook western Newfoundland. The West Coast of the island of Newfoundland is the administrative hub of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation and the area is still largely unrecognized publicly as having one of largest concentrations of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, many now with status under the Indian Act. In order to examine these themes, it has been necessary to do a review of the existing literature on the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq and how it has changed; this is a type of analysis that has not previously been carried out. By doing so, this paper provides an overview of how public perception and the status of the Mi'kmaq have moved from one of near invisibility to one of important historical proportions.

The now outdated historical characterization of the Aboriginal population of the island of Ktaqmkukewaq (Newfoundland) as consisting only of the culturally extinct Beothuk peoples has been laid to rest but only in the past generation. The reluctance and even refusal to officially recognize the existence of many Newfoundlanders of Aboriginal descent - the Inuit, the Innu, the Mi'kmaq, and Metis peoples – resulted in 1949 in their omission, as "Indians" under the *Indian Act*, when in 1949 the province entered into Confederation. (Hanrahan, 2003; Tanner, 1998; Tompkins, 1998; Tompkins, 1988); they were again overlooked in 1951 during a national census taking of Aboriginal peoples. In regard to the Mi'kmaq population, the main focus of the following paper, the position of the government of Newfoundland remained one of official resistance until 1987, when the Conne River reserve was established by the federal government. While the Inuit and Innu of Labrador received federal recognition (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs 2004a; Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 2004b; Department of Indian and Northern Affairs 2002), twelve different Mi'kmaq bands under the Federation of Newfoundland Indians were not recognized until an Agreement-in-Principle was reached in 2006-07 (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador - Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, 2007; Kruzenga, 2002; Federation of Newfoundland Indians, 2006). The consequences of this historical dynamic continue to resonate into the present and will likely do so into the foreseeable future. This paper is divided into two interrelated parts: first, *invisible no more* explores how Newfoundland Mi'kmaq history and culture came to be understood by the academy and the Mi'kmaq themselves, in a dialectic fashion, reflecting the search for Aboriginal knowledge, history, cultural identity, but also status recognition under the *Indian Act*; and secondly, *Indigenizing the academy* shares how recent developments which attempt to incorporate this scholarly and Mi'kmaq knowledge have contributed to the formation and activities of the

Aboriginal Initiatives Committee at Grenfell Campus. This committee has attempted to address some of the issues of Indigenizing the academy, address Aboriginal student needs both in pedagogical and institutional terms, and look beyond the academy to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities for Indigenous knowledge and support.

## **Invisible No More**

The lack of visibility of Mi'kmaq population of Newfoundland (Ktaqamkuk) had much to do with factors common to other Indigenous peoples in mainland Canada; they had been colonized informally and largely assimilated through institutionalized religion, education, and marriage and their traditions and identity had been suppressed. The Anglicization of Aboriginal surnames and the wholesale loss of language among the Ktaqamkuk Mi'kmaq were noted as early as the 1920s by the anthropologist Frank Speck (Speck, 1922) which was already commonplace among the Mi'kmaq population of the Maritimes (Wallis and Wallis, 1974; Paul, 1993). In these years, Mi'kmaq individuals and their families faced subtle and overt racial discrimination which prompted many of them until quite recently to hide and deny their Aboriginal background, sometimes even from other family members. Negative connotations, the "shame" of "being Aboriginal," were most manifest in once common usage of the term "jack-o-tar" (also jackytar, jackatar) referring to people of French-Mi'kmaq ancestry, particularly stereotyped persons from the Port-au-Port peninsula and Crow Gulch near Comer Brook, and labelled as poor, lazy, and dirty (Robinson, 2012; Baehre, 2010b).

For these reasons, "Mi'kmaq" remained largely invisible in public discourse, though references were always to be found in fragmented forms, such as early twentieth century census information with an occasional reference to "Indian." References in newspapers and magazine articles also sometimes noted Mi'kmaq guides used by outfitters for recreational tourism such as hunting and fishing, which were traditional Mi'kmaq pursuits (Chute, 1998). The noted guide Mattie Mitchell, for example, who led the way to the discovery of copper, lead, and zinc ore and the Buchans mine, was recognized as Micmac. Thus, despite official refusal to acknowledge their collective existence, many residents of the island, especially in central, southern and western Newfoundland, remained well aware of their Aboriginal roots through stories (Woodrow, 2012; Coish, 2000) and family ties (Butt, 2007; Bartels and Barrels, 2005).

The controversial federal White Paper of 1969 recommended eliminating the *Indian Act* and its accompanying state paternalism in the interests of Aboriginal equality, but such a sudden change was regarded in many First Nations community as premature, assimilationist, and a threat to cultural survival. In the wake of the White Paper, some Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, like Calvin White of Fiat Bay, were determined to rediscover and assert their distinct heritage in order to avoid complete assimilation. Influenced by the American civil rights movement, the American Indian movement, and the formation of the Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador at Memorial University, Chief White and like-minded supporters organized the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI) in 1973 (Lyon, 1997; Hanrahan, 2003). As a result, their efforts, the isolated Mi'kmaq community of Miawpukek (Conne River) situated on the south coast at Bay d'Espoir and its roughly 800 inhabitants were tentatively recognized by the federal government in 1979; Miawpukek began receiving some initial funding by the

Department of Northern and Indian Affairs (DIAND) under the Canada-Newfoundland Native Peoples Agreement. This qualified but formal recognition of an Aboriginal presence on the island was essential to the FNI in its efforts to gain wider recognition for all Mi'kmaq peoples of the province under the *Indian Act*.

This was not a new but an old struggle. Conne River had first been set aside in 1872 by the provincial surveyor Alexander Murray, as a "reservation" and again recognized as a "Micmac" community in 1908 by Governor William MacGregor (MacGregor, 1908). However, there the matter rested. Except for the occasional short article early in the century (Millais, 1908; Power, 1910; Anger, 2006), the Mi'kmaq disappeared from view. In a sense, what happened between the turn of the century and the 1960s was typical of the cultural loss and "acculturation" noted in the work of the anthropologists Wilson and Ruth Wallis in their studies of the mainland Mi'kmaq. They were among a small handful of scholars interested in documenting the history and lives of the Mi'kmaq in eastern Canada but, except for Speck, had little to say about Newfoundland (Speck 1922; Hoffman, 1955; Wallis and Wallis, 1955; Wallis and Wallis, 1959; Wallis, 1959).

This marginalization and denial of the Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland history can be attributed to a number of factors: intermarriage, church repression, economic change, and racism. However, when the Mi'kmaq attempted to reassert their existence, the main source of resistance was the Newfoundland government. They were often regarded as small in number, and a mixed population, or metis peoples, who were not then recognized federally under the *Indian Act*. Also, for a long time government officials saw them as more-or-less assimilated, one of many immigrant groups who had arrived in Newfoundland, who therefore belonged to the newcomers; they also relied on "the Beothuk myth" and regarded Newfoundland's Mi'kmaq peoples as responsible for the Beothuk's demise. The omission in school textbooks of Aboriginal peoples even existing on the island at Confederation only contributed further to their public invisibility (Mackenzie, 2010). The little that the public knew about the Mi'kmaq could probably be found in a short entry in the *Book of Newfoundland* which characterized them as "happy and cheerful" (St. Croix, 1937).

Their relative invisibility had political consequences. During Newfoundland's negotiations with Canada to join Confederation in 1948-49, Aboriginal issues were "penciled out" (Tompkins, 1988). The failure to achieve consensus and who would have responsibility over Native affairs in Newfoundland flowed out of the assimilationist mentality which dominated Canadian Indian policy. Most importantly, these issues were "not deemed of sufficient importance to hold up the Confederation negotiations" (Mackenzie, pp. 41, 44), and no further reference was made by either jurisdiction to address these questions. Rather, Newfoundland and the federal government looked to some later unspecified date to revisit the matter and worked at "glacial speed." Tellingly, a federal government publication on Canada's newest province made not a single reference to the province's Aboriginal peoples except (and incorrectly) that in 1692 "Indians" from the mainland and allies of the French had attacked the island; there was also the usual acknowledgment of what had happened to the Beothuk (Canada, Department of External Affairs and Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1950).

Aboriginal politics helped to change the academy's approach to Newfoundland Mi'kmaq

history political lobbying efforts by the FNI during the 1970s and the need to document the history of all Newfoundland's Aboriginal peoples fostered a slow but growing interest in researching the prehistory and history of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Inuit, and Inna, including by several scholars associated at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College (now Grenfell Campus) of Memorial University. Their interest paralleled scholarly efforts in Native studies elsewhere in Atlantic Canada which included work by anthropologist Harold McGee and historian Leslie Upton (McGee 1973; McGee 1974; Upton 1977; Upton 1978). While McGee reconstructed the ethnic history of Micmac-White relations in Nova Scotia, Upton was the first modern historian to pay attention to the demise of the Beothuks and the history of Mi'kmaq encounters with Europeans.

In 1978, anthropologist Dennis Bartels at Grenfell began to examine the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq use and occupancy" of the land, employed oral history to establish how long they believed themselves to have inhabited the island, or "time immemorial," and subsequently refuted the prevailing "myth" that the Mi'kmaq were responsible for the extermination of the Beothuks (Bartels, 1978; Bartels 1979; Bartels 1988). Two other scholars also contributed to reconstructing the Mi'kmaq's past. Anthropologist Ralph Pastore pieced together the more recent history of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq (Pastore, 1978a; Pastore, 1978b), and much later, historian David McNab, who briefly taught at Grenfell, provided a report on the impact of British colonization upon the Mi'kmaq Nation (McNab, 1995). Collectively, they added a Newfoundland dimension to other research on the Mi'kmaq of Atlantic Canada which had until then little to say about the provinces Aboriginal history and culture.

Aboriginal politics and issues in Newfoundland continued to shape scholarship in the 1980s, especially in the wake of changes in constitutional law and major court decisions. The federal government's slow progress during the early 1980s in giving formal recognition to the Conne River band prompted the FNI to challenge DIAND through the courts in the wake of the newly passed Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The challenge of court action was averted in 1983-84 when the Miawpukek band was made an *Indian Act* band; this came about, mostly because newly uncovered documents by a provincial archivist supported the Conne River claim of having been recognized as a Mi'kmaq community well before 1949. It achieved formal status in 1987 as an Indian reserve together with a small amount of land.

In 1983, the FNI had decided to disassociate itself from the Conne River band in order to facilitate the latter's recognition as "Indian", and instead to become the principal advocate of ten other landless and unrecognized Mi'kmaq communities. While several federal ministers between 1979 and 1987 did give some support FNI's efforts to research and document the status the history and status of individual bands in order to establish their eligibility under the *Indian Act*, the Newfoundland government resisted any form of cooperation out of an apparent concern that an expansion of Aboriginal rights would result in delays of major projects and create unspecified costs for the province. Premier Brian Peckford spoke openly in the House of Assembly in 1981 against expanding Aboriginal status to Mi'kmaq residents. A position outlined in a subsequent government report (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1982). Five years later, the Newfoundland government still "declined to join the process" though now the FNI continued to prepare for its members to register. This political impasse put



a temporary end to any more tripartite negotiations and DIAND was pressured in 1988 to end its support for the FNI's call for further Mi'kmaq recognition and research necessary to achieve this goal.

The provincial and federal government's intransigence now led to a report for Newfoundland MP Jack Harris reminding the federal government of its constitutional responsibilities (Moss 1988), and in 1989 the FNI launched a constitutional challenge against the federal government based on Indian rights under the Charter. Initially, DIAND argued that this court action constituted merely a class action suit because, in its view, these bands had no formal or official recognition (McNab, 2005; Hanrahan, 2003). Not long after, a joint report between FNI and DIAND for a possible out-of-court settlement was prepared, though this initiative was squelched when the Newfoundland government refused to cooperate.

The academy was involved in a number of ways during this decade. The failure of governments to address Aboriginal needs led to the founding in 1983 of the St. Johns Native Friendship Centre, a volunteer organization supported by Memorial University and church based sources. Its board of directors consisted of members from the FNI, the Labrador Innu communities and local residents. Political developments and DIAND funding for the FNI also made it possible for several scholars to carry on the much needed research of reconstructing Mi'kmaq history and culture necessary to the process of status recognition and land claims.

Of particular note, Dorothy Anger, graduate student at Memorial University, who completed a M.A. thesis in anthropology on the island's Mi'kmaq, published several articles and wrote a series of reports on Mi'kmaq culture, political identity, and historical presence (Anger, 1982; Anger and Clark, 1982; Anger, 1983; Anger, 1984). She examined the FNI's likely eligibility under the Indian Act, its "resurgent culture," and "traces" of its material culture; she also authored and compiled the first collection of documents ever published to affirm the longstanding Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland (Anger, 1980; Anger, 1988). Best known for her work on the Beothuk, Ingeborg Marshall challenged the older Beothuk myth that placed blame on the Mi'kmaq for their disappearance, citing instead mixed responsibility that included Europeans and suggesting that disease was the most likely major cause (Marshall, 1988). Dennis Bartels likewise repudiated this myth and, in so doing, argued in favour of Mi'kmaq Aboriginal rights in Newfoundland (Bartels, 1988).

A continuing question for the Newfoundland government and the public was when and how long there had been a Mi'kmaq presence in Newfoundland and whether this was before or after the arrival of Europeans. In this regard, Bartels and historian Olaf Janzen, a colleague at Grenfell Campus, explored the written documentary record to determine when the Mi'kmaq arrived on a permanent basis in Newfoundland, suggesting that it was sometime in the mid-eighteenth century (Bartels and Janzen, 1990). Regardless of the exact date of their arrival, Bartels also contended that, regardless of whether the Mi'kmaq arrived before or after the first European explorers and settlers or were brought by the French to trap, their presence had been longstanding and merited land and Indian status (Bartels, 1991). For those who remained skeptical about the Mi'kmaq ability to cross the Cabot Strait without European maritime vessels, work by Ruth Whitehead and Charles Martijn indicated that the Mi'kmaq were quite capable, as seafarers, to have such voyages between Cape Breton and Newfoundland, even before European



arrival (Whitehead, 1986; Martijn, 1986). In these years, members of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq also began to present their history of their own, when the Conne River band produced a self-published overview and rationale for its right to exist (Wetzel, Anderson, and Sanders, 1980). This contributed to other related efforts, such as those by Phil Jeddore of Conne River who later wrote a series of short pieces "In celebration of Mi'kmaq identity" as well as helping to carry out a traditional land use study" and a Masters thesis on Miawpukek language and culture (Jeddore, 1996a; Jeddore, 1996b; Jeddore, 1996c; Jeddore, 1996d; Jeddore, 1996e Jeddore, 2000).

The 1990s proved a watershed in relations between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations bands that, in turn, also fostered additional research and interpretation on the history of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq. National consciousness was raised on Aboriginal issues during and after the Oka crisis, an event which contributed directly to the appointment of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs and a report in which Indigenous peoples throughout the country participated and were given an unprecedented voice (Government of Canada, Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs, 1996). Interest in Aboriginal issues was also spurred by public revelations regarding the former government- supported residential school system and the physical, psychological, and sexual abuse perpetrated by clergy and other authority figures upon Aboriginal children. These developments contributed to a deeper understanding of what it meant to be an Aboriginal person in Canada as well as who had contributed to and what constituted "cultural genocide." As the Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq writer Daniel Paul proclaimed in an unprecedented book which examined these historical issues from an Aboriginal perspective, "We Were Not the Savages" (Paul, 1993). Responding to a submitted report, *Aboriginal Peoples and Governance in Newfoundland and Labrador* (Tanner, Kennedy, McCorquodale, and Inglis, 1994), the Royal Commission supported the recognition of the Labrador Metis and FNI member communities, as Aboriginal communities, though these were not immediately acted upon.

However, shifts in public attitudes, constitutional challenges and court decisions, and policy change affecting First Nations peoples throughout the country were well publicized and provided models for action. This became evident in Newfoundland and Labrador as the Labrador Inuit Association and the Innu Nation began their negotiations with the federal government to secure health benefits, research, and land claims which eventually resulted in federal recognition and Indian status (Hanrahan, 2003). Nevertheless, the same degree of progress was not made between the FNI and DIAND who considered finding ways outside of the *Indian Act* to recognize and compensate Mi'kmaq communities. even a possible out-of-court settlement with some form of self-government. The Newfoundland government continued to resist any participation in this process and the federal government refused to proceed without them.

The Final Report of the Institutional Framework Project prepared by the FNI stated that its member bands displayed "both the will and the capacity to exercise the inherent right of self-government" and to identify its membership, as required under the *Indian Act*. as a step towards formal recognition (Lyon, 1997, p. 7). In 1996, DIAND had provided some renewed support for research on Mi'kmaq ancestry to facilitate the required documentation process. Then, in 1997,

when progress towards Indian status again stalled, the FNI appealed to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC), following in the strategic footsteps of the Labrador Inuit. Noel Lyon, a Queen's University professor, investigated the FNIs claims, issued a report, and concluded, "these Mi'kmaq [sic] communities have been denied recognition as human communities and their fundamental right of self-determination, the very foundation of international human rights law has been systematically suppressed" (Lyon, 1997, p. 1). As part of the process of revitalization, he argued, they needed "to restore their language and culture and regain control over culture-related aspects of their communities such as education, health and social services, while continuing to live in harmony and to share facilities with their non-aboriginal neighbors" (Lyon, 1997, p. 2). Lyon, in regarding the FNI's situation as comparable to the James Bay Cree who in the early 1970s had been forced to resort to the courts for redress, called upon the federal government to exercise "the political will to do its constitutional duty" (Lyon 1997. p. 4). This was the same year that the Conne River band redefined itself as the Miawpukek Mi'kmaq (Miawpukek First Nation, 1997).

Meanwhile, when the government opposition in the House of Assembly asked Newfoundland's premier what he thought about Lyons conclusions and recommendations, Brian Tobin circumvented the question and refused to commit his government to recognizing any Mi'kmaq communities beyond Conne River because of what he claimed "self-government" would do to the province: "One hundred million, \$200 million, \$300 million, \$1 billion, \$2 billion, \$3 billion? How much land? Ten thousand square miles, 100,000 square miles?" He also asked which communities would be directly affected by any land claims agreement, whether it was Stephenville, Gander, Deer Lake, or Comer Brook (Government of Newfoundland, 1997). This response prompted the Ktaqamkuk Mi'kmaq Alliance of the FNI to bring Lyon's report to the attention of Doudou Diene, the United Nation's Special Rapporteur to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (Federation of Newfoundland Indians, 2003).

The letter written by Chief Bert Alexander on behalf of the Alliance brought to the United Nations officials attention, "A Policy of Cultural Genocide in Canada Applied to the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq [sic], 1949-2003, by the Government of Canada," based on the lawyer Jerry Wetzel's paper, "The Hidden Terms of Union" (Wetzel, 1999). Alexander charged that Canadian officials had consistently promoted a racist and discriminatory policy of assimilation in an effort "to make us vanish as a distinct cultural group in Newfoundland [and]... deprive our people of the federal programs for health, education and welfare that would have provided a measure of protection and dignity for the Mi'kmaq people on the island of Newfoundland." Worrisome was that this remained "an ongoing policy that is still pushing our people to the brink of cultural extinction today."

The continuing need to construct a clearer and more detailed sense of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq history was reinforced by the government inaction over the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq question (Bartels, 1991; Bartels and Janzen, 1990; Stone, 1997). Because of research carried out in the 1970s and 1980s, the long term and continuous presence in central and western Newfoundland of the Mi'kmaq was now irrefutable. Anthropologist Adrian Tanner and Anger prepared a series of reports on contemporary Mi'kmaq communities of the FNI (Anger and Tanner, 1992-96). As questions remained, a number of studies now increasingly concentrated on local knowledge,

genealogy and cultural identity - what it meant to be a Newfoundland Mi'kmaq (Anger, 1997). Anthropologist Harald Prins conceptualized these developments in the broader context of the history of Mi'kmaq peoples in Atlantic Canada, as representing resistance, accommodation, and cultural survival (Prins, 1996). Aboriginal lawyer Jerry Wetzel completed a graduate thesis in law and argued for Ktagmkuk (Newfoundland) Mi'kmaw history to be decolonized (Wetzel, 1995) and reminded readers of the "hidden terms" of Union and the abandonment of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq at Confederation (Wetzel, 1999). In a different vein, folklorist Barbara Rieti, looked to intangible culture and related Mi'kmaq stories of "witching" to gender-related issues of the colonization process, in particular, the nature of violence against Mi'kmaq women by non-Aboriginal men (Rieti, 1995; Rieti, 2008).

The FNI began conducting its own in-depth research in order to meet the federal requirements of Indian status. Rather than rely solely on text-based documents, there was a concerted attempt to explore intangible history and oral history as well as new methodologies to advance Mi'kmaq claims. The *Delgamuukw* decision in British Columbia had suddenly given oral history and local knowledge greater credibility in court cases involving Aboriginal status and land claims and determined that Indian title was not to be sold, surrendered or extinguished with First Nations' consent under the authority of the federal government. The influence of this decision also left its imprint on the FNI (Tanner, 2000; Tanner, 1992; McNab, 2005). In 1999, a broad-based traditional land use study was conducted based on 682 interviews taking into account all forms of harvesting. These interviews were used to chart the locations of Mi'kmaq sacred grounds, traditional medicines, and toponyms, as well providing gender-based and cultural information. This data was then mapped to provide exact locations. Nothing on this scale had ever been attempted before. A study was also done on establishing the survival and continuity of Mi'kmaq culture (Anger and Tanner, 1994). In this regard, genealogical research was essential. Mi'kmaq family history tied together individuals and their communities over time (Anger and Companion, 2002).

This history has since become increasingly part of the province's cultural memory (Jackson, 1993; Hanrahan, 2003; CBC, 2011). Dorothy Anger spearheaded an hour-long CBC documentary on the "forgotten" Mi'kmaq past and contemporary situation (Anger, 1998). Also the Newfoundland and Labrador heritage site was established with three entries by Pastore on Mi'kmaq history, society and culture (Pastore, 1997; Pastore, 1998a; Pastore, 1999b). Ten years later, Jenny Higgins added three more sections on pre-contact Mi'kmaq land use, organization, land claims, and non-Aboriginal impact (Higgins, 2008; Higgins, 2008b; Higgins, 2008c). During the past decade, the history of the once "invisible" Mi'kmaq came full circle when, in 2000, the Miawpukek began to share their knowledge of traditional healing practices (Miawpukek Mi'kamawey Mawio'Mi. 2000; Jeddore, 1996b). Two years later, the band issued a study of the Mi'kmaq people and celebrated the role of women (Wetzel 2006; Miawpukek First Nation, 2006). This cultural revival also extended to public events and activities in the form of pow-wows to celebrate Mi'kmaq identity (Jeddore, 1996a; Jeddore, 1996d; Jeddore, 1996e) and an interest in material culture (Benwah, n.d.).

Over the past decade, the lure of Newfoundland Mi'kmaq history and culture has continued to attract scholars, not only the anthropologists and historians already mentioned but a new generation of folklorists (Sharpe, 2007; Rieti, 2008). In particular, ethnomusicologist and

folklorist Janice Tulk has documented and analyzed traditional and contemporary cultural aspects of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq and their search for official recognition. Her work includes a doctoral thesis from Memorial University, *"Our Strength is Ourselves ": Identity Status, and Cultural Revitalization Among the Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland*, which reflects the growing confidence and pride of Mi'kmaq communities (Tulk, 2008). She has also written published and unpublished studies of recent powwows, recordings of traditional and contemporary music, musical language, story-telling and dance as examples of Mi'kmaq expressive culture and as ways to maintain cultural integrity (Tulk, 2012a; Tulk, 2012b; Tulk, 2011; Tulk, 2010a; Tulk, 2010c; Tulk, 2009a; Tulk, 2009b; Tulk, 2009c; Tulk, 2007a, Tulk, 2007b; Tulk, 2006; Tulk, 2004). With the support of the FNI and Memorial University, Tulk has also recently supervised a project for transcribing the hundreds of oral interviews carried out in the 1990s which had helped to establish the long term presence of the Mi'kmaq in western Newfoundland. More will be said on the role of the academy in understanding the place of the Mi'kmaq in the following section.

Out of frustration with the province's continuing intransigence on the recognition of the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq, the Ktaqamkuk Mi'kmaq Alliance (KMA) formed in 2002 to press its claims out of a coalition of former FNI members and other Newfoundland Mi'kmaq descendants. Despite the precedent of the Donald Marshall case in Nova Scotia a few years earlier that upheld established Mi'kmaq treaty rights extending back to the mid eighteenth century (Wicken, 2002), 2002 saw the Supreme Court of Newfoundland turn down the Miawpukek First Nation's right to hunt and trap in the recently created Bay du Nord Wilderness area, a traditional Mi'kmaq hunting area, because the reserve lacked similar treaty or Aboriginal rights, an argument upheld by the Newfoundland Supreme Court three years later. The judicial process refused to hear oral history but wanted written documents which would establish that the Miawpukek First Nation had used this land prior to European contact - an impossible task.

Maura Hanrahan prepared a lengthy submission to the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our [Newfoundland's] Place in Canada in which she reviewed the history of Aboriginal peoples in the province and consequences of their omission at Confederation. In her report, she provided a comparative analysis of what could be done based on developments in British Columbia and the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development in terms of sovereignty, state institutions, and culture placed under Aboriginal control. Hanrahan made twenty-one recommendations including one that Aboriginal Nations in the province be constituted as nations and that the province should officially recognize and support this initiative, including land claims, and plan strategically to meet Aboriginal goals, including making sure that all Mi'kmaq peoples achieve recognition under the *Indian Act*. In addition, she recommended making sure that Aboriginal people be accurately and fairly represented in the school curriculum (Hanrahan, 2003). In light of the provincial government's continued reluctance to act, the KMA joined with the Sip'kop Mi'kmaq Band of St. Albans to sue the federal government for its long-time abandonment of its fiduciary responsibility to the Mi'kmaq of the province. The Alliance and the Sip'kop looked to the Supreme Court of Canada for possible redress and launched an application to take the federal and provincial governments to court in a class action suit to establish bands and reserves (CBC, 2007). It also considered approaching the federal government to ask for recognition as a landless band.

In 2004, a referendum was called among 700 eligible voters of the Kitpu First Nation on the Port au Port peninsula in pursuit of Indian status, as a landless band but there appeared to be little interest - few voted (CBC, 2004). However, these developments did catch the attention of the federal government. Late 2005, Ottawa hired a negotiator to begin discussions with the FNI and work towards an Agreement-in-Principle (CBC, 2005). Two years later, the Newfoundland Supreme Court turned down the four-year old application to initiate a class action suit arguing that any action needed to be done through the *Indian Act* (CBC, 2007) but on November 30, the federal government decided to respond. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the FNI signed an Agreement-in-Principle in 2008 which recognized the newly founded Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band. An Order-in-Council created the band in September, 2011. In October, 2012, the Qalipu band held its first elections signifying that a new era had begun (CBC, 2012). However, these elections were controversial, even among band members, because they took place while registration was ongoing and with limited time for mail-in-ballots to reach the returning officers.

As positive as these developments appeared, they were not without some serious problems. The agreement meant that Indian status had been achieved for the all Mi'kmaq in the province. Yet not everyone was included in the band. In 2007, roughly 7,800 people became potentially eligible for status which many believed would bring some health, education, and tax benefits. The determinant for status under the FNI-Ottawa agreement was that applicants be able to demonstrate Mi'kmaq ancestry, lived in a current or pre-1949 Mi'kmaq community, and live “a Mi'kmaq way of life” (CBC, 2011). Not all eligible Mi'kmaq were able to apply during the initial period and pressures were put on the FNI to allow them to do so. In an extraordinary and unexpected result following a second deadline for applications, the numbers of applicants began to soar, reaching over 100,000, including from many persons who had out-migrated from Newfoundland usually to find economic opportunities off the island. While there are applicants who are motivated by the promise of financial benefits, others sought to affirm their identity; most applicants appear to be seeking both elements. Some applicants have only recently learned of their Aboriginal heritage and now have been forced to rethink their own identities. These developments, in turn, have forced western and central Newfoundland to re-examine their own Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal past.

In light of these unexpected numbers, however, the federal government has begun to question the legitimacy of the application process and hint at having to renegotiate the original agreement. However, this situation was aggravated by the entire process. Some applicants were accepted, and others not processed or rejected entirely, even within the same family. Further, the now closed deadline for application has left potential applicants out of the process and many applications unprocessed. Also the large numbers who have met status qualifications now threaten to derail decades and more of lobbying and negotiations, as Ottawa begins to balk. The questions that these issues raise are profound and have already attracted new directions in Mi'kmaq scholarship including “being and becoming India” (Robinson, 2013a; Robinson, 2013b; Robinson, 2012; Robinson, 2011).

The once invisible Newfoundland Mi'kmaq have thus become very visible. What has happened is a major remaking of history and, in an ongoing way, the remaking of peoples whose heritage and culture has been colonized, reduced, repressed, and ignored. To understand how the past has



left its imprint on the present has required and will continue to require scholarly research and education - not only of Aboriginal students, but the public. This task means examining this past from a variety of disciplinary angles: political, economic, anthropological, ethnographic, sociological, historical, and psychological. In the reconstruction of this identity. It is also necessary to engage, as equals, with those from the Aboriginal community whose traditional knowledge, stories, and values are distinct. From the point of view of the university it requires welcoming, and learning from, the Aboriginal community, allowing for Aboriginal voices to be heard and Indigenous culture and values to be shared. How this might be accomplished and some of the challenges inherent in the attempt are discussed in the following section.

### **Indigenizing the Academy**

What does it mean to "Indigenize" the academy? A recent roundtable (University of British Columbia, 2013) addressed six "core themes": community engagement, teaching/learning, research, governance, Indigenous student success, and Indigenous cultural determination. It is aimed at "creating culturally appropriate education for Indigenous students" (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 1) by countering the dominant intellectual culture of the traditional western university and its hegemonic role in colonization with its interpretation of Aboriginal history and cultures (Mihesuah, 1998) and allowing for alternative philosophies and epistemes into the pedagogical conversation in meaningful, reciprocal, respectful, and ongoing fashion (Russell, 2013; Robie Liscomb, 2012; Vetter and Blimkie, 2011 ). At Algoma University, the symbol of such an approach was "a teaching wigwam lodge", inspired by nineteenth-century Anishinabe (Ojibway) Chief Shingwauk who wanted a place where his peoples could maintain possession of their world by importing skills, not abandoning their culture and identity (Algoma University and Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, 2013).

These themes have begun to resonate at Memorial University of Newfoundland, as they already have at other Canadian universities (University College of the Fraser Valley, 2003; Russell, 2013). The importance of making a campus not only more aware but engaged with the emerging Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation band and its members in a spirit of mutual learning and respect is the thread which ties together the following description of Grenfell's past and current Indigenization efforts (Kuokkanen, 2007; Mihesuah and Wilson, 2004; Fenelon, 2003; Mihesuah, 1998).

The Grenfell Campus is situated in Comer Brook, Western Newfoundland where the FNI established its headquarters several decades ago. Initially, upon opening in 1975, it was a two-year service campus for Memorial University. The first degree programs came into being during the mid-1980s with others following in the 1990s. The number of scholars interested in Aboriginal history, including Bartels and the author, were few. The first and second-year courses that they taught sometimes included Aboriginal content, but it was not until the early 1990s that occasional upper level undergraduate courses on the ethnohistory of Canadian Native peoples were offered on a regular basis. In a nutshell, there was no interest on campus to expand the offerings in Aboriginal studies and little contact with the FNI Mi'kmaq communities, except on an individual basis. There was also little acknowledgment by students of their Aboriginal heritage. It was the rare student who willingly admitted to such a background. Conversations with students have since revealed that this was not accidental, for their parents often advised

them strongly not to let anyone know of their heritage. Sometimes, this was based on a sense of shame, other times out of a fear of discrimination.

Developments on campus since mid-1990s, especially during the past few years, have been remarkable and changes coincide with a growing literature on Aboriginal histories and cultures. the Mi'kmaq awakening, and recognition of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation band. Progress was initially slow. An Aboriginal Art exhibit took place in 1996 at the Grenfell Art Gallery and in 2004 Memorial University honoured the Conne River Sagamaw and Chief, Misel Joe, with an honorary doctorate at a Grenfell Convocation (Anderson and Crellin, 2009). During the oration, it was noted that in 1999 a small group of Mi'kmaq had paddled a traditional canoe from Cape Breton to Newfoundland, demonstrating not only that it could be done but more importantly that it had, according to Mi'kmaq oral history, been done long ago. Chief Joes appeal to the academy emphasized the importance of education, spirituality, and protection of the environment. He also contended, "Education - if there is one aspect of our society that is truly important to the future of my people, and all peoples, it is education. It opens the doors to opportunities: the knowledge that comes with education brings understanding and eventually, acceptance. Education is, in fact, the great equalizer" (Memorial University, Presidents Report 2004). Both the Aboriginal art exhibit and the honouring of Chief Joe were unprecedented and illustrated a growing awareness, respect, and willingness to engage with the Newfoundland Mi'kmaq.

Memorial University had attempted to address the problems facing Aboriginal students as early as 1980 and in 1987 had tabled a major report at Senate which looked at needed improvements in undergraduate education relating to Native and Northern programs, including teachers' education. It was not, however, until 2009 that a Presidential Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives consisting of leading members of the university and the Aboriginal communities was established. In a list of twenty-two recommendations, it called for fundamental change in how Aboriginal students were served and taught (Presidential Task Force on Aboriginal Affairs, 2009). Part of this initiative resulted in the hiring of a Special Adviser to the President for Aboriginal Affairs, Dr. Maura Hanrahan.

Late in 2011, Special Adviser Hanrahan and Dean of Education, Kirk Anderson, visited the Grenfell Campus to discuss how the campus might fit into the strategy of the Aboriginal Task Force, namely to give Aboriginal students full access to what the academy had to offer by creating an environment which welcomed and promoted their success. The St. Johns campus had already been part of some developments in this regard including an Aboriginal Studies minor program, as well as the creation of a Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Studies, an Aboriginal Seminar Series, an expanded Aboriginal Resource Office, and a high-level Aboriginal Space Working Group. The development of the university's Engagement Framework involved Aboriginal governments and organizations.

The Grenfell Campus had at this point recently undergone major administrative restructuring and expansion of infrastructure. Nevertheless, it remained a small campus in Corner Brook with a student population of 1,300 students. Geographically, it was over four hundred miles distant from St. John's, making communication and the sharing of new resources created for Aboriginal students on the larger campus irrelevant to its circumstances. Yet, in being on the west coast of



Newfoundland where Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation had its headquarters and in a region with the heaviest concentration of Aboriginal peoples in the province, Grenfell Campus appeared a logical place to be included more directly in Memorial's strategic plans; it was an attractive option for Aboriginal students on and off the island based on its small campus setting, interdisciplinary offerings, and existing student support.

Some Grenfell faculty members in Social/Cultural Studies, Historical Studies, and Visual Arts were already active in integrating Aboriginal content in their courses; the anthropologist Angela Robinson and historian Rainer Baehre had also been discussing for several years, ways in advancing Aboriginal Studies at Grenfell. This interest and collaboration resulted subsequently in the formation of an informal Aboriginal Studies minor committee with Robinson, as chair, and representatives from historical studies, social/cultural studies, visual arts, English, business, and nursing. The arrival of the delegation from St. Johns to discuss where the campus might fit into the university's overall Aboriginal strategy came at a fortuitous time.

Of particular note in early 2011, and a source of pride to the campus and the Aboriginal community, was the awarding of a Rhodes Scholarship to Gabrielle Hughes, a visual arts student and a member of Cape Sable Band of Wampanoag<sup>15</sup>, who upon graduating from Grenfell went to study art history and visual culture at Oxford University with a focus on "the discourse of academic/First Nations relations and the transcendent qualities of the museum space as an artwork in and of itself." As a student, Hughes had been involved in the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN) Violence Prevention Initiative, the local Aboriginal community, and performed as a traditional Mi'kmaq drummer.

In November 2011, this committee kept in contact with both Hanrahan and a group in St. John's involved in developing an Aboriginal Studies major program headed by Lianne Leddy. Out of this contact came another meeting at Grenfell with Hanrahan, Anderson, Robinson, Baehre, and business program faculty member, Jose Lam, to discuss how the Grenfell campus might involve itself in Aboriginal initiatives at Memorial; this was followed by a subsequent meeting with senior administration where Vice-President Mary Bluechardt who gave her full support for the initiative. These meetings together led to the formalization of the ad hoc Aboriginal Initiatives Committee at Grenfell with Robinson, as chair, and included faculty members and the curator of the Grenfell Art Gallery but also representatives from the Grenfell Campus Student Union, Student Affairs, and the Qalipu band. Baehre and Lam then met with the Senior Planning Group on the Grenfell Campus to inform them of the committee's activities reviewing what had been available in the past including a summary of courses taught, the hiring of recent faculty who had an active interest in Aboriginal topics, and events at the Grenfell gallery such as several exhibits and panel discussions. The latter included a Forum on Aboriginal Identity and Language held in September 2011 with representatives from the Labrador Interpretation Centre, the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network. Saqamaw Calvin White of Flat Bay, and Anne Hart, who is Mi'kmaq, of the Southwestern Coalition to End Violence.

In addition, contact was made in November 2011 between Grenfell, the Labrador Institute, and College of the North Atlantic (CAN), in Happy Valley-Goose Bay to explore common grounds, including providing services for Aboriginal students. Vice-President Bluechardt and Special

Adviser Hanrahan also met with representatives of the Innu Nation, the Nunatsiavut Government and the NunatuKavut Community Council in Labrador. This was followed by a workshop held in January, 2012 on Community Engagement organized by Hanrahan and Keith Goulding, Director of Workforce Qalipu. The promise of adding to the Indigenization process at Grenfell to fulfill Memorials Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives now encompassed student and faculty recruitment possibilities, additional program development, community engagement, and research and teaching potential across the disciplines.

Several key initiatives settled upon by the Grenfell Aboriginal Initiatives Committee (AIC) came to fruition during this first year. This included determining the number of Aboriginal students at Grenfell with the help of Student Affairs, the GCSU, and the Registrars Office. Only 65 Grenfell students self-identified as Aboriginal on the application for admissions form in 2011. The Registrar's Offices on both the St. Johns and Grenfell Campuses, working with GCSU president and Aboriginal student, Robert Leamon, spearheaded an initiative to encourage other students to self-identify as Aboriginal. It was successful with 280 self-designated Aboriginal students registered in the Fall semester of 2012. There are probably another 100 if one included those who did not self-identify. The AIC made the case for a dedicated Aboriginal student space on a campus where space was at a premium. Grenfell's administration set aside an office area as an Aboriginal Resource Centre, a room placed under the authority of the Grenfell Campus Student Union. Another major step was to create an Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator position to foster "a supportive environment for aboriginal students" by offering cultural appropriate resources, conducting assessment needs, facilitating social and cultural activities, promoting cultural awareness of Aboriginal matters on Campus, and linking the campus in this regard with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. Finally, the committee lobbied for Aboriginal speakers and visitors to come to the campus.

In the academic year of 2012-13, the AIC was reorganized to make it more efficient in meeting the objectives begun during its first year. The committee consisting of 15 active members was divided into three subcommittees - community, student, and academic, as well as maintaining the overall general committee structure in order to focus its activities. In a number of instances, individuals served on several sub-committees in order to meet the AIC's goals. A new committee chair, Rainer Baehre, was appointed when Angela Robinson left for a sabbatical.

Another AIC objective was to involve the Grenfell Aboriginal student body. During the second year Matthew Hughes, a member of the GSU council and a Cape Sable Wampanoag member, was chosen chair of the AIC *Student* Sub-committee; he successfully found a way to organize Aboriginal students formally under the governance of the GCSU. By year's end, these efforts had resulted in the creation of an Aboriginal student caucus to oversee student-related activities and secure some funding. Younger Aboriginal students were also brought into the caucus to ensure continuity from year to year. These students also participated on campus in Aboriginal movie nights, healing circles, pow-wows, potlucks, and smudging ceremonies.

A widely acknowledged and essential element in recruiting and retaining Aboriginal students was to provide student services specific to their needs. To meet this need, Grenfell hired Janine Lightfoot, the institution's first Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator in Student Affairs. Lightfoot

worked closely with all three sub-committees of the AIC in order to create more awareness about Aboriginal peoples and practices across the campus. An Inuk from Makkovik in Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador), Lightfoot holds a degree in Political Science and Native Studies from St. Thomas University, where she had chaired the Native Student Council. In collaboration with Matthew Hughes and his student group, Lightfoot has created an Aboriginal Student page on the Grenfell website, featuring information on programs, services, housing, scholarships and other items important to support Aboriginal students. Of further note, one of the results of Memorial's Task Force was the designation of seats for Aboriginal students in specific programs, an initiative supported by Grenfell's administration and protected by the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission - two seats in the Visual Arts program, one in the Masters of Environmental Policy program, and three seats shared between the Western Regional Nursing School and the St. Johns campus<sup>16</sup>.

Over the years, the Grenfell Art Gallery under curator Charlotte Jones has been quite active in including Aboriginal themes and content. Jones sees such contributions as "an important part of the exhibition and outreach programming needs to reflect current and traditional and Indigenous cultural and creative practices." She regards the gallery as an opportunity in providing national and international forums for contemporary Indigenous artists as well as serving as a resource and support for local Aboriginal artists. In this regard, the gallery has already provided a number of forums for discussing Indigenous issues of identity including Engaging Aboriginal Communities hosted by the Atlantic Provinces Art Gallery Association at which Chief Calvin White and the Mohawk artist Stan Hill offered overviews of their respective Flat Bay and Six Nations Reserve communities; there were also conversations at the workshop about such important related matters as repatriation of Aboriginal artifacts and the need to hire and retain Aboriginal curators. Upcoming exhibits at the Grenfell Gallery include "inner Works: North" to show the works of Aboriginal artists from Labrador, Cape Dorset, and Pagnirtung, Nunavut.

AIC had hoped to bring in well-respected and accomplished Aboriginal persons to the campus to give talks. It was thought that such an activity would link the academy, including faculty, students, and staff, with the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. One of the highlights was the launching in October, 2012 of the Aboriginal Speaker Series at Grenfell. This event required complex negotiations and assistance in order to succeed; it was funded by Memorials Vice-Presidents` Council Cross-Campus Initiatives Fund with the assistance of other academic and non-academic units on various campuses. The evening guest speaker who also met with Grenfell students during the day was the distinguished and acclaimed documentary filmmaker of the National Film Board Dr. Alanis Obomsawin, and Abenaki of the Odanak reserve in Quebec, whose work on the Oka (Kanehsatake) and Burnt Church fishery crises, had contributed to a profound and better understanding of Aboriginal issues in Canada.

This event was introduced by Keith Cormier, a Qalipu member and an AIC community subcommittee member who believes in the academy as an essential resource to help Aboriginal communities "explore, uncover, and discover" and promote mutually beneficial Aboriginal self discovery and scholarly research. Cormier and other Qalipu members, including Elder Odelle Pike, offered traditional drumming and sang the Mi`kmaq Honour song, as had been done during the previous year with the building opening of Grenfell's Arts and Science extension. A

Mi'kmaq welcome and prayer offered by Qalipu Western Vice-Chief Kevin Barnes also preceded Obomsawim's talk. In these ways, in an overflowing lecture hall, Grenfell faculty, staff, students, and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members, all participated. Through teleconferencing and webcasting, the event welcomed participants from the St. Johns Campus and the Labrador Institute in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

Another way in which the AIC *Community* Sub-committee helps the Indigenization of the academy is through the members themselves; they represent a source of information based on personal knowledge and experience. For example, Linda Holwell Tibbo, a Grenfell staff member with Community Education, was born in Labrador of an Aboriginal woman and "adopted out" as an infant. Though unaware of her ancestry, Tibbo noted that, during her childhood, "I soaked up knowledge of everything First Nations and Aboriginal." As a girl guide, she represented Newfoundland and Labrador on the National Aboriginal Council to promote anti-racism in Canada. Yet Tibbo was not made aware of her ancestry until her early twenties. The loss of her family cultural ties through adoption, a widespread phenomenon of the past, has resulted in a personal journey to find and restore that lost identity, a process that many other Aboriginal children have faced. Another example is Linda Wells from Bay St. George and the executive director of the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network; Linda's knowledge has caused us to reflect on the place and role of Aboriginal women in society and the obstacles they face by virtue of their gender. A third example is Raymond Cusson from Shoal Brook, Donne Bay, who had previously been responsible for First Nations programs at the Canadian Police College in Ottawa. He served as a Policing Advisor to the federal government's First Nations Policing Policy/Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service, worked as senior consultant to the Department of Justice in Nova Scotia on First Nations policing, and co founded and still advises the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association.

Equally important to the Indigenization of the academy at Grenfell is the role of the AIC *Academic* Sub-committee whose faculty members reflect a range of disciplines including anthropology, art history and visual culture, business, education, English, history, and sociology. However, unlike the St. John's Campus which is much larger and relatively rich in resources, this campus had to find a way of serving Aboriginal students and the community with a smaller faculty and less flexibility in terms of curriculum offerings. Nevertheless, in recent years, especially through new hiring, the campus had developed and grown to the extent that interested faculty started to believe that there were indeed ways of Indigenizing the curriculum above and beyond individual research and the occasional invitation sent to focal Aboriginal leaders to come and talk.

The consensus within the AIC Academic Subcommittee was to concentrate on developing an Aboriginal Studies minor as the most appropriate and realistic option for Grenfell. It was doubtful whether an Aboriginal major program at a small campus would attract sufficient students to sustain the program at this stage in the history of the campus which had comparatively fewer faculty and fewer courses to offer. In contrast, a minor program would allow both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to major in more traditional but related programs and to develop a background on Aboriginal Studies potentially useful to them in graduate and professional schools or in occupations where such a background was considered

helpful. Another consideration in supporting an Aboriginal minor rather than major was whether sufficient courses would be offered regularly enough to allow students to finish their degree requirements within the usual four-year period. To this end, therefore, the committee drafted a program proposal for an Aboriginal Studies minor that is currently under consideration. The proposal reflects the credentials, background, research interests, course instruction, and disciplinary perspectives of the Grenfell Campus faculty willing and available to make such an interdisciplinary program attractive for interested students. All faculty members at the campus willing to teach specific courses or offer other pedagogical benefits to Aboriginal students participated in this AIC Academic Sub-committee. Their publications on Aboriginal and related studies are listed in the references. The following overview introduces not only their work but how they tie into the broader objectives of the Aboriginal Initiatives Committee.

The first AIC chair, Grenfell anthropologist Angela Robinson has worked with Mi'kmaw communities throughout Atlantic Canada. She has numerous conference papers and publications to her credit, including *"Ta'n Teli Ktlamsitasit (Ways of Believing): 'Mi'kmaw Religion and Identity in Eskasoni, Nova Scotia* (Robinson, 2005). In recent years, she has been carrying out ethnographic work in Newfoundland examining Mi'kmaq rituals, religion, identity, marginalization, and cultural revitalization. She belongs to the Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network and the Comer Brook Aboriginal Women's Association. Her regular teaching includes Anthropology 2012 (Threatened Peoples) and Anthropology 2412 (Regional Studies: Aboriginal Peoples of North America) as well as other courses with substantial Aboriginal content.

Art historian Gerard Curtis spent five years living and working in the Little Red River Cree First Nation of Northern Alberta, and also with the Sahtu Dene of Defina, NWT. He has been strongly influenced by the critical work of Canadian First Nations artists like Jane Ash Poitras and Joane Cardinal Schubert, to the Urban-Native work of Brian Jungen and Jordan Bennett, and the historical works of artists like Charles Edenshaw, Bill Reid, and Norval Morrisseau. For Curtis, Indigenous Art has played a central role in the development of a post-colonial approach to culture and documents the historical issues faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada and North America; it represents a form of resistance to repression and domination. Specifically, Visual Arts 3712 (Indigenous Art: Global Contexts) and Visual Arts 4740 (First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Art), as well as other visual arts courses, explore visual culture "as a political nexus point in resistance to colonization," course content which challenges Western views of Indigenous imagery and how Indigenous art becomes commercialized and characterized with misnomers like "primitive art," "tourist art," and "outsider art." Other topics include issues of postmodernism, cultural appropriation and repatriation, and the ethnographic role art has played traditionally in typecasting Aboriginal cultures.

Historian Rainer Baehre has taught History 3520/3525 (Ethnohistory of North American Native Peoples) at Grenfell for over twenty years. He has also regularly incorporated the history of European-Aboriginal encounter into his History 1100 (Introduction to History), History 2200/2210 (Canadian History) and History 3030 (Environmental History). His interest in researching on Aboriginal history extends back to graduate school and resulted in a series of articles for Saskatchewan Aboriginal high school students as well as a number of conference



papers (Baehre 1990; Baehre 1992). More recently, he has also published studies on how medical and anthropological views of the Labrador Inuit developed during the nineteenth century, contributing to racial stereotyping and influencing the work of the anthropologist Franz Boas (Baehre 2008; Baehre 2010a). In addition, Baehre has conducted research for Nuntukavut on archival records relating to European/North American encounters of Aboriginal peoples in the Strait of Belle Isle during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Most recently, he has been exploring the Aboriginal presence in the history of the Bay of Islands, as reflected in the former “jackatar” community of Crow Gulch (Baehre 2010b).

Stephanie McKenzie, a member of Grenfell’s English program, is an expert in Aboriginal and Canadian literature but also has extended her interests to include the Indigenous peoples of the West Indies, such as the Maroons. Her present interests in Aboriginal literature focus on international connections between Aboriginal art and aesthetics, as well as the pragmatics of grass roots production and funding practices which serve to include - or exclude - Aboriginal production and, in particular, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal combined efforts. She is the author of *Before the Country Native Renaissance, Canadian Mythology* (McKenzie, 2007a), a study of First Nations writing in Canada of the 1960s and 1970s and Canadian mythology following this Native Literary Renaissance, and numerous conference papers on Native literature and issues of publishing (McKenzie, 2009; McKenzie 2008; McKenzie 2007b; McKenzie, 2004; McKenzie 2001). Recently, she delivered a paper on Haisla First Nations author Eden Robinson's *Blood Sports* and issues of addiction, trauma, truth and reconciliation (McKenzie, 2013). In addition, with colleague Ingrid Percy, Visual Arts, McKenzie organized a symposium on Emily Carr in 2013 which included a talk by Haida/Tsimshian author Marcia Crosby "Engaging Carr In Relation To Indigenous Peoples." While McKenzie does not teach dedicated courses on Aboriginal literature, she does offer a special topics course on Eden Robinson and incorporates Aboriginal-related topics into her English other literature courses.

Cultural sociologist Marie Croll teaches courses on the social construction of gender and sexuality, social inequalities, and social theory. Before becoming a sociologist, Croll had been a psychotherapist and counselled mostly girls and women, including those of Aboriginal heritage, who had been sexually abused and/or victims of violent crime. Her ten-year private practice and doctoral work in applied sociology led to *Following Sexual Abuse: A Sociological Interpretation of Identity R/Formation in Reflexive Therapy*, a narrative and account construction about the private and social negotiation of identity following trauma (Croll 2008). Currently, her research explores the impact of forced institutionalization on identity and her focus is the survivors of the Roman Catholic Magdalene Laundries in Ireland, Canada, and Australia - the latter two settings where Aboriginal and Aborigine children were frequently housed. This research helps scholars and respective communities to better understand gender and institutionalization and can readily be applied to Native Residential Schools experiences. She teaches Sociology 2210 (Social Inequality) and Sociology/Anthropology 3314 (Gender) where such issues are addressed. Croll has also previously conducted "Relationship Violence/Sexual Abuse Healing Circle, a Workshop for the Native Women's Group, Comer Brook," and participated in January 2012 in the “Engaging Aboriginal Communities” workshop, which was part of Memorial University's Engagement Framework development process.

Three other faculty members of the AIC do not teach courses specifically related to Aboriginal Studies but have work experience in the area and teach in disciplines which increasingly attract Aboriginal students. Cathy Stratton, Associate Director at Western Regional School of Nursing, became involved in Aboriginal Nursing education in the 1990s when the School developed and implemented the first Nursing Access Program to address the shortage of Aboriginal nurses in coastal Labrador communities. In 2005 the School partnered with the College of the North Atlantic (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) to offer the second program, enabling students to complete a bachelor of nursing degree. Jose Lam, whose research interests are in the fields of entrepreneurship and family business, teaches primarily in the areas of family business, small business management, regional economic development, and international business. He teaches Business 1600 (Introduction to Entrepreneurship), Business 6600 (New Venture Creation), and welcomes assignments and business plans that deal with Aboriginal business, as well as local economic development courses (Business 4010 and Business 4020) that incorporate case studies on community sustainability including the Voisey community and the Inuit of Labrador. He has also taught professional development courses in entrepreneurship and starting a business at the John Molson School of Business, Concordia University, where he delivered outreach workshops on entrepreneurship and local economic development to Aboriginal and minority groups through the Entrepreneurship Institute for the Development of Minority Communities, as well as in Val d'Or for the James Bay Cree and Innukjuak (Northern Quebec) for the Inuit. Finally, Sharon Langer of Grenfell Campus Fast Track Education Program, who also works as a Vice-Principal and Grade 5 teacher at St. Gerard's Elementary in Corner Brook, teaches Education 3951 (Curriculum), Education 3322 (Children's Literature) as well as Education 3312 and 3542 (Language Arts). She has made numerous presentations surrounding the promotion of Inclusion and Differentiation in the Classroom, Enhancing Literacy Development, and the Importance of Play in Learning. Her thirty years of public school teaching have taken her to the coast of Labrador, the Northern Peninsula, and Ramea on Newfoundland's South Coast, where she has taught all grade levels from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Her interest in Aboriginal education stems from a strong desire to learn about her own Aboriginal ancestry; she recognizes the need to empower others of similar background to develop a greater awareness and understanding of the value of Aboriginal studies – a perspective shared by all members of the AIC committee. IG These seats complement the range of designated seats On the St John's Campus and at Memorial's Marine Institute.

## Conclusion

It is unlikely that Grenfell would have seen the same level of organized involvement of faculty in an effort to Indigenize the small campus without the current revitalization and resurgence of Newfoundland's Mi'kmaq and political dynamics related to the formation of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation. The history and objectives of the Mi'kmaq in seeking recognition and status underscore not only how government but the academy has responded to the Mi'kmaq realities in the past and in the present. Suddenly, from not knowing that so many people in western and central Newfoundland have an Aboriginal background and barely recognizing that Aboriginal students exist on campus, the academy is discovering more than ever before that what has happened to the Mi'kmaq, and why this deeply affects many students, staff, faculty, administrators, and the wider community. The sheer numbers of Aboriginal applicants seeking



status under the *Indian Act* with the Qalipu band is beginning to leave its mark on campus, and has become a source of identity and pride. The institution needs to welcome the presence of these students and our own fundamental change in perception. Through teaching, research, and engagement, this campus can help students to understand who they are as Mi'kmaq peoples who have experienced what many other Indigenous peoples have experienced. In turn, through the teaching of Aboriginal elders and other sources of Mi'kmaq knowledge and culture, researchers and faculty can also explore, learn and explain what constitutes both our common and different identities in a respectful and constructive fashion. By extending our welcome to all Aboriginal and Indigenous peoples, it becomes possible to truly learn from each other. In this sense, our common humanity can become a source of knowledge that benefits everyone.

<sup>1</sup>

I would like to thank Angela Robinson, Stephanie McKenzie, Marie Croll, Jose Lam, Sharon Langer, Gerard Curtis, Cathy Stratton, Linda Holwell Tibbo, Charlotte Jones, Janine Lightfoot, Matthew Hughes, Linda Wells, and Keith Cormier for generously providing me with information on their background, research, and teaching used in this section.

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**Indigenizing the Academy (Anderson and Hanrahan, 2013) A hard copy 40th anniversary special edition of The Morning Watch**

**Chapter 5: Confronting “Contentious Ground”**

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**Abstract:** I have spent 17 years in the academy, first as a student and now as an educator - almost two decades. Over the years, I have often reflected on my learning and teaching experiences, my interactions with professors and other students, and what has worked and not worked for me as a Saulteaux/Anishinabe, an Indigenous person, in this post-secondary world. Why Indigenize the academy? What does it mean to Indigenize the academy? How can the academy be Indigenized? This article is the result of my humble attempt to answer these questions.

I continue to be somewhat discouraged by the challenges and barriers that Indigenous students and faculty encounter in the academy, but I am encouraged by the call for systemic, epistemological and pedagogical change from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, by the research and literature on this topic, and by the engaging course, curriculum and program development that uses Indigenous knowledge as its foundation. From experience, from listening to and being in dialogue with Indigenous students and faculty, and by being immersed in emerging research and literature on this process, I have learned that 'Indigenization' requires leadership that is strong and enduring, courage and determination as those who pursue it may be on “contentious ground” (Alfred, 2004, p. 92) that requires intentional and strategic confrontation.

**The landscape for Aboriginal students in post-secondary education**

Aboriginal peoples of Canada, like society in general, are experiencing significant changes; these changes directly affect the dynamic and quality of relationships at every level. According to the 2006 Canadian Census, Aboriginal peoples made up approximately 3.8% of the Canadian population as approximately 1172 790 million people identified themselves as either First Nations, Metis or Inuit. The Aboriginal population is increasing at twice the Canadian average, and is expected to increase by 56% between 1991 and 2016. In a more recent Statistics Canada statistic report, the Aboriginal population could become 4.1% of Canada's population by 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2005).

In terms of post-secondary education, First Nations and Inuit enrolment rates have slowly increased between 1987-88 (15,572 funded students) and 1998-99 (over 27,157 funded students) (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), 2000); however, more recent statistics indicate student enrolment decline: in the 2002-03 academic year, 25,075 students were enrolled, then in 2008 approximately 23,000 students were funded on an annual basis (INAC). However, between 2001 and 2006, because of federal post-secondary under-funding, approximately 105,500 First Nations students who are eligible to attend post-secondary education were on waiting lists. Overall, it appears that the number of post-secondary students

has been declining in recent years. The Auditor General of Canada's 2004 Report indicates that approximately 27% of the First Nations population between 15 and 44 years of age hold a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree, compared with 46% of the Canadian population within the same age group (as cited in AFN, 2009). Furthermore, the Canadian Federation of Students (2012) report that "only 8 percent Aboriginal persons hold a university degree compared to 23% of the total population" (n.p.). As a result of statistics like these and the dramatic disparity in the quality of living between segments of the general population and the Aboriginal population, identification of barriers and initiatives to improve Aboriginal educational success, and consequently quality of living, have emerged.

Increasingly, based on research, organizations are examining the needs of Aboriginal students. Malatest (2002) identified the following post-secondary challenges for Aboriginal students:

- Lack of funding for specific First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) students
- Specific support services for key learner groups, particularly women (high numbers), men (low numbers) and mature learners (high numbers)
- Lack of Aboriginal instructors and staff Lack of diversification of subjects at the post-secondary level
- Lack of community support at the community level to address cultural and social barriers (cited in Alberta Advanced Education, Aboriginal Sub-Committee, 2006, p. 11)
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In supporting Aboriginal students in post-secondary education, Malatest purports that "value-based viewpoints" of Aboriginal people need to be reflected. This approach goes beyond a recruitment and retention issues to identifying the individual (i.e. policy makers) and organizational values from which policies are made.

Again, based on research and (FNMI) consultation organizations are seeking and implementing solutions with the goal of positively impacting student achievement and overall well-being. In 2005, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) proposed the *First Nations Education Action Plan* that encouraged:

- "Education that embodies and support the strengthening of a First Nations identity through an emphasis on language, cultural and traditional knowledge, and the effective reincorporation of First Nation elders and women in educating younger generation" (p. 3).
- "First Nations have opportunities to design and develop appropriate institutions to deliver essential professional and administrative support to their schools and communities in areas such as curriculum development, specialized services [and] assessment" (p. 6).
- "Full involvement of First Nations people in the decision-making process as related to First Nations education" (p. 5).
- "Enhanced relationships . . . between First Nations and provincial/territorial ministries, school boards, and schools to support First Nations participation in governance and to develop culturally appropriate programming, teacher recruitment and retention strategies and methods for tracking First Nations student progress and rates of success in the provincial/territorial systems" (p. 8).

Alberta Advanced Education Aboriginal Subcommittee report, *A Learning Alberta, Setting the Direction, Partnerships in Action: First Nations, Metis and Inuit Learning Access and Success* (2006), Alberta Learning's *First Nations, Metis, Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2002), and Alberta's Commission on Learning final report. *Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds: Report and Recommendations* (2003), recommended similar policy actions and recommendations for governments, learning providers, communities, industry and the public in relation to post-secondary education of Aboriginal students. The Alberta Advanced Education Aboriginal Subcommittee report included recommendations from the *Minister's 2005 Review and Forum of Alberta's Advanced Learning System: "A Learning Alberta: Framing the Challenge"* that included the appointment, recruitment, and inclusion of Aboriginal peoples and leaders in advance education institutions. In addition, the following were proposed: With FMNI consultation, the development and adoption of a separate FNMI policy framework and implementation of resources to post-secondary learning; and, the building of leadership capacity of Aboriginal peoples 'for' and 'in' the post-secondary context (as cited in cited in Alberta Advanced Education, Aboriginal Sub-Committee, 2006, p. 30). Finally, Alberta Advanced Education in the document, *A Learning Alberta: Final Report of the Steering Committee* encouraged the development of "a range of strategies to ensure teacher preparation" (p. 13) acknowledges and supports Aboriginal students.

A pragmatic and systematic process for post-secondary institutional change is outlined in the document in the document *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan: 2020 Vision for the Future* (2013). This Framework was developed by a comprehensive working group that included British Columbia's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners, including the First Nations Education Steering Committee, the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, the Metis Nation BC, the First Nations Public Service, BC Colleges, BC Association of Universities and Institutes, and the Research Universities Council of British Columbia. The aim in developing the Framework was to positively impact the social, cultural and economic well-being of Aboriginal peoples, and the vision is that "Aboriginal learners succeed in an integrated, relevant, and effective British Columbia post secondary education system that enhances their participation in the social, cultural and economic life of their communities, the province, and global society" (p. 13). In working towards this vision, "Culturally responsive programs, information and services developed in collaboration with Aboriginal communities and organizations" (p. 13) are encouraged and the following goals for post-secondary institutions are outlined:

Goal 1: Systemic change means that the public post-secondary education system is relevant, responsive, respectful, and respective to Aboriginal learners and communities

Goal 2: Community-based delivery of programs is supported through partner ships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutions and communities

Goal 3: Financial barriers to accessing and completing post-secondary education and training are reduced for Aboriginal learners

Goal 4: Aboriginal learners transition seamlessly from K-12 to post-secondary education

Goal 5: Continuous improvement is based on research, data-tracking, and sharing of leading practices (p. 3)

To aid the implementation of this process, the goals are then broken down to objectives, actions, and short-term results from which success can be measured.

With substantive research and literature support, the message of securing authentic and meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal peoples in the decision-making process and in organizational development is clear, and that gaining Aboriginal representation and perspective is conducive to Aboriginal student and faculty efficacy and success. Another message that is clear is that Aboriginal peoples want systemic, second order change, the kind of change that is suggested in decolonized and indigenized education.

Much of the research on Aboriginal post-secondary student experience not only identifies the systemic issues that many Aboriginal students encounter in post-secondary institutions, but the recommendations that are provided overtly or covertly describe a radical, fundamental, paradigm shift in the organizational landscape. It is apparent that educational organizations have to ask some difficult questions when considering the authentic and meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal peoples. Frawley, Nolan, and White elaborate:

Given the statistical evidence, it would be hard to deny that there has been significant growth in the participation of Indigenous students over the past two decades. However, we must constantly ask whether the learning journeys of those students have been quality experiences undertaken in culturally supportive learning environments, and whether Indigenous students and staff today truly feel part of the academy. For many Indigenous people, universities have remained 'white man's institutions', places where of necessity they have engaged in learning that has given them a qualification that is recognised in the outside world but has done little to enhance their value as Indigenous people. University curricula, governance and leadership have traditionally been attuned to the dominant Western paradigm with no acknowledged place for Indigenous knowledge systems, Indigenous pedagogy and Indigenous forms of governance and leadership. (2009, p. 1)

How can universities become inclusive of “Indigenous knowledge systems, Indigenous pedagogy and Indigenous forms of governance and leadership” for the purpose of positively affecting not only the experiences of Aboriginal student and faculty but the whole learning community?

The inclusion of Indigenous students and faculty in postsecondary institutions has occurred in degrees and the hope is this change will also fundamentally influence value systems - from isolated programming to more encompassing structural and affective change initiatives. In any event, it appears that the recruiting and supporting Indigenous students is complex and has been laden with barriers that stem from tradition, bureaucracy, and an unwillingness or incapability to embrace diversity and change. Michel Foucault stated, ‘There is no power relation without the



correlative constitution of a field of knowledge' (1977, p. 27). Leadership within educational institutions lead with an established 'field of knowledge' that is evident in every aspect of the organisation. Consequently, for significant change to happen throughout an organisation, the values and belief systems that define the organisational culture must be identified and examined then either affirmed or challenged (Ottmann & White, 2010).

### **Decolonizing education, Indigenizing the academy**

As we reflect upon what it means to "Indigenize the academy", we are beginning from the presumption that the academy is worth Indigenizing because something productive will happen as a consequence. Perhaps as teachers we can facilitate . . . "education as a practice of freedom". Perhaps we might engage in an educational dynamic with students that is liberatory, not only for the oppressed but also for the oppressors. Perhaps as scholars we can conduct research that has a beneficial impact on humanity in general, as well as on our Indigenous peoples. Perhaps the scholarship we produce might be influential not only among our ivory tower peers, but also within the dominant society. Perhaps our activism and persistence within the academy might also redefine the institution from an agent of colonialism to a center of decolonization. Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice believes that Indigenizing the academy means "to make the academy both responsive and responsible to First Nations goals of self-determination and wellbeing". Taiaiake Alfred states that "the university is a contentious ground," and that should make Native scholars seriously consider "their view on the role they are playing and on the battles they are fighting. (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004, p. 5)

As this quote posits, if an educational institution is considering Indigenization, it must first ask whether the challenge is worth the arduous journey. As this journey may involve questioning then perhaps challenging an established 'mindset'-basic assumptions, values and belief systems - of an organization; a necessary process if transformation of this magnitude is to occur. In essence this is can be described as the opening of a closed system - a system that has been entrenched in longstanding traditions, and one that has experienced very little structural change - or, more dramatically, a metamorphosis. This whole change process needs leadership that is strong, courageous, rebellious, visionary, and leadership that can communicate hope and the individual and collective strength that lies beyond the battle.

Indigenizing the academy begins with asking pertinent, perplexing, and relevant questions, and it is very important to ask the right questions. McConaghy (2000, p. 1) wrote, "Indigenous education in Australia is both a social institution of colonial governance and an academic discipline. At both these sites, competing traditions of knowing indigenous education are vying for legitimacy". She goes on to query, "How is it that certain claims to knowledge are able to secure epistemic authority in particular times, in particular ways and for particular purposes? What are the processes by which old knowledge claims are rejected and new gain legitimacy? How do elements of the old persist in the new? Importantly, how is it that certain colonial formations have remained resilient within Indigenous education" (p. 1). These are difficult questions. They question the power dynamic within an institution - who holds it, why, and

should it still be? McConaghy later posits, “Rowse is correct to suggest that issues of representation and authority are much more complex than can be solved by a simple reference to more Indigenous voice and more Indigenous control” (p. 259). If the academy is to move past these issues, the question asked could be: How is Indigenous thought - philosophy, ontology, and epistemology - informing our policy and curriculum and how is it guiding our actions?

A critical question that needs to be asked is: what does indigenizing the academy mean? Taiaiake Alfred (2004, p. 88) wrote:

To me, it means that we are working to change universities so that they become places where the values, principles, and modes of organization and behaviour of our people are respected in, and hopefully even integrated into, the larger system of structures and processes that make up the university itself. In pursuing this objective, whether as students attempting to integrate traditional views and bring authentic community voices to our work, or as faculty members attempting to abide by a traditional ethic in the conduct of our relations in fulfilling our professional responsibilities, we as Indigenous people immediately come into confrontation with the fact that universities are intolerant of and resistant to any meaningful “Indigenizing.”

Alfred contends that in the process of Indigenization, colonialism needs to be understood then ‘defeated’ which he states contributes to the “denial of our freedom to be indigenous in a meaningful way, and the unjust occupation of the physical, social, and political spaces that we need in order to survive as Indigenous peoples” (p. 89).

Clark (2004, p. 218) describes the concept of Indigenizing the academy:

When comprehended as a dynamic course of action, to think about indigenizing the academy is to imagine the academy as a location from which Indigenous Peoples appropriate research, writing, and other non- (and sometimes anti-) Indigenous educational resources to seek justice for past and enduring crimes, to combat unyielding colonization, to safeguard treaty rights, and to advance general well-being among Indigenous communities. In order to bring about the necessary and radical sorts of transformations encoded in the phrase “indigenizing the academy” . . . Indigenous academics and our non-Indigenous allies labor to reconfigure both the colonial structure of the academy and the colonizing frames of mind affecting our consciousness. The argument emerging here is that the authority for Indigenous studies must be located prominently among Indigenous institutions and rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

This radical and systematic change process will inevitably lead to the disciplining of the disciplines “and to subject Indigenous studies to the concrete needs of Indigenous Peoples” (p. 219).

In his review of literature on this topic, Clark discovered the following three areas of concern:

1. “To decolonize what currently is widely accepted as knowledge about “Indians” is crucial”

(p. 219); 2. “The need to theorize, conceptualize, and represent Indigenous sovereignty so that [indigenous] people may live well into the foreseeable future; 3. The necessity “of producing Indigenous knowledges *for* Indigenous Peoples rather than primarily as subjects for non-Indigenous curiosity” (p. 219). Clark further comments, “To indigenize the academy probably means that we must not only expect but demand a radical redistribution of social and educational resources in the direction of Indigenous students and the needs of Indigenous communities” (p. 222). He explains that Indigenization in this sense includes “decolonizing methodologies, theorizing sovereignty, and producing knowledge,” and consideration of “reallocations of intellectual resources ranging from who is admitted into and advances in (and through) graduate programs, what gets published and rewarded, and who colleges and universities hire and promote” (p. 223). Clark’s vision of an Indigenized academy is one that “nourishes and promotes communities of Indigenous scholars and our non-Indigenous allies,” (p. 223). The redistribution and reallocation of resources leads post-secondary institutions to question and evaluate what they value, since ‘we resource what we value’, and to learn where Indigenous peoples (and all they encompass) stand.

If a shift in resources (and in some cases this may be significant) is required to begin and sustain change of this kind what does Indigenizing the academy come down to? Clark believes that “Indigenizing the academy is not only, or perhaps even primarily, the rather simple (but difficult) matter of exchanging ideas. Visualizing an indigenized academy is not utopist, the stuff of unrealistic dreaming; rather, visualizing an indigenized academy free of institutional anti-Indianisms most likely is a matter of no-nonsense, matter-of-fact politics” (p. 223). And, politics is fundamentally about power, this including the struggle that determines who will have the privilege of commanding it for a period of time.

Why would it be important to Indigenize the academy? Perhaps, “The academy if indigenized might offer important resources for restoring well-being to our nations” (Clark, 2004, p. 230). Perhaps, Indigenizing the academy would help strengthen not only our institutions but Canadian society as well. Kuokkanen (2003) supports this notion: “while knowledge is much needed and a prerequisite for any human relationship, it is inadequate to change deep-seated hostility and fundamental attitudes, many of which are clearly prejudiced” (p. 270) and public education may be used “as a means to eradicate such attitudes as well as to ‘move beyond policies that are the failed relics of colonialism’ - something that, according to [Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples report], would benefit all Canadians” (p. 271). Furthermore, Simpson (2011) contends, “Canada must engage in a decolonization project and a re-education project that would enable its government and its citizens to engage with Indigenous peoples in a just and honourable way in the future,” (as cited in Scully, 2012, p. 155). Scully posits that gaining knowledge and establishing relationships with Indigenous people contributes to decolonization, reinhabitation, and reconciliation. Indigenizing the academy is an effort to deepen understanding and relationships that lead to reconciliation. It means working together to remove the barriers that lead to oppression and impede genuine and meaningful interaction at an individual and collective level.

### *Indigenous Knowledge*

An Indigenized academy understands the value of Indigenous knowledges and the richness and

depth that these perspectives can bring into the constitution of the organization. “Indigenous knowledges are a means to empower diverse bodies that make up the academy. They are a means to open up possibilities for those who come after us, to centre their own concerns” (Kuokkanen, 2003, p. 234). Kuokkanen (pp. 281-282) believes that the weaving of Indigenous philosophies into the cultural fabric of an organization has many benefits:

The “original practical ecological philosophies of the world”- Indigenous epistemes and philosophies - can not only teach us how to learn, but they also function as a powerful mobilizing discourse for the entire world, not only Indigenous peoples. Perhaps this is what Luther Standing Bear had in mind over a hundred years ago: that “white people” learning about Indigenous philosophies and epistemes would not only benefit Indigenous peoples (in that they would be understood better) . . . Drawing on ancient notions of hospitality of nomadic peoples, Parker Palmer suggests that “[g]ood teaching is an act of hospitality,” (1998, 50).

The concept of hospitality is key in this statement. When ideas and people come together, Kuokkanen stresses that the gathering, the meeting, the act of hospitality “cannot ever be a one-way street” (p. 282), and that there is responsibility for every person involved in the interaction and exchange to act with respect, integrity, and openness. “It has also been suggested that universities are the most appropriate places to develop mutual respect and “an understanding and appreciation of ‘the other’” (Axtell 1998, 72)” (Kuokkanen, p. 283). Kuokkanen believes that Indigenous people have a very important role in this process because they hold, have access to, and are bringing Indigenous knowledge and practice to established institutions - they are essentially presenting a gift:

[I]t is the role of Indigenous people to assist others to pay more attention and become more familiar with ideas, premises, and concepts characterizing Indigenous thought. This does not need to imply a merging of the different epistemes, as some scholars have suggested, but rather becoming more aware of each other and reciprocating with one another in the spirit of openness, not only of limited give-and-take (that is, restricted reciprocity).(n16) Thus the role of Indigenous people would be, among other things, to guide others in listening, in learning to listen, and in becoming a guest instead of automatically assuming the role of the host (or a host-guest) (Kuokkanen, 2003, p. 282).

Kuokkanen encourages the honouring of Indigenous and of all people, and the maintenance and valuing of identity in the midst of intellectual union.

### *Decolonization*

Because Indigenizing the academy involves understanding all that colonialism encompasses and being consciousness of the long-lasting and systemic impacts of colonialism, Indigenization involves the process of decolonization - a moving away from practices that violate at the emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual levels. Wilson (2007) believes, ‘Decolonization is about changing lives and, in connection with research, conducting studies in different ways that directly benefit Indigenous peoples, instead of once again subjecting them to a research project that has

“extract[ed] and claim[ed] ownership” of indigenous ways of knowing only to “reject the people” responsible for those ways of knowing,” (p. 117). Decolonization also needs to begin in the classroom, with teachers.

Teachers, instructors, and professors have tremendous influence in the classroom and, over time, they have the potential to impact the thought processes, values, and belief systems of a great number of students. Consequently, they have the opportunity to act as decolonization change agents in our educational institutions. Wilson (2007) posits, “[Educators] are charged with the job to “transmit, critique and interpret” knowledge deemed important for a society’s members to know. In this respect, the teacher can be seen as an “intellectual” or cultural worker” (p. 115). Because teachers have this capacity, this power, at an individual, organization and societal level, their interpretations and perceptions of the past and current landscape matter as these interpretations and perceptions determine the quality of relationships and help to determine our future.

### *Teachers, Instructors, and Professors*

Decolonization of teaching practices begins with educators asking: Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going? What are my responsibilities? These ‘identity’ existential questions begin a ‘mining activity’ and a deeply introspective journey for the teacher. They help the teacher learn his or her story, and it is through in depth understanding of this process that a teacher can meaningfully and passionately transfer learning to his or her student(s). It is important to support and implement teacher personal and professional learning of this kind since organizational change begins with individuals; and, ultimately individually or as a whole, teachers, instructors, and professors will either further the cause of decolonization and Indigenization of the academy or impede it. In a larger context, whole learning communities can engage in this process as a collective and they can ask: As an organization, who are we, where did we come from, where are we going, and what are our responsibilities?

What does decolonization of teaching encompass? Wilson (2007) explains, “A decolonizing education for white teachers involves “bringing forward” the storied history presently subsumed within their teaching but in relation to post-colonial or counter-stories for the purpose of provoking a different story that can open and shift their horizon” (p. 119). Wilson (2007) notes the importance of story in this process:

Teachers need opportunities to reclaim their own stories or “landscapes” so as to recognize their “standpoints.” However, reclamation becomes a truncated process of reification if touchstones are not recognized as formative, are allowed to re-subside into the unconscious, and fail to be counterpoised with stories that challenge them with an alternative perspective. Within a decolonizing education for white teachers, “counter-stories” fulfill this role while a “story of confrontation” represents a teacher’s decolonizing of his or her storied history (p. 122).

The counter-story is an essential part of this approach. It is the counter-story that opens the door for new learning and growth, for seeing time (the past, present, and future) through a new lens

or a much clearer lens, for grasping a multi-dimensional concept of perspectives, for developing empathy. Wilson (2007) elaborates, “A counter-story is not simply an alternative version of a story; it is a story told from the point of view of the colonized, and thus “postcolonial” in the sense that Ashcroft et al. intended, but with “colonized” understood, as Smith clarified, as speaking from a privileged position” (p. 124). The challenge in this approach is that “Teaching . . . has to deal not so much with *lack* of knowledge as with *resistances* to knowledge” (Wilson, p. 124). This is a dramatic epistemological and pedagogical change, and for this reason decolonization of knowledge requires much thought and care in its implementation.

Exercises like the counter-story begin a journey - self discovery, which then may open the door to learning about others (knowing self, knowing others), which may lead to transformation of being and doing for the individual and institutional, resulting in authentic relationships, then the addressing of injustices:

A central, indispensable part of responsibility in this context is to accept and be guided by the fact that as “knowing other peoples and cultures” is about increasing knowledge and understanding or changing attitudes, it is also equally about addressing systemic power inequalities and hegemony in the academy as well as in larger society that prevent hospitality between Indigenous and dominant Western epistemes. Put another way, the academy can and must start doing its homework by rethinking its relationship as well as epistemological and ontological assumptions, structures, and prejudices toward Indigenous peoples and their epistemes. The challenge to the academic imagination is to rethink Indigenous peoples and, consequently, the gift of their epistemes “not only as repositories of cultural nostalgia but also as part of the geopolitical present” (Spivak 1999, 402). (Kuokkanen, 2003, p. 285).

In reviewing literature on Indigenizing the academy, certain themes emerge. Indigenization involves reflection which may lead to first- and second-order individual and collective change, and it promotes reciprocity on many levels and quality relationships.

### **Embedding Change**

Creativity, innovation, and sensitivity are needed when creating policy, models, program, curriculum, and courses that promote Indigenization. Indigenous peoples (scholars, teachers, leaders, elders, etc.) are a critical in this process. Increasingly there are exemplar practices of decolonized education in the academy. Kuokkanen (2003) discourages the traditional special or “area studies” that places the learning of Indigenous content in the margins, but rather “the transformation of academic institutions requires a permeation and subversion of the existing structures rather than a creation of parallel structures; a conceptual rather than merely content-based inclusion of non-Western intellectual traditions” (Kuokkanen, p. 274). This approach requires the support and ‘buy-in’ of the entire educational community.

Place-based education is supported as an educational practice that supports decolonization because it brings awareness and promotes critical dialogue about the impact of colonization and the relationships within humanity - with time, each other, creation, the cosmos, and the Creator. This deeply reflective and engaging process is best described in the Indigenous philosophy of



‘All my Relations’ which encapsulates the inextricable interconnection of ‘all things’. Greenwood comments that “place consciousness provides a frame of reference from which one can identify, and potentially resist, the colonizing practices of schooling as a function of the larger culture and its political economy” (2009, p. 1). “Place-conscious education, however, can potentially challenge learners to consider where they are, how they got there, and to examine the tensions between different cultural groups’ inhabitation across time,” (Greenwood, 2009, p. 4). According to Greenwood, place-based education should include, but not be limited to: “a) acknowledging and listening to Indigenous people and their stories of connection to land and place; b) learning how colonization and settlement impacted and impacts Indigenous people and cultures; c) tracking the living link between colonization and today’s economic globalization, . . .” (p. 3)... Decolonization, reinhabitation, reconciliation, and healing are the goals of place-based education (Scully, 2012). Scully writes, “Place-based education is a powerful and strategic pedagogical practice that can promote greater cross-cultural understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, move further towards social and ecological justice, and act as a site of resurgence for Indigenous sovereignty and epistemologies” (p. 156). In every case, as it is with place-based education, teaching, and learning should be intentional if it is to generate and inspire meaning.

Indigenous philosophy can provide the epistemological and pedagogical foundation, the anchor, in a decolonized approach to education. Dumbrill and Green (2008) have utilized the philosophy embedded within the Medicine Wheel to guide learning in this realm:

*East: Engage in Critical Historical Analysis*

Here we must understand the past: who has been included and excluded from the space we occupy, who is defined as Other, and who has the power to so define. This entails understanding the process of colonization discussed earlier and including Other knowldges, and building a multi-centric academy . . . “the goal of inclusive schooling is not to displace Eurocentrism, but to de-centre it and make room for other marginalized knowldges that should be equally validated and taken up in schools as legitimate ways of knowing” (Del et al., 2002, p.27). (p. 498).

*South: Explore Difference and Other Knowledge*

Here we need to have ‘courageous conversations’ that address the responsibility of White people to restore that which has been taken away by their colonizing processes. Here the academy must learn ways to include and explore Other knowldges in a respectful and honourable manner. This state requires moving beyond a critique of Eurocentrism and addressing restoration (p. 499).

*West: Make Space for Knowledge and Establish Academic Standards*

Moving west we put ideas into action, establish academic standards for the new learning, and implement programs. . . The action needed is radical; those from the dominant location need to move over and make space for Other ways of knowing. Making space includes inviting expert members of Other groups to teach in the academy. By ‘expert’ we mean expertise as defined by those groups themselves, not as defined by the academy. This means having people teach even if they do not have doctoral degrees. . . this standard

does not signal the ability to understand or teach indigenous knowledge nor does it signify the ability to evaluate students learning in this area. . . we suggest that a PhD is not the only criteria within academia that should count towards who is recognized as a Professor with knowledge that has value (p. 500).

#### *North: Evaluation and Revision*

. . .we evaluate our progress and re establish the vision needed to continue our journey. Here we celebrate success, learn from mistakes, and prepare for another new beginning and the journey ahead (p. 501 ).

“[A] shift in academic thinking and restructuring of post-secondary educational institutions” is suggested by Dumbrill and Green (2008) in order to experience the transformational effect of implementing an Indigenous model such as this.

#### *Decolonizing Classrooms*

As mentioned educators are cultural brokers that negotiate "the interests of their people through the content they teach, their teaching methods, and the ways in which they balance between divergent goals such as cultural reclamation and economic advancement (Stairs, 1995)” (Kitchen, Cherubini, Trudeau, & Hodson, 2009, p. 358). Educators can use the following guidelines to evaluate how well they bridge or “broker” Aboriginal and Western epistemologies:

- Material Culture refers to the content of courses;
- Social Culture refers to the relationship between classroom interactions and the interactions and relationships that take place within the Aboriginal community;
- Cognitive Culture refers to the differences in worldviews, value systems, spiritual understandings, and practical knowledge between Aboriginal and Western societies;
- Linguistic Culture extends beyond language to the role of language in the community, such as the ways in which language is used (mainly orally in Aboriginal communities) and how it is used to maintain culture across generations (Leavitt, 1995 as cited in Kitchen, Cherubini, Trudeau, & Hodson, 2009, pp.358-359).

The authors explain, “This four-part conception of culture is useful as it marks a shift from a narrow cultural inclusion approach, focused on content, to a cultural base conceptualization that incorporates all aspects of culture into the education of Aboriginal peoples” (p. 359). It is important to utilize each cultural category to varying degrees, depending on the objective of the lesson, course, or program.

Much thought has to be put into the development and content of courses about Indigenous peoples (their history, current realities, philosophies, practices, and traditions). St. Clair and Kishimoto (2010) warn that courses that are identified as diverse and multicultural may not confront “the challenging issues including White privilege, institutional racism, social position, and oppression. This model of multiculturalism also puts forward the common stance of colourblindness as a response to racism that we continue to struggle against,” (p. 18). St. Clair and Kishimoto promote racial issues courses that focus on the following:

- *Understanding:* A course must examine the historically and socially constructed concepts and meanings of race, racism, ethnicity, and oppression.
- *Education:* A course must explore the patterns of racial oppression, racial domination, and hate crimes; the impact of racial classification; as well as the heritage, culture, and contributions of under-represented and oppressed people of color.
- *Awareness:* A course must raise consciousness of the daily and institutional realities of racial discrimination, as well as racial privileges experienced by different racial groups. In addition, a course must explore how members of racially oppressed groups maintain a sense of identity in the face of persistent and systemic racial oppression.
- *Student Growth:* A course must provide a significant arena for critical dialogue and self-reflection on the role of racial power relations in students' lives (p. 19).

With this approach, it is important for educators to develop “critical analytical skills needed to deconstruct how racism may be invisible yet is still prevalent in our societal systems, including our educational institutions,” (p. 20). These courses are designed (i.e. contents and delivery) to encourage students to learn more than facts, but have them critically think of the issues, barriers and the circumstances that have led to current realities. Rather than just dwelling on the issues, it is important to have students develop solutions to the challenges that are uncovered.

Decolonized learning moves from an “emphasis on cultural diversity” that “too often descends, in a multicultural spiral, to a superficial reading of differences that makes power relations invisible and keeps dominant cultural norms in place” (Razack, 1998 as cited in Kuokkanen, 2003, p. 278). Decolonized education that supports the indigenization of the academy “is not so much about new information as it is about disrupting the hegemonic ways of seeing through which subjects make themselves dominant,” (1998, 10). One way of doing this is to acknowledge Indigenous people in our universities on every level. Kuokkanen posits, “[T]here is need for the institutional legitimization and respect for Indigenous knowledge (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991, p. 8). Achieving this state of respect remains impossible as long as there is not adequate knowledge and information about Indigenous communities and knowledge,” (2013, p. 279).

Why decolonize learning in our learning institutions? Because it has the potential to strengthen relationships, our learning organizations, and therefore society. Because it communicates to Indigenous students that they, and their ancestors, are valued. Because it can help improve the academic and overall well-being of not only Indigenous but non-Indigenous students as well. Kuokkanen (2003) quotes a non-indigenous faculty member:

In my experience, when Indigenous perspectives are genuinely included in the curriculum and the classroom, the epistemic and pedagogical changes involved are huge. I believe that is why so many otherwise forward-looking faculties resist it or don't manage to “get around” to it—because of implicit recognition that their epistemic and pedagogical power will be eroded (pp. 271-272).

As one can see, it is difficult for the academy to experience such change; leaders and educators within the organization have to be open to the letting go of espoused practices and positions of power to make way for new possibilities. This transformational metamorphic process requires humility and trust.

Collaborative research and partnerships bring ‘like-minded’ people together, people who can motivate and affect change through the innovative and compelling work they produce. I have had the privilege of participating in research and being included in partnerships, in synergistic unions that has produced inspiring and affirming work. The following is a short description of research that has changed the way I engage in research, how I perceive and how I exist in the academy. A more detailed account can be found the special edition of Ngoonjook (2010), a journal devoted to stories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars whose goal is to Indigenize the academy.

Globally, Indigenous people continue to feel the effects of colonization (i.e. increased poverty, marginalization, abuse in many forms, and educational challenges). Because colonization was executed in uniform methods on an international level, similarities in the Indigenous experience exist and for this reason these similarities, which go beyond the sharing of tragic colonial experience to collective threads of philosophical perspectives, bring Indigenous people together in discourse and relationship (Ottmann, 2010). The *Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous Higher Education (ILP)* participatory action research project was one such vehicle of union, and through international, collaborative research efforts such as the ILP Project, meaningful findings and conclusions could be reached and positive change can occur; change that not only benefits Aboriginal students, but all of society. This research encouraged the partner-participants to seek in-depth understanding of the ‘field of knowledge’ that relates to the culture, the structures, and the conditions of their organizations, and to become change agents as they worked at broadening the perspectives on knowledge within their higher education institutions in meaningful, manageable and measurable ways (Ottmann & White, 2010).

The international and institutional Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participation and partnership for this research project were impressive and significant. There were five Australian and three international institutions represented. Altogether, fourteen people were directly involved as co-researchers, this not including the associates, in making this study a reality.

The primary research question was: What institutional leadership practices, structures, and conditions lead to change and improvement in teaching and learning for Indigenous students? The project aims for the project team and partner-participants were twofold: to strengthen institutional leadership capacity to develop and deliver culturally appropriate and relevant teaching and learning programs for Indigenous students within the participant institutes; and, to encourage academics, students, and administrators to change and transform institutional leadership practices, structures, and conditions so they can more effectively advance excellence in teaching and learning for Indigenous students, generate new knowledge, and serve the community. In essence, the goal was to work towards more inclusivity by ensuring that there is meaningful and relevant support for Indigenous students and faculty so they can experience

greater success. As the project progressed, the research participants in this project found support and resources for shaking the foundations of the academy in positive ways as they attempted to decolonize and *Indigenize* it, for the benefit of all students (Ottmann & White, 2010).

Building a transformative process involves a series of stages; identifying shared philosophy and values; establishing conditions; planning for change; implementing the change process; and, assessing and evaluating change. These stages were replicated in the ILP Project, in a broad sense. The activities that took place within participant institutions were informed by the values identified collectively by the participants as essential in supporting Indigenous participation in higher education. Influential leadership (Duignan, 2006) at an institutional level requires organisations to model leadership by living their values. The ILP values statement (below) can assist any Higher Education institution serving Indigenous students and staff to achieve change. It does this by enabling others to access the set of values (the ILP) this project delineated as central for transforming practices, structures, and conditions. It can be a starting point for other educational institutions in negotiating their own sets of values. Care was taken to ensure that the project processes by which these values were established mirrored those being promoted through the ILP and proved to be a powerful tool for use by participants within their own institutions.

This experienced and knowledgeable group identified these values as critical in establishing and sustaining institutional leadership for Indigenous outcomes and for organisational change. They include:

- *openness*, through a demonstrated belief that Indigenous education is everybody's business, not just Indigenous student services,
- *enduring leadership*, through a long-term commitment to an Indigenous employment strategy,
- *transformation*, by extending the learning of the individual into their respective communities,
- *cultural integrity*, through approaches to learning and teaching imbued with Indigenous traditions,
- *empowerment*, including and involving the students' families, as well as the students themselves,
- *partnerships*, bringing communities into the university,
- *inclusion*, providing higher education in communities.

(ILP Working Group, December, 2007)

The action planning process (as outlined in the special journal, Ngoonjook, 2010) was also a useful strategy for coordinating the activities of the diverse group of people within different institutions undertaking different action plans. The action planning approach draws on standard action planning cycles familiar in action research. Project participants were asked to plan activities using a uniform format which was designed to support them in thinking through of their local actions to foster change within their institutions. This action plan proved beneficial in helping the participants achieve their goals.

It was recognised early in the study that Indigenous faculty must *straddle two worlds* and, therefore, carry the responsibility of both worlds - their Indigenous world and the world of the academy. As a result, their roles were often more complex and hectic than their non-Indigenous counterparts. The Indigenous community expectations that First Nations/ Indigenous academics have because of their expertise and professional experience often are numerous, and these responsibilities, cultural or otherwise, must be balanced against and, in many cases, may need to supersede faculty commitments. For this reason, it is often difficult for Indigenous faculty to seriously consider and act on change initiatives, or even to engage in battle for a just cause.

In being part of the collaborative ILP research project, I have benefited in many ways. First, I have learned what other institutions have done to encourage and support Indigenous students and faculty, and I also learned about the transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous higher education that have made a positive difference for Indigenous students and faculty. In addition, I have learned that systematic change initiatives require collaborative partnerships based on relationships that are respectful and authentic; and, that change at a deep level requires time, commitment and leadership that is transformational and 'enduring'. Leadership that is enduring requires a person to be persistent, prepared for challenges and committed to the 'long haul'.

The ILP project also had me considering the institutional change from a "decolonized" and "indigenized" perspective - a much deeper and perhaps more contentious investigation of change and transformation. The Institutional Leadership Paradigm action research project was a movement towards what Taiaiake Alfred (2004, p. 92) describes as Indigenising the *contentious ground* of the academy. The relational and intellectual support (i.e. ideas, practices, programs, encouragement) that the ILP project team and participants gained from each other throughout the three years provided the solidarity and strength to pursue and initiate institutional change based on the idea that *the academy is worth Indigenising* from its inception (e.g. BIITE), from the inside out (e.g. ACU), or from the borderlands (e.g. University of Victoria) and that change on these levels is beneficial for all of humanity.

A number of concluding themes emerged from the analysis of institutional change processes and activities. For example, there remains a continuing need for change in universities to enable Indigenous staff and students to thrive. What is currently happening in universities is not consistent with Indigenous values. When Indigenous academics and students step into some of these organisations they have an intuitive feeling that something is not right and needs to change. More often than not, rather than endure and embrace the culture of the institution, a lot of Indigenous people, staff, and students, tend to opt out and this should not be allowed to continue. Strategic support for both Indigenous students and faculty members is required. Barriers to their engagement need to be identified and they need to be addressed. Indigenous peoples are very community oriented. They call for conditions where their involvement and support can occur within university structures at all levels. Indigenous people expect to engage in education within a culturally safe working place that gives them the opportunity to share their knowledge. When this does not happen, it is the institution that misses out on the valuable cultural knowledge and practices that could strengthen it. In the long run, a critical mass of Indigenous people within the institution may be needed to create sustainable and deep seated



change - change that not only supports Indigenous students and faculty, but that strengthens the overall fabric of the institution.

## Conclusion

Being a warrior of the truth is not, however, about mediating between worldviews as much as challenging the dominant colonial discourse. It is about raising awareness of Indigenous histories and place-based existences as part of a continuing struggle against shape-shifting colonial powers (Corntasassel, 2013, n.p.).

Because of the intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual challenges that can be experienced in the complex and \_cultivating process of Indigenizing the academy, and because it may entail “discomforting moments of Indigenous truth-telling that challenge the colonial status quo” (Corntasassel. n.p.) a warrior mentality and “warrior scholarship” (Alfred, 2004) is essential. The primary goal for people who engage in Indigenizing the academy is change - sustainable change that leads to stronger, healthier individuals, to inclusive communities, to the public acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples (their histories, philosophies, traditions, and practices), and ultimately to a respectful invitation to participate in their rightful place at every table.

This article has provided information on First Nations, Metis, and Inuit student and faculty experience in the post-secondary context - the academy. As was described, Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments and communities are insisting that change occur within our learning institutions because of the on-going dismal (albeit slowly improving) Aboriginal post-secondary student achievement statistics and overall negative experiences that contribute to Indigenous people opting out of the academy~ As was argued throughout this paper, Indigenizing the academy, which includes embedding decolonizing practices throughout the organization, is a responsive and hopeful response to this challenge. Increasingly, educators within the academy can draw from exemplary teaching and learning strategies, course, curriculum, program development, and from literature and research that supports this change process. Overall, this transformational, monumental but momentous, metamorphic shift cannot be done by individuals working alone, but by ‘like-minded’ people, people driven by a cause, who may need to think (intently focused on a vision,) and act as courageous warriors (strong, confident, disciplined) , and as mavericks (risk-taker, innovator, bold).

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**Indigenizing the Academy (Anderson and Hanrahan, 2013) A hard copy 40th anniversary special edition of The Morning Watch**

**Chapter 6: Indigenous Languages and the Academy**

Sarah Townley (Labrador School Board) and Marguerite Mackenzie (Memorial University of Newfoundland) with Elizabeth Yeoman (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

**Abstract:** Language is almost universally considered to be very important, because it is a key aspect of culture and identity, because of the knowledge it transmits, and because it enables communication between generations and across communities. In this article, Elizabeth Yeoman interviews two specialists in indigenous language education about their experiences and stories of language, and education and cultural challenges throughout their lives.

. . . even if our mother tongue was forbidden ("on pain of getting strapped on your bare buttocks'.) by the Church and the Government that ran such places right across the country ("to assimilate the Indians into our culture"), we still could speak it, if undercover of night and darkness and rope thick intrigue (like French spies in a Hitler movie). That is to say, we had formed, without our knowing it, a kind of "resistance movement" of the Cree language. And it worked; the language survived.  
(Tomson Highway, 2010: 50)

Tomson Highway's playful yet searing description of his experience in residential school highlights the importance of language to cultural survival. His account is one version but each community is different and the three indigenous languages of this province, Mi'kmaq, Inuktitut and Innu-aimun, represent three very distinct situations and histories. Yet there are commonalities. Language is almost universally considered to be very important, because it is a key aspect of culture and identity, because of the knowledge it transmits, and because it enables communication between generations and across communities. As Alfred Metallic, who defended his PhD thesis in Mi'kmaq at York University, put it, "Our language, its how we maintain our relations and how we understand where we come from. It gives you access to your place in the world" (York University Alumni News, 2010). Conversely, in some indigenous communities language loss has been found to be a strong predictor of a high suicide rate (Hallett, Chandler & Lalonde, 2007). Thomas Homer-Dixon argues that maintaining indigenous languages is important in another way as well. In response to a World watch study that found that half of the worlds languages are likely to disappear in the near future, with indigenous languages being especially vulnerable, Homer-Dixon argued that such a loss would

start to compromise the health of human society more generally. The reason is straightforward: complex systems - systems with lots of internal diversity - tend to be more resilient than simple ones. They tend to be better at absorbing and coping with unexpected surprises and external shocks, because their

diversity represents a reservoir of information, adaptive strategies, and alternative behaviors that's available if dominant strategies and behaviors suddenly don't work for some reason (2010, unpaginated).

In the interviews that follow, two specialists in indigenous language education. Sarah Townley and Marguerite MacKenzie, share some of their extensive knowledge of how to maintain and strengthen Indigenous languages and their thoughts on Indigenizing the academy. Both interviews were conducted in the spring of 2013 and represent the situation at that time. Sarah Townley, a former student in Memorials Teacher Education Program in Labrador (TEPL) program (an earlier Native and northern teacher education program) who also holds a masters degree in Education, is currently Inuktitut Program Specialist with the Labrador School Board. Marguerite Mackenzie, Professor in the Department of Linguistics at Memorial, has played a vital role in curriculum development for Innu-aimun as well as leading projects to develop a pan-Innu dictionary and glossaries of workplace terminology. I had hoped to have a chance to speak also to Doug Wharram, who has worked for many years at Memorial on Inuktitut language programs, and to others working in the school system, but busy schedules, my own and theirs, did not allow for it in the timeframe of this special issue.

There are some surprises in the interviews. For example, Sarah Townley tells us that, contrary to popular belief, there are still a few young people in Labrador who speak Inuktitut. She also describes a residential school experience that contrasts with the one described by Tomson Highway and prevalent across Canada: at the school in North West River, Sarah feels that they were not discouraged from speaking Inuktitut and possibly were even encouraged to do so, and yet they rarely did. She reveals why this was so, and goes on to present an optimistic yet pragmatic picture of Inuktitut education in Labrador today. Marguerite MacKenzie shares thought-provoking findings about language teaming and reading, the role of the school in language maintenance (“much less than people seem to think it should be”), and critical insights into the use of the Internet and distance education for teaching in northern indigenous contexts. Both interviewees express serious concerns about the education and retention of teachers able to teach in indigenous languages and the challenges that face those who do follow this route, and both emphasize that family and community support for indigenous languages are essential if the languages are to survive. They also suggest ways the university can contribute to retaining and strengthening indigenous languages and cultures.

The interviews raise other issues and topics as well: how to educate and support non-indigenous teachers teaching in indigenous communities; the key role of elders in passing on language and culture; the importance of various resources from dictionaries to digital archives to software such as Rosetta Stone and Storyboard and equipment including Smartboards and I-pads; the value of a consistent spelling system; the “language nest” approach to language revitalization, successful in New Zealand Maori contexts and now used in Hopedale, Labrador; language immersion, enriched bilingual programs and more. The interviewees also discuss the serendipitous experiences that led them to their current work and, of course, their thoughts on how to “indigenize the academy”.

## **The setting and context for Labrador Inuktitut**

Elizabeth Yeoman (Education, MUN) interviews Sarah Townley (Inuktitut Program Specialist, Labrador School Board) about her work in Inuktitut curriculum development and teacher education:

EY: Could you tell me a bit about your current work?

ST: I work with the Labrador School Board and I'm the Inuk coordinator - Program Staff for the Inuktitut language programs and I also have the Life Skills portfolio. In that program our instructors teach younger students about cultural things. We make different things such as amautet. That's a woman's coat that you can put a baby in the back of and carry the baby around that way in the past, we have also worked with seal skins and grasswork, just to name a few examples.

With the Inuktitut teachers, we have Inuktitut immersion in Nain, where they speak only Inuktitut all day from Kindergarten to Grade 2, and we also have Core Inuktitut where the students are taught about an hour every day. Also in the high school we have credit courses: Inuktitut 1120, 2120, 3120. They have to complete them in order to get their credits in Inuktitut.

EY: Do all students do core Inuktitut?

ST: Yes, all of them do, in the North Coast schools. The secondary level credit courses are being revamped. I'm working with Craig White on it right now. We're revamping Inuktitut 1120, 2120 and 3120.

EY: So you're coordinator of the Inuktitut language program and cultural life skills program? Could you tell me a bit about your office and the kind of work that is done there?

ST: I have two curriculum workers, Nancy Ikkusek in Nain, and Sophie Tuglavina in Makkovik. They help me put together Inuktitut materials that will be used in the schools. Sophie works in the high school area and Nancy does the lower grades. They get the manuals or lesson plans ready for the Inuktitut teachers to use.

For Life Skills we have a binder that I put together a few years back. It has patterns for how to make different things such as a vest, basket weaving, snowshoe making - instructions on how to make the wooden snow shoes, right from scratch. Here in the office what we do is gather up all the material, supplies and research who would be the best person to teach and find instructors who know how to make these things. Then we make all the travel arrangements from here if they have to travel to Rigolet, Makkovik, Hopedale, Nain, Postville. All five communities have core Inuktitut and Life Skills.

Another thing we do is if the teachers run out of school books, we mass produce more and send them out to them.

EY: What about other parts of Labrador, do they do Inuktitut and Life Skills?

ST: I don't usually deal with the schools in Lab City or Goose Bay but there are people who are wanting Inuktitut classes here at Queen of Peace and Peacock smaller schools. At Queen of



Peace middle school, they have exploratory Inuktitut. Students sign up if they want to take Inuktitut classes. It is usually two and a half hours a week for one month. I believe that every three months or so they run the exploratory program.

EY: So it's a bit of an introduction?

ST: Yes.

EY: How is the immersion program going?

ST: There are some teachers retiring soon so we're going to have to start looking for more Inuktitut teachers and new teachers are going to be hard to come by because we don't have a TEPL program like we did before. As far as I know that's being revamped too but I haven't heard anything for five or six years. So we don't have any Inuktitut teachers coming up unless we get them off the street. I don't know what's going to happen there.

EY: That leads to another question I wanted to ask you. What has MUN done in the past to support Inuit education and what could we do?

ST: We used to have Native and Northern Teacher Education through MUN and that program was working really well. I went through that route. I think it would be beneficial for the people who want to teach Inuktitut to go through a program like I did. As far as I know that's no longer in place. I don't know why it was cut out but it would benefit a lot of students. I know of two students who are in their last year of high school and would like to teach Inuktitut but if that program is not there what are they going to do? I don't know why it was cut out but I think it would benefit a lot of students.

EY: So you hope that something like the TEPL program will come back?

ST: Yes, and you've got to start working on it right now for MUN to get those students who are interested in teaching Inuktitut - and they do really want to - and they are in level three, last year of high school right now.

EY: Sarah, I think I can tell you that we're about to hire for two positions relating to Aboriginal Education in Labrador. One is a research position to do research with the communities to find out what they want. I believe they're going to start with Nunatsiavut so I think I can say that soon there will be something that hopefully will meet the needs you're talking about.

ST: That would be excellent because there are people who want to teach Inuktitut. They came to the Inuktitut speak off and they are able to speak Inuktitut. I think this would really support them in their wish to become Inuktitut teachers.

EY: Are these young high school students?

ST: Yes, they are, that I know of, at least two: one in Nain and one in Hopedale

EY: That's wonderful. I thought that there weren't many young people who could speak Inuktitut in Labrador?

ST: They have done really well and are continuing to do so. They might not speak it every day but I think they do speak it at home because that's where they get the support.

EY: Can you talk a little bit about the state of Inuktitut in Labrador? Who speaks it? Do a lot of young people speak it?

ST: That depends on the community. In Nain and Hopedale they speak it more. In Hopedale they have the daycare centre called Inguaggualuit, the babies are learning to speak Inuktitut there. In Nain, you can hear people talking around town. It's not very much and they're starting to add English constructions, "s"'s and "-ing"'s but you can still understand what they're saying even though they're combining Inuktitut and English. When I travel on the coast, I usually hear a lot more in Main and Hopedale than in the other communities.

EY: Are you suggesting that the daycare plays an important role in Hopedale?

ST: Oh yes, and also in Main, I know the daycare plays a big part there. When you do cultural activities, have a feast, you can still hear people speaking Inuktitut. It's more the elders in the community, more than young people.

EY: But there are these two young people who want to teach it and who speak well enough to do that?

ST: Oh, yes.

EY: May I ask you how you got into this work?

ST: Back in 1984, the late Dr. Beatrice Wans approached me when I was working as an interpreter/translator in the hospital in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the old Melville Hospital. She said she needed a curriculum worker, so after an interview process I was hired on. That was back in January 1984. I've been working in Inuktitut education ever since then. She encouraged me to start taking TEPL courses which was then the Native and Northern so I started taking courses whenever I had the chance to. She must have been leading me to where I am today. I guess you knew her?

EY: Yes. She was a wonderful person.

ST: Yes, she was. She led the way. She opened the door for me and I guess I must have continued on what she wanted me to do.

EY: Could you say something about the value of Inuktitut in Labrador?

ST: For me, really if I didn't have the Inuktitut language, who am I? Where would I be? With

my grandson - I have a new grandson. Whenever I see him, I speak to him in Inuktitut. I didn't do that with my three boys because of the stigma back then. The stigma isn't there anymore so I'm trying to pass it on to my grandson now. When I travel to places like Iqaluit where the Inuktitut is strong, that's when it comes right back to you again. We're able to converse with people from Nunavik and Nunavut. There might be a bit of a dialectal thing but you can still understand what they're saying and if you don't, all you've got to do is ask. You don't have that stigma, that being ashamed of it anymore. For me, it is who I am.

EY: How did that change? What made the stigma go away?

ST: We used to live in Hebron before it closed down and we were relocated to Makkovik or other communities south of Nain. Our family first moved to Hopedale because our houses weren't ready in Makkovik. We had a little settlement in that area and that's where Inuktitut was the strongest, what they called Hebron End, so that's how I got to keep my Inuktitut. Also, when I went to the Northwest River school there was no phone so the only way to keep in touch with my mother was through letter writing. That's how I kept a lot of my Inuktitut. Even though others lost theirs, I just felt I had to in order to communicate, in order to talk to the elders, to keep my language. It's always been there for me. It's never going to go away from me. That's what I did anyway. I guess you know what I'm trying to say, right? As far as I know too with this stigma thing - as the younger people grew, they wanted to learn Inuktitut and the Inuit realized that Inuktitut was dying out fast because it was not used as much as before so some committees were formed to start using the Inuktitut language again.

EY: About the school in Northwest River: what was the attitude towards the use of Inuktitut?

ST: We couldn't speak it. It wasn't discouraged or anything but we just never spoke Inuktitut. I have no idea why we didn't. Maybe when we were in groups we might have, just coming back from the dorm or things like that. I think it was encouraged, but we weren't really sure. But there were people in the community who didn't really like people from the coast in Northwest River so I think we kind of kept it away. But I worked in the hospital and used to talk to Inuit who were in the hospital. They didn't have a translator back then so I used to go see them, see how they were making out, if they needed anything - if I had anything I would give it to them. That is how I mostly kept my Inuktitut. They also had an orphanage in Northwest River and I used to go see kids there to see how they were making out. I'm sure they missed their parents so every now and then I'd go see them too.

EY: Do you think a lot of people feel the way you do about the importance of Inuktitut in Labrador?

ST: Yes, they're all starting to feel that way now I believe. You can see that more and more. It's mostly because they know that Inuktitut is not very strong the way it was before. We need to keep our language and traditions alive. It's starting to come back a little bit. If their grandparents are able to speak it, I'm sure they'll get that support and learn Inuktitut that way.

Also we now have the Rosetta Stone program that they can use to learn the language at

home and that's something a lot of people do now too, if they have access to a computer. All they need is the little CD and they can learn the language that way.

EY: Do they use that in the schools?

ST: Oh yes, whoever wants it has access to it. The cost for that CD is \$50 for members but we do have it at the school for anyone who wants to learn Inuktitut.

EY: What other resources are there for supporting people who want to learn Inuktitut?

ST: The technology is playing a big part now, so programs like Photostory can be used as a resource. You can record stories in Inuktitut on Microsoft Word as well, as long as you have a good headphone and speakers, because there's a place where you can record your voice, your student's voices as well. Our Inuktitut teachers were in-serviced on how to use Photostory and they can take photos of their students or community workers, or whatever they want so that the students can learn to speak that way. The students really enjoy this too because it is interactive. Technology is becoming more widespread in the schools. We're using that with the Smartboard. Smartboard is the best way to go because all the students can see and learn at the same time. You can record your voice or the student's voices in Inuktitut and make up little stories that way. Photostory is really good that way and the students love it. They absolutely love that program. That's if they don't have computer problems. If there aren't problems with that, they love to use it.

EY: That sounds very exciting. That's wonderful progress since I interviewed Sophie Tuglavina in the late 90s. All this technology really has come in since then. It's wonderful!

ST: Also, we'll be doing training on the I-pad. We'll be getting that in the schools. Hopefully they'll be there in September. So I want to do some training with our Inuktitut teachers so they can continue teaching Inuktitut through technology. The hardest part is learning the sounds but once you've got that everything opens up for you. It's been really good that way.

EY: Can you think of things we should be doing at MUN to support Inuktitut language in Labrador?

ST: Maybe having a person who can speak Inuktitut, to give students a tour, a person who could greet students coming from Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik Postville and Rigolet - their first time away from home, having someone there that they know to talk to. My son is there for example. They could contact him. It would be good if they had a list of others who are there, who are willing to be called, so they can support each other to stay in school. Sometimes they don't know who else is there. That kind of support would go a long long way. You'd know you're not there by yourself.

EY: It must be really lonely sometimes for people who come from the coast.

ST: When I was there with my children I didn't know there were other people there from

Labrador. That would have been a huge support. If you had a list of names of people, that could go a long way. And a room, a place where you can study, and that's also a support place.

EY: Why does Inuktitut matter? Why should people keep speaking it? And why should the university support it?

ST: Because if Inuktitut is not supported in Newfoundland and Labrador what would we be left with? If we don't have that support, that connection, it would be like a broken straw. disconnected. Losing the language would be like a disconnect for the person, spiritually, mentally, physically, the whole person, head and body. If I didn't have that, I wouldn't know what to do. No wonder people feel lost sometimes, get into crime. Some people are doing drugs because they don't have that support, because they don't have that connection. To be well rounded you have to have that Inuktitut language and be able to pass that down to others who want to learn. If I hadn't had the support from MUN through a study area and a place to meet, way back when, I don't think I could have completed my studies. I have completed my Masters and through Distance Ed I have my seventh grade [highest level of teaching certification], which was a huge support for me. If this researcher and teacher do come that would really help to enhance and support it. If you don't have Inuktitut, what have you got? You're like an empty shell.

EY: Is there anything else you want to add before we finish?

ST: It would be good for people to know about work that was done before, that is available through MUN. For example, Labrador Inuit Through Moravian Eyes. The choirs singing, the brass bands. That is there for students who need it.

EY: It's archival material?

ST: Yes. A lot of people don't know about the brass bands anymore, or the choirs. If they could also see the names of the people in the bands and choirs, they could see that they are their relatives. If they saw that they might say "oh, that's my grandmother's brother!" or "That's my cousin!" A lot of people don't know their family history anymore. I think that would really perk people up.

I listen to those videos and recordings all the time. I go into Labrador Inuit Through Moravian Eyes, on the MUN website [Note: The website is <http://collections.mun.ca/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=%2Fmoravian>]. Dr. Hans Rollman in Religious Studies put them up and we can get access and listen to those recordings. That's a really good resource. Whenever you're feeling down it can really cheer you up.

### **The setting and context for Inna-aimun in Labrador**

Elizabeth Yeoman (Education) interviews Marguerite MacKenzie (Linguistics) about her work in language education with the Labrador Innu:

EY: Could you tell me a bit about your current work in language education for Innu-

aimun?

MM: Well, since 2005 we've been funded through SSHRC research grants to create reference materials for Innu language education. The main product is the pan-Innu dictionary which has just been finished. There are English and French versions which document over 27,000 Innu words for several dialects in a common spelling system. We have also been working with staff of *Mamu Tshishkutamashutau*, the Innu school board, to make books and classroom materials for the two Labrador communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. where quite different dialects are spoken. In addition, we have been working with organizations to publish glossaries of workplace terminology: family law, criminal law, environmental impact studies and education. We are currently completing one for health.

Although I have been giving courses and workshops in the structure of Innu-aimun and the common spelling system over the years, it has been to a continually changing group of mainly classroom assistants and has not yet successfully been implemented into the school system. We are hoping that the dictionary will assist people with the task of spelling in a consistent way, so that children will learn to read in their language more easily.

Because all but one or two of the Innu people working do not have a Bachelor of Education, we have been using a small team who can address both improving the literacy in the language and classroom delivery skills. There has been no teacher education program for Innu people for many, many years, so it has been problematic to train people to use the materials we create. This past year another linguist and I, along with an experienced primary teacher, were in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu doing in-service for the Innu staff in the absence of funding on the part of the Innu school board to do teacher training, we're trying to fill in the gaps by holding workshops after school.

The whole issue of trying to implement a common orthographic system is difficult, as people have a tradition of spelling according to the pronunciation of words, and, as the Innu language has many dialects, there is little consistent spelling without training. People who speak one dialect will not necessarily be able to read what someone from another dialect has written, so providing people with things to read that are spelled consistently is important.

EY: You mentioned teaching courses. Are those courses here at MUN?

MM: I taught courses that were part of the old TEPL Program at MUN in Labrador in the 1990s. More recently, whenever there have been Innu students on campus, I've given them, usually on a pro-bone basis, courses on the grammatical structure of the language. For languages like Innu with long words and a complicated morphological structure, it's very efficient and useful to teach people to recognize the parts of the words that have meanings, and to spell those parts the same way every time.

EY: Are you working with the Innu in Quebec as well?

MM: The Innu in Quebec who work at the Institut Tshakapesh are partners on all of my projects and we also work with a linguistic team at Carleton University. The Carleton team has put the dictionary on the web, and is currently creating on-line lessons for vocabulary and spelling. It's basically like producing a movie - people with many different skills contributed.



Jose Mailhot and I were the editors, Marie-Odile Junker at Carleton advised on the database and web versions, an editorial committee of linguists and bilingual Innu made decisions on spelling and definitions, elders were consulted to clarify meanings and pronunciation. We had people working on place names and identification of fauna a graduate student wrote an MA thesis on grammatical categories while others looked after choosing key words for the English-Innu and French-Innu versions and students did proofreading of the English.

EY: And it's already online?

MM: Yes, it's online at [www.innu-aimun.ca/dictionary](http://www.innu-aimun.ca/dictionary). Because of the slow internet speed in Labrador, people there don't actually deal with it very much, but the people in Quebec are looking at it quite a lot and sending us comments and corrections.

The people at Carleton and I have already worked on the East Cree dictionary in Quebec, so there is already a template and a protocol for putting things online, which was then used for putting the Innu dictionary online. We recycle a lot of our work with the Cree in our work with the Innu. As the Quebec Innu create online lessons for spelling and grammar recognition in French and Innu, we add in the English, the dialect variants and the Labrador sound files. Producing trilingual materials requires a lot of coordination, but in the long run is the best use of resources.

I think we have a model that works very well for language groups where people still speak their language. I have another project doing assessment of Innu vocabulary in school age children, with Lori Morris, a linguist from the University of Quebec at Montreal. She has taken the model to Ojibway speaking groups in Ontario, and we're extending it to the Naskapi in Quebec. Once we establish a model that works, we offer it to other language groups to see if they'd like to use it, and then revise it for the new language, change the spelling and particular lexical items, but the basic structure is often the same.

EY: So how do you assess the speaking proficiency of young people?

MM: Rather than assessing overall speaking proficiency, we're documenting recognition of nouns and verbs, modeled on the Peabody for English. Children are shown pictures and name or point to the item, if they recognize it and know the word. Our preliminary results show that there appears to be loss of vocabulary among young people. Grandparents tell us that young parents are speaking to their children in English rather than in Inna. This is a very common thing which has been going on for decades in communities where people see that the majority language, be it English or French, is the language which will allow a person to get a job. Parents are under the impression that speaking to children in the majority language will give them a head start in school. They assume, unfortunately incorrectly, that the children will just keep on acquiring their Aboriginal language. There are all kinds of problems with this approach. If the parents are not native speakers of the majority language, they may be passing on a version of English or French that is not fully developed, while at the same time the children are not being fully exposed to their own language from the primary caregivers.

EY: What do you think is the role of the school in language loss or maintenance?

MM: Well, it is much less than people seem to think it should be. The schools, until very recently, were primarily dealing with children who came in speaking Inna. This is changing rapidly, so that a number of the children coming into kindergarten do not speak enough to understand the Innu teacher. So, the rules of the game as far as school goes are changing. The schools now have to assess what the language strengths and weaknesses of children actually are. The Innu school board has received funding under the First Nations School Success Program and now has literacy coordinators who assess the children's English, which we can put together with the assessments of the Innu in order to create a comprehensive profile of the language abilities of Innu children in the primary grades. One might think that a child who is strong in English would be weak in Innu, or vice versa, but that is not necessarily the case. For instance, with the assessments carried out in the Quebec Innu community of Betsiamites, Lori Morris found that in general children who were strong in one language were strong in the other language.

EY: There are a lot of studies of bilingualism in other contexts that have similar findings.

MM: Yes, right. In Betsiamites, where we have been able to assess many more children, Lori presented the findings, and the school actually immediately took on responsibility for communicating to caregivers the best ways of interacting with young children to encourage language development. There is a fear, not just in Aboriginal communities, but everywhere, that children are not being spoken to face to face, because of increased time in front of a screen, and we know from language acquisition specialists that it is necessary to actually interact with a child, to speak to the child in person, for the best language development to take place. I heard a program on the CBC talking about this situation within the general population. There isn't anything inherently wrong with playing video games and watching TV, except that it reduces the amount of time for human interaction, since the best way for children to learn is by talking to real people, and being talked to by real people.

EY: And for the Innu that means being talked to by real people in their own language.

MM: Yes. But I think in general people are largely unaware of what it takes for language to be developed in children of any culture, since in a monolingual society we assume that it's just going to happen. Lack of vocabulary relates to potential problems in reading. We observed a situation in Quebec where children were being successfully taught to read their language using the Naskapi syllabic script. They were fairly fluent readers by grade three, and could decode well but, as it turned out, they often did not know what the word meant after they pronounced it. So, teachers can teach decoding skills, and that sort of thing, but if you don't have the word in your vocabulary you still don't get the meaning. The home environment has a really big part to play, particularly with preschool children, in developing vocabulary.

Lori Morris has set up another project with Kindergarten students in Betsiamites, sending books home and asking the parents to read to the children fifteen minutes every night, in French, or Inna, or even just fuming the pages and making up a story. She tested the children at the beginning and the end of the year and found that some had moved out of the at-risk category. Although it is difficult to separate out the effects of giving children extra reading practice from other factors, it is very encouraging, and has led to setting up a well patronized

reading centre in the community.

It's very tricky, but I think that probably in a year or two we'll have enough information available to show people in the communities that the children really do need more words. They need be able to describe the world, and to be able to understand what they read.

EY: And if I understood you correctly, in that particular study they were told that they could read to the children in any language or just tell them stories, so the focus wasn't on supporting the Indigenous language, it was just on language development and literacy in general?

MM: Yes, and this is because there is a dilemma emerging. We can no longer assume every child coming to school speaks an Aboriginal language at an appropriate level for their age, but they have to move into learning to read by grade three because we are told that if they don't learn to read by grade two or three, then their future academic success is at risk.

EY: Well, they just fall further and further behind: it has a compound effect.

MM: So then, the question is 'what can be done for these children'? Do we put all the resources into having them learn in their own language or just teach reading, no matter what the language? In Quebec they are producing Innu language materials, but have gone for a fifty/fifty bilingual approach, so that the children are going forward in French at the same time that they are receiving instruction in Innu. In Labrador, the number of trained Innu people in the school is so small that it is difficult to offer even Kindergarten in the language. However, the classroom assistants, who can interpret what the English classroom teacher is saying, have an important role in ensuring that the students understand what is expected of them.

EY: Tile program in Quebec is a kind of enriched bilingual program, is that what you're saying?

MM: Yes, that's it. An additional pressure in Labrador is that there is rapid turnover of Innu staff in the school because it's easy to get a much better paying job, with less stress, with one of the mining companies. As you well know, being a teacher is stressful, and unless you're well-trained and committed, why wouldn't you take another job that pays more? So, there is a problem with retaining Innu people in the school system as classroom assistants, and they can't advance in the system because of lack of training. In the meantime, what we can do is put together useful tools and materials.

Take the example of Labrador Inuktitut, which has disappeared in most communities. it is unrealistic to think that the language will come back once it has passed the point where children no longer learn to speak it at home. In Miawpukek (Conne River) there is some Mi'kmaq language taught in school, but it may be largely for ceremonial purposes. Under those circumstances, people will not be able in a position to pass on the language to their children at home.

EY: I think there are some exceptions around the world but its rare. And its usually very particular circumstances, like Hebrew in Israel, for example.<sup>12</sup>

MM: Exactly. There the nation state looks after it; and then there is Ireland where Irish Gaelic is taught in the school system, but not that many people continue to speak it after leaving school.

EY: Could you comment on the role of the university in indigenous education?

MM: I can only talk about the Innu because I think that the Inuit in Labrador are taking advantage of Memorial to get their Bachelor of Education and go back as teachers. I worry about non-Aboriginal teachers in Innu schools not having had any training in teaching children who are monolingual or with minimal second language abilities. In northern schools there are children of all levels of ability in every grade, so that every classroom is multilevel. This is less of an issue in the primary and perhaps even the elementary grades, but in the high school grades there are always students in the class who cannot read. Teachers trained for high school don't necessarily team to teach beginning reading, but that's something they have to cope with. I don't know whether the Bachelor of Education programs contain enough hands-on practice in how to teach reading at any age level and in English as a second language contexts.

EY: I think the answer to that question is that it depends on which program and which specialization the students are in, but maybe it should be across the board.

MM: I am disappointed that the MUNNTEP (Memorial University of Newfoundland Native Teacher Education Program) program disappeared. This was a parallel program for non-Aboriginal students who were planning to teach in Aboriginal schools, introduced when the TEPL program was set up back in the 80s. I still think that would be a useful thing for teachers who are going to go teach in the north.

EY: That is actually something that we are working on now. I don't know if it will be a whole program, but certainly we will address that. There are a number of people in the faculty who see that as a very important piece.

MM: Well, I agree because I spend my time in the two Innu schools in Labrador and I see how a certain number of the new teachers - and there are always new teachers in those schools, any school in the north, because that's where recent graduates can get a job - are in shock because they haven't been prepared for what the students and the schools are like. They need really, really good classroom management skills, to cope with a range of behaviours. They are not always prepared for the situation that different students are absent every day, so a teacher cannot actually count on building on what was taught the previous day. There are a lot of realities that I think the teachers could be made aware of and then given strategies to deal with, with respect to working in northern communities. Perhaps it does not have to be through courses, but through something like the institutes they've set up for French language teachers, something shorter and more focused.

Until teacher training can be funded for the Innu, there are problems that cannot be addressed by the academy, but only by the school board and school personnel. It would, of course, be useful to build relationships with people in the Faculty of Education. Recently, workshops given to Innu staff by a consulting teacher from outside the province, who has lived in northern communities and is very, very experienced in working with Aboriginal teachers,

have been successful.

EY: Another thing I wanted to ask you about is how you got into this work and what drew you to it in the first place?

MM: I began as a Masters student in Linguistics. I wanted to do fieldwork, and couldn't afford to go to Africa or India. I met anthropologists at McGill who were working with the Cree in James Bay who said, "We really need a linguist." I was able to get funding to go north and work in one of the communities, and once you get to know people, you just want to go back. People are so nice, and it's just an interesting world to work in. So I just kept on working with Cree language speakers through my PhD. There can be a lot of serendipity in how an academic career works out - you don't necessarily plan everything that happens. As I was doing my PhD, the Quebec Office of Indian Affairs opened up a teacher training program for Aboriginal languages, and hired linguists for a six-week summer session. Speakers from every Aboriginal language group in Quebec came together at an old missile base that had been turned into an Aboriginal CEGEP, Manitou College, where we taught courses for a number of years. The rest of the year the linguists traveled to the communities to deliver more courses, since we were working there in the schools. The linguists and those teaching educational methodology or psychology usually did a six-week rotation, offering additional courses, courses in a compressed format. That has remained the model for on-site delivery: a 50-hour course delivered over two 4-5 day weekends scheduled several weeks apart. Up until five years ago I was still teaching courses in literacy and grammatical structure in Cree communities.

EY: What do you think about that model for now, or maybe a model like that combined with Distance Education online?

MM: I much prefer face-to-face work, but it depends on the subject. What I was teaching worked well in a compressed format, all set up as short tasks on computer, but other courses which require a great deal of reading and reflection need more time in between meetings with the instructor. Online delivery can be problematic in Labrador because the Internet is so slow, particularly on the north coast. Distance courses are also a problem for students who are not super committed, who need the structure of a class and an in-person instructor. Even people who are very committed to finishing their degree have gone back to Labrador and somehow never quite get around to completing the last few courses. People talk about online and distance as the way to go. but frankly its not as easy as that. Students without a lot of experience in university-level courses are not necessarily going to be as successful, unless community supports are put in place, as has been done for northern Ontario.

EY: So you've talked about a couple of barriers here in terms of Indigenizing the academy: the combination of people without that kind of history of success and the bandwidth problems. I've covered most of what I wanted to talk about but another question you might have more to say about is: Why do Indigenous languages matter? And why should we care about them? From me personally that's a devil's advocate kind of question, but I think it would be good to talk about.

MM: Well, language is part of a person's personality, and an important part of one's culture. Speaking an Aboriginal language contributes to a person's wellbeing, it's part of themselves, and as Aboriginal languages decline - there are statistics but I can't find a reference - suicide rates increase<sup>13</sup>. As minority languages disappear, access to important parts of the culture disappears. Aboriginal languages encapsulate and encode a huge amount of information about traditional life, the land, the animals, about ways of doing things and ways of seeing the world. With the decline and loss of any language, all of that tends to be eroded and eventually disappear. Then the only way that people have of thinking about and speaking about the world is through a majority language, which provides a very different lens on the world than does an Aboriginal language.

I don't know if I've said much about Indigenizing the academy. There is an issue with teaching Aboriginal language in this academy in that very few people can do it, and we are retiring. John Hewson, who works on Mi'kmaq, has retired and Doug Wharram, who teaches the Inuktitut course, does not have a tenure-track position. It is up to the academy to somehow secure the positions to teach those languages and to implement the process Alanna Johns started many years ago. She trained a number of Inuit as co-teachers for university courses, with the goal of having them hired to offer regular courses. But it proved difficult to retain them as the per-course rate of pay is low and one is tied up for a whole semester.

EY: Even more so for people who are mostly living in Labrador, and would have to move and so on, so it's really not very realistic.

MM: Well, this is it, and also the Aboriginal organizations do not appear to have created positions for people who specialize in language. In other places, they have established interpreter/translator positions, as well as training and positions for people to work on developing materials in the language, but in Labrador I do not believe that has happened in any community.

EY: In terms of Indigenizing the academy, do you think MUN and the Labrador Institute could work with the communities to do some of that?

MM: Certainly the Labrador Institute is very supportive of all these things, but even though it's been excellent for MUN to have me on faculty for all of these years, what happens when I go? Part of the issue is that very few people are being trained in Aboriginal languages through university graduate degrees. It takes a lifetime to set up the kind of relationships where you are accepted and trusted to work in communities. We have not yet been successful in training many Aboriginal speakers in Labrador, partly because the population numbers are low, and very few people from any population are interested or talented in linguistics; then of course there is the question of whether there will be a job for them when they're trained. Innu people in Quebec went through a great one-year program in Innu language and culture at the local CEGEP, but the band councils did not create jobs for them at the end of it, so they just went off to other kinds of jobs. We can see the same thing today in Labrador as people who work in the schools are lured to high-paying jobs with the mining companies. It's problematic and complicated, and we can only do what we can do.



## Conclusion by Elizabeth Yeoman

There are many other important issues relating to the role of language in Indigenizing the academy that are not highlighted here: for example, the study of literary and cinematic works in Indigenous languages and an exploration of how such works might “challenge [non-Indigenous readers] to see with a native eye” (Krupat, 2009: 133); the politics of language and of translation (why, for example, grant applications cannot be submitted to any provincial or national funding body in an indigenous language); the development of university courses and programs taught in Indigenous languages<sup>14</sup>; strategies for recognizing the ability to speak an indigenous language through course credits, scholarships, credentials and salary increments, to find and hire faculty with this linguistic expertise, and to understand the needs of students and faculty whose first language is an Indigenous one; and connections between language, spirituality and ceremony, and language and the land. It could also be useful to investigate how universities in other parts of Canada and around the world are “indigenizing” and what we might learn from them. These and many other issues could be explored in future interviews or other research and writing.

Indigenous language education is a complex and vital aspect of Indigenizing the academy. As we in the Faculty of Education work towards the development of a new community based teacher education program for Labrador, we need to be talking to people in the field. Sarah Townley and Marguerite MacKenzie - along with others - have been in the field for a long time and have a wealth of experience. The two interviews presented here are just the beginning of a conversation we hope to continue as we develop the community based teacher education program, design courses for southern teachers expecting to teach in northern Indigenous schools, and consider ways to support Indigenous teacher education on the island of Newfoundland. There is much to be learned from these two interviews and I look forward to continuing the conversation with the interviewees and with others!

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<sup>12</sup> There is much more to say on this topic. See Sarah Townley’s interview in this issue for her perspective on Inuktitut education in Labrador. The daycare she mentions was inspired by the language nest program in New Zealand. For more information on that see an interesting video and article at <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/livingthelanguage/2012/04/2012416141630195978.html> and an annotated bibliography at [http://www.maorilanguage.info/mao\\_lang\\_abib.html](http://www.maorilanguage.info/mao_lang_abib.html)

<sup>13</sup> See Hallett, D., Chandler, M.J. & Lalonde, C.E. (2007). Aboriginal language knowledge and youth suicide. *Cognitive Development*, 22(3), 392-399. [web.uvic.ca/~lalonde/manuscripts/2007CogDevt.pdf](http://web.uvic.ca/~lalonde/manuscripts/2007CogDevt.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> For example the first PhD thesis in Mi’kmaq was recently defended at York University. It would be useful and exciting to explore this model and possibilities for Memorial. See <http://alumni.news.yorku.ca/2010/11/29/phd-student-defends-thesis-in-migmaw-language-a-york-first/>

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**Indigenizing the Academy (Anderson and Hanrahan, 2013) A hard copy 40th anniversary special edition of The Morning Watch**

**Chapter 7: Leaving Home: The Post-Secondary Transition as Seen by A Labrador Metis Woman**

Amy Hudson (University of Victoria) & Maura Hanrahan (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

**Abstract:** An interview and discussion by Maura Hanrahan exploring the post-secondary education transition experience for Indigenous people focusing on personal experiences of Amy Hudson as a Labrador Metis Woman.

The people of the territorial heart of NunatuKavut - the South Coast of Labrador - have Inuit roots reaching back millennia. Their Inuit ancestors made families with men who came from the British Isles to trap small fur-bearing animals for Fequet's, the Hudson's Bay Company, or other for trading companies. Or they came to fish the rich waters off the Coast, especially around Black Tickle, Batteau and Domino on the Island of Ponds. The social and economic adaptations of these men and the families they would create were Inuit in nature; with its spruce forests and thin soil, Labrador is sub-Arctic tundra and its small population is widely dispersed. The agricultural and market-based adaptations of the British men could not be replicated here; survival dictated that they adopt Inuit ways, which they did.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, visiting missionaries and traders referred to them as "Esquimaux/Eskimos", "Natives", "Breeds", "Half-breeds", "Metis", and "Settlers"<sup>4</sup>. The Moravian missionaries who had established themselves north of Makkovik tried to keep the Metis away from the Northern Inuit whom they were trying to settle into year-round communities; they feared the "wild" (read indigenous) ways of the Metis, who were not under missionary control. As with most Indigenous peoples, the people of NunatuKavut lost their Inuit language; *only pieces of it* survive. But the values that mark Indigenous peoples remain strong, as do many cultural and economic practices<sup>5</sup>; in Black Tickle it is not unusual to have goose meat for dinner, the bird having been shot only that morning.

The Labrador Metis Nation (LMN) was formed in the early 1980s to advocate for the Indigenous rights of the Metis. Now the LMN is NunatuKavut Community Council and its people have adopted the name "Southern Inuit". Located on the Island of Ponds with a population of approximately 140, Black Tickle is the most isolated of the Metis communities. In common with

**Maura Hanrahan:** Here I talk with Amy Hudson, who is from Black Tickle, and is my colleague in the Office of the Special Advisor to the President for Aboriginal Affairs. Amy is a Memorial University graduate in Sociology and Women's Studies and is completing her master's degree at the University of Victoria. She studied at Memorial beginning in 2000 when there were almost no support services for Indigenous students and very little awareness of the cultures and histories of the Indigenous peoples of the province<sup>6</sup>. As discussed in the last section of the special issue, there is now a much-improved suite of support services for Indigenous students. Amy and I frequently talk about the transition she and other Indigenous students - especially

those from remote communities - have made to post-secondary education (PSE). What follows is one of our discussions with a focus on Amy's particular experience as a case study. This article is not an interview but a conversation with my role being to contextualize Amy's experiences as a young university student from a remote Labrador Metis community. Readers will recognize in the following discussion some of the phenomena that Jodie Lane has identified in the preceding article.

MH: First of all, Amy, I know that you are from Black Tickle, Labrador, and that you attended and graduated from St. Peter's School, which is very small, thirteen years ago. There are only 24 students there now from kindergarten to grade 12. I wonder if you could tell me about your school experiences there and your classmates there.

AH: It was a very small school, small class sizes. Everybody knew each other and grew up together from preschool to grade 12. We were all with each other along the way. For the most part it was pretty collegial, there weren't very many of us.

MH: While some First Nations have assumed jurisdiction over education - the Innu of Labrador are in the process of doing this - this is not an option for the Southern Inuit, at least at this stage<sup>7</sup>. So this means that St. Peter's came under the Labrador School Board, as it does currently, and the provincial curriculum was, and is, followed. Meanwhile I know from spending a great deal of time in Black Tickle that Indigenous cultural values remain strong there; there's a deep attachment to the land and a consistent emphasis on the communal rather than the individual, for instance. I wonder if your experience as a student at St. Peter's gel with the community's values and culture?

AH: No. Not at all. I remember learning stuff about Inuit history and culture a bit. To my memory, we were never taught that it had anything to do with us when we were taught this material in school. There was never any connection that I could remember drawn between us, the community, our ancestors, and Aboriginal culture - not inside the school. The most we had was the Labrador flag.

MH: The Labrador flag which acknowledges all the cultures of Labrador in a symbolic way and flags themselves are symbols, of course. So there was little or no reference to the students' Inuit ancestry and what that meant. Was there any sort of a conflict between these Southern Inuit or Inuit-Metis values or culture and school curriculum or content? Were there instances or examples of how the approach in school was at odds with the local Indigenous culture?

AH: In our early years, our school was a Roman Catholic school which was very interesting. It was run mostly by sisters (nuns) as our community is a Catholic community as such, at least nominally. But I didn't necessarily grow up in a very traditional Catholic home. In the beginning, there was always a balance between - I want to say Metis culture and Catholicism, the only thing that would have been identified there is Catholicism because back then we didn't talk about being Metis but it just was what it was. But for the sake of making this clear, I say 'Metis culture' and 'Catholicism' and I remember that being very difficult in school. We would have to stand up in front of the classrooms as late as grade 5 and 6 and have our hands checked for dirt and religious instruction was quite intense. Certain religious sacraments were carried out with the school. It was all very structured and it certainly didn't mesh well with my values as a Metis

person. That was very intimidating and isolating experience for me in school. It's difficult for me to say whether or not other students felt this way with regards to the impact of religion on their lives. Certainly, like in many other Aboriginal communities, Christianity was "introduced" and adopted by many. Religious teachings and values became 'tradition' alongside Aboriginal values and traditions, I think sometimes to the detriment of Aboriginal values. Certainly though, I was not the only student/youth who resisted religious instruction or ideology, or at least aspects of it. Back then though, I should clarify, I don't think I clearly understood that my resistance to Catholicism came largely as a result of my culture, particularly since I did not spend much time reflecting on the fact that my actions, values, or behavior were as they were because of being Metis. I cannot emphasize enough that this was just the normal, natural state of being. It was not until later in life, especially after moving from my community and spending time in urban, non-Aboriginal surroundings that I began to reflect on this and understand that the life I had lived, and the values I held, and continue to hold were that of a Labrador Metis.

We also had a lot of freedom growing up coming from Black Tickle. I remember teachers having trouble getting us to come back to school after lunch, especially on nice days and during the winters when there is a great deal of outdoor activity. Winter brought us so much freedom as kids/youth, and our generation embraced it. So much time spent outside, on the land. I remember sitting in class and students just gazing out the window during instruction. Daydreaming of the bell ringing so we can get outside get to our skidoos and spend the afternoon and evening outside. I actually remember occasions in which the teacher would actually have to close the curtains in the class room to gain our attention. Due to the size of our school, we went home during lunch hour. In the winter we would rush out the door on the lunch hour bell, get home as fast as possible, very quickly grab something to eat, sometimes not at all and get back outside before we had to return to school in the afternoon. Upon our return to school in the afternoon, there were so many days when the principal would have to stand outside on the bridge and flag so many of us down as we were driving back and forth on our skidoos. I remember some students who would drive back and forth intentionally, just for the humor of it. I remember that there were some years that teachers would take it upon themselves and suggest that an afternoon class would be spent outside. We would cover the curriculum, but we would simply sit outside to do this. Reflecting back, I guess what happened is that they realized how important it was for us to be outside and that we were actually more studious when we were outside so they took some classes outside both in the winter and the summer - well spring. We would have our instruction outside. Now this didn't happen a lot but it did occasionally happen.

There was always sort of a bit of division between your home life and school, it didn't really seem to mesh. Certainly, school life in my mind was sometimes over-structured - not sure that is the exact word I am looking for - but I think it depended on who was teaching at the time. Teachers who were more integrated into the community and that sort of had a place maybe in the community were a little bit more understanding and probably a little bit more, I don't want to say lenient, but a bit more knowledgeable I guess of community values. Whereas there were a couple teachers I would come in and literally spend all their time at the teacher's residences<sup>8</sup> and not speak to anyone in the community. They tended not to mesh very well with the students.

MH: Did you have any Metis teachers or Indigenous teachers?

AH: My aunt. But she didn't teach me, she taught my sister. She was very, very well respected

in the community. Also, a teacher that married into the community. she is from Labrador but I don't think that she is Metis but she was well respected as well. I don't recall any others that would have been.

MH: It seems that an ability to work cross-culturally would be important for teachers going to the work in the community and other Indigenous communities along the Labrador Coast. I've talked to teachers in the past couple of years who want to do well when they teach in Labrador but don't feel prepared for their time there. Besides preparing teachers - giving them the opportunity to develop cross cultural skills and tools - there ought to be more Indigenous teachers who serve as role models and have an easier time integrating or working with the students and community. Memorial University's proposed Community-Based Teacher Education Program, which will be delivered in Labrador, initially with the Nunatsiavut Government, is one response to this. Do you have any experience with Indigenous teachers? If so, can you describe their relationship(s) to the community?

AH: My aunt (Audrey) taught in Black Tickle and was well respected, she taught primary and she did a lot for the kids. It wasn't the situation in which you go to school and when school is over it's done and you have no contact with community life or the kids or the families. There was always open contact with her; she had an open door policy. I remember her being so busy and so involved in so many areas of her students lives. I know that because I used to spend a lot of time volunteering with her, helping her. People still talk about her today when I go home to Black Tickle. Talk about what a great teacher she was. Actually, there are a lot of comparisons made between one of the teachers in Black Tickle now who is from Black Tickle – Nicole Roberts - and my aunt. Another teacher who was well respected was just very patient and personable and she fit into the community well, too. She married someone there and she had a good reputation.

MH: We saw in Amarjit Singh's interviews of Bill Edmunds and Bart Jack in this issue of *Morning Watch* that there no high schools on the Labrador Coast in the mid-1970s and some students went to residential schools to complete high school. Not surprisingly, early school leaving rates were very high. The establishment of high schools was a slow process. St. Peter's School in Black Tickle became a high school in the late eighties and the first graduating class of Grade 12 students graduated in 1989. I'm wondering how education played out in Black Tickle prior to this and how people felt about education?

AH: Before St. Peter's itself was set up, my grandfather taught in a one room school in Black Tickle a bit. I am not sure what years that was. Some people did go to residential school in North West River in Central Labrador and some people went to residential school in Cartwright, which is two hours by skidoo. But from what I remember from talking to people, they went to school for as long as they wanted to and then came back. They went for a year and came back- that kind of thing, from what I recall hearing about. Once they were early teens, a lot of people in the community didn't go back to school at all because fishing was so prosperous then that they didn't need to or they couldn't because they needed to help their families with other things, such as fishing, hunting, getting water, and basically maintaining the household).

But education was big in my family. It started with my grandfather. It was always an



expectation that I would go to university so I grew up really not knowing any other options. I didn't actually think about it, it was a norm; in my family, it was something that you did after high school. I came from a family of entrepreneurs who were self employed. In a sense, my family was politicized and that certainly influenced my thinking.

Many of my graduating class went on to post-secondary of some sort. I think education was impressed upon us during our final years in high school, perhaps in part due to the state of the economy in Black Tickle. Things were different at that point. The fishery had really slowed down, it was harder to make a living and I guess parents thought that the best option for the kids would be to go away for school or work, given the fact that making a living at home was becoming much more complicated and, sadly, near impossible at times. It's really too bad this happened. My parents later moved away as well. This was not a desirable circumstance. People from Black Tickle have a reputation of being very hard working and resourceful, whether they currently live in the community or live away.

MH: You came to the St. Johns Campus of Memorial University in 2000. We are a large university in the middle of an urban conglomeration of up to 250,000 people with the nearest community with a significant Indigenous population - Grand Falls-Windsor where there are many Mi'kmaq - being a four to five-hour drive away. When you first came here, Memorial had limited support services for Indigenous students at that time. The report of the Presidential Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives was nine years away. In this issue of the *Morning Watch*, Jodie Lane discusses the processes that Inuit students go through as they become university students and I know from our previous conversations working together that you had some fears and worries about going to university.

AH: Oh, my god, yes. I went with somebody else from the community. We went together and we were very nervous. I remember our first day being left alone in St. Johns. We saw my father off at the airport and we just didn't even know what to think because it was so big to us. We would go into a university classroom and there were more people in our class than in our community. It was quite intimidating to navigate around campus. With the two of us together we managed to do it. But we were always really happy when terms were over. So we would go home to our apartment and try to negotiate our exam schedule so that we could go home to Black Tickle earlier.

MH: We talked a lot about what your early classroom experience was like. What was university like as an academic experience?

AH: It shifted over the years. The first year I remember being pretty into my studies; I was kind of anxious about how I would do and what people and family would think if I couldn't do it - especially not knowing what to expect. It's not something that I can really articulate in writing. I just remember that I would feel embarrassed, at the very least. When I thought about failing or quitting, it was both my family and my community that came to mind. Both are interconnected though - when I think of home, I think of family. Growing up in a small community like that, the way we did, as family, influenced by every member of the community, touched or "scolded" in some way. (I sometimes feel like this sense of family is less prominent to many young people now- or at least less respected or appreciated. This is very sad to me, and I hope I am mistaken). I know for sure I was not, or I am not, the only person who felt or feels this community/family

connection. The second year I was really homesick. So I didn't care as much as I had in the first year it seemed. The homesickness affected my focus in finding out what I wanted to do in university. Possibly a lot of that comes from the fact I never really knew, we didn't know what these courses even were before we came to university, we had no exposure to them so, it was almost like we needed time to figure out what university or particular disciplines were about before we could decide what career path we were going to go down. Honestly a career path wasn't even in my mind in the second and third year of university because I wanted to go home to Black Tickle. It was hard, but you couldn't go home because you couldn't drop out of university.

MH:I want to drill down to the experiences you had in the classroom. And here, I'm thinking of experiences the students on Siawita'nej<sup>9</sup> relate to us and to the Aboriginal Resource Office. I don't want to prejudice what you will say but you know that they often speak of values clashes and misunderstandings and so on and that some of these things negatively impact their time university and, occasionally, even whether or not they remain at university. And, of course, they also bring us stories about inspiring faculty members and other positive developments happen, like the Social Work students 2012 project on the invisibility of Indigenous culture on campus and their clear support for change. What about in the classroom? What was it like for you being a student from a Metis community in the classroom at Memorial?

AH: Welt, if someone found out if you were Aboriginal or if you were from Labrador only actually, you sort of became the token person when topics permitted or arose. Sometimes people were rude and said rude things and other times people were really interested and wanted to know more. Stereotypes were prominent though in many ways, even if there was no ill intention. I remember a few times I had a few friends from different classes who tried calling me and because they couldn't reach me they assumed that I had moved back to Labrador. So I quickly realized that I think there was a stereotype that we don't stay in university, we just leave.

My experience of relationships at university was mixed. I kept to myself a lot. Outside the classroom I didn't develop a lot of support or friends from class, from those circles. I didn't access much instructor or professor assistance in my first few years. It wasn't until I lived in the city for a while and went back to university after dropping out for a few years that I did access faculty. I didn't realize that you could and I guess it was a part of the intimidation factor to not access the resources that are there for you.

In the classroom itself, well, in sociology in particular, I remember one time there was myself and a friend of mine from the North Coast of Labrador. The professor certainly deferred to us a lot when it came to speaking to certain social issues related to the province or anything Aboriginal, that kind of thing. There was this idea of tokenism a lot. Then sometimes a lot of people didn't know who the Metis are nor had no idea that they existed. You always felt like you had to take it upon yourself to try and educate people. It becomes very tiring - the educating, I mean.

MH:It takes the resources and will of the whole institution to effect the kind of change that is required to make our campuses culturally safe for Indigenous students. I don't think that it is the

responsibility of individual students to resolve or even address these concerns, although it is important that concerns are brought to administrators and service delivery staff so they can be addressed and hopefully resolved. Having said that, I wonder how you attempted to deal with the concerns that you had?

AH: I am not sure that they were ever really resolved. I do know that from the first year here we joked about things. My friend and I joked about this last weekend actually that we didn't associate with anyone who wasn't from the Labrador coast. But for the most part we just associated with Aboriginal people from the Labrador coast. These individuals were Metis from Southern Labrador and Inuit from Northern Labrador. In a sense it was a coping mechanism for us and when we found each other out here in St. John's we sort of just stuck together for that time period. (Of course this changed over time). We also organized our schedules to match each other's because in the first year we were doing a lot of the same courses so we tried to make sure that we were in the same classes could. And if not, we helped each other; we did a lot of that. We were pretty codependent.

MH: So you and other Metis and Inuit students from Coastal Labrador developed your own support system. Were there any supports that you were able to find at the university itself or in the larger municipal community?

AH: Not really. Not when I first arrived here back in 2000. One of the first places that we went to was the Native Liaison Office<sup>10</sup> and I quickly stopped going there. So no, I didn't actually access any supports here on campus. Having said that, I spent as little time on campus as I could. I didn't get involved in campus life; I didn't join or participate in volunteer activities or different councils as I see students doing now. I wasn't one of those and maybe a lot of that is because I didn't feel integrated into campus life. I have always been a very politicized person and taking part in on campus organizations is something I think that I would be interested in but I didn't feel comfortable - I felt too different in a way I guess. Things are definitely changing around here now; at the service and support level and the policy level as well.

MH: You had left university before getting your degree initially? In terms of the anecdotal evidence, this seems to be a common pattern among Indigenous students. Many, especially women, leave and then return as adults.

AH: Yes, I left for about three years I think.

MH: And you eventually decided to return to university to go to Graduate Studies. So what was your rationale for that?

AH: Well, graduate school was something I knew I would have to do anyway. I always intended to go back to school. I went to grad school at the University of Victoria. I am still finishing editing the thesis for that now.

MH: I want to get your thoughts as an emerging academic and as an Indigenous person on the intersections between the academy and Indigenous identity. I realize that the *Indian Act* does not apply Inuit and Metis, but some decades ago the *Indian Act* said that if an Indian person, so called, gets formally educated they lose their Indian status. This happened in Canada to quite a

few Indigenous people, as Sheila Carr-Stewart and her colleagues state in their article elsewhere in this issue. In addition to that, some First Nations people were viewed by their own communities and/or by the dominating Canadian society as not “authentic” anymore because they are educated. There are still vestiges of this. They are not perceived to be authentically Indigenous. This can be painful for some people. Can an Indigenous person be academic or an academic and still be Indigenous?

AH: Yes, of course they can. I think they can. And, I think it is important that Indigenous people choose this path, if it is something they are interested in. As it stands, Indigenous people are underrepresented in academia, and I think that increasing the proportion of Aboriginal researchers and Aboriginal faculty at universities will compliment very nicely the efforts that are taking place at many universities across Canada, ensuring the visibility and place of Aboriginal people within the academy, including Memorial University.

I think it is important for Aboriginal people who pursue academia to use their skills to help their communities and to be involved. There is a bit of a balancing act going on though, sometimes at least -especially if you have lived away for a period of time-in larger urban settings. When you go home you still have to speak their/your language; you can't go back thinking or acting like you're better or privileged. In fact, when I go home I don't feel like the privileged one, in the sense that I know I am the one who has to leave. And that is never easy.

MH: That is a very interesting answer actually. Do you have any advice for faculty or staff for people who deliver services for Indigenous students or for administrators? In other words, do you have advice for the people who run the academy in terms of Indigenous students?

AH: I certainly think that it has to be an open and culturally safe place for Indigenous students at university. There needs to be a concerted effort to ensure that the cultures and histories of all Aboriginal peoples are reflected on campus and are visible in Aboriginal diversity events. I have found that some Aboriginal peoples are not necessarily on the radar so to speak. For example, there still seems to be much confusion surrounding the Labrador Metis, also now known as Southern Inuit. Education efforts and/or workshops could help with this perhaps. As an employee, and former student, I have and continue to hear students discuss the lack of culturally relevant curriculum. There seems to be a consensus amongst Aboriginal students that this is an area that is need of attention. In addition to this, I think it is imperative that curriculum address histories of colonialism, both in this province and abroad. This is vital if we are to justly educate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, faculty and staff with the goal of breaking down stereotypes and engaging each other respectfully and sincerely. I know that such efforts and initiatives are taking place on campus with the implementation of the Task Force on Aboriginal Initiatives and are having very positive effects. The goal would be to address obstacles and barriers that prevent diverse Aboriginal students from going to university, and once at university, to ensure that they have equal and equitable opportunities and feel a sense of belonging. I think these are some of the things that have been missing, and it is good to see that steps are being taken to overcome these obstacles and barriers.

## Conclusion

Our discussion of one Indigenous person's education experience of more than a decade ago raises many of the issues that Jodie Lane and others writing elsewhere have raised. Among these issues is irrelevant curriculum which, in this case, is put in sharp relief because of the religious denominational school system that was in place in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador<sup>11</sup>. The scarcity of role models is also a theme that emerged through our discussion. At the academy, Amy felt alienated, as many Indigenous students do. In the near absence of support services at the university, she and her Inuit and Metis peers from Coastal Labrador created their own unofficial support network. The measures taken to address these concerns - increased support staffing and community-based teacher education - are discussed in my article later in the special issue.

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<sup>4</sup> De Boillieu L. (1969) *Recollections of Labrador Life*. First published 1861. T. Bredin ed. Toronto: Ryerson Press; Rompkey, R. (ed.) (1996) *Labrador Odyssey: The Journal and Photographs of Eliot Curwen on the Second Voyage of Wilfred Grenfell, 1893*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press. Wallace, D. (1983) *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*. First published 1905. St. John's: Breakwater Books.

<sup>5</sup> Hanrahan M. (2008) Tracing Social Change among the Labrador Inuit and Inuit-Metis: What does the nutrition literature tell us? *Food, Culture and Society: Special Issue on Canada*. 11 (3): 315-333; Hanrahan, M. (2001) Salmon at the Centre: Ritual, Identity and the Negotiation of Life Space in Labrador Metis Society. In *From Red Ochre to Black Gold* (D. McGrath, ed., St. John's, NL: Flanker Press), 146-155; Hanrahan M. (2000) *Industrialization and the Politicization of Health in Labrador Metis Society*. Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 20 (2): 233-250; J. Howell (transcribed by M. Hanrahan) (1998) Taking Care of Each Other: the Relationship between the Labrador Metis and the Environment. *Terra Borealis: Traditional and Western Scientific Environmental Knowledge Workshop Proceedings*, Northwest River, Labrador 10 & 11 September, 1997, 26-28. M. Manseau, ed. Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research. over 60 Northern Indigenous communities, it lacks running water and a sewage system.

<sup>6</sup> As explained in Hanrahan's and Baehre's papers the Indian Act had not been applied in Newfoundland following Confederation in 1949, which contributed to the invisibility of Indigenous peoples in the province. While the Indian Act does not apply to people of Inuit descent, its absence in the province had negative repercussions for them as well as for First Nations.

<sup>7</sup> The land claim of NunatuKavut Community Council has not yet been accepted for negotiation by the federal government.

<sup>9</sup> This is the Aboriginal Student Council of the St. John's Campus.

<sup>10</sup> For many years, the NLO at Memorial was at least partly funded by the Labrador Inuit Association. One of the unintended consequences of this was that non-Inuit Indigenous students felt that the support service was not for them, as Amy reports. The NLO is now the Aboriginal Resource Office with two permanent staff members.

<sup>8</sup> Many Coastal communities in Labrador have residences for teachers. In Black Tickle the teachers' residences are among the very few in the community with running water and connections to a sewage system.

<sup>11</sup> The denominational education system has been replaced by a non-secular system with enrolment at particular schools based on place of residence rather than religious denomination.

**Indigenizing the Academy (Anderson and Hanrahan, 2013) A hard copy 40th anniversary special edition of The Morning Watch**

**Chapter 8: The Power of Partnering: Offering a Culturally Relevant BSW Program to Inuit Students in Labrador**

Eleen Oliver, Martha Macdonald, Nathaniel Pollock, Gwen Watts, Mary Beth Hutchens, Sandy Kershaw, and Lucy Brennan

**The Labrador Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Nunatsiavut Government**

**Abstract:** The authors review the process and development leading to the creation and completion of a Bachelor of Social Work program offered by Memorial University of Newfoundland to Inuit students based in Labrador. The program was developed in partnership with the Nunatsiavut government and aided by the Labrador Institute. This is a successful example of engagement by a university with an Indigenous self-government territory - an example of indigenizing practices that worked.

The Nunatsiavut Government, a regional Inuit government in Newfoundland and Labrador, identified a need for social workers in its communities through a needs assessment that highlighted difficulties in recruitment and retention of social workers in Nunatsiavut. The Nunatsiavut Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), which facilitates access to education through funding and support for Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, was tasked to engage with a university to develop a social work program which was to be offered entirely in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB). However, initial explorations were unsuccessful in finding a partner who could meet the expectations of the Nunatsiavut Government in relation to having a comfortable level of control and influence over the program. The Governments commitment to upholding the principle of controlling their own destiny led to the PSSSP department approaching Memorial University of Newfoundland to explore the possibility of partnering for a social work program.

A rapid and intense three-month planning period occurring within an Aboriginal government-university partnership led to the implementation of a Bachelor of Social Work program for Inuit students in Labrador. Thirty-eight students applied, were screened, and thirty-two were admitted to the university to commence pre-social work courses which were offered in winter and spring of 2010. Nineteen students were admitted to the Social Work program and commenced their studies in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador in fall of 2010. The students who were accepted into the program were all beneficiaries of the Nunatsiavut Land Claims Agreement. The program was offered by the School of Social Work, MUN with the Nunatsiavut government as the funder. The design and implementation occurred with support and input from the Nunatsiavut PSSSP Nunatsiavut Government, Memorial University administration, academic units and programs, the Labrador Institute of Memorial University, and with assistance from the College of the North Atlantic.

It is clear to those involved in the program planning and delivery that creating a culturally relevant program was achieved because Inuit-specific principles, beliefs, communication styles,



and approaches to partnering were infused into all aspects of the program including the course content. Nunatsiavut main goal was to have social work graduates with a degree enabling them to work with both Inuit and non-Inuit populations. The government also emphasized the expectation that all graduates would be competent professionals who met all the standards of an accredited social work program. Nunatsiavut insisted that the program be delivered in a manner that avoided reproducing practices that have sometimes arisen as a result of colonization. This article describes the ways in which the planning process and program content were designed to respond to Inuit cultural needs while maintaining the mainstream BSW program as the core.

## **Planning**

Nunatsiavut PSSSP identified goals and obtained funding prior to approaching the School of Social Work in October of 2009. They were seeking a program that would be offered in Labrador primarily in a classroom format. They requested the existing Bachelor of Social Work program with the inclusion of Inuit cultural content. The School of Social Work faculty and staff initially wondered if existing Aboriginal social work programs in other provinces might be a better fit for Inuit students. However, it was quickly determined that Nunatsiavut officials had already considered their options and were in the best position to determine their needs.

The preparation for the offering of pre-social work courses occurred between October 2009 and January 2010. This process required the university to work much more quickly than usual to design the program outline and obtain commitment from the various schools, faculties and units that contribute to a degree program. This was achieved due to the commitment of the university community to find ways to make it happen. The planning was effective partly because of the establishment of trusting relationships within which people were content to proceed without having all the planning questions answered. Relationship building was essential at all levels and was especially important between the School's faculty and staff and the PSSSP staff.

The planning process was also aided by the cooperative approach established by the university administration and Nunatsiavut government officials. These bureaucracies vested the responsibility and accountability for the program with the School of Social Work and PSSSP. These programs in turn identified lead people who regularly engaged in transparent communication and collaborative planning. The type and frequency of communication responded to Nunatsiavut's expectation of honesty, sharing and respect and its preference for consensus-based decision making (Nunatsiavut Government 2012). These expectations were readily met by the School which upholds similar values as reflected in the social work Code of Ethics (Canadian Association of Social Workers 2005).

The Schools faculty and staff were made aware of the need for in-person contact with Nunatsiavut staff in order to engage in effective planning. Meetings were held in St. John's and Labrador to meet this need. School personnel also quickly acknowledged their need for guidance in relation to cultural matters in order to create a culturally sensitive program. This acknowledgement, which reflected Nunatsiavut's valuing of respect, proved to be a fundamental factor in relationship building (Nunatsiavut Government, 2012).

A steering committee comprised of representatives from the Nunatsiavut Department of Health and Social Development (BSD), Nunatsiavut PSSSP, the School of Social Work and the Labrador Institute of Memorial University oversaw program development and delivery. These representatives were instrumental in ensuring that challenges were met with efficient responses by respective organizations. They also monitored the progress of the program in relation to the official agreement between the university and the government.

The School also created an internal planning committee and designated a coordinator to address any issues and routine operations that were outside the usual matters addressed by existing school structures. This new layer of planners was accommodated within the School structure in recognition of the complexity of working with another culture on a program in a remote location.

The Labrador Institute staff provided their insights on the factors important in offering a program to Inuit students in Labrador. Staff also agreed to facilitate identification of local instructors who could quickly be available to teach in the program. The Institute also committed to providing space for instructor offices and providing consultation as needed. The Labrador Institute's Associate Director served on both the planning and steering committees.

### **Modifying university procedures to foster cultural sensitivity**

A number of procedures were modified to achieve a more culturally sensitive experience for students as well as create program content that provided more than the basic social work program. These modifications are outlined below.

The social work admission process was modified to enable students identified by PSSSP to complete the social work program prerequisites with the understanding that those who could be considered for admission would be competing for 20 seats reserved for this group only. The competition for seats occurred only among these students. Applicants were also permitted to apply based on the completion of 24 of the required 30 prerequisite hours with the agreement that the remaining six credit hours would be completed as a graduation requirement. All other admission requirements remained unchanged. The criteria and process for assessing applicants were those applied to all applicants to the four-year BSW program.

The application process involves a written exam. The exam for the Nunatsiavut students was created with input from Aboriginal social workers. The process was also modified to include an oral as well as the usual written admission exam. This acknowledged the oral traditions within Inuit culture. The oral exams were administered by school faculty and local Inuit social workers with the understanding that the Inuit social workers could interpret culturally embedded communication styles that might be unclear to those outside the culture. The written and oral exams were developed and scored in collaboration with Inuit social workers.

The Social Work program is normally offered only in fall and winter semesters. This schedule did not fit well for Nunatsiavut students who were being funded to be in school and would have no source of income for part of the year if the two semester system was applied. PSSSP also

advised that students would have an improved chance of success if they were able to do four rather than five courses whenever feasible to do so. Therefore, the program was designed to be offered over three semesters each year with the students doing four courses in each of seven semesters and completing five courses during each of three semesters.

The selection of social work and non-social work elective courses occurred as a consultative process involving Nunatsiavut PSSSP, the Labrador Institute and the School. Whenever possible courses were chosen that had direct relevance to Labrador and/or Inuit realities. The appropriate academic units were then contacted and asked to offer the course in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. This resulted in a program that in addition to the core social work and entry level courses also offered courses on topics related to Inuit culture, the Inuit language, Inuktitut and Labrador society.

Nunatsiavut PSSSP staff advised on the learning style and strengths of students, past successful teaching methods and lifestyle issues that needed consideration. This advice led to a program that offered only one course by distance, provided all daytime course slots for classroom teaching were delivered in part by local instructors and Inuit social workers, and would include on the land experiences and elder participation, and emphasize local examples. One elective course was offered by a faculty member who flew in from Memorial's Grenfell Campus in Corner Brook, Newfoundland, to teach for several days on three occasions during the semester. Social Work faculty members also new to Labrador to teach in a condensed schedule at regular intervals. Three Social Work faculty members moved to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for the semester in which they were teaching. These arrangements necessitated changes in usual work assignments for faculty thus requiring flexibility on the part of faculty members as well as the affected schools and faculties. The living arrangements for the Social Work faculty were facilitated by Nunatsiavut through provision of an apartment in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and local transportation needs were met through the rental of a vehicle for faculty use.

PSSSP staff also provided cultural orientation to university faculty and staff and field instructors. These sessions occurred at the beginning of the program and were repeated as new people became involved with the program.

## **Student Services**

Past experiences of the PSSSP staff and Nunatsiavut officials indicated that support services would be essential to student success. It was determined that support would be needed to address the following areas: gaps in student education, lack of preparedness for university level performance, unresolved trauma that could be triggered by Social Work program content, stresses in family life that interfere with the student role, lack of practical resources such as study space and housing, lack of access to resource materials, and impact of personal problems. There was also disparate awareness of cultural knowledge among some students and there were instances where cultural values and beliefs clashed with social work approaches. Supports were established through the university and Nunatsiavut with input from the Labrador Institute and the College of the North Atlantic. The team working to support the students included: a part-time School of Social Work student services coordinator, a part-time skills development

instructor, a full-time Nunatsiavut program coordinator and a full-time Nunatsiavut cultural consultant/counselor.

Student services capacity available on the St. John's Campus had to be created in Labrador since they did not exist there for university students. A number of required services were made possible through a service agreement between the Nunatsiavut Government and the College of the North Atlantic. This agreement contracted for the provision of classroom space, equipment, library services and student housing. Students' needs for quiet places to study were met by providing access to their classroom during evenings and on weekends.

The program augmented these services in several ways. Regularly scheduled and on demand tutoring was available throughout the program. A skills development instructor with a graduate degree in English had primary responsibility for this role and offered tutoring through regularly scheduled group and individual meetings. Special seminars were also offered to assist students with skills related to writing, analysis and critical thinking. The instructor customized an approach to tutoring that reflected needs specific to this group of students.

The School of Social Work supplied a part-time student services coordinator to provide supports and guidance similar to those offered to all students in the Social Work program on the St. Johns Campus. This person provided guidance related to regulations and policy, assisted the students in navigating university services, intervened in student crises that arose, consulted with students to create class schedules that met their needs and assisted in facilitating any required program changes.

The Nunatsiavut Government hired a Nunatsiavut beneficiary with a degree in education as their program coordinator. Her role was diverse as she had responsibility for implementing and monitoring policies and procedures of PSSSP while also offering a variety of direct support services to students. These included: referring students to services related to academic performance, providing tutoring, assisting with organizational skills, assisting with problem solving around practical personal issues, troubleshooting issues related to students access to services such as library and study space, providing guidance about study skills, assisting with writing challenges, clarifying feedback from professors and ensuring that information was circulated in a manner that supported student progress.

A Nunatsiavut beneficiary with a graduate degree in social work filled the role of cultural consultant and counselor. Individual and family counseling and referrals were regularly provided on request. She utilized circle work including sharing circles as well as teaching circles on a variety of topics including maintaining boundaries within northern social work. She offered services such as: assisting students in understanding social work concepts and methods, helping students consider social work knowledge and skills in the context of the Inuit culture and providing group opportunities for student to discuss cultural issues. The consultant also facilitated regularly scheduled, mandatory cultural integration circles as part of specific courses during the final two semesters of the program. This process involved guiding students in the development of their own Inuit-specific social work practice framework.

The coordinator and the consultant followed university guidelines in their interaction with students and used the School of Social Work Suitability Policy to develop their expectations of student conduct. Their attentiveness to university policies and procedures strengthened and clarified the centrality of the university in the student experience and contributed to the creation of a social work professional identity among the students.

### *Cultural Content in Program*

Cultural content was identified as a required element of course content at the onset of the program. Several courses were specifically selected because they presented opportunities to integrate local and Inuit-specific content. These courses included:

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| • Social Work 3230    | Culture Camp  |
| • Philosophy 2591     | Restorative Justice   |
| • Linguistics 2025/26 | Introduction to Inuktitut   |
| • Sociology 2200      | Communities   |
| • Geography 1050      | Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Geography (Social Effects of Mining) |
| • Sociology 2220      | Labrador Society and Culture  |
| • English 2012        | Introduction to Professional Writing  |

All faculty and instructors were also asked to include cultural content in their courses. Instructors met this request using a variety of mechanisms including:

- Involving the cultural consultant in course design and classroom discussion
- Incorporating on the land experiences into selected courses
- Providing opportunities for students to make presentations in recognition of the oral traditions of the Inuit
- Using case studies and examples that were relevant to practice with Aboriginal peoples
- Using texts and readings that reflect Aboriginal traditions, issues and ideas
- Designing discussions that compare Labrador/Aboriginal perspectives with other world views
- Involving local guest speakers and elders in classes
- Designing group assignments to respect the Inuit value of working as a collective
- Creating assignments that required knowledge of culture and region
- Incorporating on the land experiences to embrace the Inuit respect for the power and value of the land
- Using videos and resource material with Aboriginal content
- Including an assignment designed and graded by the Cultural Consultant which focused on creation of individual Aboriginal frameworks.

The Aboriginal content within courses was supplemented with special learning opportunities focusing on obtaining cultural and local knowledge, and practice knowledge relevant to

Labrador issues. These opportunities included:

- A meeting with Inuit social workers to discuss their experience of integrating social work knowledge with their culture and to hear about their experiences of working in their own communities
- Travel to the Vale mine site at Voisey's Bay to gain increased appreciation of the impact of mining on culture
- Attendance at a Truth and Reconciliation hearing to observe the process and the impact of these hearings
- Travel to coastal communities during field internships to gain an appreciation of the manner in which social work services are delivered in these communities
- Participation in a session on healing in an Innu community
- Participation in a training program focused on intergenerational trauma and using culture as healing
- Participation in a first aid program
- Participation in an Applied Suicide Intervention and Skills Training

Students were required to complete two field internships. The selection of internship sites was a complex matter because many dual relationships existed between the students and the agency staff who would provide mentoring and field instruction. Many students were related to agency staff. Others had received services from those who could become their supervisors. Several students were already working in agencies where they might have been considered for an internship. These various connections created the potential for conflicts of interest and uncomfortable professional relationships. Another complicating factor was a scarcity of social workers in the region who met the School's qualifications for provision of field instruction. All of these factors were further influenced by lack of available housing in several communities identified as preferred sites for internships.

The Nunatsiavut cultural consultant and the Nunatsiavut program coordinator provided advice to the field coordinator in selecting agencies for individual students. The field coordinator benefited from the consultant and manager's knowledge of the students, the agencies and the cultural dimensions of these agencies. The contributions of both the manager and the consultant were essential to finding good fits for the students. The collaboration also strengthened one of the core principles underpinning the program that being the existence of a collaborative partnership that privileges Inuit knowledge. The cultural consultant and the field education coordinator also travelled to Nunatsiavut communities to meet with agency personnel who would accommodate student internships.

Students were placed primarily in programs and departments operated by the Nunatsiavut Department of Health and Social Development, Labrador Grenfell Health and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Several community-based agencies provided internships and one student worked with the NunatuKavut Community Council. All but one student were placed in the Labrador region for both internships.

Students continued to have access to student services throughout their internships. They also



participated in group and individual discussion with the cultural consultant to continue to integrate their cultural and professional knowledge.

The basic internship experience was also augmented by special teaming opportunities aimed at increasing cultural knowledge and information about local needs and services. The PSSSP and HSD provided funding enabling several students to travel to coastal communities in Nunatsiavut to provide services and observe programs. These trips introduced students to the practical and philosophical challenges related to offering services in the diverse communities in the Labrador region. The HSD also provided housing to facilitate student internships in one coastal community.

### *Challenges and Lessons Learned*

The depth and scope of challenges associated with offering this program could not have been known at the onset of the program. They are outlined here as sources of the best learning about how to create a program that meets the needs of Inuit students.

The Memorial campus where the School of Social Work is located is on the island of Newfoundland in St. Johns while Happy Valley-Goose Bay is approximately eight hundred kilometers away on the mainland of Canada with air travel as the most efficient and feasible method of transportation. The issue of distance between the School and the students' location presented many challenges from seemingly small matters like getting text books to students to bigger issues like finding faculty prepared to teach courses in a location so far from their normal place of work.

It was clear that existing infrastructure and resource people in Happy Valley-Goose Bay were essential to the programs success. The existence of the Labrador Institute in Happy Valley-Goose Bay facilitated the hiring of local instructors. The Institute also made faculty and staff available to teach, contributed to program development and supported the work of visiting faculty and staff. The Institute staff members were also effective in identifying local resources to assist with teaching and other tasks.

The assumptions, principles and relationships that had been key to the design and dynamic of the program were weakened as staff changes occurred within the School of Social Work. New players did not have the history required to share the norms and approaches developed among the original team. This created difficult collaborations, trust issues and barriers to progress.

Continuity of collaborators emerged as one of the most important factors in program efficiency and effectiveness. This factor is linked to the importance of relationship within the Inuit community. The Indigenization of the program required shared vision, and beliefs and a knowledge of unspoken understandings achieved through team building.

University personnel, including social work faculty and staff, recognized their own lack of expertise in the provision of a professional social work program to Inuit students. This reality meant that many staff and faculty needed information about Inuit culture, effective teaching styles and Aboriginal content relevant for courses.

This lack of cultural expertise was acknowledged at the onset of planning and although identified as a challenge, it became one of the factors that convinced Nunatsiavut that Memorial had an approach which fit their needs. Nunatsiavut was concerned that the university might take an “expert” role and perhaps a colonizing stance. This concern was relieved when the School, in recognizing its own limitations, also acknowledged the expertise of Nunatsiavut and the reliance on Nunatsiavut to take the lead in cultural matters. It also helped that the Labrador Institute had personnel who were experienced in delivering courses to Inuit students and were willing to share their observations and skills. The Schools forty plus years of experience in delivering social work programs gave it confidence in its areas of expertise and a readiness to enter into a partnership where it could add to existing capacity.

There were many occasions when plans and procedures did not work as anticipated and as a result the program intent was jeopardized. These incidents inevitably led to frustration. Issues would arise such as not having housing for student going to the coast, lack of funding for students to travel, lack of instructors available to teach, library hours that did not meet student needs, proposed schedules that violated university rules, on the land excursions that created risk management concerns and course content that created stress and discontent among students.

The solution-focused attitude of all partners was essential to overcoming this challenge. Nunatsiavut values include a belief in the importance of resourcefulness in problem solving and this was evident in the approach of the Director of PSSSP who always responded to large and small disasters with “Let’s see how we can make this work.” The Labrador institute was able to provide help to broker solutions to local issues due to their experience in the Labrador region. Social Work faculty and staff sought ways to work around the barriers in their way using social work beliefs and principles which mirror many of the values of Nunatsiavut. University academic and support units stretched their rules and procedures to accommodate unusual and often unprecedented situations. The flexibility of everyone was key to success and fit well with the flexible and fluid implementation style that is characteristic of Aboriginal organizations.

## **Conclusion**

The experience with the Inuit Bachelor of Social Work program provides a potential template for other cohorts seeking programs that can be delivered in rural locations and especially those designed for Aboriginal peoples. The development and delivery of this program has been an education about cross cultural education that has enriched the knowledge of all involved.

A major lesson emerging from the creation of this program is that meaningful and effective creation of culturally relevant curriculum requires much more than development of curriculum content. The entire approach to planning and delivery must privilege Aboriginal knowledge, practices and traditions. The partnerships supporting the program must include the essential elements of respectful and collaborative relationships and an inter-professional generosity allowing for shared responsibility in fixing the inevitable mistakes encountered in cross cultural education. The students in the program require supports that are sensitive to their lived experiences. Perhaps most importantly, the program must be led by Aboriginal people who share their own expertise while welcoming the expertise of a university community that

embraces the opportunity to create a partnership with an Aboriginal government.

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## **Indigenizing the Academy (Anderson and Hanrahan, 2013) A hard copy 40th anniversary special edition of *The Morning Watch***

### **Chapter 9: The Return of the Native: Personal Perspectives of Identity**

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**Abstract:** This writing is adapted from an early piece (Anderson, 2013) written to celebrate the MUN Reunion 2012 and the 40th anniversary of the Elizabeth Avenue Campus, now known as the St. John's Campus, of Memorial University of Newfoundland. In this particular article, the author reflects, in ways both scholarly and personal, on the unique contribution of *The Morning Watch* to the development of scholarship and to the important recognition of Indigenous realities in the province and country.

Admittedly, *The Return of the Native* is an odd title, but then there are turns in ones life and scholarship that *are* odd. Long-held convictions have come to be seen as strange when contested with perspectives that challenge the epistemological underpinnings of what is true or not true, real or not real. I write this somewhat reflective narrative to situate myself within the context of a special edition of *The Morning Watch* devoted to the theme of Indigenizing the academy. In this modest contribution to *The Morning Watch*, I have written several sections which my co-editor, Maura Hanrahan, has jokingly called *The Return of the Native*. So it is that in the return of the native story I will draw on insights gained having lived away from my native province and returned home. Consistent with Indigenous thought, this narrative reflection will be two-dimensional: one side tells the tale of me as an 'academic' while the other tells the context of the search for my 'Indigeneity'. This two-world response from me covers the same 40-year span and I comment on the systems we serve, why we choose to live where we do, and indeed how my province has come to better know who I am.

#### **Place: Identity as belonging to here and there**

I have enjoyed most of the places I have lived. However, my sense of not simply being from this place but belonging to it is strong. Imagine you were able to attend a great university, do a great degree (three actually) at that university, live a great career, and then to return to where it started and actually lead one of the faculties. This is where my life has taken me. I was born in Shoal Brook, Donne Bay, with my grandmother as midwife, and completed high school in Comer Brook. I attended Memorial University (both at Grenfell and St. Johns), graduating in 1978 with a B.Sc., again in 1981 with a B.Ed. and again in 1987 with an M.Ed. I did stray a little and completed a PhD from the University of Toronto, but the campuses of Memorial are my home, plain and simple.

I started teaching in Makkovik in 1981, and then moved to Cartwright, then Woody Point, Lark Barbour, and finally the North Shore of the Bay of Islands. I have been a professor at the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Calgary, at the University of New Brunswick and now Memorial University of Newfoundland. I wanted to outline this as I feel

this eclectic mixture of experiences, from here and there, enables a unique perspective for comparison and insight.

Decades ago on a Western Newfoundland open line radio show, a somewhat hostile caller challenged guest speaker Peter Fenwick, then leader of the provincial New Democratic Party. She questioned Fenwick's motives in running for Newfoundland politics, arguing that because he was not 'born here' he did not share the same commitment to the province as those who were. This is an unfair challenge many newcomers and long-time residents often face, yet Fenwick's response was eloquent and I often think of it. He responded: *Yes, but unlike those that were born here, I made a deliberate choice to make this my home.* Therein lays the deepest of commitments to a place.

I faced a 'life happens' awakening while living in Fredericton and working as an Associate Dean with the Faculty of Education for the University of New Brunswick. I enjoyed working there, as it was a great faculty. However, in 2009 I attended a *Wonderful Grand Band* reunion concert in Halifax. This band was all the rage in my last couple of years at Memorial so seeing *WGB* again produced lots of nostalgia. I even found a few long-lost friends who had also moved away. Stemming from this experience, I began to wrestle with the realization that many of us face in a way I had not done before: I had been away from Newfoundland for about eight years, but up until that point, I do not think I actually believed I had *actually* moved away. In the hours of driving back to Fredericton, I was drifting down memory lane and then back to the direction I was actually headed. At some point during the drive, it struck me that I had moved away--I was not going to live in Newfoundland anymore! This might seem odd, but many of us see moving away as temporary and then life just kind of happens. It was not a happy feeling; it was somewhat fearful even. My sense of identity with Newfoundland and Labrador is strong and I was not sure what to do with these feelings. The drive passed, eventually the feelings subsided and life continued to happen.

Somewhat reconciled with my life in New Brunswick, happy in my work at UNB, in the summer of 2010, I saw an ad for "Dean of Education" at Memorial University. I was not sure what to do. I had already passed up one other opportunity to seek a faculty position at Memorial as I did enjoy my life at UNB, but this was a unique opportunity. I knew I had built up a credible resume but one never knows about hiring processes. I applied, was interviewed, and here I am writing this piece of reflection for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *The Morning Watch* as Dean for the faculty that has housed it all these years - 40 years since I started as a student at Memorial.

### **Speech: What was important 40 years ago is important today - our accent is important**

In this section, I will raise the critically salient concept to which Newfoundland and Labrador scholars, among others, have alluded often: our accent(s) and dialect(s). The Newfoundland-Labrador dialect(s) has been source of ridicule and humour. But what about our dialect (s) as a source of pride, as a mark of distinction or identity? This was the subject of strong debate 40 years ago as many rose to defend the legitimacy of our dialects in the face of outright

contempt. It may be time to come back to this. Being a distance educator based in Alberta and New Brunswick, I would note how my students would respond once they established that my accent was from Newfoundland. I have often compared this to the experience of seeing a person for the first time, having no awareness that they were of a different race. We hold stereotypes based on culture, race, gender, and indeed accent. Accent is more than a variance in standard spoken usage; it has grammatical links as well.

Beyond our notions of vernacular and standard English, David Corson, a former professor of mine, spoke often of the negative biases held against those from different social cultural backgrounds by the dominant hegemony and their use of dominant language conventions. He outlined this in an article *The Learning and Use of Academic English Words* (Corson, 1997). His view that students who used text and speech that was seen to be ‘richer’ in Greco-Latin phrases were seen as intellectually superior by instructors, resulting in higher marks in schools and universities. This was not because of the sophistication or complexity of their arguments and ideas but because of ‘our’ bias towards word content. Has this type of social/cultural language bias been at play in our Newfoundland and Labrador context? I think so. Remember, it was once believed that a truly educated scholar also spoke Latin.

Corson's work was considered ground-breaking research in the late 1990s. Yet this thinking was noted much earlier in *The Morning Watch* as several articles on this subject were published in its very first issues in 1973 in relation to “Newfoundland Englishes” (see “World Englishes”, Singh, 1996).

Above, albeit briefly, I addressed the notion that *The Morning Watch* as unique as it represents both conventional and more innovative types of thinking within a unique legacy and mission. This struggle continues today. Indeed, even at Memorial, 40 years ago there were courses to remove students Newfoundland accents. Is it the case that to be seen as truly educated, a Newfoundlander-Labradorian, has to surrender his/her accent to dominant Englishes and the related language use patterns? I actually do not *always* think so, but sometimes I do; that worries me.

### **Culture: What mattered before matters now in respecting our Indigenous ways and identity**

The false narrative which rendered much of our Indigenous history invisible has recently changed to reflect what, 40 years ago, I was told as family lore. As a boy, I knew my family had Mi'kmaq and Inuit ancestry. However, I graduated from a school system into a society that essentially denied the existence of Aboriginal peoples in this province. We knew that the Beothuk were extinct, but this was characterized by the myth that they were “killed off” by the Mi'kmaq who were brought in by the French to help fight the English. We loyal Britons, its oldest colony, were the result - this was the Newfoundland narrative of our history for a long time. Understandably, this part of my life caused mixed feelings. How do we ‘right’ the wrongly-written-albeit grammatically correct - versions of our history? This is also part of seeking the answer to the question: what is new in history?



Yet another critically salient concept I alluded to above is our Indigeneity. The Dominion of Newfoundland became the province of Newfoundland in 1949, a distinction many in this province still hold as an active event. The terms of Union between Canada and Newfoundland did not refer to Indigenous peoples in the province hence the Indigenous peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador were not acknowledged on our entry into Canada. As a result, the Harper apology to Canada's Indigenous peoples was a version of “No apology to you” for the Indigenous people of this province as it was not offered to us; in fact, we were explicitly excluded. It may be time to come back to this, too, as it relates to the ending of the forced invisibility and more ready acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples within our province. Despite such additional barriers to official recognition, there is a growing awareness of our Indigenous reality which seems to hold great promise in adding to the richness of our social fabric. This is something we need to build on as we have been long overdue in making our universities truly open to all in a way that celebrates the contribution of Indigenous peoples to every facet of life in our country. Most recently, the creation of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq Band, while a contested process, is leading to a resurgence of Indigenous awareness in this province. Despite some disputes over membership and related growing pains that are not unusual as bands are established, the Qalipu process is adding to a rich history of successful Aboriginal leadership in spite of some incredible obstacles and ongoing challenges.

## Conclusion

Identity is linked to place, speech, and culture. Historical narratives often written through contested worldviews also shape our identity. Time changes this and history changes as well. How do we ‘right’ the wrongly written, albeit grammatically correct, versions of our history? This is also part of seeking the answer to the question: what is new in history? We need to share the work of our many scholars, practitioners, and stakeholders who are dealing with the struggles, the successes, and the ongoing challenges as we look at how Indigenous peoples were portrayed then and should be honoured now. *The Morning Watch* helps serve a role in giving voice to the researchers and the people who will share this rediscovery.

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**Chapter 10: Revisiting “Learning to Mediate Social Change: Interviews with Two Community Leaders”** (a 1975 Interview with Indigenous Leaders by Amarjit Singh)

Maura Hanrahan

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**Abstract:** In 1975, Faculty of Education Member Dr. Amarjit Singh interviewed two community leaders in Labrador: Bart Jack of Sheshatshiu, Nitassinan<sup>i</sup>, and the late Bill Edmunds of Makkovik, Labrador. A lightly edited version of these interviews appears below.

Mr. Bill Edmunds was the first vice-president of the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), founded in 1973. The LIA was the second regional Inuit Association in Canada; following the 2005 settlement of the LIA land claim, it is now the Nunatsiavut Government. When Dr. Singh interviewed Bart Jack, Mr. Jack was President of new the Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association (NMIA), which would become the Innu Nation in 1990. He was then a young man, having completed his formal education only four years before. Mr. Jack would become a negotiator with the Innu Nation, the umbrella political organization for the Innu of Labrador that would, among other things, achieve an international profile with its campaign against NATO's low-level military flying program in Labrador.

Around the time of the interviews, Jack, Edmunds, and other Indigenous people in Newfoundland and Labrador were organizing for the first time. There were several reasons for this: the *Indian Act* was not applied in the province when it united with Canada in 1949, which had negative rights and resources implications for the Innu, the Inuit, and the Inuit-Metis/Southern Inuit of Labrador and the Mi'kmaq of the island.<sup>tt</sup> The push to organize in this province was part of the pan-Indigenous movement across Canada that emerged as a reaction against Prime Minister Trudeau's White Paper that had strongly recommended the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into Canadian society. Cree leader Harold Cardinal's response, the Red Paper, can be considered foundational to this movement.

At the time of Singh's interviews there was a great deal of discussion in the province about the possibilities associated with oil and gas discoveries off the coast of Newfoundland and, later, Coastal Labrador, the first discovery being near Mr. Edmunds's home community of Makkovik. I was a child at the time but I vividly remember the heightened sense of anticipation that marked that period; our hard scrabble province seemed to be on the cusp of far-reaching change, there seemed to be a consensus that we'd be rich and that riches would do us good. Indeed, Singh's interviews took place in St. John's where the Indigenous leaders were attending a conference on oil and gas development. With reference to hydro-electric dams, the leaders express their concerns about industrialization and its threat to Indigenous societies, cultures, and economies; these concerns are just as valid today as we are about to witness the construction of a dam at Muskrat Falls, Labrador that is opposed by NunatuKavut Community Council, the political organization of the Southern Inuit, some of whom have been arrested for protesting at the construction site. Thus, some 38 years later, as the province plans for hydro electric development in Labrador, these views are again being

expressed by Indigenous leaders and their people.

Jack and Edmunds clearly felt that the rewards of resource development were not being distributed equitably between the regions and peoples of the province. One of those advocating for a better distribution of resources is Mr. Edmunds's son Randy Edmunds, the Member of the House of Assembly for Torngat Mountains, echoes his father as an outspoken critic of the province's longstanding neglect of Coastal Labrador. While Bill Edmunds had to create a political platform - the Labrador Inuit Association his son has assumed one on the provincial stage. In turn, Bill Edmunds daughter, Janine Lightfoot, is the Aboriginal Liaison Coordinator at Memorial University's Grenfell Campus where she provides support services to Indigenous students.

Both Bill Edmunds and Bart Jack raise concerns about the lack of opportunity for Labrador students to attend high school in their home communities. At the time students as young as 12 from the North and South Coasts had to go to Northwest River in Central Labrador if they wanted to go to continue their education. This was a long boat ride away and home was not accessible. In the 1970s, early school leaving rates in Labrador were extremely high compared to those in the more urbanized centres in the province, undoubtedly because of the lack of local high schools. Black Tickle on the South Labrador Coast, for instance, did not have a high school until the late 1980s. Bart Jack also links the near absence of culturally relevant curriculum to the high early school leaving rates, a pressing issue today as seen in Elizabeth Yeoman's interview with Marguerite McKenzie. Bill Edmunds points to difficulty recruiting teachers and the need for more accurate content in teacher recruitment efforts. There remain lessons to be learned from their words today; later, in Maura Hanrahan's article, we will see how Memorial University is responding to these challenges.

Bill Edmunds promotes student exchanges as a way to educate others about Coastal Labrador. In this, he reiterates Bart Jack's concept of education as a "two-way" system with non-Indigenous people in the province and elsewhere needing to learn about the original people of Labrador. They foreshadow Jacqueline Ottmann's analysis.

Today most Coastal Labrador communities have high schools, including tiny Norman Bay with its seven students. A significant number of courses are completed via distance education. In her article elsewhere in this issue, Jodie Lane of the Nunatsiavut Government explains how Inuit high school graduation rates today are relatively high yet Inuit students still face enormous barriers and have to draw on their own resilience as well as community support as they pursue their post-secondary education. Maura Hanrahan's discussion with Amy Hudson, a native of Black Tickle, takes us inside the experience of a student transitioning to Memorial University and, later, the University of Victoria. All of these articles - from 1975 and 2013 - poignantly call us to support Indigenous students from remote areas of Labrador in multiple ways - as well as to learn from these students. In some senses, the academy has appropriately responded to these calls - at the May, 2013 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Summit at the University of Regina, it was noted that there are now over 1,100 Indigenous PhD graduates in Canada - while, in other ways, we are still learning - and learning to learn.

## **Learning to Mediate Social Change: Interviews with Two Community Leaders**

**Amarjit Singh from *The Morning Watch*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1975, pp. 14.**

Is Newfoundland society changing? Is it going to change? In what direction is it going? Who are the change agents? What are their perspectives on society, culture and change? What is the scientific, cultural base of perspectives held by change agents?

What are the interests and ideologies of those who have the power positions in the organizations? How do their interests and ideologies differ from other groups in society? Who is to be changed? For what purpose are they to change? Who is going to evaluate whom, how and on what criteria? Who is to benefit from change? What is the price of change? Who is going to pay what price in the change process? What are the long term consequences for the life chances of various groups of people in Newfoundland society?

Is the biography of Newfoundland society, culture, and individuals in it to be compared with the biographies of other societies, cultures, and individuals in them? These are some of the questions which have been raised by many peoples in the world when confronted with schemes of planned change. Any scheme of planned change involves conflict of human values. There are various factors of change associated with political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of change. Each aspect of change is based upon certain images of progress. The images of progress provide a source for defining obstacles to progress in various aspects of change. There are then political considerations, economic considerations and sociocultural considerations for overcoming perceived obstacles to progress.

Change can be brought by force or cooperation. If change has to be brought by cooperation, then human values must interact with politics, economics, and culture. That is, people caught in the process of change must mediate politics, economics and culture. The failure of many schemes of planned change is often due to a lack of a viable concept of community and society. The planners generally do not listen to the people whose life they propose to plan. Many of the problems of change arise out of the insensitivity of professional planners to incorporate the ideas and expression of people involved. It is not unusual to find out that the professional planners are too much flattered by their neat techniques of social engineering and evaluative procedures. This is not to say that professionals and technicians do not play a useful role in planning change.

At the time when various agencies<sup>iii</sup> are involved in bringing about change in communities in Newfoundland, it seems appropriate that we opt for community development thinking which incorporates the ideas, expressions, and values of those people whose life is directly involved. With these thoughts in the back of my mind, I had the opportunity to interview two community leaders - Mr. Jack Bart and Mr. Bill Edmunds. I believe that mediating the change is a learning process, and that much can be gained in the area of cooperation by listening to others.

## INTERVIEW WITH MR. BART JACK

**Amarjit Singh:** Bart, you are president of the native people (Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association). You are in St. John's attending the Conference On The Potential Impact On The Province Of Future Commercial Oil And Gas Discovery Off Newfoundland. I would like you to tell us something about what you think are the educational, social and research needs in your area.

**Bart Jack:** First of all, I would like to comment on the conference. I think it's not focusing too much on the local needs as such. I think it's only a conference on stocks and bonds and whatever you can get out of it. Well, that's the main thing as far as these people are concerned. As far as we are concerned, the native people, we feel that much will be changed when this oil discovery goes in. For instance, the way of life will be changed. For many years the native people on the coast have been dependent on the land and on the sea, fishing and hunting. All this will change dramatically as the years go by - when oil discovery goes into full swing.

The education, I guess, will change, too. For the good or for the bad. For not the judge for that at this moment. At the moment the educational needs in Labrador are very tremendous. There's only one high school in Labrador which is central. The coast doesn't have any high school. They have to send their people to Northwest River, which is about 100 miles from Makkovik, where the actual oil discovery is. If the industry moves into Makkovik they will supply a school. But that's not the answer to the whole problem because this oil industry will create some problems as well as probably solve a few. They will be able to solve the problem of communication; they will be able to deal with education; but in the process they will create more problems than there are right now in the community. They will create problems in regards to the people's traditional hunting and fishing way of life. There'll be disruptions in the general overall way of life in the community and at this moment I don't think the people in Labrador are ready. It was pointed out by some here the rate of progress in regards to industry may be expressed as 'slow', but for Labrador this kind of "slow" is actually a fast pace of life and I don't think that the community can grasp this at the moment.

**Amarjit Singh:** You said that you had one high school. Do you think one high school is sufficient? Do you think the high school is serving the needs of the area? Obviously university is involved, high school is involved. What role do you think university or school play? What kinds of programs should be introduced? What are they not doing?

**Bart Jack:** First of all, I'll start from elementary level. In the elementary school age, there should be programs relevant to the communities. What I mean is that no person or no children on the coast should study about New York because there's gonna be no place like New York on the coast. This is irrelevant. They should study about their own environment, their own history and their own way of life because that's the life that they've understood and have lived and their parents have lived for so many years. Then we go to high school. They should try to establish right now programs that are practical to the students because high school students are very rare in Labrador. There's no need for me to mention the scarcity of university students from Labrador.



Not very many achieve university status. Therefore, I think, they should generate and accelerate development right now from elementary to high school. They should introduce programs, relevant and practical to the students. By practicality I mean they should start teaching them their own way of life. The students should have an option regarding what he or she wants to learn. Right now, there's no option. They have to learn exactly what the people in Toronto do; they have to learn exactly what the people in St. John's do-which is to me, very very impractical at the moment.

**Amarjit Singh:** Would you like to see your people coming to universities? Or would you want them to go only as far as high school?

**Bart Jack:** Well, we'd like to see them coming to university but the way of the university is not always to learn about big cities, big towns and big industry. You can make your way to university in learning what you want to learn. University can be a good thing for the people of Labrador, but at first there should be programs that they understand in order for them to get ready for university. University prepares you for a way of life.

**Amarjit Singh:** Many people in Newfoundland are talking about Labrador. Also, they are talking about the oil discovery and the impact of oil on Labrador. What is the feeling in terms of separatism? Is there any movement in which the people of Labrador are saying: "we want to be separated from Newfoundland"? Newfoundland, of course, is taking much of the resources from Labrador. Shouldn't the benefits go to Labrador rather than Newfoundland? I hear some people get into this kind of discussion. What are your feelings and attitudes towards this?

**Bart Jack:** Well, there is no doubt that there is a feeling like this and there has been for many years and probably will continue to be because of the way the Newfoundland province treats Labrador. I can see myself now in the same situation if Labrador was getting all the revenue and Newfoundland was depleted of resources. The reason for that is, I think, the people in Labrador had been neglected for so many years. This neglect is still predominant in the communities, especially the coastal communities, not very much in the inland communities like Goose Bay, Happy Valley and Wabush. The coastal communities have been far more neglected than any other community on the island of Newfoundland.

The reason for this is, I think, very simple. The people in these communities have not, up to this time, or with very little effort on their part, tried to fight for their rights. It's just like an ostrich - if an ostrich is attacked by an animal, it puts its head in the sand- it doesn't want to defend itself. Well, it's the same thing with the people in Labrador. I think they have to learn now, I think they have started to learn now, to demand things. For example: as we heard at this meeting here, the Labrador delegation - of which I am part - have demanded a meeting in Labrador such as this, to have a meeting on the impact of all industry in Labrador. I think the people in Labrador have to learn to do that right now in order for them not to be swept under the carpet.

**Amarjit Singh:** I see a parallel between the way things are happening in Labrador and Newfoundland and the way things are happening in Quebec where they are building hydro dams. There the conflict has been between the people whose land is going to be covered with water. The same thing is happening in Manitoba and British Columbia and other parts of the world where these big industries move in and the people whose life is going to be influenced somehow are unable to influence this trend in their favour. What do you think can be really done to stop or at least to negotiate with these forces in such a way that the benefit goes to the people who have been living there for so many years?

**Bart Jack:** First of all, I am not so certain what you mean when you talk about benefit. Are you talking about whether the people on the Labrador coast are really concerned about what jobs they are going to get out of this, or what other benefits they are going to get out of it? I think what more concerns them right now is how will their way of life be changed in regards to their hunting and traditional fishing life.

In regards to your question about James Bay, I think Newfoundland can avoid this by more consultation with the native people which I think they have started to do right now. In Quebec this was never done. The people were never informed of this hydro development. The government just moved in there and started building dams. Now, the government here has shown at least a bit of concern. They had this meeting and I hope they will continue to have these meetings so that people will be informed.

The other probable solution that can be gotten out of this is to encourage the government to give the native people some money to do their own research, to find out for themselves what kind of impact this oil industry will have on them. In that way we'll have a two-way educational system. The people will be able to educate the government on their own way of life and then the government, in turn, will be able to educate them about the impact that it is going to have on their way of life.

**Amarjit Singh:** If you have to say something to the young people in Newfoundland, especially those who are going through high school and who one of these days will be working for the government and other industries, what would you say to them? What kind of attitude should they develop at this point?

**Bart Jack:** I think the students at present - I was a student only four years ago - should be involved right now with community projects or groups or whatever you want to get involved in because I feel there is nothing to be criticized about. Being involved you get to know the environment you live in; you get to know the people. Like four years ago I was a student. I didn't know anything about my community and right now I seem to know almost exactly what is going on in my community and probably the future of my community, which is far more important than not knowing anything at all.

## INTERVIEW WITH MR BILL EDMUNDS

**Amarjit Singh:** Mr. Edmunds, you are here attending this Conference on The Potential Impact On The Province Of Future Commercial Oil And Gas Discoveries Off Newfoundland. You were listening to us as I was talking to Bart Jack about his area in Labrador. We can continue to talk about that sort of thing. You would like to elaborate on the educational part in this area and you can perhaps give us a good insight into the communities of Makkovik to Nain. Would you please say something about education?

**Bill Edmunds:** First of all, I would like to speak about education and how it is handled on the Newfoundland- Labrador coast. What I mean when I say Newfoundland-Labrador coast is Northern Goose Bay. I came to a committee here years ago and we spoke about education and we talked about education and what was going on along the Labrador coast; at that meeting we spoke about the problems in regard to education. One guy from St. John's gets up and he says, "You got high school in Labrador - you got everything in Labrador, as far as we can gather". I said, "Yes, we have it in Labrador, but you, who are talking now, have never been up to Northern Labrador, and you are saying these things". I pointed out to him that from Nain, Labrador, to Goose Bay is 240 odd air miles, and the high school is in Goose Bay not in Nain, Labrador. There's another one in Hopedale, and a couple in other places. So when I told him that he was shocked after hearing that Labrador is like this.

To go on, today, in Labrador, they have little better facilities than what they had - say six or seven years ago. The only thing I don't go along today with in the education is that when you reach a certain grade in education you are shipped out from Labrador to Goose Bay. Myself, like all others don't go along with the situation because in some parts of Labrador, there you are with your kids in grade 7, 8, etc.- they're being shipped out to another community altogether and to me they're not mature. They could at least go as far as grade nine. Then they're more mature to be shipped out and leaving their family. It's kind of tough to see your daughter or your son at grade 7 or 8, who's not mature, being shipped out and you know she's going to a completely different community where she doesn't know anybody other than the ones who are being shipped out with her. How can you expect that girl or boy to get educated? Because she's not mature, she doesn't know. So these things have been going on and we've been trying to arrive at some kind of solution for this problem.

Now, they will remain to do up to grade 9 and I'd like to see all the communities on Northern Labrador to go at least as high as grade 9 before they are shipped out from their families. University students are very aware that since the kids don't want to leave home at such an early age there are many dropouts. We have one or two people with university experience. When they come back to Labrador coast, what are they? They are low-scale labourers with university experience. By this time, your kids, and their kids, are thinking - why should I go and get my education, why should I go and get my university? Why should I get my degree? Here I am looking at somebody with a degree and still a low-scale labourer. To look at it from my point of view - it's not always going to be like this; there are going to be industries coming up. Then, I think now is the time to change the pattern - try to get our kids educated. Explain the future to them. I have had no degree, no education and I've still got none and I never will get any. The only thing I'm working on is a bit of experience. I don't think it should be like this today. I think they should go to university and I think their parents should

encourage them to go and get their degree because they're looking forward, not only to 5 or 6 years but they are looking well ahead to 30, 40, 50 years to come - the third generation, the next generation and their generation.

I think education should be regarded very highly, regardless of who they are or what they are even the parents, I think, should really demand that their kids get an education. I'm speaking of myself again right now; I could kick myself so many time! that I haven't gotten an education. When I was going, to school I never had the chance to get a good education. I went to school at Riverhead for 9 months and you can't team anything in 9 months. So I don't want those kids, mine and theirs, to be in my boots to look at the world today.

**Amarjit Singh:** This is very interesting. When you talk about children going to other communities, parents expecting their children to go to school, the school boards come into the picture. Now, to what extent do you think the people have been capable of influencing the school boards to change their policies in regard to busing children? Is there any dialogue between the parents and the school boards, the schools and the school boards so that the interest and concern of the parents are incorporated into the policies? Do you think that people have been able to do that? Or do schools and school boards still impose their own rationalization and say, well, because of this and that the kids have to be shipped?

**Bill Edmunds:** Well, I really don't know because I don't get involved too much with the school boards. But speaking from what I've heard about the school boards on the coast they're trying every year to have meetings with the school boards, and people coming from other parts of the province are trying to extend classrooms in the community. By more classrooms I mean that if you go as far as 7 or 8 why not go as far as grade nine? Another thing is the lack of teachers. I believe that it should be advertised more than it is now. A person coming from, say, England Canada, or Newfoundland, hearing about a teaching position in Labrador imagines it to be as it is advertised in books, i.e., living in snow houses. For this reason I think it should be advertised more. Like anyone else, we are Canadians, we have schools, houses, running water<sup>iv</sup> I think, therefore, it should definitely be advertised more.

**Amarjit Singh:** That's right. May I make one comment? Like you said, you never had any education yourself, but I think by that you mean you never went to school. Obviously you know more about the area and you have more experience than many people can get by coming to school. Schools do not educate people for all the experience which you have and I will say that although you never went to school that doesn't mean that you are not an educated man. Of course, you know a lot of other things and perhaps the young people, in my opinion, are hung up too much on what they learn from school. It doesn't give them any idea about real situations in the community and in the area. This is lacking. In my opinion students should have more opportunities to go into the communities and see how the life is in actual conditions.

**Bill Edmunds:** Very true. Yes, I go along with that 100% because you're in the classroom and you don't learn everything. I think there should be more exchange of students from Labrador coming to St. John's or other places. That's where experience comes in. You can educate yourself more in the outside world. So I really believe in student exchanges.

<sup>1</sup> Nitassinan is the Innu name for the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula

<sup>1</sup> Although the Indian Act applies only to First Nations, its omission from the Terms of Union was part of Canada's and Newfoundland's failure to recognize any of the indigenous people of the new province.

<sup>1</sup> The Department of Rural Development, the Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Development Council and its member organizations the Memorial University Extension Service, the Centre for the Development of Community Initiatives, L.I.P., L.E.A.P., O.F.Y., D.R.E.E. (all government work creation programs), Manpower, the Department of the Secretary of State, The Company of Young Canadians, Frontier College and The Newfoundland Development Corporation.

<sup>1</sup> Not all communities in Labrador have running water (e.g. Black Tickle).

**Chapter 11: If we Tore Down the Barriers Would We Still Be Equal: Nunatsiavut Students and Post-Secondary Education**

Jodie Lane

Nunatsiavut Government

**Abstract:** This paper attempts to look at the potential Inuit people of Nunatsiavut possess when it comes to earning a formal education. The potential is there right from the start, but what is amazing to witness is how varied people's experiences are simply due to factors beyond their control. We all want to think positively and believe that we are on an even playing field. The sad reality, however, is that we are not. Whether it is the education levels of our parents, our first language, or the supports we receive in the schools themselves, some students are just destined to do better than others. But how can the institutions work with us to help even things up? How are they able to intervene and encourage even the wariest of students? How do we Indigenize the academy?

We cannot simply label someone a success based on one variable because success is a subjective term and has been so broadly defined. Is someone 'successful' because they have a good job or lots of money, but are struggling to pay the bills? Is a single mother labeled as unsuccessful because she chooses to live apart from the child's father? Is a student considered a success because they make it through a semester having just scraped by?

We have a way of wanting to place people into categories, so that we can better justify how we will treat them, or better yet, help decide if we will even interact with them at all. Judgments are made the moment we meet someone new, whether we like to think that we are open-minded or not. The same holds true for students leaving home to pursue an education - young adults released from the protection and comfort of their parents' watchful eye, warm home, and often, open wallet. We like to think the best: that they all will be successful (however you may wish to define success), and will end up with a meaningful career, and then eventually a comfortable life. Reality, however, soon sets in and some students, regardless of upbringing or academic background, realize that the path that they have chosen is not for them. Maybe it's their first impression, maybe it's timing. Maybe they went for the wrong reasons in the first place, and are being true to their desires. Maybe they were forced to go and do not want to disappoint. Whatever the reason, we end up with a student dropping out or "withdrawing from studies".

For Aboriginal students, the measurement of success is a lot different. For us, simply graduating high school is cause for celebration, as, according to a report by the Canadian Council on Learning, "68% of Inuit young adults living in rural settings in the North had not completed high school, a rate twice that of Inuit residing in large cities (34%) (CCL, 39)." The graduation rate for students in Nunatsiavut is quite high at 830%, compared to the national Inuit average. However, this does not mean that completion of post-secondary studies is a given, or that graduation comes without a price.

When we consider how many students have graduated from Level III, the final year of high school, in Nunatsiavut, and compare that to the number of those young people who have



attended post-secondary studies, here is where we see our biggest gap. Yes, we may be able to get our students through the secondary system, but helping them make the leap into a successful post secondary career is something else.

Why is it that some Aboriginal students can easily make the transition and others struggle? Once we answer this question, we can better close the educational gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians and therefore level the playing field when it comes to economic prosperity. This is a question that we need to answer sooner rather than later, and one that we can answer by starting from the beginning.

### **Early Childhood Education**

There are many challenges facing Inuit students in Nunatsiavut and these begin at a very early age. The first five years of a child's life are extremely crucial for brain development. This is a very small window of time in which we as parents and educators have not only to start the process of teaming, but also instill a love of learning. I am a firm believer that parents and care givers are, by far, the most important educators, however, we cannot do it alone. First of all, we are not created equal, nor have we navigated through life on a level playing field. Some of us are formally educated, while others are functionally illiterate. Some of us have experienced other cultures first hand, through travel, while some of us have never left the comforts of our home community. So, unfortunately, this uneven playing field affects our ability to teach our children. This is not to say that parents need to have a university degree in order to educate their child, but rather that the attitudes toward learning - the content, methods, and values of education - are different between parents of different educational and experiential levels, and this therefore influences what is passed on to the child.

What does this all mean? It means that now more than ever, early childhood education is so crucial to our children's development. Our problem? We do not have enough daycare and child development spaces for all of the children who could benefit from additional engagement and stimulation to that which is received at home; in fact, in Nunatsiavut we do not have enough spaces for those who may receive little to no stimulation at all. This amounts to many children being left behind, and when children are left behind right from the beginning of their educational journey, they spend the rest of their lives trying to catch up. Some succeed, but many do not.

Yes, this is a National problem. But keep in mind that the national non-Aboriginal population has a higher educational attainment than the Aboriginal population as, according to the 2006 Census, "40% of Aboriginal young adults aged 20-24 had not completed high school, compared with a rate of 13% for non" Aboriginal young adults" (CCL, 38). Keep in mind my previous point about parents educating their children and you will see just how necessary and urgent the need is for us to have more early childhood education services available in Nunatsiavut, and across the North.

So what does this deficit in early childhood education services really mean? What does it matter? All children will eventually start school. Kindergarten is not limited by the availability of space. Yes, all children can go to Kindergarten, but what it boils down to is an uneven playing field from day one of a child's formal education. Children who attend daycare or some

form of structured child development, prior to entering the public school system, are proven to be better prepared and therefore perform better, on average, than those that stay at home. “The RHS [2002-2003 First Nations Regional Health Longitudinal Survey] reported that children who attended the early childhood program showed better performance once in the elementary school system; 18% of First Nations children (aged six to 11) living on-reserve had repeated a grade in 2004 compared to 12% for children who had attended an Aboriginal Head Start preschool” (CCL, 33).

## **Formal Education**

There are many debates on formal education and if it is the way to go. Historically, Aboriginal people have taught their children themselves and had little dependence on outside sources to educate the next generation. Traditional Inuit ways of living are still being taught in Nunatsiavut, as in many other Aboriginal regions across Canada. However, this is no longer the primary source of education for our children. The traditional lifestyle is no longer enough to provide sufficient income for the modern way of living. Goods and services cost money; money has to be earned by way of a job. To ensure that one can land a job and keep it, one must, nowadays, have some kind of formal education, preferably at the post-secondary level. Even high school graduation is often not enough.

But how do we get there when many of your young people are struggling to even make it to Level III, let alone graduate? And for those that do graduate, how can we ensure that, not only do they continue on into post-secondary studies, but that they see it through to the finish?

### *Choosing What to do Next*

When a young person has finished high school and actually has the option of applying to college or university, what makes him/her actually choose to do it? In today’s world, with all of the terrifying statistics about low Aboriginal academic achievement, overrepresentation in prison and underrepresentation in the workforce, what hope does that give our young people? It’s hard enough for the average student, Aboriginal or not, to pick up and leave the comforts of home, not knowing what to expect. But for our students, it’s even worse.

Making the decision to apply to school is sometimes just as hard as actually applying. Many students feel that because they grew up in a small community and struggled with their studies, that they are unable to handle that college or university has to offer. This holds true even more so for those that have graduated from the general stream of high school. There is often little faith in not only what they have learned, but also in their ability to learn at a new level. Sometimes they quit before even trying.

But when the decision is made to take that first step and apply, most are pleasantly surprised to learn that they are what the school is looking for and that they are welcome to try. It is an amazing sight to see, the expression on a young person’s face as they bring you their acceptance letter (or conditional acceptance letter, as the case may be): the sense of relief, paired with pride and accomplishment, even though it is only an early stage in the game. But it is pride nonetheless.

As the application process continues and more paperwork than you can shake a stick at is

submitted not only schools, but funding agencies as well, the momentum builds and this further fuels the final push to pass exams and graduate. An effort welcomed by the teachers indeed! And as the days of the final exams come and go, the stress levels begin to rise again, as now it is a waiting game. Did I get in? Did I get funding? Emotions are high as one by one students begin to receive their transcripts and acceptance letters. Some pass. Others sometimes miss the grade by only a few percentage points. Plans are changed in the blink of an eye and, for some, back-up plans are put into action.

For those who were successful in earning a seat at college or university, they are now faced with new emotions, often times mixed. Does this mean I am going? How am I going to handle it? What am I going to do? But at the same time, many are excited to leave home and experience something new; a world that they have lived vicariously through the internet and television for years.

### **Identifying Barriers**

When you live in a small, isolated community, even if you are fortunate enough, like I was, to be able to travel out to larger centers a time or two, you become accustomed to certain ways and take many things for granted. When I left my home community of Makkovik for university, I quickly learned that not everyone is honest, nor does everyone know who you are and can therefore be sensitive to your insecurities. They do not necessarily know about Aboriginal people and our ways, but are quick to judge you as someone eating up tax-payers money by getting a free education. Lesson learned: be careful who you share information with and also to be prepared to stand up for yourself.

When we think about barriers to education, we often think about the obvious ones which include, but are not limited to: financial, geographic, academic preparedness, level of confidence, and fear. Then, when we take a step back, we must not forget about the education of the parents, culture and language and lack of motivation. Put these all together and they combine to create a strong, solid wall that is determined to hold our students back; to keep them from proving that, despite the many excuses they can use for not pursuing an education, they are capable and deserving of the same opportunities as everyone else. So, just as this wall has been built brick by brick, let's take a minute to tear it down and have a look, brick by brick.

#### *Financial*

Many people have the assumption that, because Aboriginal people have access to government funding for post-secondary education, that all of our financial woes have been miraculously solved. This is simply not the case. If you ask any student who has accessed funding through either of our programs administered through the Nunatsiavut Government, they will quickly set you straight citing high rental cost as probably the number one reason for their financial stress. Sure, food and other amenities may cost less in the larger towns and cities to the South, but there are also so many other things to spend your money on. In addition to rent, utilities, and food, students are now faced with transportation costs, for example, that they may not have expected or budgeted for. One cannot always walk to school, to the grocery store, or to a friend's house to study, as they probably could have in their home communities. In addition to this, there is simply more things to buy in these larger centres. Extra cash is quickly eaten up by a night out

with friends, a trip to a restaurant, or an unexpected purchase when picking up essentials.

We also cannot ignore the availability of alcohol (although this can fall under many of the barrier categories) and the snowball effect this has on young people who have a new found freedom with no one watching their every move. Combined with a guaranteed deposit into their bank accounts each month from their funding agency, this is often a time bomb waiting to go off by way of the student being unable to control spending, consumption, and thereby affecting their studies to the point of being forced to leave school.

But what can we do? It's not that easy to convince the government to fork over a few billion more dollars for our education, and equally futile is the plea to landlords to lower the rent for students. And true, not all students are in dire need of the essentials while at school. In fact, many are doing just fine because of the help they get from home. And chances are, those parents who are able to help out financially are the ones who themselves have some form of post-secondary education and are making a decent income. I have no statistics to back this up, just thirteen years of experience with students from all financial backgrounds, and I know who is struggling and who isn't. So what does this tell us? If anything, it gives us hope that, if we can keep these students in school and help them to graduate and become more employable, their children will be the next generation of post-secondary students and have parents more financially secure and therefore able to help them out, thereby increasing their chances of success.

### *Geography*

It's a long way from Nain to St. John's, and sometimes even when the physical distance may not be that great (Rigolet to Goose Bay for example), the fact that students cannot go home every day after classes is often enough to deter them from even attempting to further their education. Some students have never left the comforts of home, and when faced with the expectation that once they complete high school, the next step is to leave home and go to college or university, they can experience a great deal of stress. It can be argued that there are even students from more urban areas that have never left their comfort zones either, for example a student growing up in St. John's and never having gone further than the overpass that leads to rural Newfoundland. The difference lies in what they learn in their comfort area that can be taken with them should they have to leave home to go to school. Students growing up in Nunatsiavut do not encounter crosswalks, escalators, public transportation systems, or even see uniformed police on a daily basis. They may have never had to ask for directions, travel great distances alone, or even converse with strangers (e.g. ordering food in a restaurant, speaking to a bank teller, or registering for classes). Daily tasks that students from urban areas take for granted can often be huge stressors in the lives of new students and it is important to recognize that, in addition to adjusting to a new learning environment, the act of even getting to their new location is often a feat in itself.

### *Academic Preparedness*

We can sit around all day and point fingers at one another and lay blame, but the bottom line is that our students, the ones that do manage to navigate through the secondary school system, are often ill-prepared for post-secondary studies. Why is this? Why is it that many students from

Nunatsiavut finish high school only to be faced with a bridging or upgrading year (or two) at college before gaining access to the desired program, when students in other areas seem to be able to go right on in? What did we miss? Is it the school system? It is the same system across the province, so why would groups of students perform differently? This is an argument worthy of greater attention, but for the purpose of this paper, let us just note that many of our Nunatsiavut students are not prepared academically for post-secondary studies and require transitional programs to bring them up to par with other applicants.

### *Lack of Confidence*

It is amazing to witness our youth doing something that they love, with such passion and confidence that you are certain that they will succeed. This is the case in Nunatsiavut in many areas, such as sports. That same passion and, more importantly, confidence, often disappears in the classroom however. Academic preparedness and lack of confidence go hand in hand and they both feed off one another and keep the cycle going. Students lack confidence in their academic abilities, and this affects their desire to even try at times. Then, after high school is over, because they may not have the best grades, their confidence level falls even lower. I often hear students ask, “If I only barely passed my high school courses, how could I ever get through college?” This mental block can oftentimes carry into the first year of post-secondary studies as well, until they prove to themselves that they can do it.

### *Fear*

Fear has the ability to paralyze even the strongest of students. There are many fears that our students face, from the time they apply to college or university right up to when they are actually in school. Fear of not getting into the program they apply for, fear of not earning all of their high school credits, fear of disappointing their family, teachers, and themselves. Sometimes what other people think, or what we assume they will think of us, consumes our thoughts and can hold us back.

Too often the fear of the unknown can seal the fate of many students, as they have already convinced themselves that they cannot do it. We are our worst enemy. Many students feel that it is easier to quit while they are ahead and not even attempt to go away to school. That way, there is no danger of disappointing anyone if or when they fail. But there is another danger here: the danger of never realizing their potential.

### *Family Responsibilities*

In addition to these barriers, a number of young Aboriginal people have children of their own that they need to factor in when deciding what to do after high school. The fact that they even graduate is cause for celebration, but they know that their time in school shouldn't stop there; even if they are unable to go right away. The key is to continue to remind these youths that there are options for them and to ensure that they know you are there for them. They need to be aware that there are support systems and that people believe in them.

### **Perceptions of Aboriginal people**

There are so many stereotypes out there about Aboriginal people ranging from our work ethic to

intelligence to struggles with addiction. Too often people judge others based on what they believe is fact, when it simply isn't. And when young, vulnerable minds hear such false statements enough, they begin to believe that they are true, so that when the time comes to make decisions about their future, they are poisoned with these stereotypes and made to feel that they won't be able to succeed at college or university because they are stupid, or lazy, or "just going to drink their cheque anyway!"

It doesn't take much to taint a student's feeling of self-worth but it does take a long time and a lot of work to restore it. We can have all of the resources and tools at our disposal to aid in educating our young people, but we can only do so much. We can teach our children morals and values, pride in their culture and language, do what we can to increase their sense of self-worth, and most importantly, let them know that they are loved no matter what. But we are limited. We cannot control outside factors such as the people they interact with, and that includes those at the institution they choose to attend.

The real test comes when students choose to actually take a leap of faith and accept their offer of admission to school. It is at this point in time that we as educators and parents can hopefully begin to see our hard work paying off. But there remains a delicate balance between the confidence we have instilled in these young people and the harsh realities of the world that can easily strip that confidence away.

## **Conclusion**

Any institution has the power to offset this balance, either positively by way of supporting the students and embracing their uniqueness, or negatively by forcing them to conform to rigid regulations and policies that do nothing more than mass produce cookie-cutter graduates. I think that it is safe to say that all post-secondary institutions believe that they positively influence any student that walks through their doors. However, it takes more than just having a mandate on paper to actually pull this off.

To make a learning environment, especially a heavily regulated learning environment, open to change, a number of actions must take place.

First, it is necessary for us to be the educators. Change cannot take place unless those that are demanding the change or that will be affected by it are meaningfully consulted. After all, those making the changes first need to be aware of what, if anything, actually needs to be modified. It also needs to be noted that it takes a lot of courage for any institution to admit that change is necessary or that they have not been serving all of their students to the best of their ability. It is through consultation that the institution will begin its own learning process about who they are dealing with, their unique strengths as well as their weaknesses.

Second, after recognizing and accepting that changes have to be made, it is necessary to commit to making those changes. Too often strategies are developed and presented with great excitement and enthusiasm, only to fall by the wayside at the first sign of resistance or by lack of motivation. Having people in the institution dedicate their time willingly will ensure that the right people are doing this for the right reasons, thereby decreasing the chances that those assigned the task of following through with the recommendations will lose interest.



Third, the institution needs to commit financially to the projects deemed necessary to carry out these changes that enlarged through the original consultations. It is unrealistic to set a one-time dollar amount and think that all challenges can be overcome. However, it is more probable that significant changes can be made to positively affect student retention and success if the overall goal of Indigenizing the academy is broken down into manageable tasks which are more likely to be carried out.

Fourth, the strengths and uniqueness of the students need to be embraced. It is easy for Aboriginal students to feel out of place in such an unfamiliar and intimidating setting as college or university. Thoughts of self doubt run through their heads as they try to justify why they actually decided to give it a try. They cannot help but compare themselves to others and many times incorrectly assume that the other students in their classes know way more than they do and are not struggling near as much. It is at this crucial early period when students first enter into a post-secondary institution and can easily second guess their good intention and own abilities, that it be made known to them that they are first of all welcomed, but also accepted for who they are, and embraced by their new, albeit temporary, home.

It needs to be stressed to the students that not only is there much to learn at school but also that those at school (which include classmates as well as professors) have much to learn about these students. Welcoming Aboriginal students and inviting them to be as much a part of the learning process by way of being a teacher as well as a student places value on the knowledge that they already have. This, in turn, reinforces their own self-worth and, instead of tearing them down to conform to a set of norms, will build them up and help foster a confident learner that will build on their traditional values.

Finally, it is obvious to see that by reaching out to this demographic, by taking steps to make it more inviting for them to attend a certain school, a definite financial benefit is bestowed upon that particular institution. We in Indigenous organizations are not naive about this, but I feel that as long as it is done in an open and transparent manner, it is beneficial to both sides. After these steps are taken, efforts need to be communicated to the Aboriginal population which the institution wishes to recruit. All of the special services - reserved seats, and accommodations made by the institution, for example - to make it more appealing to Aboriginal students need to be promoted. If not, many students that can avail of these services may end up not even knowing that they exist. They may choose a different school with less knowledge about or interest in Aboriginal issues, thereby affecting the students' post-secondary experience.

Overall, to Indigenize the academy is to make an institution more open and inviting to students with an Aboriginal background. It is not done simply by offering special services to fulfill a policy obligation, but rather by embracing these students, recognizing their strengths, talents, and what they can bring to the academy, in addition to providing the inviting environment and supports. As much as the academy can teach our students, the academy can learn an equal amount from them.

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# **Part 6**

## **Post-Secondary Learning**

- 1. Towards a Sojourner's Model of Post-Secondary Learning**
- 2. Students' Perceptions of Effective Teaching in Higher Education**
- 3. Career Decisions of Newfoundland Youth (1973) on How People's Attitudes Toward University Have Changed (1974-Present)**

## **Chapter 1: Toward A Sojourner's Model of Post-Secondary Learning**

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### **Abstract**

This paper will introduce the sojourner's model of Post-Secondary learning (SMOPL). This new model illustrates the integrative and overlapping structures of culture shock and participatory action research into a single conceptual framework. The aim of SMOPL was two-fold; first, to help the visiting international student (i.e., sojourner) to cope with the common problem of debilitating academic performance. The second aim of the SMOPL was to provide more general application for personal change and improved performance in new academic setting.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to introduce and discuss the SMOPL (the Sojourner's Model Of Post-secondary Learning). A "model" properly represents a human experience when its assumptions can provide empirical research and expert opinion for its context, rationale, and legitimacy. Accordingly, three assumptions for a sojourner model of post-secondary learning (SMOPL) are presented first.

#### *Assumptions*

There are three assumptions in support of the Sojourner Model of Post-Secondary Learning (SMOPL, pronounced "smoh-pull"). The first assumption is that the sojourner model of post-secondary learning (SMOPL) describes primarily sojourners attending a post-secondary institution experiencing culture shock. A "sojourner" is defined as a foreign language student on an extended study visa in a new country. "Culture shock" is defined as a feeling of disorientation that occurs in some foreign language speaking adult males (and females?) attending a post-secondary institutions over a 1-year time period.

The second assumption is that the SMOPL assumes that the English language limitation of the sojourner (not all sojourners) is affecting his/her academic performance at the post-secondary institution. Not all sojourners' insufficient second language speaking and writing skills. The assumptions described in the first and the second assumptions may apply to sojourners in elementary and secondary learning institutions as well, though this is untested.

The third assumption is that the SMOPL is timely. One of the most important considerations for planning a new model is its timeliness. Is this the right time for this particular model? Is the field overloaded with new models, or is there a reported need for alternative ways of conceptualizing things- a new model? At the present time, there is a need for a descriptive framework of expert opinion and research-based principles from which to invent or select instructional methods to serve sojourners attending post-secondary learning institutions.

#### *Principles*

There are three principles of the SMOPL. The first principle is that the application of the model enhances the sojourner's cultural awareness. Cultural awareness can be considered as a stage in which the sojourner starts recognizing the differences and the similarities between his/her culture and the new cultural context.

Becoming aware of the similarities and the differences between two different cultures leads the sojourner to be critical. This is the second principle of the SMOPL. Being critical brings continuous questions about the value system, which either belongs to the sojourner's culture or the academia. Answering these questions is what we call meaning-making practices in accordance with Giddens (1991). As long as the sojourner makes sense of the new cultural context, s/he continues to adapt to the academia.

The third principle of the SMOPL is that the sojourner's adaptation to the North American academia results in change. The value system of the sojourner does not remain the same. Through cultural interaction with academia, she/he restructures a new value system.

The fourth principle is that the sojourner's cultural experience has iterative. By "iterative" we mean that anyone, who has ever experienced culture shock once, can experience it second or third time. Three principles explained so far occur repeatedly. The black part of the spiral in Figure 1 breaks from its course as soon as the problem occurs. At this point, the sojourner loses the so-called honeymoon stage and became aware of his/her situation. This brings the first new cycle (gray in Figure 1) in which the sojourner's beliefs (values) are criticized, reassessed and changed. If the change doesn't suffice for the success, as in our study, the need for ensuing change arises. Therefore, the second new cycle (two-lined in Figure 1) represents a new plan. The steps of act, observe and reflect follows this new plan.

Figure 1 shows the graphical representation of the SMOPL. The model is a composite of two previous models: Adler's (1975) 5-stage theory of culture shock and Kolb's (1984) spiral model of participatory action research. *Culture shock* is the term that describes a feeling of discomfort resulting from immersion in a new culture (Loh, 2003; Adler, 1975). "Participatory action research" is the term given to a self -reflective process of improving education by changing it and learning from the consequences of changes (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992). David Kolb with Roger Fry (1974) created their model out of four elements: concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts and testing in new situations. They used the term cycle to refer to the sequence of those four elements. They argued that the learning cycle can begin at any one of the four points and it should really be approached as a continuous spiral. This approach formed the basis of current participatory action research. Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) furthered Kolb's (1984) view by some key principles. Action research is *participatory*: it is research through which people work towards the improvement of their own practices. Action research develops through *the self-reflective spiral*: a spiral of cycles that follow the steps of planning, acting (implementing plans), observing (systematically), reflecting and then replanning, further implementation, observation and reflecting. In each cycle, these steps are carried out more carefully, more systematically, and more vigorously than the sojourner usually does in everyday life (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). As shown in Figure 1, the participatory action research spiral is comprised of three cycles and four steps in each cycle.

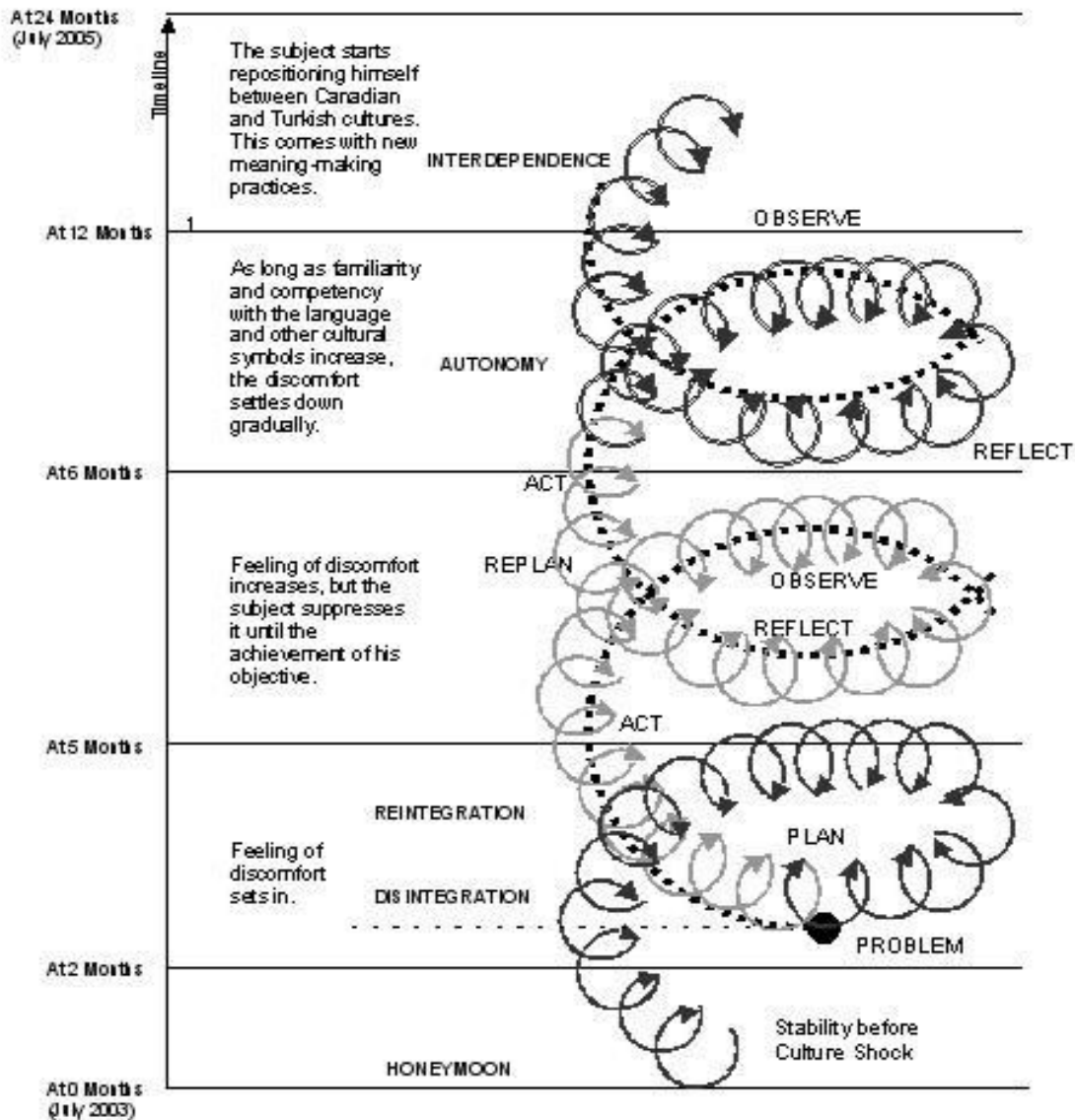


Figure 1. The Sojourner's Model of Post-Secondary Learning (SMOPL)

The term *sojourner*, who travels from one culture to another for educational purposes (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001), was used instead of the term *international student* because *international student* is a term used by the academic or government institutions to describe student fee structure and/or student visa status. On the other hand, *sojourner* is a term that encapsulates traveling across cultures, immersing in a new culture and retaining the value systems of both home culture and other culture(s). As shown in Figure 1, Adler's (1975) five-stage model of culture shock draws the preliminary timeline of the SMOPL. The stages are the honeymoon stage, the disintegration stage, the reintegration stage, autonomy stage and the interdependence stage. The first stage of initial contact, or the "honeymoon stage," is where the

newly arrived individual experiences the curiosity and excitement of a tourist. The second stage involves "disintegration" from the familiar cultural signs from back home. The individual blames himself/herself for the personal inadequacy toward the new culture. The third stage involves



"reintegration" of the new cultural signs and increased ability to function in the new culture. At this stage, the sojourner doesn't blame himself but the new culture, because it is the new culture that caused all the difficulties. As long as the sojourner increases his/her ability in the new culture, s/he tends to criticize the new culture in terms its inadequacy. The fourth stage, autonomy, is the continuation of the reintegration but in a balanced way. The sojourner starts to see the good sides as well as the bad sides of the new culture. The last stage according to Adler (1975) is the interdependence that the sojourner reaches biculturality. He feels himself comfortable in both cultures.

At the beginning of an academic year, the sojourner might believe that the cause of the problem, which is debilitating academic performance in communicative ability in English, is not an incompetency in English, but an unrecognized capacity of the sojourner to communicate in English by the professors. S/he might be following a learning cycle, which matches with the *single-loop learning* as described by Argyris and Schon (1974). As they suggest, if someone is concentrating on their *action* (*action strategy*) and limiting the change only on their *action strategy*, then it is *single-loop learning*. On the other hand, if a person, while concentrating on his/her actions, extend the change up to their *values* (*or governing values*), this would constitute *double-loop learning*. So, after facing unsatisfactory results, either with oral performance in class discussions or with term papers, the sojourner might employ some changes. If these changes don't include primary interventions specifically intended for the North American academia, it becomes hard to adapt to the new cultural context and to gain intellectual improvement. For instance, paper writing is not a common practice in many educational institutions outside North America. Besides, English is writer responsible. That means, the reader wants to know where the paper is going (Knutson, 2005). If the sojourner doesn't have enough training and experience on paper writing, but s/he presumes of herself/himself to be a skillful writer, then the changes may be at the surface level. If the written expression of the sojourner isn't clear and concise for any reader, but the sojourner believes the profundity of his/her writing, then the changes in case of low grades may not include the primary interventions. At this point, academic writing shows the sojourner to what degree s/he can write clearly and concisely beyond his/her presumptions. If not, the grades make the level of the academic writing competency clearer. It may be after the low grades or failure to pass that the sojourner experiences a breakdown. This makes the sojourner change not only the *action strategy* but also his/her *governing values*. A new set of values toward communicative ability in English brings a new learning cycle to follow as it's called *double loop learning*. At the end, what the sojourner believes/espouses and what s/he does becomes the same.

### *Statement of the Problem*

A common problem addressed in this paper is that visiting international students (i.e., sojourners) experience debilitating academic performance, particularly, oral and written competency in English language. At the present time, there is a need for a descriptive framework of expert opinion and research-based principles from which to invent or select instructional methods to serve sojourners attending post-secondary learning institutions. The SMOPL has the theoretical foundation but is as yet untested. The purpose of the next section is to put the SMOPL into an educational context. A preliminary study was conducted to explore the sojourner's experience over time.

## METHOD

### *Participant*

The participant is a sojourner, that is to say, an international, returning graduate student and the first author of this paper. His country of origin is Turkey and the first language of the subject is Turkish.

### *Context of the Study*

The context of the study is an interdisciplinary Masters program at a university in Eastern Canada. This program is an interdisciplinary teaching and research program housed in one of the faculties in the university. Students from any discipline could enroll in this program. It is a two-year full-time program. Cultural unfamiliarity is the primary determinant of this study, which primarily includes the difference in the medium of communication. The sojourner's first language is Turkish. Although he made his undergraduate studies on English as a second language teaching, seven years of absence from English-speaking environment debilitated his English competency. Second, it is unfamiliar for the sojourner to be a student again after seven years. In other words, reading and writing within the context of a graduate study are new to the sojourner. Third, the ways of conduct in Canadian academia makes the context unfamiliar for the sojourner. For instance, it is usually possible to see a professor either within the office hours or not in this Masters program. In Turkey, it is harder to see a professor and to discuss an issue privately with him/her. In contrast, the context of Masters program in this Canadian university encourages creativity and criticism that the sojourner was not familiar with from his former academic experience.

### *Design of the Study*

The design of the study is participatory action research because this type of research is a form of 'self-reflective inquiry' by participant(s), undertaken in order to improve understanding of their practices, to adjust to changing situations or to cope with their problems (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Problems are not considered as 'pathologies' in participatory action research; rather they are stimuli that evoke awareness, critique and change. This view coincides with the current literature on culture shock that considers it as an educational model (Pedersen, 1995). Participatory action research is different from everyday actions and interventions; it is more systematic and collaborative in collecting evidence on which to base rigorous self or group reflection (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992). These reflections are about two parallel sets of learning: the sojourner's learnings about the practices he is studying and his learnings about the process (the practice) of studying them. Therefore, it is a scientific method among many, but it is "not the scientific method" applied to learning as Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) stress. Finally, participatory action research starts at a small scale, but gradually widens its scope so that others affected by the same/similar problem can be involved within the research. This allows the researchers to give a reasoned justification of their rationale and educational outcome.

Data collection and analysis were completed by an *ex post facto* approach that allowed collecting data in a naturally occurring event such as culture shock in which a more rigorous experimental approach was impossible. In the context of educational research, *ex post facto* means 'after the fact' or 'retrospectively' and refers to the studies carried out after the events, which are subject to

investigation, have already happened. Second, by a retrospective analysis, the researcher can use the gist of the data that forms the epitome, not the bulk of it. According to Parlett and Hamilton (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), the process is akin to funneling from the wide to the narrow. Third, the retrospective data processing enables the participant-as-observer to move toward observer-as-participant throughout time. This move strives to balance involvement with detachment, closeness with distance, familiarity with unfamiliarity.

Data is gathered and processed from the term papers in terms of documents; from the journal notes in terms of accounts; personal observations; from the casual chatting with the director of the program in terms of semi-structured or unstructured interviews; from the written opinions of the participant's tutor, and other examiners in terms of documents.

### *Data Collection*

Three types of data were collected. The first type was retrieved documents, which consisted of grades, written opinions of professors, course notes and journal notes. The second type was personal observations. The third type was interviews, which consisted of semi-structured and/or unstructured interviews with colleagues, director of the program, and the participant's tutor during the time of the study.

### **Procedure**

The procedure was participatory in this study. In accordance with the theoretical foundation of the participatory action research, the participant was both the practitioner and the researcher, which meant improving participant's academic performance was the main determinant of the procedure. Consequently, data emerged without a specific plan only through the practices of the participant; either a specific objective was put forward due to a possible constraining effect on the process. However, four basic steps of participatory action research that of planning, acting, observing, reflecting (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000) were adopted as the basis. Data was collected *ex post facto*. The timeline that emerged from the participant's experience was as follows:

1. Emergent data was collected.
2. Identification, evaluation and formulation of the problem was done. The interpretation of the problem is done loosely so it can lead toward an innovative intervention.
3. Discussions with the interested parties –the program director, participant's tutor, and fellow students – were done.
4. Decision for a proper plan was made. The plan was implemented afterwards.
5. Data collection was done for reflecting and further planning.
6. Interpretation of the data and description of the educational context from which tentative assumptions, principles and generalizations were made under the term "SMOPL".

## RESULTS

Data was gathered and processed from the term papers in terms of documents; from the journal notes in terms of accounts; personal observations; from the casual chattings with the Director of the program in terms of semi- structured and/or unstructured interviews; from the written opinions of the participant's tutor, and other examiners in terms of documents.

### *Honeymoon Stage*

This stage happened between 9th of July 2003 and September 2003, which passed without problem. Between these dates, there wasn't any cultural unfamiliarity due to the new context. The sojourner was thrilled by the novelty and excitement of being in a new culture as a detached tourist. The term, detached, refers to his sense of temporariness. The sojourner felt as if he would return back to Turkey after some time. He enjoyed new places and new experiences.

### *First Cycle*

As shown Figure 1, the first cycle, being illustrated in black, represents the sojourner's ongoing meaning-making practices before coming to the Canadian university. Until the end of this cycle, the sojourner doesn't have any feeling of displacement. He continues his meaning-making practices not as a sojourner but as a tourist. He feels that his sole purpose is to enjoy the new environment: the city and the people. The sojourner doesn't recognize any cultural unfamiliarity that bothers him. Rather, everything that is unfamiliar to him is waiting to be discovered. According to Argyris and Schon's (1974) approach, this can be considered as an example of single loop learning. In fact there hadn't been cultural awareness, which is the first principle of SMOPL. The sojourner doesn't recognize much cultural differences that can cause him to criticize his value system. Rather, he discovers similarities more than he expected. Some communication problems occur in everyday life, however, these problems don't cause any discomfort.

### **Disintegration Stage and the first occurrence of the Problem**

This stage overlapped with the first occurrence of the problem and with the beginning of the second cycle (At 2 months in Figure 1). The problem was the debilitating academic performance, particularly, oral and written incompetency in English language. It first occurred in terms of oral incompetency in class discussions. In terms of Argyris and Schon (1974), this was the start of the second loop. The sojourner couldn't manage the problem with some changes in his action strategy. Moreover, the problem cried out for an intervention that would change the value system of the sojourner. During the *honeymoon stage* there wasn't any problem. The sojourner was content about this, because he expected some problems during the first months in a new culture. On the contrary, culture wasn't a big issue. At this *disintegration stage*, the sojourner experienced *culture shock* that he hadn't experienced before. He encountered another new culture, which had strict rules and conditions. This new cultural environment was the academia. During the *disintegration stage*, the sojourner realized huge differences between the everyday

culture and the academia. These differences became gradually more pronounced and bolder, and intimidated the sojourner. First, the sojourner concluded that his background

wasn't adequate for the Masters program. Although the program was interdisciplinary, open to everyone from various disciplines, the sojourner had been away from academic life for seven years. It could even be said at the time that the sojourner had no background compared to new graduates. All these factors disintegrated him from the class and increased his oral incompetency in English language. The sojourner presumed his English wasn't at the graduate level. Especially, when he looked at the fellow students in the program – their first language was English – his conviction became firmer. This led him to allow the native English speakers to “dominate”. The sense of inadequacy isolated him not only from academic life but also from the everyday life. He was blaming himself for the things that were going wrong; in fact, everything started going wrong. There were two choices in front of him: to leave or not leave the program. He thought he couldn't survive in the program unless he makes a plan from scratch. This was both the beginning of the participatory action research from a practitioner stance and the first step of the second cycle: PLAN, as seen in Figure 1.

### *Second Cycle*

The second cycle was the beginning of the participatory action research, which included an intervention. This cycle was represented in gray in Figure 1. This second cycle was important as the sojourner, for the first time, abandoned his previous assumptions about his debilitating academic performance. A new cycle meant a new value system toward the problem. Different from the first cycle in Figure 1, the second cycle included four basic steps of participatory action research. During the first cycle, the sojourner was concentrating on his everyday actions and applying the change only to the action strategy. In other words, his value system wasn't subject to criticism: he was absolutely right about the cause of his debilitating performance. After the breakdown, which was the end of the first cycle, he started blaming himself for the cause of his problem. Until the second cycle, the first cycle used to be a closed loop. The smaller spiral was subject to the change (action strategy) but not the big cycle (value system). Then, it was the unsustainable problem that broke this loop. Until the intervention, it can be said of an intermediate state, which was overwhelmed by uncertainty and self-blame.

*Plan:* The intervention started with a plan. The sojourner's plan was to warm up his heart toward the program by class participation. He decided to contribute to the class discussions as possible as he could. On the other hand, to prevent any possible intimidation, the sojourner determined not to speak too much. ‘Fewer sentences, fewer mistakes’ became his strategy.

*Act:* He acted on this plan. He prepared his comments or his questions down to every word beforehand and repeated it in his mind. When he had his turn, he uttered them out.

*Observe:* According to the sojourner's observations, the plan worked well. The sojourner was pleasant with his participation in the class discussions. This resulted in his connection with the program and the classmates. He felt more confident with himself then. The director of the program, who was present at all the classes as a listener if not as a lecturer, wanted the sojourner to express more. The director's argument was that if the sojourner should've explained his ideas more, it would bring clarity to the expression on the contrary of the aphorismic style that used to

employ. The director further expressed that he wanted to understand and know the sojourner more.

*Reflect:* Although this critique made sense, the sojourner didn't like the idea of speaking too much. What he believed at that time was more expression may have caused more errors and

made him embarrassed in the class. He didn't want to take the slightest risk of intimidation because he believed he was emotionally more sensitive at the time. So, he didn't stop participating in the same way: less words more turns. Only if he felt happy with his expression, did he speak with more sentences. The second cycle overlapped with the *reintegration stage*, which was the stage of recovery.

### *Reintegration Stage and the Second Occurrence of the Problem*

According to Pedersen (1995), at the reintegration stage, the self-blame turns into blaming others for any discomfort. At the *reintegration stage*, the sojourner believed that director of the program, in fact, was not in need of any further explanation for clarity, but he was constantly examining the sojourner's knowledge. The sojourner considered the director as an examiner during all the classes. At the *reintegration stage*, the sojourner concluded that any critique on the clarity issue was due to the inadequacy of professors but not him.

So far, it's been said that the problem was the debilitating academic performance in oral communicative ability in English. The second occurrence of the problem, which was before the third cycle, was in terms of written incompetency. During the 2003-2004 academic year, the sojourner required to take two courses: one, HUMN 6000 (Speaking and Writing I); two, HUMN 6011 (Readings in History II). Before the term papers were due, the sojourner decided to choose a topic focused on Turkey. He thought that this would've given him a more comfortable and easy way of writing. Afterwards, he found himself in the theoretical domain of sociology in which he didn't have any background. He determined to read on social theory, nationalism and nation state and relate this knowledge to a particular social movement in Turkey. The theoretical foundation of the topic was too wide for the sojourner and the sojourner didn't have enough time both to grasp the knowledge and to apply it to his topic. His dissatisfaction with his essays resulted in an unsuccessful oral examination. Although the sojourner passed with one of his essays, he was required to rewrite the other essay. From HUMN 6000 (Speaking and Writing I) he received 80. During Christmas holiday, he'd written 6011 (Readings in History II), which was a disaster not only for the sojourner but also for his family. He was able to submit the written essay at the beginning of the winter semester. The sojourner received 75 from that essay but he was satisfied with the outcome.

### *Third Cycle*

The third cycle is the two-lined cycle in Figure 1. The third cycle overlapped with the two stages of Adler's (1975) *culture shock* model: *autonomy* and *interdependence*. There is an iterative nature of participatory action research. The practitioner continues to change the plan in terms of a new problem until the objective is achieved.



*Replan:* So far, the sojourner concluded that what he believed about his debilitating academic performance was not true. First, the program director's comments were true. The director wrote: you need to work on some problems in grammar and sentence structure, as well as the organization of your ideas (comments on the 6011 short paper, 2003 Fall Semester). The sojourner had thought that he already knew English grammar and sentence structure but he didn't. Second, his improvement in oral competency didn't lead him to improvement in academic writing at the same scale. The sojourner learned the terms: clarity, preciseness and conciseness. He needed a new plan to approach the writing problem. In his autobiography, the sojourner talks about the problem:

Since Turkish was my first language, I used to think in Turkish. When I tried to do the same in English, I was losing the flow (track) of thinking on a particular subject in English (when it came to the daily usage of language, there was no problem). English was really a new "realm" —and to some degree, still is— that I couldn't know every "remote corner", although I think otherwise in speaking. Why? Because, although there seems a linear fashion (logic) in speaking, it does not distract me on the continuity of the speech, since I can use body language (mimics, gestures, signs, and even silence to support and sometimes to substitute my speech: speaking as a skill allows ruptures that make my mind take a "breath". In writing as a skill, I am obliged to keep on going only within the confines of some signs, and within the confines of some certain rules that were associated with those signs. Worse than that, I was supposed to open the issues in the papers, the issues related to the theories of the Post-Structuralist French thinkers. The ground of comprehension was so slippery, it caused me to lose the track of the subject matter, or even to get lost in! (Yusuf Baydal, Program Journal, 2004.)

At the end of his search, the sojourner rediscovered himself. He decided to write about his Canadian experience. The sojourner took two courses in the winter semester. They were HUMN 6001 (Speaking and Writing II) and HUMN 6021 (Readings in Western Literature II). The topic of the former course was "structure, desire, death) and the latter was "utopia". The sojourner thought to use his Turkish-English experience as the content of the first course essay and his Turkey-Canada as the content of the "utopia" course. He spoke to his tutor, who was the Director at the time; he encouraged him to do so.

*Act:* He acted on the new plan. He sketched new notes on his diary focusing on his Canadian experience.

Yes, I am in Canada. A new country, a new social setting, a new language and life style... It is not that much difficult to get used to the climate and the environment. The smell of the soil is the same everywhere although the ones lying under it are different; the rain is the same and the wind, wherever you go. (Yusuf Baydal, Personal Diary, 2003).

The sojourner discussed ways that could facilitate the implementation of the plan with his colleague, who was a senior fellow student in the same program at the time. English was also his second language. He experienced similar things in academic writing.

The Colleague: I had the same problem when I was in the first year. First of all, let's presume that there is thinking in Turkish as well as thinking in English. If I put aside all the theories on bilingualism, I feel it just right here (pointing to his head). I was born into Spanish as you were born into Turkish. This, I think, forms the very basis of our linguistic competence. When it comes to writing, we need that competency, as well as in speaking. With these two skills, you conceive something, bear something out that needs a more active participation of the mind.

Yusuf: So you mean, 'play within the field which you feel comfortable and productive...

The Colleague: Exactly... (Interview notes with the Colleague, 2004)

The interview with the colleague involved "judicious mixture" of the participant (sojourner) observation and casual chatting, supplemented by note-taking. He first wrote in Turkish, in which he felt more comfortable and then translated into English.

I adhered to the advice of a fellow graduate student in the program, "first write in Turkish, then translate the written material into English." It worked! At least it brought out a hopeful start. But...simply I was "talking" about myself. However in relation to the content of the courses, the outcome was almost a diary of a big "baby" born into English in comparison to the heavy issues of Deconstructionism. (Yusuf Baydal, Program Journal, 2004.)

The sojourner used "himself" as the source of a personal narrative. What did he and his family feel about Canada as a new country to live in? How did he feel about the change in terms of culture, specifically, language? How did an imaginary Turkey come to existence? Those core questions formed two term papers.

*Observe:* The intervention worked. The sojourner, at least, found a way to write without any problem. He was writing easily and whenever he felt a difficulty, he was switching to his native language, Turkish.

*Reflect:* When he reflected on his writing, the papers didn't have any link to the course content, which would cause him to be irrelevant. After having couple of meetings with his tutor, the sojourner decided to use footnotes to link the course content to the body text.

He would be able to incorporate the course content, which was difficult to comprehend for him, in this way. This way of writing also facilitated his comprehension of the theories having been treated during the classes. So, he not only prepared the term papers but also prepared himself for the oral examination of the papers. His oral examination went well. He was in full comprehension of what he'd written because every bit of the theory had a match in his personal life. The grades went up. He had 85 for the HUMN 6001 (Speaking and Writing II) course and 84 for the HUMN 6021 (Readings in Western Literature II) course.

### *Autonomy*

This stage started at 6 months. The third cycle or the second intervention showed its impact on the sojourner's well being. Familiarity and competency with English increased and the discomfort started settling down. The academia and academic writing seemed less hostile. The

sojourner learned how to empower his voice. He gained understanding of the rules of academic life; he became more self-assured and skillful in adapting to that culture. He was more proactive, functional and independent; he perceived himself as insider in some situations. He became more social with the fellow students and the professors as well. This transition from the disintegration stage to the autonomy stage was so smooth but it should be stated that high grades made a sudden impact on the transition.

### *Interdependence*

This stage started 12 months and continued afterwards. A bicultural identity was conceived; there has been a sense of belonging to the academia. Before this and the autonomy stage, the sojourner concluded that academia was more conservative than he'd assumed. During the interdependence stage, he longer felt negatively affected by this. He internalized some parts of

the North American academia. He sometimes felt regression to a former stage: from interdependence to autonomy or from autonomy to reintegration. A failure at the school, discomfort at home or even a long period of bad weather could cause the regression but the effect was not dramatic as it'd been before. The effect didn't last long either. After the sojourner emotionally settled down, he started feeling himself in between daily life and the academic life. One of the instructors who also examined the sojourner in the oral exam in which the sojourner had failed and was required to rewrite his essay made a written comment about this change. The comment was at the end of one of the sojourner's latest papers: Interesting material, I think you've come a long way since your earlier papers (the instructor's, written comments for the term paper, 2005).

## **DISCUSSION**

The term of culture shock was first introduced by Oberg (1960) to describe the anxiety resulting from not knowing what to do in a new culture. Others have applied Oberg's framework more broadly to include "culture fatigue" (Guthrie, 1975), "language shock" (Smalley, 1963), "role shock" (Byrnes, 1966), and "pervasive ambiguity" (Ball-Rokeach, 1973). Each of these early definitions has emphasized the reactive aspect of culture shock, as can be a part of specific pathology. According to Pedersen (1995) more recent explanations, however, have presented culture shock as an "educational model," describing the adjustment period as a state of growth and development. Ward, Bochner, Furnham (2001), for example, describe culture shock in terms of cultural interactions that diversify both sides of the interaction. While sojourners acquire a new language and a new culture, they also contribute to the host culture by their native way of life. This is what the word "diffusion" literally means in anthropology: the dissemination of elements of culture to another region or people. Peter Adler (1975) has specified the process and developed a 5-stage theory of culture shock based on work by Oberg and others. This approach describes culture shock in more neutral rather than negative terms as a 5-stage educational and developmental process with positive as well as negative consequences.

Recent literature explains culture shock as an "educational model," describing the adjustment period as a state of growth and development. Indeed, the evolution of the culture shock models yielded to such a concept. In the SMOPL, the new cultural environment that caused the culture

shock was presented as the academia. Apart from other approaches, the study suggests that, although the change in the physical setting, the climate has some effects on the sojourner, it is specifically the academia that causes the shock. Although culture shock can be a gain instead of a loss, but such a model requires a solid methodology. What we mean by the term "solid methodology" is the way that any sojourner can easily understand and employ: first, to see what possible consequences of cultural interactions wait for him or her; second, to become ready for any adverse effects; third, and most importantly is to turn these adverse effects into advantages for personal growth and development. There are various stage models of culture shock. This paper agrees with Pedersen (1995): culture shock is so subjective, the experience of culture shock is hard to convey in rows of numbers or even statistically significant general tendencies of "most" people. Moreover, culture shock is a personal experience. It does not affect all people in the same way or even the same person in the same way when it reoccurs. Thus, there can be a methodology, which favors subjectivity and empowers the voice of every sojourner. Such a methodology can transform the concept of culture shock into a practical and reliable educational model. Besides, a model based on the combination of both the stage theory of culture shock and the model of intervention and improvement can make any sojourner an active agent of the process. The SMOPL doesn't suggest a particular intervention or solution in respect to each individual's uniqueness. Rather, this study generalizes the approach to the problem. Participatory action research was employed as the methodology, which fits well in the aforementioned objective. Participatory action research promotes reflective practice for personal change and improvement. Besides, its route follows an iterative nature. In other words, the reflective practitioner follows the four steps again and again until s/he achieves the change. On this route, a reflective practitioner alters his or her beliefs and values, if necessary. So, s/he doesn't adhere to a value system but rather takes a desired change as a reference. For the last, participatory action research gave to the model a flexible nature that any sojourner could utilize in regards of the uniqueness of every experience. That's why we called it the Sojourner's Model of Post-Secondary Learning.

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## **Chapter 2: Students' Perceptions of Effective Teaching in Higher Education**

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### **Abstract**

Memorial University of Newfoundland students were asked in an online survey (Winter 2008) to provide their perceptions of effective teaching for both on-campus and distance instruction. Specifically, students were requested to identify and rank five characteristics of an effective instructor, explain why each characteristic was deemed important, and describe classroom behaviours demonstrating each characteristic. Constituting a departure from much of the existing literature, this qualitative study also provides a rich student narrative from which a student-generated definition has been formed for each of nine identified characteristics of an effective instructor. Valuable information obtained in this study is seen as a starting point for further exploration of this critical dimension of higher education teaching.

The notion of asking students to provide feedback on the quality of the teaching that they encounter during their academic career has been with us for almost a century. Student rating of instruction was introduced into North American universities in the mid-1920s (d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997). However, the desire to clarify the qualities that make university teaching effective has been revitalized, as a renewed mandate to enhance teaching and learning appears predominately in the strategic plans of many universities and colleges. The escalation in concern over the quality of university teaching has fostered a significant body of research that attempts to isolate characteristics of effective university teaching (Young, Cantrell & Shaw, 1999).

Teaching is being seen as increasingly more important relative to the research goals of higher education. In 2006, the Canadian Council of Learning called on Canada to establish clear, coherent, and consistent goals for post-secondary education, many of which reflect on the quality of teaching and learning (Cappon, 2006). This renewed emphasis on teaching necessitates valid means of measuring effective teaching in the post-secondary setting. There is a growing body of literature pertaining to students' assessment of instruction in higher education and the relevance of course evaluation questionnaires as a way of communicating to instructors the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching.

## **Review of the Literature**

Marsh and Roche (1993) examined students' evaluations of teaching effectiveness as a means of enhancing university teaching. Ryan and Harrison (1995) investigated how students weight various teaching components in arriving at their overall evaluation of teaching effectiveness. More recently, Ralph (2003) conducted a study on teaching effectiveness using how well students learn as the criterion. This study took place in a Canadian university and students represented four different instructional settings: Business, Sociology, Education, and Physical Education. The students were given 32 hypothetical instructor profiles and were asked to rank nine selected teaching factors developed by Marsh and Hocevar (1991). In that study Ralph identified five attributes of effective instructors: commitment to learners; knowledge of material; organization and management of the environment; desire to improve; and collaboration with others. Ralph concluded that exemplary university teaching is discernable and the quality of components that define it can be assessed.

Similar studies provided students with a set of characteristics from which to choose.

Clark (1995) identified cognitive and affective goals of effective teaching at the university level. He developed a questionnaire covering a wide range of teaching activities associated with effective instruction and the achievement of cognitive and affective objectives. The questionnaire, administered at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, identified qualities of effective university teaching determined by the researcher. These included four cognitive components: knowledge, organization of instruction, clarity of expression, and quality of presentation. In addition, there were four affective components: student interest; student participation and openness to ideas; interpersonal relations; and communication and fairness. Many course evaluation questionnaires administered at university campuses across Canada, including Memorial University, include these qualities. Students are asked to identify how each course/instructor ranks in each of these qualities.

Devlin (2002) examined the strengths and weakness of a survey used at the University of Melbourne to identify students' perceptions of their learning environment. The Perceptions of Learning Environment Questionnaire (PLEQ) was first used in 1994 and was developed as part of a larger project, Teaching and Learning in Tertiary Education at Queensland University of Technology. Devlin argues that the PLEQ fails to sufficiently identify student perceptions in depth. The design of the PLEQ forces students to focus on and comment on the behavior of others, and, "does not allow them to communicate their views on how they themselves are contributing to their learning" (p. 290). Devlin suggests that this approach is contrary to the PLEQ design to report on good teaching and contains none of the ". . . constructivist views of learning . . . which emphasize that learners actively construct knowledge for themselves" (p. 290). Traditional course evaluation questionnaires, she argues, assume the "student as listener-follower" point of view and a transmission model of delivering courses. While students may have been aware in the past of their own behavior and how it helped or hindered learning, the standard course evaluation questionnaires simply did not provide the means to demonstrate or express that awareness.

## **Research Questions and Method**

These studies and others like them offer to students the researchers' understanding of the applicable characteristics in the form of Likert scale questionnaires, or controlled sets of stimuli

such as the 32 teacher profiles used in Ralph's 2003 study. The purpose of this study was to establish, through the use of an open-ended survey instrument, students' perceptions of effective teaching at Memorial University. Drawing from their own experiences as post-secondary students, participants were asked to identify five characteristics of effective teaching, for both on-campus and distance courses, describe these characteristics, identify instructor behaviours that demonstrate the characteristics, and rate the characteristics in order of importance. The survey instrument provided allowed students to identify characteristics that they believe are important to effective teaching, rather than simply agree or disagree with a set of prescribed characteristics. This approach proved successful as respondents offered rich descriptions and detailed narratives about their experiences as students.

While much research has been conducted on the questions related to effective teaching in post-secondary institutions, projects that investigate the nature of effective teaching across modes of course delivery are rare. The growth of online distance education leads researchers to questions about the characteristics of effective teaching in online courses. Are the characteristics of effective teaching in a face-to-face environment the same as the characteristics of effective online teaching? And if so, how are these characteristics manifested through electronic media?

Traditional student questionnaires and course evaluation forms are designed with the underlying assumption that the designer and the participant agree on the characteristics of effective teaching. The method used to gather data to study students' perceptions of effective teaching at Memorial University challenges this assumption. The first nine questions of the survey asked students for demographic information. Thirty of the remaining 40 items were open-ended and asked participants for text-based responses. The survey instrument offered students an opportunity to express their own ideas about the characteristics of effective teaching at the post-secondary level. Students were asked to draw on their own experiences as university students to identify five characteristics of effective instructors, describe each characteristic and explain why it is important, and to identify instructor behaviours that demonstrate the characteristic. Finally, students were asked to rank the five characteristics from one to five, with one referring to the least important and five referring to the most important. The set of four questions was repeated five times for both on-campus teaching and instruction at a distance.

A goal of this study was to leave open-ended the qualities of effective teaching. Students were to be free to identify the characteristics and how they are demonstrated without having their belief system influenced by researchers' views of effective teaching. Since the origins of perceptions are found in the belief systems of the students, the rich narratives provided by the students could identify, with greater certainty, the beliefs of the participants.

The research was carried out exclusively through the use of online surveys. Studies have indicated that an online approach is an effective and efficient means of gathering data. Several recent studies have suggested that the rate of responses of Web surveys is on par with those completed on paper. For example, a study of 58, 288 college students in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in Indiana University revealed that students who completed web-based surveys responded as favorably as those who engaged in paper surveys. This response rate held for both genders, and all age groups. (Carini, Hayek, Kuh, Kennedy & Ouimet, 2003)

The survey was developed and delivered using the learning management system employed at Memorial University, Desire2Learn. Using Desire2Learn as a delivery tool provided electronic safeguards that prevented students from completing the survey more than once. The software also provided a registration system that allowed students to be entered for a chance to win one of the incentives offered for completing the survey, while assuring that each student's responses would be anonymous through the analysis stage.

The survey was made available to students from February 25, 2008 to April 4, 2008. Approximately 17,000 Memorial University students, including undergraduate and graduate students, had access to survey. The university's students are divided among four campuses (Prince Philip Drive campus, St. John's; Marine Institute, St. John's; Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Corner Brook; Harlow Campus, London, Great Britain) and numerous work-study sites. Administering the instrument online provided the potential to reach all of the university's undergraduate and graduate students registered for the winter semester of the 2007-2008 academic year. Of that group, over 2500 opened the survey but only 330 provided usable responses. The demographics of the 330 respondents were very similar to the demographic profile of the larger university population, the two exceptions being the gender proportion, and the proportion of students who participated in the survey from the Faculty of Science. Seventy-three percent of the students who completed the survey were female, compared to sixty percent of the university population. Thirty-one percent of the students who completed the survey study in the Faculty of Science, compared to eighteen percent of the university population. Of the 330 students who completed the survey, 161 of them provided data for both on-campus and distance delivery of courses. The demographics of the 161 respondents deviated from the demographics of the university population, but these discrepancies were consistent with the general demographics for distance students.

The on-campus data were analyzed first. The manual coding of the data identified 69 adjectives that students used to identify characteristics of effective teaching. A unique coding number was assigned to each of the adjectives. These numbers were then entered by hand onto a hard copy of the data. After completing the coding process, the data were filtered in spreadsheet software according to the unique numbers and new spreadsheets were derived, one spreadsheet for each of the 69 characteristics identified. The descriptions and instructor behaviours identified by the students for each characteristic were then harvested, and definitions and a list of instructor behaviours were compiled for each characteristic. The analysis of these definitions and behaviours led to further grouping of the data along behavioural themes. After completing the analysis, nine characteristics of effective teaching were identified. Effective university teachers at Memorial University are: respectful, knowledgeable, approachable, engaging, communicative, organized, responsive, professional, and humorous.

The same approach was used to analyze the data for the characteristics of effective teaching in distance courses. No new descriptors were identified in the responses to the part of the survey that dealt with the distance delivery of courses. Fifty-three of the adjectives identified in the on-campus segment of the survey appeared in the responses to the distance segment. No unique adjectives were present in the distance responses.

## Findings and Discussion

### Respectful

The on-campus students who identify the characteristic *respectful* in the survey used the following adjectives to describe both the personal and pedagogical behaviors of their instructors: fair, understanding, flexible, caring, patient, helpful, compassionate, open-minded, sincere, diplomatic, concerned, reasonable, consistent, kind, empathetic, humble, trustworthy, and realistic. *Respectful*, or the correlated descriptors associated with the characteristic, appeared in the on-campus segment of the survey 341 times, significantly more than any of the other eight characteristics. This characteristic was also the most commonly identified in the distance segment of the survey. The 161 respondents identified respectful or one of its correlates 129 times.

Those students who highlighted the personal nature of *respectful* in both on-campus and distance courses noted the nature of the valued relationship between instructor and students. They appreciate instructors who are compassionate and understanding of the unique and challenging situations that students sometimes experience when enrolled in a course. These aspects of the characteristic *respectful* are particularly important for new students.

Professors can have a bad attitude towards young or first year students, looking at them judgmentally because they are young and ignorant. This, along with the fact that most professors hate teaching first -year classes (ask any student in second year or higher and they will tell you it's true) makes them uncomfortable and feel stupid in class and could scare them from attempting a second year. When professors care that you understand what they are teaching, they will be more approachable to ask stupid questions outside of class. No one likes to feel stupid.  
(on-campus response)

Students from both modes of delivery single out instructors who were caring and patient. They describe a caring instructor as one who displays an interest in them, makes them feel comfortable, learns their names, and offers to help. Patient instructors are those who are willing to answer many questions and explain a concept several times if necessary. Such instructors appreciate that all students do not learn at the same pace.

An instructor's impatience is quite obvious and tends to disrupt the learning process.

Frustration on the instructor's part with a student who doesn't understand is clearly visible and it shames students into giving up on understanding. (on-campus response)

Other personal qualities that are cited under the characteristic *respectful* are kind and empathetic. Students prefer instructors who treat them with common courtesy and respect. It helps them feel comfortable enough to approach the professor to ask questions. Instructors who are empathetic relate to their students' interests and as one respondent commented, help them feel like "we're all in this together." Students appreciate professors who word their criticism in a constructive manner. They want instructors who, "think before speaking."

Without exception, the students who cited “concerned” as a characteristic of effective teaching were referring to the professors’ concern for the students’ academic success. They noted that students would perform better for an instructor who exhibits an emotional investment in their academic achievement.

Humility is another aspect of being respectful, according to students responding to the on-campus segment of the survey. Students expect their professors to admit mistakes when they make them. They feel that the learning environment would be better if professors did not act as if they were superior to their students. One respondent expressed this sentiment in the following comment:

A cocky prof is horrible; they think they know it all and many are horrified when they realize that they have made a mistake. (on-campus response)

Students link humility with trust and see these as important characteristics of effective teaching. Trust has several dimensions. First, they need to trust the professional qualifications of their instructors. Secondly, they want their instructors to be honest about not knowing content. They are critical of instructors who try to bluff their way through an answer. In contrast, students are eager to accept and respect an instructor who is truthful about not knowing the answer to a question but is willing to find the answer and bring it back to class. Honesty is cited as a key component in the relationship between students and professors. Other students focused on the notion that professors are in a position of power and should be trusted not to abuse this situation.

Teachers are in a position of trust and power, and a teacher who can be trusted makes students more eager to learn and more comfortable in a classroom environment. (on-campus response)

Several other characteristics listed under this category speak to the pedagogical behaviors of instructors. This refers to aspects of the instructor’s behavior that relate directly to how courses are taught. Students expect their professors to be fair and reasonable with respect to their expectations of the class. This includes: not examining material that has never been covered in class; grading all students using the same criteria; providing students with equal opportunities for success; being clear on what is expected on examinations and assignments; and giving plenty of advance notice on deadlines. Students prefer professors who find new ways to assess, other than the traditional exams and assignments. Students also feel that professors need to appreciate student workload and at times be more lenient. They should be more concerned that learning has taken place than with meeting deadlines.

Another aspect of the pedagogical nature of being *respectful* is to be helpful. This is defined as the professor who is sincere in his or her efforts to help students achieve in the course. The professor who is helpful encourages students to ask questions, is available during office hours and over email, and provides guidance on assignments and examinations.

Students also expect their instructors to be open-minded. This type of instructor is described as someone who appreciates the opinions of others and does not discriminate. Open-minded



instructors encourage discussion and debate, and respond to students equally. Consistent with this characteristic is the notion of fairness. Respondents indicate that fairness is multi-faceted. It includes a professor's expectations of students' work, fair and consistent grading of examinations and assignments, and equal treatment. One student pointed to the practice of "pegging" students at a certain mark at the beginning of the semester. Another criticized the practice of placing all the "evaluation eggs" in one basket. Another student cited the instructor who "plays up" answers from some students and "downplays" answers from others.

Students who identify realistic as a characteristic of effective teaching express a number of points of view. For some, realistic is applied to expectations. These students want realistic or reasonable expectations clearly identified by the instructor.

Others want their professors to put a realistic focus on course material. They would like to see course material related to real world examples, when possible.

Survey respondents emphasize flexibility as a characteristic of two areas of effective teaching: in the instructor's knowledge of how to teach and what to teach (see definition of Knowledgeable); and in the administration of a course.

Several students highlight the variety of demands that can be placed on a student's schedule and the willingness of professors to accommodate those demands. They are asking for flexibility and tolerance in regards to due dates for assignments and flexibility with regards to the timing and administration of tests. Some students note that flexibility in teaching strategies and in evaluation components would be favorable.

Taking a course online requires patience from the instructor in getting assignments in on time. Most people taking distance courses are doing so out of necessity and probably have a lot on their plates.

Flexibility from an instructor relieves stress associated with the isolated feeling of a distance course. (distance response)

## **Knowledgeable**

Students who identify *knowledgeable* as a characteristic of effective teaching in the on-campus segment of the survey used adjectives that include: flexible, competent, eclectic, credible, current, practical, reflective, and qualified. Respondents who replied to the distance segment used the same adjectives, however, credible, qualified, and reflective were not mentioned. *Knowledgeable* and its correlated descriptors were mentioned 231 times in the responses pertaining to on-campus teaching, making this characteristic the second most noted characteristic of the nine.

The students who responded to the distance segment of the survey only mentioned this characteristic 89 times, placing *knowledgeable* third on the list for distance teaching.

A significant aspect of the data collected is that respondents from both groups rarely separated content knowledge and the ability to teach well. For this reason, knowledge of content and knowledge of pedagogy are not separated in the findings. Respondents indicated clearly that

they believe effective teachers have strong content knowledge, and knowledge and expertise on how to teach what they know.

Students expect effective instructors to have knowledge of the subject area in which they teach above and beyond course objectives. Students expect faculty to have the ability to communicate freely about their subject area, possess a strong background in the area; inspire confidence by serving as a student resource, elicit student interest, and have the ability to respond to students' problems. Some students equate the instructor's command of the content to the level of student trust.

Students also expressed the expectation that professors be current and active in ongoing investigations in their field of study. They indicate that researching, reflecting, and/or practicing in an instructor's chosen field is significant to faculty's ability to make teaching engaging. Adjectives respondents used to describe this aspect of *knowledgeable* included: competent, credible, current, reflective and qualified.

The other component of *knowledgeable* that students identified is pedagogical knowledge. Respondents identify an instructor's ability to vary teaching strategies as a characteristic of effective teaching and an indication of strong content knowledge. For example, of the 43 students who identified flexible as a characteristic of effective teaching, 23 of them associated the notion with flexibility in teaching. These students defined flexibility as the ability to adapt to the learning styles of students, provide different approaches to teaching the material (i.e., switch often from giving notes, to class discussion, to small group work). Others highlighted the importance of offering a variety of evaluation alternatives noting that not all students perform well in written tests and prefer other forms of assessment. Others who defined flexible in terms of teaching and learning highlighted the importance of professors to consider openly the opinions of students on the content.

Other adjectives students used to describe the ability of faculty to vary teaching methods included: practical, eclectic, qualified and reflective. When students use the word practical as a descriptor of *knowledgeable*, they are indicating that students want their course material to be related to real life as much as possible. They would appreciate assignments that show the application of theory to practice in their future careers. This is particularly true in the professional schools, but a number of students suggested an even broader application.

A small proportion of on-campus responses mentioned knowledge of technology, but students who replied to the distance segment of the survey often noted that faculty should possess a good knowledge of information and communications technologies.

## **Approachable**

Students who identified *approachable* as a characteristic of effective teaching described these behaviors using adjectives that include: friendly, personable, helpful, accessible, happy and positive. Students who completed the distance segment of the survey cited all of these adjectives excluding happy and positive. *Approachable* and its correlated descriptors were highlighted, by on-campus students, 210 times, making it the third most noted characteristic of the nine. Respondents to the distance portion mentioned the characteristic 69 times, placing it fourth for

distance delivery. The expectations cited by both groups, however, are similar. The methods of communication students described vary for on-campus and distance course delivery, but appropriately so given the modes of instruction.

The definitions that students provided encompass three main themes: the positive interaction between professor and students; the comfort level of students to ask questions and to seek advice; and the sincere effort on the part of instructors to help students reach their academic goals.

The descriptor “positive”, commonly used in the on-campus part of the survey, includes a broad range of behaviors. First, students want their professors to be positive about teaching them. One student felt that:

It is all too easy to tell that some professors would rather have their teeth pulled than teach a class. A positive attitude impacts how hard the students work and can be enhanced in small ways like smiling. (on-campus response)

Secondly, students look for faculty who are friendly, helpful and patient. They appreciate it when instructors learn their names and show an interest in their progress. They would like for them to chat outside of class and greet students in class. Thirdly, some respondents indicate that there is a connection between being positive and students’ academic success. They are critical of those professors who tell their students that the course is difficult and that many of them will not pass. They feel that faculty should encourage students, provide guidance on course work and use a variety of teaching strategies to accommodate students’ needs.

The behavior of *approachable* also includes creating an atmosphere where students are comfortable asking questions and seeking help, both during class and outside of class. To that end, students want their instructors to be available and accessible, to maintain appropriate office hours and respond to emails in a reasonable time period.

A third theme in this behavior relates to the instructors’ concern for students’ academic achievement. Several respondents to both the on-campus and distance portions of the survey single out their wish to have instructors who are sincere in helping them achieve in their courses. These instructors do not ridicule their students if they do not understand the course material. One student suggests that faculty should “let their students know they can come to them with any questions they might have, no matter how trivial they may seem.” Another student feels that an effective instructor is one who is able to “answer any questions and not make you feel stupid about not knowing something.” They suggest there is a correlation between the instructor’s interest in being there and the students’ success in the course.

Being friendly, according to a number of on-campus students, will result in better class attendance and a greater responsiveness to course material. Being friendly is also perceived by some students as being a prerequisite for good interpersonal communication, an important part of their education. Respondents to the distance segment of the survey noted this aspect of the characteristic as well.

Many respondents emphasize *approachable* as a behavior of effective teaching because of their concern for the effects of intimidation, especially on first- year students. According to the

students who identify *approachable* as a behavior of effective teaching, professors who are *approachable* add life to their courses. They are enthusiastic and upbeat in their teaching. They develop a rapport with their students and build a positive learning atmosphere where everyone has an opportunity to succeed. One student observes:

[having an approachable instructor] fosters an academic environment where communication and respect promote the essence of knowledge sharing. (on-campus response)

The conclusion is that “professors who are not *approachable* are unaware of how students are really progressing in the course until it’s too late. Students end up failing assignments and then the professor wonders why they fail.” Clearly, it is important to students that professors are genuinely interested in teaching them and the subject regardless of the mode of delivery.

## Engaging

On-campus students who identify instructor behaviors that were *engaging* describe these behaviors using adjectives that include: enthusiastic, interesting, passionate, motivating, creative, positive, charismatic, stimulating, interactive, energetic, and assertive. Distance students again followed suit. They did not include in their responses, however, assertive, challenging, charismatic, energetic, positive, or stimulating. Respondents to the on-campus portion of the survey highlight *engaging* and its correlated descriptors 198 times, making it the fourth most noted characteristic of the nine. Respondents to the distance section of the survey highlighted the characteristic 44 times, making it the seventh most noted of the nine. The definitions respondents from both segments of the survey provided for characteristics that fell under *engaging* predominately dealt with three attributes: the passion and enthusiasm demonstrated by the instructor for the course material and teaching; their ability to share this passion and enthusiasm with their students; and the level to which this energy influences their pedagogical choices.

Demonstrating passion for the course was highlighted as a positive behavior, one that respondents believed would draw students closer to the topic being studied, help students enjoy learning, inspire students, and make the course interesting through fostering a positive atmosphere. Students also indicate that an obvious desire to investigate, research, and/or practice in their chosen field is a good indicator of an instructor’s level of interest in their subject area.

Another characteristic identified by respondents is that faculty should have a desire, and openly enjoy, teaching and working with their students. They believe that a good attitude toward students and students’ efforts help to create a positive learning environment and is a strong motivational factor. Respondents identified a number of behaviors that would be an indicator of this characteristic including: smiling, interacting with students, getting to know students, lecturing in a positive manner, being well prepared for class, utilizing effective public speaking practices, varying tone of voice, varying teaching strategies, and being accessible to students.

The results indicate that students believe that passing on an instructor’s passion for their discipline has a cause and effect relationship with the pedagogical choices that teachers make. Students note that they are engaged and motivated by professors who encourage them to become

involved actively in the lecture. Interactive teachers are described as stimulating, energetic, and charismatic.

Sheepish instructors are not listened to well. There are certain instructors that though they may be fully competent in their field, completely fail to spark any kind of interest in the topic. A professor that isn't confident in teaching their material is often just as bad as having no professor at all. (on-campus response)

Students want faculty to be creative with their approach to teaching and value instructors who employ a variety of teaching strategies and interactive activities. Creative approaches keep students interested in topics. They make dry, abstract content come alive.

Creative projects/discussion keep students interested and active and help us gain knowledge. (distance response)

They also highlighted the desire for their instructors to demonstrate confidence in their knowledge of their content area by being able to respond to questions, and by being able to challenge students. Respondents rarely separate pedagogical and content knowledge when they describe good teaching. The conclusion drawn from this is that strong content knowledge does not guarantee good teaching, but good teaching is dependent on strong content knowledge.

## **Communicative**

Respondents to the on-campus and distance portions of the survey highlighted several personal attributes under *communicative*. They used specific adjectives to describe this characteristic, including clear, understandable, thorough, constructive, and attentive. Respondents who completed the on-campus segment of the survey mentioned *communicative* or its correlated descriptors 153 times, making the characteristic the fifth most noted of the nine. Students who responded to the distance portion of the survey mentioned the characteristic 69 times, tying it with *approachable* for the fourth most noted characteristic of effective teaching at a distance.

The majority of on-campus students noted the importance of language, particularly effective command of English. For some on-campus and distance students, *communicative* means using a variety of teaching methods to help students understand course content. Some students feel that being organized is part of being *communicative*. Other on-campus students highlighted the importance of astute listening skills. They indicated that they want their instructors to be approachable and able to talk to them in a meaningful way about course content. Students who responded to the distance segment of the survey noted many of the same concerns as their on-campus counterparts, but focused their discussion on communication through electronic modes.

Survey respondents from both the on-campus and distance segments of the survey who chose the word clear as a descriptor gave it two dimensions. First, they note that instructors should be clear in the presentation of material. They indicate that professors should ensure their notes are well organized and the visuals and demonstrations are used to clarify difficult content. Secondly, students feel that instructors should make clear their expectations for evaluation.

They want their instructors to be specific about requirements for tests and assignments, and that course outlines be clear and concise.

Consistent with the descriptor, “clear”, students also chose understandable as a part of being *communicative*. Students want instructors to deliver coherent lectures, or well organized and clear web content, give practical work to support learning, speak clearly and loudly or write clearly in discussion forum postings and email, and explain what is expected in their course.

Students also want their instructors to be thorough. For on-campus students this descriptor refers specifically to maximizing use of instructional time, avoiding irrelevant material, providing lists of supplementary course materials, and giving tutorials. Students who take courses online want their instructors to accommodate the fact that many of them have not taken courses in many years.

Prompt, quality feedback is a theme that appears often in student responses both for the on-campus and distance segments of the survey. The distance students, however, were very concerned about the speed with which instructor feedback was forwarded to them. Prompt feedback appeared to be a very important characteristic of effective teaching at a distance. Students who note constructive as a characteristic of effective teaching focused on the importance of constructive criticism from professors. They indicate that constructive feedback could encourage student learning and provide experiences that could bolster self-confidence. To that end, they prefer that their instructors avoid sarcasm and degrading remarks.

Students see constructive criticism as a link to more effective evaluation.

Another descriptor of the characteristic *communicative* is *attentive*. On-campus students who identified *attentive* as an aspect of effective teaching focused on listening skills and their instructor’s attention to detail. They want their instructors to be vigilant when students are writing examinations, pay due diligence while students are doing presentations, return tests and assignments in a reasonable period of time, and listen carefully to students as they ask questions.

Students who responded to the distance segment of the survey highlighted the approach that instructors use when communicating with students in discussion forums or email. They want their instructors to pay attention to what the students write and respond appropriately.

## **Organized**

Respondents to both the on-campus and distance segments of the survey identified *organized* as a characteristic of effective teaching. Other adjectives that students used to describe this set of behaviours included efficient, focused, and prepared. Students who responded to the online segment of the survey highlighted *organized* or its correlated descriptors 133 times, making the characteristic the sixth most mentioned of the nine. Distance students noted the characteristic 68 times, making it the fifth most mentioned in the distance portion of the survey, just one behind approachable and communicative, both mentioned 69 times. Both on-campus and distance students value this aspect of effective teaching, as they feel that it has a reciprocating effect. One on-campus student notes:



If the prof is organized in teaching the course, I will be organized in doing the course. (on-campus response)

Students prefer instructors who are *organized* in their lectures and online content, in their approach to the subject matter, and in their dealings with students. An *organized* instructor's actions include having lectures prepared; using clear visual aids; being coherent in class or with notes on a web site; reviewing a test when it is handed back to students; providing a course outline; and providing feedback consistently throughout the course.

The first behavior identified by students in this category is being prepared. On-campus students believe that to be prepared means to maximize instructional time and to know course content. Instructors should tell students what they will be learning and what is expected of them. Students who responded to the distance survey identified similar behaviours, but framed their comments in the context of the online delivery of courses.

Students also identified focused as a characteristic of *organized* teaching. On-campus students noted that instructors should stay on topic. Students comment that it is difficult to understand or pay attention when a professor is not focused on topic. Distance students made similar comments, but in the context of online delivery.

The third characteristic used to describe *organized* is efficient. Students in both on-campus and distance segments of the study identify two important aspects of this behavior: providing sufficient feedback to them and making the most of instructional time, be it in the classroom or online. Students from both groups prefer to receive feedback on examinations and assignments in a reasonable period of time. For distance students, efficient also referred to responding to email and discussion postings promptly.

## **Responsive**

Students who completed the on-campus portion of the survey want professors to be *responsive*. They used adjectives that include available, helpful, efficient, perceptive and accommodating to describe the behaviour. Respondents indicated that *responsive*, as a behavior, encompasses two attributes, the instructors' responses to students' oral and written work, and the instructors' awareness of individual student needs. On-campus students identified *responsive* or one of its correlated descriptors 91 times, making *responsive* the seventh most mentioned characteristic of on-campus teaching. Respondents to the distance portion of the survey identified the same behaviours as did the respondents to the on-campus segment except for perceptive. There was, however, a significant difference in the emphasis distance students placed on *responsive* behaviours. Distance students identified *responsive* or one of its correlates 100 times, making the characteristic the second most mentioned of the nine.

The first attribute of being *responsive* is to provide students with timely, thorough and constructive feedback in their course work. While on-campus students appreciate the busy workload of faculty, they feel that the longer it takes to receive comments on their work, the more difficult it is to address the changes suggested by the instructor or to understand the grades. To discuss their progress with

professors, respondents suggest that faculty set and maintain reasonable office hours and respond to all emails as soon as possible.

Two important components of feedback for on-campus students are discussion and questioning during class time. Students would like their instructors to involve them more in the learning process. This would result in a more effective and efficient use of instructional time. Students who responded to the distance segment of the survey shared similar concerns with on-campus students but framed their responses in the context of distance technologies used to deliver online courses.

The second attribute of being *responsive* is the instructors' awareness of individual student's needs. Both on-campus and distance students believe that effective teaching involves being perceptive; specifically, being attentive to signs from students that indicate the course material is too difficult or a particular concept is not well understood. Students' questions and body language, in the case of on-campus teaching, should help the instructor with that insight. Students who completed the distance portion of the survey want their professors to be attentive to these signs as they appear in online communications, responding quickly and carefully to email and discussion forum postings, and asking for clarification on the part of the student should the need exist.

Furthermore, instructors should accept the fact that everyone does not learn and express ideas at the same pace. For that reason, they suggest that professors should be more accommodating with deadlines and flexible in the time frame for examinations. Students concluded that being *responsive* in a timely and efficient manner as well as being sensitive to their individual differences and accommodating their needs will result in a greater sense of trust between teacher and student. The respondents believe that an instructor who "cares about being an effective teacher, not just his or her area of expertise, will help them reach their highest potential as students."

Students who completed the distance segment of the survey were greatly concerned about the responsiveness of faculty teaching online. Their concern is quite valid given that for the vast majority of distance students, all communication with instructors is mediated electronically, through email, discussion forums, or audio or video conferencing (i.e., web-based audio and video conferencing, or telephone). For distance students, timely and constructive feedback to questions or evaluation components is extremely important.

## **Professional**

Respondents to the on-campus segment of the survey who identify *professional* as a characteristic of effective teaching use adjectives that include dedicated, punctual, dependable, efficacious, hygienic, and confident. The responses from the distance portion of the survey were similar. Distance students omitted efficacious, and hygienic. On-campus students mentioned *professional* or its correlated descriptors 85 times, and distance students 27 times, making the characteristic the eighth most mentioned of the nine for both sets of data.

The descriptions provided by on-campus students focus on appropriate dress, punctuality, trust, honesty, and a measured presence in terms of the instructors' interaction with students. Students note that they want their professors, not teaching assistants, to teach the course.

Having TA's teach the course shows the professor and university is not valuing the students. (on-campus response)

They expect their instructors to be appropriately dressed and hygienic.

Smelly, dirty profs turn me off from going to a class. (on-campus response)

It is hard to take someone seriously when they are dressed like a mess or like a slob. (on-campus response)

Both distance and on-campus students expect faculty to maintain a *professional* demeanor when dealing with students' questions, both in person and electronically. Several respondents note the importance of prompt responses to emails and other electronic communications. They expect instructors to be in class on time with well-planned lectures and activities. Needlessly cancelling classes is described as unacceptable. They want their professors to stay on the course material, but appreciate the interjection of personal anecdotes that highlighted concepts being studied in the course material. They want to be able to trust their instructors to be faithful to the course syllabus and to establish *professional* expectations for student conduct in their classes and laboratory activities. They note that, when a professor exhibits a *professional* presence and is dedicated to teaching, they feel valued as students. For some, being dedicated means keeping up with technology and new teaching methods.

Furthermore, students expect their professors to display a sense of confidence and to pass that confidence on to their students. Without confidence students are left to doubt their own knowledge because they doubt the material being taught. Distance students also noted that instructors should be confident in their technical skills.

## **Humorous**

Students appreciate a sense of humor as a characteristic of effective teaching. It encompasses many facets of the instructor's personality, including having a positive outlook on teaching, being kind and approachable, and building a more *engaging* pedagogical experience through classroom atmosphere and student-teacher rapport. Two adjectives that are consistently used to describe a *humorous* instructor are "happy" and "positive". On-campus students mentioned humor or its correlated descriptors 51 times, and distance students 11 times, making the characteristic the ninth most mentioned of the nine for both sets of data.

Students who completed the on-campus segment of the survey contend that instructors with a sense of humor help them feel more relaxed. Responses provided by distance students concurred with the findings presented in the on-campus portion of the survey, but their comments were framed in the context of distance delivery.

Students also recommend that instructors inject stories, personal experiences, and some humor into their lectures. They expect their professors to be positive about teaching the material and about being in class. In the opinion of the respondents, such qualities make a professor more approachable. They believe that friendlier instructors are more likely to be available to listen to students' concerns and questions. For on campus students, this characteristic is demonstrated by coming into class with a smile, greeting students, and having a 'chat' with them before class begins. Distance students would rely more on the content, language, and tone of electronic communications.

## Conclusion

There is great potential for this study to inform research in related areas. These results may be useful to researchers investigating the gap, if any, between students' and faculty perceptions of effective teaching; the change over time of students' perceptions of effective teaching; a comparison of Memorial University to other Canadian universities in regard to students' perceptions of effective teaching; and the influence (if any) of the amount of university experience on students' beliefs regarding effective instruction. Hopefully, this study will be the beginning of a more extensive research agenda in the area of effective teaching at the post-secondary level.

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### **Chapter 3: Career Decisions of Newfoundland Youth (1973) on How People's Attitudes Toward University Have Changed (1974-Present)**

G. Llewellyn Parsons

In the years 1972-73, there was a large drop in first year enrollment at Memorial University. This was not a very comforting phenomenon, since Confederation with Canada the prospects for university growth in Newfoundland had looked very good.

The then Vice-President of Memorial University, Dr. M.O. Morgan, contacted me to ask if I, who had recently moved from the faculty of the University of Toronto, would do a study to ascertain the reasons for the considerable drop in enrollment at Memorial University.

I consented and I'm pleased to state that the enrollment at Memorial has been steadily rising towards the 20,000 mark from the low 500s of the 1940s. This came about as a result of the wide cooperation and the magnificent efforts of the faculties at Memorial University and their determination to take appropriate action to remedy the situation.

Specifically, the terms of reference of the Committee on Enrollment were as follows:

- To investigate in-depth, the causes for the large drop in first year enrollment in September, 1973; to assess the weight of each cause, and to forecast its continuing influence.
- To investigate any changes in the pattern of enrollment in each faculty and the cause or causes of such change.
- To estimate the enrollment of Memorial University in September, 1974.

The members of the Committee were Dr. G. Llewellyn Parsons (Chairman), Department of Educational Administration, Dr. Trevor H. Williams, Department of Educational Foundations, Mr. Chesley Sanger, Assistant Professor, Department of Geography, Dr. Amarjit Singh, Department of Educational Foundations, Dr. David Kirby, Department of Educational Administration, Mr. Arnold Betz, Registrar's Office, Mr. Cyril McCormick, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, and Mr. William O'Driscoll, Newfoundland Teachers' Association.

To those people we owe a great deal for their sincerity, resolve and dedication to help restore a positive attitude towards student participation and attendance at the University and other post-secondary institutions.

From the study on Career Decisions of Newfoundland Youth it was found that many students prematurely discontinued their education and failed to proceed to post-secondary educational institutions because of deprivation. This deprivation arose in the form of inequality of educational opportunity and accessibility resulting from many factors in the social environment: lack of adequate finances, lack of motivation and encouragement, lack of communications about educational possibilities, lack of knowledge about course offerings at, and entrance requirements to, post-secondary institutions and lack of knowledge of the social and academic environments of these schools.



The reasons why the Grade XI, 1972-1973 students did not attend University could be summarized as:

- financial factors, (especially pertaining to those from low income families);
- attractiveness of other post-secondary institutions (especially when financial support was considered); and
- perceived lack of job opportunities after graduation (especially with the perceived oversupply of teachers in the school systems).

These three factors were still relevant for the 1973-1974 students. And unless some positive actions were taken by the faculty and administration at Memorial University, the problem would continue.

Fortunately, the University, after the study, made serious and positive efforts to correct the situation. These efforts have shown very beneficial results.

The recommendation of the Report on Career Decisions of Newfoundland Youth and faculty and administration was:

that every student should have universal accessibility to post-secondary education and that the University take every opportunity to encourage students and especially those students who are likely to do well in the teaching profession. The social and manpower needs of a progressive province needs to be realistically assessed and a knowledge of post-secondary education should be improved (through the various guidance counsellors in the system). Greater efforts should be made (without delay) to make students aware of the need for university education in this province, and finally, that more programs be provided in adult education to provide to our people a better view of what this province needs.

It is wonderful to find how cooperative the University has been in improving the attitudes of our people toward the enhancement of post-secondary education. There is now evidence in the twenty-first century that we are on a very positive track. The improvements made since the 1973-74 report have been astounding and this Memorial University of Newfoundland is presenting an image for which we can be justly proud.

1. Career Decisions of Newfoundland Youth. A Preliminary Report of the Committee on 1973 Enrollment. December, 1973. MUN.
2. Career Decisions of Newfoundland Youth. Report No. 2 of the Committee on 1973 Enrollment. January, 1974, MUN.
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# **Part 7**

## **Psychology**

- 1. Examining Student-Professor Confidentiality: What are the Expectations for Psychology Professors**
- 2. Becoming an Educational Psychologist in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Brief Review of Employment Roles and Responsibilities, Educational and Training Options, and Registration Processes.**

## **Chapter 1: Examining Student-Professor Confidentiality: What are the Expectations for Psychology Professors**

Stephanie A. Dalton and Gregory E. Harris  
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### **ABSTRACT**

The current paper explores confidentiality between professors and students, as well as psychologists and clients, while bringing particular attention to professors teaching psychology and also holding registration as psychologists. Confidentiality is a cornerstone of applied psychology, yet confidentiality may have different meanings in the day to day realities of professors of psychology compared with registered psychologists. In addition, student perceptions and expectations of confidentiality between themselves and psychology professors further complicate confidentiality expectations in the post-secondary context. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.

University professors often engage in multiple roles in pursuit of job success and satisfaction. Often these roles mesh well; however, there is potential for such roles to become tangled and for ethical conflicts surrounding dual roles to become a concern for professors of psychology who are also registered psychologists. Confidentiality is a cornerstone of applied psychology, yet confidentiality may have different meanings in the day to day realities of professors of psychology compared with registered psychologists. When these roles intersect, the potential for blurred boundaries intensifies.

The current paper examines confidentiality between professors and students, as well as psychologists and clients, while bringing particular attention to professors teaching psychology and also holding registration as psychologists<sup>1</sup>. The importance of student perceptions of confidentiality will be outlined and the role of informed consent will be discussed. The paper concludes by making recommendations for practice, as well as proposing the first author's thesis topic: a study exploring student perceptions of student-professor confidentiality when instructed by a psychology professor versus a non-psychology professor.

### **Method**

Several sources of data were collected in preparing the current manuscript. Information pertaining to the topic of confidentiality was gathered from the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) (1996), the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA)'s Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2000), Practice Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services (2001), the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board's Standards of Professional Conduct (2005), and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPPA) (2002). Information was also collected from various post-secondary institutions' calendars or policy statements accessed via the Internet<sup>2</sup>. A literature searches of the terms 'confidentiality', 'student perception', 'psychologist', 'professor', and 'university' (i.e.,

individually and by using several combinations of terms) was conducted using PsychINFO and ERIC databases.

Although information was readily available on confidentiality within post-secondary education and for the profession of psychology as separate entities, less information was available specifically relating to psychologists who were also professors and the perceptions of their students. In 1991, Tabachnick, Keith-Spiegel, and Pope claimed that the beliefs and behaviours of psychologists who were also teaching had been neglected. Hogan and Kimmel (1992) voiced the same concern, stating that ethical obligations of academic psychologists had been seriously overlooked in the literature. The focus of both of these studies was only on the attitudes and behaviours of psychology professors, with the perceptions of students not being explored. Owing to a dearth of research investigating the obligations surrounding confidentiality for psychology professors, as well as their students' perceptions, the current paper seeks to more clearly delineate this topic and lay the foundation for empirical investigation.

### **Multiple Roles of Psychologists**

Psychologists often assume multiple roles. In fact, the CPA's Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2000) and Practice Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services (2001) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board's Standards of Professional Conduct (2005) each highlight a range of potential roles for psychologists. Many professors of psychology do hold registration as psychologists in their respective jurisdictions. In fact, psychology registration boards often require a subset of professors within applied psychology programs to be registered psychologists in order for a degree to be acceptable as psychological (i.e., in order for graduates of the program to be able to become registered psychologists). In addition, many professors of psychology adopt the title 'psychologist', even if they are not registered psychologists<sup>3</sup>. This designation of 'psychologist' may influence student expectations. Research states that psychology students may believe that professors teaching psychology courses have clinical training and trust that their professors can rely on this training to help their students deal with personal problems (Haney, 2004; Hogan & Kimmel, 1992; Tantleff-Dunn, Dunn & Gokee, 2002). This suggests that student perception, as well as the dual title of professor and psychologist, has the potential to lead to a dual role situation with ethical implications, most notably those involving confidentiality issues.

### **Confidentiality**

#### **University Professors and Confidentiality**

University professors have a mandate to help students realize their potential and create life avenues. Not only are professors responsible to deliver curriculum; they are also serving as models for the students they instruct (Belvins-Knabe, 1992; Goodstein, 1981). Furthermore, students often want professors who are knowledgeable and demonstrate caring and concern (Strage, 2008). Belvins-Knabe suggests that trustworthiness is a key characteristic of the effective professor. To instill a sense of student trust and safety, both in and out of the classroom, some degree of confidentiality should ideally be in place. Students often reveal very personal information about themselves, whether through their writing for a course assignment, or through verbal communication with their professors. They do so, trusting that their professors will not share this information with others. It is the current authors' perspective that maintaining

confidentiality of students' personal information, such as grades, term papers, and private communications, may facilitate student learning and be conducive to pro-social student behaviour (e.g., attending classes, confiding in the professor as a confidant). Some notable authors (e.g., Carl Rogers) have highlighted that this type of relationship, whether in a clinical or educational context, can facilitate learning, growth, and human change. In the Ethical Guidelines for Supervision in

Psychology (2009), the CPA notes that the "application of ethical principles" can result in positive learning environments which may, in turn, enhance learning (p. 2).

Post-secondary institutions across Canada have been placing importance on the protection of students' personal information. The majority of Canadian post-secondary institutions follow the FIPPA (1996). The FIPPA was designed to make public bodies such as colleges and universities more accountable to the public. Its goal is the protection of personal privacy. At the post-secondary level, FIPPA policies give individuals the right to access their own personal records, while at the same time protecting the unauthorized disclosure of those records and other personal information.

According to the Act, personal information is defined as any recorded information about an individual whereby that individual can be identified. Other Canadian post-secondary institutions<sup>4</sup> have adopted similar policies and standards. In 2002, the Newfoundland and Labrador government assented to the ATIPPA. Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic, Centre for Nursing Studies, and the Western Regional School of Nursing all abide by the rules and policies put forth in the ATIPPA. While the goal of the ATIPPA is much the same as that of the FIPPA, in the ATIPPA, personal information is described in depth to include such details as demographic information about an individual, an identifying number (e.g., student number), information about an individual's educational status or history, and the opinions of others about the particular person, as well as the individual's own personal views and opinions.

A noticeable difference between the concept of confidentiality for psychology professionals and education professionals is that many of the policies from these Canadian post-secondary institutions (i.e., those that follow FIPPA guidelines and those who implement similar policies) place only minimal emphasis on the confidentiality of private communication and much more importance on keeping student records confidential. Furthermore, there is no clarification in the institutional policies as to what would constitute private communication. For example, Simon Fraser University's policy states that all information gained about students' academic progress, their political or religious views, or information about their personal life should be kept in confidence.

The policy fails to expand on whether there are specific methods of gaining information that would qualify that information to be kept in confidence or whether any means would be enough for the information to be treated as confidential. For example, would speaking to a professor in the hallway outside of the classroom, in his/her office, or during a chance meeting on university grounds all be considered confidential communications? Also, one must consider how the information was obtained, either through direct communication, a third party, or personal records, and whether that would affect confidentiality requirements.

There appears to be little consensus regarding the onus of responsibility with regard to the expectations of confidentiality within post-secondary educational settings. It is unclear whether the obligation to know, and implement, the guidelines falls on the faculty members, the students,

or both. Some school guidelines suggest that it is the university faculty members who are accountable (e.g., University of Victoria, Memorial University, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, University of Lethbridge, Simon Fraser University). The policy of Memorial University is that all employees are responsible to maintain the privacy of students, as well as research participants. On the other hand, the policies of the University of Alberta and Kwantlen University College state that it is the students' responsibility to become aware of the rules and regulations of the university, which include confidentiality, outlined in the university calendar. The University of the Fraser Valley declares that students should expect their personal information to be kept confidential and students should recognize that consent is needed for this information to be shared. It appears as though the concepts of privacy and confidentiality within the post-secondary setting have grey areas, which leaves room for miscommunication and potential harm to either the student or the professor.

Both students and professors need to be clear on the rules and guidelines of their institutions. Equally important, each party must be aware of the other's views of confidentiality in order to address underlying expectations and any discrepancies that may exist. This may present a challenge for those professors who are also psychologists, as the expectations of their students may differ from those of a professor who is not a psychologist.

### **Psychologists and Confidentiality**

Much of the literature concerning ethical standards for psychologists applies to clinical work and research (Hogan & Kimmel, 1992). Confidentiality plays an important role in the relationship between a psychologist and his or her client(s) in a clinical setting.

Researchers (e.g., Faber, Berano, & Capobianco, 2004) have suggested that in order for therapy to be beneficial, a relationship between the client and the psychologist must be established. In order to develop a positive therapeutic relationship, it may be helpful for the client to have a sense of privacy and to understand how information which is disclosed to the psychologist will be kept confidential. During the initial session, and throughout the therapeutic process, psychologists discuss the nature of confidentiality between themselves and their clients and ensure clients' understanding and consent<sup>5</sup>. Without confidentiality, Donner, VandeCreek, Gonsiorek, and Fisher (2008) assert that psychologists cannot be effective. Clients may not reveal thoughts or feelings that are of a personal nature, without the sense of security which may be fostered by an understanding of confidentiality (Donner et al., 2008; Younggren & Harris, 2008).

Research suggests that psychologists take confidentiality seriously. Tabachnick et al. (1991) asked psychologists, the majority of whom had teaching responsibilities, to rate various behaviour in terms of their involvement in the behaviour and how ethical they judged the behaviour to be. The majority of psychologists reported that discussing confidential information relayed by students was either 'unquestionably unethical' or 'ethical only under rare circumstances' (See Tabachnick et al. for a complete list of behaviour and subsequent ratings). Importantly, the inappropriate breach of confidentiality by a psychologist could result in serious consequences for the psychologist and the service recipient. Thus, there is a need for clarification regarding students' expectations and understanding regarding confidentiality of information shared with psychology professors.



To examine the ethical principles applicable to the psychology profession in Canada, one must turn to the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (CPA, 2000). The ethical standards set forth in the code are proposed to help *guide* psychologists' behaviour (Cram & Dobson, 1993). The Code summarizes an "ethical decision-making process" that psychologists should turn to when faced with ethical dilemmas in any aspect of their work (CPA, 2000, p. 2). The principles outlined characterize the ideals to which psychologists aspire in their practices (CPA). At different points throughout the Code, reference is made to students and teaching. One such example from the Code occurs under Principle 1: Respect for the Dignity of Persons. It states that psychologists....

...be careful not to relay information about colleagues, colleagues' clients, research participants, employees, supervisees, students, trainees, and members of organizations, gained in the process of their activities as psychologists, that the psychologist has reason to believe is considered confidential by those persons, except as required or justified by law (p.13).

The above ethical standard raises at least two important points relevant to the current discussion. The first point relates to activities engaged in as psychologists and whether teaching would be included in these activities. The CPA's recent publication, *Ethical Guidelines for Supervision in Psychology* (2009), claims that ethical principles apply to "all psychologists in all of their activities" (p. 1). By referencing students in Principle 1, one would presume the Code has included teaching as one of many activities psychologists engage in as psychologists. The *Practice Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services* (CPA, 2001), however, does not categorize teaching as a psychological service. Psychological services in the Practice Guidelines involve such activities as evaluation, diagnosis, assessment, and consultation relating to assessment, interventions, program development, and supervision of the above services. Herein lies a challenge for psychology professors. If one's teaching employment is dependent on being a psychologist and one is teaching as an identified psychologist, it may be reasonable to assume that one is perceived as 'being a psychologist' when one is teaching. If this is the case, the psychology professor's ethical obligation of confidentiality toward information shared by his/her students may come into question.

The second point has to do with the possibility that students may believe that there is an assumption of confidentiality between the psychology professor and his/her students.

Tantleff-Dunn et al. (2002) state that students enrolled in psychology classes may have preconceived expectations of their professors based on their limited knowledge of the psychology profession. This suggests that it may be reasonable for a psychology professor to consider that some students may expect confidentiality in their relationships with their psychology professors, in a similar way that clients would expect confidentiality in their relationships with their psychologists. It may, therefore, be appropriate for the psychology professor to explicitly discuss the issue of confidentiality with his/her students.

## Discussion

### Importance of Student Perceptions

Research focusing on student perceptions of confidentiality within the student-professor relationship is limited. Two studies on this topic were found in the literature search. Keith-Spiegel, Tabachnick, and Allen (1993) asked student participants to give their views on the ethical behaviour of their professors. Four hundred and eighty-two undergraduate students attending universities across the United States were given questionnaires and asked to rate the behaviour of their professors. The list of behaviour was compiled, in part, from student responses to an earlier request that they provide examples of ethical problems that they had experienced with their professors in the past. The results of the questionnaire revealed that requiring students to expose highly personal information in a group discussion during class was thought to be one of the most unethical behaviours performed by professors. In a similar study, Kuther (2003) examined college student perceptions of the ethical responsibilities of faculty members. Approximately 250 undergraduate students taking introductory and advanced psychology courses were asked to rate 25 “actions in which professors might engage” (p.154). Ninety-six percent of students agreed that it was never ethical, or ethical only under rare circumstances, for a professor to tell a colleague about confidential disclosures made by students. Seventy-eight percent rated telling the class about confidential disclosures, without revealing the student’s identity, the same. Clearly, in these studies, students perceived confidentiality as a highly important factor. It appears as though students are sensitive about the information they share in the classroom, as well as who has access to that information. It is important that psychology professors understand students’ perceptions of confidentiality in order to better recognize what students are expecting of them, as well as to examine whether or not they are prepared and able to meet those expectations.

### Informed Consent

A potentially interesting idea generated from the current paper is the notion of informed consent in the classroom context. Informed consent involves providing the service recipient with enough information to make an informed choice regarding accessing the service. One possibility is for psychology professors to explicitly discuss the idea of confidentiality with their students, so students are given the opportunity to grasp the reality of confidentiality in the teaching context. This upfront disclosure is in line with appropriate informed consent practices. Informed consent is a dominant theme in counselling and other psychological practices (Pomerantz, Santanello, & Kirn, 2006). The Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2000) highlights the procedure of obtaining informed consent, adding that psychologists must ensure their clients understand the nature of the activities they are involved in as well as the psychologist’s responsibilities<sup>6</sup>. Bodenhorn (2006) advises that professional school counsellors continue to remind students and other faculty about their professional responsibilities, especially regarding confidentiality. This advice can be extended to professors at universities and colleges. Tantleff-Dunn et al.’s 2002 study stands as a testament to the benefit of informed consent. In an attempt to help professors, understand and prevent conflict, psychology students were asked which behaviour they thought precipitated conflict in the classroom. One of the outcomes of the study was the suggestion that professors explain the rules and policies early in the course to minimize confusion and future conflict. At present, several universities specify

minimum requirements for course outlines (e.g., required texts, policies governing academic dishonesty). One possible option for professors to consider could be to include information on confidentiality in the course outline. Perhaps a formal policy could be added to university guidelines to include informed consent practices in the classroom and outside of the classroom. An open discussion of confidentiality could provide students and professors the opportunity to compare perspectives and reduce or avoid misunderstandings regarding confidentiality and its limits. This could also help foster positive working relationships and prevent unethical behaviour.

### **Future Directions**

More research is needed on this very important topic. The first author has chosen to focus her master's thesis on the issue of student perceptions regarding confidentiality between students and professors. It is hoped that by more clearly understanding the perceptions of students regarding this issue, psychology professors, as well as professors from other disciplines, will be better able to ensure clarity around the issue of confidentiality in this context.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Confidentiality expectations present a potential ethical dilemma to those professionals who are both psychologists and professors. To clarify the role of confidentiality for these professionals, student perceptions need to be examined. Future research devised by the first author will attempt to uncover student perceptions of confidentiality. With this knowledge, students and psychology professors will be more informed and misperceptions may be avoided.

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1 For readability purposes, the authors will refer to professors of psychology who are also registered psychologists as 'psychology professors', unless otherwise noted in the paper. However, it is important for the reader to know that there are differences between registered psychologists (i.e., people who have sought registration with a registration body and due to their training, supervised practice, and completion of an examination, have the legal right to use the title registered psychologist) and professors of psychology (i.e., typically people who teach in a psychology program and hold a doctoral degree in psychology), although many people hold both titles. It is also important to note that psychology programs often exist in various faculties, including Education.

2We are grateful to Ms. Amy Evans (MUCEP student) for her literature search on post-secondary educational policies regarding privacy and confidentiality issues.

3 Under the Psychology Act, professors of psychology are able to use the title 'psychologist' in their role as professor of psychology.

4 (e.g., Concordia University, Memorial University, Quest University Canada, Trinity Western University).

5 It is important to note that there are some limitations to psychologist-client confidentiality (see the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists, 2000, for a review).

6 For a more complete discussion on informed consent in a clinical context, please refer to the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2000).

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## **Chapter 2: Becoming an Educational Psychologist in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Brief Review of Employment Roles and Responsibilities, Educational and Training Options, and Registration Processes**

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Please note that authors have been deemed to have made relatively equivalent contributions to this paper so are presented in alphabetical order. We would like to thank Ms. Peggy Hann and Ms. Amy Stackhouse Harris for their contributions to the current manuscript. The views represented in this paper are those of the authors and not necessarily of their affiliated institutions.

### **Abstract**

Educational psychology is a sub-discipline of psychology concerned with promoting students' learning as well as cognitive, social, and emotional development. It is a broad educational-clinical discipline that focuses largely on assessment of students along with other types of roles and responsibilities. Although there are currently no specific educational/training programs in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador focused on educational psychology, there are programs that focus on professional psychology preparation. The current paper details these programs along with suggested competencies for professional educational psychology. The current paper also focuses on psychologist registration in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This paper explores educational psychology in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The goal of the paper is to present an overview of the core competencies and roles of educational psychologists, training and educational routes, as well as the process of registration as a psychologist in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is our hope that this paper will help inform people considering educational psychology as a potential career path in the province.

### **Roles and Core Competencies**

The title “educational psychologist” or better known as “school psychologist” connotes many definitions and roles (Fagan & Wise, 2007). In Newfoundland and Labrador, ‘educational psychology’ and ‘educational psychologist’ are the common titles used to describe this profession and its members as opposed to ‘school psychology’ or ‘school psychologist’. Some have noted the reason for this may be related to our strong connection to the United Kingdom (e.g., Martin, 2001). Throughout this paper we will use both terms interchangeably, to refer to this applied sub-discipline of psychology. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the professional roles of educational psychologists vary somewhat both within and between school districts (Harris & Joy, 2010).

Overwhelmingly though, educational psychologists in Newfoundland and Labrador report assessment as their primary and most time consuming role (Harris & Joy, 2010). The National



Association of School Psychology (NASP, 2010) defines the scope of school psychologists' professional roles as:

*School psychologists* provide effective services to help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. School psychologists provide direct educational and mental health services for children and youth, as well as work with parents, educators, and other professionals to create supportive learning and social environments for all children (p. 1).

The Canadian Psychological Association's (CPA, 2007) professional practice guidelines for school psychology in Canada espouse that the mandate and scope of the school psychologists' interventions include the total child or adolescent. School psychologists investigate the child's developmental and family history, present circumstances and the child's ability to function in the school and the larger community. With the recent movement to more inclusive practices in schools, the need for psychologists and psychological services has increased and their role has become even broader (CPA, 2007).

Educational psychologists have core competencies in how children learn and behave and how they develop cognitively, socially, and emotionally. At the core of educational psychology is an emphasis on learning and developmental psychology. Educational psychology is informed by a developmental-wellness model yet it is also diagnostically focused. Primary responsibilities of educational psychologists include assessment, diagnosis, and program recommendations. Typically this process occurs in a team context and requires collaboration with family, school and/or community members. Educational psychologists also have knowledge of brief and psychoeducational counselling, psychotherapy (e.g., cognitive-behavioural), research methodology, and program evaluation. This knowledge base informs their practice in the areas of assessment, prevention, intervention and consultation at the individual, group and systems levels (CPA, 2007). School psychologists are also involved in the provision of in-servicing on a variety of issues such as behaviour management and parenting skills. Their mandate is to work closely with school teams in an effort to provide the most effective and comprehensive service to the school population.

Educational psychologists both nationally and internationally share many similar roles/duties and there is consensus that the amount of time dedicated to psychoeducational assessment is quite high (see Corkum, French & Dorey, 2007; Harris & Joy, 2010; Hutton, Dubes & Muir, 1992). However, there is a desire among some members of this group to have more time to devote to areas such as prevention, counselling, and research (see Harris and Joy, 2010). This can be a challenge given the ratio of educational psychologists to students in Newfoundland and Labrador (i.e., roughly 1 to 1,544; ratio based on 2012 statistics when there were roughly 44 educational psychologist positions and 67,933 students in the province). While the roles and competencies of educational or school psychologists may vary, they share an underlying philosophy or belief that the goal of school psychology is "the promotion of children's learning and cognitive, emotional and social development" (Jordan, Hinds & Saklofsky, 2009, p. 245).

## Education and Training Programs

While Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) established an Educational Psychology program in 1970, the Department of Education did not formally recognize this title or allocate funding for such an employment position until 1979 (Martin, 2001). Currently, no program exists in Newfoundland and Labrador that focuses specifically on educational psychology. Having said that, two programs are available which focus on professional psychology preparation. Within the Faculty of Education at Memorial University exists the counselling psychology program. This is a master's level program that focuses primarily on the preparation of school and community counsellors. However, students entering the program with a background in psychology (i.e., typically an undergraduate degree in psychology with the foundational areas of psychology represented) would have the option of following a unique route through the counselling psychology program in order to complete the degree as a graduate level degree in psychology. Such a route requires the student to take a lead, in consultation with faculty, in charting specific courses, research, and internship experiences that will, at times, vary from the more typical counsellor preparation route. For example, students desiring registration with the Newfoundland and Labrador Psychology Board (NLPB) would complete additional research training (e.g., a thesis) and complete specific courses with Registered Psychologists or Professors of Psychology. This degree option emphasizes several areas of psychology and counselling and thus is not a program solely devoted to educational or school psychology. Again, students entering this program who wish to become educational psychologists would need to ensure they have appropriate pre-psychology preparation (along with other important areas of preparation such as education) and take a leadership role in developing the route they would take through the counselling psychology program itself.

The second psychology preparation program in the province is the Doctorate of Psychology (Psy.D.) program in the Faculty of Science at Memorial University. This clinical psychology program's foundation is in the scholar practitioner model and generalist training. The Psy.D. (2012) program's goal is:

to prepare clinical psychologists for practice in a wide range of interprofessional settings and in a rapidly changing scientific and human services environment. A clinical generalist program provides students with a broad and flexible foundation of clinical and research skills. Generalist training allows for opportunities to gain experience working with clients across the lifespan, with couples, families, and community groups, and also with clients from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds (Training philosophy section, para. 2).

The primary emphasis of this program is on psychologist preparation. It is "focused on issues related to meeting the health needs of individuals and groups in both rural and urban communities" (Psy.D. program, 2012, Training philosophy, para. 2). While the program outlines education and training in a number of theoretical perspectives such as cognitive-behavioural, psychodynamic, developmental, and family systems, the emphasis of the program is not specifically on educational psychology.

There is another program in the Department of Psychology at Memorial University that focuses on clinical science. This is a Master's of Science degree in Experimental Psychology and further

information on this program can be obtained from this website:  
<http://www.mun.ca/psychology/bio/mezo.php>

Another important consideration around training and employability is the need for a Bachelor of Education degree. Although the Department of Education has created new provisions for the certification (non-teaching) of educational psychologists who are registered with the NLPB, employment is still difficult without a Bachelor of Education degree, especially in more urban areas within the province.

There are several Canadian programs aimed directly at school or educational psychology preparation. The geographically closest to Newfoundland and Labrador is Mount Saint Vincent University's School Psychology program (Faculty of Education) (<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/programsdepartments/graduatecalendar/graduateprograms/education/schoolpsychology/default.aspx>). This two year, full time program is designed to prepare school psychologists for clinical-educational work related roles. The Canadian Psychological Association publishes a detailed listing of Canadian school psychology programs and other Canadian psychology programs (<http://www.cpa.ca/cpasite/userfiles/Documents/Graduate%20Guide%202009-2010.pdf>).

Importantly, in this province, registration is granted as a 'psychologist' versus a specific type of psychologist (e.g., educational psychologist). This places a large onus on the individual professional to ensure specific competencies are met to be able to practice in certain sub areas of psychology (e.g., educational psychology). One may become registered as a psychologist with a very generalist level preparation and thus further training may be required for competent practice.

It is our view that appropriate education and training in school psychology should consist of coursework and internship/practica experience including the following areas: developmental psychology (normal and abnormal), learning/motivation theories, personality, neuropsychology, diversity, supervision and consultation, counselling (individual and group-especially brief and psychoeducationally based), psychoeducational assessment, diagnostics (especially in learning, development, and behaviour; DSM focused), legal and ethical considerations, and research (including a thesis). We also acknowledge the training benefits attained from teaching and working in a classroom and school setting. Additionally, we support the current model for provisional registration, which requires additional supervision following the completion of degree. What follows is a description of the present registration process in the province.

### **Registration as a Psychologist in Newfoundland and Labrador**

The NLPB was established under the *Psychologists' Act (2005)*<sup>1</sup>. The mandate of the Board is to protect the interests of the public and, in particular, those who receive services from registrants of the Board. The *Psychologists' Act (2005)* reaffirms the legislative framework for registration as defined in the earlier Act of 1985. The term "psychologist" is a protected title. Individuals are not permitted to present themselves to the public by name or description of services as a psychologist unless they hold registration with the NLPB. The *Psychologists' Act (2005)* does not define scope of practice.

As the title “Psychologist” is in the name *Educational Psychologist*, an individual who claims to be an Educational Psychologist must be registered with the NLPB. Thus, Educational Psychologists are subject to the same criteria for registration as a Psychologist in Newfoundland and Labrador with all the rights the title offers through the governing legislation.

The registration process and criteria to be met are clearly outlined in the *Psychologists’ Act* (2005). There are two paths to achieve full registration – one is through a new applicant format and the other is through the *Agreement on Internal Trade* (AIT). Each path requires a completed application form with accompanying documentation. The NLPB does not review incomplete applications. Application forms may be found on the NLPB website at [www.nlpsychboard.ca](http://www.nlpsychboard.ca).

The application process for a new applicant includes the submission of an NLPB application form with required documentation. This documentation includes, but may not be limited to: official university transcripts; original Code of Conduct including a Vulnerable Sector check; three reference forms; a signed attestation; and the accompanying fee.

New applicants must meet specific requirements of academic training, supervision and examinations (NLPB, 2009). Academic training requires the applicant to hold an undergraduate degree in psychology **and** either a doctoral degree or master's degree in psychology from an educational institution approved by the board. The undergraduate degree path of study in psychology must demonstrate a foundational knowledge component (with the cognate areas of psychology represented) and the graduate degree path of study must demonstrate the required competencies. Foundational knowledge and competencies are based on national standards and practices, as well as tenets of the *Mutual Recognition Act* (2005)<sup>2</sup>.

Tables 1 and 2 outline the areas required for foundational knowledge and the competencies required for registration in an acceptable path of study of an undergraduate and graduate psychology program. *Foundational Knowledge* areas are usually completed in an undergraduate degree program in psychology. Each competency area has a specified number of courses/hours and some require a Registered Psychologist as a core instructor. A complete description of these areas can be found at the NLPB website at [www.nlpsychboard.ca](http://www.nlpsychboard.ca) at the link “Guidelines for Evaluation of Applicants.”

Table 1. Foundational knowledge core areas required in an undergraduate degree in psychology.

- 
1. Knowledge of the biological bases of behaviour
  2. Knowledge of the cognitive-affective bases of behaviour
  3. Knowledge of the social bases of behaviour
  4. Knowledge of psychology of the individual
- 

Table 2. Competencies required through a graduate degree in psychology

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1. Interpersonal relationships
  2. Assessment and evaluation
  3. Intervention
  4. Research

## 5. Ethics

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Following NLPB approval of the application, the applicant is granted Provisional Registration. Provisional registration may be subject to the terms, conditions and limitations that may be set out by the board, including those respecting professional supervision and the specific location for which the registration is valid. The conditions and limitations include, but may not be limited to: a specified period of supervision by a fully registered psychologist, an approved supervision plan, and an approved passing grade on the *Examination for the Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP)*. While a provisionally registered psychologist may claim to be a psychologist, they may not practice independently. Upon completion of all conditions set in the provisional registration, the applicant is eligible to apply for full registration with the NLPB. If these requirements are met, and they acquire full registration status, then they may practice independently.

Applicants who are currently registered as a psychologist in another jurisdiction in Canada may be eligible for registration as a psychologist in Newfoundland and Labrador through the *Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)*. The AIT defines professional mobility from one Canadian jurisdiction to another which may expedite the application process for an applicant. Those who wish to avail of this path must complete an application form with accompanying documentation. This documentation includes: an original Code of Conduct including a Vulnerable Sector check, a letter of good standing from current jurisdiction, copies of other certification/documentation if available (e.g., Canadian Register of Health Services Providers in Psychology), a signed attestation, and the accompanying fee.

More often than not, applications not approved by the Board for registration as a psychologist in Newfoundland and Labrador are deficient in an approved undergraduate/graduate degree in psychology, deficient in fulfillment of the criteria for competencies, or both. Applicants often mistake the earning of a degree as equivalent to meeting the academic training requirements for registration. The NLPB has encouraged all potential applicants to contact the Board before embarking on a path of study, if the intention is to become a registered psychologist in the province.

### Conclusions

Educational psychology provides a critical service to the education system in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and beyond. It can be a rewarding, as well as challenging, career choice. The lack of preparation programs in the area of educational psychology in the province poses significant challenges for those interested in pursuing registration as a psychologist and eventually seeking employment in this field.

For those considering entering the field of psychology in Newfoundland and Labrador, it is important to note the following: who to contact, what to ask, and where to find information. Answers to these questions might be obtained from the NLPB, potential employers, university faculty, professional organizations, or others (see resource links). Ideally, when considering a career in educational psychology one should seek guidance prior to their undergraduate degree.

Planning is critical to a career in this field in order to ensure an appropriate program of study is chosen. Too often, those interested in becoming an educational psychologist wait until they have chosen a university program, are in the middle of their education or have completed their education to seek guidance from academic advisors, potential employers, and governing bodies (NLPB).

## Professional Organizations and Resources

Association of Psychology of Newfoundland and Labrador: [www.nlpsych.ca](http://www.nlpsych.ca)

Newfoundland and Labrador, Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association – A Special Interest Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association: <https://www.nlta.nl.ca/home>

Canadian Psychological Association: [www.cpa.ca](http://www.cpa.ca)

Canadian Psychological Association: Regulation of the Practice of Psychology:  
<http://www.cpa.ca/practitioners/practiceregulation/>

NLPB Information for Applications Seeking Registration Requirements:  
<http://www.nlpsychboard.ca/applicants.aspx>

CPA program guide:  
<http://www.cpa.ca/cpsite/userfiles/Documents/Graduate%20Guide%202009-2010.pdf>

Psychologists Act 2005: <http://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/annualstatutes/2005/P34-1.c05.htm>

Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/>

Memorial University, Faculty of Education, Counselling Psychology Program:  
<http://www.mun.ca/educ/grad/counselling.php>

Memorial University, Faculty of Science, Doctor of Psychology Program:  
<http://www.mun.ca/psychology/graduate/psyd.php>

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Psychologists Act (2005). Retrieved August 7, 2012 from: <http://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/annualstatutes/2005/P34-1.c05.htm>

### Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup>An Act to amend the Psychologist Act, 2005 was assented to June 27, 2012 and comes into force on October 31, 2012. <http://www.assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/annualstatutes/2012/1224.chp.htm>

<sup>2</sup>A description of the MRA can be found in: Garland, John C. (2011). Regulation of Psychology in Newfoundland and Labrador. In David Evans (Ed.), *Law, Standards, and Ethics in the Practice of Psychology 3rd Edition* (pp 57-68). Toronto, Ontario: Carswell a division of Thomson Reuters Canada Limited.

# **Part 8**

## **Reflections and Essays**

- 1. Young children's learning in the contexts of families and communities**
- 2. First Comes Primary School, Then Comes...MUN**
- 3. "From Stephenville Crossing to Memorial: My educational journey"**
- 4. From A to Z (Angler to Zimdowney)**
- 5. My MUN Experience**
- 6. Culture, a narrative from within**
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- 11. Developing Rural School Collaboration: From New Zealand and Iceland to Newfoundland and Labrador**
- 12. From Neoliberalism to Social Justice and Humanism**
- 13. Journey to the Faculty of Education**
- 14. How to Not Know Everything: The Value of Experiential Learning**

## Chapter 1: Young children's learning in the contexts of families and communities

Ann Anderson and Jim Anderson

We first want to thank the editors of this special anniversary issue of *The Morning Watch* for their invitation to contribute this article. We fondly recall as graduate students at Memorial in the late 1970s and early 1980s, some of the “debates” in the fifth floor cafeteria of the Education Building precipitated by just-published articles, and have continued to follow the journal over the years.

For the last two decades or so, our work has focused on the role of communities and families in children's development and education, especially in early language, literacy and mathematics.<sup>1</sup> In this article, we share some of the insights gained and lessons learned from work with young children and their families in diverse community contexts in British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador. We first provide a brief overview of the framework that informs our work; then highlight key findings or themes from several studies; and conclude by discussing some implications of our findings.

Our work is informed by socio-historical perspectives and the notion that learning is social as parents and significant others offer structure and support for young children's learning (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978). However, we emphasize that there is considerable variation in teaching and learning across social and cultural groups (e.g., Rogoff, 2003). Furthermore, we recognize that much learning occurs as children interact with their environment, without direct, adult intervention (e.g., Piaget, 1963). Moreover, we subscribe to an ecological view (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and see children's development and learning occurring in the overlapping contexts of community, family and school. It is against this background that we next share some of the insights and understandings garnered through our own research and community engagement.

In our work with hundreds of families from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, a striking feature is that literally all of them want to support their children's learning and want them to do well in school and in life. However, families have very different beliefs about how they can support this learning. For example, in one study, parents from three different ethnic groups – Chinese-Canadian, Euro-Canadian, and Indo-Canadian were asked to name “the five most important things you are doing to support your child in learning to read and write” (Anderson, 1995). Perhaps as might be expected, all of the European-Canadian parents identified “reading to my child” as most important in supporting their children's literacy learning. Although some of the Indo-Canadian parents identified shared book reading, they also emphasized storytelling and teaching children to spell correctly and to recognize numbers. The Chinese parents however, named “teaching my child to read and write properly”, emphasizing correctness and the importance of practice and placing little importance on shared book reading, often portrayed, as Pellegrini (1991) put it, “the literacy event *par excellence*” (p. 380) and *the way* into literacy. As we have pointed out elsewhere, storybook reading to young children is not practiced in some cultures that nevertheless have a highly educated citizenry.

Parents of young children are bombarded with the message in the media, from government agencies, and in the parenting literature that “you are your child’s first and most important teacher” which probably connotes for some people, formal, school like lessons for two, three, and four-year-olds at home. It appears though that the reality is somewhat different in that much of the foundational learning that occurs prior to formal instruction in school is more incidental, contextual and in the moment, as for example, when a family member counts the steps along with the two year old as they climb the stairs at bedtime. For example, in her foundational study involving middle class families, Taylor (1983) found that the parents in the middle class families were unaware of how much early literacy knowledge their pre-school children had acquired and how children had acquired this knowledge. Likewise, Anderson (1997) found that parents support a range of mathematics (counting, size comparison and shape recognition) when they interact with their children across contexts, such as reading story books, playing with blocks, drawing pictures and so forth. In a later longitudinal study of eight middle class families, Anderson (2005) indicated that mothers engaged their children in mathematics through every day events such as baking, viewing family photos and play activities such as puzzles, follow the leader, and card games.

In addition to holding different beliefs about how best to support their children’s early learning, families also support that learning in very different ways. A case in point is a study (Shapiro, Anderson & Anderson, 1997) with middle class parents in which we asked them to read two high quality children’s books with their three and four year olds “as you normally would”. We video recorded the shared reading and transcribed and analyzed the verbal interactions. Even within this homogeneous group, we found great variation in the shared reading. Some of the families engaged in considerable dialogue about the books, making inferences and connections between the books and the children’s experiences; other families shared the books with minimal dialogue.

As educators and researchers, we need to recognize that we live in an increasingly globalized world with unprecedented transnational movement of families and children. As we have pointed out (Anderson, Anderson, Hare & McTavish, in press), much of the research with families and young children has reflected a middle class, Eurocentric world view. Within that epistemological orientation or worldview, particular ways of childrearing, conceptions of families, and activities and events that support young children are considered *natural* and *the best* for **all** families. Given the interest in the early years and the expectation that families will be expected to take on responsibility for their children’s early learning, it is important to be cognizant of our taken-for-granted assumptions as we continue to work with families.

As Rogoff (2003) and others have pointed out, different cultural and social groups provide different pathways for their children’s development and education and support them in different ways (Heath, 1983; Anderson & Morrison, 2011). We believe it is especially important that educators who develop and implement intervention programs pay attention to the social-contextual background of families and children so that the activities and suggestions “make sense” to them. The families with whom we have worked are eager to learn new ways in which they can support their children and want to learn how to get them “ready for school”. We

contend we can support families in doing this while also acknowledging and valuing what they already do in supporting their young children's learning.

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<sup>1</sup> For additional information on our research, please see <http://edcp.educ.ubc.ca/faculty/ann-anderson> and <http://lled.educ.ubc.ca/lled-faculty/current-faculty/jim-anderson>

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## **Chapter 2: First Comes Primary School, Then Comes...MUN**

Annette Larkin

It all began in grade three when we were asked to dress up as “what you want to be when you grow up”. That morning I had a fight with my mother. This led to neglecting my outfit, which led to me going to school dressed in my everyday clothes. When my friends, who were dressed as astronauts, doctors, nurses and so on began to ask me what I was, I quickly picked up an exercise book and pencil and replied, “I am a teacher.” Good cover up?

Fast forward 13 years. I walk across the stage for the first time in 2007 to accept my Bachelor of Education. (Side note: I never once envisioned myself as a teacher during my schooling.) I enrolled in Memorial in 2001, to be on the MUN Sea~Hawks cheerleading team. Yes, you read that right – a cheerleader. When I did not make the team in 2001 I decided to take a year off post-secondary education to work full time and decide what I actually wanted to be when I grew up. After a year had passed, I returned to MUN to pursue my dream to wear red and white. Luckily, I made the cut this time, I was ecstatic. But...what should I study? General studies sounded like the best and easiest option.

Regardless of what I was doing in University, my parents were tickled pink that I was going. I had been encouraged since my early school years to attend university, as not one Larkin had ever been able to apply, let alone be accepted. There was a big deal made when I was accepted, but even a bigger deal made when I decided to take a year off. I found this interesting, as I was paying for my tuition. Why did my parents feel they were entitled to such an opinion? Regardless, I did return after one short year of working hard for my money.

After a year of general studies, cheerleading and working full time, I decided to attempt to focus my studies and stop wasting my money. I was very interested in geography and travel, so I decided I would research career possibilities related to either field. One day while having a conversation with a travel agent, I expressed an interest in her chosen field. She quickly stomped on my dreams, advising me that it would be a mistake and waste of time. I was a little shocked as this was her career. She then asked me about myself: what I liked, was involved with and my favorite subjects. I told her I was a CLB leader, cheerleading coach, cheerleader and had always been involved in school council. I liked Math and English, but had a strong distaste for Biology. When I was done telling her about myself she said, “Well, sounds like you are a teacher.” I asked her what she meant, and she replied, “You teach small children in CLB and teenagers in cheerleading. You are already a teacher, just not getting paid.” With a confused look, I thanked her and left.

From that conversation I decided to dedicate two more years to complete the courses necessary for admission into the Faculty of Education. In January 2006 I applied to both the regular three year program and fast-track program for Primary/Elementary Education. That April I received a letter notifying me that I was not accepted into the regular education program. I was devastated. Other than not making the cheerleading team five years prior, I had never applied for something and not been accepted, especially in regards to education. Two days later, I received another letter in the mail from Memorial, which I opened hesitantly. I literally jumped for joy when I discovered I was accepted into the fast track program. I would be beginning the journey to the rest of my life that May, in one short month.

Luckily, I was able to continue cheering all through my first degree. Although I found the workload during the Fast Track program challenging at times, I could always escape to my favourite outlet, cheerleading. However, over the course of four short semesters I found a new passion and outlet, education. This program has to be one of the most rewarding ones that MUN offers. The courses were interesting and engaging, and the professors highly knowledgeable. In addition, the internship during the third semester made the last one worth the work.

Memorial paired me with a school, cooperating teacher and class that I could swear was made for me and me alone. I am not sure how the process works, but I could not have asked for a better match. It was during the course of my internship, off campus, that I feel I learned the most valuable lessons – things that might be impossible to learn and experience sitting in lecture halls. This was the real deal. I had the opportunity to conduct lessons, assess my students, write reports, administer interviews with parents and learn all the ins and outs of being a classroom teacher. It was unforgettable.

I enjoyed my first undergraduate degree so much, that I went on to complete a degree in Special Education and another in the Arts. Learning at Memorial did not stop there; as I went on to apply for the graduate program in Leadership Studies. A Master's program – I am completing my Masters. Can you imagine how happy my parents are now? To tell the truth, I am not sure my time at Memorial will end there as the letters P, H and D keep running through my mind. Who knows? Maybe one day I will have the honour to be one of the memorable professors who work in the Faculty of Education? A girl can dream.

### **Chapter 3: "From Stephenville Crossing to Memorial: My educational journey"**

Annette MarieMallay

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1967 a small baby girl was born into a loving Catholic family of nine in a small town of Stephenville Crossing in the picturesque Bay St. George area of the West Coast. Like the characters in Roch Carrier's "The Hockey Sweater", this little girl would grow up in a town where school, Church and hockey on the pond were the three most important aspects of life.

This little girl was me, Annette Marie Mallay nee Alexander, youngest child of Paschal and Lydia Alexander. My life was rich and full with family, love and friendship. My early schooling was at a Catholic Elementary School, St. Michael's Elementary. My fondest memory of early education was in Grade 3, we moved into a brand new school with a double gym and French lab. Maybe this memory is foreshadowing for the career that I would choose. The French lab still is a memory that stays with me. Gleaming tape recorders and headphones that allowed us to hear the formal and sophisticated voices of French speakers from France!

My high school years were influenced by Catholic Mercy nuns, who were so amazing and dedicated to our school that I still remember with pride the invaluable lessons and encouragement they gave me. They were the first mentors to spark my desire to become an educator and they encouraged me to attend Memorial. Simple little words and hopes that were so influential on the course my life took, still amaze me. Two Sisters in particular added excitement to my education and acted as catalyst for the path I would take were Sr. Maureen O'Keefe, my French teacher and Sister Marie Crotty, my principal. These two women would go beyond their vocation to instill in me the desire to learn and light a fire to motivate me to take the risk and go to university.

My parents were supportive and never spoke of "if" but "when" I would go to Memorial. My mother was educated at the Grace General Hospital of Nursing and my dad, an electrician, wanted more for me and so they did their best to point me to the Grenfell Campus to start first year studies.

From an early age, I was called to teach. I would line up my teddy bears and teach them their alphabet and numbers. I was eager to learn French words from Sesame Street and use them when I needed too. The desire to teach became stronger the closer I got to Grade 12 and I attribute it to the love and support I got from many of my amazing teachers at that small school in Stephenville Crossing. These people are still confidants today.

I started my studies at Grenfell College and had an unforgettable experience there. The calibre of professors and the quality of education was second to none. After two years, I came to St. John's and started at Memorial. I fell in love with the city and enjoyed the diversity that existed at Memorial St. John's campus. I completed by conjoint degree in English/French and Secondary education and began teaching with The RC School Board. After changes were made to the denominational school system in Newfoundland

and Labrador, I had my first child. I craved the classroom and teaching, and returned to it after a year. It was shortly after my daughter turned three that my life direction changed again and I applied to a school that had not even started. I was going back to my roots and using the skills afforded to me by the sisters, I was going to teach at an independent Catholic school! Many variables were certain. Would this school stay open? Could it survive in the climate of the times? I took the risk.

Today, after 14 years, I am so glad to say that I took the risk. St. Bonaventure's College is alive and well and the risk I took allowed me to carry out my vocation to be a French teacher at an amazing school with wonderful young men and women to teach. I have never looked back and am thankful for the many blessings in my life.

In 2013, I graduate from Memorial University with a Masters in Educational Leadership Studies. I am so proud of being able to do this program at Memorial and I am grateful that I was able to choose this university again to continue my life long learning.

## **Chapter 4: From A to Z (Angler to Zimdowney)**

Bill Fagan

### **Early Years**

My father, like most outport fishermen had little formal schooling. By age 11, he was fishing with his father. However, he had learned to read and was extremely good at math, or then, called arithmetic. Whenever, he had a break from his fishing chores, he read. The Family Herald and Weekly Star was received on a regular basis and books just seem to “pop up”. There was no local library and no such thing as a bookstore. Even if there were, money would never be spent buying books. One of my older brothers loved troutng (fishing) and spent a lot of his money on troutng equipment. Whereas, most people troutng with a pole cut in the woods and regular fishing line and a hook, he had invested in a bought fishing reel, all kinds of fishing flies, wicker basket, and hip waders. One evening as he left to go troutng, my father commented to me that my brother was a real “angler” and then explained it. On another occasion we had a heavy rainstorm and roads were washed out including the road to school and so we had a holiday. My father commented that the road was “impassible”. I asked if he meant “impossible” but he explained, and said, “The road is impassible because it is impossible to get across by the forge (where the road washed out).”

As a fisherman, he sold his catch to the local fish plant. After cleaning the fish, it was weighed in, barrow by barrow. After each barrow, the fishermen were given a receipt of the weight as shown on the scale. My father said nothing at the time but when he came home, he took each receipt and he could remember the weight of each barrow. Often the plant made mistakes and immediately he went back to the merchant to have it corrected.

When growing up, while books would not be bought or given as presents, we always seemed to have books around, usually fables and comics. These were loaned from family to family. There was no library in the classroom (I attended a three-room school), but locked, display cases in the “commercial room”, a room separated from the school where the Nuns taught typing, shorthand, etc., were filled with books. One day, I had the nerve to ask if I could borrow some and I felt I had won the lottery going home with several books. I think this is the first time I had read a novel type book. I knew there was no turning back. I taught the year just after leaving school and we had the “travelling library” to which students and I looked forward. I believe I made it a goal to read every book before that lot was returned and the next arrived.

### **Attending Memorial University**

I soon found myself faced with another kind of reading – factual, academic -from psychology, to philosophy, to teaching methods. However, the learning method, as through my school years, was rote memory. Like my father, I had a good memory and so, did well on exams. I loved Latin which I had studied in school. In fact, in grade 11, the teacher did not teach Latin, and Sister Edwardine, who taught grade 3 and 4 (she

shared a room with the grade 1-2 teacher), made time twice a week when I went to her classroom and she continued to instruct me in Latin. I think I enjoyed the challenge of unlocking the meaning of a different language, a different code. This continued at University, and one Latin teacher there, Mrs. Cochrane made Latin come alive. Even though I was a teenager at the time, Cicero's (I think) essays on aging were interesting. Some fellow students, recognized my ability in Latin and in the free period, after Latin class, they steered me to a vacant classroom and I became teacher in helping with the homework assignment.

The first jolt (and a pleasant one) to rote learning was in my final year when I took a course in European history. We only knew the instructor as Mr. Schwartz. We had a book of documents, such as Child Labour Laws. No memorizing! Our assignment was to go to the library and read the social, political, economic, and religious conditions at the time and then in class argue how these conditions led to the Child Labour Laws and influenced the course of events. Reading had really become challenging!

### **Graduate School**

Mr. Schwartz's class perhaps, best prepared me for learning in graduate school. There, I was to meet a person, of like mind, Dr. Marion Jenkinson. I was enrolled in Elementary Education, with specialization in reading and writing ("literacy" was not popularly used). We studied all angles of reading – history, sociological, political, philosophical, and methodological, including clinical. I think the one thing that graduate school showed me was that learning was a matter of bridging – taking from the academic/theoretical to the practical, and back from the practical to refine the academic/theoretical. Learning and literacy only made sense through use.

In a course on the Psychology of Reading, Dr. Jenkinson approached our learning somewhat as Mr. Schwartz. We didn't just learn from reading a text book. She made up case studies from the Reading Clinic files with key data missing. It was our assignment to try and complete the picture by highlighting what was there (called "loyalty to the given") and then through inference, and questioning, setting out what might be known, or needed to be known to provide an overall picture of the child or adult, in identifying the reading/learning problem and projecting possible solutions. This learning came more alive on field trips. On one occasion, the class of about 20 travelled to the Peace River country. We arrived on Thursday evening. We were paired in teams and had a full day of testing on Friday in one of the schools in the district. A colleague from South Africa and I were assigned to Dixonville – I was fascinated by the main street and hitching posts for horses. We tested selectively – two high, average, and low achievers as identified by the teachers at each grade level. I had a strong outport Newfoundland accent and my friend had her South African accent. I picked up after my friend to administer a spelling test in grade 7. Students kept asking me to repeat a word. Then one student chipped in, "We didn't hear what the other one said either – just guess." We spent Friday night, and Saturday marking tests, discussing outcomes across grades, and across schools, identifying profiles, projecting suggestions for intervention. On Sunday we spent the day



in the school in Peace River putting up graphs and charts, and getting ready for the all day workshop on Monday when all teachers came together in Peace River. We met them by school, and then across school by grade. Literacy, and learning and graduate school was really becoming meaningful.

The other great impact that Dr. Jenkinson had on me was in a research course which she taught with two other professors. I can remember her talking about the excitement of being a researcher. “Do you realize that when you analyse your data, you and only you, possess knowledge that no one else in the world has. It is up to you to share this. It is up to you to see that the world is better because of it. Savour it while it is private. When it is public, it is everyone’s for better or worse.” I have never forgotten this excitement of research!

After completing my Master’s degree I returned to Newfoundland and taught at Memorial for two years. These were great years, and perhaps best remembered for the great people who were there. But the challenge of learning led me back to Alberta for a Doctorate with studies at the University of Toronto, and the University of Michigan. We were all required take a second specialization outside of the Faculty of Education, and I choose linguistics. At that time “transformational generative grammar” by Noam Chomsky was making the news and for my doctoral research I looked at the complexity of language based on this theory and its implications for comprehension. My external examiner was Dr. Kenneth Goodman, the guru who coined the term “reading miscue” which he used to understand how readers processed text. Reading became rational! My doctoral research won the International Reading Association Dissertation of the Year Award that year and I received the Award in front of about a thousand educators in Atlantic City, a long way from a three room school in Newfoundland.

I was hired by the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta and became interested in the sociology of reading/literacy. I worked with inmates in the provincial jail and after interviews with a few inmates, realized that their literacy was embedded in a very complex world. I enrolled in a Master’s in Educational Psychology (with studies in social psychology and clinical psychology) which really helped me as I tried to understand the literacy world of the inmates. My interest in the sociology of literacy led to my obtaining a major two-year research grant and I came back to Newfoundland to study how people in rural Newfoundland coped with reading and writing tasks. This led to a book, “Literacy for Living” publishing by ISER Books, Memorial University. I studied different age cohorts from high school to age 70+. One finding that stood out was that not being able to read or write was not a stigma. It was not much different in not being able to repair a door – there was always someone to help – that was the culture. I would walk into a house (you never knocked) and a person, writing a letter to a relative in Fort McMurray, would pass me an envelope, saying, “You address that while I finish this.” Or in another case, the daily paper would have arrived, and the person would say, “You’re just in time, tell me what that says today.” One senior, who now had the assistance of home care, said that she had never learned to read, but one of her home care workers was reading books to her. She said, “I can’t wait for the next part. It is so much more interesting than television.” After the home care worker read a section, the senior would talk about it to her and wonder what would come next, to which the worker would

say, “Tell me what you think. ... We’ll have to wait until Wednesday to find out”, and the senior would reply, “I can’t wait ‘till then” (meaning I am looking forward to then.”

### **Back to My Roots**

I returned to Newfoundland and in the new millennium I became an Adjunct professor at Memorial. This overlapped with my getting involved in municipal politics – first as Councilor and then as Mayor. The basis of literacy is obviously reading and writing and its use. But I knew you can only use what you have and I wondered to what extent people were readers and writers. This led to my research on Levels of Knowledge (depth of reading) and decision making. My work has been published in Morning Watch. I marveled at how much material elected municipal officials should read – from Committee reports, to Conference material, to correspondence from residents, to theories, treatises, and documents. The power of persuasion is based on the power of argument and argument is based on knowledge. Councilors and other municipal officials operate on different levels of knowledge. Without depth of knowledge there may be superficiality and confusion. For example, reports have been completed on “Regional Government” with one document proposing a two-tier level of government in different regions, the Northeast Avalon being one. Some people confuse this with “Regional Co-operation” and so there is discussion at cross -purposes, on two different topics. No one is against Regional Co-operation, but Regional Government is very controversial in some regions, including the Northeast Avalon.

Municipal involvement did not take me away from my education roots – just the opposite. In addition to my research on depth of knowledge, I was the liaison from the Town Hall to the local elementary school, and a Community member of the high school Council. As a member of the Town Council, I realized that involvement of the students as citizens was crucial to their becoming good citizens and good learners. Providing state of art recreational facilities is important. Providing for community supports through volunteer groups is important. Children should be citizens first, and students second.

### **From A to Z**

How I learned the meaning of the word “angler” stays with me. I became a reader too. I can’t imagine not having reading material available. Waiting at the dentist’s office or getting my car serviced is easier with a book. I read a myriad of newspapers and magazines. Two kinds of books dominate my reading life: fiction and non-fiction. My fiction is mystery, particularly British mystery, which is more than “who-done-it” – it is exposing insight into the social and psychological conditions of the crime. Non-fiction depends on the latest publications. I am just finishing “Empty Nets” by Gus Etchegary, who is a good friend as well. This is a poignant account of what went wrong with the fishery. But a small bit of literacy trivia that fascinated me was that the Company, Fisheries Product Ltd. for which Mr. Etchegary worked, named their trawlers beginning with Z so they would be easy to locate in the Department of Transportation Registry – Zenava, Zebrula, Zipper, and Zimdowney.

## **Chapter 5: My MUN Experience**

David E. Locke

Long Pond, C.B.S., NL.

(Born and raised on Bell Island, Conception Bay)

Throughout High School I worked long hours to succeed and do well. I wrote public exams in grades 9, 10 and 11 as there was no grade 12 at that time. The public exams were worth 100% of your final mark for every subject, (except Religion) at the end of the year. It was in grade 10 when Mike Galway, my homeroom teacher, asked me what I planned to do when I finished school. I told him I planned to join the Air Force. He suggested and encouraged me to go to University; and so my MUN journey began. Different career options were open to me but I chose education. I had a lot of great teachers and I felt if I were going to university, I wanted to be a teacher. I had no interest in Medicine, Commerce or Engineering or any of the other available options.

For the most part, my experience at MUN was enjoyable. My years at MUN were closely linked to managing my finances, finding a good boarding house, some social life and summer jobs which were necessary to enable my return to MUN in September. During those years we also made the effort to stay connected to our faith. Many boarding house owners were surprised that my buddies and I would get up every Sunday morning and go to Mass at the Basilica. I did a great deal of studying and learning. From September to May, including weekends, I was consumed with attending classes, studying, doing assignments, and preparing for tests and exams, and at times some social life. I tried to make up for the social life during the summer months. Another thing I always did was shower at the MUN Phys. Ed. Building rather than competing at our boarding house for the bathroom. Using our MUN ID card, we could avail of a fresh supply of towels. This made life a lot easier for me. Our careers were in sight. Our paths for life felt great.

September 1965, the start of my first year at MUN was traumatic and challenging. I was enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts-Education four-year program. The gap between high school and university was overwhelming. My boarding house was at the home of a widow on Merrymeeting Road. (\$15.00 per week, meals included, which was a lot of money “then”) She was a great and a generous cook and had a wonderful personality. This made life at MUN more manageable. Grants were available for Education students for the first two years. I applied for and received a grant the first year. I did not apply for the second year grant because after the second year, if you accepted the grant, you were required to go teach in rural schools for two years. I wanted to complete my four years straight.

Throughout the year, like my close friends, I worked long hours and had little or no social life. It was a time when I really did not know how to plan and study, as I tried to know everything in each of my subject areas. We were not used to having girls in classrooms, since in high school, grades 5-11, we attended an all boys’ school. You can imagine the big adjustment with trying to pay attention amongst the girls, many of them

in mini -skirts! I did not go home many weekends since I was trying to keep up with my studies at MUN. Terms were not semesterized, so courses went on during the whole year. In many course areas there was little sympathy if you could not keep up with the workload. However, there were some professors who made a real difference. There was also Math tutorials that were very helpful. Mrs. Matthews was my Math Professor. She was older than most professors but she was amazing, phenomenal even, as she helped her students a great deal. You could go to her office and she would take all kinds of time to help you. She really made a difference and set you up for success when you were prepared to work for it. Physics was a lot of work but it was difficult to understand the professor. I had never been in a science lab before so the three-hour Physics labs were new to me and a real challenge. The fact that I had a good lab partner made the difference. The amazing Newfoundlander, Ted Russell, taught English and I found him a great professor who made his course interesting and enjoyable. It was much later that I realized what a wonderful personality he had. The French and Education professors delivered their courses well and they made it interesting. The real problem for me was organizing the material, being selective with studies and keeping up with the workload.

One of my few disappointments with MUN came during my first year. It was when the Bell Island mines closed completely. There were many students from the Island and it was a shock to have all of our parents out of work. To my recollection, the university did absolutely nothing to encourage and support us in any way. They really had no understanding of how we felt and what we were experiencing.

After my first year at MUN, I applied for and got a job as an orderly at the Walter Templeman Hospital on Bell Island during the summer. I really enjoyed that experience and the extra funds helped prepare for another year. I had a wonderful summer. Life was great during this time away from school.

During my second year at MUN I switched majors from Math to French with a minor in English; even though I had a better grade in Math my first year. I also understood that French would make me more marketable for teaching positions. This proved to be correct throughout my entire teaching career; and it also seems to hold true today. There was still a tremendous amount of work. My future brother-in-law and I had another great boarding house. ( \$17.00 per week, meals included) Premier Joseph Smallwood introduced a salary program for students; fifty dollar per month for students living in St. John's and \$ 100 for students from outside St. John's. It made a tremendous difference in the amount of student loans you had to borrow and pay back at the end of your four years. At the end of every month I can remember students lining up to receive their monthly cheque.

History was a real challenge in my second year. As I remember my initial History professor had little or no consideration. I failed History the first semester. It was the first time I had ever failed any course or subject. It was by the grace of God that the History professors were switched after Christmas and I had Dr. Alexander. I put a tremendous amount of work into a major research paper and received an "F". I went to see him and he told me that I had written a 'scissors and cut paper' with no proper footnotes or proper

bibliography. I told him I did not know how to do those things. He was quite surprised and arranged for me to meet with him on a regular basis and showed me how to write a proper research paper. I achieved an 'A' on the next paper. He then re-read my first paper and gave me a 'D'. He was another awesome person who made a difference in my life. Every paper I wrote after that (and they were numerous) I received 'A' grades. My French and Education courses went well and I found the professors interesting and easy to understand. I learned a lot from them and their experiences.

After my second year I applied for a job at St. Clare's Mercy Hospital instead of going back to Bell Island hospital. I started work in May. One day in late June all these girls in white uniforms arrived at the hospital to work. I asked the head nurse on St. Jude's floor who they were and how long they would be here. She told me they were nursing students who would be on the floors all summer. I remember walking down the corridor and raising my hands towards Heaven and saying, "Thank you, God". Needless to say, I made many good friends while working at the hospital for the next three summers. During those years I lived with a family at a boarding house on Pleasant Street who treated me like part of the family.

My third year of my university program was the most challenging. The course loads were very demanding and I had no life other than studying. Our new boarding house did not help. (\$20.00 per week, meals included) There were three of us. The lady did not want to really feed us anything close to a decent home cooked meal. I remember that her husband shot a moose. We ate so much moose that winter I thought I was going to grow antlers. Another time I remember having homemade soup for supper which was a mixture of leftovers such as beans, capelin, and ingredients from other previous meals. We had enough. We decided to express our concerns so we drew matches to see who would deliver the message. I got the shortest match. I met with the husband and wife and expressed our concerns about not having reasonable food for our meals and gave them examples of what they had been feeding us. They told me I had to leave. When the other two boys told them they would leave also, we would report them to the university, and we would sit out on the sidewalk without luggage and call the media to report how we had been treated. While the atmosphere was a little uncomfortable for a while, after that the food was more acceptable.

During my third year some courses were semesterized, so there were more course options like History, Psychology, and Sociology. At the orientation week for first year students, I sat near the steps of the Arts and Administration building with a group of boys from Bell Island. Since I was the only one not having a steady girlfriend, they borrowed a beaney (the mark of a first year student) from one of the boys and put it on my head. I sat on the steps of the Arts and Administration building pretending to be a first year student. Since first year students had to do what senior students told them to do during orientation week, within reason of course, the boys told the female first-year students, who also wore beanies, they had to kiss me on the cheek. However, when the girls went to kiss me on the cheek I turned my head and kissed them on the lips. We did this several times before other students caught on. I suppose nowadays you would be charged with some kind of

offense. Anyhow, it was a great laugh for all of us, especially me. Unfortunately, this is when the fun really slowed down.

I completed two very difficult French courses (how I passed them I don't know) In one of my French courses we had three different professors; and several times one of them did not show up for class due to illness. We would have substitutes instead, which made it even more difficult. I also completed an English course, the complete works of Shakespeare, one Education course and one Sociology course. Even though I attended all the classes, did the readings and any assignments, I was not prepared for what I faced in the final exam on the complete works of Shakespeare. All courses were extremely difficult. I could not even figure out what the Education course was about, even though I attended the lectures and read the text. It was another time when the grace of God was there for me. Two nights before the Education final exam I met a girl who did a lot of courses with me. She asked if I knew about the Education exam which counted as 100 % of the mark. I told her I didn't even know where to begin. It was my last exam and I had two days to study. She told me she had a book of objectives based on the course with the answers and I could borrow it for one night. I promised her I would have it back to me the next day. Into the long hours of the night, I managed to cover two thirds of the book but I did get it back to her the next day. I could not believe that the final exam was all objectives and it counted for 100% of the mark. However, I did pass the course. The History course, Ancient Rome and Greece, was enjoyable and very interesting. The professor did a great presentation at his lectures and you knew what his expectations were and how you could achieve success.

Every year during exam time it was always next to impossible to get a quiet study place in the library. The library was filled with students you hardly ever typically saw in the library building. My buddies and I used to try to find an open and quiet room to organize and prepare for exams. There were usually other out-of-town students in the room with us. We would all take breaks and go for a coffee together. I came to realize that most students spent as much time as I did keeping up with the workload.

I did not go home to Bell Island much at this time. I had a lot of studying to do, so I went home less and less. That year I thought I failed two or more courses. I requested six weeks of evening shifts at St. Clare's Hospital so I could go to MUN during the day. I remember my brother and a mutual friend coming to the boarding house with my marks. I passed all the courses. However, I still had to do the six weeks of evenings. It was a rough summer with little social life. I spent part of the summer helping a nurse renovate a house he had bought.

I did meet an attractive girl during my third summer, and we liked each other. However, after only a few dates, she got all worked into a steady relationship image, wanting to buy a car together and so on. To me, we were just dating and I was a student who could not afford two or three nights off from my studies each week and I certainly could not afford to make payments on a car. So needless to say, I had to break it off. She asked me to let people believe she broke up with me. I had no problem with that. It was



a small price to pay, instead of the price of a car; and I had no hang-ups about going steady or not going steady.

My fourth year at MUN was enjoyable, the workload was more manageable and my study abilities had improved considerably. My best friend and I lived with an older couple who were awesome; (board was \$20.00 per week, including meals.) Since they were an older couple we used to help with the housework. I did well, passed all courses and graduated from MUN with my first degree; a Bachelor of Arts –Education, with a Major in High School Education, a Major in French and a Minor in English. I invited a third year student nurse at St. Clare's to my graduation. I took part in an interview fair for teachers, had three job opportunities, and was hired to teach in Carbonear at St. Clare's, an all girls school, grades 7 -11, Conception Bay North. Life was enjoyable and it was during that summer that I met Rita, my wife. What a way to end my first four years at MUN!

My part-time years at MUN lasted for the next twelve years. My first part-time course was a VCR video course in psychology, while I was teaching in Carbonear. We would sit in a classroom in one of the high schools, watch videos of a professor giving the taped lectures, take notes, read the text book and study for tests and take a final exam. Over the next summer I got married and the next year we moved to St. John's. For the next twelve years I did courses during the Fall, Winter and Summers to obtain my second degree, a straight Bachelor of Arts (Major in French, Minors in English and History) and then my Masters Degree in Educational Administration.

An added priority in my life soon became my own family, my wife and three children, integrated with full time jobs for both my wife and me. We worked hard and balanced everything together with the children being our top priority.

During those part-time student years, I did courses that I felt would help me during my career. I did additional courses in French, History, Psychology and Sociology. I really enjoyed those courses, especially now, I also had the real knack on how best to study, do assignments, and prepare for tests and exams. From my recollection, all of the professors were also quite good and more approachable. I don't know if it were because I was older and more mature, or if they were actually much better than some of the professors I had for my first undergraduate degree. My life completely evolved around raising a young family, teaching and doing courses at MUN.

During the time of doing my Master's Degree in Educational Administration, I selected the courses and did research papers that most appealed to me and would be the most interesting. There were two options available to me; ten courses and a thesis or twelve courses with an oral exam at the end. I opted for the twelve courses and the oral exam. Going to MUN part-time, I knew it would be a long time before I reached the oral exam. At the end of each course, I kept all my notes and text books but I would summarize each course with four or five pages of jot notes.

I found the graduate courses and the professors to be excellent. I tried to think of the course content as it would apply to reality. While in school I was always mentally assessing the plans and decisions of the department heads, assistant principals and principals in the schools where I taught, as well as what was going on from a provincial perspective. I would then think about whether it was a good thing they were doing or whether I would do things differently. For me personally, it was a great mental exercise every time a challenging situation arose; whether it be about scheduling, the curriculum, school events and activities, parental situations or discipline (positive or negative); as well as critically analyzing what the Department of Education was developing and proposing.

A real challenge arose when it came time for my oral exam which was to cover all twelve courses. I reviewed the material of all twelve courses; and the pages of jot note came in real handy. Many things came back and were now fresh in my mind. The examiners consisted of a panel of three professors. Two of them I knew, since I had completed a number of courses from both of them. The third professor I did not know. He had been away and he was my student advisor for my Masters Degree program. Whenever I needed consultation I went to another professor, Dr. Dennis Treslan, who also happened to be one of my examiners for the oral exam. I had taken no graduate courses from my advisor; however I did do an undergraduate course from him. This bothered me so I eventually got to see him with a copy of the courses I had completed and the grades. He looked at the outline of my courses and the grades and reassured me there should be no problems. The day of the oral exam came. It was real tense for me. I just wanted to get in there and get started.

During the oral exam, things were going quite smoothly. There was a fair amount of interaction. I was responding to all the questions and sub-questions and providing examples with a fair amount of ease. I also requested clarification of questions when necessary. The questions were based on a variety of course content and situations in schools and the environmental educational situation in our province. The exam was gradually coming to an end when my advising professor, from whom I had taken no courses, became more challenging and intimidating, requesting further clarification on answers to questions asked by the other professors. The situation threatened to become tense. Once again in my life, by the grace of God, Dr. Treslan was present. His support for my performance was tremendous. The panel chair brought things back on track and I proceeded to answer the remaining questions with some unease, however. At the end I was asked to wait outside. Finally, the examinations panel chair came out and informed me that I passed the oral exam. My head was ready to explode with the release of tension. And that, as a student, was my final experience with MUN.

Many years passed, and I have retired from the teaching profession as a classroom teacher, Department Head, Assistant Principal, Principal, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum. I applied for, and was accepted as a Teacher-Intern Supervisor during the Winter Semesters. This turned out to be a fabulous experience for five years, having the opportunity to influence and coach prospective new teacher who were assigned to several different schools. I also worked for The Telegram part time. My position as Teacher-Intern supervisor ended when my manager at The Telegram suggested I finish what I was doing at MUN and work for them full time. I used my experience, interest and enthusiasm as an educator to develop a Newspaper In Education (NIE) Program for The Telegram. With my education and experience in the

teaching profession, that too turned out to be a fabulous second career with some wonderful people. Many staff at The Telegram supported me with adjusting to the technology component of developing the NIE Program, and they continued to support me through the next ten years.

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador has provided the opportunity for me to have a wonderful career and a second career, thanks to the many tremendous professors I had over those years. Any time I walk the corridors of the buildings where I did my courses, or happen to pass the area where I usually had my locker, I still feel the nostalgia. Life is real good, thanks to my life at MUN.

## Chapter 6: Culture, a narrative from within. . . .

David Trainor

*(David Trainor, artist/art educator, husband and father, from Port Kirwan on the Southern Shore of the Avalon Peninsula, the youngest of fourteen children, now residing in Spaniard's Bay, Conception Bay North)*

The birthplace of an identity geminates from the belief and connection that people identify with their sense of place and of themselves across personal stories of culture. Such a belief is not based on a blind adherence to a way of life but through lived experiences that create meaning and fulfillment in one's life. Such experiences are connectors that endow a personality within the narratives. The meanings associated with the stories are transferrable expressions that carve out an understanding and appreciation to the narratives, whereby, the presenter's experiences are allowed to become living knowledge for the inheritor. Because we all want to belong, feel value in ourselves, enliven efficacy and hold onto that truth of emancipation, then education holds that power of development.

It is through the instructional debate about our awareness of the present that we need to reflect upon where it all began. The cartography for the life in teaching and learning is embedded within the history of its people. The narratives of people in places are pedagogical tools that empower the meaningful relationship in the curricula. When the melding of that process occurs, an experience revitalizes the character of the class because the subject comes alive in the relived practices of the students and now the teacher becomes the student. This personal adherence to a place is the setting upon which to build the perspective model for learning and teaching within a visual arts classroom. And, like all curriculum studies, the true reflection of a subject is through the thought and expression for an area of personal connection. The teacher draws upon the narrative of experiences in reverberating a meaning in the lesson and, in this way, the students can absorb the experiences as part of their own. This induces an appreciation in the development and support of their self -worth through a connection to place. The embodiment of sharing is a commensal relationship that forges a joining of lived experiences both past and present.

My educational project, "From Stagehead to Saltbox House: A Cultural Connection through Art," became a self-expressive enigma that envisaged a microscopic vision of my own lived metaphoric vision of a closed cultural paradigm. I drew upon the isolated cultural jigsaw of the self-reliant fishing community where I grew up. Yet, through research I was able to reflect back upon the genesis of this project as being the first rock skipped across the salty bay on the Southern Shore. Metaphorically speaking, that single rock joined all the other rocks that sank to the sea floor and the conduit in reaching that new haven was possible because of the fluidity of that salty water, much like the connection in the *Essence of Self* (a pastel painting).



(Preliminary sketch)



("Essence of Self" . . . pastel painting)

*(Through a free flowing mode of expression this was the internalized view I envisaged as the substance of my existence. Symbolically, the surrealistic purview of this piece of work also reflects the surge, both high and low, of the tidal flood of constructive critical thinking that ebbed through my journey in the MED program. )*

Through my ED 6192 with Heather McLeod, at MUN, I was encouraged to look at myself and develop a *Conceptual Self-Portrait*. I first envisaged all of the parts that made me and this entailed a barrage of cultural components that have, had and still do influence whom I believe myself to be. I presented a slide show that was a visual interpretation of my place with others through personal interactions and other sense motivated stimuli; I composed a song that I performed but through all of this sensory-filled data I was looking at myself as seen through the eyes of others. There were words from another professor, Clara Doyle, who advised me to continue what I was doing, which was in reference to my style of allegorical writing, which struck home that last spike on the cross, namely to be myself. Who am I?

If anyone is to awaken within a conscious deluge, then you become enamored with a desire to escape or become immersed within the essence of your developing muck, that is, face resignation to the fatalistic mire or rise to emancipation on the new blank canvas. It was the latter that I struggled with because much like the creation of an artwork, when it is fixed, it is a tenuous battle to undo, as are the life experiences over half a century. Also, your history has a pre-birth that awaits your arrival which is already fully born through a cultural identity and within that finely drawn sketch you may only represent a scratch in its design, but you are forever belonging to that tangible iconic domain. How to experience growth, so as to learn, as you look back upon yourself is the trek I undertook at MUN in doing my masters.

The education faculty at MUN helped remove the bandages from my eyes where I experienced a new vision about myself and my sense of place from where I had come and to where I am now. That journey was an internal and external battle midst acquiescence and protagonist ideals from me and others. Barriers always exist in the artist's mind over discerning the outcome of the work before it is finished and so too is the development of oneself on the outside looking in, beyond and letting it reflect back to you. That conscious awakening arose on the crest of the wave that carried me along the educational dig site that uncovered who I am. The Master's program presented me with new tools that allowed me to create and find my bearings and sea legs for the journey that lay ahead.

This journey through education was a re-education, re-affirmation and renewal of my vows for a cultural identity that I had squeezed into a tiny pill bottle with a dosage that was running out. My research empowered a new spirit of revival from whence I came and from where I was going as a Newfoundlander who grew up in a small outport fishing community. I was able to see myself as being a part of an evolving essence that I ingested through my multiple senses. I absorbed my surroundings, ingested my experiences and expanded my sense of place as I continue to forge my existence. I accredit this development to the fine minds at MUN's Education Faculty. They helped purge the complacency of thought that festered inside me to an interpretative, creative and critical outlook on the indelible strength that lay in the awareness and ownership of a cultural identity where I came to believe in Gerald Pocius' book, A Place to Belong.



## **Chapter 7: Bridget and the White Rose: An author among school children**

Ed Kavanagh

When I was a child, the only people you could ever expect to see in school, other than students and school employees, were the priest, the public health nurse, and, occasionally, the schools inspector. That seemed right and proper; who would want to come to a school if they didn't absolutely have to? Certainly we never saw a writer in school. If, on some bright May morning in 1963, Miss Hynes had announced to our grade four class that an author was coming to visit, I'm sure we wouldn't have known how to react. Is this person going to give us a needle? Tell us why good Catholics go to heaven? Ask us to spell a difficult word? One of our first questions would probably have been, "What's an author?" When told that authors were people who wrote books, we would have stared at each other incredulously. People? People wrote books? We knew, of course, that a person's name was usually affixed to a book's cover, but equating that name with an actual human being required a mental stretch of which few of us were capable. And if they were human, weren't they all dead? Surely a dead person wasn't coming to visit.

My personal knowledge of authors was, to say the least, limited. I knew that someone named Franklin W. Dixon wrote the Hardy Boys books, but was he a real person? (As I have since learned, he wasn't; the books were written by a number of different people. Franklin W. Dixon is a collective pen name.) Conjuring up an image of Mr. Dixon hunched over a typewriter, hammering out Frank and Joe's latest adventure, was, for me at least, a difficult feat.

So where exactly did books come from? Many of us, I'm sure, if we thought about it at all, considered that books originated in some mystical void, shadowy places like Limbo and Purgatory. From there they somehow made their way to bookstores, angels perhaps?

...and then, eventually, on to us. Or perhaps they came from those green, hot countries we sometimes studied in geography class, countries that exported bananas and other exotic fruit; places far away that had no real connection to Newfoundland. Perhaps books grew on trees like mangoes.

None of these notions had anything to do with liking books. I liked books even more than Fireball XL5 (my favourite TV show of the era), and so did many of my friends. After all, you couldn't take a TV show to bed with you. But the idea of one person, an author, coming up with all the words and characters of a novel, and then sealing them between covers was, for us, more magical than a magician pulling a rabbit from a hat.

Times have changed, at least in the larger centres. Today students are becoming more and more aware of authors. School libraries are often adorned with posters of famous contemporary writers, many exhibiting a flamboyant rock star quality. And it's not just authors who are finally making their presence felt. On any given day, school children may be marched down to the library or resource room to meet a policeman, scientist, pet-owner, fiddle player, theatre group or, of course, a real, live author. (To be distinguished, I suppose, from the many fake, dead ones.) It's a wonderful experience for everyone. For teachers and students, author visits add an exciting, extra dimension to a book; authors get an opportunity to meet their audience. I find it a great way to get my batteries recharged, to learn what children really feel about writing; it reminds me of why I spend all those lonely hours in front of a computer.

But what exactly do authors do in schools? There is certainly no uniform approach. For me, developing the most effective school visit was a long, drawn out process. When I first started visiting schools, I found the experience more than a little intimidating. But it was also exhilarating. Imagine, here were 30, 40, 100 people who had read my book and seemed to genuinely like it. Question and answer time was a forest of raised, waving hands. In those early days I kept things simple: I would read from *Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star* and then take questions. That was it. Gradually my visits changed. Because of my musical and theatrical background, I began to storytell my books, essentially turning them into self-contained plays. That way I could, nominally at least, cover the whole story. (Young children dislike getting half of something.) Eventually, I began to bring the guitar and sing my original children's songs. Still later, it occurred to me that students would benefit from seeing how a book was composed. I began to bring the early handwritten drafts of my stories, as well as the illustrator's mock-up illustrations. The children could see that the composition of a book requires many attempts. They learned a lot, but so did I. Having to explain how I go about a piece of writing made me measure and re-evaluate my own compositional techniques. Something else happened that was useful: I gradually began to develop a feel for what appealed to children, to subtly sense what they found moving or amusing. I learned that this is not necessarily the same for a Kindergarten student as it is for someone in grade three. Writing for children became even more intriguing.

When children are truly interested in something, they give back a wonderful, honest energy. It wasn't long before I was addicted to my school sessions. If too many weeks went by without one, I found myself wondering if I should call a school myself and volunteer to come in. Or would that be pushy? Luckily, in the early days at least, there was never too much of a dry spell.

As the years went by my school visits became even more animated. Now they are a mixture of theatre, the writing process, songs, question and answer, and, recently, the Celtic Harp. It makes for a full and rewarding hour.

Memories. I've performed for thousands of school children in just about every nook and cranny throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and also on the mainland and in Ireland, so I have a great many, but here a few that have stayed with me in an especially vivid fashion. I've long since forgotten her name, but the little girl was in grade two and the school was in Portugal Cove. As the children trooped, single file, into the stuffy library, giggling and glancing at me sideways, she stood out like a white rose in a cluster of rhododendrons. It was her dress. On that bitter February morning, with the north wind whipping freezing spray off the grey ocean and rattling the ill-fitting fire doors, the little girl wore a white, fluffy party dress: the same style I remember my sister and her friends wearing at 1960s birthday parties.

Throughout my presentation the White Rose seemed off in her own world, distracted, continually looking around the library, taking us all in with a wondering eye, as if she questioned our purpose there. Why were we having such a good time? What was all this

singing and face-pulling about? During the presentation she offered not a single response, remained tight-lipped during the sing-a-long, refused in any way to be drawn in. And even though everyone else was having a wonderful time, it was this little girl of whom I was most aware. Her distraction was distracting me; I began to question my performance. What could I possibly be doing wrong? Usually, I'm confident about my school presentations. Ninety-nine per cent of the time my audiences pay me complete, riveted attention. After all, where else do children get to see a grown man do the kinds of silly things I do? Where else would they see a Celtic Harp and actually get to play it? But this little girl was not buying in.

I was surprised, then, that when the time came for questions, the White Rose was the first to raise her hand. I braced myself and awaited what I was sure would be some stinging criticism--the kind of which only children are capable: unselfconsciously cruel, brutally direct and honest. I smiled weakly. "Yes?" And then, as if she were a miniature priestess conducting some ancient ritual, the little girl slowly stood, drew herself up to her full height, smoothed down the folds of her shimmering party dress, clasped her hands in the "Mercy Clutch" (although, I seem to remember, it was a Protestant school), and in a solemn, plaintive voice announced, "My cat Tiger got runned over!" Immediately she raised a fist to her mouth in a futile attempt to stifle a series of smothering sobs. It was one of the few times in a school session when I was completely lost for words. The other children nodded and stared at her sorrowfully. Sadness hung heavily on the humid, library air for an eternal five or ten seconds. For a horrific moment I wondered if she was accusing me of this crime. Eventually I found my tongue. "Oh, I'm so sorry," I blurted out. Surprisingly, this simple statement seemed to satisfy her. She wiped away her tears, gathered the folds of her dress and sat down, her large brown eyes, now puffy and wet, continually fixed upon me. But her expression had changed; her countenance had definitely lightened. Afterwards, one of the teachers said it was telling that she wanted to share her grief with me, with all of us. Getting it off her chest in such a public fashion had helped her. It helped the rest of us, too. Somewhere along the line we'd all had a Tiger in our lives.

During recess I asked the little girl about her dress. "It's really my Mom's," she said. "But she lets me wear it whenever I'm sad. Pretty, isn't it?" "Very," I said.

She smiled. "You know, sometimes I think I'd like to live in a waterfall like Amanda Greenleaf."

I nodded. "I know just what you mean."

Later I saw her sprawled against a library wall, a half eaten apple in one hand, an Amanda Greenleaf book precariously balanced on her white dress, a faraway look on her smudged face.

On another occasion I gave a reading in a Halifax public library to a large and varied audience: adults, teenagers, babies--the lot. It was in a poor, rundown part of town. I

remember a line of leather-jacketed boys hanging around at the back. In front of me, practically on top of me, were 10 pre-schoolers tied to a rope. There were also two or three elementary classes from a nearby school. One of the librarians told me that many of the children's parents were unemployed or on social assistance. Despite the age differences and the big crowd, the show went well.

Towards the end of the session I call up a child from the audience to play Amanda Greenleaf. On this particular morning a little girl sitting about three rows back caught my eye. I think I called her because she looked a little bit like Amanda; I do remember that she had long yellow hair. The girl hesitated momentarily, but then made her way to the front. She was not a healthy child; she was far too skinny and her cheeks were sunken and sallow. But she was a pretty little girl with intelligent, flecked blue eyes. She said her name was Bridget. Bridget performed her duties with quiet, efficient dignity and returned to her place to a round of applause. She flushed with pleasure; a small grin crossed her thin face.

At the conclusion of the show, as the audience was leaving, she smiled at me and waved shyly; impulsively, I gestured for her to come over. "Here," I said. "This is for you." I passed her my copy of *Amanda Greenleaf Visits a Distant Star*. She took the book gingerly and then looked up at me. "You mean I can keep it?"

"Sure," I said. "It's ... it's for helping me. Here, I'll autograph it for you." As I wrote in the book some of her classmates gathered around. For a moment I regretted the gift. Would her friends feel envious or put out because they didn't get a book. I could imagine comments like, "Why should Bridget get a book? She only said a few old lines." But nothing like that happened. Her friends gathered closely around her looking at the book. A little boy whispered softly, "Wow, Bridget got a book." Bridget stared at the book and hugged it to her chest.

"You'll share it with your friends, won't you?" I said.

Bridget nodded. "Yes."

As they left the library their teacher, a tired young man in a threadbare cardigan, approached me. He glanced at Bridget and her friends and smiled. "You realize she's going to sleep with that tonight, don't you?"

"I hope so," I said.

Oh, Bridget, where are you after all these years? There aren't many things I'm sure about in this world, but even though you're grown up now and probably have children of your own, I'm sure you still have that book. I remember what I wrote in it: To Bridget, for helping me. I wonder if you ever knew what I really meant.

Of course when visiting schools there is always the silly and the unexpected. I remember a session where a stereotypically nerdy child in black frame glasses hung on

my every word. Not for a moment did he take his eyes off me. When I asked for questions he waved his hand frantically. I expected some profound question, perhaps with Freudian overtones, something like, "Why, Mr. Kavanagh, does your protagonist, Amanda Greenleaf, live in a cave behind a waterfall? What exactly is she hiding from?" What he actually said was, "Sir, where did you get that watch?"

"Woolworth's," I said. "\$19.99."

"Cool," he said.

You never know what the children will say or what might happen. I once visited a school when, just at the most dramatic moment of my storytelling session, a fire drill sent us all out to the parking lot, even though the school authorities knew I was going to be there on that day.

And, of course, you have to learn how to think on your feet. Once, during a sing-a-long, a child inexplicably asked me if I knew any songs about the Post Office. I pride myself on rarely missing a beat. "Oh," I said, "you want a slow song." So I improvised a slow song about a letter carrier who was so rich he could never get his route completed; he was continually stopping off in every store he passed to buy things.

Then there was the little girl in Corner Brook who came to my session dressed as Amanda Greenleaf; attention had been paid to every detail: dress, wig, necklace - everything. She had made the costume with her mother for Halloween.

I remember a little Inuit boy in Nain, Labrador. At the completion of my visit, just as I was about to board the tiny four-seater that was to take me to Davis Inlet, he came tearing up to the plane on his bicycle. I thought I must have left something at the school and he had been detailed to bring it to me. But no. He merely wanted me to sign his Toronto Blue Jays baseball cap. (Incidentally, when I got to Davis Inlet, my first two sessions were with young Innu children, none of whom could speak English.)

I've done hundreds of school visits and I hope to do hundreds more. I love books and I love to see children excited by them. These days, however, there are fewer and fewer calls for writers to visit schools. Apparently there is no money, no time, no co-ordinators left to arrange the visits. Catch phrases like "Time on Task" are bandied about. It's a shame. If you ask children what they remember most about a particular school year they will often say, "The time the author came." To this day, I am often stopped on the street by young men and women, long since graduated from high school, who tell me that I visited their class when they were in primary or elementary school. I'll admit that it sometimes makes me feel old, but it also makes me smile. After all, it's nice to be remembered.

## **Chapter 8: Memorial, Korea and Back**

Geoff Barrett

My experience as a graduate of Memorial University of Newfoundland has been varied but mostly positive. In 2006 I completed a BA in Political Science/English with hopes of getting a job with the Newfoundland and Labrador or Canadian government. I was pretty open minded about future employment prospects and applied for jobs in organizations ranging from Canadian Border Services to The Rooms. For about two years after graduation I applied for job after job and wrote entrance test after entrance test with absolutely no calls or interviews. In the meantime I did what many recent arts graduate are forced to do; I found monetary sustenance through working service industry jobs such as bartending or serving tables at restaurants. This disheartening period of my life led me to look outside the province, and indeed the country.

My next step was to apply for a working holiday visa in the UK, which over the course of a few months I was granted. I then moved off to London where I promptly found a bartending job which provided much higher pay than anything I had found in Canada. I did this for six months until I had a satisfactory amount of money to travel throughout western Europe. Once the money was gone I returned to Newfoundland with hopes of going back to further my education.

Throughout the winter of 2008 I completed two certificates at Memorial University, one in Public Administration and another in Criminology. I thought that having those certificates would help me in finding a job within the provincial or federal bureaucracies. As was the case after my undergraduate degree, I still struggled to gain any ground on finding a job through the impersonal channels of applying for such jobs online through the government hiring process. Once again disheartened and this time even further in debt, my eyes once again looked overseas.

In the fall of 2008 I left Newfoundland once again to go teach English as a second language in Seoul, South Korea. I had known several people who had done this after years of struggling to find work at home and I was open to the idea of a new international experience that paid well, had reasonable work hours, and multiple benefits. Over the course of my one-year contract I had one of the best life experiences I have had to date and found that teaching was something that came naturally to me. I would have never been hired as an ESL teacher unless I had a university degree so for the first time I began to feel that there was some value in my MUN education. Once I returned home in the fall of 2009 I knew what my plan was going to be.

In September of 2010 I began my Bachelor of Education (Intermediate/Secondary) at Memorial University. Throughout that year I worked part time in the service industry even while doing my full time unpaid internship. Near the end of the degree I began searching intensely for any teaching job I could find. Unlike most of my classmates that year who were unwilling to leave the St. John's area, I was open to moving to a rural town and applied for such jobs. Eventually in late August I was called for an interview to teach music (which was not my teachable) in Burgeo on the south-west coast. My teachables were actually Social Studies and English but some music experience on my resume landed me the interview which must have gone well given that they offered me the job. In September of 2011 I began my first ever job as a true professional.



I taught on a replacement in Burgeo for my first year teaching classroom music to students in that town but also by video conferencing in the nearby towns of Ramea, Francois, and Grey River. This was a truly unique experience and I generally enjoyed it and felt fulfilled. Once the year was over the woman I was replacing decided not to come back and I was offered the job on a term by term basis. I decided to go back for one more year to get the necessary two years experience to go on and complete my masters degree.

I am now in my first semester of completing my graduate degree in Educational Administration and Leadership at Memorial University and I find myself thinking that this will perhaps be my last degree completed at MUN. That is not to say that I will not pursue further university education throughout my life, but I am confident that five programs at one university is probably enough. My plan once I finish this graduate degree is to look for new opportunities both in and out of the province. I am currently considering Calgary because I have many connections and friends there. However, I will also consider international opportunities.

Though the future is again somewhat uncertain for me I do not feel as hopeless as I did back in the anxiety-filled years directly after my undergraduate degree. Generally, I have no regrets about my time spent at Memorial. However, I do find myself recommending international experiences to recent graduates who are struggling to find work because my year of teaching in Korea seems almost as much a part of my education as my actual degrees. It is unfortunate that many graduates at MUN cannot get the immediate experience they need in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Chapter 9: My MUN Experience**

Jeffrey E. Locke

Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador

I was born and raised in Conception Bay South (CBS) and graduated from Holy Spirit High School in 1995. During my high school years I witnessed the end of the denominational school system. At this time, students required a 70 % average in the 3000 level public exam courses. This was not a concern for me as I had a mid 80's score. Perhaps this was inflated somewhat as the year previous, public exams were cancelled. I had always done well in school but I really had no study skills. I was engaged in class and disciplined enough to pay attention and complete all assignments on time. I would categorize myself as a classic underachiever back then. I didn't have any desire to attend a post secondary institute but I assumed that I would as directed by my parents and that's just what everyone seemed to do. My father had been an educator and an administrator and my older brother was attending Memorial University, doing well. My mother continually reminded me that I had to get a degree. I recall having completed my last high school exam and I was looking forward to the chance to sleep in. My mother woke me up on the day after my last exam and suggested that I go in and write the optional electoral district scholarship exam. After much groaning and a glass of orange juice, I found myself at school, bed head and all, writing the exam. I managed to win an entry scholarship valued at \$1000 which nearly covered my first semester tuition at MUN. I credit my high score on the science and religion sections of the exam. I thought this was hilarious at the time as I did not see myself as an academic.

My first term at MUN was tumultuous. Nobody was going to help me unless I sought out the help. Student orientation was helpful but very strange for me. I knew many people attending and they all seemed very serious about getting started on their respective educational paths. I found the Breezeway and the video games arcade most appealing. This is where I spent my down time. Either I was pumping quarters into Samauri Showdown or downing cheap draft beer. Many would see this as wasted time but I made several friends that I am still close with. I lived at home with my parents, older brother and younger sister. We commuted back and forth to university from CBS. We would arrive in the early morning and often stayed at MUN long hours as our combined schedules were quite complicated. I am amazed at the sacrifices my parents made to ensure that we all made it to school and work. I was on track to complete a Bachelor of Science. My first term I was enrolled in introductory Biology, Physics, English, Math and a Religious Studies course. The only two courses I was really interested in were Biology and Religion.

On my very first day of class, I entered my religious studies classroom. Once the professor began it was apparent that I had no idea what he was talking about. Then I read the course outline title and realized that I was in a 4th level Classics course. I had thought that

everyone else looked very mature. I said nothing in hopes that I could just wait it out until the end and leave, never to return, unnoticed. About midway through the class the professor must have noticed my vacant but frightened stare and asked if I were in the right class. I said “No.” which was met with much laughter by the class. He then inquired as to why I would sit there and do nothing about it. I did not have an answer and I left the room quickly. I have never been in a Classics course since. Looking back, my one day Classics professor's question held a lot of truth. I spent a lot of time not doing much about anything. I achieved B's and C's that first term, which was impressive considering how little time I spent on school work. I crammed when I needed and this was my normal routine for test preparation. The following term I completed the second round of introductory courses with similar results.

I started working as a lifeguard and swimming instructor. This is where I began learning how to teach. I had a knack for entertaining young kids and I did well as a teacher. I avoided my studies as much as possible during my second year at MUN. My marks suffered greatly. I had switched my program of study to primary/elementary education. I skipped many classes, missed many assignment deadlines and found myself on academic probation after my first term and subsequently failed out of MUN. I was upset but relieved as I thought that this would be the end of school for me. Under pressure from family and friends, I appealed my dismissal from MUN and was granted a second chance by ‘the powers that be’. I ultimately felt humiliated and unworthy. I began dedicating myself to my job and gained a promotion to management. This is where I really learned how to work hard. I took pride in my work and really tried to do my best and I was rewarded for it. At the beginning of my third year at MUN, I moved out of my parents’ house and into an apartment with my girlfriend. Despite the unhealthy relationship I was in, life was good. I made enough money to provide for myself and I returned to MUN part-time. I still was a poor achiever. But this time, I was trying. My employment took priority and I studied as much as I could. Working full time and going to school was difficult. I returned to the Bachelors of Science program and was determined to finish. I recall long hours of getting help with chemistry at the help center. I also had a lot of positive support from friends who were now nearing the end of their bachelor’s program. I found being relatively behind was humbling. I knew I had to work hard to be successful at school. I still struggled and I gave up on a few courses along the way.

Finally, I swallowed my pride and asked my parents if I could move back home to finish my Science degree. The unhealthy relationship I was in had ended and I had quit my job in management. At the time I remember feeling quite defeated despite my best efforts to maintain my lifestyle. My folks were overjoyed at my decision to return home. I worked jobs at a grocery store and as a home care support worker to pay off debt that I had accrued while living on my own. A job became available with the local swim team and I began teaching swimming again which rekindled my desire to be a teacher. The swim team became a family to me. I always felt that I had to do my best in school as I demanded the same from my swimmers. I had never been so devoted to anything before. Our team grew and performed well on a National level. We won

many team awards for being the most spirited and I credit the amazing kids and families that I was fortunate enough to work with. I won a coaching excellence award that gave me the necessary validation I needed to stay focused on my goals. I enjoyed the science and religious studies courses as they both presented vastly different student experiences. I also attended the marine biology field station at GrosMourne for 5 summer courses. Hands on field studies and laboratory work were enjoyable and better suited to my learning style.

I had one last course to complete my Science degree, a biochemistry course about metabolism. I had a decent average going into the exam. I wrote the exam and felt good about it. The time came to phone in to receive my grade. At this point, I had been traumatized by that automated reporting system several times. I recall the eternity between the automated 'Biochemistry' and 'F'. This was impossible. I worked hard and thought I had done well. I'm pretty sure I freaked out completely at the automated lady on the phone. I had never wanted anything so bad in life. So close to the finish, yet so far away. My father insisted that I go to see the professor immediately to see my exam and find out what happened. He suggested that it may be a mistake. I resisted, but was desperate. I proceeded to go to MUN and speak with my professor who gave me my exam and the answer key. As I perused the carnage, I looked at the questions and noticed that I had entered the multiple choice answers on the answer key in a vertical sequence but the answer sheet was arranged numerically in a horizontal sequence. Then, I leapt up and screamed out. The professor made some calls and I was granted credit for the course. If it were not for the flexibility and understanding of this professor and the encouragement from my family, I would have not have graduated.

My younger sister had also just completed her Bachelor's degree and we both applied to the Faculty of Education Intermediate/Secondary program. The letters came, she was accepted. I was denied on the basis of my 'non-competitive average'. That being said, my average was a 76 % but the lowest average they accepted for Biology majors was an 81 %. I was devastated, not only at the rejection but I was looking forward to taking courses with my little sister. After all, I credit her with helping me through several difficult courses during my Science degree. Over my MUN career I have never been self motivated. I have always wanted to do well for others. My academic past has had many second chances. Many parents of the swimmers I coached heard about my rejection from the Faculty of Education. I came to learn that several emails had been sent to the Dean of Education on my behalf. I had written a formal appeal myself outlining the reasons why they should let me in to become a teacher. I was admitted to the program. This was a turning point for me. I was tired of needing second chances and I wanted to impress myself for the first time.

I moved out of my parents' house, again, but this time under much healthier circumstances. I availed of the student loan program to focus exclusively on school. My sister and I registered for all of the same courses during Education outside of our methodology courses. We were a great team with complementary strengths. She taught me how to be organized, focused and prepared. I offered quality presentation abilities and was not easily stressed. I had

honed my skills as a teacher through coaching and I found the material in the education courses very interesting and useful. The professors were skilled teachers themselves. I learned a tremendous amount from the manner in which they taught. Many taught classes with the methods in which they were teaching us to employ. My experience with the Education department at MUN has always been positive. The difference between professors who are trained as educators versus those who are subject matter experts is a stark one. This is the nature of educational studies and I enjoyed the entire Bachelor of Education program.

Upon graduation, I began coaching with a city swim team and the MUN varsity swim team and I applied for a job at an Independent Jesuit School. I taught Science and Theology for two years at this private school until I made the move to the public system. I was called in to substitute for grades 7,8 and 9 English Language Arts and Math for the first three days of school. The incumbent teacher did not return to the position for several months and I stayed on as the replacement. Once the teacher returned, a new position had become available at the school which I applied for and received. During my Education degree program I had been told by everyone that it was impossible to gain employment in the metro area if you are a new teacher starting out. I ignored their sentiments and thought that if I worked hard enough, was open to teach anything and contributed to the school community, it would work out. I volunteered at every opportunity, coached sports' teams and became involved in committee work. I always made myself available to assist students in any way that I could. I maintain these practices and I feel that they have served me well and brought much personal satisfaction.

Over the past 8 years of my teaching career, a lot has changed. I have gained permanent tenured status and I have had the fortune of making numerous positive relationships. I have taught Math, Gym, English, Health, Religion, Music, Careers, Industrial Arts and Science. All disciplines have helped diversify my repertoire of teaching methods. I have participated in facilitating professional development for colleagues, character education programs and leadership roles. I have also worked with the Department of Education on resource development, curriculum development and participated in documenting professional learning activities for teachers. Through a local publishing company, I have contributed in the development of teacher resource guides for Religious Education. I have focused on relationships with students and getting to know them well. Learning how they learn best by being genuinely interested in whatever they are interested in enhances my instruction.

Now, I am at the half-way point of the Master's Program in Educational Leadership at Memorial University. I enjoy the courses immensely as they offer a chance to learn valid and engaging ideas in education. The material we learn is very relevant to teaching and education. I appreciate hearing the multiple perspectives from other teachers. This knowledge is invaluable. Maintaining a teaching career and being a student is challenging but I generally do well because I enjoy the material and the process itself. I appreciate the collegiality of the Master's program and graduate studies in general. Now the challenge is to become a better researcher, academic writer and student overall. I think the goal of any graduate student is to attempt to generate

new knowledge and perspectives based on our teaching experiences and the material we are learning. I look forward to classes and completing school work which is very different than when I started out at MUN. To be honest, I never thought that MUN would be enjoyable. Once I began putting in a genuine effort, I experienced the benefits of being a student at Memorial. Finding subjects and teachers that I enjoyed is a key part of my successes to date. And who knows, perhaps I will continue on with Doctoral studies after the Master's program is complete.



## **Chapter 10: Reflections on the SORT Project**

Joan Oldford

In his remarks during the presentation of the President's Award for Exceptional Community Service for 2007, Dr. Axel Meisen commented that Project SORT (Significant Others as Reading Teachers) had been chosen as its first recipient primarily because of the "idea of it". What follows here is an attempt to explore the journey of SORT from emergent ideas to its implementation as a reality in an educational environment.

### **The Background**

In the post -confederation Newfoundland and Labrador of the 1960's, an increasing emphasis on education, the creation of a Teacher Education Faculty within Memorial University, and provincially-provided incentives for managing the costs of university education, afforded men and women from rural communities an opportunity to participate in teacher education in a university setting. I was among those who participated and became a teacher.

Early teaching career experiences combined with life experiences outside my home community contributed to my growing curiosity about linguistic prejudices and literacy underachievements. To further explore language attitudes and learning, I enrolled in graduate studies work in psycho- and socio-linguistics at the Ohio State University. Among other perspectives the study revealed that literacy challenges and outcomes were interwoven in the social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts of our schools and classrooms.

Specifically, in our provincial context, approximately three in four of our communities lacked libraries, bookstores were rare, and most primary/elementary schools lacked books for young children (with the exception of provincially-prescribed texts). Our strong well-developed oral traditions were a powerful foundation for literacy learning, but without easy access to printed materials, literacy activities and models, many children were limited in their literacy achievements.

### **The Context**

In September, 1983, I became a member of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and of the Language Arts Disciplinary Group in the Faculty of Education. My educational background included more than a decade of experience as a classroom teacher, reading specialist and language arts co-ordinator in various communities in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. As mentioned, such experiences had contributed to my decision to study language and reading education as a graduate student in Early and Middle Childhood Education at the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Additionally, the legacy of a quantitative methodology in an agricultural state university ensured my approach to educational research was quantitative.

## **The Role**

Like others in the Language Arts Disciplinary Group, my initial assignment for the beginning academic year included teaching six language arts courses for primary and elementary pre-service teachers with some expectation to teach graduate courses during ‘summer school’. As well, there was a service role to the Faculty and to the community, which I engaged in within the Publications’ Committee, the NLTA’s, Study of Dropouts and a Department of Education Evaluation Committee for the selection of provincial reading programs. Additionally, I encountered a demand for graduate thesis supervision in the literacy area, since all of our students were required to complete a thesis. Supervising seven or eight graduate students during an academic year was commonplace.

## **The Challenge**

Early in my assignment I recognized the improbability of continuing a research program in experimental studies of print factors influencing early reading. Research funding which could provide release from teaching was difficult to accomplish and preparing proposals for funding was a time-consuming process in itself, although I constantly engaged in writing them.

Upon reflecting on what seemed to be an ever-expanding fragmentation of my work, I sought a vision for integrating my work aspects into some meaningful whole. A sabbatical leave afforded me the opportunity to synthesize research findings on emergent literacy as a basis for a text for preservice primary teachers. An ongoing issue of my concern as an educator was the improvement of literacy outcomes in our province, where many discrepancies were occurring both in literacy outcomes and availability of print resources. I possessed a strong commitment and sense of mission to contribute to literacy improvement for young children in our province.

## **The Emergence of SORT**

While studying early literacy research findings, I confronted an unanticipated insight, i.e., that parents could be more influential in affecting young children’s reading achievement than could small-group classroom teaching. Reflection on this phenomenon led me to a change of audience for my writing. I imagined “suppose parents could be participants in teaching young children to read?” Although requiring an abrupt change in direction, I imagined that tying my disciplinary knowledge to a project that would include parents as teachers of reading could facilitate integrating research and community service into a meaningful project with the potential of transforming children’s reading achievement. The seed of SORT was sown.

With initial funding from the National Literacy Secretariat, we produced a video, Reading: A Gift of a Lifetime, featuring families and schools involved with reading to young children. The producer was Sharon Halfyard. As well, a series of booklets were produced for parents. Both the booklets and video were based on principles from the reading research and included the following:

### **Ten Principles of SORT**

- Learning to read is a highly complex task.
  - As early as six months of age, children can engage with significant others in reading activities and read-alouds.
  - Significant growth in children's knowledge about reading can occur between the ages of three and five.

Most children learn to read over a period of four or more years.

- The purpose and value given to literacy activities in families and communities contribute to the significance children attribute to learning to read and write.
- The single most important activity for building children's knowledge about skill in reading is reading aloud to them.
- Messages that significant others give in their daily interactions with children, books and print, influence children's perceptions of themselves as readers.
- Children model the reading behaviors enjoyed and demonstrated by significant others, especially behaviors of the same-sex others.
- Children learn to enjoy story and book language when it is read aloud expressively by caring adults.
- Children who develop positive images of themselves as readers engage readily in reading play and activities.
- In listening to stories children try to understand the actions and feelings of characters in terms of their own experience.
- Children construct their own knowledge of reading. As they become capable, they need to be given more control over their reading activities.
- Children who have been read to in homes and communities enter school with longer attention spans, have greater knowledge of stories, vocabulary, books and print, and experience less difficulties in learning to read.

Essentially, the approach taken by SORT recognized that children learn literate attitudes, concepts and behaviors from people who are significant to them.

I continued to rewrite my initial text to be appropriate for parents as an audience, and self-published it as a book, Help Your Child Become a Reader. A second edition was republished by Grassroots Press, Alberta, Canada. The SORT program received its first promotion when the videotape received a National Award of Merit for educational effectiveness by AMTEC (Association of Media Technology in Education in Canada) in 1991.

Accompanied by a Shared Literature component of 100 copies for each of 40 titles of emergent reading literature, and a Facilitator's Guide for Program Sessions that we developed SORT was ready for implementation. The kits of children's books were supplied to SORT by Scholastic Inc. Canada at a cost of \$1.00 per text, provided they remained with the program and were lent free of cost to the parents.

With a lack of continuous funding, it became clear that tying the project to kindergarten children in a school setting with possibilities for parents' involvement was necessary. The program was

presented at two provincial curriculum conferences and a pilot school was selected when an enthusiastic invitation was received from a rural school, and a volunteer, a retired kindergarten teacher, Hannah Power, embraced the challenge of becoming SORT's first facilitator as well as research assistant to the program. All the parents of the kindergarten children attending that school were invited and more than 90% participated in the first year of its offering.

As Director of the SORT project, achieving funding for a longitudinal research program was my priority. Two additional stages of funding were provided by the National Literacy Secretariat. Constant communication with the pilot school and facilitator occurred. SORT provided graduate students interested in early literacy a setting for research studies. We were constantly aware of the give-and-take balance of our project and overall it was generously collaborative. The pilot project, in which both the parents and teachers taught kindergarten children, resulted in significant improvements in children's early reading ability and attitudes toward reading. The results showed significant improvement in scores that were below the average norms in September to above average performance according to the May norms in alphabetical, meaning, and knowledge of conventions in reading as measured by knowledge (Tests of Early Reading Ability [TERA]).

## **Conclusion**

The SORT program successfully demonstrated that literacy achievement could be transformed with parental intervention and the SORT program. Our facilitator, Hannah Power, expanded the program to other settings in various rural communities for a period of 20 years. She was an outstanding and enthusiastic volunteer, who no doubt was an important aspect of the success of the program. She went about her monthly meeting with parents, demonstrating the practices and rationales for reading aloud to young children with great enthusiasm.

The research findings from the SORT program were woven into the course content of preservice reading and graduate courses. I developed a graduate course, 'Home and School Literacy' which was accepted into our graduate offerings. The research findings were presented to the pilot school and to National and International conferences. Despite the successful efforts at integrating the aspects of my role, there was insufficient time to publish all the findings that were produced in the project. Several papers were published in previous volumes of *The Morning Watch*. Qualitative evaluations from parents were positive and recommended that the program be expanded to preschool children, to French programs, and to other reading stages beyond kindergarten. Several graduate students completed Master's theses in the SORT setting and one student progressed to a completion of her Ph.D. in early literacy at another Canadian university from her involvement in the SORT research.

After 25 years of service in the Faculty of Education and upon retirement, I consider SORT to have been a rewarding educational project with significant potential for replication in other settings. It demonstrated successful collaboration between the University, communities, schools and families. Most significantly, with a focus on significant others reading children's books to students, significant improvement occurred in children's reading achievements and attitudes.

Much more could be written about SORT and the layers of meaning that accumulated from experiences within the project, but it is sufficient here to highlight the great satisfaction and meaning to be had in choosing to contribute to educational challenges presented by your context. As Jon Muth suggests in a children's book, The Three Questions, among the most important persons to direct your efforts in helping are those 'under your nose', both adults and children.

## **Chapter 11: Developing Rural School Collaboration: From New Zealand and Iceland to Newfoundland and Labrador**

Ken Stevens

I came to Newfoundland from New Zealand to work on e-learning and almost immediately engaged with rural schools in selected areas of the province. Before my arrival in this country I was employed in a New Zealand university where I worked on issues in rural and distance education and it was very interesting to connect with people with similar interests on the other side of the world.

As an academic in a New Zealand university I had collaborated closely with Icelandic colleagues who were, at the time, developing the Icelandic Educational Network and with a team at the University of Helsinki who were establishing a network from the Finnish capital to small schools in Lapland. Iceland, like Newfoundland, is an island with two main cities and almost exclusively coastal settlement. Like Newfoundland, Icelanders have traditionally been engaged in the fishing industry. There are many similarities between Iceland and Newfoundland but each society has its own distinct history and culture. The link between these two societies was, in my case, through New Zealand.

When I visited Iceland during my first year in Newfoundland, I had to make a statutory declaration with my travel claim that the documents were in the Icelandic language and that there was, in fact, a language called Icelandic. It appeared that few, if any, people from Memorial University had visited Iceland before me. Several colleagues in the faculty questioned the purpose of a visit to this isolated northern country and wondered what possible relevance it could have to education in this province. Rural Icelanders, I believed, were at the forefront of solving the international education problem of how to provide instruction in small and isolated communities that is comparable in quality and scope to what is available in large, urban schools. The Icelandic Educational Network preceded the networking of schools in other places and provided me with a guide to the research and development work in which I was engaged in New Zealand before coming to Canada.

My initial appointment in the Faculty of Education was as an Industry Canada Research Professor in tele-learning (or e-learning as it is now known), in which my focus was to become the provision of enhanced education in the province's rural communities along the same lines I had been developing in my own country on the other side of the world. I had no knowledge of rural communities in this province before I arrived to take up my appointment but found, upon arrival, that the dean had chosen a rural school as a "test site." From this base a network of eight neighbouring schools were networked through the Internet the following year and included the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Within the network four Advanced Placement (AP) science subjects were initially taught online. The significance of this was two-fold: AP subjects were provided to small schools in isolated communities for the first time in the province and, for what also appeared to be the first time, the senior science subjects were taught online. These developments in rural Newfoundland and Labrador put the province in the front line of developments in the provision of education in small communities located far from major centres of population. The problem of providing access to extended learning



opportunities for rural students is an international one and Iceland, New Zealand and Newfoundland & Labrador each crafted new, internet-based approaches to it that provided models for other countries.

The transition from traditional rural education whereby students were educated by teachers appointed to their schools, to one that continues this approach alongside open, collaborative teaching and learning, mediated by the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI), was based on technological change (the advent of the Internet), new pedagogy (e-learning) and, most importantly, conceptual change, whereby students were often taught by teachers who were located in other schools. Teachers and students in rural Newfoundland and Labrador engaged with one another not just in schools but in the spaces between schools. The changes that took place in rural education in the province were not without problems. Initially there was alarm in the teaching profession that the Internet could eliminate the jobs of some teachers. Parents frequently expressed concern about the amount of time their sons and daughters were spending in front of computer screens and the school board office had multiple technological problems to sort out to keep classes running. The advent of e-learning brought new challenges for some Newfoundland and Labrador school principals. Principals were not always comfortable with the idea of an online teacher teaching their students from a distant site. In the early days of e-learning, another site meant from another school in the district. Principals wondered who was responsible for the online teacher's teaching and on-site teachers in schools receiving online instruction were sometimes upset that a teacher from elsewhere was teaching what they perceived to be their students. Somehow these challenges were met and as the initial rural school network began to expand to include more schools in Newfoundland and Labrador, the provincial government called for a ministerial inquiry into the concept of "distance learning in schools." The report of this inquiry (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000) led to the creation of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI), an organization that rapidly expanded the linking of classes throughout the province through online teaching and learning.

Today, CDLI is an integral and very important feature of education in Newfoundland and Labrador. The technological, pedagogical and conceptual changes that have taken place in Newfoundland and Labrador education over the last decade provide a model of how to provide students with learning opportunities regardless of where their homes are located or the size of their local communities and schools. In 2013 school size in Newfoundland and Labrador and the physical location of teachers and learners are no longer reasons to consider rural students to be disadvantaged. New Zealand, Iceland and Newfoundland and Labrador have successfully pioneered new approaches to the provision of educational opportunities in small schools regardless of where they are located.

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## **Chapter 12: From Neoliberalism to Social Justice and Humanism**

Mary G. Green

I have drawn on a thirty year career spent teaching and learning in a unique Canadian context to narrate a rigorous self, social, historical, cultural, and political reflection of educators who despite disturbing experiences with reform draw purpose from faith in the possibilities and potential of more caring policy and practice. With appreciation and understanding of the social and political challenges involved, I advocate for the infusion of more humanism into work in education.

Since the 1990s, work in education has been defined by increasing personal risks through downsizing or employer restructuring, rising workloads, and growing family tensions. There are demands to do more with less, blame for the underachievement of students, fiscal restraint, and greater scrutiny and accountability with abundant testing and evaluation processes. During these turbulent times, there have been communication breakdowns, more unilateral decision making, mistrust, skepticism, and a lack of care. All of this is negative for individuals and groups, as well as for educational organizations as a whole.

I have been moved by my experiences as a teacher, curriculum consultant, district administrator and now university academic to ponder ways of working as a leader within education, and specifically the impact of the reform policies I and others have had a hand in developing and implementing. Through the process of mandated reform, I found myself in untenable positions where my personal values were questioned and many people hurt, discouraged, disheartened, and disillusioned.

Through an ethnographic case study (Green 2008) conducted within a school district at the time of the unprecedented reform movement (that abolished Newfoundland and Labrador's denominational education system and created a new public system), I profiled the everyday reality and turbulence experienced by employees positioned at various levels within the organization and implementers involved in the process of reform. I wrote through the eyes of 'insiders', intricately involved in the process as policy makers, administrators, middle managers, principals, and teachers and narrated our story through my lens as a district administrator who experienced and participated in its implementation. I interrogated district policies, conducted individual and group interviews and chronicled everyday experiences that became 'critical incidents' representative and illustrative of what the reform embodied. My examination of policies, transcripts, personal journal entries, and critical incidents highlighted the impact on people as we struggled to deliver on the neoliberal reform mandates imposed upon us and our efforts to settle the turbulence we experienced as a consequence. People, whose voices were often silenced, were thrown into chaos and expected to work in some uncaring, as well as caring, ways. Our relationships between and among colleagues provided learning opportunities and enabled me to examine numerous contradictions and paradoxes that defined our lives in the school district.

The focus of my research has been to explore the concept of caring within the context of neoliberal education policy direction, and seek possibilities for intervention and new leadership

approaches. My reflection on and analysis of our local reform movement illuminated a past burdened with the financial responsibility of a publicly funded religious-based education system in a shrinking population base in the midst of an economic crisis. While unique in some ways, I've discovered that thereform challenges experienced in our province reverberate throughout global education contexts. I believe amore hopeful beacon for future reforms is needed and I share my work with the intent to offer helpful recommendations for future reforms that emphasize the importance of relationships and the need for greater attention to the humanistic elements so critical in any change process.

While the research literature reports on various conceptions and processes of care, there is little attention given to the potential and practice of caring educators working in bureaucratic and hierarchical organizations during times of "severe turbulence" (Shapiro & Gross, 2008). There is an absence of literature about the contexts in which caring educators carry out their work, how individuals are positioned in contradictory ways, and how they manage multiple and competing agendas. I attempt to address that gap by profiling the everyday reality and turbulence experienced by individuals involved in the process of education reform and address some practical questions and dilemmas. My goal is to open up dialogue about themes that have been difficult to discuss in many educational work contexts — gender equity, the need for more care, and how people are treated during demanding and chaotic times. I tell stories to illuminate the cultural, organizational, historical, patriarchal, and contradictory stories that are sometimes invisible or considered inappropriate to talk about on a daily basis. When we pursue our missions, we don't pause to think about how people, including ourselves, are treated. We don't think about how we create, perpetuate, or challenge (with our words and deeds) the culture in which we live and work through our daily encounters.

In order for us to become all that we are capable of, we need to reflect on who we are, where we've come from, and critique that in honest ways through various lenses, if we hope to make our world of work and education more socially just. My goal is to present examples of my experiences and perspectives, as well as those of my colleagues, as valid 'other' stories. I hope that readers will relate to, consider, and adjust some of their own attitudes and practices to be more caring and respectful of people with whom they work. I do not argue against the necessity of change and reform but rather highlightthe ways we as leaders carry out reform mandates, and urge us to consider alternate, more humanistic ways of working.

The stories I tell are an attempt to reveal the subtle workings of educational organizations. By paying attention to the everyday experiences of educators in a local context, we begin to understand the bigger picture. We have to be able to relate to one another before we can understand our interdependence and the complexity of our work. It is helpful to consider who has privilege, who is marginalized, whose opinions count, how people should be treated, and what must change. My interpretations and stories are not adequate to convey the full range of experiences in our workplaces. We need more stories to motivate change toward a better balanced understanding of how we should be working with each other. I aim in some respects to challenge current systems of oppression, exploitation, power, and privilege — the dominant bureaucratic ways of working — and believe we must hear more such stories in order to create new and different ones.

My research pertained specifically to a school district, a learning institution, undergoing external and internal pressure, where people believed caring could be beneficial, but in practice was complicated and difficult to achieve. The challenge to implement managerialist agendas with a caring perspective and to create change in the lives of disenfranchised employees was not a straightforward process. Good intent and significant action were exerted to establish a collaborative and caring work environment with various structures and policies put in place and many individuals did their best to work in caring and collaborative ways. Although the findings are limited in terms of our ability to generalize from them, they are useful to educational policy makers as well as practitioners who wish to improve relationships within organizational settings. My research identified factors unique to one school district in one Canadian province that strived to overcome organizational barriers, enable individuals to work together, and support caring processes. Further study is required to provide insight into the potential barriers and supports for future caring practices in organizations and assist others in responding to some of the dilemmas that any education reform process is likely to involve.

Work in education is stressful and often contradicts the commonly held perspective and dominant discourse that it is a nurturing and caring environment. While some organizations claim to value caring work relationships and recognize the need for more care, there is limited evidence of this in the policies and practices of our workplaces, and the value of care for others is rarely evident in the hierarchical and managerial contexts in which we work. Examining learning from the shortcomings of the past provides a critical element that can help determine the success or failure of future efforts by shedding light on obstacles to avoid, problems to correct, and methods to embrace. With these insights, we may strive to overcome hurt and disappointment and foster more caring and effective educational organizations.

## Chapter 13: Journey to the Faculty of Education

Rachel Lobel

In August of 2014, I will be the fifth and final person in my immediate family to be awarded a Bachelor of Education. Despite the fact that teaching clearly runs in my blood, there is no indication from my childhood Language Arts assignments or elsewhere that I actually wanted to be a teacher "when I grew up". My sister and brother followed the straight path to education and are both teachers now but my own journey has been a little bumpier than theirs and one that is likely not completed yet.

Throughout grade school, my strongest subjects were always Sciences and Mathematics. In my earliest memories, I wanted to be a doctor and once I learned the name of the specialty, a pediatrician. At my high school graduation, I won the "Mad Scientist" fun award and subsequently registered for a full first- year science course load for my first semester at university. However, during my first few days at Memorial, seeing the diversity of opportunities available, I quickly descended into an identity moratorium, which essentially led to almost two full years of apathy and irresponsibility. I barely attended class and almost never studied during my whole first year and then in my second year I decided to take some time off.

Thankfully, working at a restaurant full-time did not suit me well and gave me the authentic motivation that I needed to return to my studies. I loved serving then and I still love serving now but I knew that it was not what I wanted to do with my life. I was so eager to go back to school that I ended up taking a few summer courses the semester before what would have been my third year. And though I still didn't know what I wanted to study, I knew that I wanted to study and being back at Memorial felt great.

How I wandered into the Religious Studies department, I'm not overly sure. I was born to a Jewish father and a Christian mother who both converted to the Baha'i Faith when I was about seven. In my preschool years, I took Hebrew classes and throughout the rest of my childhood and adolescence I took part in Baha'i gatherings and celebrations. However, once I was old enough, I opted out of formal religion and honestly gave it very little thought until becoming a Religious Studies student. I think I was just drawn to the intriguing sounding course names and then ended up falling in love with the department's professors. I was not considering career prospects and basically just chose the discipline that I was most interested in at the time.

The next great pivotal moment was shortly after I returned from my birthright trip to Israel, which is an experience provided free of charge to every Jewish young person in the world. The point of these trips is to garner support for the existence of Israel by creating connections to the country amongst young people around the world. At the time I took this trip, I had little knowledge of the conflict that persists there and managed to go the whole month with negligible exposure to Palestine. A few weeks after coming home, I was discussing my experiences with a friend at a party and he casually suggested I get a hold of the graphic novel *Palestine* by Joe Sacco. Eager as I was at the time, I tracked down the book within the week and soon began reading it diligently. Little did I know that the contents of this book would not only change my way of thinking but significantly alter the path I chose in life.

Upon discovering the Palestinian side of the middle-eastern conflict, I immediately began choosing courses only for the purposes of learning more about the topic. I decided on History for my minor and favored courses on the 20<sup>th</sup> century; in Religious Studies, most of my courses were on either Judaism or Islam. In this way, I could choose different aspects from the Middle Eastern conflict to write papers on which would help me piece together a greater understanding of the situation. Eventually this passion expanded to include all aspects of global injustice and I developed a strong drive to do something to change the world – but how?

It was Dr. Ranee Panjabi who first planted the seed of using education as a way of instigating social change. Though she did not actually tell us directly to become teachers, she repetitively told us that she made her choice to become a teaching professor so that she could produce young people that were socially aware. In each class that I took with her, she would always finish on the last day by providing us with her home mailing address and telling us to send her postcards telling her of the things we did. She encouraged us to be critical, she encouraged us to be active, and it was during these times that I saw the power teachers actually have to do good.

Although my interest in teaching faded somewhat after finishing my undergraduate degree, it was surely resurrected during my Masters. This degree I completed at Ryerson University in Toronto through an interdisciplinary program on Immigration and Settlement. The choice to explore this topic was again purely out of interest but upon its commencement I knew it was for me. We examined in-depth experiences immigrants have in our country as well as the political choices that cause them. Within the first few weeks, the readings for one of my courses were centered on newcomer children's experiences at school and with that, the rest of my research became narrowed down to not just immigrant and refugee children's experiences in the classroom but also how to teach young children to think from an anti-racist framework.

Coincidentally, another interest of mine was also resurrected during my Masters degree and that was my childhood ambition to become a doctor. I took an elective in Immigration and Health and through guest speakers and an inspirational professor I became taken with the role a doctor can play in peoples' lives. Many of our class visitors worked as health professionals that particularly served refugees and who all had incredibly inspiring stories to tell from their careers. Interestingly, however, it has only been in recent months that I actually made the connection between my childhood aspirations and my current ambitions to pursue Medical School which I believe stems from the fact that they come from very different places. My initial ambition to become a doctor was because I excelled at science; my current desire comes from a developed interest in having a skill that can lead to positive change in peoples' lives.

So how did I end up in the Education faculty at Memorial? The actual reason I am here about to begin my second term in the fast-track program in Primary/Elementary Education is due to my desire to know more about children. It is also to provide me with the certification I need to embark on a meaningful career if my aspirations to become a medical doctor fall through. This does not mean being a teacher is my second choice, nor that I am simply completing the degree while waiting to get into the medical program. I am actually at this moment genuinely pursuing both professions and am very curious as to what my future self will be doing.



## **Chapter 14: How to Not Know Everything: The Value of Experiential Learning**

Rebecca Collins

As I reflect on my first semester as an undergraduate student in the Faculty of Education I am surprised by how much my perspective on education has changed in four short months. Though it feels silly to admit it at this point, I embarked on this journey to become a teacher with the understanding that this year of my life would be the year during which I learned everything about everything. (How thrilling and yet how daunting!) I had always believed that my really great grade school teachers were simply individuals who liked to be around children and who knew everything about everything. Naturally, I was relieved to discover through the wise words of several of my professors in the first few weeks of classes, that it is not the responsibility of teachers to know everything. Our responsibility is to foster relationships with our students in order to establish a partnership that is founded on learning.

An integral part of the pre-service teacher's education is, of course, self-reflection. In the first weeks of my academic program my colleagues and I spent a considerable amount of time and energy reflecting on our own experiences as grade school students and considering the conditions under which deep and meaningful learning can occur. One theme that permeated many of these discussions is that learning happens when something unique is experienced. I am honoured to have the opportunity to share some of my unique learning experiences as an undergraduate student in the faculty.

My journey as a pre-service teacher began on my 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. While most of my peers might celebrate this occasion by having a special meal with family and friends, I found myself hiking to the faerie stump...in the dark...with a bunch of classmates that I had met only one week earlier. As I fumbled my way across the challenging terrain one thought resounded in my head: “what am I doing here?” A few weeks later I experienced a similar sentiment. At midnight on a weekday, as I contemplated driving to the grocery store in search of Oreo cookies so that I might teach my colleagues how to demonstrate all of the moon phases by scraping off the appropriate amount of icing, I thought “I must be crazy.” When I ended up stooping to collect eggs inside of a noisy chicken coop on a farm that I had never been to before I felt certain that I was, indeed, crazy. I can remember that in those moments I questioned the relevancy of what I was doing with respect to learning how to teach. Now that I have had time to reflect on it, it seems that I was not learning how to teach, rather I was learning how to learn. I believe that this is an especially important distinction for new teachers to make since we are so focused on transmitting knowledge to our students that we can easily lose sight of the fact that there is much that our students can teach us as well. And it is what we learn from our students that will make us better teachers.

So what did I learn through each of these unique experiences? The hike that I described was one part of a field trip to the Brother Brennan Environmental Education Centre that my classmates and I participated in. The purpose of the field trip was for us to experience the impact that taking a group of students outdoors can have on learning, and certainly this purpose was met. But my experience on this trip serves as a noteworthy example of how powerful unexpected learning can be. Prior to our group's departure I was feeling uncomfortable about the whole situation. I didn't know anyone very well and I was concerned that the time that we were about to spend together would be awkward. Thinking back on it now, my feelings were not unlike those often

experienced by young students when they begin a new school year with an unfamiliar teacher and new peers. While walking in the darkness alongside my new classmates I felt vulnerable, but I also experienced feelings of trust. The potential for someone to fall into harm's way if we were not cooperative was tangible. I was one of a small number of individuals carrying flashlights and I felt an unassigned in-group responsibility for lighting the path. At one point I stumbled, but someone caught my arm and prevented me from falling. The hike, though intended as recreation, created an opportunity for relationship building and also allowed me to empathize with what my future students may experience at the outset of a new school year. It was a very valuable experience.

Some of the courses that I completed during the spring semester included group peer teaching projects during which the members of a group would prepare a lesson and teach it to the rest of the class. These projects were important for me because I struggled initially with the notion of lesson planning for imaginary students. The process sometimes felt too hypothetical and arbitrary. My peer teaching group in our science methodology course had decided to create a lesson about vacuums for a sixth grade unit on space. After an energetic group meeting we parted ways, excited to wow our classmates and professors with an experiment for creating a partial vacuum using a dinner plate, water, a candle and a household glass. My responsibility was to determine how this experiment mapped onto the curriculum outcomes for sixth grade science. As I combed through the curriculum guide I experienced worry, anxiety, and then panic as I discovered that vacuums are not mentioned in the authorized texts for grade six, nor are they included in the curriculum guide. I slowly convinced myself that the concept of a vacuum was entirely too advanced for sixth grade students and that my new responsibility was to find another captivating experiment for our project. I engaged in a frantic online search until I stumbled upon an activity in which students scrape the icing off an Oreo cookie to represent the various moon phases. Though I felt that this idea was less intriguing I pitched it to my group because I was fearful of taking a risk. However, with some reassurance from our professor and one of her former students I was able to acknowledge that having the courage to take a risk and to be willing to learn alongside the students can create a high level of engagement, and it can result in a memorable lesson. When we conducted our experiment with our classmates and their mouths dropped open as they observed the partial vacuum that they were creating it was clear that we had made the right decision. I learned that it is okay not to have all of the answers upfront and that if I can engage my students' curiosity and motivate them to ask questions and to learn more then they will remember what they learned in my classroom.

As for my adventures on the farm, they were initiated by an assignment in which I was expected to visit a location that I felt would be a suitable field trip for students. Before visiting the farm, I had given what I felt was adequate consideration to how I would be able to carry out this field trip with actual students. My plans included having the students take turns entering the chicken coop to collect eggs. In completing this assignment, I learned to appreciate the importance of visiting a possible field trip destination prior to arranging the outing. If I am a little bit afraid of the chickens, then it is a reasonable assumption that my first grade students might be a little bit afraid of the chickens. Who knew how loud and intimidating their clucking could actually be? After visiting the farm, I was faced with many new questions about how to make this potential field trip feasible. One important question that emerged was creating an alternative activity for

the students who were not comfortable collecting eggs. I will always remember the experience of planning the field trip and I will certainly never forget to visit the destination beforehand.

The deep learning moments that I have shared are a few among many that I was fortunate to experience during my first semester as a pre-service teacher. I have not described my trials and tribulations in creating a fish puppet that swims, my impromptu public recitation of a favourite childhood poem, or my performance as a stress management and rehabilitation counsellor in a rescue drama, but I trust that I have expressed my belief in the power of experiential learning as well as my gratitude for the quality of the education that I am receiving.

I would like to conclude by challenging pre-service teachers and all educators to embrace the many opportunities to learn that are within our reach. If we make learning a lifelong goal and we take time to engage with others then we are sure to end up teaching somebody something meaningful and enduring, perhaps even if we hadn't planned on it.

# **Part 9**

## **Research Writing and Student Experiences**

- 1. Academic Writing: The Key to Student Retention?**
- 2. Certainty, chaos and becoming**
- 3. Empowering children's voices through the narrative of drawings**
- 4. Becoming a researcher: Stories of Self**
- 5. On becoming a researcher: a kaleidoscope of life**
- 6. Narratives of becoming a researcher: A realistic, idealistic, and self-nourishing journey**
- 7. This white woman has journeyed far: Serendipity, counter-stories, hauntings, and ekphrasis as a type of poetic inquiry**
- 8. The tale of the pink slip**
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- 10. Perspectives on discovery**
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- 12. An autoethnography exercise**
- 13. From staff member, to student, to part-time researcher?**
- 14. In competition: A narrative of a young scholar**
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## **Chapter 1: Academic Writing: The Key to Student Retention?**

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### **Abstract**

It is widely recognized that writing is central to teaching and learning in post-secondary contexts. Writing is also, almost certainly, a key to student success and retention. The response of universities around the world has been to establish Writing Centres and these have played a pivotal role in helping students succeed. However, as is argued in this paper, there should be a broader responsibility to develop student writing. Academic writing is fraught with hidden rules and implicit discursive practices that are often discipline specific. Far from being a discrete and separate ‘skill’, writing is part of a complex network of social practices conducted within different academic discourses. This insight is crucial because it is a prerequisite for making meaningful pedagogic recommendations. Academic writing requires an understanding of shifting and competing discourse requirements, how the ‘self’ is bound up in writing, how authority is constructed, how language is shaped and shapes, how some ways of writing are privileged and others not, and what is valued in this context. The paper unpacks several ways in which the requirements of academic writing can be made more explicit.

### **Introduction**

New students in university contexts soon find out that writing is a currency they must acquire to succeed. Those who are able to write ‘well’ find their path through academia is less burdensome and more enjoyable. Those who do not, find themselves limited, struggling on the margins and losing confidence in their ability to complete their program requirements. Writing is one of the foundations of academic engagement. Students need to write to learn, to take notes and to study. They also need to write to think, to process their ideas and to integrate new ones. They need to write because this is how they are assessed. Yet, academic writing is seldom explicitly taught. Instead, students are expected to engage in what must seem like “a set of secret handshakes and esoteric codes” (Sommers, 2008, p. 153). Post-secondary teaching is often so focused on content and subject matter that writing needs are hidden. In this approach, which is heavy on content and light on writing, writing becomes the mechanism for the transmission of subject knowledge, rather than something that is integral to the writer developing expertise in that area.

Admissions protocols, instructors and even students themselves often assume that they know how to write when they are accepted into a first year program. They are right in the sense that many wrote well in high -school, or if they are mature students, in the workplace. They had learned to write in those contexts. It is also assumed that if students do not know how to write in the post-secondary milieu, they will pick it up as they go along. In homogenous student populations with small class sizes, students might acquire the academic writing socialization they need. But with mounting student numbers, large classes, increasing diversity, and growing complexity in

participation (on-line, blended, part-time), this does not appear to be happening (Coffin, et al., 2003).

There is an extensive literature on writing in post-secondary contexts globally (Carroll, 2002; Coffin, et al., 2003; Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006). In this literature, it is widely acknowledged that writing is key to learning in post-secondary contexts. It is recognized that from 1<sup>st</sup> year, students struggle with writing across the disciplines, that they find writing assignments daunting and they often do not understand the writing requirements they are asked to undertake (Fukuzawa & Boyd, 2008). In the literature, it is also widely accepted that since writing is the main form of assessment, it is critical to student success and retention (Fukuzawa & Boyd, 2008; Paszkowski & Haag, 2008; Pritchard & Thomas, 2010).

Theoretically, there are different approaches to writing. This paper promotes the argument that students need explicit writing instruction from an academic literacies perspective. In other words, they need to know *how* to write but they also need to know the complex role writing plays in academic discourses. To illustrate this argument, I will use a composite writing rubric. Writing rubrics are assessment tools that are widely used in post-secondary assessment because they allow assessors to have a standard assessment approach to multiple and varied writing assignments. While writing rubrics may seem straightforward and accessible, the purpose of this paper is to illustrate the implicit complexity facing students as they try to complete a writing task according to the assessment criteria. For each criterion, I will deconstruct what students implicitly need to know, understand and apply in order to meet the writing requirements. Faculty can frequently identify poor student writing but often cannot specify the problem or articulate what needs to be done. By deconstructing a writing rubric, the hidden rules and implicit discursive practices will surface as an accessible language for further dialogue.

The first part of the paper explains the different theoretical approaches to writing and outlines an academic literacies perspective. The sections that follow deconstruct a writing rubric and examine the literacies required of students, the consequences of ‘failing’ at writing and possible interventions. The perspective that writing is part of a complex network of social practices conducted within different academic discourses is crucial because it is a prerequisite for making meaningful pedagogic recommendations in post-secondary contexts.

## **Perspectives on Writing**

While it is common to talk about what constitutes ‘bad’ academic writing and to agree that students need to learn how to write ‘well’, Lea & Street (Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998; Lea & Street, 1999; Lea & Street, 2006; Street, 1984; 1995) have argued that these terms are not helpful. Instead, they conceptualize writing in academic contexts as *approaches* to student writing, which effectively constitute writing epistemologies. They identify three different approaches to writing: 1) a skills approach; 2) a process approach or academic socialization; and 3) an academic literacies approach.

According to the *skills approach*, writing is cognitive and dependent entirely on the individual. If the individual cannot write as required, it is because she or he has not learned the cognitive skills they need. The focus is on acquiring the surface features of language and forms of writing. This



perspective assumes that students can learn the generic skill of writing and then transfer their learning successfully to wide and varied contexts and audiences. According to this approach, the student is in deficit and general non-specific once-off courses or workshops on writing should solve the problem.

The *process* or academic socialization approach acknowledges that writing is not a generic skill but is tied to the process of learning how to write in academic contexts. Disciplines have particular ways of thinking and writing and according to this approach students need to become acculturated into these specific discourses. In order to write well, students need to understand the genres and the language used in those discourses. Once students understand the hidden requirements of the discourse, they are able to reproduce it unproblematically. Writing is seen as a process of acquiring the discipline or discourse, both of which are relatively stable. From this perspective, it is the instructor who is deficit for not demystifying academic writing for the students.

The third approach, *academic literacies*, takes a literacy perspective. Literacy in its broadest sense is about acquiring the epistemologies necessary for socialization in a particular discourse. Academic literacy encompasses a number of literacies: critical literacy, reading, writing, information literacy, visual literacy, graphic literacy and so on. Academic literacy/ies is epistemological because it is about developing an identity as a student, scholar and writer. It's about learning to write as an educator, scientist, or engineer (Coffin, et al., 2003). It is about making meaning and negotiating authority in this space. The context or discourse is situated, nuanced, complex, and constantly shifting. A writer has to be able to interpret power relations among individuals and within the institution, and navigate multiple social identities. The complexity of academic writing explains why a student can take a course on writing or be given a writing template and still fail to produce the writing required. It is also why a student can write successfully for one instructor and when that same writing style is reproduced for another instructor, the student finds that it is wrong. Many students have 'hit and miss' experiences with writing with no way of knowing what they are doing wrong or right. What this perspective stresses is that students need access to university epistemologies and that writing is a way of becoming a discourse member.

From an academic literacies perspective, writing is not a student or instructor problem but a challenge for all members of the academic community and one that needs to be addressed continuously and on multiple levels. Writing is something that students acquire over time and with practice (Sommers, 2008). It is not simply a set of skills but is rather deeply embedded in society beyond the discipline. In the university, broader power relations 'construct the author' in classed, gendered and racialized ways' (Burke, 2008, p. 200).

These three approaches overlap but they differ in their epistemological approach to writing. Conceptualizing writing according to these three approaches allows us to see how our perspective on writing will determine the interventions and curriculum development needed.

### **An Academic Literacies Approach**

Writing is difficult because each time a student sits down to write a paragraph s/he will make multiple decisions in a matter of minutes. In terms of the *mechanics* of writing, these decisions

involve what content to include, what ideas s/he has on that content, the logic of those ideas, the relevance of that content, what audience to write for, what the purpose of writing is, what to select, how to sequence and structure the writing, what words to use, what tone, what voice, what styles, what evidence to use, what style to reference, what academic conventions to follow, how to organize the paragraphs, how to transition between paragraphs, how to make the text coherent, how to write sentences, how to choose words, how to spell, how to punctuate, how to format the document (Badenhorst, 2007).

Layered on this, students also encounter *discourse* related difficulties and they need to think about the context in which they are writing, the social conditions, power issues such as gender or race which will affect their perception of authority, intertextuality and their ability to draw meanings from multiple texts both present and absent, what identity they are shaping, presenting, needing for this text, what voice (or lack of voice) is needed, how they are positioned by the text (as novice, authority), how will they position themselves in the text (distant third person, close personal 'I'), and what discursive issues need to be negotiated here (what counts as knowledge, assessment) (Badenhorst, 2008).

Since the student is a whole person and not a compartmentalized student-writer only, there is a further round of decisions that happens when s/he sits down to write. These are the *emotional* issues: the critical eye through which the author views him/herself, the criticism incorporated from others, the anxiety held about writing, fears of failure and success, the burden of not meeting expectations from self and others, the exposure of writing something in black and white and seemingly carved in stone, the fear of being ridiculed, of being found out to be an imposter, the inability to persevere, the paralyzing feeling of being stuck and unable to write, the helplessness and disempowerment of failing and not knowing what to do about it (Badenhorst, 2010).

Writing does not happen in a straight forward linear fashion, it involves rounds of thinking, writing and revising in a fairly chaotic non-linear fashion. Students develop self-efficacy in writing through continuous practice, writing on topics they find relevant, and through observing authentic models.

### **What Students Are Required to Produce in their Writing**

For the purpose of this paper, I want to present student writing requirements from the perspective of what students are asked to produce and what they need to understand in order to fulfill those requirements from an academic literacies perspective. I have used writing rubrics as a platform to examine this. Writing rubrics are qualitative mechanisms to standardize writing assessment and are widely used to assess writing (Wilson, 2006).

I have compiled a composite writing rubric from rubrics collected from an extensive online search of university and college writing rubrics, and key texts on rubric assessment in post-secondary education. All the writing rubrics were similar with minor differences in style and organization. Some contained less complex requirements while others were quite specific about the complexity required. I opted to include the more complex conditions. The assembled rubric is displayed below as Figure 1.

Figure 1: Composite Writing Rubric

Criterion	Exemplary	Competent	Unacceptable
<b>Focus (thesis), purpose and argument</b>	Clear original thesis/argument, focused and specific, purpose is clear, logical development of thesis as appropriate to assignment purpose, acknowledges complexity, sustained analysis. Ideas are critically developed. Conclusions are consistent with reasoning.	Well-developed thesis, adequate understanding of assigned topic.	Weak thesis, unclear, too broad or only indirectly supported.
<b>Idea development and evidence</b>	Consistent evidence, originality and depth of ideas, main points are defined and supported with evidence, support is valid. Ideas are developed logically and reasonably. Number and types of sources appropriate and integrated in writing. Sources are assessed critically, includes counter-arguments. Writer able to make connections between sources and his/her own writing. Does not overuse quotes.	Ideas are sufficiently supported, support is valid and logical.	Ideas are only indirectly supported, support isn't sufficient but loosely related to main ideas.
<b>Organization and structure</b>	Writing is organized, logical and sequenced appropriate to assignment, paragraphs are well developed, one idea per paragraph with support and smooth transitions between paragraphs. Writing progresses clearly from beginning to end. Good introduction and conclusion. Writing is coherent.	Competent organization, competent paragraph structure, lacking in effective transitions.	Paragraphs not organized around a thesis, paragraphs too complicated or stand-alones, transitions weak.

<b>Audience, tone, style</b>	Clear idea of audience related to purpose of assignment, tone and point-of-view appropriate to the audience. Writing engages reader. Writer's voice is revealed.	Awareness of an audience, tone and point-of-view satisfactory.	Inconsistent or little sense of audience, tone and point-of-view not consistent.
<b>Sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar</b>	Clear, concise sentences. Each sentence powerfully structured, rich, well-chosen, variety of sentence styles and length. Writer skillfully communicates meaning to readers.	Effective and varied sentences, errors due to lack of proofreading, grammar errors, colloquialisms.	Repetitive sentence patterns, errors in grammar and non-standard use of language.
<b>Mechanics, conventions, presentation</b>	Almost without errors of punctuation, spelling, etc, appropriate format and presentation. Standard referencing in text and in reference list.	Occasional errors of punctuation, spelling, etc, some formatting errors, errors mostly from carelessness.	Many errors of punctuation, spelling, etc, and in formatting or formatting inconsistent.

(Source: Internet search of available college and university writing rubrics; Quinlan, 2006; Price & O'Donovan, 2006)

I will focus on the *exemplary* column and examine – from an academic literacies approach – what students would need to know and do in order to meet this requirement. In the paragraphs below, each *exemplary* category will be unpacked with this lens.

### **Focus (thesis), Purpose and Argument**

*Exemplary* rubric requirement: *Clear original thesis/argument, focused and specific, purpose is clear, logical development of thesis as appropriate to assignment purpose, acknowledges complexity, sustained analysis. Ideas are critically developed. Conclusions are consistent with reasoning.*

In order to develop a 'clear original thesis/argument, focused and specific', students will need to know what counts as original knowledge in the discipline, what questions are

important and relevant (Lakoff, 1990). They will need to know how to extract one thread, one focus, one purpose from the morass of ideas, knowledge and information available. The focus or thesis needs to be appropriate to the content and to the discipline. They will need to understand that academic writing always contains an argument and that arguments can be quite complex. Students often come from school contexts thinking that academic writing is about ‘facts’. In some disciplines where arguments are more deeply embedded, academic writing does appear to be fact-like. In many of the sciences, for example. In the social sciences, arguments are often more explicit and apparent.

Students will need to know the difference between ways of arguing and which would be appropriate to the discipline. Even for those students who do recognize the importance of argument, they may have difficulty articulating that argument in writing (Elander, et al., 2006). Inductive reasoning, for example, is an argument that begins with observation and arrives at a conclusion based on available evidence (I think therefore I am). A supposition argument begins with an assumption (suppose Darwin’s theory of evolution is true) and then through inductive reasoning and evidence, the supposition is proven or disproved. Hypotheses are supposition arguments. Deductive arguments begin with a claim (alcohol destroys brain cells) and through reasoning, the claim is supported and when reliable becomes more certain and less of a probability (so alcohol should be illegal). Causal arguments draw direct links between claim and reason or evidence. All of these arguments are drawn from the natural sciences and are a way of simplifying the complexity of the natural world. The idea is that through simplification, we build increments of knowledge brick by brick that ultimately would make up the wall of science. Not all arguments in academia follow the natural sciences. In the social sciences, qualitative arguments tend to embrace complexity rather than reduce the argument to its simplest form. A main claim is made but is discussed within a context of counter arguments. The counter arguments may represent several voices and not just an oppositional argument. Ambiguity and uncertainty are often welcomed in qualitative arguments (Badenhorst, 2008). Consequently, students will need to know that it is a qualitative argument that is being assessed in this assignment. ‘Sustained analysis’ requires that students need to know that arguments and their analysis differ from discipline to discipline (Elander, et al., 2006). Arguments in philosophy are very different from arguments in history. How the analysis is presented and what counts as evidence will depend on the discipline. That conclusions are consistent with reasoning makes much more sense if one understands what type of reasoning is being employed.

Originality in academic contexts is often less about newness and innovation and more about acknowledging previous research in new ways (Creme, 2003). Students would need to know that all research, in academic contexts, builds on previous research and that originality depends on what counts as original in that discipline. Students would also need to know what constitutes critical thinking and how to write this while at the same time adhering to published authorities and not expressing their own opinions explicitly.

### **Idea Development and Evidence**

*Exemplary rubric requirement: Consistent evidence, originality and depth of ideas, main points are defined and supported with evidence, support is valid. Ideas are developed logically and*

*reasonably. Number and types of sources appropriate and integrated in writing. Sources are assessed critically, includes counter-arguments. Writer able to make connections between sources and his/her own writing. Does not overuse quotes.*

What counts as evidence in an academic context is again complex and discursive. If a student makes a claim and the evidence is unconvincing to the reader then this writing is more like opinion. If a student is convincing with the evidence then the argument becomes more truth-like for the reader (Badenhorst, 2008). In academia, there are only two types of evidence that count: 1) primary evidence (raw data); and 2) secondary published research which gets its authority from the peer review process. Both primary and secondary research obtains authority from where it is positioned in the discourse. In a discipline dominated by a particular discourse, say the scientific method, what counts as evidence will be very different than a discourse dominated by post-structural feminism (Lakoff, 1990). In the same way, the secondary sources carry different weights. Evidence from research published in top journals in the field will be more truthful than a paper published in an obscure journal. Research published in 2011 will be more truthful than that published in 1965. Since discourses are often contradictory, the article published in 1965 could be a decisive influential article which is still regarded as an authority (Badenhorst, 2007). How do students know this when they look for sources for their assignments unless they have been explicitly walked through the minefield of what counts as evidence in their disciplines?

Added to this are layers of academic reading literacy and critical literacy. Students need to be able to extract an argument and the key message from a text, identify the evidence, and judge whether that evidence and argument is valid often in relation to other arguments and evidence (Elander, et al., 2006). They have to extract relevant information from the text as well as their critique of it and weave that into the argument they have developed. They also need to incorporate counter arguments without undermining their own argument and without refuting the counter arguments in a direct way. For example a student cannot write ‘I disagree with Jones’ argument’ but would rather be required to write ‘Jones argues X but Johnson argues Y’ while making a point which furthers their argument (Badenhorst, 2007).

‘Good’ academic writing also involves *intertextuality*. Intertextuality is the way a text relates to all the texts that surround it (Brazerman, 2004). We use other texts for information, as a source of social context, as a source of evidence, and as evidence of epistemological beliefs or paradigm. Intertextuality is evident through direct quotations, citing sources or using phrases that can be linked to specific places, people, contexts or texts (Brazerman, 2004). A paper has intertextual reach when there is a complex interweaving of original texts with the current one and meaning is dependent on the reader making connections between the current text and the referred texts through the myriad convolutions of time, space, culture and context. Intertextual reach is dependent on the writer developing relationships between the source texts in a critical and scholarly way. In addition, each time we use words from one text in another, we recontextualize them. This means we give them new meaning in the new context. Sometimes recontextualized words are close to the original, at other times, we may add a critical slant before the reference or reposition the words while maintaining the meaning (Brazerman, 2004). Recontextualization is subtle and is often shaped by the discipline. In other words, what gets referred to, who gets cited, what is implied and inferred is dependent on the discipline. Without explicit instruction, how



would students know this? Through this assessment criteria, the instructor is implicitly looking for intertextual reach.

## Organization and Structure

*Exemplary rubric requirement: Writing is organized, logical and sequenced appropriate to assignment, paragraphs are well developed, one idea per paragraph with support and smooth transitions between paragraphs. Writing progresses clearly from beginning to end. Good introduction and conclusion. Writing is coherent.*

On the surface, the organization and structure of writing seems a simple task. In academic contexts, this involves an understanding of academic genres of writing as well as what makes a piece of writing coherent. Genres are “localized, textured sites of invention” (Bawarshi, 2003, p. 114) where those who write situate themselves before they write and as they write. In other words, genres are templates or examples of different forms of writing in any context. They are generic forms used to explain the norms and conventions for organizing writing in ways that are socially agreed upon by members of that discourse. Since discourses are not monolithic, there are often subtle differences in genres and they change over time and across disciplines (Wrigglesworth & McKeever, 2010). As Bawarshi (2003) suggests, genres are not discrete but make up a series of overlapping and interacting sets. The genre of an essay, for example, while it is still an essay, will be different in the natural sciences, in Women’s Studies and in philosophy. In addition, even within a discipline there may be great variation in terms of what instructor/assessor’s belief constitutes an essay (Brannon, et al., 2008; Elander, et al., 2006). Students encounter layers of genres in academic contexts. While they may understand the genre of an essay, they may not understand the different genres of argument they will need for the essay to be successfully communicated.

Writing coherently on a superficial level is about having a key message that runs through the piece of writing, smooth transitions between paragraphs and a logical flow to the overall document. On a deeper level, coherence is also about *what* goes into the paper. What needs to be included in terms of content/subject matter, assessment requirements (showing that you’ve read assigned texts), and discipline/discourse specific needs (concepts, ways of defining concepts, ways of posing arguments). Coherence also involves making decisions about *how* to tell that story. Where is the beginning, where is the end? How will the middle bits fit in? Sequencing is crucial to the coherence of a piece of writing and is about ordering the material. It’s deciding what comes before what.

To help understand what goes into sequencing it is useful to use Bloom’s taxonomy of thinking skills (Krathwohl, 2002). In writing, this taxonomy is particularly fitting. Bloom’s taxonomy locates three lower order thinking skills: knowledge, comprehension and application; and three higher order thinking skills: analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The key about the taxonomy is that one cannot engage a thinking skill without first satisfying the one before it on the taxonomy. For example, one can not comprehend without knowledge. In writing, sequencing follows a similar pattern. The writer needs to provide information and descriptions to give the reader *knowledge*. The reader cannot *comprehend* without explanation. Examples show *application* of

the topic. *Analysis* means taking the topic apart, *synthesis* means pulling it back together but with insight and new knowledge, *evaluation* is a critical eye on the value of the entire process. This sequencing – even in its most basic form – *description* then *analysis* – is rarely taught to students to apply to their writing (Badenhorst, 2007; 2008) but it plays an enormous role in creating a coherent document. Again, all of these decisions may have discourse/discipline requirements. For example, in science papers the *how* is usually standard. In the arts or humanities there may be a wider range of options.

### **Audience, Tone, Style**

*Exemplary rubric requirement: Clear idea of audience related to purpose of assignment, tone and point-of-view appropriate to the audience. Writing engages reader. Writer's voice is revealed.*

When students write assignments, their audience is a constructed audience: their instructor/assessor. The instructor/assessor's purpose for reading the student's writing is not voluntary or out of interest, it is for the specific purpose of assessment. Many students find the whole idea of writing for an audience perplexing in academic contexts (Greene & Orr, 2007). Often students will say 'I didn't know I had to put that in, I thought the instructor already knew that.' Writing for an audience whose sole purpose is assessment is very different from writing for an authentic audience. The assessor is looking to see that the student has included what was covered in the course. Has the student engaged with all the course material? Can the student explain or apply the key concepts? Even though the assessor knows those concepts well the student writer still has to explain them.

In terms of style and tone, writing is about apprenticeship into the discourse and what is 'normal' for that discipline. Writing that does not follow conventions of style is considered 'abnormal'. What is considered 'normal' often changes from instructor to instructor and from subject to subject. While there may be similarities, there are also many differences and students are rarely taught to look for these nuances. For example, some disciplines will encourage students to use the personal 'I' while others will insist on the third-person distant author (Hyland, 2002a). In some disciplines there are limits to originality and student writers are bounded by what is allowed within their discipline. Some disciplines allow a wide range of voices and approaches to writing style, while others are much more rigid and room for writing innovation is marginal. Lakoff (1990) distinguishes between vertical and horizontal communication in a hierarchy. There are different ways of speaking and writing depending on where one is located – vertically and horizontally – in the discourse and to whom one is communicating.

Tone and style is also about authority in the text and ultimately it is about identity. Authority in a text is the extent to which the writer writes as a 'knower' versus a 'consumer' of knowledge. For students, this is a delicate balance. Because they are positioned as newcomers – consumers – in the discourse, they are very rarely 'knowers'. Their role is to mimic authorities rather than to challenge them in any meaningful way (Lakoff, 1990). To fundamentally challenge an authority would be to claim a new position in the discourse and for undergraduate students, who have not

completed their apprenticeship, this would probably result in being penalized by negative assessment.

Graduate students are allowed more leeway to challenge authorities. Authority is also about how writers present themselves in the text (even without the use of ‘I’). Projecting an identity, a voice, that is questioning, scholarly, confident, and knowledgeable is how writers get credibility in academic contexts. Putting one’s self in the text is a way of promoting a ‘competent scholarly identity and gaining acceptance for one’s ideas’ (Hyland, 2002b, p. 1110). This is very hard for students to do, even if they know that this is what they have to do and it takes years of engagement in practice and discursive activities to acquire these identities (Creme, 2003; Sommers, 2008).

### **Sentence Structure, Vocabulary and Grammar**

*Exemplary rubric requirement: Clear, concise sentences. Each sentence powerfully structured, rich, well-chosen, variety of sentence styles and length. Writer skillfully communicates meaning to readers.*

On the surface sentence structure, vocabulary and grammar seem straightforward and simple as a language issue. Yet, when the surface is scraped away, we find that the nature of scholarship is embedded in sentence structure, vocabulary and grammar (Lakoff, 1990). As Lakoff (1990, p. 148) argues, “within disciplines, we develop special languages”. The very words we choose and the sentences we construct are subtly shaped by layers: first, by the university context; second, by the discipline within which we write; and third by the content.

Attention to detail, precision, accuracy and consistency are some of the attributes of scholarly writing and they are apparent in sentence structure, vocabulary and grammar. Precision means that each sentence is as exact as it can be in meaning as well as structure. Accuracy is faithfully representing a truth and not misrepresenting anything from sources to language used. Consistency involves following a specified set of decisions regarding terminology, formatting, fonts and other design elements. Attention to detail is what students have to do to achieve precision, accuracy and consistency. A lack of attention to detail sends the message to the instructor/assessor that the writer lacks credibility as a scholar/writer.

While aiming for precision and accuracy, students also need to know that academic writing tends to be nuanced and complex. Modalities and hedging are used as opposed to declarative statements and certainties: “Hedging is an expression of tentativeness and possibility and it is central to academic writing where the need to present unproven propositions with caution and precision is essential” (Hyland, 2006, p. 433). For example, academic writers use *rarely* instead of *never*, *often* instead of *always*. Yet, these same modalities are used to convey certainties in research results and conclusions (Elander, et al., 2006). How are students to navigate these waters without explicit instruction? Even with explicit instruction, extensive mentoring, feedback and immersion in the discourse is necessary to incorporate the subtleties of hedging (Hyland, 2006).

Another seemingly simply but complex issue is the use of passive or active verbs. The passive verb is seen as the language of science. Passives appear to make the text appear neutral and objective because the actor in the sentence is anonymous (*A meeting was called*). Writing in the passive is traditionally the scientific way of writing research (Badenhorst, 2007). Increasingly, in some disciplines, students are being asked to write using more active verbs (*the manager called the meeting*) but the implication of this is that the writing by nature becomes more personal and subjective for which the writer may be penalized. Students often receive mixed messages about writing style. They are told to write clearly but are given articles to read that are dense and unclear. They are told to write with voice but then are penalized if it is too personal. They are told to be original but rewarded for conforming.

### **Mechanics, Conventions, Presentation**

*Exemplary rubric requirement: Almost without errors of punctuation, spelling, etc, appropriate format and presentation. Standard referencing in text and in reference list.*

Even for the mechanics of a paper, the conventions and the presentation there are underlying discourse issues. Referencing, for example, while seemingly about punctuation and format, is really about evidence and the writer's credibility as a scholar. If the referencing conventions are incorrect, it's not just an editorial issue, the writer's credibility is called into question. It means that the writer is not precise, accurate or consistent and therefore not scholarly. The same applies to formatting, layout and the general presentation of the writing.

### **Consequences of 'Failing' at Writing**

Unpacking the rubric from an academic literacies approach uncovers the complexity of academic writing and the network of social practices in which writing is embedded. It also highlights why students struggle with writing. What are the consequences of this struggle? As Pajares (2003) argues, writing is as much of an emotional activity as it is a cognitive one. For many students, a consequence of the struggle is their writing self-efficacy drops (Pajares, 2003). They retreat from the task with mounting anxiety and self doubt. They begin to exhibit procrastination and work avoidance behaviours or they complete the task with a minimum of effort. Students' confidence in their writing ability influences their motivations as well as their writing outcomes (Archer, et al, 1999). As anxiety increases and fear of negative assessment, students may turn to plagiarism as a solution to their problems. With increasing alienation, they may disengage and drop-out of their programs. Rather than seeing writing as a problem, we blame poor performance on lack of 'ability' and 'intelligence'.

### **Interventions**

From a skills approach to writing, short one-off generic workshops or courses on writing should be sufficient. From an academic literacies perspective, there is room for these types of courses but they cannot constitute a pedagogy of writing. Epistemologically, it is important to move away from a skills approach because it portrays a deficit model of student writing (Ganobcsik-Williams, 2006).

From an academic socialization approach, a pedagogy of writing would involve sustained longer courses on writing genres and the establishment of Writing Centres to socialize students into academic ways of writing. From an academic literacies perspective, the problem with genre-specific courses is that they represent static snapshot of a complex, dynamic process. Students need to learn *about* genres – how they develop and change in situ - not just how to follow the genre (Fulford, 2009; Wardle, 2009). While Writing Centres are crucial they cannot carry the burden alone but need to be part of a broader program.

An academic literacies pedagogy of writing would include short workshops on writing, longer sustained courses on genre, and Writing Centres, all of which would focus on the literacies required in academic contexts. In addition, since writing is a social practice, writing instruction would be imbedded in subject areas (Wingate, Andon & Cogo, 2011; Greene & Orr, 2007). Students would have access to explicit writing instruction across their programs and even into graduate work as their writing requirements changed. A layered approach, where students have exposure to a range of genres, audiences and writing in a subject area are all key to meaningful writing (Ivanic, 2004; Ellis, 2004; Greene & Orr, 2007). A writing pedagogy that is embedded in content produces critical thinking and deep learning and students who understand the complexity of what is required of them produce writing with more complex structures (Elander, et al., 2006). Over time, these writers will develop a voice, an identity, a ‘self’, an authority in writing far beyond technical skills (Fulford, 2009). Writing is one of the ways in which students have access to the university. Burke (2008) argues “the conceptualization of writing as a skill and technique conceals the ontological and epistemological dimensions of writing” (p. 208). We want students to be critical, thoughtful learners who complete their programs. We want to retain those struggling learners and change their experience to one of empowerment. We want a writing pedagogy not to show students how to conform but so that they can exercise their voice. We want to focus attention on the idea that to be literate is to undertake a dialogue with multiple languages, discourses, and texts in a critical way. Literacy, therefore, is a “rupturing practice that engages questions regarding who writes for what audience, in what institutional setting, and with what purpose in mind” (Giroux, 1992, p. 2).

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## Chapter 2: Certainty, chaos and becoming

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### Abstract

Identifying how we *become* researchers can appear to be as straight forward as a narrative with a beginning, middle and an end. Yet, in life with all its complexities and chaos, extracting a single thread is not at all easy. In this narrative, I used the idea of “writing-stories” (Richardson, 1990) built around the identification of four “moments” in my life to explore strands of teacher/researcher/writer identities. I elicited the moments by drawing memory-maps (Creates, 1990; 1998) of places/images that came to mind when I thought of what might have influenced my identities. From the “writing-stories”, the memory-maps and the moments, I was able to detect enduring contours of influence. While this narrative and these contours may look coherent and certain, the experience of writing this paper has revealed exactly how identities are always partial, uncertain and in process.

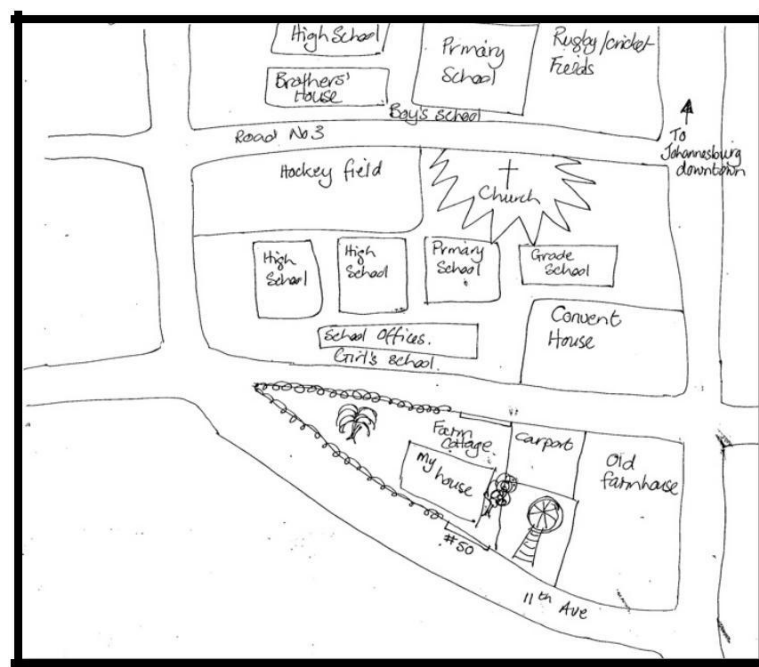
### Buds, shoots, nodes

I am drawn to academic writing. I find undergraduate student writing absorbing and complex but it is research writing by graduate students and faculty that really fascinates me. I am enticed by the difficulty many people experience with academic writing and by the common perception that there is little personal choice within discourse or disciplinary conventions and constraints. Like Richardson (1990), I believe we do have choice in how we write but that choice has poetic, rhetorical, ethical and political implications. My research is framed within an *academic literacies* perspective on writing. This is “a specific epistemological and ideological stance towards the study of academic communication” (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 5). The framework has developed and grown since the 1980s (see Lea, 2004; Lea & Street, 1998; Lea & Street 1999; Lea & Street, 2006; Street, 1984; 1995; 2003) and now forms a sizeable portion of research on academic writing particularly in the UK, Australia and South Africa. Academic literacies constitute “a specific epistemology, that of literacy as a social practice, and ideology, that of transformation” (Lillis & Scott, 2007, p. 7).

Like Richardson (2001), writing is an integral part of my life. It’s how I come to “know” my world. For me, academic writing and research is always personal while at the same time situated in time, context and other discursive practices. Richardson (2001) argues that narrative writing-stories allow us to situate our work in “sociopolitical, familial and academic climates” (p.34). Yet, these narratives are always shifting, changing and being reconstructed depending on “one’s sense of who one is” (p.36) which is not stable or fixed. I found it difficult to “fix” a narrative about becoming a researcher until I was reminded of Newfoundland artist Marlene Creates’ memory maps (Creates, 1990; 1997). These rough free-hand images, drawn from memory, are not accurate representations but rather repositories of meaning about memory, experience and place. The narrative that follows flowed around these images and allowed me to fix a writing-story around four moments: school, university, rural Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) work and academic teaching. From these images, moments and the narrative, I extracted key enduring “contours” that extend into my current research interests.

## High School

I went to high school in Johannesburg, South Africa during the 1970s. When I think of the 1970s, I think of war. Mozambique, South Africa's neighbours to the east had been engaged in a guerrilla war of independence since the mid-1960s, which ended in 1975. Two years later a bloody civil war broke out, largely instigated by the South African government, which only ended in 1992 when Nelson Mandela was released from prison and South Africa became a democracy. To the north, Rhodesia was also involved in a civil war during the 1960s and 1970s, which ended in 1979, and Rhodesia became Zimbabwe. To the west, South West Africa engaged in a war of independence against South Africa from the 1960s to 1988 when it became Namibia. Similarly, Angola to the north of Namibia also fought for its independence during the period. South Africa itself was at war but the war was waged underground and in the dark with the typical blanketing of communication that goes along with authoritarian control creating an environment of rumour and fear.



Memory Map 1: School

The Apartheid government had been in power since 1948 and all schools were segregated according to race. My parents chose to send my siblings and me to a small independent under-resourced Catholic school. My father, particularly, did not want us to be educated in the Apartheid schooling system. The Catholic Church in South Africa at the time was influenced by liberation theology, which sought to change the unjust social, economic and political conditions in the country. While the government regulated the curricula in independent schools, they could not control what was taught in the classrooms. The convent-school began as an all-white school

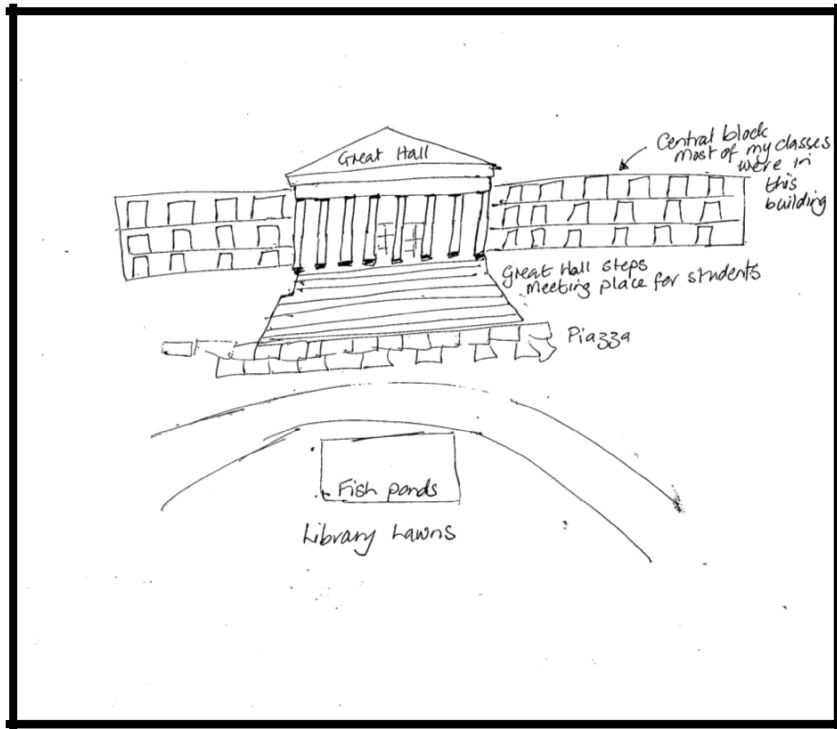
but during my tenure there, they were one of the first schools in the country to open their doors to all races despite government legislation.

Against this background of turbulence on the sub-continent and in the country, life at school was relatively regular, methodical and stable. *Memory Map 1* shows the zoomed-in view of my life around the school and the house we lived in situated right across the road. While I loved playing sports and I excelled at extra-murals, I was not a good student and always seemed to be at odds with what was required. I had no childhood dreams of becoming a teacher and no thoughts of staying in any educational environment. Even so, one hot afternoon in the science room while Sister Beata Maria droned on about “inertia”, I remember thinking: There must be a better way to teach this. I had no conception of academic life since no one in my family had a degree and many had not even finished high school.

As we got closer to our school-leaving exams, my teachers’ anxieties grew. “Don’t take math and science because you’ll fail” said Sister Maura. I needed these academic subjects to get into university. “You’re not university material anyway,” she reminded me. I was also “not marriage material” because my Home Economics marks were equally as poor even though I loved cooking classes and making (poorly sewn) baby clothes. These labels never particularly distressed me because I had no ambitions for either. My father, however, insisted that I take the subjects needed for a university entrance and he told Sister Maura in no uncertain terms, so that was that. I had a good group of friends, and one especially gifted peer mentor, and it was with their help that I managed to complete school and scrape a university entrance pass.

## **University**

After school I couldn’t make up my mind what I wanted to do. Ever conscious of ‘not being university material’, I went to secretarial college because a friend of mine had decided to go. Teaching was still not an option for me even though my father persisted. “You’ll be good at teaching,” he told me. We had several ‘discussions’ about this but I was resolute: It was not for me. During that whole year I was at college, my father worked on me. “Go to university, try it for one year, do teaching, you’ll be good at it”. I did not want to teach but I finally gave in about university and decided to try it for one year. In my mind, subjects like psychology and sociology appealed to me. But once I had agreed to go, my father admitted that he couldn’t afford to pay my fees (with two sisters still at the fee-paying convent) but that he thought I could apply to get a teaching bursary. We ‘discussed’ the issue further but by that time I was excited at the thought of university. Government-issued teaching bursaries were readily available and all a student had to do was complete a B.A. Ed and then teach in a government school for the equivalent time that the funding was granted. I was still a teenager with little thought of the future and not at all sure I would finish the four years of study anyway, so signing up for one year didn’t seem too onerous.



## Memory Map 2: University

As classes got underway, I realised that unlike school, this was my milieu. I understood what was required of me and I slotted right in as if the whole place was made just for me. My subject choice was limited because I was on a teaching bursary and I could only select teaching subjects. I chose History, Geography and Education as majors and I enjoyed every class. I no longer had doubts about going to university and I even began to think of myself as a future teacher. In stark contrast to school, the group of friends who had helped me survive now needed my support. The person who was ‘not university material’ had somehow inexplicably become very much ‘university material’. The more I took education classes, the more I turned towards teaching as a career. *Memory Map 2* focuses on the Great Hall, a focal building on campus, and the steps where students often gathered. I spent many hours sitting in the sun on these steps. It was here that students and faculty collected to protest.

I went to university when the apartheid government was at its height in terms of repression and control. Any insurgence was ruthlessly repressed. The university I attended, the University of the Witwatersrand, was a staunch anti-apartheid institution. From the 1960s it fought to maintain its independence from the apartheid government despite political pressure and funding cuts. Many famous anti-apartheid activists had studied at the university including Nelson Mandela. During the 1980s, the government’s response became increasingly more coercive. Peaceful student and faculty protests were met with police invasions onto campus along with rubber bullets and armed vehicles. Academics, staff and students were beaten, detained, banned or deported with



regularity. Our courses exposed us to the brutal realities of apartheid hidden behind official miscommunication and smokescreens. It was no surprise that our key course “textbooks” were by Marx, Engels, Althusser, the Frankfurt School, Gramsci and Freire. Most of these texts were banned in the country and it always surprised me to remember this because they were openly read, discussed and debated on campus. The key message of my university education was liberation from capitalist social and economic domination, particularly that of the current government.

It was with this mindset and *Das Kapital* tucked under my arm that I went on my annual teaching practicum into the ultra-conservative and reactionary apartheid school system. Without any forethought whatsoever, I had taken the three subjects at university that were the foundations of apartheid philosophy. Rewriting history to justify the need for segregation, carving up the geographical landscape and forcibly removing people to “homelands” to enforce segregation and then providing an education that ensured that the majority of the population would always be labourers to maintain economic dominance. “Bantu” education consisted of untrained teachers, teaching a specifically designed curriculum to create workers, in schools that had no electricity, running water or the most basic of learning resources. In the fully resourced white schools, the curriculum was designed to explain the rationale and logic of apartheid, and to ensure compliance. My university education had opened up history, geography and education for scrutiny. My lecturers peeled back assumptions based on race, class and economics. They exposed “norms”, “traditions” and “common sense” for critical examination.

In my third year practicum, I remember walking into the history class I was due to teach and seeing a huge South African flag pinned up on the notice board at the back of the classroom alongside a picture of the prime minister. I have a vivid memory of time slowing down and the student’s voices fading to white noise as the flag came into sharp focus: a flag I despised for all it represented. I remember turning to the classroom teacher and saying “I’ll never have that flag in my classroom.” He gave me a rueful smile. “If you teach history, you are required to have that flag in your classroom.”

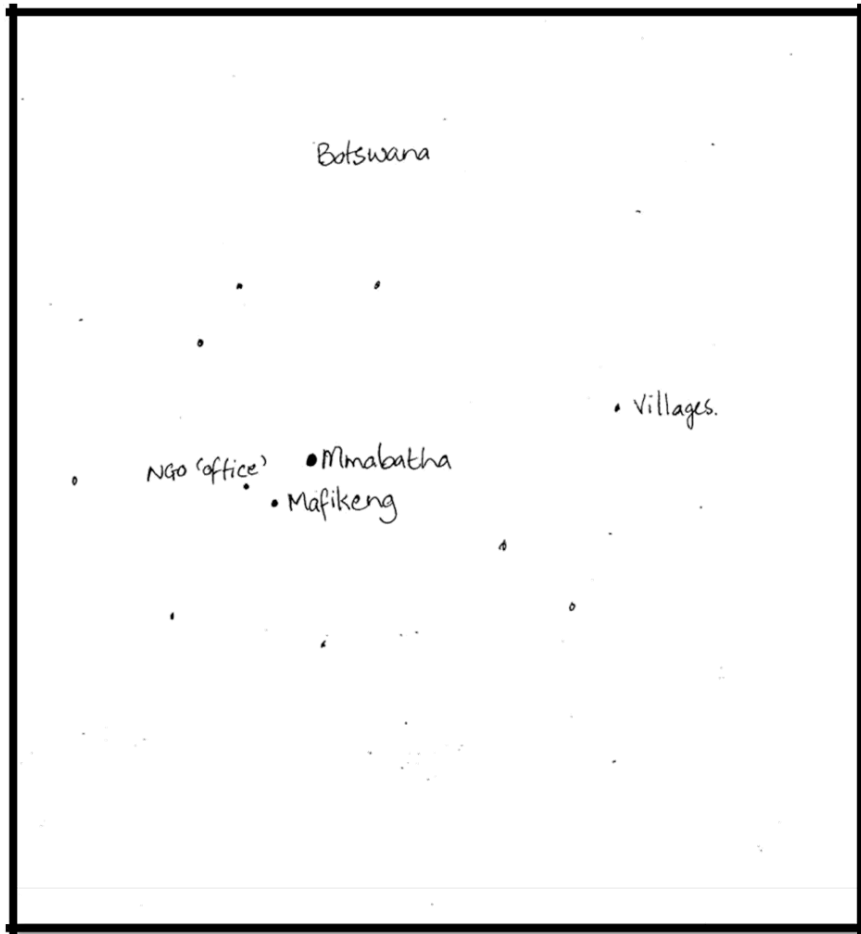
That was the moment of truth when I knew with certainty that I could never teach in an apartheid classroom. I could never teach history, or geography or *be* a teacher in that system. When I returned to classes at the university, I switched programmes from a BA Ed to BA Geography Honours and applied for scholarships. I used the scholarship money to pay back the teaching bursary.

### **Rural Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) work**

After finishing a BA (Hons), I left for Canada to do a Masters and PhD. My research interests focussed on Neo-Marxism, particularly Antonio Gramsci (1971). As the apartheid government tried to wipe away African history, a “school” developed across disciplines at the University of the Witwatersrand around social history. This was the history of the ordinary African men, women and children. Not the history of great men but the stories of people who had been silenced, removed, and whose ways of living had been destroyed by racial politics in South Africa. My PhD involved reconstructing a social history of African cultural institutions in Johannesburg from 1920 to 1950. My thesis combined my three subject areas: history,

geography and education. By visiting government archives, private collections and industry vaults – some no longer in existence - I sewed disparate bits of information together until it became a history that had not been documented before.

I left South Africa, not because I had a burning ambition to get a Masters or a PhD, but because I wanted to get away from the violence, the brutality and the lack of humanity. Six years later, I was drawn back again. By this time it was 1991 and South Africa was at a tipping point. No one really believed that a peaceful solution was possible and it seemed clear that civil war was immanent. But it also seemed imperative to be there. We moved to one of the ‘homelands’, Bophuthatswana, situated west of Johannesburg where my partner took a position at the university. While I was waiting on the outcome of an interview, one of my spouse’s colleagues asked me if I would be interested in managing an adult basic education non-governmental organisation (NGO) in the poverty-ridden rural areas of Bophuthatswana. I accepted without blinking. This was practical on-the-ground work, not the theoretical in-the-mind work of the university. Here, I could make a difference. In the barren semi-desert landscape, I would drive from one isolated village to another establishing adult literacy projects. This involved developing materials, training tutors, canvassing students and setting up classes for reading and writing in the local language SeTswana. With visions of a Freirian social movement, I immersed myself in the job. It was one of the most satisfying periods of my life and also the most frustrating. Learning to read or write in a context of abject poverty is pretty low on most people’s lists of things to do. Tutors joined the NGO because they wanted the pitiful wage we doled out. Adult “students”, often grandmothers, came because they wanted the scribbler books and pencils we gave out for free. They took these and gave them to their grandchildren to use at apartheid schools where everything had to be paid for: fees, uniforms and books. While illiteracy didn’t prevent many of the people in the rural areas from eking out a living, it restricted them to low paying work. All of this against a background of people, who had been disenfranchised, subjugated and told through state legislation that they would never be ‘university material’. At the NGO we struggled from one fiscal year to the next, applying for funding but never knowing if we would receive it. Some people became literate under our auspices but it was like trying to nurture a forest with one teaspoonful of water. *Memory Map 3*, in a way, illustrates my despair at the enormity of the task. It shows the two towns nearest the NGO house/office (Mmabatho and Mafikeng) and the barren landscape dotted with villages and resettlements.



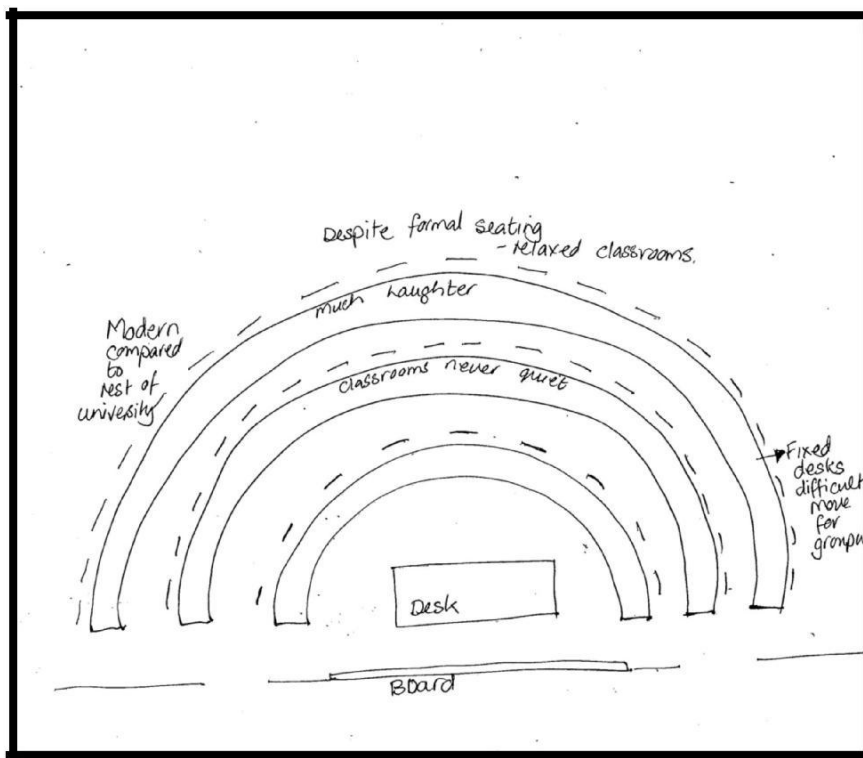
### Memory Map 3: Rural NGO

In 1992, Nelson Mandela was released from prison. The impossible had become possible. As hope increased, so too did tensions. In the months before the first democratic elections, our NGO was busy with election education showing people how to vote for the first time in their lives. Now our classes were full, as everyone wanted to make their mark on April 27, 1994. In Bophuthatswana, the 'homeland' president was opposed to joining the new South Africa and he refused to have any elections held there. This sparked widespread reaction. The civil service went on strike: government offices, schools, hospitals and other government employees took to the streets in protest. Students and staff from the university soon entered the burgeoning numbers. Eventually the police also joined the strike and law and order broke down completely. Cars were burnt in the streets, roads barricaded and people with guns were running everywhere. At our NGO 'office' (a run-down house on the edge of the towns), amid the chaos of helicopters

flying overhead, soldiers with AK47s and tanks rolling down the road, we focused only on getting everyone home alive albeit clutching their 'How to vote' notes.

### Academic teaching

After the tensions and the elections, South Africa swung into democracy. We moved back to Johannesburg. My time at the NGO led to an involvement in re-writing adult education curricula as South Africa moved into the enormous task of redress and reparation. Alongside this was the immense mission of writing new textbooks for all levels of education from pre-grade (Kindergarten) to post-secondary. I became more and more interested in 'writing' as I was tasked with 'translating' the emerging policy documents and the new Constitution into readable texts for school children, parents and adult learners. Several years later, just by chance, I once again found myself back at the University of the Witwatersrand: This time as an academic.



### Memory Map 4: Academic teaching

The University of the Witwatersrand hired me because of my interest in writing and my experience in adult learning. I joined a school in the Management Faculty that was new and unique. The Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P&DM) had been set up immediately before the first democratic elections in 1994 because the new government would mostly consist of activists, many of whom had been exiled and others who had gone underground in South Africa. While some were highly educated, most were not. P&DM was established to educate the new civil service with graduate degrees and a broad certificate programme. "Public Administration", which was the traditional discipline for civil servants, was

discredited as a result of apartheid. A civil service that was decontextualized, atheoretical and neutral is what administered the apartheid state without questioning its actions. A paradigm shift was needed to accommodate democratic social development and black empowerment, which were the objectives of the new government. The P&DM curricula was developed with three components to meet these requirements (Hewlett, forthcoming): 1) Widening access – ‘students’ without previous degrees, who came from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, who were never ‘university material’ and did not receive university entrance certification were to be accommodated; 2) Different teaching approaches – the traditional “chalk and talk” was replaced with more participatory teaching approaches (group work, case studies, student-centred learning, flexible participant/educator roles, relevant adult learning principles); and 3) “Administration” was no longer viable but sustainable *development* and accountable *management* became increasingly centre-stage.

Two education-focussed academics were hired to help develop and deliver curricula to meet the requirements of widening access and different teaching approaches. Multi-disciplinary academics drawn from law, political science, sociology, geography, international relations and other disciplines were hired to deliver the development management curriculum. I was one of the education-focussed academics who joined in 1998. My role specifically was to embed writing “skills” into the curriculum and to ensure that Masters students were able to complete the research component of their programme. Our initial cohorts of local activist-students began to change as peace settled on the sub-continent. Increasingly, we began to see “students” from Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique in our classrooms. Civil servants, teachers, doctors, nurses, farmers, engineers, the police and the military came to our classes to get a graduate degree in management development and to help rebuild the sub-continent. We had high-ranking personnel sitting alongside low-level personnel in the same way we had the political economy of development being taught alongside neo-liberal managerialist approaches. As shifts in South African state policy moved from reconstruction to the delivery of a developmental state, P&DM’s curriculum was re-worked and revised accordingly. In my own classes, I began to link writing to research methodology and to epistemologies. Post-structural feminism and Foucault (1995) were the theoretical guides I turned to for insight and understanding. *Memory Map 4* is of one of my favourite classrooms. It was here, on a first day of class, that I would look up at the amphitheatre of seats packed to capacity with laughing, noisy and demanding learners who good-naturedly grilled me on why I thought I had the authority to teach them.

At P&DM I developed my thinking about academic writing more systematically and I consolidated my teaching and research into one stream. P&DM was an exciting place to work. I loved teaching the diverse groups of ‘students’ and it was enormously rewarding to see people who had never thought they “were university material”, that they would ever get a degree, crossing the stage at graduation time. And yet, it was also challenging and exhausting. I worked with students on their research writing, with supervisors on how to mentor master’s students and with academics who needed to publish. For many years, I thought I was a researcher first and teacher second. It was during the ten years at P&DM that I began to realise that I was passionate about teaching. When I started to conduct research in the area of my teaching, that’s when writing became much easier for me.

## Mass of roots

The story I have presented here looks ordered, coherent and linear. It appears as if my trajectory as a researcher was rooted in particular ‘moments’ (school, university, NGO work and academic teaching) that constituted a beginning-point and then developed in a logical consistent progressive manner to an end-point. It does not show the difficulty I had in extracting this narrative from the mass of narratives available to me. Nor does it tell the whole story, for example, the influence of my children or the impact of moving to Memorial and how that has shaped my identity/ies as a writer/teacher/researcher. The story presented here is chronological and appears certain, and yet sometimes the most random of decisions and chance encounters led me along particular paths. French philosophers and post-structuralists, Deleuze & Guattari (1987) have argued that the tree-image to describe knowledge and research emphasizes linear and vertical connections and in doing so we look for the roots of things and then follow branches which are often chronological lines. The tree-image has clear beginnings and pre-determined endings. They argue that this conception of research prevents us from seeing multiple entry and exit points. They suggest a different metaphor – the rhizome – which is the subterranean root of a plant (e.g. Irises, ginger). Rhizomes send out roots and shoots, and are part of a complex net of stems that sometimes bend back into itself. Any bit of root can give rise to a new plant. Any part of a shoot or stem can give rise to a bud. Consequently, rhizomes do not have clearly defined beginnings or endings, or linear branches, or progressive growth. From this perspective, my narrative of becoming a researcher is not so much coherent and certain as it is emerging.

Hidden in the story I have presented here are shoots moving forward and then turning back, creating a layer of roots in a context of soil that fed and nurtured them. What forms the mass of roots that underpins my research ethos? I’ve extracted four “stems” (contours) here:

1. I always question exclusions to university classrooms whether these are individual beliefs of a ‘lack of ability’ or institutional beliefs of “lack of preparedness”.
2. As Freire (1986) argued there is no such thing as neutral education. Education either normalises, or it becomes the means by which students begin to critically see their own position in society, forming the basis for learning how to transform that world.
3. I have a critical suspiciousness of anything considered “normal”; an enduring need to question assumptions (my own as well as others); and to always ask whose interests does this serve? While at the same time I hold an innocence about possibilities of equity, inclusivity and the benefits of difference.
4. Academic writing is a mechanism by which many people are excluded from the academy. Like other practices in academic environments, writing is shaped by accepted “norms” of particular disciplinary discourses (Lakoff, 1990). It is the way we perform academia and our academic identities. Writing is the way people become normalised but also the way to transformation. Finally, articulate intelligent people are often hamstrung by the unspoken rules and conventions of academic writing.



Rather than providing a route to certainty, post-structuralists look at the instability of systems, the openness, and the potential for chaos. Deleuze & Guattari (1987) were particularly interested in how systems mutate or *become* in a context of the instability and the open dynamism of thought. Deleuze argued that no system or vocabulary could adequately capture the chaos of life. If life, and writing, is not a closed system, then it is constantly in a state of change and renewing as it comes into contact with other influences. Writing, like a rhizome, “has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25). Consequently, Deleuze and Guattari do not look at what *is* but explore what is *becoming*. When we feel we have become, the process begins again. We start “to renew, to question, and to refuse remaining the same” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 8). This way of thinking appeals to me because I always feel the potential for chaos in my own research, in my identities as teacher/researcher and in my writing. While I try to control it through chronology and extracting “themes”, these constructs are always in the process of deconstruction as I am forced through engaging in life, interacting with colleagues and being challenged by students to continually question my own biased assumptions, my “taken-for-granted” certainties, my perceived consistencies in life, my “normality”, and even the stems I have presented here. As Richardson (2001) argues: “what we know about the world and what we know about ourselves [is] always intertwined, partial and historical” (p.36). I do not feel like I have *become* a researcher, instead I am always in a state of becoming.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Rob Kelly for, as always, providing perceptive and insightful feedback on this chapter.

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### **Chapter 3: Empowering children's voices through the narrative of drawings**

Anne Burke

Memorial University

#### **Abstract**

This article shares my journey about becoming a researcher of young children. Importantly, a part of this journey is an understanding of how to empower children's voices in the classroom through playmaking and through the narrative illustrated in the drawings of young children. Using a narrative approach and visual methods to connect to children's voices through drawing and classroom discussions, I use the Mosaic approach in the collection of data to fully capture the essence of what it truly means to "listen" when young children are expressing themselves (Clark, Kjørholt, & Moss, 2005). The richness of children's meaning making (Wells, 1999) is shared through this multi-method approach. The recognition of the different "voices" or "languages" of children is enriched through narrative and empowering for all when children are treated as experts and agents through the sharing of story.

"That's the secret in my picture." – Daneisha, age 6

#### **Introduction**

Pictures and stories (or "secrets," as young Daneisha characterizes them) are very important to our research about children's literate understandings of their world. My particular research focuses on children's play and how it illustrates their role as "meaning makers" in their own lives. The very essence of a child's understanding stems from the social events that characterize each young child's life, and their understanding of these events becomes apparent through play (Wells, 1999). Their rich social interactions, found through play, provide opportunities for both rehearsals and re-enactments of roles and experiences. In my research, I have used a number of visual methods and narrative approaches to connect to their important stories, which in turn has shaped my research around the literacy practices of young children (Burke, 2010). Engaging children as collaborators in my research has demonstrated how the expertise of young children provides meaning making for both their teachers and myself.

A story is composed of events that can be real, imaginary, or organized through forms such as pictures, words, songs or even dances. Relating the events of a story can also be termed a "narrative". Children often tell narratives along a time-line, describing self-identifying features, a sibling's birth, or the process of a day at school. Notably, these stories help children make sense of their world by engaging their feelings, exploring complicated feelings and emotions, or connecting them to childhood memories through their association with characters and illustrations in picture books. With a child-centered approach to research, the significance of a child's sharing is expressed through the methodology itself, where the children's own narrative stories are told in their own voices. As a researcher who is primarily concerned with children's voices and knowing, I use a narrative approach in my research. I am a strong admirer of the work of early childhood educator and writer Vivian Paley. By wisely acknowledging the power and voices of kindergarten children, through story, Paley helped her students make sense of their young lives through friendship and in the context of their relationships with others in their world.

Paley employed a number of “narrative tools” (McNamee, 2005) to help children connect their school knowledge to their knowledge of their homes and world, including: author studies, picture books, children’s play, illustrations depicting dilemmas faced by characters in stories, and personal narratives. The narrative tools used in this study are similar to ones used above, but I also use children’s artifacts from home such as digital pictures and personal drawings.

Beyond a child’s first beginnings with narrative, it is used in our society for a variety of purposes: for entertainment through recitation, for teaching morals and values to children using fables and legends, for reporting academic findings, for documenting historical events through novels, and for relating cultural practices and traditions. “The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Children’s literacy scholars, such as Hardy (1997), believe that stories act as a narrative web, bringing meaning and understanding about the world to children. Ethnographic research in classrooms, conducted by Anne Dyson (1993; 1994) and focused around play, meaning and literacy, illustrates the importance of storytelling as children use it to filter their own narratives within the official classroom curriculum. Other seminal research about children’s literacy engagements, by Shirley Bryce Heath (1983), observes that the development of children’s narrative and cultural identities is vital to sharing experiences from home, and by sharing home narratives they demonstrated closer connections to literacy than those exhibited in classroom performance. Her study suggests that narrative is essential to children’s meaning making in the classroom. In many ways, narrative is the act of speculating on the life and the events, which characterize a young child’s experiences. It is their way of showing us what they know, in their natural form of knowing.

This article is an exploration of the particular stories and knowing that children can share through play-based learning in classrooms and through illustration. This article employs research data from a project that examined children’s literacy development and forms of text making in primary schools. As the researcher, I was particularly interested in looking at literacy practices developed through play pedagogy in school compared to how children constructed literacy in their out-of-school play at home. My research intent was to engage children, through narrative, in the types of texts and literacy events they use outside of the classroom. This is a very natural way for the children to share their stories about how literacy is constructed in their worlds.

This research study is comprised of my observations in the children’s classrooms, during interviews, of visual representations of their knowing and their voices. My observations provide data consisting of “actions, events, and happenings” that, when looked at through a narrative lens, “produce stories” (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 577). Focusing on the process involved in the construction of a story, and ‘topic-centered narratives’ in particular, I relate children’s literacy moments as “snapshots of past events that focus around particular topics and themes and are fragments rather than extended narratives” (Jones, 2011, p. 112). Through observation of these literacy moments, we are able to analyze how a child creates meaning and constructs these moments as a story around a particular topic. As Kramp (2004) explains “through narrative inquiry, you gain access to the personal experiences of the storyteller who frames, articulates,

and reveals life as experienced in a narrative structure we call story. In narrative inquiry, this story is the basic unit of analysis” (p. 105).

### **Becoming a researcher**

My interest in play, and how children learn from play, stems from my work with teachers in primary and elementary classrooms across Canada. I have since recognized that there are many life skills such as turn-taking, critical thinking and problem solving which may be credited to the powerful learning potential of play. Literacy in young children is nourished through play, which in turn benefits their own knowing. The following sections share the narrative stories of two classrooms and involve a number of research studies that examine the play lives of Canadian children. In particular, I consider how different resources such as picture books, children’s personal narratives, and illustrated texts can help children to fully engage their narrative voices. When this research was conceived, I was working with a publishing team and looking at the creation of a new kindergarten resource program in three Canadian provinces. In my research of early learning, I sought out kindergarten teachers who held a similar philosophy, and I sought pedagogy and practice to support the idea that the situated learning and diversity in literacy each child carries is a personal map to greater achievements.

Research is an important aspect of professional practice that is designed to promote educational effectiveness. As such, it is imperative that educators be versed in educational theories that attempt to represent the “best” professional practices as well as how these practices might be facilitated in the classroom. This idea of praxis, where theory and practice come together as an integrative frame, is important to me for a number of reasons. As a former classroom teacher, I would often find myself limited when only using a best practice approach. It often did not answer the questions of why some children would clearly grasp the lesson more quickly, or be more creative, or be critically attuned to deeper issues within a reading of a story. Without a theoretical framework, educators are left with few resources for thoroughly interrogating their respective sites of research (i.e. the classroom). According to Lankshear and Knobel (2006), there are three “moments” that can be most productively discussed as a means to this end.

The first moment, experienced by educators, is described as the impetus for pursuing a particular topic of inquiry. For example, research may be inspired by something an educator may have read, a topic addressed during professional development, or an interaction with faculty or staff. This is considered the primary research activity. For this research, I was concerned with how play could be used as a pedagogical tool to more deeply explore how children play and construct narratives.

The second moment takes place when educators begin to actively frame their topic into a research question for further inquiry. This includes the consideration of related concerns for the research topic, various theoretical approaches that can be employed as a lens through which to view the topic, and a rationale for the selection of a particular approach. This moment is considered an on-going process for the duration of educational research. In my early classroom visitations, I realized that teachers needed to consider their own questions about how to teach using play and books, and how to invite home experiences into the classroom. The research

questions were flexible enough so that teachers could mould their understanding to different groups of learners.

The third and final moment occurs when research is complete, and educators begin to reflect on the feedback and response to the research. The third moment of this research study, produced

sudden and clear realizations for both the teachers and myself, as we reflected on what the children shared through their play episodes. By sharing our collective knowledge, we could create a holistic picture of learning based on what we had observed in the classroom. As a result, the learners and theory became our inspiration, or first moment, to look more deeply into improving professional practice.

Children are natural storytellers, which is evident in how they recount their life events. Stories are shared through multiple forms of knowing, such as illustrations and play, which in turn invite a narrative approach, ensuring that life stories from beyond the classroom are shared (Eick, 2011). Using narrative inquiry as the basis of analysis would also emphasize the necessary life experience and beliefs that are needed to see children as active co-researchers (Eick, 2011). As active co-researchers, the children's stories were molded through a narrative lens, which acknowledges the multiple ways and forms of knowing that children share in this world. When working with young children as active researchers in collaborative research; however, other considerations need to be taken into account.

### **Other considerations with children's narratives**

Using young children as research participants has been contentious due to the perception that children who are often below the age of seven (sometimes older), lack the competency, capability, and responsibility required to contribute any relevant or beneficial information to researchers, generally speaking (Smith, 2011). Nonetheless, it must be understood that the subjective experiences of the children involved in this study of children's narratives are an important element because they reflect the quality of research where children are the major focus (Dunphy and Farrell, 2011). Reflection is a key feature here. Children will often articulate their views on aspects of their own learning, and educators must reflect on this in their efforts to maximize the learning potential of their students (Dunphy and Farrell, 2011).

The unfiltered views of the participating children were essential features in our search to understand the literacy engagements of the children in that particular classroom. As stated previously, children may not completely understand the purpose of an academic activity involved in the research process. As researchers in these primary classrooms, however, our intentions and responsibilities were to monitor and record how children learn through play, and, just as importantly, how literacy instruction could be informed by their voices. The United Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC-1989), as an organization, reiterates this understanding through their statement that children should "have agency and voice, and that they have a right to participate – to give information and to take part in decisions in matters that affect



them” (Smith, 2011, p. 12). For this reason, as researchers in this area, we have an obligation to not only “hear” but also “listen” to the voices of these young children.

According to Smith, another key aspect to take into consideration is the importance of methodology when investigating issues concerning the child, while also emphasizing the agency of the child. If we, as researchers, seek to find the children’s voices, then we must view the children as subjective participants (knowers and social actors) rather than objective participants (Smith, 2011). In other words, researchers should seek out a participatory dialogue with these children, creating a “safe” space in which to collect data. The children’s voices, their sharing, artifacts, and stories, were the basis of our knowledge. Asking them to share their expert knowledge as “meaning makers” brought deep stories that were embedded with an understanding of literacy and performed through play.

### **Visual Understanding**

Another element of our research was the study of children’s intentions and abilities to engage with literacy through multiple forms of text. In honoring what the students knew, we allowed them to find voice through illustrations, art mediums, and various digital tools, such as cameras and video recorders. Research showed that using visual elements as a methodology made it possible to provide a voice to disenfranchised groups, those who had been marginalized or socially excluded, students with disabilities, children as well as young people (Bragg, 2011). Although Bragg (2011) writes about youth as adolescence, in particular, we also found that the visual elements engaged our young research partners in ways they could not always access through their own dialogue. Bragg (2011) contends that the “youth voice can be heard more directly through images, and thus the visual methods give a more privileged ‘inside’ perspective than others, allowing young people to speak for themselves” (p. 89).

### **Methods**

We decided to use the Mosaic approach, which incorporates a narrative approach to include “the voice of the child.” The framework is devised to fully capture the essence of what it truly means to listen when young children are expressing themselves (Clark, Kjørholt & Moss, 2005). “Listening” is the basis of the framework, and it has success if employed in a multi-method approach. The Mosaic approach recognizes the different “voices” or languages of children, sees children as participatory in their own knowledge building, and treats children as experts and agents in their own lives (Clark et al., 2005). The inclusion of children, practitioners, and parents in this framework, proved to be useful in our research, as reflective meaning was cultivated through deeper inquiry into the questions of interpretation. In this particular aspect of the study, children shared their learning through their expertise, alongside the teacher’s pedagogy, and their parents’ participation with home literacy activities, such as visiting a market. Because the framework is adaptable, it can be applied in a variety of settings, such as a primary school or a childcare centre. It is focused on children’s lived experiences, and it can be used for a variety of purposes, which can include a consideration of life experiences, rather than merely knowledge gained or care received.

The three stages to the Mosaic approach are as follows:

Stage 1: Children and Adults Gathering  
Documentation

Stage 2: Piecing Together Information for Dialogue, Reflection, and Interpretation

Stage 3: Deciding on Community and Change

The three stages support, “both the traditional tools of observing children at play and a variety of ‘participatory tools’ with children” (Waller, 2006, p. 81). This approach gives children the opportunity to not only be heard, but to also be the expert on how they identify literacy, using their voices in a variety of ways: (1) to take photographs of what they like to play with or do at home, (2) to make illustrations, and (3) to create identity artifacts in the classroom. Using a data collection, which adheres to a narrative storyline of the young child’s learning, whether it is at school or at home, engages children in their knowing. It also invites teachers, researchers, and parents into the literate lives of the children, where they can observe and witness the child’s perspective and be a part of the reflective component of the framework (Clark et al., 2011).

Including children’s voices in the creation of their own narrative accounts, using visual elements and a variety of textual forms, and communicating within a framework of active listening, invites children to be “skillful communicators, rights holders, and meaning makers” (Clark et al., 2011, p. 6).

### **Seeing the narrative within the stories**

This study focuses on stories authored and drawings illustrated by students, both taking place in a kindergarten classroom. The research design for data collection was selected quite deliberately. While there are several different tools that could be utilized for this sort of research design, a table consisting of guiding questions has proven to be particularly effective. This table, used by researchers, was divided into four columns: (a) research purposes, (b) data to collect, (c) data analysis approach, and (d) guiding and informing sources. In particular, we used the guiding questions of our research to locate the data.

James Spradley (1980) discusses the important use of field-notes as an intricate research design. He describes an ethnographer recording field-notes according to their observation of a social situation. For our purposes, this mode of observation and research is applied to a group of students being instructed in a classroom. Notably, James Spradley (1980) concludes that while these field-notes may provide a series of descriptions of what has taken place (in the classroom), they will not provide any sort of cultural meaning. Ironically, however, according to Spradley, it is this cultural meaning that is the true research aim of the ethnographer. To shift away from mere descriptions of the social interactions contained in field-notes, the ethnographer’s observational research must be subjected to thorough analysis. One potential mode of analysis includes cultural domain analysis. This technique involves analyzing patterns that appear in the recorded field-notes, which could constitute certain cultural meanings. Put another way, domain analysis involves sifting and sorting through the data to discover these cultural domains. It is important to note that domain analysis is representative of what data analysis entails beyond a mere repetition of the data collected.

For myself, it was important that the data analysis still represented and related to our informed approach using the Mosaic methods. Our approach to data analysis would position the children in the research as holding the key narratives to their literate understandings through artifacts such as drawings, picture books, and play. Organizing the data collection table so that (a) research purposes was positioned next to types of (b) data to collect served as a reminder that the data to be collected had to be relevant to the purpose of conducting this research (i.e., the question of inquiry). For example, I wanted the data to be augmented with the child's voice so it was necessary for me to record classroom dialogues not only alongside the teacher's lessons but also during the children's interactive play and illustrating of stories. Similarly, by placing (b) data to collect next to, (c) data analysis approach, researchers are reminded to use methods of data analysis that are most effective in terms of the actual data that has been collected. Finally, the column labeled (d) guiding and informing sources provided me with a space to indicate current published research, or expert opinions, that may be related to the topic of research or question of inquiry. By designing the research in this way, I could perceive a distinct lens through which the children's voices and narratives could be shared.

### **Powerful narratives**

Schools can empower children to become critical thinkers through their natural ability to use their boundless imaginations as a backdrop for their narrative voices. The following two narratives demonstrate how our Mosaic approach to the research can represent children as agents of their own stories.

### **Daneisha's princess**

It was a cool morning in April with bright sunshine warming the classroom through the windows. Leslie stood at the door welcoming each of the children as they arrived for the morning session of kindergarten. Confidently, each child removed his/ her coat and placed items in their cubbies, putting on their "indoor shoes" to begin the day. As she greeted each child, one by the name of Daneisha asked if the dress-up centre was allowed today at recess. Leslie smiled at the smallest child in her class and assured her that their story of princesses and princes that had been created over the week, could resume again at playtime. Over the past week, I had come to "play" in the role of a researcher in this urban classroom. We had created a unit on fantasy, using the story *The Paper Bag Princess*, and the children had been busy working on scenery for the castle in the block area, re-enacting different storylines through puppets. As a part of the oral language retellings of story, Leslie wished to engage children in a discussion about stereotypes and gender. She knew that the children felt empowered by the protagonist in the story they were discussing, a heroine who stands up for herself, questioning stereotypical viewpoints of dress and image. Throughout the week we had seen this story narrative through a number of ways: as a puppet play where children explored what it meant to judge someone by their clothes, and how the character Ronald is 'just behaving badly'. We see how the children understand that the resolution means an end for some of the main characters, and in some cases we may have to lose something in order to gain something else. The play scenario, enacted by the children the day before, entitled "Ronald's apology," shows how children can also develop resolution in their own lives by exploring differing viewpoints of the characters, perspectives and ways to address acceptance and difference. After playmaking, Robert Munsch's popular tale, we gather together

on the story mat to talk more about the book. I am curious to see how the children retell the story, but also what happens when Leslie leads their expertise of knowing in discussions about acceptance for others. Using their expressive language, the children become a part of the critical discussion about how the protagonist stands up for herself – using their own voices, they question stereotypical viewpoints, dress and image, and come to a critical understanding of *The Paper Bag Princess*.

Leslie: *What did you like about the story? Kieran?*

Kieran: *Well, I liked the end. I think that Ronald is a bad friend...a bad prince.*

Leslie: *You do, why is he not a good friend? Why do you think that?*

Kieran: *Because even when Elizabeth saved him from the dragon, he did not say thank-you. He told her to change her dirty clothes because she did not look like a princess.*

Daneisha: (interjecting) *...yeah, that, and also too that he thinks that she should wear princess clothes.*

Leslie: *Do you think princesses should always dress a certain way?*

Daneisha: *They wear pink I know* (listening to others making reference to other princess dress) *...but you know she saved him from the dragon and got her clothes burned for him. He is a bum.* (repeating the last line of the book)

Leslie: *And, so, he is not a good friend?*

Seth: *No, not a good friend...he is? Just wants everyone to be the way he wants.*

Some of the children were given the task of recreating the story through the drawing of a picture series, which sequenced the events of the story, an expected language arts outcome in the kindergarten classroom. Daneisha chose to draw Elizabeth the protagonist (Figure 1) as a happy princess, now that she had told Ronald “off for his rude behavior.” Her drawing was well represented in retelling the story and fit in well with her peer’s task of sequencing the story events through illustration. I was interested in the “living literacy story,” which was also Daneisha’s intention in how she drew the character of Elizabeth. Sitting next to her at the writing and drawing centre, I asked her to retell me the story through her drawing.



Figure 1. Elizabeth, the protagonist as illustrated by Daneisha.

Anne: *I like your picture. It has many wonderful things about the story. Can you tell me about your picture?*

Daneisha: (excitedly, pointing with her tiny fingers) *See? There is the castle where she lives with her mom and dad. They are called the king and queen, you know, and there are trees here, but they are small because of the dragon burned all of them*

Anne: *I like how you drew Elizabeth (smiling).*

Daneisha: *You like her? Kieran said she was too tall (laughing). Her crown. Look! Her crown... (circling the top of her crown with her whole hand) Her head is in the sky.*

Anne: *Why do you think you drew her that big?*

Daneisha: *That's the secret in my picture... (She pauses and looks up at me and quietly says) Do you really want to know why?*

Anne: *Okay, tell me why?*

Daneisha: *Because... because... I think that is how Elizabeth feels now that she is not Ronald's friend, (in a really loud voice) the bum (laughing)!*

Daneisha taught me a great deal that day about how children know much more about life than we expect, and about how their narratives are central to their understanding of even a complex theme, such as stereotype and identity. Leslie allowed children to live within their imaginative world of play and invited her students to explore complex narratives that underpin much of children's popular culture media such as that of the Disney princess play, which enveloped the allotted free play of the classroom at times. The verbal retelling of the story in Leslie's classroom

showed how children explore the ideas of the plot, but can also extend the original ideas of the story. The collaborative play through painting, drawing, puppets, and role-play using the block areas, created a setting for the imaginary castle that enabled the children to feel the story as if it were alive. It reinforced narrative structure and allowed them to use their own words, drawing on their cultural understandings. Children used the narrative of their own lives and combined that with Robert Munsch's beloved tale in order to explore differing viewpoints of the characters, perspectives, and attitudes of society. This was the first of many lessons, in which the children would learn the value of critical inquiry through narrative of self and story in a classroom.

### **To Market to Market?**

An important part of the literacy engagement with young children is through oral language that is central to narrative. My own classroom observations showed the importance of story and how children's voices are part and parcel of that language connection. Very early, children come to understand that language and its use is a critical component of their social engagements. They learn that language serves a purpose and is used in differing contexts, and that understanding these differing contexts will be beneficial to them. However, it is through narrative, imaginative play in the early years of children's lives that they come to understand the differences that make each of our identities unique. How we live our lives informs how we come to literacy. Home literacy practices vary from child to child, and it is how these literate engagements are included, which plays a formal role in children's communication. This is evident through the narrative of Laura's classroom, described below.

Laura had just started teaching a new grade one classroom and was making great efforts to locate the children's reading and writing within their own community. Early in September, she started a discussion about a farmer's market that had recently opened in the area. Laura brought in newspaper clippings, discussed the idea of a market, and she asked the children to help make a list of all the jobs at the market. She wanted to create a narrative around their understanding of market. Children worked in small groups drawing pictures, in comic strip form, of what each person would do. The sharing of knowledge and experiences helped the children to offer their narrative telling in a meaningful way, and drew from their social and environmental contexts. Laura also used their own understanding of what it meant to communicate in their own world to good effect. Some children drew a road map, outlining how to get to the market, marked by various familiar store and restaurant signs, such as a McDonalds and a nearby fire station. Another group drew and cut out pictures of vegetables that would be sold and had discussions about the colors of the vegetables and their various flavors. One little boy, named Sam, reported that he felt that vegetables that were green should not be eaten, while another child argued strongly about the virtues of a balanced diet.



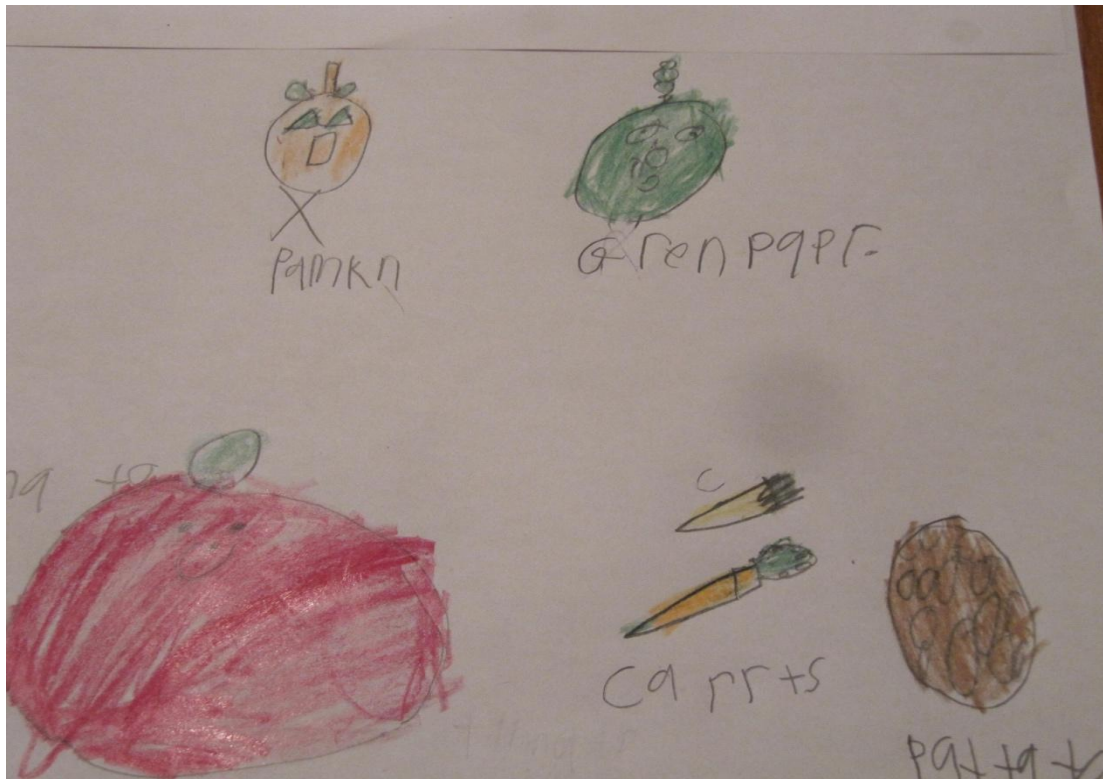


Figure 2. Types of vegetables as illustrated by the children.

I chatted with a group of children about the market and the types of vegetables we could get there. One of the children produced a picture (Figure 2), which showed each vegetable the children discussed. The following excerpt comes from their discussion.

Jenny: *Every week my Nan buys carrots* (speaking to the group's designated artist), *so Michael you draw carrots.*

Sam: *I like carrots. They are not green* (others are talking around him).

Henry: *My mom buys green peppers. She cuts them. She says they are good for everyone.*

Sam: *I don't like green ones.*

Anne: *Just green ones Sam?* (He nods.)

Michael: *I can make a green pepper like this* (works on drawing).

Henry: *My mom says ...says that you have to eat things you like, and not really like, to be healthy.*

The children's home literacy practices emerge from a meaning-making process, which is centered on narrative. Jenny, Michael, Sam, and Henry constructed social understanding of the market along with the ways their families interact around food and nutrition at home. We know that literacy is socially constructed (Teale & Sulzby, 1986), and we see in this scenario how the children develop this narrative in the context of the market. We learn much from what the children share, such as home practices of grocery shopping and trips to the market, stories related by parents, such as Henry's retelling of his mother's nutritional advice. The stories the children share through their group discussion show their rich literacy context, which forms the basis of

their knowledge. The powerful learning for me, as the researcher, was in observing first-hand how children share their first literacy experiences through their “skills of life” by relating an event and drawing on a part of that knowing. During my visits, I would often hear Laura sharing the day’s events with parents. In return, parents would share small stories of their child’s experiences at the market, anecdotes about eating a banana that hadn’t been paid for, and picking out pumpkins for the traditional Halloween carving. On reflection with Laura, she shared that through embedding the children’s oral story retellings of their trip to the market, within their individual contexts, she felt she was empowering their ability to “restory” their lives. The important lesson for Laura, as a new teacher, was her realization that the most empowering foundation of literacy is the story, which each of her students brings to school.

### **Ways of knowing**

In completing this research and writing this article, I realize our current pedagogical approach to early learning and literacy, with teachers, is too often focused directly on the teaching and learning of explicit academic skills, such as reading and writing. Centering a child’s knowing in narrative, through various types of texts that include visual elements, like illustrations, gives a child agency. In this research, children’s voices and knowing become the main storyteller. Moreover, schools and teachers have access to these important stories, which are embedded within each child’s life experiences. The children’s narratives also help educators, such as Leslie and Laura, to understand the rich literacy connections their students are making. Anthony Paul Kerby (1991) concludes that, “Narratives are a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, of experience, and ultimately of ourselves” (p. 3). If we recognize that a child’s understanding of the world is enhanced when it is mapped as a personal narrative, we are better equipped to truly listen as their story of pivotal moments is shared. Narratives explored through the Mosaic approach validate the distinct voices of children as active participants in their own

knowledge building and meaning making. Through their story telling, children can be recognized as experts and agents in their own lives.

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## Chapter 4: Becoming a researcher: Stories of self

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### Abstract

In this introduction we situate the call for papers for this Special Edition on *Becoming a researcher*. We begin with a discussion on writing, research and publication; and the idea of slow scholarship and meaningful collegiality which forms the substrate of our approach. Next, we foreground the self as data in current research genres. We begin with narrative methods which emphasize the argument that people lead individual and socially storied lives. Burgeoning out from narrative, we explore arts---based educational research which encompasses the visual, the aesthetic and often borrows literary elements. Next, we turn to the growing genre of autoethnography to see the interweaving of the self, the social and research. Finally, we introduce the unique papers in this Special Edition. These stories of becoming researchers constitute a rich contribution to this genre of writing and research.

### Introduction

In this Special Edition: *Becoming a Researcher*, we foreground the self as data and recognise multiple *stories of self* (Arnold, 2011). Moving aside abstract, distanced, non-emotional frameworks, the contributions in this volume embrace an embodied, interconnected approach to understanding selves as researchers (Essén & Varlander, 2012) and the process of reaching current settled and unsettled destinations. Contributions link the personal with the theoretical, the individual with the universal, factual with imaginary, and word with image to reclaim the inevitability of the personal in academic lives. Papers in this collection show how researchers *live* their research and how, even though, many researchers “have been trained to guard against subjectivity (self-driven perspectives) and to separate self from research activities, it is an impossible task” (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010, p. 2). Scholarship is intimately tied to personal experience. Stories of liberation, loss, love, survival, trust, emergence and becoming are presented here as researchers bear witness to themselves as writers and academics (Nash, 2004). Collectively this Special Edition enacts a methodological proposition that the personal, the academy, ways of knowing, pedagogy, theory and practice are intricately bound together (Arnold, 2010; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002; Knowles & Cole, 2008).

How do we write these stories of self? Since the 1980s, new research genres have interrogated writing and research practices with a sharpening eye on the “I” in academic inquiry. Pinnegar and Danes (2007) identify four recent trends that have opened up the space for personal scholarship to develop. These are: 1) The growing change in relationship between the researcher and the researched and a recognition that human interactions are never static but are always relational; 2) The change from the use of numbers to the use of words as data and the growing primacy of human experience and meaning; 3) A change from a focus on the general and universal to the local and specific; 4) Increasing acceptance of alternative epistemologies and a growing recognition of blurred genres of knowing. In this volume, contributing authors

have used some of these current forms of scholarship such as narrative, poetry and autoethnography. Although these are personal stories that focus on the self, they do so at intersections with time, context and place. As such, these stories of the self move beyond the personal to include the social.

We would like to use this introductory paper to explore some of the literature in these emerging research genres. A section will focus on narrative methods, the next on the contributions of arts-based genres followed by a discussion of autoethnography. The final section of the paper will present an overview of the contributions to this Special Edition. First, however, we would like to begin with a discussion that is at the heart of this Special Edition: Becoming a researcher.

### **Becoming a researcher**

Increasingly, faculty are under pressure to write and publish. The literature on publishing productivity levels world-wide indicates that about 15% of researchers account for most published articles (Stack, 2003) and that many academics, new and experienced, continue to struggle to publish their research (McGrail, Richard & Jones, 2006; Pannell, 2002). Calls for regular, ongoing, structured interventions to help faculty increase their writing output appear regularly in the literature (Campbell, Ellis, & Adebonojo, 2012; Cumbie, Weinert, Luparell, Conley, & Smith, 2005; Galligan et al., 2003; Gillespie et al., 2005; Grant, 2006; Lee & Boud, 2003; McGrail et al., 2006; Moore, 2003; Morss & Murray, 2001; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Non-tenured faculty and women, particularly lag behind in the productivity stakes (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Damiano-Teixeira, 2006; Leahey, 2006). Akerlind (2008) argues that although non-tenured faculty and women require particular attention, development is needed at different stages of any academic career as research needs/agendas change. In addition, conditions are continually under transition as is seen in the increasing emphasis on attracting grant funding in Canada (Polster, 2007). Findlow (2012) also argues that in professional disciplines, such as education, practitioners can find their professional identity more meaningful than academic ones. Coming from professional practice, academia is often seen as isolating, and many feel a lack of confidence or authority in their identity as academics (Snyder, 2011)

Akerlind (2008) suggests that there are four phases in a researcher's possible development: 1) becoming a confident researcher (developing the research and writing skills to publish); 2) becoming a recognized researcher (developing expertise and becoming part of a research community); 3) becoming a productive researcher (developing the skills to access grants, conduct research and publish regularly); and 4) becoming a sophisticated researcher (becoming a leading thinker in a field). Researcher development can build confidence and skills in any of these areas.

Faculty frequently experience extreme pressures particularly with the increasing corporatization of universities and the emphasis on continual efficiency, productivity and excellence (Hartman & Darab, 2012). A casualty of these pressures is often meaningful collegiality. As Tierney and Bensimon (1996) argue:



We must work toward the creation of a community that does not demand the suppression of one's identity in order to become socialized into abstract norms. We support the development of organizations in which interrelatedness and concern for others is central. (p.16)

In the face of constant urgent deadlines, few faculty have time to engage in the deep thinking and “slow scholarship” (Hartman & Darab, 2012) that leads to one becoming a sophisticated researcher.

### *Writing and researcher identity*

Writing is a central way academics come to know their profession (Lea & Stierer, 2009). Indeed, it is an act of identity (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). Writing within an academic context is the way we constitute and express that identity. When one writes, one uses materials, resources, practices, and genres of other people in the discourse. We identify with that discourse, discipline or set of research/writing practices. By developing researcher identities, we align ourselves with the work we do. Through acts of research and disciplinary writing over time, that identity becomes consolidated (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010). It is this identity/ies that motivates us to persevere through difficulties, to think deeply and to engage in “slow scholarship” (Hartman & Darab, 2012). One way to construct/deconstruct our writing or researcher identity/ies is through an examination of the self. Stories of the self (narrative, arts-based or autoethnographic) allow us to notice the elements in our researcher lives that shape our identity. Our purpose in this Special Edition was to provide the space for individual stories but also collectively to foster meaningful collegiality through the publication of these stories.

### **Narrative research**

Narrative as an account of any occurrence is fundamental to communication, social interaction and understanding. We use narrative to make sense of the world and to tell others what we have discovered. When we note that something is a part of a whole and that it is a cause of something else we create narrative meaning (Polkinghorne, 1988). Coherence, connections, links, meaning and sense are provided by narrative.

The narrative or autobiographical turn in the social sciences is associated with post-modernism and more specifically post-structuralism and a lack of faith in grand or meta-narratives. Deleuze (1993; 2004) and Deleuze and Guattari (1988; 1994), particularly, focused on multiplicity and connection and argued that we inhabit a changing world of becoming. Since nothing is fixed there are as many worlds as there are ways of discussing and thinking about them. The importance of narratives is in the way we use them to invent the world; new concepts are made and “lines of flight” created, while the interconnections and contradictions of human interaction take rhizomatic forms. Thinkers, researchers and writers are involved in nomadic inquiry and as foundational forms are interrogated we witness the dissolution of sedimented structures. Narrative research is a broad area and there have been many debates and disagreements about definitions, meanings and practices. This is a contested and developing field. Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2008) provide a comprehensive review of the theoretical underpinnings of narrative research and focus on the process of doing it. For our purposes here, we focus on



narrative inquiry, narrative research and aesthetic qualities and arts-based research since these are relevant to the contributions in the Special Edition.

### *Narrative inquiry*

Narrative inquiry is one form of narrative research in which researchers pay close attention to their ontological and ethical commitments. Narrative inquirers draw on Dewey's theory of experience (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) offer the following definition:

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way narrative is the phenomena studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomena. To use narrative inquiry as a methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study. (p. 477)

All phases of narrative inquiry are complex (Clandinin & Murphy, 2009) and it is shaped by narrative as a way of knowing and narrative as a genre (Kramp, 2004). Burnier (1996) distinguishes between logicoscientific and narrative reasoning. The former is based on positivist assumptions and driven by reasoned hypotheses. It answers Rorty's question of how do we come to know the truth (as cited in Kramp, 2004). The criterion for evaluating this research is verification and denotative language is used. In contrast, narrative reasoning relies on contextualism and a concern for the human condition, which results in flexible stories while attending to the particular, personal, and specific. This approach answers Rorty's question of how do we come to endow experience with meaning (as cited in Kramp, 2004). The researcher interprets the experience and events told by the storyteller, which is not simple because we are aware of alternate meanings and that each story has a point of view depending on who is telling the story and who is being told, when and where. Thus the appropriate criterion is verisimilitude or the likelihood that something could be true. Connotative language is used.

Narrative inquirers also understand narrative as a literary genre that has a recognizable structure and formal characteristics (Kramp, 2004). Human events are organized in time. The form is perspectival; it reflects a point of view. Kramp argues,

It is in the telling that meaning is given to experience. It is in telling that we come to understand ...there is no already existing story for the narrator to tell; rather the story comes to be in the act of telling.... (p. 110)

The subject of the research is the storyteller and understanding is the research goal. The researcher gives authority to the narrator. Such stories become the embodiment of an intimate

relationship between the knower and the known, storyteller and listener, between researcher and subject. They have impacts and consequences for scholars, and the research is not replicable. “Tell me about a time...” is an open ended prompt which allows the participant to tell the researcher what they want to say. Typically, detailed stories, texts rich in “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) are produced. The researcher studies the narratives, subjects them to analysis and interprets them.

#### *Narrative research and aesthetic qualities*

Other narrative researchers stress the aesthetic qualities of representation. For example Coulter and Smith (2009) argue that literary elements such as point of view; “heteroglossia” or portraying multiple voices; authorial distance; and tone, which are used in the construction of narratives in educational research, support collaborative meaning making processes between the writer/researcher and reader. By attending to aesthetic qualities the literary elements draw readers into narrative accounts. The authors discuss how such literary elements relate to the qualitative research practices of generating and analyzing evidence for the purpose of discerning themes. These relations are linked to broader issues about the knowledge we can possibly gain from research and how we might learn it. Further, Coulter (2009) argues that the aesthetic, the ethical and the relational are not mutually exclusive.

Barone (2009) explores the place of the political in narratives possessing both literary and scientific dimensions. Issues related to researching and composing narratives with a “progressivist” orientation include (a) the purposes of the research (b) how authors encourage or discourage readers to take multiple perspectives (c) ethical concerns related to the researcher’s assumed privileges of authorship, and (d) the political responsibilities and rights of readers. Additionally, Yeoman’s (2012) conception of narrative is rooted in both literature and cultural studies. She argues that from the study of the literature we learn how to tell effective stories in the most engaging ways possible, while from cultural studies we learn how narratives work in society and how they shape our understandings of the world and our roles in it. However, the two ways in which narratives operate are sometimes in tension with each other. That is, while binary oppositions can produce dramatic stories they might also produce division along lines of class, race and gender. Smith (2009) draws on literary theory and an analysis of the cultural expectations of narratives to argue that despite the capacity of narratives to represent multiple perspectives and thereby foster multiple interpretations, many do not actually do so. He suggests that therefore narrative researchers should reveal how their research stories are constructed which may encourage readers to question and to develop their own perspectives.

#### *Arts-based educational research*

Arts-based educational research encourages researchers to experiment with materials and techniques to produce creative works (Barone & Eisner, 2006; 2011; Eisner, 1997; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Siegesmund & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). Relevant to the papers included in this Special Edition, such works include narratives (Barone & Eisner, 2006) and poetry (Galvin & Prendergast, 2012; Prendergast, Leggo & Shameshima, 2009). Barone and Eisner argue that narrative construction and storytelling as a kind of arts-based educational research can enhance perspectives, “Arts-based educational research at its best is capable of persuading the percipient

to see educational phenomena in new ways, and to entertain questions about them that might have otherwise been left unasked” (2006, p. 96). Because form and function are interdependent arts-based educational research also attends to aesthetic design elements including format, language, empathic understanding and virtual realities.

### *Evaluation*

What are accurate criteria for assessing creative, non-traditional and transgressive forms of narrative research? Further, can what we use for one text be valid for another? Such questions occur within discussions about the validity and reliability of these research documents. Richardson (2000a) offers the criteria of substantive contribution; aesthetic quality; reflexivity; impact and expression of a reality. In regards to arts-based educational research, McDermott (2010) asks for whom and for what purpose does a work serve, and whether it contributes to change. She concludes that artistic scholarship is successful if it effects change in either the maker or the audience. Additionally, Barone and Eisner (2006) discuss the following criteria for evaluating arts-based educational research work: illuminating effect; generativity; incisiveness and generalizability.

### **Autoethnography**

One form of a creative, non-traditional and transgressive research approach is autoethnography. Autoethnography has increasingly gained ground as a research genre since the crisis of representation in the 1980s. In recent decades, there has been a rapid increase in the publication of autoethnographic articles that range from the purpose of academic lives (Alexander, 2012; Burnier, 2006; Hernández, Sancho, Creus, & Montané, 2010; Pelias, 2003; 2004), lessons of teaching (Granger, 2011; Rivas, 2009; Wilson, 2011), illness (Richardson, 2010; Uotinen, 2011), immigration (Alsop, 2002) and many other topics. The term “autoethnography” covers a wide range of approaches to writing and research but generally refers to the research genre that associates the personal to the social/cultural. These approaches vary in the weighting placed on culture (*ethnos*), self (*auto*), or research (*graphy*) (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Some focus more on self, others on the socio-cultural context and yet others pay more attention to analytical research methods but there is always an interweaving of the three at some level.

Autoethnography first developed with an emphasis on *evocative* representations of writing about the self (e.g., Denzin, 2006; Ellis, 1999; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, Ellis & Bochner, 2006; Richardson, 1995; 2000b; 2010). These evocative representations were highly personal revealing texts in which authors told stories about their own lived experiences (Richardson, 2000c). Recently, some researchers have moved away from evocative to *analytical* self-narratives (e.g., Anderson, 2006; Pace, 2012). Analytical autoethnography recognizes the self as empirical data available for systematic analysis (Chang, 2008).

These two approaches – evocative and analytical – form the end points of a continuum along which a range of autoethnographic perspectives are positioned. Towards the evocative end, writing is more literary with much blurring of the boundaries between social science and literature. Authors tell their stories of self without interpretation or explanation and meaning is for the reader to decipher (Ellis, 2004). Rather than drawing conclusions, the authenticity of the text is in its resonance with the reader (Pace, 2012). “I was scared,” Laurel Richardson begins

her autoethnography on the death of her sister and training as a hospice volunteer as a means of coping (Richardson, 2011, p. 158), “I hadn’t applied for a job in over forty years, and I’d never applied for a volunteer position. I feared being rejected.” Ellis (2013) begins her piece on coping with the vulnerability loss brings with “Drive slowly down the potholed gravel lane that runs atop the mountain ridge. When you maneuver the narrow tunnel...” (p.18). Pelias (2003) in his article *The academic tourist*, a statement on pedagogy and academic life, writes: “Students just keep coming and you think you will remember them, but most of them fade, like the class lectures you keep using, even though you always plan on writing new ones...” (p. 369).

Evocative ethnography uses language as a constitutive force where language acts. As Pelias (2004) suggests:

Evocative scholarship has language doing its hardest work, finding its most telling voice, and revealing its deepest secrets. It is literature that makes its writer and readers take notice not just of its points but also of its aesthetic presentation. Often it relies on the figurative and rests on form. It avoids cliché, the familiar. It depends on the creative and finds force in the imaginative. (p. 12)

Authors use literary devices to create scenes, characters and plots. The text often reveals hidden private lives and highlights emotional experiences. The language and style of writing imply the relational and connective nature of individual “selves”. All of these techniques position the reader as a participant in a dialogue rather than as a passive reader (Pace, 2012).

On the other side of the continuum, the *analytical* approach to autoethnography relies on traditional analytical methods, such as content analysis or grounded theory (see, for example, Pace, 2012) and often practices within a realist tradition. Personal experiences are empirical data for insight on broader sets of social phenomena (Atkinson, 2006). Anderson (2006) outlines five key features of analytical autoethnography. First, the researcher is an “insider”—a member—of the social phenomena being researched. When prominent adult educator, Stephen Brookfield, writes about clinical depression, his authenticity arises from his long-time experience of severe depression (Brookfield, 2011). The researcher is participant and observer, living the day-to-day experience as well as recording data for analysis. Second, this ethnography engages in analytic reflexivity—a self-conscious introspection about the position of oneself, the context and others. While traditionally ethnographers have focused outwards on “others”, autoethnographers recognize the importance of looking inwards as part of the research endeavour. A third characteristic of analytical autoethnography is that the researcher is visible in the text as a social actor. The researcher’s feelings and experiences are captured in the research process. A fourth feature of this autoethnographical perspective is that dialogue is sought beyond the self. Data from ‘others’ is collected as a way of avoiding autobiography and “self-indulgence”. The final characteristic is that these autoethnographers commit to an analytic agenda. By this they mean that autoethnography should include empirical data and some mechanism for analyzing that data (Anderson, 2006; Pace, 2012).

*What does autoethnography offer researchers?*

First, autoethnographers choose themselves as data. For Ellis and Bochner (2000), the purpose of autoethnography is to “come to understand yourself in deeper ways and with understanding yourself comes understanding others” (p.738). The researcher is both the “subject” and the “object” of research. As the subject, the autoethnographer is the one who performs the investigation as well as the object, the one who is investigated. While the “self” is often perceived of as individual, autoethnography locates the individual among others-others of similarity, difference, opposition and connection (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010). It links the self with others, the self with the social, and the self with the context and reveals a socio-cultural understanding of selves (Starr, 2010). Autoethnographic data provides the researcher with an internal window through which the external world is understood and allows researchers to access “sensitive issues and inner-most thoughts” (Ngunjiri, Hernandez & Chang, 2010, p.3) in ways that other methodologies do not.

Second, since autoethnography shifts the subject of research from “the Other” to the self (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Starr, 2010), this genre inherently carries an element of resistance. Autoethnography does this by questioning: “how and why are the borders of Otherness created? How and why might research and researching reconstitute the borders of Otherness” (herising, 2005, p. 132). Stable, certain notions of researcher subjectivity and identity are brought under scrutiny and autoethnographers are forced into:

the movement away from established places of knowing, and [to] embarking on/engaging in research as a process whereby we are confounded and dislocated, where there are no easy answers or even ‘successful’ research outcomes, or where we fail to map the start and endpoints of our linear research processes, [and] where we are unable to find language” (herising, 2005, p. 148).

In autoethnography, researchers challenge the notion that they are situated outside of personal life processes. By doing this, these researchers re-position themselves to speak on their own behalf, to change their own conditions and where they can take action to transform their own research/teaching/life practices. Autoethnography is also resistance because it decentres the anonymous essay based on abstract categorical knowledge in favour of direct testimony and personal knowledge (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Writing is deliberate in its use of the senses to invoke experiences, emotion and sentiment, which challenges the predominant model of the researcher/reader as rational impartial actor. In doing so, the relationship between the researcher and the researched inevitably becomes closer. The accessibility and readability of the text “repositions the reader as co-participant in the dialogue and thus rejects the orthodox view of the reader as passive receiver of knowledge” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p.744). Finally, autoethnography acts as resistance by providing a space for those who are or feel silenced by dominant discourses and cultures (Tsalach, 2013). Silenced groups can claim a position, according to their own agenda and their own lived experiences (Franklin Klinker & Todd, 2007). In this way, autoethnography draws on Friere’s conscientization which involves the individual becoming aware of his/her own position and creating a space to transform as the self is reiteratively constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed (Maydell, 2010; Starr, 2010).

Identifying with autoethnography, as a research genre, is itself an act of resistance “given the privileges of being in the academy, [and] choosing the margins as one’s identification is [itself] a political act” (herising, 2005, p. 145).

Third, since writing from marginalised and silenced spaces invokes exposure, these texts are inevitably fused with vulnerability:

The stories we write put us into conversation with ourselves as well as our readers. In conversation with ourselves, we expose our vulnerabilities, conflicts, choices and values. We take measure of our uncertainties, our mixed emotions, and the multiple layers of our experience. (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 748)

Through reflection inward and then reflection outward again, the presence of the researcher’s life experience is acknowledged with all his/her vulnerabilities (Mizzi, 2010). Autoethnographies often do not show the struggles that take place in the writing itself and the decisions one makes about what to reveal and what to hide. Writing about oneself, challenging marginalization and divulging sensitive issues, results in self-disclosure and exposure (Chatham-Carpenter, 2010; Ngunjiri, Heranadez, & Chang, 2010). Yet, it is this epistemology of vulnerability that is this research genre’s potency because it resonates with readers who feel that same vulnerability.

### **Overview of papers in the Special Edition**

In this edition of the *Morning Watch* we would like to honour the narratives, poetry and autoethnographies of those who have shared a piece of their journey on their way to becoming a researcher. We received submissions from staff, students and faculty at Memorial University as well as submissions from out of province. The authors draw upon various types of literary techniques in their narratives, autoethnographies and arts-based methodologies to share their research interests and journeys. While each submission is unique, the complexity of this journey is woven throughout the submissions. The authors discuss their research passions, the “moments” of significance, the stories of importance, the images of consequence and how the process of becoming a researcher is inevitably intertwined with their personal lives.

**John Hoben** relates to his own experiences as teacher-educator and beginning researcher and makes an argument for the need to place as much value on narrative research as is placed on empirical research. He discusses the importance of narrative practice and its ability to connect people within a university in an age of increasing corporate and authoritarian influence.

**Maura Hanrahan’s** journey to becoming a researcher is intricately linked to her past. Maura reflects on her childhood experiences and the stigmatism she felt as a result of her Indigenous ancestry and how that influenced her journey to becoming a researcher.



**Gisela Ruebsaat** uses poetry to reflect on the relationship between everyday experiences and the words we use to describe what happens. She questions what happens to our sense of meaning or truth when language is cut off from the physical experience which first led to “the story”?

The concept of “serendipity” is highlighted when **Margot Maddison-MacFadyen** draws us into her narrative relating her journey to a series of unexpected events which eventually led to her doctoral research. She uses *ekphrasis*, a description in poetry of a work of art, to tell her story.

**Dennis Mulcahy** states his journey was not predetermined. He seeks to answer the question “how did I become who I am?” by reflecting on the series of events in his life that have led him to his research passion-rural education and schooling.

**Judith Martin’s** journey to becoming a researcher was not planned either. She discusses how life changed for her when she received a “pink slip”. Her settled life as a teacher in an elementary school became unsettled and eventually led her to embark on her journey as a researcher.

**Elizabeth Yeoman** speaks to the importance of the stories we tell and the impact they can have on our lives and the lives of others. She shares with us vivid stories from her childhood that have impacted her life and have shaped her research.

The journey of self is weaved throughout **Sarah Pickett’s** story of becoming a researcher. She connects her own experiences in “coming out” with her work as a psychotherapist and her conceptualization of a researcher. Throughout her autoethnographic reflections she relates these connections to theory.

**Cecile Badenhorst** reflects on the theme of “becoming” as it relates to her journey. She shares four moments in her life that significantly impacted the development of her identity as a teacher/writer/ researcher. She comments that while there is coherence in the “enduring contours of influence” that are weaved throughout these moments, the identities created are only partial and still evolving.

**Cecilia Moloney** offers perspectives on discovery using poetic and narrative forms. She intertwines self discovery and research into the natural and engineered worlds.

The query of self has been focal in **Xuemei Li’s** journey. She reflects on the relevancy of her life experiences in shaping and directing her in her journey. She comments on how the process has helped her establish a professional identity and has allowed her to use her position to advocate for the marginalized.

**Gabrielle Young** uses a qualitative narrative approach and through an interview process explores a female academic’s journey of becoming a researcher. Her content analysis of the data revealed themes relating to the journey from practitioner to researcher and how family influences this path. The struggle with the conflicting roles of parent and researcher are

interwoven throughout the script. She concluded that while the interviewee found that the process has been difficult friendships with fellow academics has helped to ease the transition.

**Heather McLeod's** story of developing as a researcher is an attempt to engage in narrative construction, a form of arts-based educational research (ABER) (Barone and Eisner, 2006). She focuses on her interests in visual art, history and social justice and compares developing as a researcher to the journey of "self".

**Dorothy Vaandering** uses poetry to describe her experience as a researcher. Research to her is about the process of always questioning, always searching and is linked to her childhood.

**Anne Burke** reflects on how her research on the literacy practices of young children is shaped by the knowledge she gains from the children who are involved with her work. How children's play acts as a form of "meaning-making" is discussed.

**Heather White** views her journey as a "hero's journey". She writes about "transition", of "becoming" and how the past and future are connected in the present. Heather speaks of uncertainty on her journey but has hope that the future will unfold as it should.

**Rhonda Joy** compares the journey of "becoming a researcher" to the interconnected and ever-changing colors of a kaleidoscope. She reflects on how this journey is intertwined and has been influenced by every aspect of her life and then uses several colors of the kaleidoscope to highlight themes in her journey.

**Sharon Penney** also uses a narrative approach to tell the story of a young scholar as she transitions from graduate school to a tenure track position. The case study highlights the complexity of this "unfinished" journey and the influences of family and teachers/mentors. It amplifies the interconnectedness of the self with such identities as the child, student, partner, teacher, professor and researcher.

**Shawn Pendergast** challenges the traditional view of a researcher in terms of the path that is most often taken. He argues that while some may choose a linear path to becoming a researcher, it is possible to follow a non-linear path and become what he coins a "non-traditional" researcher.

**Nathalie Pender** reflects on her life as a graduate student and "researcher in training". She comments on the busyness of her life and the challenges of finding the time and the words to write.

## **Conclusion**

Narrative, arts-based and autoethnography research genres allow rich understandings of academic research practice, taking into account tensions and multiple layers (Jones, 2011). "A professional life story expresses a particular sense of self and a perspective on membership of a group" (Jones, 2011, p. 116). These stories of becoming researchers constitute a rich contribution to this genre of writing and research. These reflections perhaps do not show the

process followed in producing these texts but reveal decisions and tensions of the self in understanding how we do research and what kinds of researchers we are and intend to be within the historical contexts and power relationships that shape our professional identities and personal selves.

### Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank all the contributors for their enthusiasm for responding to this call, for writing their stories with such gusto and for undertaking the revisions we asked of them. Thanks also to Sarah Pickett for reading an earlier draft of this paper and providing extremely useful feedback.

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## **Chapter 5: On becoming a researcher: a kaleidoscope of life**

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### **Abstract**

I believe the journey to becoming a researcher is quite complex as it is intricately connected with the other roles in my life. In the following narrative I have chosen to use kaleidoscope imagery to represent the interconnected yet constantly changing aspects of my life on this journey. While the kaleidoscope image, when illuminated, displays a beautiful symmetrical pattern of colors and shapes, there is usually a hue or a dominating color which is the backdrop for the design. While my kaleidoscope has many colors I have chosen to reflect on several of the more dominating colors to highlight aspects of my journey.

### **Introduction**

When I think about what it means to become a researcher I feel a sense of anxiety begin to surface. My thoughts scatter in so many different directions as I quickly realize that the concept is quite complex. Becoming a researcher has so many layers of meaning and assumptions that I struggle to articulate the experience.

Describing the process of “becoming a researcher” is much like trying to capture the design within a kaleidoscope. The Merriam–Webster online dictionary defines a kaleidoscope as:

An instrument containing loose bits of colored material (as glass or plastic) between two flat plates and two plane mirrors so placed that changes of position of the bits of material are reflected in an endless variety of patterns [def 1].

The image in the kaleidoscope is made up of many colors and materials which blend together and constantly shift or change with movement. The mesmerizing pattern of colors creates a beautiful mosaic pattern yet with the smallest of movements the entire arrangement changes. Much like trying to capture this elusive image in the kaleidoscope, becoming a researcher also seems intangible at times. As I travel on this journey I will not pretend I fully grasp what it is I am chasing only that it is something that seems to be inevitably intertwined with the colors of my life and creates an ever changing lens from which I view the world. Just as Richardson (2001) contends that her ideas about writing are not stagnant but shift and change with her personal and political life so too does my journey. The colors of my kaleidoscope are intertwined yet when illuminated there is a hue or a backdrop of color which often dominates and upon which the other colors and patterns dance. These colors shift and change with the emotions that are attached to my intrapersonal, personal and professional life. While the colors of my kaleidoscope remain the same I struggle to keep the colors from shifting. This balancing act seems very hard to achieve. As I work through my sixth year at this institution of higher education I often reflect on my struggles and growth on this colorful journey to becoming a researcher... a journey which I feel I am still in the early stages of exploration.

The pieces of my life are interconnected and move around and influence or alter the colors in my kaleidoscope. Richardson (2001) claims “no writing is untainted by human hands” (p. 34). In fact, it is this human factor which has had a significant influence on my research. The colors of my kaleidoscope are derived from my inner self, my family, my friends, my work, where I live, and my interests and passions and the influences of all of these factors on who I am. I will discuss some of the hues or dominating colors of my kaleidoscope below.

### **Green as a backdrop/hue represents perseverance**

I chose the color green to represent “perseverance” in my kaleidoscope because green universally represents ‘go’. In embarking on this journey to becoming a researcher tremendous dedication and perseverance was needed. The ABD (all but dissertation) phenomenon is proof of the prerequisite dedication and perseverance needed to complete this journey. Richardson (2001) emphasizes the influence of “specific, local and historical contexts” (p. 35) when writing. For me, this color in my journey is linked to my history. It is rooted in the values engrained in me as a child. My parents worked hard all their lives to provide a good life for their six children and instilled in them the value of hard work. This work ethic and internal motivation has remained with me throughout my life and has propelled me forward in many aspects of my life but particularly on my education journey. My friends were also an important influence on me as we supported one another through good and difficult times. During my first year of university I enrolled in various courses and became very interested in the field of psychology. As I think back on those early days it was definitely the influence of my first year professor as well as the subject matter which attracted me to the field. My first year psychology professor was engaging and related well to his students. With first year classes so large it was refreshing to feel connected to the subject matter. As I studied more psychology I became very interested in child and adolescent development and so pursued an undergraduate degree in psychology. With my bachelor of science degree “in hand” I began to plan my next step of my journey. I knew I enjoyed working with children and actively sought out both paid and volunteer work to gain a better understanding of how I might connect my interests with work. With reflection and experience to inform me I decided I wanted to pursue a master’s degree in educational psychology. Still focused on child development my interests narrowed and I pursued a thesis in reading development and children’s knowledge of the causes of reading difficulties. I wanted to better understand how their knowledge and perceptions may impact their view of themselves and others. While I did not fully understand the value of completing research at the time it proved to be very important when applying for registration as a psychologist and later when considering doctoral studies. My degree allowed me the privilege of working as a school counselor where I was able to support students, their families, teachers and the surrounding school area for over twenty years. I worked in small communities as well as urban centers and continued to hone my skills. While I continued to attend workshops, conferences and other venues of professional development, my desire to help students and to better understand their needs created a yearning in me to return to school and to further my education, a need to refine my skills, to seek answers to my probing questions that went un-answered and the need to make a difference. One of those unanswered questions became the focus of my doctoral dissertation. I wanted to learn more about second language learning and predictors of success in second

language learning as I was bombarded by parents in the school system struggling with making decisions about French immersion for their children.

My need to seek more education and to better understand second language learning also highlighted my ability to persevere as my husband and I made the difficult decision to complete our doctorates in opposite ends of the country. My husband was accepted into a doctoral program in western Canada while I was accepted into a program in Toronto. We were excited and anxious as we began this new adventure. As a young married couple the time apart in some ways would be a test of the strength of our relationship. I recall my husband's mother not understanding why we were going to two different universities and wondering if it was a "trial" separation. There was also anxiety around entering a doctoral program. Was I doctoral material? Was I in over my head? Seeds of doubt began germinate in my psyche ... What was I doing? What were *we* doing? Yet, it was also an exciting time in our lives as we rented out our house, left the everyday life responsibilities behind us and embraced the challenges that lay ahead of us. We were excited about exploring new cities, meeting new people, learning and being challenged in our thinking and being exposed to other ways of knowing! It was exhilarating. We kept in close contact by phone and handwritten letters as internet technology was limited at the time. We worked long hard hours while we were apart and planned for our next time together.

While the year apart was difficult for us as a couple, the challenge of trying to complete my research upon my return home proved to be an even greater hurdle. At this stage in my journey the colors of my kaleidoscope shifted and while perseverance was still dominating the surrounding colors blended and changed as our lives evolved. Our return home was quickly followed by the death of both of my husband's parents, the diagnosis of my father with cancer and the birth of three beautiful children. I have always believed that as one door closes another opens and this belief came to fruition as my husband visited me on the maternity ward of the hospital getting ready to give birth and then traveled to the floor below to visit his mother who was quite ill and then on to another hospital to visit his father who was in the final stages of life. For the next number of years our lives focused on building a family, taking care of elderly parents, full time work and finishing our doctorates. We went to bed exhausted, and woke up exhausted as our sleep was usually interrupted by the needs of our little ones. There were many days when we questioned if it was worth it and many days when it would have been so easy to relieve some of the pressure by taking the doctoral studies off our overflowing plates. The kaleidoscope constantly shifted and changed during this period of my life as our focus changed. This was a difficult road for us, one in which pure determination and perhaps stubbornness allowed our journey to continue.

Shortly after the birth of our third child I finally completed my doctoral studies and returned to the school system. My job was very satisfying and I applied the knowledge I had gained in my studies to practice whenever I could but wondered if I could do something different. My doctoral studies changed the lens from which I viewed my world. I now saw the role of research in my work and felt the need to seek answers to some of the questions posed in my everyday contact

with others. I wanted to be able to help parents make decisions about their children's programming based on research. The research was not available and I felt I could change this.

### **Crimson as a backdrop/hue represents sacrifice and love**

My kaleidoscope began to shift and change again as the competing themes of sacrifice and love began to form the backdrop during this stage of my journey. While I derived great satisfaction from my work as a school counselor I began to wonder if I might enjoy working at a post secondary level more. I felt this would allow me the opportunity to do research on some of those un-answered questions related to my work and at the same time be able to share my experiences over the past twenty or more years with others so that they may better understand the challenges and rewards of a school counselor. A position became available in the Counseling Psychology department in the Faculty of Education and I was offered the job. The learning curve for moving from practice to academia was steeper than I had anticipated. My new job required many additional hours as I tried to establish a research agenda and gain some mastery over my teaching. At the same time my young children also required a considerable amount of attention. I was torn between my desire to succeed in the academic world and the visceral aching to be with my children. I loved my husband and my children fiercely and felt that I was a mother and partner first and foremost and their needs should come first. Yet I did not want to give up on being an academic. Maybe it was the 'hope' in me, the hope that things would get better or maybe it was the "fight" in me, that drive to persevere, to not give up? Maybe it was both? I am not sure why but I found it hard to let go of the academic journey I had begun. The colors of my kaleidoscope bleed or blend together at times, losing focus. I struggled to find work-life balance as my work kept invading my home time leaving me feeling like I was being stretched too thin in too many different directions. Guilt weighed heavily on my mind as I listened to my children begging me to go back to my 'old job'. With more regular hours in my old job, family time was safe-guarded and I did not have to relinquish holiday time in order to meet deadlines. Now in this job, there were nights when I sat around the kitchen table trying to help my older children with their homework only to have my youngest child clinging to my leg crying for attention while in the back of my mind I kept wondering how I was going to find the energy to do my own work when they went to bed. Exhausted, I seriously questioned if this journey of becoming a researcher was really worth it. What price had to be paid? Was it that important to me? The only thread that kept me holding on was the hope that it would get easier with time, and that things would settle and some semblance of normalcy would return. The dominant color in my kaleidoscope was a vibrant crimson representing sacrifice and bleeding hearts. The challenge of women trying to balance a career and a family is well documented with researchers such as Acker and Armenti (2004) and others (e.g., Drago et al., 2006; Raddon, 2002) reporting on the daily dilemma women in academia face as they struggle to manage their career and their families. In fact, Armenti (2004) reports the difficulty of maintaining a balance is one of the main reasons why women leave academia.

### **Grey as a backdrop/hue represents self-doubt**

As the reflections of color bounced around in my kaleidoscope I could catch glimpses of grey invading the other colors. Grey represents the feeling of self-doubt that always hung on the periphery of my other colors, casting shadows and dulling the hues at times. Doubt has always plagued my life from when I was a very young child into adulthood. I recall thinking that I was

accepted into my master's program "out of some equity requirement" and had I not also been accepted at another university that feeling would have plagued me for a long time. I read about "imposter syndrome" which is characterized by self-doubt and uncertainty a number of years later and could relate to it. Reybold and Alamia (2008) report that "imposter syndrome", while not openly discussed, is not uncommon among early career faculty. While I experienced doubt, my inner drive continued to propel me forward. It was this drive that challenged me to reach beyond my comfort zone again. As I entered academia my feelings of doubt were sometimes overwhelming. I had moved from practice where I felt comfortable and competent to academia

where I felt incompetent and always lacking. Coming from practice and not another academic setting provided a number of challenges. I was a counselor, not a teacher or a researcher so how was I supposed to do this job? For the first time in my life I was in a three-year tenure track position where I was required to prove myself and then further prove myself over another three-year period or risk not having my contract renewed. I had to demonstrate to the university community that I was worthy of this position through yearly review of my progress. This fear of failure and anxiety surrounding evaluation while not uncommon among new researchers (see Acker and Armenti, 2004) fueled my self-doubt and created an atmosphere of enormous pressure in which I felt compelled to perform. My uncertainty in my ability to succeed in this role caused me to request a leave of absence from my position in the school system instead of resigning so that at least I still had my position in the school system should I "fail" or decide I did not want to stay.

For the next six years I worked diligently to build my research, teaching, and service portfolios. I began first by tackling my teaching portfolio. I reflected often on my ability to teach... How do I do this? Can I do it well? Will students learn from my courses? Am I doing things the way they are supposed to be done? I enlisted all the help I could find to support me in gaining mastery of teaching. This included, among other things, attending professional development sessions related to teaching and exposing my vulnerability by approaching colleagues and discussing my teaching with them.

Second, I tackled my scholarship. It had been almost ten years since I was immersed full time in research and now I was being asked to "research". Self-doubt plagued me as I struggled to find some footing, something to hold onto. How do I begin this process? Where do I begin? Can I do this? I worked persistently and sought out support wherever I could to move forward. Each step of this process proved to be humbling as I realized how much I had to learn. Self-doubt crept into my writing often causing blocks, it slivered into my publication submissions as I hesitated to let others see my work and it silently infected my sense of worth as a writer. Over time I have managed to harness this "monster" which has cast grey shadows over the colors of my kaleidoscope. While I have been able to push back the grey so that it does not dominate it still floats around the periphery of my kaleidoscope today.



### **Yellow as a hue/backdrop represents support**

My kaleidoscope always seems to have touches of yellow intertwined with the other colors of the pattern. Yellow represent the various forms of support that have been present in my life. I believe I would have never ventured down this road of becoming a researcher if I had not had support.

From a young age there have been key people in my life who have helped me along my journey. It may seem strange to think about this journey beginning so early but I believe that being a researcher does not occur overnight or when you enter academia. The foundation for that road is built well in advance. That sense of curiosity, that determination is instilled and nurtured from birth. My parents were the first to help me on that journey as they provided the love, support and when the time came, the wings I needed to grow. There were other key people who nurtured those traits throughout my life and believed in me: teachers, professors, friends, colleagues, and loved ones. My husband was my biggest supporter, my strength, particularly as I contemplated enrolling in and then completing doctoral studies. He believed in me and that faith never waived through our struggles during those tough years. He helped me to believe in myself when I had nothing left to give. He was there to lend a strong shoulder to lean on or an ear to listen, to review papers, to discuss ideas, to provide support in taking care of the kids, all while trying to work on his own research. He gently pushed me forward when I was ready to quit and always saw in me what I did not see in myself... the ability to succeed. He continues to be my biggest fan and most treasured confidante.

I was fortunate to also be supported by colleagues and a mentor who believed in me and guided me through the tenure process. Bode (as cited in Gillespie et al., 2005) and others (e.g., Gerdes, 2003) discuss the effectiveness of mentors and collegiality in increasing the success rates of new faculty. In fact, she reports collegiality as more important to faculty than mentoring. Acker and Armenti (2004) also note the importance of moral support for new faculty. Early in my tenure process the dean of education offered the support of a mentor to guide me through the tenure process. I gladly accepted this offer and persevered, working long hours over the next six years to build my teaching, scholarship and service portfolios. My mentor worked closely with me, helping me to navigate the writing, publication and tenure process. This was a rewarding experience for me as I could see my progress and development as an academic. I am grateful to the university for offering this support and even more grateful to my mentor for her willingness to work with me.

Another form of support came from the formation of a writing group within the faculty of education. The writing group consisted of academics who were new to the academy. A bond formed among the group members as they shared their fears and uncertainties about becoming researchers. My teenage daughter never really understood why I would need to be in a writing group especially at university. She asked if it was like getting “extra help” in school and then wondered why I still needed that help. I laughed when she recently asked: “Are you STILL in that writing group?” What my daughter did not understand was that while the writing group provided support for writing it was bigger than that. The writing group provided the much needed emotional support that is often lacking in academic institutions. It provided a means for making connections and a safe haven to express those feelings of self-doubt. It helped to reduce that feeling of being alone that is often present in an environment which seems to thrive on isolation and competition. The concept of collaboration seems to be foreign in academic

settings yet one of the projects I enjoyed most involved working with members of the writing group on a paper. We have learned from one another, grown as writers and researchers, and we have also built a support network where we feel safe.

As I sit here on this sunny Sunday morning reflecting on a recently attended funeral and the dawn of my 50th birthday I see the yellow in my kaleidoscope shining brightly. I am thankful for the support that I have received and appreciate its' significance in my journey to becoming a researcher. As I reflect on this identity I still feel the urge to try to capture those ever changing colors of my kaleidoscope and keep them. Yet, I am realizing that I cannot really hold onto those colors. Those colors like becoming a researcher are part of, an ever changing process. Just as the colors of the kaleidoscope change with every movement so too do my colors as I navigate the road of research. The continual weaving and intertwining of my own professional and personal journey ensure that the colors in the pattern of my kaleidoscope continue to shift and change.

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## **Chapter 6: Narratives of becoming a researcher: A realistic, idealistic, and self-nourishing journey**

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### **Abstract**

This narrative delineates my journey of becoming a researcher. While the trigger involved defense of my dignity, the real reasons that led me to doing research were for better teaching, and for query of the self. In the article, I integrate my language learning and teaching experiences with discussions of the native speaker fallacy, communicative language teaching and teacher culture in China, and the inadequacy of Canadian oriented TESL textbooks. I also discuss how doing research empowers me and helps me establish a professional identity. What's more, my research brings me back to my youthful idealism of speaking for the marginalized and creating a better society.

### **Research for dignity**

How did I become a researcher? To answer the question, I need to begin with “Why did I want to be a researcher”? Answers to these questions are inter-related and outline my path of becoming a researcher.

Let me begin with the tender years of my career when I did not want to be a researcher. In fact, I did not want to be a university teacher at all. It was not an exciting, adventurous job. What did I aspire to be? An investigative journalist who would travel around the country and the world seeking truth and justice for the people. An idealist? Yes, indeed I was; but who wouldn't be at that age? However, at a time when university was free but going to university was highly competitive in China, we were assigned an “iron-bowl” job<sup>1</sup> upon graduation. Voilà, I became a university teacher of English—what people call an EFL (English as foreign language) teacher. However, it turned out a good profession for me. Teaching was not adventurous but quite exhilarating when I saw sparkles of excitement in my students' eyes. Their excitement resonated in me as I recalled my own learning experiences. I wanted to be a good teacher—caring, knowledgeable, and respectable. Research? What was that? It seemed irrelevant to my students and my teaching, and too abstract and too high for me to reach.

My contentment with being a good teacher lasted for five years until I was one year into my part-time graduate study. My thoughts and reflections on teaching accumulated, and my learning of research methodology intrigued me. I wrote a few articles based on my teaching and limited knowledge of the field, and got them published. Back in the mid 1990s, the western notion of research methodology was not common knowledge among university faculty in China. I pondered doing research was not that difficult?

My involvement in an innovative teaching project in my university during 1998 -- 2000 was the impetus for my journey to research. Through the design of the program, compilation of teaching materials, discussions with colleagues, intense work with students, and reflections of

the issues, I felt a strong call for methodological and theoretical guidance. Knowing teaching alone was no longer enough.

Two incidents that hurt my pride but amplified my desire to become a researcher happened in 1996 and 2000. On both occasions—one was a research proposal discussion meeting and the other a large-scale teacher training session—two senior professors who had received their graduate education in the west commented on the lack of research skills of “us” EFL teachers. I was indignant as the arrogance in their tone was unmistakeable. They were speaking to the general situation of the EFL teaching profession, where teachers were over-burdened with heavy teaching loads but insufficient support. However, the condescension was not acceptable to me. I was determined to become a better researcher than them.

After a one-year academic visit to the UK, seven years of Master’s and doctoral study in Canada, and three years into my “new” academic career, I am looking back at the path I trod, and realize that my research and teaching have never been irrelevant, and my query of the self was always a driving force for my research.

### **Research for better teaching**

#### *The native speaker fallacy*

Back in the 1980s when I was learning English, native English speakers were rare in China, and so were authentic English instructional materials. I never saw a foreign face on my middle school and high school campus. In the university, we were lucky to have one or two foreign teachers every year, although they came from different parts of the world with different accents. Regardless, we treasured the opportunity of learning authentic English from native English speakers. However, after the initial excitement and curiosity, we always felt the same kind of mixed feelings about our foreign teachers.

They were all friendly and approachable, but they appeared not as knowledgeable as our Chinese professors. A few examples may be illustrative. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> year writing instructor from the United States told us not to ask him grammar questions as he did not know English grammar. It was our first writing course and he was teaching us how to write sentences and paragraphs. Another American instructor complained indignantly that some students asked her questions about *Canada*, a country she knew nothing about, during an intensive training course on IELTS (the International English Language Testing System). The test is accepted by Canadian universities for admissions purposes and by the Canadian government for immigration purposes. If the instructors had been Chinese, such questions would have been answered thoroughly and confidently.

The way our foreign teachers taught seemed not to be in sync with the way we wished to be taught. For example, our lovely teacher from a small British town brought to class a bag of recyclable items, such as a screw, a yogurt cup, and a paper clip, and asked us to discuss what we could make out of these. It was funny for a roomful of university students to sit in a circle with such items in hand and talk like kids. It was not considered learning, but rather, a waste of time. At college age, we wished to be treated as adults and do work with some challenge and

depth. Our intellectual capacity was obviously misjudged by the limited expressiveness of our spoken English. Another conversation teacher thought our vocabulary was not large enough for carrying on conversations, so she taught us groups of words and tested us on these words every class. In the end, we didn't practice much speaking, but memorized some new words without knowing how to use them. Meanwhile, we were learning much more sophisticated vocabulary in our reading classes. The issue was we had trouble converting what we had learned in reading and listening, to speaking due to lack of practice and colloquial expressions. Learning to speak a language is like learning to swim. The learner has to actually "do" it for real in order to turn the book knowledge into practical skills.

Comparatively, our Chinese instructors knew much better how to teach us. They also had less trouble understanding our English, or *Chinglish*. The discussions, debates, and presentations in our conversation classes involved a lot more thinking and risk-taking. The detailed reading of the original works of western literary giants in the literature class, the sophisticated techniques of translation and interpretation taught in these respective classes—everything and anything taught by our Chinese professors could be exciting and inspiring, even those "dry" phonetics and lexicology courses. Four years' university education seemed to suggest that our Chinese instructors knew how to make learning more challenging and our western instructors knew how to do the opposite.

In my own ten years of teaching, I had many students come to me and inquire how to carry on a meaningful conversation with their foreign teachers after the initial introduction, which was always accompanied with awkward silence as nobody knew what to ask next. Some of them had contradictory feelings about the fact that their foreign teachers taught them "Happy New Year" or "Old McDonald had a farm". It was fun to learn an English song, but it was awkward to be treated like children. Uncertainty of culturally appropriate conversation topics and incompatible expectations of students' intellectual needs account for such problems. However, shouldn't teachers be aware of the cultural differences in communication and teaching pedagogy before they start their positions overseas? They speak English, yes, but should that be the only qualification for them to teach?

My initial realization of the "native speaker fallacy", the misleading tenet that the ideal English teacher is a native speaker of the English language (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 1992), did not come from the reading of critical linguistic work, but from my own learning and teaching experiences. My practical knowledge of the issue was too shallow to explain why foreign teachers were popular but ineffective, and why it was easy for them to find jobs that they were not trained to do. I needed more profound theoretical knowledge to enlighten my querying mind.

#### *Grammar translation method vs. communicative approach*

Grammar translation method (which focuses on grammatical rules and translation between the native and target languages) was the prevailing method used in my six years of middle school and high school English learning. We started with simple vocabulary, parts of speech, verb conjugations, and tenses. By the time we graduated from high school, we had covered most of

the contents one might find in an English grammar book. Our teachers mixed English and Chinese in instruction and none of them had even near native-speaker pronunciation or fluency.

Due to my love for language and my passion for learning a *new* language, and due to the fact that we were among the first families to own a home television in our town in the early 1980s, I was able to learn from the only English instructional program on CCTV, China's national television, for five years in a row, every day after school before the CCTV news, and without a textbook. I took notes for five years and when I finally got the textbooks, I no longer needed them as I could almost memorize the lessons myself after repeated viewing of the program over the years.

The program contained many episodes of native British English speakers demonstrating language use in an entertaining way, complemented by a Chinese professor's explicit instruction. I would say it was a mix of grammar translation method and the communicative approach (which emphasizes interaction as the means and goal of learning the language). I was lucky to have found this program, which allowed me a more Standard English accent (which was considered 'strange' by my classmates because it was different from our teacher's) and an early feel of non-traditional ways of teaching (which I adapted and used liberally in my teaching later on).

At university, we had professors and instructors who were educated overseas and foreign teachers from all over. However, except for our conversation or oral English classes, most of the classrooms were filled with lectures and structured exercises. Our reading and listening vocabulary were much bigger than what we were able to use in speech and writing. The communicative approach was yet to have a decent entrance to the Chinese language classrooms. And when it was introduced to us, it did not work well. Did the teachers not do it the right way, or were we inflexible in learning?

When I integrated the communicative approach in teaching, without knowing the term itself, I realized that it was very challenging to implement under the pressure of meeting the national curriculum requirements and preparing students for the standardized examinations<sup>2</sup>. In addition, students were trained well to learn in the "Chinese way"—taking notes of lectures and answering questions only when called upon. They felt uneasy in a less structured classroom as spontaneous engagement was not the "norm". Moreover, speaking was not a focus in college English teaching. It was integrated in the teaching of listening and reading. Opportunities to practice oral English were limited and at the discretion of the individual teacher, who might not be fluent in speaking themselves. Furthermore, student-oriented learning might lead off the required curriculum. When given the opportunity to direct classroom learning, my students showed more interest in political and cultural issues beyond the curriculum. Addressing such issues would take a lot of instructional time. It was a delicate balance to keep.

By the time I read about the communicative approach, I had already come to the conclusion that the communicative approach would not work well as long as the pressure of the standardized exams persisted. Basically, a thorough reform was needed in China's secondary and tertiary education systems. Would that happen? When? To what extent? And most importantly, should we expect the communicative approach, which was developed and advocated by native English speakers (cf. Littlewood, 1974, 1981; Savignon, 1972, 1991; Widdowson, 1978) in teaching



English, to work in the Chinese EFL context, with students having very limited off-campus, authentic exposure to the language, with domestic teachers having trouble adapting themselves to the approach, and with foreign teachers barely knowing anything about Chinese learners and learning styles?

### *Teacher culture and innovation*

The mention of teachers leads us to the next point—the teacher culture. Hargreaves (1994) defines the cultures of teaching as comprising of “beliefs, values, habits and assumed ways of doing things among communities of teachers who have had to deal with similar demands and constraints over many years” (p. 165). In other words, “it is ‘the way we do things around here’” (p. 166). According to him, teachers often work in isolated classrooms, which offer them “a welcome measure of privacy, a protection from outside interference” (p. 167) while at the same time, they also need to maintain relations with colleagues for their socialization and development.

The traditional culture of teaching was undergoing tremendous challenges in China during the mid to late 1990s, when the college English textbooks were systematically changed, the communicative approach introduced, and various innovative English teaching programs implemented. In my university, it used to be that a teacher was assigned to teach two classes of over a hundred students for two years in a row until the students finished all required contents for the CET Band-4 exam. Listening, intensive reading, and extensive reading were taught in separate classes but by the same instructor. For students, it was pure luck if they were placed with a “good” teacher for the two years.

The innovation program turned things upside down. Now each class of students had three teachers for the three courses (listening, intensive reading, and extensive reading), and each teacher had triple the number of students to teach. Students were able to compare their teachers’ abilities and sneak into the classes taught by a better teacher not assigned to them. The face-level harmony among the teachers was broken. Competition caused tension. Teachers’ in-service education became an issue, and so did the age-old routine of promotion by seniority. Numerous complicated issues forced the university to abort the innovation program two years later (cf. Li, 2002). Some teachers were happy to get back to their secure, “insulated and isolated” egg-crates of classrooms (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 167), at the cost of students’ learning. Others were disillusioned by the reality. Was it a problem with communicative teaching? Was it a problem with the culture of teaching? Was it a problem with the existing higher education system? Or, was it a problem with innovative program design? My heavy involvement in the innovation program urged me to seek answers, solutions, theoretical guidance, and feasible practices.

### *Gap in Canadian oriented textbook*

My teaching (not mentoring or tutoring) in Canada started in the third year of my doctoral study. This experience prompted me to write a TESL textbook geared to the Canadian context. At that time, many peers were teaching in our Bachelor of Education program. Due to the focus on Canadian K-12 teaching, an elementary and secondary classroom teaching background was a strong asset in hiring instructors. I was, to my knowledge, the only international, non-white, non-native-English-speaking instructor at the time hired to teach in

the B.Ed program. Disregarding my feelings of unfairness in selecting instructors, I took the job seriously. The course was Teaching English as a Second Language.

The first problem was the textbook. I searched online and in the library, and from all major publishers to find an appropriate TESL textbook with a Canadian focus. To my disappointment, all the ones available or popular were too general to address the Canadian ESL teaching and learning concerns. Most of the books used examples from the US or the UK to illustrate points or present scenarios. I was dumbfounded by the finding. As a major immigrant country<sup>3</sup> and with a bilingual policy, Canada has among the highest ratio of ESL population. All ESL teachers in the K-12 system and in the nationwide government sponsored LINC programs need proper TESL methodology training and a practicum prior to hiring: a Master's degree in TESL or a recognized TESL certificate is required. However, most of the TESL programs were using general textbooks that hardly mention Canada.

I managed to teach using a one-size-fits-all textbook and complemented it with the provincial ESL documents and some handouts. The students' feedback on the textbook was not positive. Something had to be done. But what could I do, as an ESL speaker myself and on a student visa in Canada? What's more, I was moving away from language teaching and my research at the time was identity issues in cross-cultural contexts. However, I could not help but ponder the possibility of working on such a book and the potential workload. I spoke with two colleagues who had been ESL teachers in Canada for many years—one even had some overseas EFL teaching experience. We decided to give it a try.

When I finished my doctoral research and graduated two years later, my ideas for this book were getting more specific and mature. At an academic conference, I caught the attention of a publisher who followed up with me and requested a proposal and sample chapter. There began our work on the book. After two years' of research, discussions, meetings, writing, and revising, and then repeated revising after numerous peer reviews, the book (Li, Myles, & Robinson, 2012) was finally published. The book addressed many of the concerns I had in teaching. There could be no closer connection between teaching and writing than this one. Again, teaching was the driving force for my research, and research was for the benefit of teaching, mine and others'.

## **Research for identity and idealism**

### *For empowered self*

Being a researcher allowed me to understand many issues that confused me when I was a teacher. As I mentioned, the communicative approach was strongly advocated in the few years before I left China. Through my teaching practice, I learned when it would work and when it would not, and why it worked sometimes and why not other times. However, it was difficult for me to articulate the ideas explicitly and convincingly. I felt like I was scratching the surface but not reaching any depth. It was not until much later in my graduate study, when I examined various approaches and methods with critical eyes, that I began to see where the proponents of the approach (Clark, 1987; Johnson, 1982; Nunan, 1989; Savignon, 1991; Widdowson, 1978) came from and why the opponents (Bax, 2003; Swan, 1985a, 1985b) disagreed. While China needs to shift from teacher-centered, test-oriented teaching method?, issues such as lack of understanding of the learning context (Bax, 2003), the need for teaching both use and meaning,

the effect of mother tongue in foreign language learning (Swan, 1985a, 1985b), let alone the complicated local teaching cultures and learner needs, among many others, have to be considered. Popular methods or approaches emerge in response to the needs of certain times and contexts, but none of them are one-size-fits-all. The frenzy of pushing communicative approaches into Chinese EFL classrooms lacked rational thought and theoretical altitude. Maybe more efforts could be made to change “the system”: the unreasonable demands for English competencies in fields and professions irrelevant to language (e.g., in archeology, physical education, and chemistry), the absurd requirement of passing English tests as a pre-requisite for entering any university and for obtaining any university degree, the deficiency in EFL teachers’ on-going in-service education and support, and the ambiguous criteria for hiring foreign teachers.

A Chinese saying goes “Bystanders see more than gamesters” or “spectators see clearly while the participants are dazed”. When I was overwhelmed with teaching, supporting students, doing research, and publishing, I was a busy player of the EFL teaching game. It was only when I stepped outside of the game and had the opportunity to catch the ideas that used to race through my mind that I began to see the whole picture and to reflect thoroughly. I felt elevated to a higher platform in terms of professional and theoretical knowledge. The insights I gained through reading literature, doing research, and contemplating ideas empowered me. It was a good feeling.

#### *For professional identity*

Once I started to write again academically in Canada, and go to conferences and publish, the confidence of being an EFL/ESL professional slowly came back. First of all, the deficit in theoretical knowledge and research skills that I felt when I entered my graduate program was shrinking. The more I read, the better I knew how to do good research. My first empirical studies with ESL students became my first two term papers, which were well-received by my professors. It was encouraging. Moreover, the embarrassment of not speaking English proficiently was easing off when I was able to present myself clearly in the classroom and at conferences. I had thought my oral English was excellent while I was in China and I actually published a textbook on communication skills for college students with a colleague (Li & Li, 1997). However, the troubles I had communicating with people in the UK almost crushed my confidence. Although I was aware of the fact that people spoke in very different accents and dialects, I could not help feeling my English skills were inadequate. Now in Canada, while I was picking up the colloquial English through daily conversations, extensive use of Standard English on formal or semi-formal occasions assured me of my language competence. While I was not a fluent English speaker yet, I felt I was on my way to becoming a researcher. And certainly I wanted to be a good one.

The path was not as smooth as I had thought. It was not an issue of personal endeavor and determination. What caused the twists and turns were other issues, such as figuring out my identity puzzles in an English speaking country, being a former English teacher, a current student, a non-native-English-speaker, an instructor of teaching-English-as-a-second-language to native-speakers of English, a visible minority, and whatever labels other people put on me

(Li, 2006). There were also issues of dealing with the hidden curriculum in a western academic context (Li, 2003; Margolis, 2001), where subtle implications normally escaped me when I was busy dealing with the obvious demands of academic work. Snyder analogized the hidden curriculum as a “semiprivate matter” (1971, p. 7), and it was true. There were so many things I didn’t know or didn’t know how to ask, or knew I would not get an answer if I asked. An invisible screen separated me from the people who grew up in this culture. The *spiritual loneliness* was also caused by lack of shared cultural experiences with peers and colleagues (Li, 2006; Mukherjee, 1994) and maybe some unspoken racism and hints of linguistic imperialism that one could only “feel” but could not “tell”. The stress wore me down but also toughened me up. What were unambiguous were my growing interests and knowledge in doing research. I stayed focused.

Research is a yardstick of success in the academy. By the time I graduated from my doctoral program, I felt I was somewhere on the yardstick. My research skills improved significantly. I also noticed my *westernized*, or *Canadianized*, critical thinking skills demonstrated in the articles I wrote, which were different from the modest and implicit critical thinking skills I internalized in my own culture. Such skills gave a more powerful voice of the researcher that I was becoming than ever before. The process of research-writing-publishing was always challenging but never insurmountable. The prospect of being a qualified, professional researcher outweighed the tediousness of rewriting, revising, and re-submitting and the scrutiny of reviewers and editors.

My own struggles and puzzles along this path make me empathetic to my students who are beginning their journey. I see the importance of guiding them through the process of conceptualizing, designing, and undertaking a research project. I also see the importance of pointing out the differences in second language teaching across cultures, not simply at face level, but from historical, philosophical, and sociopolitical perspectives. For international students, awareness of the hidden curriculum and acquisition of different ways of thinking are equally imperative. It takes a lot of practice to turn the eastern inductive, dialectical ways of thinking and writing to the western deductive, logical ways (Ballard, 1991; Cortazzi, 1996; González, 2001; Nisbett, 2003; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzanyan, 2001). Working with students, our future researchers, makes my professional life more fulfilling.

#### *For idealistic self*

While my research interest in China was mostly for the purpose of better teaching, my interests in Canada mostly reflect my search for the self. Initially, when I wrote about the innovative project in China, I was trying, subconsciously, to position myself in the context—what role I had really played in this top-down teaching innovation, and why I felt powerless in spite of my passion and hard work. Then, I was troubled but also intrigued by the change of my identities and self-confidence in Canada. I recruited participants who were in more or less similar situations to mine. I observed myself closely while undertaking my research and analysing the data. It was difficult sometimes to strip my personal biases from what the data revealed. The findings answered my research questions, and importantly, they helped with my query of the self and the world in general. I thought people like me were in a vulnerable position in the

western academy, but my involvement with immigrant-related work changed my view and the direction of my upcoming research.

When I was hosting a local spoken-word radio program, I had the opportunity to interview a refugee woman from an African country. She escaped her horribly abusive family with the help of many people. The agonizing story shocked me. I also interviewed a former ESL teacher who recounted an incident in her class back in the 1980s. A young boy with a refugee background screamed and ducked under the desk at the sight of a camera man holding an old-styled camcorder on his shoulder. The boy thought it was a machine gun. The boy's frightened eyes had imprinted on her memory for decades and the story has imprinted on my memory ever since. Later, I served on the advisory committee of the local immigrant and refugee service. I was able to meet some of the refugees in person. The service was helpful, but it could not solve all their practical problems, not to say dealing with their mental and spiritual issues. They were the most vulnerable people I ever met.

Here in St. John's, my first research projects began with ESL learners from immigrant and refugee families. Words of the children were most heart-rending when they talked about missing family members, the confusing transition to Canada, the lack of resources for living, racism and discrimination, difficulties with study, and struggles of parents. I felt the urge to do something more. If I can't solve the problems, can I at least uncover them to raise awareness? If I can't impact policy making, can I at least make some noise to draw attention? I have obtained funding for a few more research projects, all related to this population: some with children, others with adults; some looking at learning and family support, others looking at social integration and career options.

After two and a half decades, I have come back to my original ideal of speaking for the marginalized and the vulnerable, only that I work as a researcher not a journalist. I have settled down on the other side of the earth; the people I wish to help are from all over the world; and the community I'm serving is not my hometown. Do these make a difference?

No. I would rather consider myself a "global soul" (Iyer, 2000), who would call home anywhere I live in spite of the ambiguity of identity.

### **Research training**

My narrative above has answered why I wanted to become a researcher and the internal drive of how I have reached where I am now. However, I haven't given enough credit for the research training I obtained in my graduate programs in Canada. I published in China, yet I felt I was more a classroom teacher with some insights and ambition. I learned research methodology and ethical concerns in my Master's program at Carleton University. The patient explanation of the ethical review process (which was unheard of to me), the invitation to publish my first term paper in our internal journal, and the encouragement of conducting a classroom action research from my professors were not only instrumental but also inspiring. There were times when I was puzzled with the "unnecessary" details required for the ethical proposal, the tedious description of the research process, and the boring particulars of the referencing style. And the writing of research papers was so rigid. My intention of being creative and metaphorical in language was

not appreciated. I learned to “hedge” every claim I made and be accurate in wording. After two years’ training, I began to deem myself a researcher on occasions, although only in private. In public, I was still a graduate student, a researcher in training.

The training in my doctoral program broadened my knowledge in related fields and further honed my research skills. I almost had my own spot in the library and spent the bulk of my day there. My supportive supervisor never attempted to bind my hands and feet. I was free to go where I wanted to with my research. This sense of autonomy was also a source of motivation. I conceptualized my own theoretical framework, designed my own study, and drew my own conclusions. Such a self-driven process with gentle reminders every now and then could not be more nourishing for an independent researcher. I also worked well with “tough” professors. One “picky” professor spent an hour reviewing APA formatting style with me while offering feedback on a draft of my term paper. Another “peculiar” professor drilled me in methodology issues so I would not trip over any unforeseen questions from potential examiners. All the bits and details contributed to my overall skills in research and writing. I tried different genres of research writing using different data collection methods. I had six peer-reviewed and two non-peer-reviewed publications added to my CV during my doctoral study. By the time I graduated, I was confident that I was a researcher with insights and depth.

Beyond the university, going to academic conferences is another way of expanding my research repertoire. Learning from other graduate students, junior and senior researchers was always eye-opening. I observed effective presentation skills and tried to improve mine. I heard interesting quotes and tried to memorize them. I learned of pioneer studies and tried to read them. I found unique research methods and tried to figure out how they would work for my projects. In addition, socializing with colleagues was exciting and reassuring. Although many times those friendly faces faded away in memory as the conferences and our conversation became more distant, some of them indeed left an evident mark in my mind. It was always pleasant to meet “an old friend” at a conference, and it was always comforting to feel connected with people in the same line of research.

Research is the connection between the past, the present, and the future. Research is also a bridge between reality and the ideal. While each project of mine is about reflections of the past, or examinations of the present, it has implications for the future. While each project is grounded in reality, it is oriented to make the future more ideal. I may be “brainwashed” by “communism” or by the Chinese collective culture, but I do believe that everything we do today is to make for a better tomorrow, and everything we do for ourselves should be beneficial to others. Being a researcher gives me the power to do so.

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1 A colloquial term for a secure, permanent job paid by the government.

2 All non---English major Chinese university students are required to pass the national College English Test (CET) Band---4 for their bachelor’s degree and CET---6 for their graduate degree. English majors have to pass their respective national exams too.



3 Immigrants accounted for 17% of Canada's population in the 2001 Census, only next to Australia's immigrant percentage, which was 21.1% (Chua, 2002). In the 2006 Census, almost 20% of the Canadian population were foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2009). It is estimated that by 2031, between 25% and 28% of the population could be foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2011).

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## Chapter 7: This white woman has journeyed far: Serendipity, counter-stories, hauntings, and ekphrasis as a type of poetic inquiry

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### Abstract

Serendipity—the faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident—played a major role in revealing my research path. She dabbled with my undergraduate academic studies so that, enrolled at Simon Fraser University in 1988, I undertook Black American Literature the first time it was offered by that university’s English Department. Because of this, I engaged with counter-stories that have proved to be both decolonizing and life changing. Serendipity has also taken me on far-flung journeys, perhaps most critically to Grand Turk Island, where my PhD subject, Mary Prince, and I had a transformative meeting—even though we are situated historically 200 years apart. Serendipity also placed me in front of David Alexander’s vivid painting, *Tropical Punched*, which, resonating with the bright-coloured palette of the tropics, affected me deeply and potently. I was taken down, deeply down, to my memories of Grand Turk Island, to my hauntings there, and to my PhD learnings. As a result, I wrote *Tropical Punched 2*, an ekphrasis-inspired elicitation. I propose that in some instances, ekphrasis—the description in poetry of a work of visual art—may be used as a type of poetic inquiry.

### Ghostly encounters

Haunting is a constituent element of social life. . . . [B]eing haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as transformative recognition.  
Avery Gordon (as cited in Johnston, 2011, p. 132)

Ghosts of long-dead slaves press upon me as I descend the stairs from the Beachcraft 1800 double-prop plane to the tarmac of the Jas McCartney International airport on tiny Grand Turk Island, British West Indies. It is my second trip to the island, and the ghosts have waited for my return. This time, my husband Gary and I have rented a house, and we intend to stay. We intend to live here amongst the ghosts, and amongst the ruins of the salt industry from those bygone days before Emancipation when thousands of slaves toiled in salt ponds, raking up solar-evaporated salt and bagging it for the enrichment of their Bermudian slave-owners.

Our first trip to Grand Turk had been a four-day tourist adventure planned around “Museum Day” a few months earlier. I had seen an advertisement in *The Sun*, one of the territory’s newspapers, and insisted that we go. We lived and worked on Providenciales then, another island in the Turks and Caicos archipelago. Gary was Senior Engineer for Projotech, an island-based construction firm, and I was Head of English at British West Indies Collegiate.

Museum Day was held on Saturday, so after work on Friday we had hopped a plane and made the thirty-minute flight. We stayed at a guesthouse right on the beach of Cockburn Harbour, just a few blocks from the museum.

The Saturday morning of Museum Day was particularly hot. Women passed by in flip-flops, straw hats, bright skirts and billowing blouses. Dust wafted around their feet. Dogs barked, fretting in the heat. Roosters crowed gloriously, announcing the day. The ocean surged out at the reef. Beyond it the Windward Passage, where the ocean plummets to a 7,000 foot abyss, seemed an endless expanse of blue.

The museum, a well kept, restored, historic island residence, houses glass cases full of island artifacts. There is a Lucayan paddle dating from A. D. 1000, evidence of the Lucayan culture that had flourished in the Bahamas Islands prior to the arrival of the Spanish. There are household effects—china cups, combs, brushes, buttons. And there are photographs of white people in high-necked clothing far too hot for the island climate. Several photographs are of Queen Elizabeth in a polished black convertible as shiny as onyx.

In the gift shop, there are handcrafted items for sale—bowls, scarves, beach glass earrings. And there is a shelf of books by local authors. One, originally published in 1831, is *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*. I recognized it right away, having studied it in 1988 in a Black American Literature course that I undertook at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia.

Prince was born in Bermuda in 1788 and had lived in three different British overseas territories—Bermuda, Grand Turk Island, and Antigua—under five successive Bermudian slave-owners. She had also lived in England and, in a remarkably brave self-emancipatory act when living in London with her fifth slave-owner, she had seized the opportunity to walk into the streets a free woman at last. She sought out the London Anti-Slavery Society and began working with other abolitionists. Her narrative, her *History*, was compiled with the aid of an abolitionist writing and editing team in 1828-1829.

I reached out and slid a copy of Prince's *History* off the museum's shelf and purchased it. Ghosts shuffled toward me then, like shadows moving along a wall and brief tingling touches on my skin.

Unknown to me, layers of preparation had brought me to this place. It was as if my finger had been pricked with a spindle and I had been sleeping for, how long? Nineteen years. The ghosts of Grand Turk Island began to awaken me. Not long afterwards, I realized I wanted to live near the ruins they haunted.

In retrospect, I realize I had an encounter with what Deborah Britzman (1998) calls, "difficult knowledge" (p. 20). Prince's *History* had been merely a story until I came to know it in the embodied sense of being near the ruins of her enslavement. I was, "touched by the past," in Roger I. Simon's (2005) terminology. I believe that I was positioned for true learning, that

“welcome given to the memories of others as a teaching—not simply in the didactic sense of an imparting of new information—but more fundamentally as that which brings me more than I can contain” (p. 10).

### **Robert Dunham (1939 – 1989) and counter-stories**

One of the greatest gifts bestowed on me was to have Robert Dunham as an English Literature professor when I completed my undergraduate degree at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in the late 1980s. He had come to SFU from Berkeley, California, in 1966 when SFU was a fledgling institution. Robert’s specialty was The Romantics, though he also taught Shakespeare. In the last years of his life he sought and received permission to teach one class of Black American Literature, which ran in the spring semester, 1988. I was in that class, and in the summer semester following it I enrolled in a directed studies class on Black American Women’s Literature with Robert as supervisor.

Robert’s instruction was a gigantic step in the decolonization of my mind. I now refer to myself as a “creolized” individual in the sense of Édouard Glissant’s *Poetics of Relations* (1990), which Lorna Burns (2009), writing on Glissant, explains as an identity, “conceived of as a synthesis of cultural features, never finally realized in some static and essentialised form but always as a becoming” (p. 101). However, in the 1980s I (as did most of the of the individuals who peopled my world) saw myself as a white woman with roots in the wealthy municipality of West Vancouver, and bloodlines to crusty old Canadian families stamped with British Empire Loyalist monarchist zeal.

Recent genealogical inquiry into my family history, however, has modified this assumption. I now know that prior to the American Revolution, my ancestors included Aboriginal women—Ojibwa peltry brokers working in the fur trade—and fishers in Newfoundland whose grandchildren were later to purchase Mockbeggar, a fishing plantation situated in Bonavista. An as-yet- unverified family story tells of a possibly black ancestor who, a French naval captain on the run from the fallout of the French Revolution, wound up in Bonavista and married into a family already established there.

I believe that Robert knew exactly what he was doing when he offered those courses on Black American Literature. However, he would not have used current terminology to explain his methods. He was offering my classmates and me resistance literature, what might now be coined counter-stories. Memorable titles are Zora Neale Hurston’s *Dust Tracks on the Road* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Paule Marshall’s *Praisesong for the Widow*, Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*, and Alice Walker’s *The Colour Purple*, *Meridian*, and *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*. Mary Prince’s *History* was included as an example of a slave narrative.

These stories live in my heart, and to this day I feel an intense, sometimes overwhelming, emotion when I hear lines from them read aloud. Though I was always open to the *Other* as a child, sometimes to the chagrin of my family, these books were my opening to a beautiful and ever-widening garden beyond the society with which I was most familiar.

## Touchstone stories

Theresa Strong-Wilson (2008) identifies the early books of our childhood as touchstone stories, those stories that live deeply within us and inform our perspectives of the world. For me these books were J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and by age 12, *The Lord of the Rings*, C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, and L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. I also read the complete Nancy Drew series, Hardy Boys series, and Trixie Belden series (all three of which are, interestingly, ghost written by various authors), and other books numbering in the hundreds.<sup>1</sup>

Of them all, however, Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is my foundation text. It is my primary touchstone text out of the hundreds that I read as a child. I find it interesting to reflect on this now, especially in light of its subtitle, *The Unexpected Journey*. Bilbo Baggins, that intrepid hobbit, leaves the Shire and all of his comforts for a hard, long, and dangerous road that forever changes him, so much so that when he returns he does not fit his old environs, nor the skin of his previous self, and, eventually, he returns to live out his days with the elves he encountered on his journey.

In my case, although I also related to more realistic characters such as Anne Shirley and Mary Lennox, the protagonists of *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Secret Garden* respectively—both orphans who migrated to new places to find acceptance, love, and belonging—it was the fantastical quest of Bilbo Baggins that critically informed my childhood imagination. I remember my grade five teacher reading *The Hobbit* aloud in class. This memory is one of only a handful of glittering remembrances from what I otherwise recollect as the drudgery of my school days prior to university studies.

Strong-Wilson (2008) purports that in preparation for the work of teaching children, pre-service teachers might analyze their own childhood touchstone stories, which largely paint a colonial meta-narrative, and that they might then be offered counter-stories—such as the narratives offered to me by Robert Dunham—as a prescriptive to initiate a process of their decolonization. These stories rub against each other, producing a, “chafing, such that the teacher[s'] touchstone[s] cannot remain as [they were], inviolate” (p. 2). They create disequilibrium and an opening for change. The hope in this method is that when planning a course of instruction for their own future young charges, these pre-service teachers will not only keep in mind the problems of their own colonization through curriculum and text, but will work to remediate this effect for their students.

I offer myself as a product of a similar process, but advanced by twenty-three years. Graduating from Simon Fraser University in spring 1989, I began a post degree professional program at the University of Victoria in fall 1989, had my teaching credential ten months later, and began a straight run of eighteen years of teaching high school English starting in September 1990. I taught in both public and private international schools. My last position was in the Turks and Caicos Islands where I taught the youth of that territory, many of whom are the descendants of slaves.



In every position, I brought forward the counter-stories of those wonderful authors read under Robert Dunham's tutelage. In my first year working as an English teacher, I was assigned junior high classes. For these I brought forward poems or excerpts of books by these authors, and I made sure that the school librarian acquired important core texts so that interested students would have access to further reading. I changed schools in my second year of teaching and was then in charge of grade 12 English, plus Advanced Placement Composition and English Literature. Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and Morrison's *Sula* were ordered as class sets.

And it went on from there, year after year, school after school, school library after school library—until Museum Day on Grand Turk Island when I selected Prince's slave narrative, her *History*, from the museum's gift shop book shelf and purchased it—and the ghosts began to awaken me from my nineteen years of slumber. In retrospect, I realize that a new, *embodied* dimension of engagement with the counter-stories received from Robert Dunham, specifically with Prince's *History*—a text that is foundational to neo-slave narratives, such as those aforementioned counter-stories I engaged with under the tutelage of Robert Dunham—had been initiated.

### **The lane of the dead**

I wanted to live near the ruins haunted by the ghosts of the enslaved—the physical ruins from those bygone days when they worked in the harshest of conditions in the salt ponds of their slave-owners. Therefore, I didn't renew my contract with British West Indies Collegiate, Gary got a transfer to Grand Turk Island where he supervised new construction at the Grand Turk Cruise Ship Terminal, and we rented a house right on the beach.

Behind the house was a derelict salt pond, one of many left from the days of enslavement that now serve as ready-made bird sanctuaries. Beachside was Cockburn Harbour and, I suspect, one of three beaches used in the past for loading salt onto ships—schooners, brigantines, sloops—for shipment to the northern colonies where it was used to preserve food before the days of refrigeration.

It was impossible to lie tourist-like and carefree on the chalky-white sand beaches of Grand Turk knowing that slaves, probably malnourished, locked up at night, burnt by the sun, and with blisters covering their feet and legs from standing in brine all day, once walked on the sand upon which my own body lay. Equally impossible was swimming in warm turquoise water, bright yellow fish all around, when everyday reality shifted and, looking back to land through haze, I saw the enslaved toiling along the shoreline, bent under heavy sacks of salt that they carried on their backs.

Thus began a very productive few months on Grand Turk Island. I emerged from an academic hibernation of fourteen years to conduct research in the museum's scant archives, and to interview elders. Within days, details previously unknown to the academic world about Prince's enslavement were revealed. With the assistance of elders, I identified Mr. D—, her Grand Turk Island slave-owner. He had been deceased when her *History* was

published, but his identity had been concealed to spare his living relatives the agony of public scrutiny. Robert Darrell and his son Richard—known as Dickey in the *History*—had owned property on nearby Salt Cay as well as on Grand Turk Island. I found two archival photographs of their residence on Grand Turk which, torn down in the 1950s, had been right across from the salt yard.

Most significantly, however, local lore informed me that a derelict building on the island was *the* shed (see Figure 1) in which Darrell had locked Prince up at night:

We slept in a long shed, divided into narrow slips, like the stalls used for cattle. Boards fixed upon stakes driven into the ground without mat or covering, were our only beds. On Sundays, after we had washed the salt bags, and done other work required of us, we went into the bush and cut the long soft grass, of which we make trusses for our legs and feet to rest upon, for they were so full of the salt boils that we could get no rest lying upon the bare boards (Mary Prince, 1831, p. 72).



Figure 1. The shed on Grand Turk Island, which is thought to be the shed Mary Prince was locked up in at night by Robert Darrell. Photograph by Margot Maddison-MacFadyen.

Standing in the heat of the day, curling my hands around the iron bars covering the windows and feeling their density, smelling the tang of salt in the air, and hearing nearby voices calling from the beach not a city block away—where had she not been locked up, she might have escaped by boat to Haiti—I responded to Prince’s summons, and it marked the beginning of my commitment to her, though over 200 years separate us. At that moment, I hatched a plan to further investigate and authenticate her story and to get it out to a wider audience, especially to children and youth and their teachers.

A few months later, in May 2008, *The Spirit of Bermuda*, a 112-foot Bermuda sloop sailed into Cockburn Harbour, Grand Turk Island, for the Windward Passage Symposium. Several enslavement and maritime Atlantic scholars were aboard— Kimberly Monk, Clarence Maxwell, and Michael Jarvis to name a few—and they gave lectures topside when the ship was at dock. I took these scholars on an excursion to the aforementioned ruins that are related to Prince. Walking up a section of Middle Street— what I call the *Lane of the Dead*—I pointed out what had been the Darrell property, the adjacent Wood property, and situated across the lane and diagonally to both, the long shed. That day Kimberly Monk suggested that I undertake a PhD based on my findings.

Hurricanes Hana and Ike swept through Grand Turk Island in September, 2008. Our rented house was destroyed, its roof ripped off by Ike. The long shed? It survived, though one end collapsed. Gary and I returned to Canada, and I, accepted into the Interdisciplinary PhD program at the Memorial University of Newfoundland in 2010, began my studies of Prince in an academic

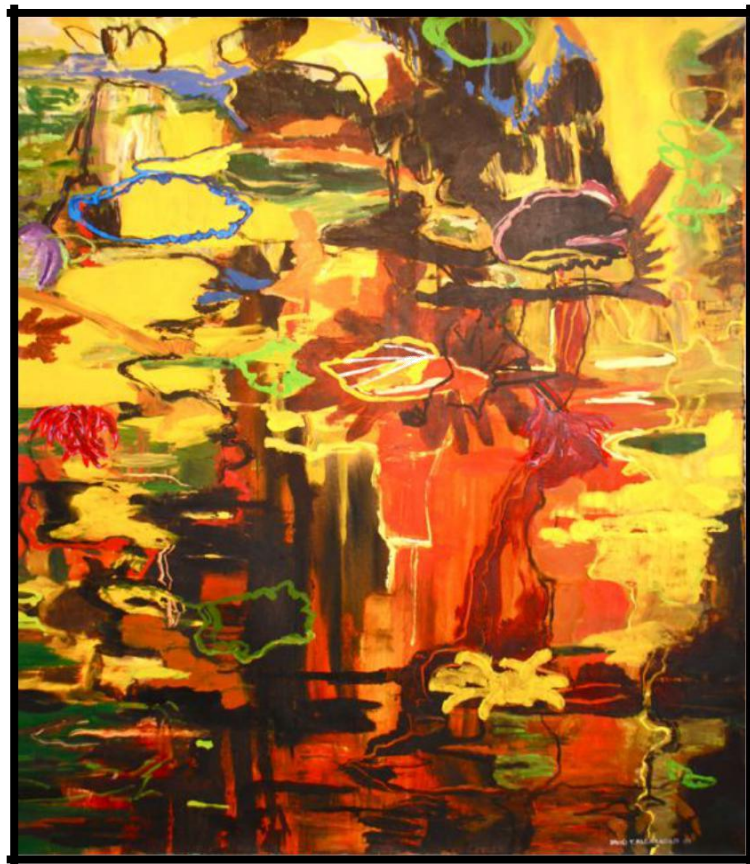


Figure 2. *Tropical Punched* by David Alexander (2007). It was part of a larger exhibit by Alexander that was on view at the Confederation Centre of the Arts, PEI, in fall 2012. Image courtesy of David Alexander.

context. In 2011, I made my first research trip to Antigua. Since 2008, I have published six articles about my findings on both Grand Turk Island and Antigua.

### **Ekphrasis as elicitation**

The experiences I have had that surround my relationship with Prince, that entangle me with her—living near the ruins of enslavement on Grand Turk Island, feeling the weight of the iron bars covering the windows of the long shed, hours spent in archives sifting through microfilm, through archival photographs, more hours engaged in PhD coursework at Memorial, in writing articles for publications, and the hauntings, the many hauntings—they have become a part of me. They have become primary experiences shaping who I am and what motivates me.

So it should not be surprising that when standing in front of David Alexander's<sup>2</sup> vibrant painting, *Tropical Punched* (see Figure 2), which resonates reds, oranges, and yellows of the tropics, I should suddenly be back in that deep space within me where Prince, and everything that I associate with her, resides.

I saw the blood of the slaves oozing through the water, and the darkness behind was a sunken slave ship held fast by the sucking reef. I was back in warm, sunlit Turks and Caicos Islands water, bright yellow fish all around. Bones of the dead strewed the seabed. Their eye sockets gaped. Rib cages that had once held their hearts, were the homes of fish.

Susan said, *Write! Write what you see. What you feel.* And so I did. My writers' group TWiG (The Writers in Group) had orchestrated this event of ekphrasis for Cultural Days with the assistance of the Art Educator at The Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown, PEI. Susan Buchanan, an accomplished writer and a member of TWiG, had been selected as workshop facilitator.

So I wrote a poem that, after a good scrub and polish, I titled *Tropical Punched 2*:

#### *Tropical Punched 2*

Midnight:  
chalky-beached Grand Turk Island,

British West Indies.

Silk ribbons of reflected moonlight slip across inky  
water.

Sunbursts of lemon-yellow & blood-orange  
anemones explode on coral heads

below.

And synchronous spawning, luminescent  
sperm & egg awash in radiance—  
pillar, brain, staghorn, fan lit like neon signs.

Their feet implanted in an ancient  
wreck—  
a tall ship hurricaned & sunk 200  
years past.

Its three pine masts once sky-lit towers  
cut from robust Acadian forest homes  
of black bear, lynx & fox

now nurse trees for an underwater  
West Indies world—

massive coraline fingers knuckled with brilliant  
outcrops

adorned with fire-red rings  
that radiate from a storm-besieged hull

broken & clutched by the living reef  
to its aquamarine heart.

Bones, skulls  
that once roiled within,

that once rolled with each pounding wave—  
solidified.

Gape-mouth sharks,  
their eyes lusterless coins,

g l i d e

slow-moving torpedoes

past long leg bones,

over bits of chipped vertebrae.

Darting sapphire fish hide in eye-sockets  
burrow under broken jaws.

Translucent pencil fish slide through rib cages  
slither around finger bones.

Portugese Man of War suspended from bulbous air  
sacks trail perilous mile-long tendrils, collect prey,  
travel the Atlantic from Iberia to Africa  
to the Antilles:

The Triangular Trade

& a death ship come to a stormy,  
magnificent end—

transformed  
in West Indies water.

♪

A second time  
on chalky-beached Grand Turk Island  
by acrylic & brush

on canvas—

Tropical Punched:  
new life burgeons extravagant from  
old.

In an interview with Anita Lahey (2011), David Franklin, deputy director and chief curator of the National Gallery of Canada, purports that ekphrastic works are,

very old in the history of writing. For the Greeks, the term originally had an expanded meaning as any heightened form of memorable descriptive writing meant to stir the imagination, as in the account of terrible battles. The narrower sense, indicating the description in poetry or prose of a work of art—fictive or real— is the one that has survived (Lahey, *Arc Poetry Annual 2011*, p. 19).

In my case, *Tropical Punched 2* was also a work of self-reflection where meaning was amplified not only to embrace my memories of Prince and the ruins, but also of the counter-



stories prescribed by Robert Dunham, and of my PhD learnings, especially Enslavement and Resistance Studies and Post-Colonial Caribbean Literature.

In these places I had read of slave ships, their captains, and their cargos. Especially reminiscent is Derek Walcott's (1990) *Omeros*, whose character the "foam-haired" (p. 9) Philoctete suffers from an unhealed sore on his shin that appears "like a radiant anemone" (p. 9) that had come from a "scraping, rusted anchor" (p. 10)—the untethered anchor of a sunken slave ship. Later, Philoctete's friend Achilles, a "walking fish" (p. 142) in his 300-year-long sojourn along the bottom of the ocean floor, sees, "huge cemeteries/of bone and the huge crossbows of the rusted anchors/and groves of corals as massive as trees" (p. 142).

David Alexander was not pushing paint around canvas on Grand Turk Island, nor anywhere in the Caribbean, when he painted *Tropical Punched*. In email correspondence, he explains,

That painting was a result of going to a tropical place (Hawaii for the first time) and not expecting to do anything about it visually. I was god-smacked by the colour and responded to it in that work as well as others since in an ongoing series I call *Wet*. I think I had a similar experience as Gauguin had when he got to the tropics for the first time (D. T. Alexander, personal communication, November 14, 2012).

*God-smacked* describes the experience well. *Transmogrified*—forever altered—possibly better. In the same email, Alexander further explains,

I recognize it made me change my palette. It always interests me when someone is influenced when not expecting to be. . . . [W]hen I'm not expecting to respond to a place but may be open and ready to make changes that place hits like an ungloved punch.

Visiting a new place elicited transformation in both David and me. David was changed by Hawaii. I was changed by Grand Turk Island. Later, when I engaged with his painting, rendered in the new palette of which he speaks, I was able to bring forward my experiences and to express them in a poetic form. It was a time of heightened cognition and creativity that I find often occurs when meditating on the skillful art of others.

### **Ekphrasis as a type of poetic inquiry**

Laurel Richardson (2005) proposed writing as a viable method of inquiry nearly two decades ago (p. 959). Moreover, she predicted a paradigm shift with the introduction of ethnographic creative analytic practices (CAP Ethnography) and she suggested that, "in the foreseeable future, these ethnographies may indeed be the most desirable representations because they invite people in and open spaces for thinking about the social that elude us" (p. 962).

One of these "desirable representations" is poetic inquiry. As explained by Carolyn Elliot (2012) in her recent PhD dissertation, it, "seeks to reveal and communicate truths via intuitive

contemplation and creative expression” (p. 1). Furthermore, Elliot suggests, it, “emphasizes subjectivity rather than objectivity” (p. 2), and is, therefore, essentially an, “extra-rational process” (p. 2).

I propose that ekphrasis, a type of poetic inquiry, also reveals and communicates truths. However, ekphrasis has an additional force within it because it gives words to visual art. Thus, it adds meaning to art, even if that meaning is not what the visual artist had originally intended. It is an artist reflecting the work of an artist, taking experience from one form and giving it life in another, and it goes to a new place. And if the ekphrastic poem is performed, it then becomes utterance, taking it yet another step.

As a method of inquiry, ekphrasis may initiate a deep reflection upon one’s research subject allowing expression not only of findings, but also of feelings. Engagement with the work of a skilled artist, such as David Alexander, may, perhaps unexpectedly, affect the researcher, taking her deeply down into her subject.

An added feature is that ekphrasis may be used by a researcher as a summation of her learnings, to bring together in poetic form, using sensory images, figurative language, symbol, and sound devices, for example, the central concerns and truths of her research. And it allows her to present her findings in vibrant language, inviting a readership that otherwise might not be interested. Because ekphrasis depends on engagement with a selected piece of visual art, however, it is not viable for every research project. In my case, *Tropical Punch 2* came about as a happy, serendipitous event.

### **Conclusion**

The road leading to my PhD studies, and the one I have trod since, has been one, long, “unexpected journey” with several side paths, and like Bilbo Baggins of my foundational touchstone story, *The Hobbit*, I do not fit my old environs—I’ve outgrown my previous skin. This white woman with roots in West Vancouver has journeyed far.

Serendipity has played a large part in this transformation. She placed me in Robert Dunham’s Black American Literature class at Simon Fraser University back in 1988 where I received prescriptive counter-stories, and it was she who launched me on an unexpected journey to first, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and later, to Grand Turk Island itself. There, haunted by ghosts of the enslaved, I responded to Prince’s summons, and I set out on yet another path, the one leading to my PhD.

Ekphrasis as a type of poetic inquiry also came to me serendipitously as another well met aspect of my unexpected and seemingly never-ending journey of learning and decolonization. I discovered that through the process of ekphrasis—as I was engaged with David Alexander’s painting—I was able to express central ideas of my PhD learnings in a poetically nuanced way that I believe may be interesting to others.

Serendipity has had a huge impact not only upon my research path, but also my life. Knowing this, I wait for her in anticipation. She is like the dependable Sun that reappears every morning, heating the soil, and bringing buried seeds forth as plants. *Or* she is like a haunting, beckoning

from the past, and transformational—if we heed the summons. *Or* she is like a unicorn, just out of sight. If looked for, she defies discovery. In whatever way she appears, serendipity is magical—and possibly life changing.

#### Footnotes

5. *The Chronicles of Narnia*, by C. S. Lewis, comprise seven books published between 1951 and 1956. See the References section for publishing details regarding these wonderful books. The Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys series were the brainchild of Edward Stratemeyer. Ghost writers worked under the pseudonyms Carolyn Keene for the Nancy Drew series, and Franklin W. Dixon for the Hardy Boys series. The first six volumes of the Trixie Belden series were written by Julie Campbell Tatham, with subsequent volumes ghost written under the pseudonym Kathryn Kenny.
6. A well-known Canadian artist, David Alexander's website can be accessed at: <http://davidtalexander.com>.



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1 A colloquial term for a secure, permanent job paid by the government.

2 All non---English major Chinese university students are required to pass the national College English Test (CET) Band---4 for their bachelor's degree and CET---6 for their graduate degree. English majors have to pass their respective national exams too.

3 Immigrants accounted for 17% of Canada's population in the 2001 Census, only next to Australia's immigrant percentage, which was 21.1% (Chua, 2002). In the 2006 Census, almost 20% of the Canadian population were foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2009). It is estimated that by 2031, between 25% and 28% of the population could be foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2011).

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## **Chapter 8: The tale of the pink slip**

Judith Martin

### **Abstract**

In this article I trace my journey from having a settled career as a teacher in an elementary school, through the dislocation caused by receiving a pink slip, to embarking on a graduate research thesis. This narrative includes within it excerpts from other narratives I wrote en route while I was pursuing the degree. The narratives differ stylistically because each one was written for a particular purpose, at a particular time, and for a particular audience.

### **Introduction**

I have often told myself the story of how I became a researcher and in telling this story I have imbued certain events with a magical quality as if they were signposts guiding me towards graduate school and selecting my research topic. I often tell it to myself with a sense of amazement at how it all just seemed to fall into place as if it was “meant to be.” Polkinghorne (1988) describes narrative as “the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful” (p. 1). He adds that narrative creates meaning by “noting the contribution that actions and events make to a particular outcome and then configures these parts into a whole episode” (p. 6). His observations certainly seem to describe my experience.

I have organised this article in six sections including the introduction. In the next section I outline my personal circumstances and the political climate in education which prevailed at the time this narrative begins. In the third section I describe the critical incident which changed the course of my career in teaching. For this section I draw on the narrative I wrote for a Writing Research class in which I enrolled in my second year at graduate school. In the fourth section I trace two pathways which I followed after the critical incident and which led to my decision to apply to graduate school. In the fifth section I use excerpts from another narrative, this time from my journals, as I write to try and understand why the topic I have chosen is so important to me and to search for “a way in” to arrive at my research questions. In the sixth section I reflect on the process of narrative and use an excerpt from my master’s thesis to describe why I consider understanding of self to be an important part of any research project.

### **Setting the scene**

I begin the narrative of my journey in the 1980s. Two major events occurred in the middle of that decade: my fortieth birthday and leaving my marriage of 18 years. At that time too I started seeing a therapist and contacting a new sense of who I was and what was important to me. It was an exciting time as I questioned decisions I had previously made and contemplated new possibilities. I devoured books on feminism and women’s spirituality. I participated in workshops by Starhawk and other feminist leaders. One book in particular that became important to me was Natalie Roger’s (1980) “Emerging Woman: A Decade of Mid-life Transitions” with



its cover illustration of a woman emerging from a tunnel into the light. It was at this time that I also started journaling.

As far as my career was concerned, I had resigned my teaching position at an elementary school on Vancouver Island when my daughter was born in 1970 and I had worked on short term contracts and substitute teaching while my two children were young. In 1980 I returned to a regular teaching position as a teacher-librarian. Shortly afterwards I became aware that the education climate in BC was changing. The old paternalism was being replaced by harassment and bullying by provincial and local government officials. Staffing needs were changing as enrolment dropped in some areas and teachers were force transferred. The question of budgets arose. The government claimed there was not enough money to pay teachers and Vander Zalm, the minister of education, gave teachers the option of volunteering to give up three days' work (and pay) or have the government legislate six days without pay. Opinion was divided amongst the teachers. The majority volunteered to give up three days but there were many who were vehemently opposed to that position. Morale amongst teachers was plummeting. In our staffroom we insisted that everyone who came in should bring a joke to tell or pin up on the board.

### **The critical incident**

As I indicated in the introduction I wrote this account (Martin, 2000, p. 4) for a Writing Research course. We were expected to prepare a piece of writing to read to the class thus I wrote this narrative for a specific purpose and audience.

#### *The Pink Slip*

*In January 1986, as part of the cutbacks in education, fourteen teachers in the school district in which I was teaching, were handed pink slips. A rehiring process took place before the end of the month and all but two of the teachers were hired back, most of them to the positions from which they had been let go. They were allowed to choose, in order of their seniority, what job they wished to have, from the list of available assignments. However, the district administrators had told the local Teachers' Association that they expected the teachers to request to be rehired to their former positions, to facilitate continuity for the students. At that time I was about three above the cut-off line. I was outraged by the process and thought that as an association we should protest the manner in which this was being done. As teachers we did not make a collective stand and I, too, was silent.*

*In May, four months later, I was one of the twenty-five who were handed pink slips. Again, there was the "Cattle Market" rehiring process. I was close to the top of the seniority list and, when it was my turn to go in to the rehiring room, I did not choose the assignment from which I had been laid off. Instead, I selected a position which had been filled on a temporary basis for a number of years, the Hospital Homebound post - one of those positions which no one knows too much about, and which is funded on an inconsistent basis. That was not a popular choice with the district administrators, since I had been let go from a part-time job and I was now selecting full-time employment. The administration tried to rule me disqualified, however I had previously consulted with the executive of the Teachers' Association and I knew I had their backing. I knew, too, that the regulations were on my side.*

*The following May over sixty of us, many with ten years seniority, were laid off. To me it was clearly a political move by the district administration. They were able to eliminate whatever programmes they chose. They also “protected” some positions and personnel, thus making them immune to the effects of the seniority clause. They knew they needed to cut about ten full-time*

*positions, but the way in which they chose to do it kept people in a state of fear and uncertainty, and pitted teacher against teacher. This time I was a long way down the list, and, when my turn came to go into the “Cattle Market,” the hospital-homebound position was no longer available - it had been selected earlier in the process. I was faced with the situation of choosing either a position in the school at which my ex-husband was principal, or “bumping” a friend, who was two places below me on the seniority list, from the library job she had held for a number of years. I chose the library position. A week later a colleague told me she had heard the principal of that school state publicly that no one who had “taken” a job from one of “his” teachers was welcome in “his school.” He was referring to me and the new kindergarten teacher. I learned later that the kindergarten teacher’s husband had confronted the principal. I did nothing. I felt guilty and ashamed.*

*I spent that summer backpacking in Peru and Ecuador, in a completely different world. When I thought about my work situation, I decided that I was a professional and would go into the school and do a professional job. However, when September came, it was a different matter. My friend had removed everything that could be of help from the library. I felt the wrong-doer rather than a victim of the system. By the end of the first week, I found myself unable to face going into school. I went to see my doctor who recommended I take time off. That time stretched into eighteen months until I decided to resign. I couldn’t see myself going back as “I hadn’t really resolved anything.” I did not have another job to go to and, in fact, had no idea what I would do.*

## **Two pathways**

As I look back on the years following my resignation from teaching I appeared to follow two separate pathways both of which led me towards the decision to apply for graduate school; one was the Teacher Workshop pathway and the other was the Women’s Self-Esteem pathway.

### *The teacher workshop pathway*

During my leave from teaching, when it became obvious to me that I had no heart for returning to the education system, I registered for an in -depth career planning course which took place one evening a week for 13 weeks. There were six of us in the group, all women between the ages of 30 and 50, and all looking for a change of direction. During the first six weeks we participated in a number of activities which helped us become aware of our values, our personal preferences about a work environment, our personal strengths, our dreams, and many other aspects which might influence our choice of an ideal job. Next we each made a poster representing the information we had gathered about ourselves and then we took turns presenting our posters to the other members of the group who brainstormed all the possible activities, jobs, and careers they thought might fit the presenter’s profile.

When I presented my poster one of the suggestions was “Reiki.” I had no idea what Reiki was but the woman who suggested it said it was a hands-on healing system like therapeutic touch. My immediate thought was “How can I heal others when I need so much healing myself?” and I put Reiki on the back burner. However, a few weeks later I saw an advertisement in a local paper for a Reiki course and I signed up. I loved the gentleness and the contemplative atmosphere; it seemed to be just what I needed at the time and I started exchanging sessions with some of the people I met on the course. My experience with Reiki led me to explore other alternative healing modalities. I took a second Reiki workshop and the basic level Acupressure workshop. About the same time I heard that two psychiatric nurses in my community had started up a local wellness centre offering body work, counselling, and acupuncture, as well as ongoing support groups. I contacted one of the nurses who I knew and started volunteering at the centre as a general receptionist and person-on-the-spot to answer questions from people who walked in off the street to see what the centre was about. After a while I began offering Reiki sessions to clients for a donation towards the rent and in this way I became part of the community of practitioners who were working at the centre.

In addition to working individually with clients, the two nurses delivered wellness workshops to businesses in town. One day they were approached by the local Teachers’ Association to present a workshop as part of a Professional Development day. It turned out that neither of them was available to do the workshop so they asked me if I would be willing to take it on. I struggled with the decision of whether I would go back into the system which I had left with so much hurt and anger the previous year. I decided I would. I designed and presented two half day workshops which, in my naïveté, I called “Wellness is .... Loving Yourself.” They were a great success. Both sessions were full and many teachers who came to the morning session wanted to return in the afternoon.

That workshop was a turning point for me. I had thoroughly enjoyed the experience and I realized that here was something I could do which would be of value to teachers and healing for me and earn me some money. I developed a few different workshops and produced a brochure which I mailed with an introductory letter to all the Professional Development chair people in BC. I also made appointments with Professional Development chair people locally on Vancouver Island and visited them personally to talk about the workshops. I began to get bookings from local Teachers’ Associations as well as individual schools. One district engaged me for workshops which we held at a resort over two days. The format was very popular and we repeated it twice a year for three years. During the next few years I travelled throughout the province and to Calgary and the North West Territories presenting workshops.

During these time teachers were increasingly being blamed by government and the press for perceived short-comings in education and children’s learning. There was little acknowledgement, appreciation, or respect for the job which teachers did, so in each workshop I included activities which focused on self- and group- appreciation and respect. Also at the beginning of each session when teachers were introducing themselves I would ask them to share one joy and one frustration of their job. This enabled them to connect emotionally with others in the group. I would find that often teachers would stay past the time when the workshop finished, sitting in

groups, talking to each other and sharing their stories. The feedback from the teachers was enthusiastic: “We didn’t know how much we needed this.” They identified telling their story, being heard, listening to other people’s stories, and making connections as valuable parts of the workshop experience.

During the years I was designing and presenting the workshops I looked for research to inform and support what I was doing. I found a few articles on teacher burnout but nothing else which seemed to speak to the personal world of teachers, their wellbeing and emotions.

A few years after I started presenting workshops the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF) hired a full time wellness coordinator who was responsible for making presentations and training teachers who would go into schools and deliver wellness workshops at no charge. The number of workshops I was booked for started to decline, probably partly as a result of the free availability of the BCTF sessions. I was faced with the question of “What now?”

#### *Women’s self-esteem pathway*

A few weeks after I finished the career planning course I saw an advertisement in the local paper for a co-instructor at the local community college to help with a job re-entry programme which was partly funded by Federal and Provincial departments. Having just completed my own career exploration I thought I knew something about the topic, so I applied and was appointed. Courses lasted for four weeks and were repeated a number of times throughout the year; some were co-ed while others were for women only. It was heartening to see the participants in the women-only groups flourish. They wrote poetry, made up plays, talked about feelings, and enjoyed each others’ company.

As the courses neared the end the women would become quieter. They said they were afraid that they would slip back into their old ways when they didn’t have the structure, motivation, and support of the group. I realised how much the course had meant to the women and I also realised that no matter how many new skills they had learned and practised they were not likely to be successful without a certain level of self-esteem. I decided to investigate to see if I could raise some grant money to put on some women’s self-esteem classes locally. I talked to the coordinator of mental health whom I knew and who had a good record for securing grants for projects. He was encouraging but said it would take time. I decided I didn’t want to wait so I put up notices around town advertising a six-week self-esteem group for women for a fee but also with a sliding scale. The group filled up quickly and I put names on a wait list for the next group which I started a couple of weeks later.

The groups were very popular and obviously filled a need. At times there were four groups running concurrently. We continued over a period of five years. The women were a mixture of ages from 18 to 78. Social Services and the Indian Band funded some participants. I enjoyed running the groups. Each one was different and I appreciated the resilience, humour, and warmth of the women. As each group progressed women would often ask if they could see me for an individual counselling session. This was something I did not feel qualified to do so I would refer

them to the local lay-counselling services or to professional counsellors in the community. I realised, however, that I regretted not being able to provide that service for the women.

### *The two pathways meet*

The reduced demand for the teacher workshops coincided with my realisation that I wanted to be able to provide individual professional counselling for women. For the first time I started thinking about the possibility of going to graduate school to do a counselling degree. So ten years after the Pink Slip incident I applied to take an M.A. in Counselling at the University of Victoria and named “Teachers and Emotions” as my research area.

### **Starting with my own story: narrative writing to understand**

During my first year in graduate school I took the mandatory research course but it concentrated on quantitative methods which I knew would not suit my purpose. By the end of that year I still had not managed to focus in on what aspect of teachers and emotions I wanted to research. That summer I was visiting a friend who was doing her doctorate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and when I described my struggle to reach clarity she told me “You have to start with your own story.” With that advice in mind I registered for a Writing Research course and used it to support and motivate my exploration of writing to understand. I documented my autobiographical process in my thesis and the following are excerpts from my journal as presented in my thesis (Martin, 2000, p. 6).

#### *September 11*

*I’m taking Leslie’s advice and starting to write my own story. It was far easier to write and talk about issues from an impersonal (so called) perspective. I have successfully managed to distance myself from my feelings during the last few years as I have been presenting workshops to teachers, and now I need to reconnect with my subject, to move into the feeling place, not just talk about emotions. I feel very vulnerable. Why is it so important for me to write about teachers and emotions? What is it about emotions that moves me?*

#### *October 14*

*Facing my emotions all these years later - so much anger and so much pain. I walk around, avoiding sitting down to write - when I’m walking around and when I’m driving the car, there’s so much I want to say, and when I sit down, it dissipates. Why teachers and emotions? Because of my experience of not valuing my emotions and not feeling supported? Why am I doing this? To keep my connection with teaching? I can feel tears. I had never really believed that I would not have a job, not teach. What I need to write most is what I am not saying and not feeling. I am thinking too much about what I need to write instead of writing it. I think I’m afraid of an immense sadness, of a loss. I miss teaching, I miss the children. I’m not a teacher any more. That seems poignant. I lost my community and I lost my life work. I haven’t realized until now how important that was. It was, and is, important for me to do something which I believe is making a difference and to express who I am through my work. I had not fully realized that. The loss of identity with a community, a group of people coming together with a common purpose.*

#### *October 28*



*Standing up for what I believe has always been important to me. It seems that a large part of my emotion about the layoffs is shame and guilt at not standing up for what I believed was right, not acting on my values.*

*November 7*

*So what else was there besides the shame, guilt, and loss? There was anger. I was angry we were not valued. I felt anger at the system and I felt powerless to do anything about it. I keep remembering the scene at the Cattle Market where the administrators were ranged around the tables. I get angry all over again. What's the relevance of understanding my process all that time ago? How does that add to the body of knowledge? How can I apply that to teachers today?*

*June 21*

*I realize that much of my distress, the shame and isolation I felt, was a result of how my peers reacted to my challenging authority and how I, in turn, reacted to them. I recognized that, while I had broken some of the tacit rules, I was also bound by others. It was also apparent that as a group we, the teachers, had policed ourselves. I had been just as silent as my peers, so I cannot approach my inquiry from a self-righteous position. It is important to recognize how easy it is to become complicit. One theorized purpose of co-constructed emotions is that they keep the group together by discouraging the challenging of the status quo. Those who do step outside and question are often isolated or ignored (White, 1993).*

*There are many instances throughout school life in which teachers feel very strongly about an issue but do not allow themselves to speak up about it because of the rules concerning appropriate behaviour in their setting, or they may speak up and suffer the repercussions. There are often emotional repercussions either way. I have therefore decided to interview teachers and invite them to tell me about a time when they perceived themselves to be out-of-step with their peers, that is, thinking and feeling differently from their peers about an issue. By focusing on peer relationships rather than relationships with administration, I am attempting to equalize the power dynamics within the system. Within the experience of being out-of-step, there will be an emotional component. I am also interested in finding out how that emotional experience affects the individual teacher's well-being and the well-being of the staff.*

It took almost a year of writing to process my own emotions about the Pink Slip incident and to arrive at a research question. Later I read an article by Nias (1996) in which she commented on the lack of research on teachers and emotions. She speculated that one of the reasons for this lack of research could be that inquiring into other people's emotions might bring one too close for comfort to one's own. I heartily agreed.

## **Reflection**

I am ending my narrative here at the point at which I had decided on my research question and had become grounded about my own emotional journey. My journal writing had convinced me of the importance of self-reflection and self-knowledge in the research process. I conclude with an excerpt from my master's thesis (Martin, 2000, p. 3):



*As I embarked on the process of proposal writing, I found myself referring to my year's exploration as a "prelude" to writing my thesis. I realized I was discounting it because it was not the "formal" part of my process. However, as I progressed with the so-called formal part, I became clearer that the year's work and my personal writings were, in fact, an integral part of my thesis. They were important for several reasons. First, since I am writing about the subject of emotions, it is important that I understand my own emotions, positions, and perspectives as clearly as possible. Second, my personal writings allow me to make my own biases and perceptions clear to the readers of this work. Third, my writing enabled me to be honest with the people I was interviewing. Reconnecting with my own experience meant that my relationship with the participants was based on common understanding. I was no longer a distant researcher. Fourth, one of my intentions in writing this thesis is to affirm the value of taking oneself and one's emotions seriously. Therefore, to call my year engaged in writing "a prelude" devalues the process and perpetuates the very attitude I want to discourage. Last, my personal story is important because, no matter for what, or for whom, I might think I am writing, ultimately I am writing to try and understand myself better.*

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## **Chapter 9: Becoming an arts-based educational researcher (unfinished)**

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### **Abstract**

I explore becoming an arts-based educational researcher through a short biography of my schooling and three pieces of creative writing. Such an approach to inquiry is capable of persuading us to see educational phenomena in novel ways, and thus to entertain queries that might otherwise remain unasked. The first story is about research in a broad sense in my earliest years, while the second is about searching through art making. The third involves focusing

on what it means to become a researcher as an adult and to work collaboratively within a twenty-first century academic setting. Working with notions of bearing witness to myself as researcher and that the personal, the academy, ways of knowing and pedagogy are conjoined I link my research to my teaching.

### **Introduction**

As an art educator I identify with many of Buttignol's (1996, p. 138) descriptors for creative people, "Scattered, reclusive, can be anti-social, mad, exciting, colorful, can be anguished if blocked creatively, driven if in a creative 'flare', misunderstood at times, hard to understand, fun but sometimes scary to be around, people who require freedom and time", however a significant part of my position as an assistant professor involves research and some might say there is a poor fit between Buttignol's descriptors and traditional notions of scientific investigation. Nevertheless, I prefer to think of research as a notion that is still under development; like me it is involved in a process of becoming. Reflecting on my experiences, here I explore becoming a researcher in relation to a relatively new form of inquiry, arts-based educational research (Barone & Eisner, 2006; 2011; Desai, 2009; Eisner, 1997; Huss and Cwikel, 2005; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Leavy, 2009; McDermott, 2010; Siegesmund & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008).

First I outline my biography in relation to schooling and my developing interests in visual art, history and social justice. Next I briefly summarize arts-based educational research to indicate how this approach allows me to integrate my three interests. Finally, as an example of such research I explore the notions of research and searching through short pieces of creative writing.

### **Growing up: Art, history and social justice**

I grew up in a working class family in British Columbia and we sometimes moved to new communities because of my father's job. In the various schools I attended I was significantly younger than the other children in my class because I'd started school early and was then "skipped" from one grade to the next in the middle of a year. Being new and younger meant that at school I was mostly concerned about making friends. Producing what adults wanted in the

classroom was easy therefore I wasn't a particularly hard working student. It was life as reflected in good books and beautiful objects as well as the wonder of the outdoors that fascinated me. Indeed, I very much identified with the words of a poem by Richard Le Gallienne (2008, p.67), which my elocution instructor had me memorize for a competitive performance when I was five:

*I Meant to Do My Work Today*

I meant to do my work today,  
But a brown bird sang in the apple tree,  
And a butterfly flitted across the field,  
And all the leaves were calling me.

And the wind went sighing over the land,  
Tossing the grasses to and fro,  
And a rainbow held out its shining hand--  
So what could I do but laugh and go?

The prize I won that day quickly vanished but both the words and the poet's implication stuck with me; to focus on 'work' might mean you would miss out on the important and beautiful things which were available on any particular day if only one took the time to notice. Nevertheless, by my teens I realized that teachers and schools could sometimes facilitate exciting adventures. One such opportunity was to become a Rotary exchange scholar in New Zealand, and I managed to convince my parents of the wisdom of letting me go for a year when I was 15. At Wellington East Girls' School my teachers of Art and History were passionate about their subject matter and I glimpsed connections between the daily routine of school, my 'ideal' world of art and literature, and history and social justice issues. The fire with which Miss Campbell, my history teacher, described and analyzed Russia's revolutions convinced me that if I'd been a girl from the poorer classes in that time and place I might well have found myself in the midst of the fray. In the art room Mrs. M. seemed very vulnerable yet most days she found the strength to teach - we students knew that she had been imprisoned as a youth in a concentration camp in Europe and although she never did more than indicate in a general manner her experience of suffering, somehow, and in every way, her intense, dry and somewhat severe presentation of material was suffused with issues of social justice.

My developing interests in visual art, history and social justice influenced the choices I made when I got to university and later in the world of employment, and on reflection I see that over the years I've attempted to knit these strands together. Both my bachelors degree from the University of British Columbia (UBC) and my masters degree from Simon Fraser University were in history where my focus was on issues of social justice. In my late 20s, after having worked my way through numerous interesting but poorly paid arts, social justice and research jobs, going back to university to achieve a professional certificate in education from UBC

seemed like a wise move. Next came school teaching positions, where I taught all grade levels from kindergarten to grade 12 including Art, involvement in the British Columbia Teachers' Federation where I served as an assistant director of communications and training for four years, and later work with the provincial government. Meanwhile I maintained my interest in art, picking up courses here and there and always visiting museums and galleries. However, within the various academies I attended art and education felt like separate silos and one did not inform the other. For example, when I took art history and art studio courses in the fine arts I was appalled by certain teaching methods. It seemed that some specialists in the arts had little regard for how they might better facilitate their students' learning. No doubt there were many reasons for why this was so, nevertheless, I reasoned that we as adult students were not being taught according to the best educational practices.

When in mid career I reflected on the past so as to best plan for the future I could see that I'd spread a wide net in both my education and my professional life choices. I considered pursuing another degree within a fine arts faculty but concluded that education as a field, by virtue of being very broad, was a more workable space for me. Therefore, in 2005 I enrolled in a doctoral program in art education at the University of Victoria, where I felt well supported to integrate my interests in a project involving history and art making.

My doctoral research explored the interaction between six families and a particular house, now mine in the city of Victoria, over the course of the last century. Social justice issues emerged which related to the social exclusion experienced by the two families of Chinese heritage within a racist mid-twentieth century Canada. After I completed my dissertation I created "House Very Strong" A Historical Case Study Through Six Visual Text Narratives (Unfinished)(see Figure 1), (McLeod, 2009, a, b, c, d), an arts-based research project from some of the materials I'd gathered. It can be characterized as arts -based research (Barone and Eisner, 2011) in that I seek to persuade the viewer to see the house and people who acted there in a new way, and to ask questions that might otherwise be left unasked.

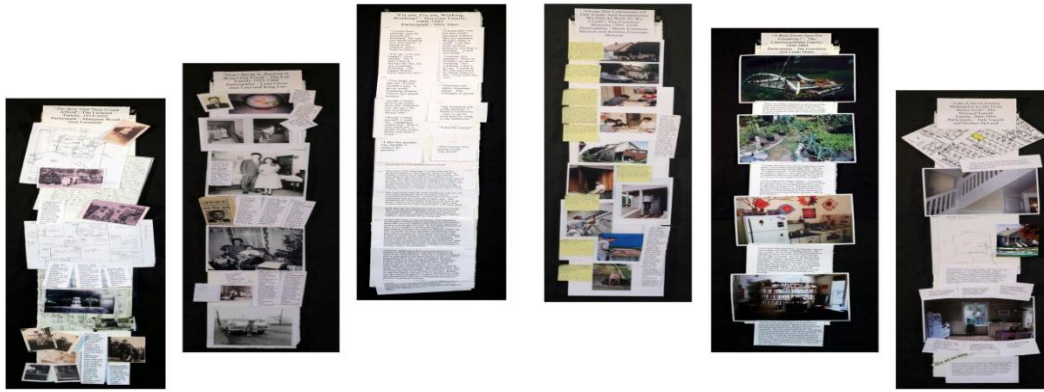


Figure 1. “House Very Strong” A Historical Case Study Through Six Visual Text Narratives (Unfinished)

*Research Participants: Margaret Leonard, Lena Chow, King Lee, Mrs. Guo, Bjorn and Kirsten Freeman- Benson, Linda Matte, Ian Lawrence, Dale Vanelli.*

*A series of fridge displays? Social studies bulletin boards? In “House Very Strong” I have explored the experiences and strategies used by six families to claim and personalize space in relation to a particular house. This piece, based on my doctoral dissertation research can be characterized as arts-based research in that it crafts a description of a situation(s) so that it can be seen from another angle. I began with my aesthetic/emotional/ intellectual response to my own house. Interviewing at least one member of each of the families who have lived in it for any significant period since the 1920s, I gradually accumulated a small archive of photographs and other materials contributed by the participants. These are representations of themselves interacting with/in the structure. For this emerging series of narratives I have used these items as well as powerful quotations culled from my interviews to portray a sense of how each family acted upon the house. Issues of representation are important here; I did not take any of these photographs. Acting as the researcher the narratives were, of course, composed by me, however I worked only with what the participants made available to me. (Although there is also a reflexive element to the research, Dale Vanelli, my partner, took the photos that depict our time in the house.) Because Mrs. Guo was not able to provide any visual records, I have chosen to portray her story only through quotes from her interviews, despite the fact that evocative items, including distinctive Chinese vernacular furniture, tools and shoes remain from her family’s time. Here I am persuaded by Marcoux (2001) who found that when moving, householders reconfigured the narratives of their personal biographies through sorting their possessions, which served as mementos. This was the active management of externalized memory, and that which was left behind was no longer required. Reasoning that this may be so for my participants, it would not be appropriate for me to photograph these items as part of Mrs. Guo’s story. (A yet to be created visual work exploring the house as palimpsest from my perspective might be a more sensitive response to these elements).*

House Very Strong was exhibited in two galleries in Canada (2009 a, b,) and two in South Africa (2009, c, d,) where it was also used for teaching purposes. Later I reflected on the dissertation and the various showings of House Very Strong and how this linked to my current teaching

(McLeod, 2011). Additionally, theorizing about the social exclusion of one of my participants became fuel for a fruitful collaboration with another researcher (McLeod and Ricketts, in press).

### **Arts-based educational research and narrative**

Many factors have contributed to my development as a researcher and I've analyzed my doctoral journey noting that passion, support and serendipity were crucial drivers enabling me to reach my destination (McLeod, in press). However, on reflection, four years after the completion of my dissertation, I see the significance for me of arts-based educational research (ABER), which encourages researchers, teachers, students and community activists to experiment with materials and techniques to produce creative works (Barone & Eisner, 2006; 2011; Desai, 2009; Eisner, 1997; Huss and Cwikel, 2005; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Leavy, 2009; McDermott, 2010; Siegesmund & Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). Such an approach allows for my abiding interests in visual art, history and social justice, thus it is within this genre of work that I've begun to carve out a research agenda within the academy.

Barone and Eisner (2006; 2011) argue for ABER noting that such research can enhance perspectives, however they add that unlike other types of postmodernist scientific inquiry, because form and function are interdependent ABER also attends to aesthetic design elements. These elements include format, language, empathic understanding and virtual realities. The authors note, "ABER at its best is capable of persuading the percipient to see educational phenomena in new ways, and to entertain questions about them that might have otherwise been left unasked" (2006, p. 96). They outline three kinds of ABER: narrative construction and storytelling; educational connoisseurship and criticism; and non-literary forms of arts-based inquiry. Their criteria for appraising such research include illuminating effect, generativity, incisiveness and generalizability.

I note that traditional concepts of 'worthy' visual art and what makes one a 'good' visual artist are steeped in oppressive colonial value systems, so that processes and products of art making that do not adhere to a Eurocentric aesthetic value system including folk, outsider and vernacular art remain marginalized. In relation to ABER, Huss and Cwikel (2005) stand against this view and argue for art as communication, where reactions to an artwork outweigh considerations of the quality of the pieces measured against external aesthetic criteria. Further, Desai (2009) writes that ABER work must "raise questions of how vision is controlled and disciplined in our society and the ways categories, labels, and discourses order particular ways of seeing in our increasingly image-based world" (p.7). Thus, rather than focusing on debates over the definition of art, what makes it good, or who qualifies as a practitioner, I am persuaded by McDermott (2010) who asks whom and what purpose does a work serve, and whether it contributes to change. She concludes that artistic scholarship is successful if it effects change in either the maker or the audience.

I'm also informed by Yeoman's (2012) conceptions of narrative rooted in literature and cultural studies. Yeoman argues that from the study of the literature we can learn how to effectively tell stories, including research stories in the most engaging ways possible. Additionally, she points out that from cultural studies we can begin to understand how narratives work in society and how



they shape our understandings of the world and our actual and potential roles in it. Further, the two ways in which narratives work are sometimes at odds with, or in tension with, each other. For example, binary oppositions can, on the one hand, produce powerful and dramatic stories, while on the other hand they might also produce division along lines of race, sex and class. Yeoman teaches that the standards for such research are substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact and expression of a reality (Richardson, 1994).

### **Three tales of becoming a researcher**

All kinds of research have a story and inherent drama of some kind, and in what follows I adapt a Brechtian (as cited in Yeoman, 2012) dramatic form where individual scenes are discontinuous. I look at the complex process of becoming a researcher from different points of view. There is an effect of “collage”. While Brecht’s original use of the form implied alienation (Yeoman), it seems appropriate here to represent an evolving and unfinished process. Mine are stories of emergence, survival, trust, and becoming. The arts strengthen my research (Knowles and Cole, 2008) and I argue that the academy and ways of knowing as well as pedagogy are tightly interwoven with the personal (Arnold, 2010; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002).

As an art educator I note that painters often create several works at the same time because they may be exploring a concept, technique or material in various ways. Of all the art forms, painting appeals most to me, and as with painting, my choice as a developing researcher has been to engage in several related projects at once. The common theme between my research initiatives is a focus on experience and an exploration of narrative approaches. For example, my current funded projects include a study of children’s experiential learning in an art gallery, museum and archive setting; a self-study; two initiatives involving narrative methods to access teachers’ stories about dress; and one using narrative methods to explore researcher development, collaboration and writing identity.

Below I tell tales. That is through short pieces of creative writing I work in the genre of art-based educational research to explore becoming a researcher. The first story is about research in a broad sense in my earliest years. The second is about searching through art making. The third involves focusing on what it means to become a researcher as an adult and to work collaboratively within a twenty-first century academic setting.

#### *Tale number 1:*

##### *Deciding to talk (to further my investigation of the universe)*

In my very early years I made little effort to speak. This was unexpected in a family where my father, mother and sister were in constant conversation. My father was a man who loved to read and talk about ideas. He sought out what my mother called “big discussions” and was the undisputed master of serious remarks. Meanwhile, through chatty stories my mother explained people and Christine, my elder sister by two and a half years, chimed in like an expert, chattering with my mother but also clearly destined to have “big discussions” too because of her affinity for books. Analysing, exclaiming, deducing, declaring, pontificating, conjecturing – the waves of loquaciousness washed around and over me.

However, talking seemed to involve sitting and I loved to move, and anyways I was busy, busy, busy, with my heady exploration of the world. I specialized in colour, which seemed to manipulate my very physiology! Texture and smell excited me too. My research involved carefully ripping velvety pansy petals from their stems so that I could concentrate on quietly creating my own purple and white designs on the neighbor's front stairs, and I knew that the flesh of yellow daffodil petals on a brisk Vancouver morning tore easily in a crisp straight line. As well, the peppery scent of the frothy blossoms on our Japanese Cherry tree drew me near, (only to learn that the fragile pink petals bruised easily and disintegrated into mush despite my best efforts to be gentle).

So intrigued was I by my investigations that I got into the habit of flipping out of my crib in the morning and leaving the house before the others were awake to expand my study of the surrounding neighbourhood. Nowadays my mother recounts a story that I was eleven months old when I fearlessly toddled away on a midday journey lured by candy. I headed two long blocks down Lillian Road and crossed a suburban street busy with commuter traffic to the neighbourhood grocery store. There I knew that behind the glass counter laid enticing sweets and brightly coloured packages that required my close inspection. Luckily the clerk knew me and walked me home. This seemed typical; amused and impressed adults were unfailingly around when I needed them.

I continued to rollick wordlessly through my studies until at sixteen months I was laid low by illness and placed overnight in a hospital ward with other children.

*The room is vast and we're all in individual cribs placed against the walls. Small arms reach through the metal bars on the sides of the beds. The cold hard rails are far higher than those on my crib at home. I'm in jail and it's at least a mile to the floor. I know that I'm locked in – there'll be no flipping out of here. My parents are gone forever and I don't have words for how I feel; their absence is grayness. My new world oppresses me; the walls are bland beige and the narrow windows at the top of the far wall allow only a thin strip of sunlight into our cavern. The smells of antiseptic and cooked food are strong. Snuffles and whimpers echo. Like the delicate cherry blossoms when they're touched, I'm disintegrating into mush.*

*Kitty corner in the expanse of space looms a huge boy in faded blue sleepers who grasps the bars of his crib and shakes with rage - he does NOT accept that his parents have gone! At high volume he indignantly screams for his Mommy! Red face and carrot coloured hair. His loud words scare me. I hope that even a gargantuan boy like him can't climb over the top of those bars, survive the massive drop to the floor and get all the way across the room towards me, but I'm not sure. Maybe he can fly? There aren't any helpful adults in the room - only a bunch of sad sick kids in other elevated prisons. The angry boy has words and so far I've been keeping mum, but now it isn't working. I face life alone.*

*Continuing gray - I've been abandoned and betrayed by my parents. But the next day, surprise, they're back! Grand relief when Mommy takes me into her arms. Color returns.*

*Once we're home I return to my riveting independent investigation of the universe, however now I know that uttering words might be necessary. Not long after my second birthday I speak in*

*complete sentences. My pronunciation is correct and I've no baby words. But the best part is that I can do it while walking and balancing on the wheel I've contrived by placing a rounded ottoman on its side. I roll expertly around our living room and begin to ride the waves of conversation...*

*Tale number two:*

*Searching/painted  
nails*

Whipped by the gale, snow sheets flap and I turn my eyes from the narrows in the St. John's January chill.

I gather brushes, canvas, paints,  
And moving loose with hands and arms  
I locate joy in swabbing middle yellow and light red stains  
Daubing dark red blotches, and scribbling marks of Yellow  
Oxide, My pencil drags deep through warm buttery hues.  
I dabble in pools of liquid red  
purple. I work large.

Later water drips down layers of cool Cerulean and Ultramarine blues.

I smear with deepest green  
Fool with rags  
Dapple my canvas and  
Etch a pretty line.  
White pigment seeps beneath my fingernails.

Images emerge  
I search.

*Tale number three:*

*Collaborative research as knitting*

Just as in knitting where strands of twisted fibers connect, so too I've found that one research project is stitched to the next. For example, in 2011 our faculty writing group conceived of a self-study project in which we planned to explore how making art might foster collaboration.<sup>1</sup> We formed a sub-group of people interested in this idea including myself, Sharon Penney, Rhonda Joy and Cecile Badenhorst and assigned areas for separate literature reviews. I located a call for book chapters that focused on arts-based research and collaboration and which sought to include teams as well as scholars from across Canada. Although we queried whether a journal might be a somewhat more prestigious form of dissemination, we decided to pursue this opportunity because several elements of the call resonated with what we were already doing and the argument we wanted to make. We made contact with the editors and they encouraged us to submit our work. I wrote the chapter reflecting on our process as a group and the other members offered timely edits. We found that the experience of working in a collaborative manner to produce the chapter both added to our knowledge of the topic of collaboration and helped to strengthen the general functioning of the writing group. Sharon used knitting as a metaphor for collaboration: "knitting can be compared to collaboration...When people are missing from the

group it produces a different feeling, and the same as dropping a stitch while knitting, it leaves a hole in the product...repairing the holes does take skill and mentorship” (McLeod et al., in press).

We submitted our chapter and it was quickly accepted (McLeod et al., in press). Additionally, all authors were invited to attend an SSHRC funded workshop, *Creating together: Participatory, community-based and collaborative arts-based practices and scholarship across Canada* in Montreal in May 2012, and Sharon, Cecile and I took part. There we engaged in an intensive two days of information sharing and collaborative planning of the book. Together all authors agreed upon a process of peer review involving the establishment of teams based on common themes between chapters. Seven individual peers reviewed our chapter and our group reviewed two chapters. The workshop was flexible and well planned yet one of the most positive moments occurred when Sharon taught us how to knit.

*Imagine:*

<sup>1</sup> ~~The details of how we proceeded with the art making and reflection involved are described elsewhere (McLeod, et al. in press), while here I describe the process of writing the paper and how the project is connected to my current work.~~

*With the clanging of students' pots and pans protests against tuition fee increases still ringing in our ears, in one of Concordia University's towers situated within Montreal's 'Golden Mile', approximately 40 scholars and students are enthusiastically swapping wool samples and learning how to cast on stitches. Sharon lights up as she shares the use of her mother's collection of knitting needles, and the group comes alive! The activity spills over into the rest of our time together and we craft small bits during presentations and break times. John, a scholar/poet, yells, "Got it!" and then explains that throughout his life he's never before been successful at learning how to knit. Sharon takes the many pieces home to Newfoundland and over the summer she creates an intricate hanging sculpture expressing collaboration. Many small figures peep out at the viewer; no one is alone. A close-up photo of her work is chosen by the editors to appear on the book cover.*

An added benefit of collaboratively writing the chapter and working with the larger group to produce a cohesive book was that building on the work that the writing group had already completed on the topic of collaboration (Badenhorst et al 2012; Badenhorst et al, 2013; McLeod et al, in press) Cecile and I conceived a series of initiatives in which we are exploring the significance of a robust connection between collaboration, creativity and developing researcher identities. This is important because in the contemporary academy where much emphasis is placed on researcher productivity, there is potential to make a noteworthy contribution on the topic. These initiatives include a research project using narrative methods for which we have already secured funding, and, along with Rhonda Joy, the co-editing of this edition of the *Morning Watch*. As well, the three of us are working to develop both a writing institute and a book.

*It's lunchtime on a Friday in January 2013, and the members of our faculty writing group sit around tables grouped together in a fifth floor classroom in the Hickman building. Dorothy is working her way through a salad and Gabrielle munches on bread and fish while tapping out a written record of our weekly meeting. Cecile acts as chair and Sharon Penney suggests that the check-in question, to be answered by everyone in turn, be "What kind of fruit are you today?" After Xuemei's cheery comments likening her mood to a rosy apple, I chuckle and say that I'm feeling a little bruised like my banana. Chris can relate. Next, our agenda develops from updates on collaborative work for presentation at the annual conference of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, the scheduling of presentations of members' writing, questions, and any new or unfinished business. Jennifer queries how to bring a novel aspect into her research. We listen attentively and proffer our insights and resources while pondering research traditions and appropriate metaphors. Listening and occasionally taking part in the discussion I draw and take notes using pencil crayons and pens with ink that flows generously. Our customary one and half hours comes to an end and Jennifer thanks everyone for responding to her question. She declares that she's "itching" to get back to her computer to capture ideas in text! We rise to go but Karen lingers in conversation with Sarah and Rhonda. We missed Jackie and Sharon Pelech today. Mary pops back in the room to share the title of a book her mother has just written. We are loosely stitched as a collaborative entity. Knitted together, evolving and growing. We are becoming researchers...*

### **Pedagogical implications**

Working with notions of bearing witness to myself as researcher (Nash, 2004) and that the personal, the academy, ways of knowing and pedagogy are conjoined (Arnold, 2010; Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002), I link my research to my teaching. For example, when working with students in ED 6394 *Biographical explorations of teaching and learning* I employ "House very strong": Six families, one house, and the life of an arts-based research project (McLeod, 2011), because it demonstrates the use of the arts to effectively tell a research story, which is one of the goals of the course. Students respond well to this piece and some have found the metaphor of a house to be fruitful when telling their own tales. In addition, I recently used *Tale number one: Deciding to talk (to further my investigation of the universe)*, to model how a graduate class can workshop or critique a narrative. The students gave specific feedback, some of which I responded to by changing the text, and some of which I did not. Because *Deciding to Talk* is an integral part of this chapter the result is a product that better attends to Barone and Eisner's (2006) aesthetic design elements of format, language, empathic understanding and virtual realities. Further, I believe it now holds more potential in relation to criteria such as illuminating effect, generativity, incisiveness and generalizability (Barone and Eisner) as well as Richardson's (1994) standards of substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impact and expression of a reality.

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## **Chapter 10: Perspectives on discovery**

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### **Abstract**

This paper offers perspectives on discovery in poetic and narrative forms, juxtaposing self-discovery with research into the natural and engineered worlds.

### **Dream sequence**

*I.*

They may yet demand  
My head upon a platter  
Not for heraldic failure  
A mere by-product  
Of their games of gain  
Mine not the bloodiest  
Nor yet the handsomest  
Yet still in death ranked  
In gruesome competition

And I have eaten their meals  
For years  
From an ill-assortment  
Of chipped stained plates  
As I fattened and bloated  
On a diet rich unnourishing  
And addictive

And all the while I eyed  
From afar  
The ancient platter of my desire  
On which the wise ones ate

I held it in my hands  
Yesterday  
I polished it  
Large rectangular fired clay  
Hand-painted gold and purple  
Fragile unstable alive  
I rescued it

And set it carefully  
Out of harm's way  
As befits a valuable  
*Objet d'art*  
Of benign  
Authority ...

## *II.*

Away, away  
Escape the house if you can See this skylight here  
Onto the roof Over the snow  
On skis waxed and ready

Down, down  
This wild white slope  
Air and wind and mind and heart Tipped into movement  
In a new born moment

Back, back  
Through all the universe And all of time  
To a mansion looking out Onto a wide granite terrace A fitting bier for my body For the  
bodies of the many

Let the birds be quiet now And I wait ...

## *III.*

A long wait Torturous and boring  
Through years and years Of inactivity  
Silent, compressed, frozen To this slow awaking  
Not by the kiss of a prince By a slow spring  
Of fickle winds Occasional sun  
Snows to crush the spirit

Of snowdrops  
Yet life stirs up  
To this tentative return  
This big bang  
That no one can hear  
Not even I ...

### **Dream sequence narrative**

In her memoir, historian Jill Ker Conway writes about her experience of choosing a topic for her Ph.D. thesis at Harvard University in the early 1960s (Conway, 1995). She was inspired by the seminars on American intellectual history given by Donald Fleming who became her thesis adviser. She writes of Fleming:

He was implacable in his insistence that one be committed to one's work, not just professionally but emotionally. ... "One's research should always involve some element of therapy," he said smiling. "It only counts if it's really close to the bone." I agreed, knowing that I had found someone who could help me to find an intellectual vocation. (p. 34)

This passage stood out for me when I first read Jill Ker Conway's memoir over ten years ago. I could envisage how it might be applicable in history or in most of the humanities and social sciences—and especially for Conway who went on to research women intellectuals of 19<sup>th</sup> century America, a choice significantly motivated by her need to understand her own non-belonging in academic life in the 1950s. However, it wasn't clear to me how the principle of research close to the bone might apply in the natural sciences or engineering. Specifically, it was not clear how it applied in my case.

In the years since reading Conway's memoir, I have come to understand research as discovery more deeply, not just as the discovery of facts and principles of the natural and engineered worlds, but also and substantially as discovery of myself. I have struggled with this understanding alongside my engineering research, but over time have come to appreciate their interconnectedness, sometimes with what I take to be clarity and at other times only dimly through the fog of day-to-day concerns.

The dream sequence speaks to this slow evolution or growth in self-knowledge, including in my own case insights into myself as a researcher and why I was drawn to research. Ultimately, while the process of self-discovery (and of scientific discovery generally) may have its Archimedean moments, the evolution in understanding is surprising both in its slowness as well as its ever-unfolding newness. It is like a big bang that can only be heard by very careful attention.

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## **Chapter 11: Opus 42: Agency as Education's Great Imperative**

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What is it like to be intrinsically motivated? This is a different question than what it means to be intrinsically motivated, although the two are conceptually linked. In contemporary psychology there has been a roughly accepted meaning for the term. Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, which appears to be one of the more well-articulated expositions of intrinsic motivation, defines intrinsic motivation as engaging in an activity for the enjoyment or pleasure it brings, or to engage in an activity for its own sake.<sup>1</sup>

Their formulation of intrinsic motivation has been built upon a programme of research involving experiments and surveys of people in a variety of settings and tasks, and whose results have important implications for the human endeavour. Intrinsic motivation has been associated with well-being, life satisfaction and happiness, cognitive development, cognitive engagement and achievement, and healthy development.

However, Deci and Ryan<sup>2</sup> have tended to use experimental designs with contrived tasks (such as solving anagrams), or correlational designs with participants in settings such as classrooms, and in many instances, operationally define intrinsic motivation as how interesting participants found the activity to be (which is odd, because interest was not something they included in their definition of intrinsic motivation). In such instances, can the participants be said to be truly intrinsically motivated? At the same time, their research has never really explicated the experience of being intrinsically motivated. What is it like to be intrinsically motivated?

Conceptualizations of intrinsic motivation will eventually intersect with discussions of flow<sup>3</sup>, a subjective experience in which the individual becomes wholly immersed in the activity to the point that attention is directed solely to the task at hand; execution seems effortless, time seems to pass faster or slower than normal and there is a loss of self-consciousness. Consciousness and action become blended and there is a deep and enduring satisfaction from engagement. In sport, it is referred to as "being in the zone" and musicians recognize it as "being one with the music."

If we consider flow to be the pinnacle of an intrinsically motivated experience, the research on flow provides some insights into being intrinsically motivated. Several studies have provided descriptions of flow experiences, articulating the subjective elements of the phenomenon (see Seifert & Hedderson, under review). Yet, the relationship between flow and intrinsic motivation is not well-delineated, either conceptually or empirically.

Rather than using contrived tasks to better understand intrinsic motivation, it seems sensible to examine individuals engaging in a freely chosen activity in a spontaneous, natural setting. What might such individuals tell us about the experience of being intrinsically motivated, and what psychological constructs underlie intrinsic motivation?

I began this project with an examination of the experiences of skateboarders.<sup>4</sup> Skateboarding is an activity that seems to be inherently intrinsically motivated, and data collected last summer support this claim. There are no rules; there is no formal structure, no instruction or coaching, no practices or drills. There is minimal social interaction. It is, for the most part, self-directed. Skateboarders set their own goals, choose their tricks and plan their execution. They do not compete against each other, and they are not evaluated in any formal way (except for the occasional competition they may register for). They do not do it because they are pressured or to impress others.

This was followed by interviews with musicians and students who enjoy mathematics. These two groups are interesting because they are engaging in activities which have potential for flow episodes. Musicians speak of being one with the music, and math problem-solvers can become engrossed in a problem. Yet, the environments in which they function can be competitive, evaluative, structured, and constraining. They may have little choice in the activities they engage in: they have lessons to attend, practice to participate in and homework to complete. In the case of musicians, they also must perform publicly. Under such conditions, how do they maintain a sense of intrinsic motivation and achieve flow?

So why do skateboarders do what they do, and what is the experience like? Ethnography was chosen as the means to study skateboarders. They were observed and interviewed over the course of a fall and summer, with more than twenty interviews being conducted. Observations indicate that skateboarding is an activity characterized by mastery goal pursuit – the desire to master a new trick. Within the activity there is a cycle of varying levels of frustration, followed by a dogged persistence and expressions of elation with success. For example, consider M.:

I watched closely as one particular skateboarder was continually attempting an ollie off the flat green box. It appeared that he was having some minor difficulties with the kick-off ... with each consecutive try, it seemed as if his kick-off was improving ... on the fifth attempt his foot was directly in the middle of the skateboard and he landed the stunt successfully. He yelled, “Oh yeah, baby,” smiled, and started jumping up and down in the air [Observations of M].

But what underlies this cycle and sustains their motivation? What is it that makes this activity so enjoyable? Skateboarders do what they do because of the subjective experience that is inherent in the activity. The most prominent reasons given for their enjoyment of the activity were the sense of freedom and independence they feel, the challenge, and the emotions that accompany successful execution of a trick.

When they are skateboarding, skateboarders feel free. They are free to do as they please, to choose what tricks they try or don't try. There are no adults telling them what to do and no rules to follow. They are free from stress and worry:

I just feel so carefree whenever I am skateboarding. I feel free! I feel free of parents, teachers, people in general ... I just enjoy my freedom and like to express



that through skateboarding ... I actually feel in control of what I do ... I can pretty much do what I want. I feel that I am in charge [M].

But they also did it because of the challenges it presented, and the immense satisfaction that came with accomplishment:

It is so thrilling when you finally nail a stunt ... finally nailing a stunt that you may have tried 30 times to get [A].

Skateboarders were asked to describe what it was like to be in the zone, to experience flow. For them, being in the zone was “a feeling you get inside yourself” [A] that was actively pursued. The experience was characterized by several important qualities. One is an intense subjective experience of euphoria, emancipation and efficacy. They described it in such terms as being addictive, a rush, a natural high that made them feel alive:

Wow! That is what it is like ... wow! There is nothing that I have ever done in this world that has made me feel this way ... You just feel good all over, especially inside ... it's an unreal feeling [J].

It also left them feeling liberated from stress and pressure as though the cares of the world had been lifted from them, with elevated levels of confidence that bordered on invincibility:

It's like you are flying, flying around the park on your skateboard. You feel like nothing can ever stop you ... the skateboard is part of your body. You just feel so free, and unstoppable ... you feel so alive [J].

But being in the zone also assumed a transcendental quality in which skateboarders became disconnected from their surroundings, feeling separate from the world. They felt like they were being transported to another place:

In the zone is like you are in a different world all together. It's not like you are in this world at all. You just feel away. You feel far away from everything and everyone else. .... You are so carried away with the skateboarding [A].

This transcendental feeling may be a result of concentration and absorption in the activity, a third characteristic of being in the zone. For some, this concentration leads to a singlepointedness with the only thing they were thinking was their trick in the present moment:

It's hard to describe, but it is almost like you are so completely wrapped up in what you are doing that your mind shuts itself off from anything else [A].

The experiences of musicians and mathematicians are similar to those of skateboarders.<sup>5</sup> Confronting challenge and the feelings of satisfaction that come with success were primary reasons for enjoying the topic, as were other positive emotions experienced. For example, some

musicians felt at peace while making music, while math students reported that “working out a solution is a rush.” However, there were two important differences. Musicians stated they enjoyed making music because it was a means of expressing themselves. Making music was an extension of who they were and was part of their identity. Students who enjoyed mathematics consistently referred to the nature of the discipline as a source of their enjoyment<sup>6</sup>. Mathematics was an activity in which there was a right answer, rules and procedures to follow, and something to which they could bring their knowledge and skill to bear.

Like skateboarders, music and math students described experiencing flow as peak performance, an uplifting emotional experience, and as having a transcendental quality. Not only did they perform at a high level, they experienced intense positive emotions and an element of transcendence in which they felt disconnected from the world as they became wrapped up in the activity.

Researchers of flow theory have consistently maintained that flow occurs when there is an optimal match between challenge and skills. Responses from math students were consistent with this position. They reported experiencing deeper concentration when problems were complex and multi-step, something that was long and complicated with multiple solutions that made them really think. Routine problems or problems beyond their skills did not result in flow.

Yet, it is apparent that while a challenge-skill balance might be a necessary condition, it is insufficient to produce flow. Even if the difficulty of a task is within the capabilities of an individual, the individual must believe that he or she is capable of successfully completing the task. But, if students’ sense of self-worth is contingent upon being perceived as capable, then challenging tasks will be a threat to their self-worth and they will utilize strategies to protect self-worth. Some researchers have reported evidence suggesting that a preoccupation with self and self-worth will inhibit flow. Arguing from a self-objectification theory position, they have suggested that concerns with self, such as worrying about body image, occupy consciousness and inhibit flow. Using data collected last summer from skateboarders, I was able to identify skateboarders who could be classified as failure avoidant, that is having a preoccupation with ability perceptions, and those who were not. Likewise, using latent profile analysis I identified two patterns of flow experience – those who reported a transcendental quality and those who did not. Of those students who experienced a transcendental quality to their flow experience, 95% were not failure avoidant. Skateboarders who had a preoccupation with ability perceptions did not report this transcendental quality to their flow experience.

Yet, is failure avoidance necessarily an obstacle to flow? In the course of her search for interviewees, Christa encountered two skateboarders who we shall call Tom and Jerry. Tom was a boy whom she met in one of the local skateboarding parks whose behaviour was different than that of the other skateboarders:

... except this one skateboarder who stayed by the quarter pipe ... He sat next to the quarter pipe and watched the members of his group skate about the park. He sat for quite some time (15 minutes) until I noticed him stand up and get on his skateboard. Periodically, his friends would skate by the quarter pipe and [encourage him] ...

[He started] attempting a trick off to the side of the quarter pipe ... He picked up speed on the skateboard ... he was about to jump, and did jump somewhat, but the skateboard slid from under him ... he fell to the ground. He got up on his feet, ran after his skateboard, started walking slowly back to where he was previously sitting. He sat there for another 15 minutes before he stood up again [Observations of Tom].

Eventually Tom went behind the quarter pipe, out of view, and tried his trick and did not succeed. When his friends noticed, he commented on how lousy his board was. By his own admission, Tom was not very skilled. He did not try hard in front of others because he did not want to look foolish and was concerned about negative comments that might be made.

Jerry was a skateboarder who was discovered in a quiet cul-de-sac. There was a small group of boys who had set up a small ramp in the middle of the cul-de-sac with a small wooden box near by. While the boys were flying around the cul-de-sac, up and down the ramp, there was one boy who was off to the side, by himself, whose behaviours were different than the others. Like Tom, Jerry expressed very little confidence in his abilities:

I notice that one boy is rather quiet. He is not yelling out when he lands a stunt. Furthermore, he is not encouraging his fellow skateboarders on ... In addition, he is not skateboarding that much. During the time that I watched him, he only skateboarded off the ramp twice. In contrast, his fellow peers may have skateboarded off the ramp up to 20 times in a 45 minute period. The first time this boy skateboarded off the ramp he fell ... As he fell the other skateboarders laughed at him. The boy stood up, picked up his skateboard ... and stood and watched the other skateboarders. Around 15 minutes or so passed before the boy placed his skateboard back on the ground. Another 5 minutes or so passed before he stood on his skateboard and began skating slowly around the cul-de-sac. ... The entire time he was skateboarding slow. He did not speak, laugh, smile or look up and around while he was doing this ... At one point, he attempted the ramp for the second try... he landed on his backside. ... One of the skateboarders stopped, pointed at him and started laughing. He let out a small giggle and said, "Yeah, I know. I suck!" [Observations of Jerry].

Although they had little skill, and were preoccupied with ability perceptions, Tom and Jerry were able to talk about flow experiences. They knew what it was like to be the zone. Jerry reported that he enjoyed learning new tricks, felt satisfaction from his accomplishments and the autonomy he experienced was one of the things that made skateboarding enjoyable. He had been in the zone a few times in the past and that the experience was euphoric. Tom stated that feelings of control and autonomy were important to him. While being in the zone he was focused, concentrating hard, would lose track of time, and was able to describe the transcendental quality of flow.

Although Csikszentmihalyi<sup>7</sup> contends that a challenge-skill balance produces flow, it seems to me that something else is needed to support flow. I contend there is something more profound

that is reflected in the experiences of skateboarders, musicians and math students. I suggest that it is the sense of agency they possess and feel that is the reason they do what they do – the opportunity to be self-determining, the efficacy to set challenges, the autonomy to seek ways to meet them, and the satisfaction and pride that comes with success through hard work.

In his recent works, Bandura<sup>8</sup> has argued that agency is the catalyst and impetus that initiates and sustains self-regulated behaviour. It is a sense of agency that allows an individual to set goals, make plans or choose strategies, implement them, monitor progress and react accordingly.

Unfortunately, Bandura, and those who have followed, have reduced agency to that of self-efficacy, one's judgement of capability for doing the task. However, as I point in a 2004 paper<sup>9</sup>, students' behaviours, affect and beliefs are patterned. For example, some students think, behave and feel in a mastery-oriented way in which their goals are directed towards improving their knowledge, learning the content and testing their skills. Other students think, behave and feel in a failure avoidant way, trying to avoid threats to self-worth by avoiding situations which may call ability perceptions into question. Still others may be helpless, feeling they are not capable. Considerations of these patterns suggest that it isn't just one's sense of self-efficacy that drives motivation, but also attributions, self-worth and its contingencies, and affect. Taken together, these elements constitute a sense of agency that initiates and sustains behaviour.

The role of agency in motivation is evident in our examination of the motives of musicians. In our interviews, musicians were asked why they enjoyed making music. Like skateboarders, musicians enjoyed making music because of the challenge and the accompanying sense of satisfaction. They relished the opportunities to work on diverse and difficult pieces, and revelled in the feelings of accomplishment when they had mastered those pieces. At same time, they also reported experiencing joy, relaxation and serenity. Making music was an uplifting experience, and these emotions were part of why they enjoyed it. But they also said making music was existential – it was part of who they were, part of their identity. The interviews with skateboarders did not suggest this theme of identity; however, skateboarders who were surveyed tended to agree that one of the reasons they skateboarded was because it was part of who they were. There may be a recursive mechanism at work – they did it because it was part of who they were; but the success and emotions were self-enhancing to the point that the experiences become part of their sense of self.

The centrality of agency is evident in the strategies music students used to cope with the evaluative contexts they encountered in performance and judging. The primary aim of these strategies was to establish psychological control in a setting in which they otherwise had little control. Music students knew they had to practice and be well-prepared which increased their confidence. They developed ways of helping themselves concentrate by focusing on positive thoughts and avoiding distractions. They also tried to create an adaptive and supportive mindset in which they focused on their love of music and relaxation. By using these strategies, music students were able to assume psychological control over the evaluative context.

Although Tom and Jerry lacked ability and were constantly exposed to contexts which evaluated them in a negative way, I contend that they possessed a sense of agency which sustained their motivation and enabled them to experience, on occasion, flow. Removed from an evaluative context, that sense of agency, as limited as it might be, was allowed to blossom and enabled them to experience the joy of skateboarding. Jerry stated that he enjoyed skateboarding by himself, in peace, and despite his lack of skill he wanted to become a better skateboarder and believed he could. Tom would disappear behind the quarter pipe where he could practice unseen by others. He loved the feelings of control that skateboarding offered, and it may have been in those quiet moments that he could experience flow.

I hypothesize that agency is the reason that math students enjoy mathematics. Although they stated they enjoyed mathematics because mathematics had a right answer, rules and procedures, something to which they could bring to bear their knowledge and skill, I suggest that a sense of agency underlies these reasons. Faced with a challenge, students use their knowledge and skills to manipulate rules and procedures, working out a solution, leaving them with feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. The resulting sense of agency is the reason for their enjoyment.

Interview data collected by Schulz and McKee from females enrolled in advanced placement high school mathematics course suggest a theme of agency. They saw themselves as capable and knowledgeable. These girls enjoyed the challenge of mathematics and experienced joy with success.

To be agentic is to assume control of one's actions; to set goals, initiate and sustain behaviours directed towards achieving those goals, to monitor and regulate progress. These behaviours are illustrated in the data collected by Schulz and McKee; the girls they interviewed would set goals which would either increase their mastery or test their mastery, such as trying to solve the problems before the teacher did. They challenged themselves, and derived satisfaction and joy from meeting those challenges. Agentic people recognize they are, for the most part, responsible for their successes and failures. They both feel a sense of self-determination and exercise their autonomy. They feel pride and satisfaction in the successes they achieve. They have a strong sense of self, and their thoughts, feelings and actions are self-enhancing.

The development of a sense of agency is critical for normal human growth and capacity, and stunting it results in functional impairment. In her Master's thesis, Bernie Lindemann<sup>10</sup> theorized that eating disorders were a manifestation of learned helplessness. At some point in her life, a woman with an eating disorder had experienced some event or events that had left her feeling helpless. To cope with these feelings, she attempts to exercise agency by controlling food intake and manipulating body shape. Doing so is her way of establishing psychological control.

If flow is the zenith of student engagement and the purest form of intrinsic motivation, and if agency underlies both intrinsic motivation and flow, then I contend that the development of agency is Education's great imperative. To do otherwise is to fail our students. In her 1999 Master's thesis, Barb O'Keefe<sup>11</sup> reported that there were many things teachers do that may impede the development of agency. For example, students she interviewed commented on the way failure was treated in school. Although they recognized that mistakes

were a natural part of the learning process, in school they did not have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes. Mistakes were treated as failures; grades were given and the teachers would move on to the next topic. Failures in school would leave them feeling denigrated, inadequate, helpless, guilty and stupid. Students commented that:

“If teachers were willing just to support students’ learning as opposed to controlling students’ learning, most students would take on more responsibility for their own learning and do better.”

“If teachers treated us more mature, pushed us more, treated us with respect and as equals in the classroom environment, gave us more independence, then students would take more responsibilities and develop a sense of accomplishment and success.”

When these students were asked to list the qualities of an effective teacher, the first characteristics students described was that of nurturing and caring. Indeed, the relationship between the teacher and student is critical. In our 2001 paper<sup>12</sup>, Barb O’Keefe and I reported that teachers who saw their teachers as nurturing and supportive of learning were more likely to be more agentic; they were less likely to make external attributions and adopt performance goals. Sharon Jarvis<sup>13</sup> identified a group of work avoidant Grade 7 students and interviewed them for her Master’s thesis. She reported that students may not work for a teacher because they do not feel able to do the work (helplessness) or because of hostile feelings towards the teacher. If they do not like or respect a teacher, they may not do work for that teacher. Craig Janes<sup>14</sup>, in a 1996 article for the Morning Watch, explored the relationship between teachers’ expectations and attributions, pointing out how expectations can influence agency.

On the other hand there are many simple things that can be done to facilitate the development of agency. In a 1995 thesis, Wade Mouland<sup>15</sup> demonstrated that simply stating the objective at the beginning of a math lesson increased students’ self-efficacy. This simple act is important because as students recognize the goal to be achieved, see themselves working towards the goal, and achieve success they will feel pride and satisfaction and attribute the outcomes to their own efforts. Using a think aloud protocol in Peggy Wheeler’s mathematics classroom, we found an increase in students’ motivation for mathematics. Students’ self-efficacy increased, but more importantly, their resilience improved. In her 1996 Morning Watch article, Barb O’Keefe<sup>16</sup> described a pedagogy for enhancing the motivation of her basic level students, the foundation of which was supporting students’ sense of agency.

A student’s sense of self-worth is often contingent upon being able to do find something that they are good at. Sonia Harvey’s 1995 Master’s thesis<sup>17</sup> explored the relationship between perceived competence and worth, pointing to a number of different strategies students may use to protect self-worth. Self-worth is often linked to perceptions of competence; that is students need to be able to find something that they are interested in and good at. Being able to participate in those activities will enable them to develop a sense of agency and self-worth. One of the most important functions of contemporary secondary schools is to offer students a wide variety of experiences which will allow them to explore, finding something they are good at. In the 1990s, cuts to arts and music curriculum in favour of emphasizing mathematics and science would have



limited the opportunities for many students find such an activity, thereby preventing them from developing a sense of agency and self-worth.

When all is said and done, teaching is a uniquely human endeavour, and education is a manifestation of our humanity. The student-teacher relationship is at the heart of education, and is fundamental to the development of agency. But agency is central to our humanity. It allows us to play, explore and build. It enables us to hope, dream and love. It is for this reason agency is education's great imperative.

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## **Chapter 12: An autoethnography exercise.**

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### **Abstract**

Who has the time for introspection? I don't. Nevertheless, I stole some hours from my life and from my sleep to think of, articulate and exemplify my new reality as a PhD student, as a researcher in training, as a writer fighting to find her words. And that in itself is what it is all about.

### **Introspection**

As I sit to type a short story of my experience as a researcher, two emotions emerge from my recollections. The first one is fear, fear of failure, fear of disappointment, fear of inadequacy, fear of not belonging. The second is exhilaration, my world is not only moving at the speed of light where every moment counts; it is also, in some ways expanding.

Of the many ways of dealing with fear that experience has brought me, preparation and readiness are the more efficient responses. The ability to prioritize, efficiency and organization are the skills upon which I relate the most to be ready. Another ability that I am still working on, but seems to get easier as I get older, is the ability to make decisions and assume responsibility for them, knowing and accepting that I will make mistakes or bad choices and yet be able to move on, to overcome setbacks. Setbacks come in different shapes and forms, some are easily overcome and some may take days or more. From my point of view, setbacks occur when control and power are in somebody else's hands. An easy setback that I had to overcome recently, was family related and as often is the case for a minor setback, time related. The other day my daughter was supposed to drive her little brother around when she called me, suddenly unavailable. I had just sat in my chair in front of my computer, to read two articles, one on validity in qualitative inquiry written by Creswell and Miller (2000) and the other on Appreciative Inquiry by Mohr and Watkins (2002). That was it. Creswell and Morh had to wait, I was distracted and not on task anymore. Luckily, I am an avid reader who has developed over the years the ability to read quickly and to be able to extract pertinent information from what I read. But I know that many more major setbacks are still to come, from possible lack of funding to some difference of opinion within my committee that will lead to additional work and constructive discussions.

Since having to carry on multiple responsibilities between my family, my teaching and my research, I found, surprisingly that instead of being overwhelmed, and in a state of panic, my organizational skills just took over my agenda, my week became organized like never before. I don't remember ever having a desk so clean. The downside is that I do not handle unpredictable situations as well as before. Multitasking and prioritization associated with sometime heavy time constraints do not leave much non-dedicated time periods that allow overcoming unplanned activities. For me, it means sadly less patience for and more demands on the people that surround me. I surely hope that, as I will grow into my role, I will be able to develop new

strategies to deal better with surprises. After all, one of my many goals in pursuing my education is to improve myself, not to scare people away.

The fact that time is not completely my own anymore is compensated by the true interest that I have in my readings. Consumed might be a bit too strong a word, but my work is taking a place it was not used to have. Being French and having read “*les Misérables*” from Victor Hugo (1862) more than once, I was really excited, when in January 2013, the movie of the musical “*Les Miserables*” by Tom Hooper (2012) came to Corner Brook. I might add that I had literally lobbied the movie theater manager to bring this particular movie to our theater. Believe me, the last thing, I expected to happen, was for me to disengage from the middle of this pretty intense movie to rephrase the conclusion of an upcoming paper. This is a behavior that I am not used to experiencing and it is, for me, a sign that I am more deeply involved in the process of researching than I first thought possible.

I don’t remember many satisfactory writing experiences in my past, except, maybe, when in France, I started corresponding with a friend in Quebec. Before that point all my writing had been at the high school level, and I found it really hard to express opinions on literature for which at the time I didn’t have time nor interest. Writing was a burden that didn’t serve any other purpose than getting a grade for a specific topic that didn’t hold much interest. But when I started writing to my far away friend that I had met through an exchange program on a regular basis, writing became a different experience, a tool that allowed me to paint my life with word, a tool to describe information and to express and often share emotions. You have to remember that at this time, a simple phone call was far from my reach as the cost of a minute of communication was \$10. So through regular letters she described her life in Quebec for me, and I described my life in France, including the political and historical context as we went. At this time, the excitement came from my emerging ability to explain and describe without any other medium than a few pictures, my view of my country to somebody who had no direct knowledge of my environment. It sometimes took a lot of back and forth before we reached the same level of understanding. We created each other’s world in each other’s consciousness. This world went far beyond the romanced vision described in “*Maria Chapdelaine*” by Louis Hemond (1913), and ultimately brought me to Laval University to further my education a few years later in 1989 and ultimately here to Memorial University.

I may still not write every day, as I have a tendency to conceptualize first and write later. But I start to understand and visualize why I will need to write, not only when I have to, when a paper is due, but also, when I feel I have something to say, after a reading or after a more challenging experience. As I continue my exploration, discover my interest and conduct my research, writing day after day is the tool I have at my disposition to be able to share my findings. Therefore, I can predict that a more regular time will be set into my agenda for the sole purpose of writing in a very near future.

Reading other people’s works, starting to understand how paradigms compete and how diversified the research world is, is a major eye opener, bringing depth, I hope, to my way of thinking and to my way of understanding the world. Some readings like Freire (1970) are truly inspirational for the values he defended and for the work he accomplished.

As for the type of researcher that I may become, I know that I always wanted to be a teacher, that I am a teacher, and I will always be a teacher. The teacher I am will bring into my life as a researcher my most essential qualities: patience, perseverance, observation skills, listening skills and attention to details, to be added to the other skills already listed above. It is Saturday evening, 7:30 pm, in my basement by the stove, with my dog, working for my class, texting with my daughter about her whereabouts, looking at the pile of articles that I want to read like Foucault's lecture at the College de France (2010) "Le gouvernement de soi et des autres" in French or that I have to read like the description of the French Immersion program in Newfoundland, at the correcting that I have to do, thinking at all that must be done, I feel like Camus' Sisyphus pushing his rock to the top of the mountain for all eternity, accepting my never ending tasks, content and at peace with my world...for now.

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## **Chapter 13: From staff member, to student, to part-time researcher?**

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### **Abstract**

Often, our initial impression of a researcher is someone who dedicates their entire career to the pursuit of knowledge. For many, becoming a researcher follows a linear path. The path starts with an Undergraduate degree, then a Masters and finally a PhD, which leads to a career as a researcher at a post secondary institution. This paper explores what it means to be a researcher and how others can follow a non-linear path and become a non-traditional researcher.

### **Introduction**

I consider myself an avid life longer learner. Ironically, while I completed my undergraduate studies, I could not wait to get out. However, once out, I found myself missing the learning process. From then on I started doing courses. Not because I had too, but because I wanted to. Looking back this would become a fundamental switch that led to a 15-year journey and writing this paper. Linear was something that this 15-year journey was not. The path I took spanned two careers, dozens of university courses and four provinces. Many choices were made on the way; there were no wrong ones. I found each choice a learning experience that helped shape the person I am today. This paper will explore the milestones in my educational and professional career that led to me becoming a non-traditional, part time researcher.

### **Undergraduate: Consuming information**

I look back fondly at my time as an undergraduate student, probably for all of the wrong reasons. My first two years at university were a bit of a blur, between working, studying and other extracurricular activities, I was lucky to get by. In the third year I began to straighten myself out and worked towards a bachelor of science. The majority of my undergraduate studies were about learning new information as a means to an ends. My main goal was to finish so I could get a good paying job. I can only recall one instance where I considered myself doing actual research. At the end of my undergraduate program, I was required to complete a research project. I was neither prepared for nor enthusiastic about this undertaking, and the result was mixed at best. If someone had told me that I would eventually choose to conduct research of my own free will I would have laughed out loud. Many of my classmates were in the same situation, we heard about research but that was something you did as a professor or a graduate student. When the time came for us to actually perform some research we were at a loss. There was no session on how to look up academic material or even how to reference the material we were citing. With little support, it was no wonder that there was no research spark ignited in me. I vividly recall the joy I felt once I had finished my capstone project. Not because I had enjoyed the process, but because I would never have to do something like that again.



### **Private sector: Dealing with data**

After graduating from university, I bounced around a little and finally settled in the high tech sector. As a software developer, I faced many challenges and was confronted with massive amounts of data. For example, we tackled everything from the features clicked on by users to the number of errors an application was making. This was the beginning of the data collection era, where mined data yielded valuable insight into a product. Software packages, such as Crystal Reports, allowed the user to sift through data, provided it was formatted correctly. The phrase "management by metric" was uttered by management on a daily basis. This was a very new concept for me and really struck a cord. For the first time I saw how data was being used to answer questions and make decision in a concrete way. Data was at the centre of how the organization made improvements. Moreover, once a change was implemented, the data provided us with a way to measure success. This was not only limited to automatic collection of quantitative data, the use of qualitative data was also used to improve the overall productivity of the organization (Markovits, 2010). Qualitative data from the support desks was also analyzed to identify where customers were having trouble. It was not uncommon to see an entire application interface reworked based on usability concerns pointed out by customers.

### **University as a career: Asking questions**

In 2004, I moved from the private sector to Memorial University, where I have worked for the past nine years. There were many reasons why I chose to work in a post secondary institutional environment. Work life balance, flexibility and the chance to work with students were top on the list. With the birth of our first child, it made sense to work in a environment that was more stable and did not require the same time commitment. Taking the position at Memorial was also a homecoming for me, before that I has spent almost a decade living and working in New Brunswick, Ontario and beautiful British Columbia. The time I spent away from Newfoundland gave me the opportunity to work with many great individuals and experience the diverse culture that Canada has to offer. Looking back, I feel these experiences allowed me to look at my environment from a wider point of view.

At this point in my career, I did not remotely consider myself a researcher, even though I shared my ideas with others in meeting and informal discussions. While attending conferences in the private sector, the research discussed felt like it was force fed onto the attendees. The conferences I attended at university, however, had the expectation that attendees present their work. Not long after my first conference, I found myself thinking about what I could contribute. Slowly but surely, this led me to look at ideas from a more critical view as opposed to an operational viewpoint. I started asking myself why students behave in a certain way, and before long I was conducting small surveys. The information gleaned from these surveys helped influence and often justify operational choices. The next logical step was to present at one of these conferences. The first conference at which I presented was the Canadian Learning Commons Conference at the University of New Brunswick. This allowed me to share some of my ideas to a larger audience. Initially my sessions were focused on sharing my operational knowledge. Over time my presentations began to explore other ideas such as the effectiveness of student training as it relates to customer service.

In 2011, I attended an EDUCAUSE conference in Philadelphia. One of the keynote speakers was Michael McRobbie the President of Indiana University. He delivered a speech titled “IT from Both Sides of the Executive Table” (McRobbie, 2011). He pointed out universities are one of the oldest forms of human organization; historically these institutions have conducted research, taught others to do research and collected and stored information. He went on to discuss how today's junk data could be tomorrow's treasures and may lead to breakthroughs. He discussed a wide range of topics such as the mission of universities, supporting the Open Source Software movement, and the role of Central IT within a university. The latter really had an impact on me and it caused me to reflect on my own role within the university. Up to this point I had been collecting and researching a substantial amount of data specifically related to student computing. The main goal of the research was to gain a better understanding of student behaviour. For example, the trend toward mobile communication has enabled different types of communication among students, such as social media. This has created a fundamental shift on how students use computing resources and how they learn at postsecondary institutions. Up until now I have been reviewing the literature related to this topic, and doing my own research by conducting interviews and surveys with students. Often I would present my finding to my peers in other parts of the organization and to higher level management within my department. It is at this point then I decided to pursue a Masters in Education. As in most of my courses I intended to kill two birds with one stone. In other words, I would try to incorporate my own work in class projects, and apply what I have learned in my program to work.

I consider myself lucky to have a position that directly involves student interaction. More importantly, I find myself in a position to influence the way they interact with technology. One stark difference I found during my time in the private sector was the lack of ability to step back and look at the bigger picture. For example, problems were often addressed on the assembly line when they really needed to be addressed in the design stage, long before they became an actual product. More and more I started to questions how we interact with students. I felt that undertaking a graduate program would provide me the necessary motivation to seek some of the answers to these bigger picture issues.

### **Digression # 1: To think or not to think?**

In order to be considered a researcher you must first look at the world critically. What makes someone a critical thinker? If you are lucky, at some point in your academic career you begin to shift from a consumer of information to a creator of information. This critical shift is set off when you start to transition from learning to thinking. This may happen in high school, during an undergraduate degree, or it may never happen (Lipman, 1988). Looking back, I cannot recall when I became a critical thinker. Like most things in my life, it probably happened very slowly. For me it was a combination of my work environment and my drive to consume information. I have been fortunate to be in a position to make changes in my job. In order to make a change, you must first understand the root cause of the problem. My approach has often been to first measure the problem then let the data tell the story. When I left the private sector I brought this approach to the post secondary environment. Over time, I began collecting data to help solve a variety of issues. In the private sector, the goal was solving the problem. This too was the main objective on campus, however the environment also allowed me to dig deeper and explore more meaningful questions. For example, I began collecting data on the type of devices that students

wanted to use on Memorial's wireless network. The goal was to discover which devices were the most popular. Over time we could see a trend towards mobile devices, such as smart phones, over more traditional technology, like laptops. During this time I was also doing a course that allowed me take this data and ask more strategic questions, such as exploring the impact of mobile technology not only from a technology perspective but also from a learning perspective.

### **Graduate studies: Seeking answers to questions**

As I stated before, I find it ironic that I spent the first five years of university trying to get out. Now, I find university woven into the fabric of my own identity. From my own experiences with research, the more you do it the more you want explore. For example, once I discovered that students often own more than one mobile device, the next logical question is why? So, questions often lead to additional questions, becoming a circular entanglement that is not easily broken. Just the very nature of working at a post secondary institution gives you access to resources that cannot be found anywhere else. Being on campus allows you to can gain access to the library's holdings by simply searching on your computer. In addition, you can go to the university library and gain access to librarians and other knowledgeable library staff. Graduate studies offered a chance to learn more about how to conduct research and articulate it to readers. Unlike my undergraduate experience, a lot of emphasis is placed on how to conduct rigorous research, and how to write papers. Many Graduate programs required their students do a research course early on in their programs which is important as I felt I did not learn this correctly in the undergraduate level.

I was now mentally ready to undertake this type of program and to build the skills necessary to be an effective researcher. I also felt that I had data and experience to contribute to field of education technology. This program forced me to gain a depth of knowledge in areas that interested me professionally and academically. Writing papers in Assistive Technology, IT Training, Mobile Computing, and Student Computing helped me gain insight in these areas would not have happened otherwise.

### **Digression # 2: The problem with a subjective opinion**

An opinion is a point of view or a belief that has been created by someone (Merriam Webster, 2013). A fact is something that has been proven and can be observed (Dictionary.com, 2013). It has been my experience that far too many decisions have been made based on opinions supported by anecdotal evidence. These types of decisions are reactive and deal with addressing symptoms of a larger issue. These band-aid solutions may seem to produce results, but often result in the band-aid losing its ability to stick, causing the problem to remerge. Then, if the band-aid needs to be removed, it can be very painful. At work, I had the opportunity to see the results of good and poor decision making. I have witnessed groups spending considerable amounts of resources working towards these band-aid decisions. Conversely, I have seen people highlight the problem, then seek more empirical means of measuring the issue. They may be looking at data that has already been collected, or it may result in data needing to be collected. Once the information is acquired, a careful examination is conducted on the data. Sometimes a clear solution emerges from this process, in this case a solution can be implemented with confidence. However, more often than not, there is no clear choice and a "lesser evil" approach has to be made. I am not saying that this type of approach will always lead to the best solution. I

am saying that intuition is more likely to result in a trail of inconsistencies that could lead to more problems down the road.

### **Life after graduate studies: What now?**

For the last two years I have been working towards a Masters in Education and will be graduating in April. So what is next on this journey? Up until now, each term presented me with a new challenge and at least one research paper would force me to find ways to incorporate my own information research to my work. Once this chapter of my life ends, will I continue to have opportunities to do research? Up until now, I have not published in any type of peer-reviewed journal. From my perspective I have two conventional choices to continue with research. The first is to aim my sights on writing articles in professional journals. This would seem like the logical choice, there are several publications, for example, *EDUCAUSE Quarterly*, that could potentially publish my work. The other option would be a professional degree such as an EdD. These programs are for practising professionals that can continue their day jobs while working. This will require a lot of additional effort and a long term commitment. If I step back a little I can see a third unconventional option, the internet, specifically blogging. Blogging, while not peer reviewed, would allow me to continue to share ideas. The very nature of blogging allows for back and forth dialog via comments. This allows users to challenge and/or expand on ideas posted in your article.

For more than two and half years I have been writing papers, many of which have helped me gain more insight into my profession. There comes a time, however, when you want to reach a wider audience. At this point, I consider myself someone who looks at the world through a critically tinted lens, but am I really a researcher, and can a blog be considered a medium to share research? Albert Szent-Gyorgy (as cited in Ferrarese, 2005) was famously quoted as saying "Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought" (p. 527). Based on this definition maybe I am a researcher, but not in the traditional sense.

At this point in my Masters, I am writing at least two papers per semester. These papers take a considerable amount of time and emotional effort. For the most part, my audience has consisted of my professor, and a few people who worked with me at university. I felt that my papers were not publishable, but I still wanted to reach a larger audience. One day chatting with a colleague over a cup of tea, we came up with the idea of creating an educational blog. The focus of the blog was to be something we were both interested in: educational technology. This could be a perfect solution to my quandary, it would allow me to publish material to a larger audience, plus I could avoid my own perceived publishing phobia. Before long we decide on a name, Binary Chalk and then started to brainstorm potential themes for posts (Pendergast & Goulding, 2013). Blogs serve many purposes. Depending on the writing styles, posts could be used for magazine articles, published as scholarly journal articles and even presented as academic posters (Nardi, 2004). In order to have a successful blog, it should be updated on a regular basis. I think it is fair to say that neither of us are prolific writers. We both had jobs and lot of other commitments. To solve this problem, we decided to add a core group of bloggers from the post secondary landscape. We recruited professors, staff and even students to participate. At present, we have bloggers representing universities and colleges from the Atlantic region. Our goal was to publish

every Monday. The topics vary widely, but have one thing in common: educational technology. Over time we have been building our readership and now have a weekly audience of 300. These 300 readers chose to visit the blog of their own free will. I often criticize myself on the low number of readers, but if I revisit why I co-founded this blog in the first place, I consider it a success. I have gone from having a readership of only a handful to people to a much wider audience. While a blog is far less formal, and not nearly as rigid as a peer-reviewed journal, it does allow a person to present an argument. The amount of rigour depends on each individual. One thing I do like about blogging is the flexibility it provides. For example, I have posted blogs in videos, demos, and written format. While I discovered blogging near the end of my Masters, I think it could be a great tool for graduate students. It would take very little work to convert an academic paper into a blog. For traditional researchers, publishing to a peer reviewed academic journal pushes them to write high quality work. Writing for a larger audience may have a similar effect on the quality of material that is being produced in a blog. After all, once something is published in a blog, it is there for everyone to see.

## Conclusion

I purposely posed the title of this paper as a question rather than as statement as my goal was not to answer the question but to explore the events that have brought me to this point in my career. Reading over this paper it is clear to me that the professional and academic choices I have made have led me to this point. My commitment to lifelong learning and my decision to work at a post secondary institution have influenced me in profound ways. Do I consider myself a part-time researcher? In the traditional sense, probably not. In a non-traditional sense, using a non-traditional medium, maybe.

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## **Chapter 14: In competition: A narrative of a young scholar**

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### **Abstract**

*In competition*

*Growing up in a foreign land*

*Mixing with a wealthier man*

*Charity student prove yourself*

*Never quite measuring up*

*I dreamed about becoming a teacher*

*It wasn't enough, be a doctor, be a lawyer*

*Status in society is the aim*

*Working for financial gain*

*Grow up*

*Hurry up*

*Measure up*

*Don't give up*

*In competition don't give up*

*Be the best*

*Cover the test*

*Grow up, measure up*

*Get a degree*

*Then another and another*

*You're are not doing it fast enough*

*Hurry up finish up*

*Get married have a kid*

*Hurry up measure up*

*Save your money*

*Buy a house*

*Grow up measure up*

*Make us proud*

*Grow up get a job*

*Hurry up measure up*

*Be the youngest in your crowd*

*Want the best! Do your best!*



## Introduction

This is a case study investigating the journey of a young scholar as she moves from a graduate student to a tenure track position and her journey, it's not yet finished. This case study highlights the complexity of a career journey and the influences of family and mentors/teachers. The case study amplifies the inability to separate the self from the child, self from the student, self from the partner, self from the teacher, and self from the professor and the researcher.

The “call for papers” came out on Memorial University’s list serve for a special edition of the *Morning Watch* “on becoming a researcher” with two of my *Writing Group* colleagues as editors. I immediately wanted to support their endeavors with a paper on my own journey and write the *narrative of becoming a researcher*. Having not been schooled in narrative inquiry I set about the journey of discovery. I started reading about narrative methods, attempting to understand what it means to do narrative research. I read several works written by Bullough and Pinnegar (2001), Connelly and Clandinin (1990), Clandinin and Connelly, (1996), Clandinin, Pusher, and Murray Orr (2007), Denzin, (2009), Polkinghorne, (2007) Richardson (2000), and Richardson (2001), to name a few. I found myself more confused than enlightened about the approach as I stumbled into debates, differing points of view, and critiques about those views. There are multiple definitions of narrative research, however, I found myself drawn to Polkinghorne’s (2007) definition, “narrative research is the study of stories” (p. 471).

## Methodology

In the beginning I thought I would write about my own journey of becoming a researcher. I started the writing process and quickly found that I exposed the “self” and indirectly my family for all to read, at least those who read the *Morning Watch*, a public document. In presenting my personal reasons for researching in the area of special education I felt a sense of extreme vulnerability. What I did, was to stop writing, go back to the literature, read and read. I wondered why I was doing this; what were my motives? I know that when I am uncomfortable or unsure of how to approach a topic, procrastination, in the form of collecting more articles, books, chapters and reading text, is my fall back. In examining and reflecting on this “procrastination” I realized that I did not want to expose my family. Laurel Richardson (2001) discusses the ethics of writing about the self and the associated risks and states “Can you write about your department without serious consequences to yourself or your students? What about your family? Who might you be hurting?” (p. 37). With this in mind I changed gears and completed a more traditional qualitative study in the form of a case study of another researcher, using narrative methodology.

The researcher, who I gave a pseudonym, Roxanne, listened to my deliberating about how difficult I found writing about myself and volunteered to write a narrative of her own journey for me to analyze and write about for this special edition. Therefore, the process of participant selection would be considered one that was “purposeful”, in that the Roxanne was required to have experience with the phenomena under study. Sandelowski (2000) describes purposeful

sampling as an approach to data collection “where the researcher wants to ensure that certain cases varying on preselected parameters are included” (p. 250).

I had difficulty starting the process of writing, I wanted to honor Roxanne, and give voice to Roxanne’s story. I reread Laurel Richardson’s (1994) article *Writing: A method of inquiry* in

which she describes writing formats including metaphor, experimental representation, poetry and drama. Richardson states, “Settling words together in new configurations lets us hear, see, and feel the world in new dimensions. Poetry is thus a *practical* and *powerful* method of analyzing social worlds” (p. 522). When I reflected on Roxanne’s narrative many of her words came to mind. I started to think how to put what I had come to learn about Roxanne’s journey in a form that would speak to her, about her, and at the same time represent her story for others to understand. I started this article with a poem, and by doing so I found I felt freed to write the rest of the article. I was schooled to write only after I had the reading completed, the analyses done, and an organizational framework in place. Van Manen (2006) suggests that “qualitative inquiry can not be separated from the practice of writing” (p.713). This process was both frightening, in regards to how will it be perceived in an academic context, as well as liberating in that I was able to write this story. However, in keeping with my previous training I needed to outline the process that I went through to ensure the process was visible.

### *Steps taken*

I met with Roxanne to develop a plan for this research. We debated whether to complete face-to-face audio-taped interviews or written narratives. To save time by eliminating the process of transcribing the interview, she agreed to write her narrative “on becoming a researcher”. Time lines were decided and the purpose of the study provided. We decided that the goal of this study was to explore the experiences of a beginning researcher based in the narrative tradition; with this in mind Roxanne’s task was to write her story of her journey.

We agreed on meeting times to discuss the narrative and the analysis of the narrative. Five meeting times were established, however, two were cancelled, one because of workload issues and one because of illness.

I kept a reflective journal during the course of our process and used the journal notes in conjunction with the written narrative. I found myself constantly thinking about my readings on narrative inquiry and the written narrative Roxanne provided. I made numerous handwritten journal entries and I also made notes on my iPhone when my journal was not available. The poem came as a part of my immersion in the story of Roxanne’s journey. My only available place to store the poem at the time was on my iPhone. All notes and reflections on the process were transferred to the journal and the journal formed a part of the data.

I did find myself uncertain once I received the written narrative from Roxanne. I thought, “Okay, now what? How do I analyze this within the framework of narrative methodology?” Narrative has many different methods depending on the author, and as a novice using narrative methodology, I needed an approach that was clear and structured. I opted to begin the analysis by

adopting one aspect of Labov's (1997, 2001) well-known method, examining the data for "complicating actions". I recognize that there are advantages and disadvantages to using a structured approach; however, I felt this approach was appropriate for our process.

I read Roxanne's narrative several times before beginning the coding. While reading the narrative I jotted down notes about the narrative and questions related to meaning. I coded the initial narrative using "complicating actions" as an overarching category. In coding for complicating actions, I read the narrative and coded key phrases as the primary method of data analysis.

Once the narrative was coded I once again examined the narrative, my codes, and my journal. Re-examining the data lead to further questions, I emailed Roxanne and provided her with a choice of a face-to-face meeting or responding in writing to a series of clarifying questions. Roxanne opted to respond to my questions in a written response. She suggested that writing the responses allowed her to "formulate her thoughts and write a complete response" which she didn't think she would be able to do face-to-face.

When the written responses to the questions were received they were analyzed in the same way as the initial narrative provided by Roxanne. The responses were examined for complicating actions, and the key phrases were coded. Once this coding was completed, the key phrases from the initial narrative and the follow up questions were placed in a word document and numbered.

The key phases were printed and they were cut into individual statements. I sorted the key phrases taken from the narrative into categories "that are similar or go together" (LeCompte, 2000, p.149) and then I named the groups using broad categories. The categories were family, peers, partners, teacher, professor, and researcher. These were eventually sorted into three broader categories of family, self, and relationships.

During the coding I read an article written by LeCompte (2000) and I was struck by her statement "to create good research findings, analysis also must yield results that are meaningful to the people for whom they are intended and described in language they understand" (p.152). As a result, I asked Roxanne if she would also sort the key statements. I provided the broad categories but told her she could add to these if she felt necessary. Of the 88 key statements Roxanne and I coded, 66 of them, or 75% overlapped. We discussed the differences and the rationale for their placement in the chosen categories. In writing this narrative I deferred to Roxanne's coding of the statements.

During my career I worked as a children's therapist with the Alberta Mental Health Board and was provided the opportunity to attend training sessions with Dr. Karl Tomm, the Director of the Family Therapy program, at the University of Calgary. Tomm often uses the "internalized other" (father, mother, brother, sister, or peer) in working with families and individuals in counselling. To do this I asked Roxanne to write "using the 'I' position of another person and to speak from their experience..." of her as a researcher (Tomm, 1998, p. 411). This data was subsequently coded and used in the analyses.

The final step in the process was to have Roxanne read the first draft of the article and to provide feedback. Roxanne was given the opportunity to remove any information she didn't agree with or was uncomfortable with, and to change any errors or omissions. Feedback was incorporated into the final version of this article and Roxanne was again given the opportunity to provide feedback.

The poetry used at the beginning of this article and at the beginning of each theme was initially written by me using the words Roxanne's wrote in her initial narrative and her follow-up writing.

I first composed each of the verses and I asked Roxanne for feedback in regards to whether the poetry was reflective of her writing. Roxanne provided significant input into the poetry. I would suggest that end result was poetry that was developed by both of me and Roxanne; however, the words belong to Roxanne.

## **Results**

The results of this case study suggest that the journey of an early career scholar is influenced by many factors. Separating the journey that Roxanne travelled from other aspects of her life was impossible. I imagine that this would essentially be the same for any narrative regardless of the career stage or the person's journey under study. Relationships with family, peers, partners, community and the larger society are complex and they have an impact on the individual. For the purpose of this article I have divided the narrative into three main themes; family, self and relationships.

### **The family**

*I dreamed about becoming a teacher  
Status in society is the aim but  
Stability is my plan*

*Growing up in foreign lands  
Mixing with a wealthier man  
Charity student prove yourself  
Working hard to measure up*

In reviewing Roxanne's narrative from the point of view of her family, it became apparent that they were several "complicating actions" to her life journey. She grew up in a family that moved around the world. She lived in several countries during her early school years and attended private schools with extremely wealthy peers. Her parents relied on fundraising and charity throughout Roxanne's life to do their work in other countries. This meant that Roxanne's family may not necessarily have had a stable source of income. It seems that Roxanne was influenced by this instability and purposefully moved from undergraduate, to graduate degrees to ensure that she was able to secure a stable job, with a stable income, with a clear retirement plan. Roxanne reflected on her father's career and the following quote provides her rationale for needing to be secure.

My father's line of work relies on charity and as a result there was never a steady stream of income. So perhaps making it in society means I am able to secure a job with a steady income that allows for a reasonable retirement age and adequate vacation time. This steady income would hypothetically allow me to pay for braces for my son or daughter, without worrying about whether or not I would have funds for maintenance visits.

In her narrative Roxanne suggested her parents valued education and professions such as doctors and lawyers.

Both of my parents have 10 years of post-secondary education, so this further education was not something I questioned, rather it was something that was

expected if I was going to become a top achiever in my field. This was another expectation in my family, for second best was never good enough.

As a young child Roxanne would tell her parents she would be a doctor or a lawyer when she grew up to please them knowing they valued these professions. However, Roxanne dreamed of being a teacher as she loved children and enjoyed working with children and tutoring children, however, this career in Roxanne's view was not as valued by her family or her peers. "I knew I would never get rich being a teacher or feel like I had made it in society". "My best friend became an actuary... I was always mocked for pursuing a degree in education as it was perceived as 'taking the easy way out'".

During Roxanne's final year of high school she lived with her friend's family while her parents moved abroad to work. Roxanne felt that she had very little guidance or support in her decision making regarding school.

At the age of 17 I applied to university. With the exception of a few university promotional flyers, I received little support from guidance. With my parents living in China, I felt very alone in making these potentially life altering decisions. I had always been a strong student, but had to work for the grades I received in math and science. As a result, I applied to a humanities based program.

In this regard Roxanne was making adult decisions without the support of her family or from the school counseling service. These are difficult years for most adolescents and were especially difficult for Roxanne as she struggled to make these decisions on her own.

Roxanne was the oldest of three biological children and shortly before Roxanne finished teacher's college her parents adopted a fourth child, a three-year-old girl. Roxanne's sister had some health problems and she was approved for major surgery. Her family moved back to Canada with Roxanne's sister, and at a time when most young adults are launching themselves into the working world and moving out on their own, Roxanne chose to move home. Roxanne

moved in with her family so she could get to know her youngest sister. The move home allowed Roxanne to study full time in a graduate program without having the financial burden of maintaining her own living space. However, by the time she had completed her Master's her parents had once more moved abroad and Roxanne remained in the family home, continued with graduate school, and took over the care of her younger brother who had just started university. "I felt it was my role to keep the house in good order, and ensure there were hot and healthy meals on the table so that he could experience a "normal family life." Continuing to live in her parents' home allowed her to save her money which she used for a down payment on a house once she secured employment. However, Roxanne did recognize that doing her Master's and PhD at the same university may have limited her opportunities to interact with different people and scholars.

### **Self**

*Pressure from within  
In competition don't give up  
I'll be my best*

*Cover the test  
Cook the meals  
Grow up measure up*

*Get a degree  
Then another  
You are the youngest after all  
Hurry up prove yourself  
Volunteer then do some more  
Advocate  
Hurry up measure up  
Do the work  
Finish up  
Get a job  
Get married  
Buy a house*

Roxanne showed much strength in her decision to pursue her dreams even in the face of her family and her peers. During her first degree Roxanne made a choice to get good grades, she had reviewed the requirement for teacher's college and worked hard to achieve good grades to ensure she was successful in being accepted into teacher's college.

I knew I needed to meet the required 80% grade point average to be accepted into the concurrent education program and I knew I would need to avail of valuable work experience if I wanted to pursue a Master's program immediately after teacher's college.



During summers when most students were pursuing their social lives, taking on jobs just to earn money, Roxanne was setting up teaching experiences to ensure that she would meet the minimum requirements to be accepted into her Master's degree following teachers' college. This did come at a price; being the youngest student in her graduate programs, Roxanne always felt she had to prove herself. "I was very much aware that I was the youngest doctoral student in my faculty. I didn't want to appear young and naive, and as a result I took on additional responsibilities."

Roxanne took on additional volunteer experiences both with her peers as a co-leader of a doctoral study group and with a variety of community organizations tutoring and taking on administrative roles. She felt she had to work harder to make up for her lack of experience.

I know I'm young, and I want to be taken seriously. I want to be perceived as someone who gives back to their community. I know I am a strong academic, but I want to be perceived as a well-rounded individual, so I started volunteering... I'm excited, I want to get involved and give back to those individuals who learn differently – those individuals who have made my research possible.

Roxanne also worked on a number of research projects during the course of her PhD. She felt that she needed to work on projects so that she had experience and she would receive authorship on published articles and in turn increase her chances of employment. Even with the experience from projects she completed with others and for her own doctoral dissertation Roxanne talked about the "Imposter Syndrome". This syndrome has been described as, "feelings of not being as capable or adequate as others perceive or evaluate them to be" (Brems, Baldwin, Davis, & Namyniuk, 1994, p. 183). She indicated that she feels that she isn't a researcher "there is almost a sense of mysticism associated with these individuals-similar to the *Wizard of Oz* - someone you hear from and respect, but rarely see".

Roxanne discussed how she was privileged to work with people she admired and does not feel that she measured up. She indicated these individuals are mid-career and she was just beginning.

I am passionate about research, but I can't say I can confidently wear the hat of researcher, at least not yet. I feel I must obtain additional research funding, and become recognized by my peers for my publications and contribution to the field, before I can confidently identify with the title of researcher.

Roxanne states that she feels disappointed in her progress since taking on her new job. Her move to a new faculty position prior to the completion of the defense of her doctoral dissertation meant she was negotiating the roles of assistant professor and student at the same time. She set timelines that she was unable to meet and was extremely disappointed.

I felt like I was unable to do my job with my dissertation looming over my head. I understand that my dissertation is part of my line of research but internally I felt as if it were part of my student life - one I needed to leave behind in order to transition into the role of a faculty member.

## **Relationships**

*Mentor's respect*

*Get involved you're allowed*

*Have a voice*

*Make it heard*

*Valued member*

*Take pride I think you've earned it*

*Giving help but not too much*

*Guiding voice is just enough*

*Prepared me for a tenure track*

*I just know that you'll give back*

*Be your best I know you're worth it*

One of the “complicating actions” in Roxanne’s journey towards becoming a researcher occurred when she was hired as a research assistant by Susanne (a pseudonym) an academic at the university where Roxanne was accepted to complete her Master’s degree. From the beginning, this relationship was respectful and Roxanne felt valued. She eventually took Susanne as her Master’s thesis supervisor and eventually her Doctoral supervisor. Roxanne’s choice of research topics was also influenced by her doctoral supervisor. Roxanne’s relationship with Susanne was one of the factors that significantly influenced Roxanne’s decision to remain at the same institution to complete her PhD.

The relationship I encountered along the way [supervisor] pushed me in this direction. The woman who introduced me to my first research project soon became my Master’s thesis supervisor and quickly became

an important role model in my life...based on the advice of my supervisor, I began to pursue a career in academia. I applied to two doctoral programs and was accepted into both. However, I opted to continue to work with my Master’s thesis supervisor because of the nurturing relationship that developed.

Roxanne became immersed in her supervisor’s academic research and eventually decided to pursue similar research. “I don’t know that my teaching influenced my research. In fact I had not been exposed to [the topic] during my pre-service teacher education or during my initial teaching experiences.”

Roxanne did find a personal connection to her topic area, “from a human rights perspective”. She experienced living in several different countries in her formative years and the experiences of her

adopted sister influenced and motivated her to continue in this research. Growing up in China exposed Roxanne to children with disabilities who were not eligible to be educated because of their disabling condition. “My sister would not have been educated because of her [health condition]. Her presumed short life expectancy meant she would not be deserving of the time and resources surrounding her education”.

Roxanne believes that the relationship with her supervisor has been a significant influence. Her supervisor instilled a confidence in her ability to do research and to become an influential academic.

I’m lucky to have such a great supervisor, she trusts me and she allows me to get involved as a colleague – not just her doctoral student. She allows me to take the lead on research projects and allows me to contribute to joint publications. To this day I would say I had the greatest thesis supervisor. She was the greatest role model in every way. She showed me it was possible to be a researcher, teacher, community advocate, and mother-and to do each job well. She helped me understand the life of an academic and placed confidence in me to lead major projects. She exerted an ‘I know you can do it’ motto which I soon internalized.

### ***Partners***

*Slow down take a break  
Watch TV, eat some cake  
Relax, hang out  
What’s your rush?*

*Juggle your time  
Take a break we’re new in town*

*Find new friends  
Let’s go fishing  
Finding our way  
New people, new friends, new culture  
When will this end?*

*Finding his way has not been easy  
His new job is not the best  
This has put us to the test  
Social life not so much  
Academics! I’ve nothing in common  
Where do you make friends?  
On the job working in isolation  
Not enough money and no vacation*

Roxanne starting dating her partner, Frank (a pseudonym), just after she finished teacher's college and before beginning her Master's degree.

We were an unlikely match, but he was the polar opposite from my high strung father, a trait I was perhaps unconsciously looking for. [Frank] taught me how to relax, but his easy going personality also meant he was also always looking to 'hang out' and this made me feel like I had to do an even better job of juggling my time.

To add another dimension to Roxanne story: marriage. Shortly after she took the position of assistant professor she married Frank. While this was an exciting time for her she also found herself negotiating her academic work and her relationship with her new husband.

I live to work, but I found it difficult to balance my time between my academic responsibilities and my husband who was struggling with adjusting to this new province and way of life. I have struggled to find my academic voice, against my other competing work responsibilities

The new couple, in a new province, struggled to find their place. Frank initially struggled to find suitable employment and had to navigate employment on his own.

I always thought that when I moved away from my family I would be able to focus on myself and work. I had only ever known Frank as a 'happy go lucky' guy and was taken by surprise by his difficulty to adjust to our new home. I know that Frank thrives on social activities and as a result I made a conscious effort to spend more time with our cousins who are the same age... I felt little in common with my cousins who were just a few years younger than me. Similarly, Frank may feel less in common with my co-workers who already had children and are at a different phase in their lives.

*There cannot be any distractions*

*No shopping*

*No eating out*

*No watching TV*

*She must not stop*

*Until the task is complete*

To summarize, Roxanne is a young scholar just entering her career as an academic. She had not previously worked in a full-time academic or professional position. She moved from an undergraduate student, to a Master's student, and onto being a Doctoral student. She gained her teaching experience through short-term work contracts and this is her first full-time experience. Roxanne had several changes in the past year including transitioning from student to assistant professor, she's moved from being single, living with her brother and boarders, to getting married and now living with her new partner. She also has transitioned from living in her

parents' home to being a home owner, and as a result of taking on a faculty position she has had to leave her home province, leaving behind a system of supports including her family and her friends.

## Discussion

While I was analyzing Roxanne's narrative and preparing this paper, I found that I was engaged in a number of topics represented in the research literature. I found myself reading on topics such as stress and coping, self-esteem, identity, and career development. There is a large body of literature on each of these topics and I decided to focus on the psychology literature; therefore, I have limited the discussion to surround stress, coping, and developing a new identity.

After I looked at all the number of life changes listed in the summary, I remembered reading that getting married and buying a house were rated high on a stress scale. I searched for stress scales and found the *Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Scale* (1967). Many of the transitions listed in Roxanne's narrative are actually a part of this scale. This scale ranks certain life events on a scale of 0-100. The authors ask you to check the items that have occurred for you in the past year and you are provided a cumulative score. On this scale marriage gets a score of 50, change in one's line of work gets a score of 36, a mortgage or loan scores a 31, beginning or ending school, gives you a score of 26, and an change in residence, receives a score of 20 (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Other events such as a change in the number of arguments, change in the hours of work, taking a vacation, and experiencing a change in religious activities, were also included in this scale. The authors suggest that cumulative scores of less than 150 are considered to be at low stress; scores from 150-299 are considered moderate to high risk stress; and scores at 300 and above are considered to be very high stress. I completed the scale using information from Roxanne's narrative and her score was considered moderate to high risk, therefore, Roxanne and Frank may be at higher risk for developing an illness than an individual coming into a faculty position that did not experience the same number of life's stressful events. Even though this scale was developed in the mid-1960's it continues to be used and is prominent in the research literature that examines the links between stress and illness (Blasco-Fontecilla et al. 2012; Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Kabasa, 1979).

Change is a part of living. However, when a new graduate hopes to move into an academic position, change is very likely as academics often need to move where jobs are available (Mason & Goulden, 2002). Usually it will require that the academic move community, province, and sometimes country to take up a position (Mason & Goulden, 2002). The ability to cope with the changes that occur as a result of taking on an academic position is dependent on a number of factors. Building on the work of Kobasa (1979), Brammer (1992) suggested that a critical component of how a person copes with a transition is how much control they perceive they have over the change. In the narrative written by Roxanne, she discussed how difficult Frank found the move to this province; it is possible that Frank did not perceive control over the move in that he followed his partner, Roxanne, to support her career. While we can't know for certain without his narrative, his lack of job satisfaction and his sense of being unemployed may also have impacted his adjustment to the move.

Change can be a problem for many individuals and their reactions may range from high levels of anxiety to extreme excitement. Kobasa (1979) suggested that it is not only stress that can impact

an individual and increase the risk of illness, but an individual's personality may also impact how they respond. Kobasa studied a large group of executives and analyzed the difference between those that experienced illness and those that didn't in relation to stressful events. She found that there were some personality characteristics that may differentiate those that become ill from those who do not; they include a commitment to self, active involvement with the environment, and an internal versus an external locus of control (Kobasa, 1979). The sense of loss associated with life stress and transitions can cause grief and may require a period of mourning to resolve this sense of loss. Mason and Goulden (2004) recommend that institutions hiring new faculty should be attuned to the demands of tenure and that there should be institutional commitment to assist new faculty. These researchers also recommend that provide assistance to the spouse or partner to assist with adjustment and job searches.

In the literature, there is a suggestion that individuals usually identify themselves in two major domains, work and family roles (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006; Halpern, 2008). Individuals, including academics, will be a part of a family, a community, and the world of work. There is a whole range of research on identity theory and career identity development which is well beyond the scope of this article. For example, Waterman (1999), links identity to Erikson's psychosocial stages and would suggest that Roxanne, in the course of her narrative, introduced two of the stages; "identity versus role confusion", in her pursuit of a career; and "intimacy versus isolation", in her relationships with her mentor and her partner. In contrast, Blustein and Noumair (1996) introduce the concept of "embeddedness" and suggest that identity and career identity are a part of a larger construct. "Encompassing both the relational and cultural influences [on self and identity], embeddedness is a way of underscoring an interdependence between individuals and their psychological, social, historical, and cultural contexts" (p. 437). This theory is more in alignment with Roxanne's narrative where her relationship with her family, her experiences of living in Canada and elsewhere, and her relationships with her mentor and peers are intertwined.

Separating the various roles that a person takes on throughout their life is extremely difficult. When I reviewed and analyzed Roxanne's narrative the level of difficulty became very clear. I had difficulty separating the child, the student, the partner, the academic and the self. In trying to separate the journey towards researcher it was impossible not to consider these other roles of the self. In the narrative Roxanne wrote about difficulties balancing her world of home and her world of work. She has found the transition difficult. Halpern (2008) suggests that "faculty positions can be all-consuming in their time demands, which can make it very difficult to manage family care responsibilities" (p. 59). Halpern suggested that "psychologists, who work in universities, research labs, and other professional settings, need work policies that allow them to meet both their professional and family obligations without having to choose between the two" (p. 58).

I believe that Roxanne's journey is common. I recently read an article by Chen and Anderson (2008) in which Chen describes her journey toward becoming a researcher. Like Roxanne, she was hired into an academic position which required her to move cities, move houses, and the



demands of being an academic. “Research, teaching, supervising students, service, with so many things that demand time and energy everyday, stress is a constant factor in my life” (p. 66). McCormick and Barnes (2008) offer new academics a number of helpful strategies that could make the transition to an academic position easier. These authors offer advice for navigating the academic culture of an institution including the recommendations that new academics learn about the promotion and tenure process, seek out mentorship, and protect their time. Kostovich, Saban, and Collins (2010) strongly recommend that new researchers in Nursing Faculties take on a mentor. They suggested that to expect new graduates to compete for research funding is setting new researchers up for failure. Setting up a research agenda will be difficult because most new graduates have limited personal and financial resources and as result institutions should set themselves up to support these new researchers. Kostovich, Saban, and Collins (2010) suggest that while doctoral studies are an arduous process, new graduates are far from being “experts”.

### **Implications**

In reading Roxanne’s narrative I believe that there is a great deal for us to learn. She is a young scholar navigating an institutional culture and a new province. These things bring with them a number of life changes, and as a result, an increase in levels of stress and anxiety. On an institutional level I think that universities need to be aware of these stressful events and plan a system of supports around new faculty if we want them to be happy, healthy, and contributing members of the academic community.

Another implication is that scholars are not isolated beings. They come with partners, children, and sometimes extended families that rely on them for support. Therefore, institutions such as Memorial University of Newfoundland should also have policies and procedures in place to assist new hires with adapting and adjusting to the new institution, as well as the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador. Most important for Roxanne would have been support for her partner, Frank. Frank moved to Newfoundland so that Roxanne could take on a faculty position, however, as a couple they were left with the task of finding employment for Frank. There was no information provided that employment supports were available, and other than reviewing the health care benefits associated with the position, no assistance was provided or offered.

Roxanne’s narrative also shows the positive relationship she experienced with her supervisor and the impact it had on herself and her career. Roxanne’s mentor trained her to be involved, that her opinions were valued, and that she was capable. I believe that this served as a role model for Roxanne. She states that she hopes to be able to treat her students in a similar manner.

### **Coda**

*The task is complete!*

*I can’t wait to start again*

*Children I’ll see again*

*They will make this journey worth it*

*Getting involved, working again*

*Energizing, it's surprising*

*I love my job*

*It been worthwhile*

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## Chapter 15: Bare: A conscious choice as a researcher

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### Abstract

Through autoethnographic reflections this paper explores the problematic discourses for those entering the academy in “becoming a researcher”. These problematic discourses broadly include (1) the notion of “researcher” as an identity rather than a performance base on social constructions, (2) the privileges associated with norms of acceptable research, (3) distancing of self, and (4) messages which devalue the significance of how lived experience is essential in understanding the process of becoming a researcher. I attempt to enhance awareness and contribute to growing knowledge surrounding the experience of becoming a researcher in the academy through detailing the relationships between my ‘coming out’ journey, my experience as a psychotherapist and the evolution of my view of a ‘researcher’. Through personal, evocative writing toward inquiry I weave specific interactions and introspection with theoretical positioning. I highlight the inextricability of the roles I perform, the collision of discourses and how both vulnerability and rigorous introspection have paved the way for me in embracing the experience of ‘becoming a researcher’.

### Introduction

The gifts I have received in relationship with my father are immeasurable. I can only begin to describe them through story. During the course of our relationship as father and daughter, mentor and student, friends and confidants I have been visible and invisible, understood and misunderstood and always fiercely loved. These experiences along with many others, a few of which I will further explore here, have brought me to my present understanding of ‘becoming a researcher’.

*Galileo's head was on the block*

*The crime was looking up for truth*

*And as the bombshells of my daily fears explode*

*I try to trace them to my youth – Galileo (Indigo Girls, 1992)*

### 1984: Venice Beach

The air at the Culver City ice-skating rink was different on competition days; it was colder, still and full of tension. My long auburn hair pulled tightly back in a French braid wearing new tights, skating dress and polished skates. I came off the ice. My first glance was to my coach, Doug. I was looking for approval, confirmation that I had just locked in the high score for the figure portion of the competition. He said nothing only nodded his head and I knew I had performed well. My next thoughts were, “*Where’s my Dad? Where are my skate guards? What does he think, does he think it will be enough to get me through tonight’s freestyle competition and still end up 1<sup>st</sup> overall?*” Then I saw him, “*Dad*”! He holds me tightly, squeezing me and warming me under his big bear like arms. “*I think you did it Sarahdoo. I knew you would. Now, what do you say we get out of here for a little bit?*” he says. This was not my Dad’s typical role. He did not manage my competitive skating career- that was my mothers’ job. She would

have had a plan of how we were going to prepare for the evening competition: likely visualization, rest, nutrition, off-ice practice of my routine and most importantly nothing overly stimulating.

**Doug:** (walking over to my Dad and me) *Oh good Ed, you're taking her out of here for a while, remember to keep her relaxed and save up her energy for tonight- she goes on late, I don't want her tired.*

**Dad:** *Come on Sarahdoo, I have somewhere in mind for us to go.* (He hands me a doughnut making sure that my coach doesn't see it and I run to gather my things for our adventure. Eight hours later we return).

**Doug:** *Hi Sarah, you ready for this?*

**Me:** *Absolutely!* (Excitedly jumping up and down) *We ate fried bread, saw a man juggle chainsaws and people watched, oh and I practiced my routine barefoot in the sand.*

**Doug:** (looking at my dad in disbelief) *Ed, where did you take her?*

**Dad:** *Venice Beach*

**Doug:** *I thought you were taking her somewhere to relax and reserve her energy?*

**Dad:** *She's 10, she doesn't need to relax, she has an abundance of energy. Venice Beach was an experience she'll always remember.*

**Me:** (thoughts) *Wow! My dad loves me, he gets me, he sees me.*

From that point forward my Dad was forbidden to take me on his own to a competition. I do remember it, this early experience of love, visibility and understanding by my father.

### **1998: Key Decision**

Internal dialogue: *Today is the day, it has to be, I can't wait any longer. I am so tired of hiding, of feeling invisible and lying either directly or by omission. What if it doesn't go well, what then? You can't worry about that right now, Sarah or you will never go through with it. Just pick up the phone; he loves you, he gets you, now let him see you.* Tammy walks by me sitting in the kitchen, holding the phone. *"Are you going to call or just hold the phone for a little while longer?"* she says. *"Stop it",* I say. I pickup the phone, dial the number and take a deep breath, *"Dad I have been trying to connect with you for a while, there is something that I want to talk with you about. I'm ok, don't worry I'm not sick or anything life threatening like that",* I say. The truth is what I was about to share did feel life threatening. My foot begins to shake, my eyes shift and my voice cracks as I go on, *"Dad I'm gay, Tammy is not my friend, she is my girlfriend."*

My eyes focus on the I Love Lucy pajamas I am wearing and the smoke from the cigarette in my hand fills the air around me as I anxiously wait for his reply. *"Oh, well that's not too much of a*

*surprise Sarahdoo; I love you no matter what your sexual preference. Do you think that this might have something to do with your mother; I mean her dying when you were 12? Do you think you missed something that you are now trying to find?"* he says. Heartache. In one swift moment I am both relieved and enraged. He still loves me, I breathe a little easier; but he doesn't

understand or see me, I begin to cry. I try to explain, give voice to my experience. The notion that I would *choose* to bring upon myself the agony, the pain I have felt in living a double life, and the fear I've walked with for years is unfathomable.

The decision I made to 'come out' to my father and my family has set the stage for how I have navigated many mainstream discourses. In that moment I was both attempting to stabilize my identity to be consistent with my attraction for women and destabilize it, away from assumptions about my sexuality. Both heteronormative and lesbian discourses require that I explain my behavior; they demand that I claim my sexual identity through the paring of my sex, gender, attraction and behavior (Butler, 1999). I responded accordingly, completely unaware of the notions of "fixed" sexuality and gender identities influencing my self-perception (Warner, 1993). For most of my childhood I had assumed that sex, gender and attraction were pre-scribed. As a young child these relationships posed no notable dilemma for me in that my performance of gender was consistent with societal expectations of my sex. I liked dresses, had long hair and like many of my peers thought that boys had 'cooties'. I did struggle at times with being an athlete and the expectations that I be a strong competitor and yet demure. Perhaps this was my first questioning of 'society's' pairing of gender and sex. I was fortunate; my parents were quick to highlight a wealth of examples for me to look toward that were both athletic and female. My walls were graced with Dorothy Hamill, Nadia Comaneci and Peggy Fleming. As I moved through adolescence the dilemmas began to simmer. I was aware that I no longer had the same experience as my peers. I liked boys and I even went so far as to keep a picture of Kirk Cameron on my bedroom wall for a few years, yet I knew that my experience of sex, gender and attraction differed from most of my peers. Unable to understand my experience and with the only visible models reflecting parings of sex, gender and attraction in binary forms I assumed it would come, attraction to the opposite sex. Perhaps I was a late bloomer. It never came.

My inability to reconcile my unlabeled, unrepresented, invisible experience grew until I met Chad. Chad and I worked together as servers in a local restaurant and had become fast friends during my late teens and early twenties. I had reached a level of comfort with Chad in sharing my feelings of confusion about dating, attraction and gender and for many months now he had listened patiently to my struggle. He had gone with me to my first lesbian club and watched me squirm with discomfort while at the same time breathing a sigh of relief that a place like it existed. He offered comic relief sharing how uncomfortable he was as a large statured gay man in a lesbian club. In all my confusion, I knew he 'saw' and 'got' me, even though I didn't quite understand myself. Thus, it was fitting that it would be Chad who would gently, humorously and warmly nudge me toward a more rigorous reflection of my experience of gender, sex and attraction. It was a warm night in West Hollywood and I was feeling particularly comfortable in the 'gay' community with Chad by my side. After an evening of dancing, we stood outside devouring Polish hotdogs from our favorite street vendor:



**Me:** *So, I think I've figured it out. I'm bisexual. That's why I look the way I do. Why I look like most of my straight girlfriends and like most of the same things as they do, and don't want to date anyone who looks like them or me. I'm bisexual; I like women and men, but only women who look more androgynous.*

**Chad:** *Really, you think? So, are you going to call the girl who gave you her number tonight? What about that other girl, the lawyer, are you still dating her? Oh, and who was the last guy you dated?*

**Me:** *I don't know; maybe I'll call. I don't know about the lawyer yet, and what do you mean who was the last guy I dated?*

**Chad:** *Well, I can't remember the last time you dated a guy? In fact, in all the time we've been friends I can't really ever remember you dating a guy. You talk about it, but that seems like something you think you should do because of how you look, not something you actually want to do.*

**Me:** *Really, that can't be true.*

**Chad:** *Ok, maybe it isn't true, that's just what I see. Only you really know what it's like to be you.*

**Me:** *Hmmmmmm. (both intrigued and wanting to run from the conversation)*

**Chad:** *You know, it's ok if they don't all add up how we are told they should you know. I mean, how you look, who you like, what parts you have. Look at me, I'm built like a bear, can 'act' either gay or straight, love women and I'm really only physically attracted to men. You just are who you are and society is the one who doesn't get it. It's their loss if they don't get to know and love you like I do.*

**Me:** *Lesbian, huh? But the lesbians I know don't think I am a lesbian, they think I am straight and if I tell my straight girlfriends I am a lesbian, I think they might laugh. Does this mean I have to start wearing Doc. Martins, or overalls, or like team sports? I don't really like any of those. I don't know anyone like me. Who looks like me and is physically attracted **only** to women, and I can't think of anyone on TV or any example. I'm not a 'lipstick lesbian', or 'androgynous' or 'butch' - I'm a lesbian who most people assume is straight.*

**Chad:** *Then I guess that means that you better get comfortable with who you are since you'll probably have to explain yourself a lot, but pretending to have feelings of attraction that you don't or trying to act like a 'stereotypical lesbian' isn't who you are. You have never intentionally been fake, so please don't start now. What I love about you is your bravery and honesty.*

**Me:** *Ok, so a lesbian- or at least a woman who looks straight, but likes girls. This will be interesting Chaddy. Can I just say I am gay? I like that much better.*

It was because of this conversation with Chad and the realization that I needed to be brave and honest that I decided to declare my ‘lesbian status’ to those I loved; hoping, praying, and cringing a little as I awaited varying responses.

What does this have to do with my developing identity as a researcher? Everything. Although without self-awareness, at the time I was laying a foundation for how I conceptualize the process and purpose of research. At the beginning of my journey as an ‘out’ lesbian I discovered a central tenet in honoring others and myself: *lead with vulnerability*. Leading with vulnerability has been an evolutionary process, shaped by both my personal and professional relationships. Up to now, *leading with vulnerability* in the process of ‘becoming’ a researcher has meant trusting my gut or intuitive knowledge, following my passions, attuning to my experience – particularly feelings of fear, taking a deep breath and forging forward.

### **Listening to intuitive knowledge**

The language we choose to use and the meanings of words are important. Sexual *preference* implies a degree of voluntary choice, which is inconsistent with Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual person’s experiences (American Psychological Association, 2008, *What causes a person to have a particular sexual orientation?* para 1; Herek, Kimmel, Amaro & Melton, 1991). Whereas sexual *orientation* refers to an “enduring pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attractions to men, women, or both sexes. Sexual orientation also refers to a person’s sense of identity based on those attractions, related behaviors, and membership in a community of others who share those attractions” (American Psychological Association, 2008, para 2). The term preference is ambiguous, it suggests that I simply like women more than men; that the strong feelings of attraction, intense draw and magnetism I experienced in 2005 when meeting my now partner Kathy, I chose to have and therefore I might have been able to choose not to have them as well. Preference implies that affectionate attraction is akin to which shoes I decide to wear for the day. ‘Preference’ does not articulate the embodied sense of knowing, connection and exhilaration I feel in her presence; so much so that I would decide to move to Newfoundland and serendipitously to becoming a ‘researcher’. This early experience of invisibility, insult and invalidation through my father’s use of the term preference has been instrumental in shaping my research interest in microaggressions and LGBTQ equity and experience.

*We’re sculpted from youth, the chipping away makes me weary  
And as for the truth it seems like we just pick a theory  
The one that justifies our daily lives  
And backs us with quiver and arrows - Deconstruction (Indigo Girls, 2002)*

Microaggressions are the ordinary daily verbal, behavioral and environmental indignities that communicate hostile, disparaging or harmful sexual orientation, race, ability, gender and religious slights and insults to the target person or group. They chip away at my assumptions and expectations of visibility, equality, understanding and value. Microaggressions may be verbal, non-verbal, environmental and intentional or unintentional (Sue, 2010). I am surrounded, embedded and intertwined in my personal life, research and daily experiences with both microaggressions and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ) experience. Historically, as lesbians I have been scrutinized within the academy with research

focused on seeking truth about the origins and suitability of my ‘condition’. Homosexuality was not removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder II until 1974, the year I was born (Fox, 1988). In subsequent editions this was replaced with equally harmful measures of human experience, sexual orientation disturbance and ego dystonic homosexuality (American Psychiatric Association, 1980, 1987). In an attempt to repair the harm caused by the pairing of LGBTQ persons with pathology and deviance the term sexual orientation was adopted and promoted by the American Psychological Association. Sexual orientation has become the recommendation for appropriate terminology to include lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual persons within psychology (Herek, Kimmel, Amaro & Melton, 1991). I do wonder though if in an attempt to pair LGBTQ person’s expressions of gender, sex and attraction with perceptions of ‘normal’ behavior did we reinforce the notion of ‘normal’ and cause more harm? Did we further reinforce the ‘normal’ discourse, exclude experience, and limit room for deeper understanding of the relationships between sex, gender and attraction as performances required by social constructions (Butler, 1999). Perhaps we did and these constrictions are presently harming others; and still I find comfort in having a label, a way to quickly describe generally how I experience sex, gender and attraction. Although, over the years I have become increasingly aware of how my performance may change depending on the discourses around me.

*Whatever has happened to anyone else  
Could happen to you & to me  
And the end of my youth was the possible truth  
That it all happens randomly  
Who is teaching kids to be leaders  
and the way that it is meant to be  
the philosophy of loss - Philosophy of Loss (Indigo Girls, 2007)*

### **Who am I? Why does my experience matter?**

I wonder how I will ever define what it means to be a researcher? How can I describe the elusive concept of a ‘researcher’, when I can’t quite seem to grasp it? What do I have to contribute to this dialogue? The story I have carried about research is that I am a consumer of research not a producer. This is most clearly linked to my course of study as a Doctor of Clinical Psychology, Psy.D., which focused on educating psychology practitioners. I have been ‘schooled’ in the belief that research is something I digest from afar, not something that I inhabit. It was my automatic assumption that the title of researcher may only be granted to those engaged with a positivist conceptualization of empirical knowledge that initially paralyzed my entrance into the academy. From this position, I am unable to comprehend meeting the academy’s performance expectations. Consequently, since entering the academy as an assistant professor roughly three years ago, I have often walked the building halls feeling disconnected, lost, confused, and fearful. In believing my only access into the academy’s ‘researcher club’ was to perform in a specific manner, as is honored, valued and praised within the academy, I became smothered. How could I ever begin to contribute in a meaningful way to a greater awareness and understanding of LGBTQ peoples’ experiences, dilemmas, and lives while measuring, quantifying and judging LGBTQ people, couples, families and communities’ experience? I attempted many times to write grant proposals and conceptualize projects with a basis in measuring, solidifying, and quantifying outcomes to no avail. I consistently felt as though my

voice, intuitive knowledge, and lived experience was overpowered and marginalized through the process.

Conversely, my professional identity has been well developed and firmly rooted as a counselor, psychologist, teacher, and mentor. I am challenging the social construction of my professional identity and my understanding of the title ‘researcher’ in attempting to create/perform as a researcher in a way that is consistent with my experience and worldview. As a counselor, one of the aspects I enjoy most is the ‘research’ involved with understanding the lived experiences of those with whom I work and having the privilege to be involved in other’s lives in often intimate ways. Yet, upon entering the academy I had not considered my approach to therapeutic work of relevance to the discussion of ‘becoming’ a researcher. I am naturally curious and have learned the value in becoming comfortable with both ambiguity and multiple meanings. It is here, in alignment with the social constructivist counseling theories which are concerned with meaning, knowledge construction and the ways in which we story our lives that I found a home (White & Epston, 1990; Freedman & Combs 1996).

### **Searching for connections**

January 11, 2013: I pull out an article from the stack on my desk searching for a way to describe the intertwining roles that I experience as I perform the role of lesbian, therapist and researcher. As I read I am reminded by Ellis and Bochner (2000) of the importance of arguing for and valuing research “that will allow readers to feel the moral dilemmas, think with our story instead of about it, join actively in the decision points that define an autoethnographic project and consider how their own lives can be made a story worth telling” (p. 735).

In an attempt to carve out this ‘researcher’ space I find I am engaged in a process personally which I relish in with clients. As a counselor I have co-collaborated and co-constructed meaning with others in attempts to aid in the re-authoring of their life stories. Problem identification, story deconstruction, looking for unique outcomes, shining lights on dormant aspects of the self/experience, reconstruction of meaning, preferred identities/alternative stories and thickening of plots are all ways of co-collaboration and therapeutic work in which I position myself (Freedman & Combs, 1996; White & Epston, 1990). I perform the role of counselor, teacher and mentor from this approach (Butler, 1999). It is from this narrative theoretical perspective to counseling, with its’ post-structuralist, post-modern and feminist roots that I am beginning to see how my researcher identity is emerging and may evolve. “In reflexive ethnographies the researcher’s personal experience becomes important primarily in how it illuminates the culture under study” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 740). Perhaps I am a reflexive ethnographer. My experience as a lesbian, therapist and researcher is inextricably interwoven with how I approach, interact with and choose to reveal or illuminate the experiences of LGBTQ persons as part of my ongoing research explorations.

Ellis and Bochner, 2000 suggest, “psychotherapists are ethnographers of the self” (p. 760). That resonates with me, as it is what I do with others as a therapist. As a therapist my work depends on my capacity to achieve a level of intercultural understanding along side the social skill required by ethnographic empathy (p.760).

### Confirmation of intuitive knowledge

In ‘coming out’ to my family I was fortunate, for the most part it was smooth, supportive and relatively rejection free. Although most thought it was no ‘big deal’ I was aware that I would no longer be afforded the privilege of being perceived as ‘normal’, that society did not have the intimate relationships with me that my family did and that ‘society’ may not be as willing to accept me and the voicing of my ‘lesbian status’ with the same relative ease. In a heterosexist and heteronormative society LGBTQ persons aligning themselves with gender identities and/or sexual orientations other than heterosexual or cisgender (where an individual's self-perception of their gender matches their sex) may experience a number of losses of privilege (Chernin & Johnson 2003; Ritter & Terndup, 2002; Rust, 1996). Unfortunately, I was right. I lost friends and job opportunities, and learned to read the environment for signs of danger to personal safety while holding a lover's hand in public or discussing my sex, gender, attraction and behavior. I can't avoid microaggressive waters; they are all around. In my early twenties the following song was a favorite of my LGBTQ peers and mine.

*I'm not radical when I kiss you, I don't love you to make a point.*

*It's the hollow of my heart that cries when I miss you*

*And it keeps me alive when we're apart. – Radical (Curtis, 1995)*

Catie Curtis's lyrics shine a light on microaggressions. Microaggressions can be further broken down into three broad categories (1) microinvalidations (2) microinsults and (3) microassaults. As Curtis's lyrics suggest they are often environmentally embedded in culture. Additionally, microinvalidations are regularly outside the aggressors' awareness and operate to “exclude, negate and nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of certain groups” (Sue, 2010, p.37). Often these actions are justified through apparently non-biased and compelling arguments since well-intended and thoughtful individuals frequently communicate them (Sue et al., 2007).

Through my father's line of questioning when I initially came out to him, “*Do you think that this might have something to do with your mother; I mean her dying when you were 12? Do you think you missed something that you are now trying to find?*” an “assumption of abnormality” (Sue, 2010, p. 195) was made. In trying to identify how I became a lesbian, he was unknowingly pathologizing my experience. One would not ask of their heterosexual daughter, “*how did this happen?*” or question how come she is heterosexual or suggest that she is so because she is missing something. His response and responses like his measure, judge, compare and define my experience as deviant from the dominant heterosexual discourse. I am left to decipher what these questions mean, what it means that they are asked and how to respond. The power of sexual orientation microaggressions often rests in their invisibility to both perpetrator and target person or group (Sue, 2010). How do I negotiate my early experiences of visibility with my father as a young child with the invisibility and attack I experienced in coming out? Assumptions of abnormality are subtle, so subtle that at times it is not until much later after an act occurs, when my stomach is still in knots and the internal nagging I experience of replaying the situation over and over again in my mind will not quiet and finally when I cannot sleep, that I am then forced to reflect on what has transpired.

I am not intending to be radical when I kiss Kathy; however, in the absence of visible lesbian affection in the media, in public places, at social and family gatherings, and in the presence of



questions such as, *“what point are they trying to make by flaunting their sexuality?”* or statements such as, *“I don’t care if someone is a lesbian, I just don’t want to see it”*, Catie Curtis’ lyrics reveal microaggressions and give voice to the demand for a response.

### **2007: More decisions**

Almost 10 years after my initial “coming out” I made the difficult choice to move away from my family, friends and support systems in California to move to Newfoundland to legally marry Kathy and equally parent our two children. From the time I first ‘outed’ myself and possibly earlier I began learning to attune to the subtleties of how those close to me, acquaintances and those with whom I had relatively no relationship, responded to my performance as a lesbian. These skills continue to be relevant today. Many feminist, poststructuralists, postmodern and queer theorists suggest that we “perform” identities in accordance or deviance from the dominant discourse rather than embody identities (Butler, 1999; Warner, 1993). Through my performances of lesbian and therapist, my ability to attune to experiences in the context of dominant discourses has become well developed. These roles demand that I “pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts and emotions” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 737). I try to understand both past and present experiences, and similar to autoethnographers “by exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life” (p.737).

### **Lived experience and intuitive knowledge: influencing research**

January 20, 2013: The opportunity to reflect while in the shower presents itself as my two young children graciously nap at the same time. I ponder recent readings, interactions with colleagues, relationships and music that narrates my life. I wonder why the academy “doesn’t insist on personal accountability in research, why we give weight to categorical knowledge rather than to direct testimony of personal narrative and first person voice” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 734). I must remember in the work I do with LGBTQ school personnel in trying to understanding their experiences, my personal knowledge of microaggressions and how these relate to school communities and cultures; that they must not be considered as objects. I am not an object, nor are those who open themselves in researching with me. I think about how I expose myself as a therapist, how I am fierce in my commitment to the process of co-creating, co-exploring and honoring the clients who choose to work with me toward their desired alternative stories. How can I hold to this practice as I become a researcher within the academy? I reflect on a comment a colleague made recently to me, “perhaps you are more comfortable with vulnerability than most of us in the academy, maybe this is because you have already faced the fear that comes with great risk, such as ‘coming out’ and because of societies’ requirement that you expose yourself daily in living an ‘out’ life”. Could it be that I see vulnerability differently than others, as a source of strength rather than weakness? Again, I must remember to make every effort to try to see and understand those who participate in research with me. How do I remain open? How can I suspend assumptions, avoid labeling and make room for stories? As a researcher I need to become a better listener, to others and myself. I must bring with me my ‘therapist self’ to become the researcher I want to be.

The Indigo Girls come to mind again; their music has streamed alongside my life. As the water beats down over me and my eyes fix on the lightly red colored water from my recently dyed hair, I reflect on how the honesty, vulnerability, ambiguity and dilemmas in their music evoke



emotions, questions and thoughts which cannot be ignored, they require my attention and draw in the ‘whole me’. They use personal ethnography when they open themselves to themselves and to their audience. They allow others to drop resistance to different ideas through their music (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). The Indigo Girls must be ethnographers of the soul; their music opens up conversations with both my mind and spirit.

### **Unforeseen gifts**

In 1998, I made the decision in a heterosexist and heteronormative society, to take what seemed like an enormous risk. It was a time when Ellen DeGeneres’ sitcom had just been canceled shortly after both she and her character ‘came out’ in real life and on screen, before *Will and Grace* - the longest running sitcom with principle gay characters; and long before the “*It Gets Better Project*,” a response to several teens taking their own life after experiences of bullying at school. (About the It Gets Better Project section, para. 2). I was living in the United States, it was the year the Defense of Marriage Act was signed into law and when same sex marriage was not legal in any U.S. State or any other country. It was at this time when lesbian parents were often featured in the news fighting for legal rights to parent their children and LGBTQ hate crimes were being frequently reported, that I decided to ‘come out’ to the people most important in my life. These peoples’ opinions mattered to me; whose beliefs about me I would struggle to dismiss if they rejected my ‘lesbian status’. In that one moment I decided to face my ultimate fear, dismissal of my worth, my experience and my humanity. I found a life worth living.

### **Undivided**

Elrenna Evans (2008) describes the following concept in *Fitting In*: “the academy’s ‘floating head’ syndrome; how people are expected to function as disembodied brains, not connected to bodies or families or any sort of life outside of academic pursuits” (p. 51). I am not a “floating head” nor are the students and research participants who choose to do this work. I strive for my research to be evocative, demonstrate reflexivity and affect the audience both emotionally and intellectually (Richardson, 2000a). I hope my expression of reality will promote empathy, encourage dialogue and contribute to better conversation about microaggressions and LGBTQ equity “in the face of all the barriers and boundaries that make conversation difficult” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 748). I aim for the reader to generate new questions, be drawn to try new research practices, to write and be moved into action. Through their use of self-exposure, the Indigo Girls music, lyrics and accounts of culture, social, and individual stories offer a credible sense of lived experience, one that allows me to make my own judgments about their point of view and requires the ‘whole me’ (Richardson, 2000a, 2000b). As a researcher, I seek to evoke similar reactions and response.

At times I wonder if my vulnerability, my relentless self-exposure, my commitment to revealing the unexposed will result in harm to myself or to my family’s well being? My answer: lead further with vulnerability and share this experience by naming these fears. Even as I write with sweaty palms and a rapid heartbeat, I am aware of how I reveal myself as a ‘researcher’ who is intimately intertwined with her ‘research’ and who is opening the door to significant potential criticism for my lack of objectivity and bias. I have chosen as a researcher, lesbian, partner and parent not to attempt to validate my relationship, my family or my worth through models of

deviance. I refuse to engage in comparing LGBTQ and heterosexual people, couples and families as means of measurement aimed at deeming LGBTQ persons equal. This type of measurement sits in judgment of my existence, relationships, and suitability to marry and parent. My family and I, our children, our communities don't need approval, we need a better way to engage in difficult conversations, to collaborate, honor and be honored. I am excited about my alignment with a theoretical position that believes in a "radical transformation in the goals of our work" as researchers and academics, "from description to communication" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 748).

Leading with vulnerability as a researcher, lesbian, partner, parent, and mother in the academy means taking risks. It means that if I find myself in a circumstance where there are no visible allies with more experience than I, then rather than doubt my own experience; I must trust it.

Through research I hope to aid the academy in moving toward conversations that will help all of us in society understand the pervasiveness and harm of environmental, behavioral and verbal LGBTQ microaggressions. Conversations that will offer insight, stimulate thought, and require reflection as to the role of microaggressions in my experience. Specifically, in my experience of feeling visible and understood as a young child by my father, as a young adult "coming out" feeling invisible and misunderstood and as a parent why I strive to remain open to hearing, seeing and understanding my children the way my father sought to hear, see and understand me. Conversations that will engage us with the significance of understanding LGBTQ peoples' experiences of microaggressions, thoughtfulness about how we conduct research with LGBTQ people and what meanings can be drawn from mine and others' stories. Conversations that will cause us to pause when hearing that at my father's funeral two years ago, in my speech honoring his life I reflected the following, "perhaps the greatest gift my father has given me is to remember that as a parent my role is to love my children, support them and make room for them to become. I received this gift through my experience of being his child." Conversations that will help us understand how I became visible again to my father, felt seen, heard and understood by him in my thirties, and always felt fiercely loved.

So how did I become a researcher? I showed up for my life, not as a 'disembodied head' as I thought would be required of me to claim the title of 'researcher' but with the 'whole me'. I tune into my experience and work to attune to others; I grapple with how to share these experiences in a manner that will be meaningful both to the world and to me.

*How long till my soul gets it right?*

*Can any human being ever reach that kind of light?*

*I call on the resting soul of Galileo*

*King of night vision, King of insight - Galileo (Indigo Girls, 1992)*

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## **Chapter 16: Reflections on becoming a researcher**

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### **Abstract**

This paper offers an autoethnographic exploration of my experience of becoming a researcher. By revisiting my experiential beginnings as a student and my evolution as a professional, I reflect on my developing identities as researcher and writer. I use the metaphor of the Hero's journey to shape these explorations and highlight the experiential, ontological nature of my current learning experience as a doctoral student. I juxtapose my experience with patterns of student development found in the literature seeking to forge an authentic path through the sociocultural and personal challenges that pose internal dilemmas in my development. Through an exploration of Barnett's (2011) ideas of epistemological and ontological identities in learning, I discuss my own ontological development as a researcher/writer and the power of the written word as a way of "knowing" (Richardson, 2000) and working through my own "discursive struggles for identity" (Richardson, 2000) as best I can in the present moment.

"I can only tell what I know about my story at a given point."

(Etherington, 2004, p.23)

### **Introduction**

As I begin this paper, I am aware of the whirl of ideas, memories, hopes and dreams that led me to begin this doctoral journey. I notice the changes in my thinking, my perceptions and my identity that have occurred in the last few months and increasingly understand the meaning of such sayings as "we are beings becoming" (Barnett, 2011, 2000; Crossouard, 2008; Etherington, 2004). As a developing researcher, I find myself traveling through ghosts of lives past and catching glimpses of future possibilities, in hopes of integrating them into the current moment (Barnett, 2011). I am aware that I am traveling on a predictable path (Gardner, 2010, 2008), that may be transparent to those observing me but feels new, fresh and unique in my experience of it. I see my passage as more of a hero's journey (Badenhorst, 2008; Campbell, 2004; Ylijoki, 2001; Campbell, 1949) than a predetermined academic socialization process (Gardner, 2010; Weidman, 2003) that renders my experience a themed, collective pattern of being. I am aware that I carry a deep "faith" (Barnett, 2011) that I will find my way and trust a sincere "hope" (Barnett, 2011) that I will find integration at some future moment. Amidst this dynamic land of changing forms (inner and outer), growing knowledge and grounding experiences, I reflexively (Etherington, 2004) watch myself settling into a static conception of my research interests which, although needed, limits the multidimensionality of my experience to one carefully crafted project that will meet the requirements of my program. I notice my transition from a practitioner/instructor to a researcher (Maclure, 1996) and again "hope" (Barnett, 2011) that I will find my place in an academic arena that doesn't always understand the drive of action researchers (Hamilton, 2011; Cochran-Smith & Donnel, 2006;). I know I am a researcher becoming uni-dimensional despite the sense of limitations this presents for my growing

researcher identity and its many subjective forms (Crossouard, 2008). The goal of this paper is to explore my own narrative as an evolving researcher. I will visit old and new selves, predicted and novel paths as well as individual and collective experiences. I will explore views of knowledge construction and the relevance of such ideas as researcher subjectivities and reflexivity. Through an exploration of the meanings of knowledge construction, modern learning, researcher modalities and developmental pathways, I will attempt to articulate that which I know, at this point in time. For as Etherington (2004) suggests that is the best I can do in the present moment.

### **My biographical beginnings**

I am a product of the educational system. I know the truth and power of guidance, good teachers and learning. I was raised in a working class family in which I was the first person to enter university. Neither of my parents achieved their high school diplomas and each offered differing responses to my educational aspirations. My mother, a stay at home mom, supported me unconditionally to the best that she could without a knowledge of the world I sought to travel in while my father, a factory worker, discouraged my motivations, believing that the ‘real world’ would crush me and that my gender would limit me to having children and wasting whatever education I did receive. I grew up feeling different from those I aspired to become and never quite felt a sense of belonging in school despite my growing passion for learning. I was deeply aware of my social class though the majority of my “school” friends were from more educated homes of a middle to upper middle class nature, the majority of my “neighbourhood” friends did not obtain their high school let alone going beyond that into post-secondary. I have lived an educational life in this “in between” space. “In between” feeling grounded, welcomed and excited by this new world of learning and pulled by the inertia of growing up in a world for which education was a luxury rather than an expectation. I suspect that this space is one that others who grow through a working class background into other socioeconomic and educational realities experience though it is often hard to articulate. As a young girl, I had the sense of not really knowing where I “fit” long before I had the cognitive ability to understand this feeling sense. And now, a grown woman, I realize how these roots have shaped my development and attachment to university life. As I begin to reflect on my sense of identity as a researcher now, these early realities resonate deeply in me and I catch fleeting glimpses of understanding of how all of this has shaped the moment I am in now and the representations that I feel breaking down as they give way to new ones taking shape.

### *My educational self*

As a young child, I knew the power of being seen and nurtured by teachers. Despite my mixed messages about education from my family and my internal representations of my social class and gender, my teachers consistently saw my potential and skill, supporting me in multiple small and large ways as well as very practical and deeply meaningful ways. This constant reinforcement from within the educational system continues until this very day, though the forms have changed, my experience remains one of being mentored to become the person I am today – a researcher becoming. As I began my undergraduate study, I recall the experience of having my mind open in ways that were new and exciting for me – deeply rewarding though foreign and uncharted territory. I recall one specific moment, in Fall of 1983 when I was a first year student - I was walking home from class and enjoying the colours of my favorite season as I heard the crispness



of the dried leaves under my foot, suddenly as if carried by a swift wind, I was filled with deep joy. Blissfully feeling my mind open to new and exciting ideas and future possibilities that, until then, I was unsure were mine to claim. This was my first glimpse that I may just find my way, that perhaps dad was wrong, it wasn't a false dream afterall. I was inspired.

The constant support from one teacher after another helped me stay motivated and find ways to overcome the financial and psychological hurdles that presented themselves along the way. As I gained in strength and ability, the task became easier and my motivation become more internal – guided by an inner and real world knowing that education could transform my world and a belief in a world I did not quite know but believed existed on the other side of my educational development. As a working class student, my pathway was not always as consistent and linear as many of my “school” friends. I would save money and work multiple jobs to support myself while my “university” friends travelled through Europe in the summer. I was too busy working and surviving in a new land that beckoned me – my travels were occurring in real life and inner landscapes. I consistently met professors, and employers, who encouraged me to get higher degrees, though at the time, I didn't see myself travelling too high, I was just happy to be able to travel higher than my family expectations would have suggested. When I began my graduate training at University of Ottawa, much to my surprise, one of my first courses in Educational Administration completely engaged me. I still recall my professor, for whom this was his last course taught before retiring, consistently and repeatedly asking me to please pursue doctoral studies – though deeply flattered, I was already beyond my anticipated educational milestone. I didn't see myself as a PhD student yet. I recall his encouragement to this day, and I still keep my final paper in his course, with its glowing feedback and final attempt to encourage me as he wrote “Please let me retire from this work, knowing you will pursue your PhD”. Since then, there have been a myriad of voices reinforcing the same message but my own evolving identity could not yet embrace such a possibility. So, as I continued my education, I continued working. My work experience became the bedrock of my academic life – supporting it in concrete ways, shaping it in practical ways and grounding it in a fundamental way.

### *My professional self*

As I continued to work and study, I forged a strong sense of the importance of practice and lived experience. Returning to obtain graduate training was motivated by my desire to become a better practitioner though fueled by a deep love of ideas, learning and growth. These two selves – my educational and my practitioner self – evolved hand in hand, one informing the other. Increasingly, colleagues, friends, and professors encouraged me to pursue doctoral studies; however, at this point, I felt I needed more life and work experience to inform my decision and entry into the world of researcher. I decided that I would revisit this when I entered my 40's. Later, I read that Carl Jung (one of my favourite writers) held that it is only at mid life that we can truly begin to develop (Nugent & Jones, 2009; Staude, 1981; Jung, 1933). This made sense to me and cemented my decision, so I continued engaging in meaningful work realizing that I would explore this possibility later. Once I completed my masters degree in educational psychology, I did begin to teach as a sessional lecturer, which brought me great joy as it allowed me to maintain a connection to a world I loved as well as offering me a sense of giving back to a system that became the vehicle of my transformation. I also began taking on research projects as part of my work, which was the beginning of my researcher sensibility.

## **The Hero's Journey**

As I look back over my life journey until now, it feels more like a passage through stages – cyclical stages of growth, death and rebirth (Welwood, 2000; Chodrun, 1994; Rinpoche, 1992). I am reminded of the work of Joseph Campbell (1949, 2004) and the metaphor of the Hero's Journey which includes a departure, initiation and return. A story of passage that has been used to describe change management (Lapointe, 2012); the doctoral experience (Badenhorst, 2008); and, the masters thesis writing experience (Ylijoki, 2001). An apt metaphor to capture my experience of beginning, transformation and loss and then returning to a deeper sense of self, each stage marked by educational experience and leading to this moment of presence and entry into doctoral studies. As I begin to look more closely at my current educational moment – my initiation into doctoral studies, I am reminded that my “local, historical and partial knowledge is still knowing” (Richardson, 2000, 930) and it is worthy of exploration. I am encouraged by the writing approach expected for this article – autoethnographic, narrative storytelling as it “somewhat relieved of the problem of speaking for the “Other” (Richardson, 2000, 931). I am the “Other”. I am “both the site and the subject of these discursive struggles for identity and for remaking memory” (Richardson, 2000, 929). As I began to write this paper, I was trying to create an acceptable, and perhaps traditional, academic argument (Badenhorst, 2007) with which to present my experience. Of course, this resulted in no words flowing as I felt the inherent contradiction of writing about my experience and “proving” its worth. I relinquish this impulse for this moment, knowing I will return to it later as that is the journey I am on. For now, I will use this process of writing as a way of “knowing” (Richardson, 2000) and embrace the idea that writing is thinking (Badenhorst, 2007). I “hope” (Barnett, 2011) to gain insight as I retell my story of passage and create a psychological space (Starr, 2010) to engage in the process of “conscientizing” (Starr, 2010; Freire, 1971).

### *Departure*

True to the hero's journey, entering doctoral study for me was a call to adventure (the first stage of the journey) - a call which began many decades ago when I, as a young child looked forward to the day when I would get to do homework. Anticipating the challenge and the learning, walking to the local library and getting lost in its contents, preparing my research papers with great care. My early writings inevitably surpassed the expectations of my teachers wherein I found my greatest allies on my journey. This call has recurred over and over again as I moved through my many years of training, in and out of my professional life and landing in the wonderful position of being a sessional lecturer and a successful professional in my chosen field. I was beckoned by the “ivory tower” (Lovitts, 2001) as I was propelled from it back into my professional world - refusing the call (second stage of departure) over and over again for fear of not belonging and not feeling ready to take on the task. For what place was there in this world for a little girl from William Street? Was my father correct? Were these false dreams which were beyond me? Ever and increasingly conscious of my “social class”, these experiences and memories stayed with me as I travelled, contributing to an “outsider” view of my own experience. Never quite belonging despite the deep pleasure I found in the academic world.

Multiple identities of class, gender, academic, practitioner, teacher, and educator bounced off each other in my mind and held me from answering the call. And yet, repeatedly and consistently, as far back as my memory can recall, I encountered supernatural aid (third stage of

departure). Messages, supports, opportunities, mentors and a consistent seeing of my academic self in my relations with others – it became a descriptor of the “self” others perceived in me – long before I saw it myself. Recurring again and again, as I refused the call, another messenger would appear – encouraging me to continue along my way. Somewhere in my 40’s, having gained significant professional experience, made contributions that I was content with, finished my masters training and become attached to the university as a sessional lecturer, I crossed the threshold (fourth stage of departure). I could no longer deny the call. As a close friend said to me, while I was in the final stages of resisting the call yet feeling myself crossing the threshold and living in the belly of the whale (fifth and final stage of departure), “Heather, if you don’t do your PhD, it is your choice now – you are clearly the one saying ‘no’”. After a long period of deep contemplation, I felt myself being expelled from the belly of that whale – it is time. I began exploring PhD programs in search of the one that best met my learning goals. If I was to take on this challenge, it had to be intentional, meaningful and engaging for me.

### *Initiation*

Although I believe I have cycled through these stages multiple times in my life, those detailed experiences are not relevant to this paper’s reflection on becoming a researcher. At this point, I believe I am just beginning the initiation phase of my doctoral journey as I am entering my seventh month of full time study. Only time can tell the tale of how this metaphor continues to resonate with my personal hero’s journey as a developing researcher. For this reason, my paper will not carry this analogy forward through all the stages of initiation and into the final phase – Return. Instead, I will explore the implications of the first stage of initiation – The Road of Trials – for the remainder of my paper. In doing so, I will explore the ideas of reflexivity, socialization processes, my experience of becoming a researcher, knowledge construction, and the importance of hope and faith.

### *My doctoral self*

So here I land, thankfully accepted into the program of my choice and happy to be studying leadership and organizational development which nicely integrates my professional self and the work that has guided me in the professional world for over a decade. As term one progresses, so do my trials as per the hero’s journey. Though the trials I encounter are inner trials rather than the trials that I will no doubt encounter in time, in the outer world. I notice the challenge of teaching while studying and feel my identity shifting as I decide to let this part of my work life go into the New Year. I have taught, albeit only one or two courses a semester, with great regularity over the last 14 years. I wonder am I a teacher or a researcher? Can I be both? And I have an awareness that I may not be able to manage both as I continue with my full time professional work when I leave my year of full time PhD study. This is a luxurious space that I rest and work in now as I lean into becoming as a researcher. I feel a loss in letting go of my teaching practice, much like the participants Maclure (1996) writes about as they transition from teaching careers to becoming action researchers. I too feel myself to be in a nomad’s land – somewhere between at the academic world and my professional world as I realize that as a researcher, my identity is deeply informed by the tenets and practices of action researcher. I am in the liminal space or transition space of a rite of passage. I am on the threshold of two worlds.

(Purdy & Walker, 2012). I feel a resonance to French's (2012) process of coming to terms with the dominant academic culture's view of practice based research and I sigh...what am I to do?

It is odd to leave that part of my work and as I do I notice, that it is the practice of research that draws me now. I return to my earlier messages about affluence and intellectual pursuits and I again feel the luxurious space that I now inhabit. Few people I grew up with grapple with such dilemmas, whether they would want to walk in my life or not. I feel a deep resonance with the little girl who loved learning and school yet felt outside of it by virtue of early messages as well as the class and gender distinctions that shaped my early development. I am comfortable and can manage on the periphery though I am feeling those divides breaking down – in subtle and barely distinguishable ways.

At the same time, I begin to feel the residual effects of my early training as a researcher. My experience of the experimental and positivist model of research in my initial undergraduate Psychology courses propelled me to a more arts-based Psychology program at a different university. As I sat in another psychology lab course, this time watching and recording rat copulation behaviour before and after the injection of Haldol, I realized this is not the Psychology I want to study. So I left. I transferred to another university that offered courses in transpersonal psychology and allowed me to begin study in Law from a critical perspective. I still recall the experience as if breathing fresh air for the first time. As I entered this new university environment, I felt a sense of my own experiential journey through the “paradigm wars” which has been written of extensively since the writing of *The Paradigm Dialogue* (1990). I recall my honors paper which used Foucauldian analysis to explore how legal discourse constructed gender and find myself fondly re-membering and experiencing this learning now. I am aware that research models have changed since my graduate training during which qualitative methods, though present, felt overshadowed by our more quantitative research models. I recall many conversations with a dear mentor during graduate school, who was of the quantitative persuasion, but took me under his wing – even though I was what he would fondly call “flaky” in my qualitative tendencies.

I am supported by my early training in reflexive practice as both an educator and a practitioner. My early readings of Friere (1970), Schon (1983), and Mezirow (1991) serve me well as I see how prominent this approach is in today's educational research world. I have engaged in reflexive practice as a therapist, an educator, a facilitator and as a mediator. As a novice researcher, I am guided by Etherington's (2004) work which highlights reflexive research practice and find my grounding here. I also take guidance from Seidman's (2013) advice to new researchers to find our own way and listen to our own inner sense regarding preferred research methods. Although, like French (2012), I too found “the crisis of representation in educational research was for me liberating” (p. 9), I also feel the whirl of possibility of so many approaches to choose from, many of which resonate with me. This growing sense of multi-dimensionality as a researcher is indeed liberating, though I know that it will have to manifest throughout my research career rather than all at once. I realize that I must narrow my focus soon enough on my own research project, and no doubt enter into the outer, worldly trials as a researcher becoming.

*Predictable socialization or unique passage?*

I have read several authors who discuss the experiences of doctoral studies as well as junior faculty members (Lee, 2012; Drake, 2011; Gardner, 2010a&b; 2008a&b, Powell, 2007; Lovitts, 2001; Hawley, 1993). Hawley's (1993) discussion, though dated, offered some interesting nuggets including the idea that "doctoral pursuit is a lonely quest of the heart and head" (p 7)

which surely resonates with my experience as my drive is as much to learn as it is to pursue a dream and make a contribution (however, small). She suggests that doctoral studies differ from previous educational pursuits in intellectual and psychological ways and states her main premise that "being bright" is not always enough as we need "street smarts" too or a savvy sense of when to follow the rules and when to follow your own "drummer" (p12). We are now to "produce knowledge rather than simply consume it" (p. 17). I feel very much drawn to this dialectical dance between being bright and being savvy, consuming versus producing. Here, I also see the emergent strength I acquired though all those years of "making my way on my own" and wonder if this is the required "savvy" she writes of. I seek to find the right balance between doing what is needed and doing what I need to make this a meaningful journey for me. Hawley suggests that students do not finish their degree because they "aren't sophisticated in the ways of academe" (p15). Although I am quite comfortable accepting the role of "neophyte" as she suggests is required, I do not necessarily feel a "psychic cost" to this, it is a natural disposition perhaps grown from the trust and faith (Barnett, 2011) I have developed for the educational process that has nurtured me from my early days. I understand that "intellectual combat is a way of life in universities" (p23) and expect to learn from and engage with this "challenge and defend atmosphere" (p. 23). Unlike Hawley's suggestion that academics are not rewarded for their mentoring, and therefore do not make good mentors, my experience is quite contrary. I have been mentored by many ambassadors of this system, and even when I have not found mentoring, I have found a way to learn from that experience too. So, I wonder how much of this is individual, unique, developmental and how much is socialized? I have felt, found and been encouraged to have agency (Allen, 2010) as I have moved through this world. I shall "challenge and defend" this experience as being as real as the experiences Hawley writes of in her research. Although it is still early days as a doctoral student, my experience is one of welcome and nurture - whether intellectual or emotional.

#### *Individual or collective passage?*

In reading some writings on the socialization process of doctoral education (Gardner, 2010, 2008), I was struck by the differences in relation to my experiences rather than the similarities. Like Hawley, Gardner (2008) also discusses the ABD experience (all but dissertation) as well as the movement from consumers of knowledge to producers of knowledge. I feel this shift occurring within myself and experience it as reflecting my own internal "trial" as I travel the path of my hero's journey. For me, the issue is one of developing an identity of a "writer" and not just a "reader" (Badenhorst, 2007). One of my current challenges has been developing the practice of and confidence in myself as a writer. Although, like my developing identity as a researcher, I have written many documents, reports and articles over the years, I have not yet developed the identity of a researcher or a writer despite the reality that many friends, colleagues and mentors see this in me already. For this reason, an intentional goal of my current experience is to reflect on this and nurture this development in myself.



Gardner's (2008) research on the transition phase, revealed that students struggled with the transition from a more "dependent" undergraduate experience as opposed to the required independence demanded of doctoral studies which often contributed to a sense of isolation and lack of opportunities for interaction with faculty. Again, using Hawley's "challenge and defend analogy", though in a slightly different way, this has not been my experience. While I am aware that I am in transition, mine is a more internal, ontological issue rather than a sense of wanting "hand holding (Gardner, 2008, p. 347). I have not needed nor want to have my hand held, perhaps as a mid-career professional, I carry a different set of life experiences into my doctoral beginnings. Herein, the resonance to that little girl who felt outside and knew that if she was to succeed, she would have to do it on her own, forged an autonomous disposition that will serve me well through my PhD experience. Or perhaps this is what Drake (2011) writes of when she says that there are many varieties of doctoral experiences and for those who are practice based researchers, the sense of being an outsider is common. I realize that others (Gardner, 2010) would possibly view this as the naivety of a novice doctoral student or perhaps it is an example of what Hawley refers to as "street smarts". It remains my experience regardless of how others represent it. I also have had the experience of feeling very supported by my supervisor as well as having opportunities to interact with other faculty. Although both Gardner (2010) and Hawley (1993) suggest that support from fellow students is most important in surviving the doctoral experience, my greatest supports have always come from many places – including faculty, supervisors, advisors and mentors. Though Gardner (2010) found a naive understanding in faculty regarding their role in supporting doctoral students, this is not my experience, for I have found many faculty who have supported me in small and large ways and do not appear to me to be "naive" to how important that support is. My many mentors, accumulated over the years offer further support to fortify my independent movement through the requirements as I find them. In terms of the types of development Gardner (2010) suggests occurs for PhD students - programmatic, relational and personal (p345), I feel myself learning in the first two categories but the majority of my current development is happening in the personal category on the level of identity. While some of my experiences have been and no doubt prove to be similar to others and collective in nature, in this moment, I feel my passage is more unique than collective which Drake (2011) suggests is typical of practice based researcher identity development.

### **Knowledge construction as the learner becoming**

Perhaps it is my training and practice in psychotherapy which creates a natural disposition toward reflexivity, an experience which Etherington (2004) describes as "almost like a process of 'coming out' to me" (p.19). I have always gravitated toward this practice. Much like Super's career developmental model which highlights the role of our evolving self concept as we move along our own career paths (Super, 1961). I have evolved as much through my personal as my professional experiences (Super, 1980). And the practice of reflection, has been both the force and the grounding of this experience. My earliest memories of reading about this was in my Adult Education training where I was introduced to the work of Mezirow (1991) and fully embraced the importance of engaging in reflection and encouraging reflection in those with whom I worked. This practice has deepened into the very fabric of my being. I recall multiple



conversations with colleagues and friends who would consistently point to this quality in me, long before I realized its importance for me. Even as a young child, my mother would frequently interpret this tendency as “having the world on my shoulders” and remind me of my baby picture in which I naturally took on the pose of the thinker – hand to face as though thinking, long before I had the capacity to think - a symbolic representation of the trajectory of my life path. As the years passed, a dear mentor friend once contextualised one of my many “ethical dilemmas” as stemming from the fact that I actually practice what I preach – I reflect. For me, it is not that I think therefore I am, (Descartes, trans. 1950), it has often felt that I reflect, therefore I am. And so learning and education for me has been a process of becoming (Barnett, 2011; Crossouard, 2008; Etherington, 2004; Lave and Wenger, 1991). In learning, I have found myself, again and again.

Interestingly, Barnett (2011, 2000) critiques the lack of opportunity for students to reflect on their ontological selves in education. Though he writes of the undergraduate experience, his thinking seems relevant as it reflects my own beliefs and experience of the educational process. Education and learning for me has been as much an ontological experience as an epistemological one despite Barnett’s suggestion that the dominant focus in university education is epistemological at the expense of ontology, my experience has integrated both. And, as much as I “challenge and defend” Barnett’s suggestion, I also know the power of bringing ontology into learning and so I also agree with his determination of its importance in academic learning. As he beautifully describes this reality for students:

Student becoming, then, has a Janus-like appearance. The student lives in a new place, and acquires a new identity even; but is aware, even if only dimly, that things could be yet other. The student is here and yet not here. Here lies the ‘authoritative uncertainty’ of which – quite some time ago – Sinclair Goodlad (1976) spoke. The student is both sure and unsure of his or her ground. The student has hold of a rock but it is slippery. The substance of the rock is not illusory; the ways of going on – in essay writing, in the laboratory, in the studio, in the clinical situation, and even in running a student society – have evolved over time and they have a kind of solidity to them. Here are forms of life. But the student has also become aware that these forms of life could be other than they are. Here and not-here: this is the nature of the student’s new being. This, indeed, is the becoming promised by a higher education” (2011, p. 9)

This dual character of student learning (here and not here), eloquently expresses my experience of becoming a researcher as I am and yet am not a researcher. The inherent contradiction of these words creates the space in which I transition (Gardner, 2010) and move through this liminal space (Purdy & Walker, 2012) at the threshold of a researcher becoming. The idea that “learning has an incessantly recursive nature” (Barnett, 2011, p. 7) breaths life into my experience and I move forward with *faith* (Barnett, 2011) that things will integrate at some

future moment and *hope* that this future will indeed become my present moment – all in due time. In that I trust. For I deeply know the truth of Barnett’s words “In order for learning to be authentic, one needs to venture forth into learning” (2011, p. 12). And so, my hero’s journey continues as an “ontological matter, affecting the nature of being and becoming” (Barnett, 2011, p. 12).

### **Writing my way to my researcher self**

As I bring this paper to a close, I return to the purpose for which I write, to offer my own narrative through an auto-ethnographic approach. I have embraced my “self as data” (Gadon, 2006) and realize that “it is a truism that you always bring yourself into the researcher process” (Gadon, 2006, p.2) And although I have conducted many research projects since I completed my masters training in 1999, I still do not feel to be a full fledged researcher. And so I seek doctoral training, to continue my becoming in the land of research, with faith that I will find my way and hope that I will attain the goal and not become another ABD (all but dissertation) (Hawley, 1993). My biographical landscape has cemented a trust in the process of learning and the educational system. My many subjectivities as a student, a professional, a teacher and my developing identities as a researcher and a writer have and continue to pave my path through this hero’s journey. Returning to the little girl who felt like an outsider despite her deep passion for learning, again and again – knowing that at some future moment she too will feel herself to be inside the domain that she moves in now. It is surely an ontological matter for me (Barnett, 2011). I know that my beliefs and experience have congealed into some core assumptions that will, and have, informed my choice of methodologies for my doctoral research interests and my methodological thinking as Crotty (2011) suggests. Even as I reflect back over this paper and my journey to date, I see how the critical realism which Maxwell (2012) writes of defines an approach to qualitative research that deeply resonates with me. I learned from a very young age that there were realities that existed outside of my knowing and my life journey has revealed that within that not knowing develops a knowing that is rooted in my own constructions over time and space. I have carried a deep and ever strengthening faith that these constructions would happen, long before I understand what this meant. And my experience has not only forged a fundamental hope that the future will be deeper than the present, as a researcher, it shapes my desire to do research in education in hopes of strengthening the system that allowed me to construct myself. My hope is that by understanding, supporting and collaborating with educational leaders to support healthy work practices for their selves, we will foster healthy work environments for their staff. It is my way of giving back to a system that has given me so much more than these words can articulate. I move forward feeling a growing internal compass to guide me, and a solid external structure to fortify me (including my relations with faculty, my doctoral committee, my PhD supervisor, many mentors and other students) and with a growing clarity of the path that will carry me through.

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## **Chapter 17: Using metaphor and poetry to portray the process of becoming a researcher**

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### **Abstract**

Roles are associated with behaviours, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that individuals in the specified role should display, and role acquisition is the process by which these expectations are encountered, learned, and enacted. The ecological theory of development provides insight into all factors that play a role in the growth and development of individuals. As the ecological model assesses external influences, it is used to investigate how previous work experience and family context contribute to the process of acquiring the role of a researcher. Using a lens of writing as inquiry, a qualitative narrative approach was used to explore one woman's journey towards becoming a researcher. Data was analyzed using a content analysis approach which involves coding statements based on their key concepts, clustering these coded concepts into themes, and delineating and refining these themes. The results highlight the complexity of a non-linear journey from the role of a practitioner to that of a researcher, and how family influenced this chosen path. One's role as a researcher is impacted by one's role as a practitioner and as a parent, and as a result, reflections on these conflicting roles and responsibilities are interwoven throughout the text. The process of becoming a researcher was described as difficult, but friendships with fellow academics helped ease this transition. Relationships with fellow academics can assist individuals in becoming acculturated in their new role, and provide opportunities for collaboration, and thus increase the likelihood that new faculty members will achieve successful tenure outcomes.

### **Introduction**

#### *Role acquisition theory*

Roles are defined as socially expected behaviour patterns that are determined by a person's status in society (Warda, 1992). Roles also refer to clusters of meaningful activities that are expected of, and assumed by, individuals in various contexts of their lives (Warda). Roles contain both privileges and responsibilities, and the expectations associated with these roles influence how people behave (Crowe, VanLeit, Berghmans, & Mann, 1997). Roles are associated with behaviours, attitudes, skills, and knowledge that individuals in the specified role should display, and role acquisition is the process by which these expectations are encountered, learned, and enacted (Yellin, 1999).

When examining the research surrounding adult roles, Crowe et al., (1997) found that multiple roles in adulthood were related to overall life satisfaction and a decrease in social isolation. These multiple roles had an enhancing or protective effect on physical and emotional health, including reduced depression and enhanced self-esteem (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). However, role conflict can occur when one takes on two incompatible roles; this may include the role of a parent and an academic.



### *Ecological systems theory*

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory can be used to understand human development within the context of the system of relationships within a person's environment as this theory defines complex layers of the environment which have an effect on an individual's development. According to Bronfenbrenner, in order to study an individual's development we must look at the immediate environment (the microsystem – people and institutions with whom the individual interacts), as well as the interaction of the larger environment (mesosystems – interactions of people in the microsystems; exosystems – the broader community; and macrosystems – attitudes, ideologies, and values of the culture).

According to Bronfenbrenner (2005), to study an individual without understanding the context, is to not fully understand all of the factors that affect the individual. The ecological theory of development is beneficial in providing insight into all factors that play a role in the growth and development of an individual. As the ecological model assesses external influences, it provides a tool to investigate how one's family, community, and culture have contributed to an individual acquiring the role, or "becoming", a researcher.

### **Methodology**

#### *Using narratives to understand role acquisition*

Qualitative research provides rich information about a topic, recognizes the influence of context, and focuses on the meaning of the phenomena to participants (Wright & McKeever, 2000). Thus, a qualitative approach is ideally suited to exploring the journey of becoming a researcher.

Narrative research has been described as the study of stories (Polkinghorne, 2007). Using a lens of writing as inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2008), a qualitative narrative approach was used to explore one woman's journey towards becoming a researcher.

Case study research provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases, with a case being defined as a bounded system or clearly defined context (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). This case study examines the experiences of one woman who was in mid-career when she transitioned from the role of a practitioner to that of a researcher. The data for this study was derived from a content analysis of a first person narrative. Purposeful sampling was used as I wanted to investigate a specific phenomenon – the experience of becoming a researcher. Upon becoming familiar with the purpose of this study, my colleague agreed to write a narrative to share the story of her journey. This colleague, who I will call Norah, was in her early fifties and was employed as an assistant professor during the time of this study.

#### *Data analysis*

Norah's narrative was read several times before it was coded. Data was analyzed using a content analysis approach which involves coding statements based on their key concepts, clustering these coded concepts into themes, and delineating and refining these themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The coding scheme was created inductively as it was based on patterns and themes that emerged from the data (Patton, 2002). Data analysis was terminated when no new information emerged from the analyses, when all excerpts were classified, and the categories were saturated (Lincoln & Guba).



Research findings must yield results that are meaningful to the people for whom they were intended (LeCompte, 2000). As a result, a member check was used for construct validity and to establish the credibility of the data (Mertens, 2005). Respondent validation is useful as the participant may suggest a better way to express an issue or may wish to qualify points (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). To validate my portrayal of the data, my colleague was provided with a draft of this article and a meeting was held to provide her with the opportunity to give feedback on my representation of her narrative.

The journey to becoming a researcher is influenced by many factors, and as a result, in the text which follows I aspire to link the personal with the theoretical, the individual with the universal, and words with images in order to portray one woman's path to becoming an academic. The results which follow highlight the complexity of a non-linear journey from the role of a practitioner to that of a researcher and how family influenced this chosen path. As demonstrated in this study, one's role as a researcher is impacted by one's role as a practitioner and as a parent. As a result, reflections on these conflicting roles and responsibilities are interwoven throughout the text.

## **Results**

### *Paralleling the experience of becoming a knitter and a researcher*

Narratives of the self are highly personal as they are revealing texts in which the author tells stories about his or her lived experience. Dramatic recall, metaphor, poetry, and images can be used to allow the reader to "relive" the events with the writer (Richardson, 1994). According to Richardson, "the essence of metaphor is the experiencing and understanding of one thing in terms of another" (p. 519). Through their use of comparison, metaphor allows individuals to learn about something, and as a result, Richardson promotes the use of metaphor in writing in the social sciences.

Norah decided to write a story of how she came to learn, enjoy, and become skilled as a knitter, and in doing so, she paralleled this experience with that of becoming a researcher. She employed this methodology as she felt that "fellow knitters would have the experiences to enable them to understand my journey and those without experience can understand my metaphor as I parallel my journey in research." Norah described her passion with knitting saying,

My interest began early in my childhood. I was fascinated by the process of knitting. In a family of eight children, my mother would spend her late summer and early fall knitting mitts and socks for all of us children... When I was about ten years old, I must have bugged her so much that she asked a neighbor to start to teach me... So I learned, the first attempts were pretty bad, but I was so determined that eventually I could knit a scarf without dropping or accidentally adding stitches to the needles. I continued to practice off and on throughout

my childhood and adolescence. In my early 20's I became very proficient at knitting, graduating from simple hats and scarves to sweaters, mittens, socks, and fair-isle projects.

My colleague noted that the process of becoming a knitter was a gradual one. The same was true of her experience of becoming a researcher, except there was not the same initial admiration of research:

In my graduate studies I often felt that a research project was a means to an end; a hoop to jump through on your journey toward graduation. As a graduate student I was a child of the research. Much like my initial projects in knitting, I made lots of mistakes, started several proposals, but with the guidance of my supervisor (much like the teaching from my neighbor), I was able to successfully navigate my first research study. From the research I was also able to obtain my first peer reviewed publications, just like I was able to wear the first hat and the first scarves I produced.

Throughout Norah's journey she was able to devote variable amounts of time to knitting and research due to competing family and career demands. She reported that,

Once I got married and started having children, I found that I had little time to devote to knitting... I would parallel this to my experiences after finishing my PhD. I spent significant time establishing myself in my career. I worked toward the process of registering as a psychologist, becoming competent in my areas of practice. I was fortunate to work for organizations that allowed me access to current research, but my focus was truly on how the research could apply to practice and to improve my skills.

#### *Personal experiences influence career orientation*

Postmodernist writers claim that writing is always partial, local, and situational (Richardson, 1994). Just as it is important to consider context in writing, one must also remember that an individual's development is a product of a variety of critical dimensions including context, process, time, and the individual's personal attributes (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). In order to provide a better understanding of her process of becoming a researcher, Norah described how personal experiences influenced her career orientation.

I moved from a career in health to school psychology. It was at this point that my personal life and my work life intersected. The school board where I worked developed an autism team and required a psychologist to become a part of the team. Having had a sound personal foundation, I was invited to join the team... I began to develop competency to work with children diagnosed with autism across the spectrum on a professional basis.

Norah also described how her personal experiences impacted her research endeavors.

As my competencies increased and I became more comfortable with my understanding of autism, I began to notice patterns of behavior and difficulties that students with autism had in educational settings. I found that I was interested from both a personal and a professional basis. I felt there were things that should be explored and ways developed to prevent difficulties for the students within schools.

#### *Family impacts research agenda*

According to Richardson (1994), poetry may better represent the speaker than the practice of quoting “snippets” in prose (p. 522). Richardson advocates for the use of poetry as a practical and powerful method for analyzing social worlds, with this in mind, Norah composed the following poem to portray how her role as a parent influenced her decision to become a researcher.

*My child is born, he is perfect.*

*He is perfect, but as he grows I see him transform.*

*My child is transformed and lives in a world of his own – autism.*

*Autism has transformed the perfect child.*

*My child is my teacher. I patiently learn what is best and how to care.*

*Will others care? Will others protect? Will others understand?*

*My child lives in a world of his own, will others understand?*

*My child lives in a world of his own where “the look” is meaningless.*

*My child lives in a world of his own where tone of voice is meaningless.*

*My child lives in a world of his own where his peers are hard for him to understand.*

*My child lives in a world of his own. “Your world” and his experiences are not the same.*

*The ever changing environments are difficult for him to understand.*

*My child attends school where he lives in a world of his own. Will*

*his teachers understand him? Will his peers understand him?*

*My child attends school in a community, will the community understand him?*

*My child lives in a world of his own, will our world understand him?*

*I love my child, I want understanding.*

*How can I make this happen? How can you help?*

*School is a difficult place for my child.*

*School is a place of confusion and fear.*

*School is a necessary place, but it creates stress.*

*School is a place that creates anxiety.*

*Does anyone understand?*

*How can I possibly help him?*

*His teacher tells me, “He’s tattling. Make him stop.”*

*His teacher tells me, "He's reached his potential." He's in Grade 3.  
His teacher tells me he does not fit in her class.  
In her class, all the students are expected to sit in their seats, raise their hands, and quietly do their work.  
His teacher tells me, "He needs to adapt. He needs to be quiet." Even though it's been explained that to sit quietly means he cannot learn, he cannot focus.  
Finally he is finished with school. I am so happy on graduation day.  
Little did I know how difficult the adult world would be for him.  
Little did I know how difficult it would be to help him navigate a world of adult services.  
My child, now a man, lives in a world of his own – autism.  
My child, now a man, lives in a world of his own where the community does not understand.*

#### *Family impacts career choices*

Bronfenbrenner (2005) encourages researchers to consider an individual's topography – the setting and how internal and external factors influence development. Being aware of the degree to which setting and family can influence development and decision making, Norah discussed how her family life impacted her career choices. She noted that, "When my youngest child aged out of daycare support my husband and I made a conscious decision to find employment that would allow us time to be with our children when they were not in school." Norah reported that both her children and her parents impacted her decision making, and described this experience saying,

I worked as a school psychologist until I made the transition to higher education and a tenure track position. Our child with a developmental disability was almost finished high school around the same time my mother-in-law was diagnosed with cancer-we really needed to seek positions where we would be closer to our family to lend support.

Later in the transcript she reported that,

I took the job at the university because it offered flexibility. My youngest child finished high school and had been attending programs at the autism society for the last two years. He does not work, but he does require support to attend programming.

#### *Nonlinear journey*

The research literature demonstrates that women often take a different or "nonlinear" pathway to academia (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Halpern, 2008; Knights & Richards, 2003). This was the case with Norah as she described her journey as nonlinear and indicated that,

I never consciously made a decision to work in a post-secondary institution. While completing my PhD I sought information. I wanted to develop competencies that I felt were lacking in my Master's program, and further

study was a means to obtain that knowledge. I started seeing patterns of behavior; feeling the need to look further to investigate and put pieces of the puzzle together is what caused me to look for an academic career.

My colleague recognized that her journey towards becoming a researcher was influenced by both her work experience and family context. She reported that,

I started my PhD after working in the school system as a guidance counsellor responsible for the assessment of students with learning issues. My intent in starting a PhD was to better perform my job competencies... During my PhD my youngest child was diagnosed with a developmental disability and I actually switched my program from an internship-based program to a course-based program so I could make myself available to be involved in his rehabilitation program.

#### *Difficulties associated with becoming a researcher*

It is difficult to become a researcher as a high degree of knowledge and skill is required to enact this role. The difficulties associated with becoming a researcher were evident in Norah's narrative. She discussed her experience as a novice researcher saying,

As a novice with very little publishing experience I have lots of difficulty. Establishing myself as a researcher is extremely challenging. I don't regret working in applied practice; I firmly believe that this helps me teach. I have so many experiences to draw on in an attempt to get concepts and competencies across to my students. I can help them apply what they are learning. However, the 11 years that I worked in applied practice leaves me behind. I have to learn to catch up. I have to learn to use research and various strategies that have grown and developed in the 11 years I was not researching.

Norah relayed the difficulties she experienced moving from the role of a practitioner to that of a researcher. She described how this experience impacted her perceptions of competency saying,

I have found the process of tenure extremely stressful. I went from feeling competent in my career, and permanently employed in a school district, to always feeling like I am not good enough, that I don't work hard enough, and that I do not have enough hours. I regularly ask myself why I did this to myself when I was perfectly fine in the school system and I still come to the same answer-flexibility.

Despite her difficulty associated with assuming the role of a researcher, and acquiring the knowledge and skills that are expected of you in this capacity, Norah persisted in acquiring new competencies for the sake of her family. This was demonstrated when she conveyed that,

In the school system I would not be able to drop what I am doing and take

care of my grandson. I would not be able to take my own child to appointments or to various programming opportunities. If my family circumstances were different I don't believe I would put myself through this process.

She continued to report that,

Flexibility is really a double-edged sword, because even though I am available to do the daytime appointments, I spend many evening hours making up for the time I take away during the day. I don't keep a time

score but there are many things that can't wait. Generally, I have students waiting for feedback on assignments, timelines for thesis completion, and deadlines for articles and conference submissions. Not to mention course preparation and faculty and committee meetings.

Norah decided to pursue a career in academia because she wanted to equip pre-service and in-service teachers to work with children with autism. Acutely aware of her son's school experience, Norah wanted to make a difference in the lives of other individuals with autism and to help ensure that they had a more positive school experience. While Norah was passionate about her area of research, and motivated by her ability to improve practice, she discussed the stressors surrounding her non-linear journey into academia and the associated issues with developing a research agenda.

[Because] I came to the university from the school system, and not from a PhD program, getting a research agenda off the ground has been extremely challenging. But this means nothing to anyone but me; the institution does not consider this when evaluating for promotion and tenure.

The difficulty associated with developing a research agenda and the associated implications for tenure resulted in psychosomatic symptomatology. This was demonstrated when Norah reported that, "Next year I apply for tenure and the thought has me extremely anxious and uptight. I have had many wakeful nights worried about the financial repercussions of not making tenure on my family".

### *Importance of relationships in academia*

Chen and Anderson (2008) discuss the importance of developing friendships with other pre-tenure faculty members. Through these friendships faculty members may come to understand that other academics experience similar difficulties. In addition, these friendships may provide opportunity for collaboration, and according to Chen and Anderson, collaboration plays a key role in publishing success. Norah valued the friendship of her peers, and noted the importance of these relationships in supporting her journey to becoming a researcher.



Rejection of my work by a journal amounts to shame and feelings that perhaps I have made a wrong decision; that I really do not belong in a post-secondary institution. Being a part of a group of academics who are not yet tenured has softened the blow because I am told everyone goes through this.

McCormick and Barnes (2008) discuss the importance of mentorship in academic careers. The importance of mentorship was evident in Norah's journey towards becoming a researcher as well as an expert knitter. She reported that,

I had difficulty mastering a cable stitch; even though I was able to read patterns, cable patterns are far more complex. So I sought out an expert who was able to quickly teach me the basics of cabling and I have since knit several complex patterns.

## **Discussion**

### *Difficulties associated with becoming a researcher*

Transitioning into the role of a researcher through the process of acquiring a faculty position can provide new stress, uncertainty, and emotional upheaval. Negotiating new academic and institutional cultures, along with varied expectations from administration and colleagues, is difficult for any newcomer, but can be particularly challenging for women (Grant & Knowles, 2010). Women continue to be underrepresented in academic careers (Williams, 2004). In addition, women often take a different "nonlinear" nonpathway to academia (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Butterwick & Dawson, 2005; Knights & Richards, 2003), and are faced with consistent gaps in career advancement and salary. Some researchers attribute these discriminative outcomes to the negative impact of juggling the incompatible roles of a parent and an academic (Armenti, 2004; Kemkes-Gottenthaler, 2003).

In academia, one's likelihood of receiving tenure is strongly associated with their ability to publish and obtain research funding (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005). Unfortunately, women with children have lower publication rates which reduces their likelihood of obtaining university promotion and tenure (Acker & Armenti, 2004; van Anders, 2004), and increases their likelihood leaving academia (Armenti, 2004). McCormick and Barnes (2008) indicate that writing should be a priority for new faculty members. In order to increase writing productivity, faculty members should start a writing group, maintain a writing schedule, and set deadlines for themselves (McCormick & Barnes).

### *Support for new faculty*

Halpern (2008) discusses the challenges faced by pre-tenure faculty with family care responsibilities and notes that "We cannot talk about nurturing careers in any field without also talking about ways to simultaneously handle the demands and joys of our lives outside of work" (p. 58). Support is needed for new faculty members, especially females who may be juggling the incompatible roles of a parent and an academic. Research demonstrates that when employees have access to family-friendly practices they have fewer stress symptoms, are less likely to plan

to leave their employer, and are more committed to their employer than employees without these policies (Halpern, 2005, 2006).

Mentorship has long been regarded as an effective method for the socialization of new faculty members (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996). Informal mentorship can be equally effective and as satisfying as formal programs (Goodwin, Stevens, & Bellamy, 1998), and mentorship can impact one's chances of obtaining tenure (McCormick & Barnes, 2008). Chen and Anderson (2008) discuss the importance of relationships with more senior academics; however, McCormick and Barnes report that early career faculty can benefit from having multiple mentors which may consist of senior faculty, other pre-tenured faculty, and graduate students, and note that these relationships may be reciprocal.

Despite the passion which may drive one's research agenda, individuals are often faced with many difficulties on their journey towards becoming a researcher. Relationships with fellow academics can assist individuals in becoming acculturated in their new role, and provide

opportunities for collaboration, and thus increase publication opportunities and the likelihood that new faculty members will receive successful tenure outcomes.

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# **Part 10**

## **Rural Education**

- 1. What Does the Future Hold for Rural Schools and Rural Communities?**
- 2. Children Are Not Fish**
- 3. Do we still have small schools?**

## Chapter 1: What Does the Future Hold for Rural Schools and Rural Communities?<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

It has been my privilege over the last fifteen years to meet and work with rural educators, researchers and scholars from all over the world. I have visited many small schools, many in quite remote and isolated places in my home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I have had many conversations with many students, parents and community leaders. I have disciplined myself to listen and respect the local knowledge that has been shared. I say “disciplined” because too often university professors are more apt to talk rather than listen. I have come to realize we academics need to talk less and listen more.

These many experiences in rural places and rural schools have been truly educational. That is important because, as we say in Newfoundland, I am a born and bred “townie.” That means for most of my life I have lived and worked in an urban area; I have not had the experience of growing up in a rural community or in an “outport” as many rural places are called in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Being a bit of an outsider has had its advantages. I come to rural issues, concerns and questions with some degree of objectivity. My vision and understanding is not blurred in any way by sentimentality or mythology. Making a living and a life in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, historically, was a constant struggle with the elements of the sea, the wind and the land just to survive. To make a living from the fishery meant long hours of back breaking work most of which was performed with imminent danger never far away. To a large extent the good old days are something of a myth; older rural women will assure you of that.

Life in most small rural communities today is still a struggle in my part of the world. Those communities that remain dependent on the fishery are in fact at risk of ceasing to exist.<sup>2</sup> Since 1992, there has been in place a moratorium on the cod fishery. The cod was initially Newfoundland’s reason d’etre. England established fishing plantations on the island in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and for nearly four hundred years the word “fish” meant “cod” in Newfoundland. However, it appears the fishing stocks are almost totally depleted and there is not a lot of hope that they will come back.

In some rural communities the fishers have been able to turn their attention to alternative species such as shrimp and crab. They are experiencing some success with these ventures; but overall the situation is bleak. To emphasize the precariousness of the situation a forum with the provocative title *Can Rural Newfoundland and Labrador be Saved* was held at the Corner Brook Campus of Memorial University in May, 2006. The organizer of the conference, Dr. Ivan Empke introduced the forum by noting:

Pick up any daily newspaper and, if you look carefully in the spaces between the major articles on life in the city, you can find the stories of rural areas. Many of them are stories of despair – loss of



services, youth out-migration, economic collapse, environmental challenge, struggles in governance, a culture of poverty. Some are stories of an idyllic past that will not return, stories that drip of romanticism. But here and there are stories of courage, of conviction, of defiance even.

Reading between the lines, these stories highlight the fact that the crisis of rural communities is not simply an economic or structural crisis, but it is also a social and cultural crisis. They raise the question of why rural is worth saving – or even if it is worth saving at all (Empke, 2006).

I will hasten to add that my colleague in Corner Brook cares very much about rural places and he would answer quite definitively, as would I, that rural communities are worth saving.

For two months in 2006 I was a visiting scholar at Charles Sturt University in Wagga Wagga, NSW. This was quite a wonderful, fascinating and again a truly educational experience. I had many very informative conversations with my new colleagues at the School of Education. With the assistance of Colin Boylan and Andrew Wallace I had the opportunity to visit a number of small schools in New South Wales.

The journey to and from these schools was filled with conversations about educational issues in our respective rural contexts. We have discovered we have much in common; yet there are some significant differences. However, throughout my career, I have discovered that small rural schools often have more in common with similar schools in quite diverse places than they do with larger schools in their own immediate environment.

In my travels in North America, the UK, and Australia, I have found that the issues and concerns of rural communities and rural educators are very much the same the world over. Government policies which often reflect ignorance, insensitivity or an indifference to rural sustainability and development appear to know no borders or boundaries.

While in Australia, I also had the opportunity to visit with the folks who run the Multi-age Association of Queensland. One of my primary research interests is multi-age education and at the invitation of Terry Ball, I spent a week on the Gold Coast visiting small schools and talking with educators. I also had the opportunity to visit with the President of MAAQ, Dr. Nita Lester who is a lecturer at the Mt. Gravatt Campus of Griffith University.

In my brief time in Australia I developed a deep affection for the place and its people. The landscape was quite stunning (despite the drought in NSW) and beautiful and the people were both gracious and generous with their time and knowledge. I did not feel that I was in a foreign land; but rather had come to another home. The people of Australia, at least the ones I have met, are very much like Newfoundlanders – informal, welcoming, quite accepting of others and they have a great sense of humour.

I suspect, like Newfoundlanders, rural Australians have demonstrated courage, conviction and even defiance as they continue to insist that rural does indeed matter and is worth preserving. I wish to sincerely thank Charles Sturt University for providing me with the opportunity to add these understandings to my continuing education into rural matters.<sup>3</sup>

My purpose with this paper is to share with you some of the rural issues and concerns that rural parents, educators and researchers have to grapple with in their struggle to provide a quality education for the children and youth attending schools in rural communities of Newfoundland and Labrador. As I indicated above I am sure many of these issues will resonate with many of this journal's readership who work in similar circumstances in Australia.

In many rural areas all over the world, many rural communities are under siege and hanging on by the skin of their teeth. The universal push towards urbanization and standardization is making maintaining rural communities increasingly difficult. Rural schools have a vital role to play in community development and sustainability. Yet, many government policies fail to recognize the unique context of rural communities and fail to provide the necessary resources to enable these schools to flourish and play their vital role in rural life.

### **Enrolment Decline and Rural Population Change**

The number one issue affecting rural education in Newfoundland and Labrador today is the dramatic changes in the population of the schools and many of the rural communities. Rural schools have experienced a sharp enrolment decline and many communities have also lost significant population.

A decline in student enrolment creates a domino effect that impacts all important aspects of educational provision including the allocation of personnel, financial assistance, curriculum programs and the configuration of classrooms for instruction. To a large extent all the issues that I discuss in this paper are related in one way or another to declining enrolment.

Rural Communities are also experiencing a decline in their overall population. This decline has resulted not only in less people but a significant change in community demographics. This demographic shift is also making a dramatic impact on education and schooling. Enrolment and population decline impacts small schools and small communities most severely.

For the past thirty-five years the enrolment decline in Newfoundland and Labrador has been nothing short of dramatic. At the time of Confederation with Canada in 1949, there were approximately 80,000 children attending the province's schools.

There was anticipation and expectation that this enrolment would greatly increase. In 1967 The Royal Commission on Education and Youth projected that the enrolment in schools would increase as follows:

1. 1971: 165,000
2. 1981 190,000
3. 1991: 240,000

This increase in enrolment was partly based on a projected increase in the province's overall population. It was anticipated in 1967 that by 1991 the province would have a population of at least 770,000 people. [The actual population in 1991 was only 579,518]

As can be seen from Fig. 1 the Royal Commissioners got it terribly wrong. The enrolment in Newfoundland schools peaked in 1971/72 school year at 162,818 students (*Structuring the education system: A public consultation paper for educational change in Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1997). Starting in 1975, the province started to experience a steady and increasingly dramatic enrolment decline. By 1980 the enrolment dropped to 140,000.

Fig 1

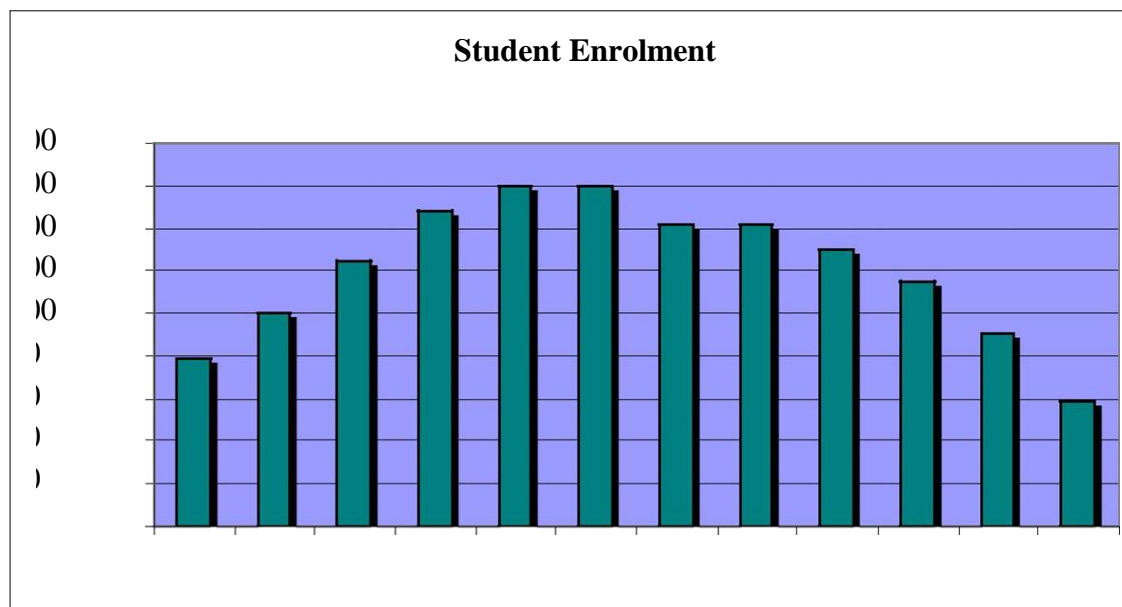


Figure 1

By September of 1995, enrolment had fallen to 110,456, a decrease of 32% from 1971. The Royal Commission had estimated that by the 1990's the school population would be 240,000.<sup>4</sup> They miscalculated the total school enrolment by about 130,000! Surely there is a lesson here for strategic planners everywhere.

The most recent statistics (*Education Statistics*, 2005/06) available from the Department of Education indicate that there are 76,763 students enrolled in the province's 294 public schools (102 urban/192 rural). There are 33, 693 fewer students attending school today than 10 years ago. The Department further projects that by 2010 the enrolment will drop below 60,000 students.

This decline in enrolment is being experienced province wide; however, it is most dramatic in rural areas and its impact is most significantly felt by small schools, some of which have lost up to 40% of their students in the last ten years.

## Reasons for Declining Enrolment

### *Change in fertility rate*

The baby boom period ended midway through the 1960's as female baby boomers began pursuing higher education and entering the workforce at rates previously not witnessed. This combined with the introduction and proliferation of more birth control methods and a rising number of abortions, pushed fertility rates and births down in most of the industrialized world (*Demographic Change*, 2005, p. 1).

The most significant factor that has lead to this dramatic enrolment decline has been a radical change in the province's fertility or birth rate. When Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, it had one of the highest fertility rates in the world. It was not at all unusual or remarkable for families, especially in rural areas to have ten, twelve and fifteen or more children. Personally, I knew several people who were from families of twenty children.

The birth rate in Newfoundland and Labrador has been in a steep decline since the sixties. Births dropped from over 12,600 in 1971 to about 4,500 in 2004, and are projected to drop to less than 3,400 by 2020 (*Demographic Change*, 2005, p.2). Currently the fertility rate is 1.3 and it is the lowest in Canada; it is also well below the rate of 2.1 which is what is needed just to maintain current population levels.

Naturally this change in birth rate can be seen in the differences in school enrolment. For example, the number of children entering grade one in 2005 was 30% less than those entering that grade in 1995. Again, the change in birth rate is a province wide phenomenon, however, that change has been most dramatically experienced in rural areas.

#### *Rural out-migration*

A second factor contributing to the decline in school enrolment especially in rural areas has been the out-migration caused by the changed economic circumstances that has befallen many rural communities especially dependent on the fishery.

The economic circumstances of Newfoundland and Labrador, while improving somewhat in recent years because of the discovery and development of off- shore oil and gas, remains somewhat bleak. Whatever economic indicator one cares to use – employment rate, per capita income, and per capita provincial debt – the province is at the bottom of the Canadian barrel. And from a provincial perspective, rural regions are worse off again. The economic prosperity that has been generated by the oil industry is being mostly experienced by the capital city of St. John's and its surrounding communities. The rest of the province which is primarily rural is under economic siege and in a struggle for survival.

The single most significant blow to the rural economy came in 1992 when the federal government imposed a moratorium on the cod fishery. The *raison d'être* for England's claiming Newfoundland as a colony in the 16th century was the presence of abundant quantities of cod. For four hundred years the culture of the place was defined by hundreds of small communities scattered around the 800km of coast line whose people depended on their life and livelihood on the continued presence of the cod.<sup>5</sup>

Then in 1992 this fishery collapsed and thus began a dramatic exodus of people from rural Newfoundland. In the fourteen years since the moratorium over 70,000 people have out-migrated from the province, the overwhelming number of these from rural communities affected by the collapse of the fishery.

The moratorium, the downturn in the rural economy and the subsequent out-migration increased the rate of enrolment decline. In the fourteen years leading up to the moratorium there was a decline of 29,132 students for an average of 2,080 a year. In the fourteen years since the moratorium these figures have jumped to an average reduction of 3,455 students a year for a total loss of 48,370.

### *The domino effects of declining enrolment*

This dramatic decline in student enrolment has impacted the whole province but its effects have been most pronounced in rural areas where the schools tend to be smaller. Some small rural schools have lost as much as 40% of their students in the last five years. It is much more difficult for a small school to absorb significant loss in student numbers.

There is a distinct domino effect experienced by small schools when enrolment declines. The allocation of teachers to a school is directly linked to student enrolment. A dramatic decline in enrolment automatically triggers a cut in the number of teachers assigned to individual schools. I have outlined below how this domino effect generally plays out:

- Reduction of educational personnel

This reduction does not just apply to classroom teachers. The school's administration is also affected as the teaching responsibilities of both the principal and vice principle increase thus leaving less time for their administrative duties and responsibilities. Specialists teachers, such as music, art, and phys-ed are also affected with their time in the school reduced.

- Increased workload for remaining teachers

As a school strives to maintain its academic and extra-curricular programs the teachers remaining in a school will have their work load increase. Many will have to teach courses outside their areas of expertise and spend more time in supervisory activities. For some the increased workload will be a disincentive to stay teaching at the small school.

- Funding reduced

In Newfoundland and Labrador schools are funded primarily on a per student basis. This is considered to be a fair and equitable way to fund education. Small schools have always been short changed with this approach as costs of many essential items needed by the school are not linked to enrolment. Any funding cuts further erode the small schools ability to purchase essential resources.

- Program cuts

The school's capacity to provide on-site courses is directly tied to the number of teachers assigned to the school. As teachers are cut, so too are programs and courses. The general result is a narrowing of

the curriculum available to students with the first programs to be cut being the arts and non-academic courses.

- Increased reliance on combined classrooms.

As teachers are cut there is an increased need to combine classrooms. Multi-grading has been a tradition in small schools the world over. For some school teacher cuts may mean implementing multi-grading for the first time; for others it may mean increasing then number of such classrooms or increasing the number of grade levels in an existing combined classroom.

- Introduction of, or increased use of distance education

A reduction in the number of on-site teachers combined with program cuts may lead to the introduction of distance education or an expansion of that mode of program delivery. Distance education is a two edged sword for small rural schools. It can provide access to programs and courses not offered by the school; however, not all students have the necessary attributes to succeed with this mode of learning. This is an issue I will return to later in this paper.

- Increase pressure to close and consolidate

The most serious consequence of declining enrolment is the increased pressure on a community to agree to close their small school and have their children bussed to a larger school in another community. This too is an issue I will return to later in this paper.

### *The changing rural demographic*

The significant decline in the overall population of the province has resulted in some very significant demographic changes for many rural communities. There are three key questions that have to be addressed to understand these changes and their implications for education and schooling:

- Who is leaving?
- Who is staying
- Who is returning?

Depending on how these questions are answered will determine the impact on both the school and the community. In many rural communities those leaving tend to be younger and/or better educated who have a skill set that they can use to find employment either elsewhere in Newfoundland and Labrador or outside the province. When they leave they take their children with them and the potential for future enrolment in the community school. Equally important, the rural community is denied the leadership and social capital that this group represents.

Many of the young people who are staying tend to be those who dropped out of school or who did not do very well. They have little or no post secondary education and tend to move from part time seasonal work to some form of social assistance. It is their children who will be attending the community school (if it remains open). Given what we know about the interaction of socio-economic factors and education this changed demographic will create a uniquely challenging pedagogical context.



Leadership and efforts to sustain and develop these communities will also fall to these young people who remain. This will create its own challenges.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, there are those who are choosing to return to rural communities in the province. Most of these are folks who left in an earlier time to seek employment outside of Newfoundland and Labrador and who are now retired. Many Newfoundlanders have a great sense of place. They may have left physically because of the need to find work, but spiritually and emotionally they remained tied to the province.

While it is a good thing to have people moving back to the province and to rural communities, the contribution of this particular demographic group may be limited to both the school and the community. They do not have children of their own; in most cases they do not have grandchildren living in the community. Their interest in sustaining or keeping the school is limited. Many also lack the interest or the energy to get overly involved in community affairs. These folks, because of their age, are and will increasingly be placing considerable demands on the rural health care system.

#### *Summary of this section*

In this section of the paper I have outlined the impact that a dramatic decline in student enrolment and out migration is having on rural schools and the communities they serve. The enrolment decline has created a domino effect that is affecting all aspects of school from personnel cuts to curriculum modifications. Out-migration is changing the demographic profile of many communities with serious consequences for both school and community.

### **Rural school closure and consolidation**

Despite research evidence demonstrating the advantages of smaller schools and districts, especially for low-income students (e.g., Howley, 1996; Howley & Bickel, 1999), many states continue to pass regulations that require or strongly encourage small districts to consolidate or to close their small schools and replace them with larger, consolidated schools (Mathis, 2003). Rural and small-town communities perhaps feel the pressure for consolidation most acutely, particularly those with vulnerable economies and limited political leverage (e.g., Dayton, 1998; DeYoung, 1993; Peshkin, 1982). Moreover, with the power of rural caucuses diminishing in state and national politics, the interests of rural citizens—including their interest in retaining community schools— increasingly yield to those of urban and suburban constituencies to whom rural fates are irrelevant (e.g., Eyre & Finn, 2002; Nachtigal, 1994; Schwab, 1985) (Howley and Howley 2006).

The most serious consequence of declining enrolment for a rural community is the loss of its school. The dramatic decline in enrolment has given impetus for the government to implement several rounds of rural school closure and consolidation. Small schools have been considered something of a

necessary evil for the past forty years and at every opportunity educational authorities have attempted to reform them out of existence.

Newfoundland and Labrador has always been a province of small rural schools. At the time of confederation with Canada in 1949, there were 1,187 schools in Newfoundland and Labrador; 778 (66%) of these schools were one-room schools with an average enrolment per room of 63 students (Rowe, 1976, p.27).

In 1964-65, out of a total of 1,266 schools, 845 or 67% had fewer than four classrooms; and only 99, including elementary, regional and central high schools, and all grade schools had 10 classrooms or more. There were 177 two room all grade schools. Total student enrolment was 140, 735 students for an average school size of 110 (*The Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth*, 1967, p.90).

For most of its education history <sup>7</sup>, Newfoundland and Labrador more or less accepted the existence of small schools as a necessary feature of the education system given the rural nature of the province, its sparse population, its lack of roads and the extreme isolation of many of its settlements (outports).

However, this reluctant acceptance of small schools changed in 1967. The provincial government had appointed a Royal Commission of Enquiry “to make a careful study of all aspects of education in Newfoundland” and to make what ever recommendations that Commission felt would advance the development of education in the province (*The Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth*, 1967, p.2). The commission’s chair was Dr. Philip Warren, a professor of education at Memorial University.

In 1967 the Royal Commission submitted to government the results of its enquires.

*The Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, Vols 1&2* [hence forth referenced as the (Warren,1967)] contained 340 recommendations covering every aspect of education and schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador. One of the principal targets for its recommendations was small rural schools.

In the view of the Commission the scale of schooling in the province was a major impediment to the future development of education and the province. Simply put, the number of small schools in Newfoundland and Labrador was a major problem that had to be addressed. They were problematic because students could not receive a good education in small schools, the Commission claimed. This was especially true for rural areas where because of the scale of schooling education was “substandard.”

Reflecting on the fact that 25 years after confederation with Canada the average size of all schools was still only 110 students, 30% of schools were one room, and that 67% of schools had less than four classrooms, the Commission declared (with some degree of exasperation):

In spite of the progress made in the last decade, Newfoundland continues to provide a sub-standard education for thousands of children. Many of our

rural children in particular are not receiving the kind of education necessary for successful living in the society described in Chapter 1 of this Report. And clearly, one of the main reasons for this *disturbing state of affairs is the large number of small schools* (emphasis added) in the Province (Warren, 1967, Vol.1, p. 99).

The way forward as far as the Commission was concerned was the elimination of as many small schools as possible through a process of school closure and consolidation. This was how the province could improve its academic productivity and raise educational standards in rural areas. The issue was clear as far as the commission was concerned:

While no one will contend that larger schools of themselves do provide good education, few will doubt that small schools rarely do (ibid, p. 90).

Small schools with their limited facilities and narrow programmes may have met the needs of education in the past, but to continue such schools today would be to impoverish the lives of the children in these schools and do an injustice to the Province as a whole. Larger schools<sup>8</sup> are essential if we are to reduce the loss of student potential referred to earlier in this Report and if we are to provide the number of well educated high school graduates which the Province will require in the future (ibid, p.102)

The Royal Commission gave the educational authorities the ammunition they needed to initiate a series of closure and consolidation assaults on small rural community schools. By the late 1980's 741 small rural schools had been eliminated. Of the 1,266 schools that had existed when the Commission began its work, only 525 remained in 1987.

As the pace of declining enrolment picked up after 1992, the government initiated another round of rural school closures. By 1999 the number of schools had been reduced to 343 with 182, mostly rural, schools closed during that time period.

In rural education studies the school closure and consolidation wars are both a current issue and a perennial one (Baker and Gump, 1964; Cubberley, E., 1922; DeYoung, A. 1995; Fox, W. 1980; Howley, C., 1996; Howley & Howley, 2006; Kennedy, J., 1914; Mulcahy, D., 1996; Nachtigal, 1982).

Such is the case here in Newfoundland and Labrador. As I have indicated small schools have been targeted for closure ever since 1967. The pace of school closure has slowed since the nineties because rural folks have become much more knowledgeable and politically astute in resisting the government's closure initiatives.<sup>9</sup> There are also limits as to how far and for how long it is considered acceptable to bus children. The government, however, continues to push those limits. Although the pace of closure has slowed, it continues relentlessly and each year one of more communities lose their schools and another group of children begin to ride the bus or have their existing ride extended.

The most recent statistics (2005/06) from the Department of Education indicate that there are just 294 schools in the province: 192 rural, 102 urban. The average enrolment in all schools is 261; the average rural school is 169 while the average urban school has 434 students. Close to a hundred of these rural

schools are all-grade schools offering programs and courses from Kindergarten to Level III (Grade twelve).<sup>10</sup> There are no urban all grade schools.

As has been the case throughout its history Newfoundland and Labrador continues to have a significant number of very small schools. For example there are 25% (75) of all schools that have less than 100 students; 44 of these schools have less than 50 students.

Currently each of the four major school districts<sup>11</sup> in the province has some kind of re-structuring plan in place. Each of these plans calls for the closure of a number of small community schools. One example of such a plan was developed by the largest school district in the province, the Eastern School District (<http://www.esdnl.ca/>) which provides for 44,000 students in 122 schools. This district serves the capital city region of St. John's and three distinctly rural areas.

In 2005 the Eastern School District hired a group of consultants to develop a comprehensive multi-year re-organizational plan for the district. Throughout this school reorganization and restructuring process, the stated goal of the Eastern School Board was to provide for educational programs and school facilities where all students receive the highest quality educational experiences possible, thus assisting them in achieving to the best of their potential (*Eastern School District: School organization plan 2006-20010*, 2005).

The consultants' report reflected the (false) conventional wisdom that has dominated educational thinking for the last fifty years: larger schools, necessarily, offer students the greater opportunity for quality educational experiences. In the section of the report leading up to their recommended school closures and consolidations the following points were identified as "planning considerations":

- The goal of the school board in this planning process is to provide for educational programs and school facilities where all students receive the highest quality educational experiences possible.
- Unfortunately, some rural schools are located in small and isolated areas where there are insufficient numbers to offer a broad-based program.
- In those cases, school viability comes down to questions of what is too small for a class size and what is too far a distance to travel for particular grades/ages. *Larger schools* benefit from a broader-based curriculum because of the efficiencies and economies of scale that can be attained; however, there are trade-offs, such as higher class sizes and longer times spent travelling by bus.
- Within the current model of schooling, the key to optimizing educational opportunities for students is their aggregation into *larger school* settings.
- *Larger schools* offer economies of scale in terms of programs and services and are generally located in communities which have the greatest amount of infrastructure available to enrich educational experiences.

- As well, *larger schools* offer greater levels of administrative and secretarial support and provide greater opportunities for collaboration among staff members.
- Generally, students in *larger schools* are assigned to single grade classes and have greater access to trained specialist teachers and the programs and services they offer (i.e., physical education, music, art, drama, guidance, resource centres, computer studies, etc.).
- These schools also provide greater numbers of student role models and increase academic competitiveness, both of which have been demonstrated to increase overall student achievement (*Eastern School District: School organization plan 2006-2010*, 2006, pp.10/11).<sup>12</sup>

The basic position is quite familiar to anyone who has followed the closure and consolidation wars in North American for the last fifty years of more:

- Quality education can only be experienced in larger schools
- Student achievement is higher in larger schools
- Single grade classrooms are better than multi-grade or multi-age
- A broad and rich curriculum requires a larger school
- Larger schools enable the achievement of economies of scale

There is no research evidence presented in the report to substantiate any of these claims. There isn't any research presented because there isn't any that would allow such unequivocal assertions to be made.<sup>13</sup> In fact most of the research repudiates these claims.

Raywid (1999) offers this overview of the small school's literature:

The small school's literature began with the large-scale quantitative studies of the late 1980s and early 1990s that firmly established small schools as more productive and effective than large ones. These studies, involving large numbers of students, schools, and districts, confirmed that students learn more and better in small schools (Lee & Smith, 1995). Students make more rapid progress toward graduation (McMullan, Sipe, & Wolf, 1994). They are more satisfied with small schools, and fewer of them drop out than from larger schools (Pittman & Haughwout, 1987). Students behave better in smaller schools, which thus experience fewer instances of both minor and serious infractions (Stockard & Mayberry, 1992). All of this is particularly true for disadvantaged students, who perform far differently in small schools and appear more dependent upon them for success than do more fortunate youngsters (Lee & Smith, 1995).

All of these things we have confirmed with a clarity and at a level of confidence rare in the annals of education research. As one researcher summed it up, "a large body of research in the affective and social realms

overwhelmingly affirms the superiority of small schools" (Cotton, 1996b). Another researcher noted that size exerts a "unique influence" on students' academic accomplishment, with a strong negative relationship linking the two: the larger the school, the lower the students' achievement levels (Howley, 1994).

Other research has disputed the other purported benefits of larger schools and the alleged disadvantages of small schools. [give references?]

The report is also lacking in its failure to adequately discuss the effects of long distance bussing on students' health, well being or academic achievement. There is no discussion of the safety concerns that parents have for their children while being bussed. There is no acknowledgement of the fact that most many students do not gain the purported benefits of larger schools if they do not have their own way of getting to and from school.<sup>14</sup>

There is no discussion of how important small schools are to the well being and survival of the communities they serve (Mulcahy, D., Boylan, C., & Gardener, C. (1998) Rural communities rarely give up their schools voluntarily since they know their sustainability and future development often depends on the continued existence of a school. There is an acknowledgement by the consultants that "continued stakeholder opposition can be expected to some of the proposed restructuring changes. In some cases, the board may be required to defend its position in the courts, in which case delays can be expected" (Eastern School District: School organization plan, 2006, p.).

One other idea that is not given adequate consideration in this report is web -based distance education for small rural high schools. I will explore this topic more extensively in the next section. However, I wish to note here that the expansion of web-based distance education provision through the Centre for Distance Education and Innovation has made the size and location of a school irrelevant in terms of its program capacity. Yet, this report does not seriously discuss this issue as an alternative to school closure and long distance bussing.

At the very end of the report the consultants acknowledge, reluctantly it would seem given the syntax, that small schools have merit:

While the thrust of the recommendations in this report is toward larger schools, this is not to suggest that small schools are not capable of meeting students' needs *Eastern School District: School organization plan*, (2006).

### *Summary of this section*

In this section I have tried to provide a brief overview of where we are in Newfoundland and Labrador, currently, Vis a Vis the perception of and attitude towards the continued existence of small rural schools. Small community schools are under siege today as they have been for the last fifty years. The same old arguments, unsubstantiated by research, are being used to justify eliminating these schools. The concerns of parents and community leaders continue to be ignored. The pace of closure has slowed only because further action will necessitate some extreme and dangerous bus rides for



students and an increased combativeness of a better informed rural citizenry. However, the “conventional wisdom” that bigger schools are better schools remains the dominant and narrow ideology. The idea that the well being of the community and the role of the school in sustaining a community be considered as part of a restructuring plan remains an alien concept.

The research of the last thirty years clearly justifies educational policies that support the creation of new small schools and, more importantly for rural areas, sustaining and supporting existing small community schools. There is little if any justification for closing small schools. All fair minded people have to wonder given this research base:

Why do so many states [and provinces] continue to develop consolidation policies that are anything but research-based? Why is this *irrational* and *failed* approach to educational improvement forced upon rural communities, despite their widespread and often vehement opposition? (*Rural Policy Matters*, 2006)

To continue to pursue a policy of closure and consolidation in the face of the research evidence is to put the education of rural children and youth at risk (Corbett & Mulcahy, 2006)

### **The Curriculum Issue and Web based distance education**

It does not follow necessarily that more opportunities exist in larger schools.  
—Kent McGuire, 1989

The final issue I am going to discuss in this paper is the increasing reliance of small rural schools on web-based distance education to provide access to programs and courses for its students. I would like to link this discussion to one of the traditional criticisms of small schools – their inability to provide adequate curriculum programs because of their size. The curriculum argument against small schools has become the dominant being used to justify school closure since the achievement argument has been all but totally debunked.

The criticism that smaller schools cannot offer as broad a program of studies as can larger schools has been around for a very long time; it is often used as a justification for closing smaller schools. Educational authorities, pursuing an agenda of school consolidation, point out the obvious: larger schools can offer a wider range of programs and more courses than can smaller schools. “Therefore, goes the argument, operating small schools with more limited curricula is unfair to the students who attend them” Cotton, 1996).

However, as Cotton (1996) points out

While this has a certain common sense appeal, examination of the research reveals that there simply is no reliable relationship between school size and curriculum quality. For one thing, researchers have found that “it takes a lot of bigness to add a little variety”—that is, “on the average a 100% increase in enrolment yields only a 17% increase in variety of offerings”

(Pittman and Haughwout). Moreover, "[t]he strength of the relationship between school size and curricular offerings diminishes as schools become larger.

This broader curriculum purportedly improves achievement, provides students with more choice in terms of courses and better prepares them for post secondary participation. This argument was first popularized fifty years ago with the publication of Conant's *The American High School Today* (1959) and has been used ever since by those advocating consolidation.

The assumption that a broader curriculum somehow equates with a high level of student achievement does not up to critical scrutiny. The research evidence clearly demonstrates that the number of courses offered in a school has no effect on overall student achievement. Students in smaller schools perform as well or better academically compared to students in larger schools regardless of the number of programs and courses either set of schools offer. *The broader curriculum does not have a positive effect on student achievement.*

Research into this issue (McGuire 1989; Monk 1992; Rogers 1987) has called into question the claim that the larger school offers a more varied and richer curriculum. What one tends to find in larger schools is not more advanced courses in key academic areas but more introductory courses in non core areas. (Many parents whose children attend larger schools are often amazed and dismayed at how little choice there is when they help their children pick out courses). Another relevant and interesting finding from the research is that "only five to twelve percent of the students in large schools avail themselves of the extra courses these schools typically offer" (Cotton, 1996).

The work of Haller, Monk, Spotted Bear, Griffin, and Moss (1990) is of particular relevance for those concerned with very small high schools. They found that it is possible for schools graduating as few as 25 students to be able to offer a mathematics program equal to that of a much larger school. The notion that larger schools with the larger number of courses better prepare students for post-secondary participation has also been investigated by researchers. Again, the research has disproved this belief.

Like the curriculum argument, the assertions about college readiness have been disproved by research. Six documents address the relative merits of large and small schools vis a vis college-related variables— entrance examination scores, acceptance rates, attendance, grade point average, and completion. Five found small schools equal (Rogers 1987; Fowler 1992; Jewell 1989) or superior (Burke 1987; Swanson 1988) to large ones in their capacity to prepare students for college entrance and success (Cotton, 1996).

### *E Learning trumps curriculum argument*

Whatever merits the curriculum argument may have had in the past, current developments in web-based distance education (E Learning) make any claim of program inadequacy in smaller schools totally irrelevant. In the 21st century, through the use of information and communication technologies,

access to a rich and varied curriculum is available to any student regardless of where they live or the size of the school they attend.

Students attending small community schools can have the best of both worlds. They can enjoy the many advantages that come with small scale learning communities *and* have access to any course or program to which they aspire. The common use of distance education in small rural schools has a long history. In 1996 Theodore Roellkie wrote,

Advances in computer and video technologies have permitted many rural school districts to electronically import courses otherwise unavailable in the school system at a cost of one third to one half of a resident teacher's salary (Smith, 1990). Computerized learning programs, interactive television, and Internet access are additional resources that can enhance the curriculum of small high schools. Success has been reported in using these technologies to provide advanced placement and college credit courses as well as instructional services for students with special needs (Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, 1994).

Canada has become a world leader in the establishment of E Learning at the secondary level of schooling. Recent proceedings of the National Congress on Rural Education in Saskatchewan (2001-2006) have been filled for the last several years by presentations that focus on online and other forms of distance learning. Given contemporary technology, synchronous, real time teaching and learning possibilities in small, isolated communities are opening up at a rate that is only constrained by our imaginations:

Improved technological literacy and Internet access have enabled educators and governments to establish virtual schools as partial solutions to the problems of curriculum equity, changing demographics, shortages in specific teaching disciplines and the need to be cost-effective (Fury & Murphy, 2005).

In a policy brief entitled “The power and promise of distance learning in rural education” Hobbs (2004) states that “A rapidly growing number of rural students are increasingly involved in some form of distance learning for all or part of the school day (or night).”

Research shows that it can be as effective as classroom learning in terms of student performance. It offers the opportunity for an enhanced curriculum and advanced classes, as well as for students to participate in low enrolment, high-cost classes such as physics, anatomy, chemistry, music theory, or calculus. Along with the academic advantages come economic ones: school size no longer determines the scope or breadth of curriculum offered. Schools of any size can offer a virtually unlimited curriculum without incurring the costs of hiring additional teachers. Savings increase even more if schools participate in distance learning consortiums to share master teachers, personnel and technology costs.

“Most importantly,” says Hobbs (2004), “distance learning can enable small schools to remain open and small—thereby embracing more than a half century of educational research showing that smaller schools offer a multitude of educational advantages for students over larger schools.”

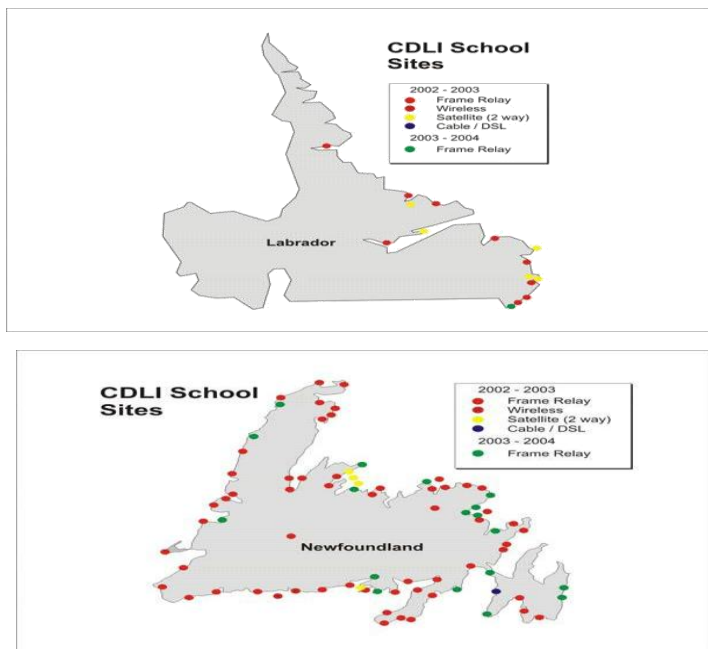
Today distance education and web-based learning are essential features of all progressive education systems. Technology is used by both rural and urban schools as a way to supplement the programming offerings available to students. It is hard to believe that educational authorities anywhere continue to use the curriculum inadequacy argument to make a case against small schools.

### **The Centre for Distance Education and Innovation (CDLI)<sup>15</sup>**

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the agency responsible for E Learning in secondary schools is The Centre for Distance Education and Innovation. CDLI was founded in 2000 by the Department of Education. The primary mandate of CDLI is to provide students attending small rural schools access, via the Internet, to programs and courses not available in the schools they attend.

Currently, CDLI makes 34 courses available to students in over 100 small schools.

CDLI sites on the island and Labrador (below)



Through the facilities and personal of CDLI Newfoundland students in remote and isolated schools can access all of the courses they need to fulfill graduation requirements. In addition they can also access an ever increasing number of elective courses in music, art and French. The creation of CDLI has great

*potential* benefit to students attending the more remote schools in the island. I say potential because there are a number of issues that need to be resolved.

The CDLI model of distance education can provide rural students with access to more and a wider range of courses than might otherwise be available to them. But then, if it is just a matter of *access*, the same goal could be achieved with a greater use of mail order correspondence courses. A commitment to education equality and a quality education for all has to go well beyond the provision of access.

It remains an open question, therefore, whether the computer mediated, Internet dependent model of distance education will in fact *equalize educational opportunities for rural students*, particularly those attending the smallest and most remote schools. An equally significant unanswered question at this point is whether or not the increased reliance on distance education as an alternative mode of program delivery will improve *the quality of education* provided to rural children and raise levels of rural academic achievement.

Among the key issues in need of critical inquiry and public discourse are:

- Equality of Access
- The appropriateness of online distance education for all learners
- The educational equivalency of online and face to face instruction
- The effect of an increased reliance on distance education at the high school level on all-grade schools

I would like to say a few words about two of these issues: equality of access and the appropriateness of distance education for all learners.

### **Equality of Access**

First of all, there is the question of *equality of access* to these new educational opportunities. Access to the Internet remains problematic in some rural areas of this province. It is most problematic for those small and remote schools most in need of program enhancement. Young students are quickly frustrated when the technology does not work as intended. A very important aspect of the CDLI model is two-way synchronous voice communication between teachers and students. When that is not available or is of poor quality and consistency students lose confidence in this mode of learning. The folks at CDLI are well aware of these technical problems and are constantly striving to improve the system.

Equality of access is not just a matter of communications infrastructure; it is also a matter of economics. Funding formulas for educational resources favour larger schools over smaller ones. Most rural schools are small, and all remote schools are very small. Rural schools (and rural districts), therefore, do not have the financial resources to spend on technology that larger urban schools do. Many rural schools are situated in those parts of the province experiencing the most challenging economic and social circumstances; they are also in those regions experiencing the greatest out-

migration of people. They do not have the opportunities for fund raising and creating partnerships with businesses that schools in larger centres do.

If the responsibility for funding the technology, the machines, and the technicians required to support online distance education is downloaded to rural boards and small schools, then a dramatic digital divide will be created in this province. Again, this will greatly compromise the equality of access students will have in rural schools compared to their urban counterparts.

A third dimension of access equality is the issue of home access for students taking online distance education. Those students, who have access to computers and the Internet in their homes, will have a distinct advantage over those who cannot afford home access. This is the second and more serious dimension of the digital divide.

These privileged students will indeed enjoy the much touted “anytime, anywhere” advantage of online education. In those communities where connectivity is problematic, especially during peak times during the day, having home access might be considered a necessity. Many families in rural Newfoundland and Labrador have to deal with very challenging financial circumstances. They may not be able to afford to provide home access for their children. At this point in time the Government does not intend to fund home access for rural students.

As long as online distance education is an option for select students wishing to take advanced academic courses, perhaps this issue can be ignored. However, if as proposed by the Government distance education is to function as an alternative mode of program delivery for all schools and the only form of program delivery for certain essential courses for small rural schools, then, access issues become of paramount importance.

If we do not provide equality of access for rural students, rather than equalizing educational opportunities we may in fact be doing the very opposite, especially for those students who live remote places and/or in challenging economic circumstances. We will be making their educational and life chances worse, not better. At the same time, we will be increasing educational opportunities for children who already enjoy many privileges.

### **The appropriateness of distance education for all learners**

A second issue is the appropriateness of online distance education for all learners. The Government proposes that distance education be re-conceptualized from a supplementary program to being an alternative mode of program delivery for all students. A constant caution in the literature suggests that distance education is not appropriate for all learners. This is because all forms of distance education, including online learning, requires certain attributes and dispositions not possessed by all learners. This is evidenced in part by the 50% completion rate in distance education for *adult learners*.

Previous to 2002, distance learners in this province had been a select group of students chosen in large part for their maturity and their demonstrated capacity for independent and self-regulated study. For the most part, this group of learners have been those taking Advanced Placement courses. Although



this latter group of students were selected especially for these courses, completion rates and the number of students writing and passing the AP exams were not as impressive as one might expect given the calibre of students involved.

In the new model all students in the more remote and isolated schools will be expected to take a significant portion of their high school program via the Internet. Given the difficulties some of the advanced students have had functioning in a virtual learning environment, it is to be expected that the average and below average student will encounter difficulties making the adjustment. Experience has clearly demonstrated that young learners, even those with the necessary characteristics, need *academic tutoring* when taking distance education courses. The failure to make this a distinct component of the new model could put future generations of rural students at risk. The Government has on many occasions lamented the poor academic performance of rural students compared to their urban counter parts. Is imposing a more demanding mode of learning on rural students creating a level playing field? Is such a development likely to ameliorate the purported rural under achievement?

Web based distance education has the potential to make the size and location of a school irrelevant in terms of its capacity to provide a broad range of programs and courses to rural students. In doing so it can enable students to enjoy the obvious advantages of small community based schooling; it can enable communities to keep one of its most important institutions. However, there has to be a commitment to provide whatever level of support young learners need in order to succeed in web based learning.

Although I have raised a number of questions about the province's new model of online distance education, I remain convinced that such an approach has potential for enhancing the provision of education in small and remote rural schools. However, as always the devil is in the details. What's needed to make the new vision an educational reality is more sensitivity and responsiveness on the part of the planners and designers to the actual pedagogical needs of those rural students who will be participating.

The system has to be designed for the students in question; they cannot be expected to "sink or swim" in a system that does not consider who they are and where they live. Furthermore, careful consideration has to be given to how any proposed change will affect the whole school and all students. Our commitment has to be to every student, not a select few.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper I have attempted to provide an overview of some of the issues and challenges confronting rural educators and parents in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador. I have chosen to focus on three of the most pressing at this point in time: declining enrolment and its consequences; the continuing pressure on small schools to close their small schools; and the potential and pitfalls of web-based distance education. I suspect the ideas presented in this paper will resonate with many rural educators in Australia as well as rural communities in many other places. If that is indeed the case I would welcome the opportunity to continue this conversation.

1 This article has its origins in a key note address I gave at SPERA in 2006 at Hobart, Tasmania. An earlier version of the current article was published in *Education in Rural Australia* in 2007.

2 Information about rural Newfoundland and Labrador can be accessed from The Rural Secretariat <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/default.asp>

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3 I wish to sincerely thank Colin Boylan who did so much to make my visit to Australia possible. In addition he and his wife Gail welcomed me into their home and demonstrated the true depth of Australian hospitality. I will always be in their debt.

4 The apparent leveling off between 1980 and 1985 is actually caused by the province introducing a third year of high school in 1981.

5 Over the years a number of other industries developed in Newfoundland and Labrador. The most important of these are logging and mining. However, these industries affect very few rural communities.

6 Recently in a community that I have been monitoring there was a house fire. When the volunteer fire department arrived at the scene they discovered that there was no water in the truck to put out the fire. Someone had neglected to fill the tank.

7 It is generally accepted that Newfoundland and Labrador's first one-room school, a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel "charity school" was established at Bonavista in 1726-1727 by the Church of England Missionary Henry Jones. This would be the basic model of schooling for the next 200 years.

8 The Commission established a minimum size standard for schools; a school must be large enough to warrant the allocation of one teacher per grade level. Multi-grading was viewed as the principal cause of low student performance in rural schools.

9 It may be of some interest to Australian rural educators to know that Newfoundland and Labrador does not presently have a boarding school option for rural students. A bursary program exists which pays room and board for students who wish to attend a larger school in a distant community. However, most rural families do not access this program.

10 The average grade level cohort in these all grade rural schools is 14. However, most would be considerably smaller than that. There are many rural schools with a graduating class of between five and ten students.

11 There is a fifth district that serves the province's small francophone district.

12 "While the thrust of the recommendations in this report is toward larger schools, this is not to suggest that small schools are not capable of meeting students' needs." The consultants only acknowledge that small schools may have some value. However, it is a bit of a backhanded compliment (p.34).

13 Given over fifty years of consolidation, it is somewhat puzzling that educational authorities are not able to produce a body of research evidence to demonstrate the benefits they claim for consolidation.

14 In this school district, students are not permitted to carry their music instruments on the bus. So if they wish to take part in any music activities either during school or afterwards, they have to have an alternative way of getting their instruments to school and themselves home after school.

15 CDLI web site: <http://www.cdli.ca/>

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## **Chapter 2: Children are not Fish**

Dennis M. Mulcahy<sup>i</sup>

### **Introduction**

The Eastern School District (ESD)<sup>ii</sup> is the largest school district in Newfoundland and Labrador and one of the largest in Canada. ESD manages 119 schools, serves 40,000 students and employs 4200 teachers. It encompasses a huge territory that includes the Avalon, Burin and Bonavista Peninsulas.

In September, 2012, ESD publicized its “Multi-Year Plan.”<sup>iii</sup> This document described

The mission of the Eastern School District is to create enhanced learning environments so that all students can achieve and succeed in the 21st century within a healthy, active, safe, caring, and socially just environment. As part of its governance function, Eastern School Board has a responsibility to ensure a wise investment of resources. All decisions regarding reconfigurations and/or closures have been evaluated in terms of meeting this function.

To create “enhanced learning environments” and to “ensure a wise investment of resources” would require the closure of five small rural schools.<sup>iv</sup> To provide an opportunity for communities to respond to these closure decisions ESD scheduled a series of public consultation meetings for October, 2012.

One of these schools targeted for closure was Swift Current Academy, a K-12 school, situated in the community of Swift Current, NL. Swift Current is a very small community with a population of approximately 200 people. It is 181 Km from St. John’s and 21 km down the Burin Peninsula.

Swift Current Academy is the community’s only school and provides education for all children from Kindergarten to Level III. The enrolment of the school is 49 students and the school makes use of multiage classrooms and distance education via the web to provide instruction at the senior high school level. The closure of the school would result in the bussing of the entire school population to Clarenville and Shoal Harbour to attend larger schools. This would mean even the youngest children would have to endure a one-way bus ride of more than an hour. They would spend almost 3 hours of their day riding the bus to and from school.<sup>v</sup>

In the view of the Eastern School District (ESD) this long distance bussing would be worth it for the larger schools would provide a better educational experience for the children of Swift Current. ESD scheduled a series of public consultation meetings in all five communities to provide an opportunity for the parents and other community members to respond to the Board’s proposals. The meeting for Swift Current was held Oct 23, 2012.

As part of my work as a professor of education at Memorial University I have focused on issues related to rural education and schooling for more than twenty years. The “consolidation wars”



has been a central focus of that work. I decided that I had an obligation to travel to Swift Current and make a presentation at this public meeting. I was determined to point out the flaws in the ESD thinking not just in relation to Swift Current but to all five schools scheduled for closure. I have reproduced my comments below.

### **Presentation at Swift Current, NL, Oct 23, 2012**

I have no vested interest in or personal connection to this community or its school. In fact this is my first time in this community and this school. I have come here tonight to speak because I think it is important that rural communities engaged in this struggle know that they are not alone and that there is considerable research evidence to substantiate their claims that their community schools are viable.

### **The Value and Viability of Community Schools**

I have travelled here tonight because I believe in the viability and value of small rural schools. I believe in the value of community and neighborhood schools.

Children are best served when they are educated close to home; communities are best served when they have a school to support and identify with. Schools provide communities with hope for their futures. It is amazing how little regard is given to the effect of a school closure on a community.

For the past 50-years educational officials in this province have persistently and sometimes perniciously attacked and dismantled rural community schools. Hundreds of good and valued schools have been closed. Today we have more children than ever before, even our youngest ones, spending increasing amounts of time being bused.

And for what?

There is no evidence that school or district consolidation saves money or improves education. Let me say that again.

Given the number of closures and consolidations that have occurred in this province, shouldn't there be a mountain of data clearly indicating this was a good thing to do? Where is the evidence that money has been saved, achievement has been improved, and communities have not been affected?

### **False Claims about Small Schools**

Over the years our educational leaders have made many false claims against small-scale schooling.

First there was the argument that children could not learn as well in small schools as they could in larger ones. Study after study has shown this was a false argument. Children learn as well or better in smaller schools.

Then we had the argument against multi-grade or multiage classrooms. Again this was shown to be a false argument. There are many distinct educational advantages to grouping children of different ages and grade levels together for instruction.

Then came the argument saying programming was deficient in small schools. The fact is with the advent of E Learning via CDLI the size and location of a school is totally irrelevant to its ability to offer programming. The whole of the high school program is now available to all schools via distance learning.

There are no valid educational reasons for closing small rural schools and busing children from their home communities to more distant ones. Rarely is there any money to be saved.

### **Mistaking Children for Fish**

A more recent argument for closing community schools seems to mistake children for fish.

Lacking any credible pedagogical arguments for closing community schools, our educational leaders have resorted, somewhat desperately, to industrial and business reasons. So today, the argument is capacity – over capacity and under capacity.

There has been plenty of talk regarding capacity in this province recently with reference to fish plants and paper mills.

But our schools are not fish plants or paper mills; they are not factories. Our children, who are our future, are not fish or blocks of wood to be processed in the most efficient and standardized manner.

Efficiency and standardization may be appropriate goals for industry, but to use such terms in reference to schooling and education is to demonstrate reckless disregard for children and their home communities.

To justify the closing of a community school and to disrupt the lives of children and their parents on the basis of an industrial concept such as capacity is to reveal a very low level of educational thought and consideration.

Children are human beings; they deserve humane treatment.

### **The Lack of Regard for Rural Children**

The lack of regard and respect for rural children is evident in many aspects of their education. One of these is the new consolidated rural schools that have been built.

Invariably they are small and cramped places with inadequate cafeterias and gymnasiums. The design of the classrooms shows no appreciation for how creative teaching and learning occurs in today's schools.

There is no room whatsoever except for students to sit in their desks and not move. Who designed these schools? Did they have anything to work with other than a measuring tape? Did they consider anything except square footage?

I have heard that many teachers broke down and cried when they saw where and how they were expected to teach in their so called new school. They would love to have some extra capacity!

Perhaps the clearest disregard for the wellbeing of rural children is the increased bussing so many of them are forced to endure every day.

### **Bussing Issues**

Bussing is a very serious issue and the decision to close a school and bus children cannot be taken lightly.

You may have noticed that officials, when discussing busing always speak in terms of distance, emphasizing how many KM the ride will be. However, the key issue is time not distance.

It not how far the ride is but how much of the children's time will be taken for the ride to and from school. Precious time is lost and wasted.

There are many safety and health issues to be considered. What kind of road conditions exist, what dangers will winter driving bring? Remember, there are no seat belts on buses.

It is kind of ironic that children cannot be left alone in the school or classroom for 30 seconds. They must be escorted by a teacher to and from the bus in the schoolyard.

Yet, forty, fifty, or more children, even the youngest ones, can be put on a bus for more than an hour without any adult supervision other than the driver whose job it is, we hope, to keep his or her eyes on the road.

How do we as responsible adults get away with this?

With such long unsupervised bus rides there is ample opportunity for bullying as well as physical and even sexual abuse of the children. And if you think this is not going on, you are only fooling yourself. In addition, there are an increasing number of children with health issues that will not be helped by long bus rides.

Busing inhibits children from being fully involved in the life of the school. It is much more difficult for them to take part in extracurricular activities such as sports and arts programming and to avail of after school tutoring that may be offered. They cannot stay after school because they have to get the bus home.

It is very difficult for students to feel any attachment to a school they have little or no involvement in other than their academics. And this lack of involvement can negatively affect their interest and achievement.

I would caution you about the offer of a so-called late bus. History has shown that the promise of such a bus is short-lived if it materializes at all.

Unfortunately, the professionals who know the effects of busing the best are not allowed to speak at these meetings. Teachers and principals see these effects every day, they see the tired children, the traumatized children, the scared children; they see the effects on their school work, they see the disappointment in their faces and their broken hearts when they realize they cannot fully experience the life of the school as they did in their community schools. But these professionals have been denied a voice in these public meetings. Their employers, the school districts, have silenced them.

More unfortunate, is the fact that the officials who will be making the decisions to close schools and bus children may not appreciate the potential harmful and hurtful effects of busing. How can they? It is not their children who have to endure long bus rides and be deprived of the rich life a school has to offer. They are not deciding to put their own children on the bus. It is not they who will see on a daily basis the effects on their children. It is not their community that will be deprived of a school.

It is crucial I believe for district officials to de-center and to listen to the parents and teachers in these rural communities so they can know the consequences of what they are about to do.

### **Fight for your Children**

I encourage this community and the others under siege to fight for your school and for your communities but mostly fight for your children.

With the consolidated boards you are very much out of sight and perhaps out of mind. Rural communities exist on the fringes and on the margins; within the district's big picture you may not be very meaningful. That is why you have to fight that much harder.

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i Dennis M. Mulcahy is a professor in the faculty of education at Memorial University. Rural education and schooling is a major component of his research and development work in the faculty.

ii Eastern School District web site: <http://www.esdnl.ca/>

iii Full text of the Multi-year Plan can be read at the ESD website.

iv The targeted schools are Swift Current Academy, Catalina Elementary, Epiphany Elementary in Heart's Delight, Whitbourne Elementary, and Immaculate Conception in Colliers.

v <https://maps.google.ca/maps?hl=en&tab=wl>

### Chapter 3: Do we still have small schools?

Dennis M. Mulcahy

Memorial University

#### Abstract

The path to my becoming a researcher was not predetermined. In fact, it really makes no sense for me to be where I am today. My life history and professional and academic background before joining the Faculty of Education at Memorial University did not make a focus on rural education an obvious choice, perhaps not even a remote possibility. In this study I take a narrative approach to investigate the path that lead to where I find myself today. Similar to Heikkinen (1998) I attempt to answer the question, how did I become who I am? As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) suggest, narrative inquiry is the construction of narratives at various levels and in this narrative I am “compelled to move beyond the telling of the lived story to tell the research story” (p. 10). The purpose of this essay is to try and explain how an urbanite became committed to rural education and schooling. I believe that in telling this self-narrative, rather than just producing data, it can “[lead] to new knowledge and /or new understanding of areas of known knowledge” (Arnold, 2011, p.70)

#### Introduction

*Dear Dr. Mulcahy: Thank you for a great learning experience in Current Issues in Rural Education. I was amazed to discover that someone who has never lived or worked in a rural community, a “townie,” could know and understand so much about rural school issues.<sup>1</sup>*

*Imagine for a moment a developed nation that regarded its rural schools as its elite and as models to be envied and emulated by metropolitan schools. Imagine a system in which rural schools were the prime beneficiaries of educational research, the recipients of a steady stream of the nation's best educators, and the bastions of the education world's power prestige, and resources. - Jonathan Sher<sup>2</sup>*

As I enter my 25th year as a member of the Faculty Education at Memorial University I find myself, a born and bred townie, considered by some an expert in Rural Education. For the last 20 plus years I have made the provision of education and schooling in rural communities the primary focus of my research and development work. My scholarly activities in terms of publications and conference presentations are mostly related to rural education.<sup>3</sup> I serve on the editorial board of the major rural education journals in the USA and Australia. My engagement in public discourse on education is also focused on rural education. The most recent example<sup>4</sup> of this being my active role via presentations at public meetings and commentary on CBC radio and television this past fall. This was in an attempt to halt the latest attempts by educational authorities to close several small rural community schools.

Yet, my life history and professional and academic background before joining the Faculty did not make a focus on rural education an obvious choice, perhaps not even a remote possibility. The purpose of this essay is to try and explain how an urbanite became committed to rural education and schooling.

### **A totally urban experience**

I was born and grew up in a distinctly urban environment. All of my schooling was in a large urban school<sup>5</sup>. Growing up in St. John's I had no consciousness of rural places or rural life styles. My family had no rural connections and as a family we made but one trip out "around the bay" to Trinity and Bonavista when I was eight<sup>6</sup>. I do not remember anything about rural Newfoundland and Labrador being part of the K-12 curriculum.<sup>7</sup> I would have to say that rural was irrelevant to my existence growing up. I was simply unaware and oblivious to rural life styles and the rural environment.

I completed my undergraduate education degree at Memorial University in the early 1970's but I cannot recall ever hearing anything about rural education in any of my courses. There was not a word about small schools, multi-grading, bussing, closure and consolidation battles. The focus was totally on generic schooling, which really translated to a focus on large urban schools; it was as if schooling outside the larger urban centers simply did not exist as far as my professors were concerned.<sup>8</sup>

My first teaching assignment was as a high school English teacher in an urban school of 1,000 students. I taught at that school for 12 years and the student enrolment was always around 800-1000 students. After 12 years as a high school teacher I decided to go back to university and pursue a master's degree in education. Over the years I had become heavily involved in high school drama and theatre as an extra -curricular activity. The province was planning to implement a drama/theatre course as part of the curriculum. I decided I would do a master's degree in curriculum studies with a focus on arts education and drama in education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto. My intention at the time was to return to my high school and urban life style and live happily ever after teaching drama and theatre in high school.

A funny thing happened at Toronto: I became a genuine student for the first time in my life at the age of 33. I fell in love with learning. I found the courses I was looking for in the arts, but I found so much more. I don't think I ever took education courses seriously while pursuing my undergraduate degree<sup>9</sup>. While at OISE, however, I developed an interest in educational issues that previously I had given little time or attention. Along with my interest in the arts and education I developed a passionate interest in curriculum studies, a passion I still have to this day.

On a more personal front, my experience at OISE was a very affirming one for my views on teaching and how students should be treated, especially those who in those days were designated as "general" or "basic" students. I was well liked and respected by my colleagues in high school because they knew I worked hard and carried more than my share of extra-curricular activities. However, I was always considered a bit odd because of my critical views of the education



system. I was very critical of the Literature curriculum for being totally out of touch with the realities and interests of young people. But I was particularly critical of the way the less academic students were treated in the school. They were definitely regarded as second-class citizens whose learning could be interrupted for any reason, who always seemed to be in the largest classes and who always ended up with the less experienced and interested teachers.

One of the joys of my time at OISE was an affirmation of what I learned to call my implicit educational philosophy. I discovered that I was not really that odd or at least I had lots of company! There were many who shared my criticisms of the curriculum and I now had the language of social justice to describe the unjust treatment of many students.

As I was finishing my Masters degree my advisor asked me if I had ever considered doing a Ph.D. It had never occurred to me to even imagine this. My agenda was to return to my high school to teach drama and continue my work in extra curricular theatre. I did not have the confidence to think this was a possibility for me. But my supervisor persisted and encouraged me to think about it and to stay in touch. He said he had enough confidence in me for both of us.

I returned to my high school job for one year but returned to OISE to pursue Ph.D. studies the following year. My doctoral dissertation was an extension of my work in arts education, drama, and curriculum studies. I really enjoyed my time at OISE and loved living in downtown Toronto. Once again, however, at no time during this period did any rural issues become part of my studies.<sup>10</sup>

In the Fall of 1987 I was teaching undergraduate drama education courses at the University of Toronto and working on my dissertation. Out of the blue I was invited by the Head of the Student Teaching Division<sup>11</sup> in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University to apply for a tenure track position with the Division. I had not finished my dissertation at this point but the best advice at the time was don't turn down a tenure track position. I started working at Memorial in the Winter of 1988. I did not finish my Ph.D. until 1991.

My first three years at the Faculty were consumed with dissertation work and supervising interns and teaching a graduate course in curriculum studies. Once I had my dissertation finished I started to think about a research focus for my work in the Faculty. The obvious direction for me to go in was to build on the work of dissertation: the arts in education.

But that's not what happened.

One day I happened to be in the office of Frank Riggs who was at that time the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Education. I had told him I was just finished my Ph.D. and was now ready to begin some new research. He handed me a copy of a research report he had completed several years previously entitled, *Report of the small schools study project (1987)*. He suggested that I might find something of interest in that report. He also said I might find it useful to take a break from my main research focus and do something else for a change.

Riggs' report served as my introduction to rural education in Newfoundland and Labrador. I was surprised to learn that "Newfoundland still has 30% of its schools with less than 100

students...”(Riggs, 1987, p.1)<sup>12</sup> and the vast majority of these were situated in small rural communities.

I would only realize later the importance of Riggs using the word “still”. Later, I would come to understand that he felt the need to remind everyone that small rural schools still existed and were playing a significant role in our education system. Twenty years earlier, the province’s first Royal Commission on Education (Warren, 1967/1968) had recommended the wholesale closure and consolidation of small rural schools. In the intervening twenty years hundreds of schools had been eliminated.

In addition, there had been a declining birth rate and the infamous resettlement program<sup>13</sup> of isolated rural communities. All of which resulted in a decline in enrolment. Consequently, there seemed to be the perception among educational leaders and bureaucrats, as well as the general public in urban areas, that small schools were no longer part of the educational landscape. Riggs’ report demonstrated that rural schools were *still*<sup>14</sup> out there. The apparent lack of concern, indifference, and insensitivity on the part of educational authorities to the various challenges and inequities associated with small schools often left educators in rural areas with feelings of “impatience, helplessness, anxiety and frustration” (Riggs, 1987, 3).

Similar points would be later made to me in my research:

*There seems to have been some "denial" or refusal to acknowledge that these (multi-grade and small school) situations still exist in our province. Everyone likes to think we've "progressed" and these 1950s/60s type conditions no longer exists  
... (Respondent- Mulcahy, 1993).*

*Most multi-grade classrooms are outside the larger centers and [located] in rural Newfoundland, and not many people worry about those little people who are already at a disadvantage anyway -- resource wise and that sort of thing. Also there's an attitude problem. They think bigger is better and that's not always the case (Respondent- Mulcahy, 1993).*

I remember being amazed to discover how many small schools were in the province. I was puzzled as to why these rural schools were being ignored and neglected. It did not seem fair or right to me. Did not they deserve equal treatment and consideration as their urban counterparts?

Riggs’ report introduced me to many rural issues that would later become central to my work: small schools, teacher education, recruitment and retention, bussing, and consolidation. In 1991 they did not mean very much to me.

The one issue that caught my attention the most on that first reading was multi-grading. Riggs had reported that rural teachers identified multi-grading<sup>15</sup> as the number one challenge they faced in their small rural schools (Riggs, 1987). This was a new concept for me. Reflecting back on

this time, I think what really attracted me to multi-grading was pedagogical curiosity. I am a teacher first and last. In the school system I was a classroom teacher, never an administrator, not even a department head. Even today as a professor I think of my self in the first instance as a teacher.

So initially, I came to rural education studies with the sensibility and orientation of a teacher reflected through the lens of my experience and understanding of how teaching and classrooms work. Hence the idea of one teacher having responsibility for all subjects and more than one grade level in a single classroom seemed a little crazy. As a high school teacher, I had been responsible for one subject, English, in one grade level. I wanted to know how any teacher could manage to teach multiple subjects in two or three grade levels at the same time in a single classroom? How could any teacher be effective or even survive in such a situation. The teacher in me was curious to find out.

### **Initial rural research project: multi-grading**

To satisfy that pedagogical curiosity I designed and implemented a qualitative study. First, I immersed myself in the literature on small schools and multi-grade classrooms. I also selected a number of small rural schools to visit. I would spend the day observing the teachers and then interview them about their work. The survey questionnaire I later developed was based on my reading and the observations and interviews. There was opportunity on the questionnaire for participants to respond in an open-ended fashion to any issues they thought important that I had not raised. This was sent to every school that had K-6 classrooms<sup>16</sup>.

I would like to emphasize that at this point in time, 1992, I was interested in multi-grading as a distinct phenomenon. I was not interested in small schools or the rural context. My intention was to conduct this study, find some straightforward answers to my methodological inquiries; write a report detailing the strategies used by multi-grade teachers and move on to something else more related to the graduate work I had completed at OISE. That was the plan.

Twenty-one years later I find myself totally immersed in rural education studies and totally committed to sustaining and supporting community based small schools. How did this happen? How did I get from what was supposed to be a quick "how-do-you-do-it" study to where I am at today fighting at every opportunity to preserve community based schooling?

I chose to start my research by visiting rural communities and spending time observing classroom activities and talking with multi-grade teachers<sup>17</sup>. The first school I visited was a small two-room school in a rural community approximately 227 km from St. John's. The last part of the trip, 25km, took about an hour over a narrow, gravel road. The whole journey took about two and a half hours each way.

I have quite distinct memories of this initial experience into the world of small rural schools. Just before I got to the school a young boy, no more than twelve passed me, riding a horse at quite a gallop. This was not something one would see in St. John's! At the school I learned that the entire school, twenty K-3 students, had just returned from a visit to a barn in the community where they had been present for the birth of a calf. Naturally they walked to and from the barn. It did not take a Ph.D. to realize I was now in a rural environment.

I split my time during the rest of the day between the two classrooms observing and taking copious notes and beginning the process of learning “how they did it”. I particularly noted the warm family-like atmosphere in the school and the way the students helped each other with their work quite naturally and spontaneously. I found it interesting that I could not tell the older from the younger children. After school was over and the children went on their way walking home (no busses needed here) the two teachers generously gave me an hour of their time.

The second rural community I visited was located about 200 km from St. John’s and very much like the first one well off the beaten track. The school was “sole charge” which meant there was just one teacher who also served as principal, secretary and everything else. There were ten students spread over six grades. It was to be the last year for this school as it was scheduled to close the following year with the kids being bussed to a larger center.

Again I spent the day observing and helping out later spending about an hour talking with the teacher who had been in that school alone for the last ten years. She told me something that really made a deep and lasting impression on me, perhaps influencing the course of my future work as much as anything else. She told me that, when younger, if she went to a workshop or professional development day in a larger centre, when people asked her what grade she taught she would say grade four. She would do this because she did not want people to know she taught in a multi-graded school. I asked her why not? She said she would be “ashamed” to say this was her teaching situation. People thought such classrooms were old fashioned and ineffective, she said, and a teacher was doing no more than baby-sitting.

I was truly flabbergasted by this revelation. I had witnessed the way she worked in her classroom tending effectively and efficiently to her students and it was far from *baby-sitting*. It was more a form of pedagogical wizardry.

A third journey took me to a small isolated community on the south coast of the island. To get to this community one had to drive about three hours from St. John’s and then take a ferryboat ride of two hours. This was the only way to get to this community other than by helicopter. This was truly a unique experience for a life long townie. There were no roads in this community and of course no cars. My first impression was of going back in time. I had no idea such communities still existed.

I followed a winding path up a hill to the school. The school offered all grades from K-10 and was staffed by two young female teachers, one of whom also served as principal. When I arrived at the school I noticed that there were ten or twelve people of different ages seated along a corridor. I was to discover later that these were people waiting to see the doctor. This was his day to visit and in addition to classrooms this school had a small medical clinic.

Because of the ferry schedule I would have to spend two nights in the community. The two teachers told me I would be staying with them in their “shack.” And shack was a good name for their accommodations. It was an old one-bedroom cabin that served as the official teachers’ residence.<sup>18</sup> Despite my protestations, they insisted I take the one bedroom and they would sleep on a couch and an inflatable mattress on the floor. I was truly touched by their generosity

and hospitality during my visit. They said they were delighted to have someone from the “outside” visit.

These two teachers like other participants in the study were quite willing to have me come to their schools and classrooms. They were quite eager to answer my questions. They were quite delighted that someone was actually interested in what they were doing and where they worked. All participants, however, were not just interested in answering my questions. They insisted on asking me a few of their own.

They wanted to know, for example, when the University was going to start preparing teachers for multi-grade classrooms. With so many small schools and multi-grade classrooms in the province, didn't I think that this was an issue the Faculty of Education should be addressing? This point was made many times later in the survey questionnaire:

*The Faculty of Education has, for too long, ignored what it is like out here. It is so easy to prepare teachers for the 'average' student in the 'average' class (not multi-graded) in the 'average' school in the 'average' town (original emphasis) ...*

(Respondent) Mulcahy, 1993).

Other questions they asked included: Why do the curriculum guides produced by the provincial Department of Education provide no advice or guidance as to how to implement the prescribed programs in multi-grade situations? Why is it that when multi-grade teachers go to a professional development workshop and ask a question about how to do something in a multi-grade classroom, the presenting "expert" confesses she/he has no idea what the multi-grade teachers are talking about? Why were the needs of teachers and students in multi-grade classrooms and small rural schools almost totally ignored by all agencies responsible for education in the province?

The teachers in the schools were willing to share with me the strategies and approaches they used in their multi-grade classrooms. I, the expert educational authority, was unable to answer their questions. More to the point, I had to confess that *it never occurred to me even to ask these questions because I did not know at that point they needed to be asked.*

My first rural school contacts also asked me one more question: What was I going to do with the information I was collecting? What they were really asking was: Was it my intention to use the data I was collecting to help improve their situation. They were assuming and hoping that my interest in their work was an indication of my commitment to help. I think there was an assumption on their part that somehow I cared about their situation and was interested in doing something about it.

*This kind of questionnaire is long overdue. Thanks for maybe opening the eyes of people in prominent places. My instincts tell me that, finally, we've reached the turning point with regards to multi-grades. Maybe this questionnaire has*

*instigated something positive for us multi-grade teachers-*  
(Respondent )(Mulcahy, 1993).

*I hope these surveys serve some useful purpose; a lot of very  
busy multi-grade teachers took the time to reply –(Respondent)*  
(Mulcahy, 1993).

I have to admit that at that point in time their assumptions were mostly wrong; for the most part I was more interested in my study than their problems.

To communicate with people in person where they work and live can lead to unintended consequences. To spend an extended period of time in a school and a community with the teachers, the students and sometimes the parents is a very different research experience than gathering data at a distance. It provides people with an opportunity to elaborate on issues and to identify additional issues. It also means that the participants in your study are not abstractions but real people that you have met in person. This is very different (not necessarily better) than receiving several hundred (possibly anonymous) completed questionnaires in the mail with the appropriate boxes ticked to the predetermined set of questions.

These initial encounters with rural teachers in small schools changed the nature of my first research study and began to reset the course for my future work in the Faculty of Education. Two things struck me very forcibly. One of these was the distinctive and inviting atmosphere of small schools. The human scale of the places, the relaxed informality, the family-like atmosphere, and the style of interaction between teachers and students were all very appealing to me.

Secondly, as I talked with the teachers, and importantly the more they talked and the more I listened, increasingly, I became convinced that our system of education was not treating them (or their students) in a fair or just manner. They appeared to have the most difficult of teaching situations yet they received the least help and consideration from our provincial educational authorities.

I was also becoming aware from this field-work and from my extensive reading how important rural schools were to their communities. They were not just places where the young were educated. They were important cultural and social institutions and quite vital to the life of the whole community.<sup>19</sup>

These initial encounters forced me to broaden the scope of the inquiry. I was still interested in the methodology issues (the how-do-you-do-it questions) but I decided to paint a more comprehensive portrait of multi-grading in the province. I decided to document the number of multi-grade classrooms in the province and their great diversity in terms of the number of grades combined and the grade combinations that existed. Also, I was determined to provide the opportunity for multi-grade teachers to describe the challenging nature of their teaching situations. I provided them with a forum to express their frustrations and anger with the lack of attention small rural schools had generally received from the educational establishment and its leaders in the province.



The report based on the study, *Learning and teaching in multi-grade classrooms* was published by the Faculty of Education Publications Committee in 1993. One chapter of the report focused on methodology (my agenda); the other chapters of that report reflected the concerns that had been identified by rural teachers. The final chapter entitled "Future Directions" consisted almost entirely of their suggestions as to how the various educational agencies in the province could do a better job of preparing and supporting multi-grade teachers in our small rural schools.

With the publication of *Learning and teaching in multi-grade classrooms* (1993), my research project was complete. As I indicated earlier, my original plan was to engage in research more related to my graduate work at OISE. I should have been ready to move on. But that is not what happened.

### **From Multi-grading to small schools and the consolidation wars**

Around the time of publication of *Learning and teaching in multi-grade classrooms* (1993), the provincial government was gearing up to initiate another round of small community school closures and consolidations.<sup>20</sup> The drum role for the start of the consolidation wars started with the second Royal Commission on Education Report, *Our Children Our Future* (Williams, 1992). This commission introduced the concept of "school viability." The provincial government would spend most of the rest of that decade in a determined effort to reform as many small community schools out of existence as possible.

The government's basic position was in order for a school to be "viable" i.e. capable of providing a quality education it had to be of a certain size. In a document (*School Viability*) released in 1995 the government claimed that only schools with at least 20 students per grade<sup>21</sup> were capable of providing a quality educational environment.<sup>22</sup> Smaller schools with enrolments of less than twenty students per grade level, were to be considered "non viable" and would be targeted for closure. Under these new rules as many as 150 small community schools could cease to exist and thousands more students would be riding busses for increasing amounts of time.

In 1996 the government introduced the term "necessarily existent small schools." These were schools that should be closed according to viability guidelines but because their location did not make bussing feasible or possible they would be given a reprieve. I have always found the term "necessarily existent" particularly offensive. The government is saying to a community that we do not think your school is educationally viable and we would like to eliminate it but for now we can't. There is an implication of contempt for the school and the community.

To explain to rural communities how the new viability guidelines would be implemented and to give rural folks the opportunity to respond a series of public consultation meetings were scheduled around the rural regions of the province in 1996/1997.

### **Becoming a public intellectual and an advocate for community schools**

The middle and late 1990's were to be the turning point for my academic career. From the time I spent visiting rural communities and talking to rural teachers over a ten year period, and the data collected for my initial research project I had become fairly knowledgeable about small schools and their viability. This knowledge was reinforced and validated by my extensive reading of the

rural education literature and my participation in conferences on rural education in Canada and the United States.

I knew that what the government was saying about the viability of small schools was largely untrue. Most research indicates that children can learn as well in smaller schools as they can in larger schools. Critically important, given the economic and social conditions in many rural communities, the research literature clearly demonstrated that smaller schools offered at-risk children their best chance of success<sup>23</sup>.

I also knew they were underestimating the deleterious impact of long distance bussing on all students especially the younger ones. In addition, they were totally ignoring the important role that small schools played in rural communities not only in terms of education but also in terms of social and cultural enhancement. They refused to acknowledge the role of rural schools in community development and sustainability. And there was no recognition of the heroic work done in small rural schools by dedicated teachers under demanding conditions and often with limited resources.

I felt I had no choice but to get involved in the emerging public debate over the value and viability of small rural community schools. The government characterized their efforts as rural education reform. I viewed it as an attempt to destroy a valuable rural community resource. At best the information being presented by the government as being at best misleading and at worse simply untrue and not supported by research.

I got involved in a number of ways. I made presentations at public meetings, worked with community groups to help prepare their defense of their small schools, wrote letters to the government and local newspapers, and spoke at any opportunity on CBC radio. I also attempted to give voice to the rural perspective in a major piece entitled "Critical perspectives on rural education reform" (Mulcahy, 1999).

Doing simply what I thought was my duty as a university professor I learned that taking a public stand on these issues was not sitting well with the government. The Dean of the Faculty at that time asked me one day if I knew what I was doing. She said you are fast becoming a persona non grata with the provincial Department of Education. They do not like people publically criticizing their policies.

### **The rest is history**

The dye was cast in the 1990's; I was irrevocably drawn into the universe of small schools and rural education.<sup>24</sup> The provision of education schooling in rural communities would become and remains today the main focus of my work in the Faculty of Education. Today I use the term rural education studies as an umbrella term for my work. I am increasingly aware that it is the unique features and characteristics of the rural context that give primary definition and direction to my work.

I can not make a contribution to improving education in rural communities if I do not understand and appreciate the strengths and challenges associated with living in rural areas. Coming to this

realization has both complicated and enriched the nature of my work. It would be simpler to ignore the context but to do so would make anything I do less valid.

However, I am still struggling to understand the rural context and its implications for education and schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador. Part of the challenge here is the sheer diversity of that context. Populations vary widely, some places remain remote and isolated, others are well connected to larger places by well- maintained roads, and some are relatively prosperous, others are still reeling economically from the collapse of the cod fishery in 1992.

I feel that I have only scratched the surface in my attempt to understand the contextual realities of rural schooling in Newfoundland and Labrador. Mythology, nostalgia, sentimentality, stereotypes, outdated notions, misinformation, lack of information, and urban indifference create barriers that impede the search for knowledge. One thing is crystal clear: to speak of rural Newfoundland and Labrador in generalities is to speak falsely. I have become very wary of anyone who attempts to make any general statement about rural Newfoundland or rural schools. A typical rural community simply doesn't exist.

The direction of my work continues to be guided by some fundamental questions: What is the purpose of education and schooling in rural communities? Whose interests are being served by current practices and provision? Should not the primary aim be the sustaining and developing of rural communities?

A most important aspect of that work has been the creation of undergraduate and graduate courses that focus on rural education issues. A promise made to some rural teachers in a small, remote rural community has been kept.

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1 An unsolicited note from a rural graduate student

2 Sher, J. (Ed.). (1977) *Education in rural America: A reassessment of conventional wisdom*. Boulder, CO:Westview Press. Sher is a pioneer in rural education studies and a true inspiration.<sup>3</sup> WebPage: <http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~dmulcahy/>

3“Education professor warns rural communities that their schools could be next for closure” CBC Radio, Nov 12, 2012: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/Radio/Local+Shows/Newfoundland/Central+Morning/ID/2303234831/?sort=MostPopular>

4Mulcahy, D. (2012) Children are not fish. Morning Watch. <http://www.mun.ca/educ/faculty/mwatch/current.htm>

5Ironically, I attended the last all grade school in St. John's. Today all grade schools are primarily a rural phenomenon.

6 I do remember jigging a cod on that trip! Could that have been foreshadowing?

7 Doing this project has lead me to wonder what if anything about rural life and communities was present in the school curriculum during that time or since. An issue even more important for rural students. This thought may lead to my next project. Perhaps there was information presented but I have forgotten about it.

8 Ironically, many members of the Faculty at this time had rural roots included Phil Warren who headed the first Royal Commission on Education (1966/67). But again, perhaps the message was there but I did not hear it? The one major study related to rural schooling in the seventies was completed by Jit Singh and Ismael Baksh, neither of whom is from Buchans!

9I pursued my education degree on a part time basis while teaching English full time in high school. I have to say I found the courses (with one exception) totally irrelevant to what I was doing and encountering in an actual classroom.

10Once again, I don't remember anything at OISE that suggested rural education issues.

11When I joined the Faculty there were separate departments, one of which was Student Teaching. I am not even sure at this point I knew exactly what this was.

12Today (2013) approximately 28% of our schools have less than 100 students. As Riggs noted small schools are going to be with us for a long time to come!

13Resettlement Program: <http://www.mun.ca/mha/resettlement/index.html>  
<http://www.heritage.nf.ca/law/resprogram.html>

14Many times during my initial research project (1992) I was asked the question, "Do we still have small schools?" And every once in a while I will get this question when asked about my work. Even today, occasionally, a student from a urban area taking one of my rural courses will express amazement that we still have so many small schools. Rural folks do not ask the question.

15 A classroom in which one teacher is responsible for instruction of two or more grade levels of students. While two grade combinations are most common, classrooms with three or four or more grade levels also occur.

16I had decided to limit the study to K---6 classrooms because that was where most multi---grading occurred and to make the study more manageable. Multi---grading, however, does occur at the 7,8,9 levels and multi--- course teaching occurs in high school.

17Sometimes, I wonder if that first research project had been restricted to a simple questionnaire with yes and no answers, a likhert scale, and no space for open ended responses I may not have been drawn into the universe of rural schooling.

18 The lack of suitable, even adequate accommodations for teachers in smaller and more remote communities is an ongoing serious issue. It is a major impediment to the recruitment and especially the retention of teachers in these communities.

19 "Communities, the Minister was told, take pride in their schools; many were built by volunteer labor. In rural Newfoundland and Labrador the whole community supports and assists the school in myriad ways. The school helps define the community and give it an identity. It is a connection to the past and represents a hope for the future. Most importantly, a school is a sign of the community's viability as a place to live, a place to stay, and a place to move to. The presence of children and the sounds of their play throughout the day are signs of life and vitality sorely needed by our rural communities. When community leaders claim that the loss of the school will lead to the death of the community they know what they are talking about. If they have a choice, families with school age children will not move to a community that doesn't have a school" (Mulcahy, 1999).

20The first had occurred following the publication of the first Royal Commission on Education (Warren, 1967/1968)  
[http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/royal\\_comm\\_68.html](http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/royal_comm_68.html)

21This echoes the recommendation from Warren(1967/68) who also set a minimum size for schools

22There would be no need for multi-grading in such schools

23Howley, (2011) writes, "Research also suggests that impoverished regions in particular often benefit from smaller schools and districts, and they can suffer irreversible damage if consolidation occurs."

24I have always believed that being a bit of an outsider in regards to rural education gave me a certain advantage in my work. I came to the work without baggage either of a negative or positive kind. My investigations were not colored by prejudice, sentimentality, or mythology.

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# **Part 11**

## **Special Education**

- 1. Thoughts Concerning Disability Within Family-A Forward**
- 2. The Plight of Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities: Social and Educational Facets of an Arduous Evolution**
- 3. Language and Cognitive Ability Assumptions: The Interface Within Cultural and Special Needs Contexts**
- 4. The Challenge of Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviour in the Inclusive Classroom Issues and Interventions**
- 5. The Evolution of Disability Studies AMIDST School Reform in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Global Perspective on Local Practice**
- 6. Assistive Technology for Students with Learning Disabilities: Perceptions of Students and their Parents**
- 7. Distance Education in Rural High Schools as a Solution to the Dropout Problem among Gifted Students**
- 8. Is there a need for a practicum experience in the Bachelor of Special Education Program at Memorial University? – Teachers' and administrators' perspectives**



## **Chapter 1: Thoughts Concerning Disability Within a Family – A Foreword\***

Glenn Sheppard

**\* in W.C. Nesbit (2010) *Stand by Me - Having a Sibling with Special Needs: A Discourse*. St. John's, NL: Newfoundland Council for Exceptional Children/Memorial University (Reprinted with permission)**

This book, written by my friend and colleague Dr. Wayne Nesbit, has the potential to enable parents and families with exceptional children and the professionals who work with them to act with greater knowledge and insight. It increases the likelihood that teachers, counsellors and other professionals who read and use it will provide their services in ways more likely to have positive benefits for these children and their parents and families. The concepts, perspectives, and guidelines for best practices found here are well grounded in a sophisticated understanding and an integration of knowledge gained from a review of the relevant literature from the study of families and particularly families with exceptional children, human exceptionality, and special education. The book reflects a significant shift in special education from a perspective focused almost exclusively on the child or the parent-child dyad to a broader view of the whole family system.

The theoretical or conceptual lens through which parents and families are viewed can have significance for insight into their needs, the nature of the interventions considered desirable, and the dynamics of professional relationships with parents. Another merit of this book is the author's ability to introduce a number of such perspectives and to see them all as having utility for informing our understanding of families with exceptional children. He appears to be at ease whether he is viewing matters from a loss and grief conceptualization, a family systems approach, or seeing the family embedded in a broad social matrix.

### **Nonfinite Loss: A Professional and Personal Perspective**

For both professional and personal reasons, I am particularly pleased with Nesbit's detailed description of the usual stages of human grieving as they apply to parents of exceptional children. This stage theory perspective is very relevant if we view the experience of having an exceptional child as initially one of loss – the loss of the expected normal child. Although expectant parents may have some apprehension about whether their expected child will be normal, virtually all parents-to-be fantasize about their future with a normal child. All their dreams and imaginings about their future as parents and as a family appear to be founded on this expectation for normalcy.

Bruce and Schultz (2001) describe the type of loss and grief experienced by parents who have children with intellectual and other developmental disabilities as *nonfinite loss*. It refers to "losses that are contingent on development; the passage of time; and on lack of synchrony with hopes, wishes, ideals, and expectations" (p. 7). This insight as expressed by these authors emerged from their work with families of children with developmental disabilities and their contacts with the professionals who work with them. They capture the essence of the experiences which led to their use of this term as follows:

These mothers and fathers leave a doctor's or neurologist's office with a mass of foreign and frightening words, most of which threaten both their child's and their own future. Often, these words are visually incongruent with the appearance of the child. Yet, over time, the disability or the disease slowly manifests itself. In fact, it is relentless, continuing to reveal its effects throughout the life span of the parent and child. *Nonfinite* became the most apt word we could find to describe the life-span grief of these families. (p. 8)

When the reality sets in for parents that their child has a disability, it usually elicits a grief response. After all, grieving is the normal human response to loss and therefore should not be seen as psychologically inappropriate or a sign of personal weakness. In fact, grief work can be very beneficial because it embraces the intellectual and psychological process of adaptation that takes place following a very significant change in one's life. A convincing example of this challenging process is captured in the personal story of Rita Burke, a mother of four children, one of whom has cerebral palsy. She describes her reactions beginning at the point where she received her son's diagnosis when he was nine months old:

What I didn't know then was how this new knowledge would affect me, and what I would have to go through before I could adjust to my son's cerebral palsy.... I remember saying to myself that these sorts of things happened to other people, and that I would soon wake up and life would seem normal again... . I imagined my son's growing-up years spanning out before me, and visualized all the normal, everyday activities he would never be able to do... . I worried that my sadness would permeate our whole family and we would never feel happy or lighthearted again. ...I was angry at the condition itself, at the permanency of it. I felt a little resentment when I saw other children my son's age who were 'normal' and starting to walk and I was still carrying Chris (Geralis, 1991, pp. 33-34).

This mother, over time and fortunately like most parents of exceptional children, adjusted to this new reality and successfully managed the passage from the shock of the diagnosis to a rewarding family life with this son and his three siblings, her husband and her extended family. Ms. Burke does not disclose all the factors that may have influenced her path to adjustment and acceptance. However, many variables may mediate both the intensity and the unique manifestation of grief for a particular parent, including such factors as age of onset of the disability, severity and type of disability, birth order, size of family, parental prior experience with significant disappointment, strength of psychological resources, familial and social support, religious and cultural beliefs and values, and so forth.

From a personal perspective as a father of an adult son with a disability, I have found within the concept of loss and grieving meaningful and useful explanations for aspects of my personal

journey. It has helped me to make sense of many of my emotional responses and so this psychodynamic explanation resonates as true for me. I believe that for many years now I have fully accepted the reality of my son's disability, a condition known as Sotos Syndrome. I am comfortable speaking openly and publicly about my experiences and I am eager to celebrate his abilities and achievements, including his success as a provincial and national Special Olympics swimmer.

Many parents have said that with acceptance comes the capacity to see the whole person no longer defined primarily by their disability. Acceptance may also free them from any previous psychological constraints and with it comes the emotional freedom to become an advocate for their exceptional child. Acceptance can also underpin the courage to speak more openly about a child's disability, to describe it and label it, to be assertively engaged with the professionals who provide services to them or to their child, to celebrate their child's strengths and achievements and so forth. It may be a necessary prerequisite for full participation in school-based procedures for determining the appropriate programming for their child. Some parents at this stage may decide to be advocates for improved school and community services for individuals with disabilities and some may become active in associations with this objective.

I believe that the grieving process, of which acceptance is normally the triumphant outcome, may be to some degree a circular one. It is the case for many of the parents of exceptional children with whom I have worked, and for me as well, that a period of transition can re-ignite feelings of sadness typical of the 'chronic sorrow' to which Nesbit refers. A time of transition such as the beginning of public school, the move from junior high to high school, the end of the high school years, the period when young people typically acquire their driver's license, the period of adolescence, the movement of peers to post-secondary education, the marriage and parenthood of peers can bring the disabled individual's limitations into sharp relief. The reality, in the case of some disabilities, that a son or daughter will never drive a car, never be a parent, never function totally independently can evoke a recurring sadness or sense of loss.

On a personal note, I can vividly recall this feeling when attending with my family the wedding of a neighbour's son. My disabled son was present and fully enjoying this celebratory event. At one point I recall myself silently and privately weeping as I watched him dancing. I believe I was sad because I was reminding myself that he was unlikely to be married and unlikely to be a parent himself. Or maybe this feeling was evoked, at least in part, because I knew that I would be denied the opportunity to celebrate his marriage and his parenthood and, by implication, my grandparenthood.

Maybe it was because I would never experience the sweet, sad poignancy of seeing him leave home for his independent life adventure. So, it is sometimes not easy to know for whom the tears flow!

Not only does the loss and grief perspective provide validation of my own personal experience, it has been most valuable as a way of affirming and giving meaning to the experiences of the many parents of exceptional children with whom I have worked. I continue to be amazed at the

frequency with which these parents readily accept and use the language of loss and grief to describe and to make sense out of their experiences.

In an undergraduate course entitled **Working with Families with an Exceptional Child** which I developed and often teach, my students have conducted more than 100 interviews with parents of exceptional children. In fulfilling this course requirement, they too are surprised by the extent to which these parents are comfortable with this use of the vocabulary of loss and grief. Often these parents are sharing their personal stories retrospectively because their disabled child is older. They can reflect with thoughtful candour about their parental experiences with the confidence that comes from having successfully confronted and adapted to challenges. After all, as the philosopher Kierkegaard is alleged to have said, “Life is lived going forward but is understood looking backwards.”

I can clearly remember an occasion when a father of a five year old autistic son said to me through his tears, “You know, I went to a funeral this summer. It was for the child who never came and finally I think I can accept Peter.” Then, as his sobs increased, he said, “You know, Susan has not done that yet and it’s very hard.” I knew intuitively what he meant. This incident provides one of the most dramatic examples from my experience of the expression of ‘symbolic death’ and the process of letting go of the potential child and embracing the actual one. It also captures the reality that two parents can very often be at different stages in coming to terms with the fact that their child has a disability. This situation can, of course, add to parental stress, cause communication difficulties, and delay parental readiness to advocate as a team.

In my experience, it is not uncommon, particularly in the case of mild disabilities or less visible conditions such as a specific learning disability, for mothers to notice and acknowledge or label their child’s difficulties before fathers are ready to do so. Of course, this is more likely in families in which the mother is the primary care giver during the child’s early years. The process towards acceptance can be even further delayed for grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other members of the extended family.

### **Complicity and the Search for a Cure**

Sometimes other family members, because of their lack of readiness to entertain the possibility of a disabling condition for their grandchild/niece/nephew, can unwittingly become accomplices to parental denial. This can be expressed in various ways such as, “Go away, there is nothing wrong with Joan that a few more months of development won’t take care of” or “Don’t be so silly; sure, he is just a little slow in getting started” or “Stop worrying, my dear. Sure, Martha’s youngest son was a little slow at first but look at him now with an engineering degree.” These statements may be motivated by a need to reassure but often they are a reflection of the reassurer’s inability or lack of readiness to engage with an emerging and perhaps painful reality.

This capacity to be an accomplice to denial can apply as well to the behaviour of professionals such as physicians, special educators, psychologists, counsellors and others. It too may reflect their discomfort with confirming or entertaining the bad news prospect of a child’s disability. It

is also my view that some ideological stances that, for example, advocate an absolute prohibition against the use of labels or promote the view that the use of terms such as ‘children with special needs’ or ‘exceptional children’ is inappropriate since ‘all children are special’ can reinforce an individual and societal impulse to deny unpleasant realities.

Once again, on a personal note, this capacity was a feature of our early experience as we sought answers to our son’s developmental challenges as a young child. We went to visit a well-respected and experienced pediatrician. My wife, Marion, a registered nurse, who first drew full attention to our son’s difficulties and advocated that we should investigate matters further, may have taken the lead in describing her insightful concerns to this physician. At the end of the consultation he declared that there was really nothing wrong with our son and that our concerns were a reflection of our parental, and particularly, his mother’s anxiety. This anxiety, he suggested, was typical of new and inexperienced parents such as we were. He was wrong and we felt that his response was dismissive, intentionally so or not. In fact, we still see his reaction as a failure to provide an appropriate and helpful professional response to our genuine concerns.

Whether the parents’ road to full acceptance of their child’s disability is short or extended, as Nesbit acknowledges it can be, there may be diversions along the way.

One such distraction is what some call ‘a search for a cure’. Of course, it is expected and appropriate that parents be fully informed by the most up-to-date knowledge about the condition that disables their child. Their parenting, advocacy, and the professional services provided to them and their children, should be greatly influenced by this knowledge. Sometimes, however, the pursuit of a cure can be less a search for relevant knowledge than an expression of a lack of readiness to accept the cold truth that there is no cure, not now and not in the foreseeable future.

Pearl Buck, a well known writer and the mother of a child who was severely disabled, describes her futile search more than 50 years ago in her book **The Child Who Never Grew**. She expresses her understanding of this search as follows:

...driven by the conviction that there must be someone who can cure, we take our children over the surface of the whole earth, seeking the one who can heal. We spend all the money we have and we borrow until there is no one else to lend. We go to doctors good and bad, to anyone, for only a wisp of hope. We are gouged by unscrupulous men who make money from our terror, but now and again we meet those saints who, seeing the terror and guessing the empty purse, will take nothing for their advice, since they cannot heal (p. 17).

Fortunately, not all parents with a disabled child engage in this type of searching. Some who do, never meet those saints to whom Pearl Buck refers. The Bratt family, for example, received no such saintly advice as they pursued the outcomes they expected for their brain-damaged son, Jamie. The story of their family’s experiences and disillusionment with the controversial ‘patterning’ program presented by the Institute for Achievement in Human

Potential in Philadelphia is poignantly chronicled in their book **No Time for Jello: One Family's Experience with the Doman-Delacato Patterning Program** (Bratt, 1986).

In it, Berneen Bratt describes the experience of driving home from the hospital after receiving the diagnosis that their nine-month old son was brain damaged with a likelihood of seizures and an array of other physical, behavioural and learning disabilities:

As we began our drive home, Jamie finally got to take a long overdue nap in his car seat, and I sat gloomily in the front seat. It had taken more than nine months of worry and chasing around to find out the truth. Now that we knew what had happened in the past and what we could expect for the present, we still didn't know what the future would hold for Jamie.

Alden reached over to hold my hand. He said, "We know he won't be a watchmaker or a right -handed pitcher for the Red Sox, but I think he'll do all right. We'll help him overcome his difficulties as they arise."

I thought about what Jamie's difficulties might be. How would he ever be able to tie his shoes, cut his meat, zip his jacket, climb a tree, ride a bike, drive a car, play baseball, swim, ski, or golf? The list was endless and the answers unbearable. It was a two-handed world. I closed my eyes in despair and napped along with Jamie. (p. 10)

Is it any wonder that parents enveloped by such anxiety and overwhelmed by thoughts of the challenges to come are vulnerable to whatever promises of relief, cure, or miracle that come their way? It is not surprising, then, that the now discredited and highly publicized statements from some professionals that autism can result from childhood vaccinations have caused untold anguish. Many children today have significant preventable disabilities because their parents declined to have them vaccinated out of fear. Parents of disabled children will continue to be vulnerable to pursuing whatever hope-filled actions or programs are presented to them, whether fully tested or not. Therefore, the responsibility of the professionals who help them is to enable parents to be as fully informed as possible before investing in any such promissory pursuit.

### **Making Sense of It**

As human beings we are persistent and creative makers of meaning. The capacity to generate theories about the nature of all things human and the rest of the universe and our place in it is a wonderful manifestation of the human drive to understand all phenomena – to make meaning. Philosophers, theologians, scientists and others devote their entire lives to the search for answers about the nature of life and the cosmos.

When critical and profound events occur in our lives we often become personal philosophers as we try to explain such events to ourselves. So it is not surprising that parents of exceptional children often devote some consideration to the question 'Why?' as they try to make sense of the



changes to their lives and the life of their disabled child. This question ‘Why?’ is expressed in the words of this mother as she struggles with the early realization that her son has cerebral palsy:

“Why and how could this happen to such a precious child, and how could this happen to me? Why should I have to answer everyone else’s curiosity when no one is satisfying mine!” (p. vii, Geralis, 1991).

This question, cloaked in exasperation and some anger, will very likely be replaced some time later with a more reflective one.

Ian Brown (2009) in his highly acclaimed book **The Boy in the Moon** presents a very personal and eloquently candid account about the life of his extremely disabled son, Walker, and his own search for meaning. He writes, “What is the value of a life like this – a life lived in the twilight, and often in pain? What is the cost of his life to those around him?” (p. 3). His search for answers took him to the French village of Trosly-Breuil to visit the L’Arche community created by the well known Canadian Jean Vanier for adults with cognitive disabilities.

Vanier’s deeply held view was expressed to Brown as follows:

“We see the face of God within the disabled. Their presence is a sign of God, who has chosen ‘the foolish in order to confound the strong, the proud and the so-called wise of our world.’ And so those we see as weak or marginalized are, in fact, the most-worthy and powerful among us: they bring us closer to God” (Brown, 2005).

Brown is unable to share in Vanier’s belief that God’s presence and intentions are evident in his son’s life and, by implication, in his own life as his father. However, he does share with us the following personal insight as he reflects on the impact that Walker has had on him:

The more I struggle to face my limitations as a father, the less I want to trade him. Not just because we have a physical bond, a big simple thing; not just because he’s taught me the difference between a real problem and a mere complaint; not just because he makes me more serious, makes me appreciate time and Hayley and my wife and friends, and all the sweetness that one day ebbs away. I have begun simply to love him as he is, because I’ve discovered I can; because we can be who we are, weary dad and broken boy, without alteration or apology, in the here and now. The relief that comes with such a relationship still surprises me (p. 285).

Of course, not all parents of exceptional children will reflect on the question ‘Why?’ and search for meaning to the same extent and with the same drive as Brown. Many have said in interviews with my students or with me that after the initial shock of the disability they picked themselves

up and simply found the personal resources to just get on with the parenting tasks and challenges that lay ahead of them without dwelling on the ‘Why is this happening to me?’ question. In fact, I believe that this was our parental response to the reality that our son had a developmental disability. However, if we wish to understand those parental efforts to find some answer to the ‘Why?’ question, we need to listen for their explanations as shaped by the family’s own legacy and the beliefs and myths from their religious and cultural background.

For many families, their religious community is an important source of support. It can offer both practical assistance as well as a source of meaning for the presence in their lives of an exceptional child. However, for some parents, the arrival of a child with a disability may challenge their religious beliefs. Given their belief in an ordered moral universe, it can lead them to question “God’s judgement and fairness.” Yet others frequently express beliefs such as “God only gives me the responsibility for that which I have strength to handle” or “I know that God will see me and my family through whatever challenges lie ahead.” and so forth.

Whether positive beliefs are drawn from one’s religious background or come from a non-religious personal source, they can sometimes support resiliency and the ability to adapt. The families who are most successful in adapting to an exceptional child, it seems, are those who create meaning that reinforces their sense of competency and mastery. Many parents volunteer observations about a particular positive effect that their exceptional child has had on them or their family. Some of these include such statements as, “I have become a better person because of Joanne”; “I have learned a deeper meaning about life”; “Philip has taught us to be more forgiving of each other and to be more generous.” One parent expressed the following more complex self-awareness:

My son’s handicap has opened my eyes to different things in the world. I’m more accepting of differences, especially if it’s something that can’t be helped. It’s also made me irate at times with “normal” people. They take so much for granted and I can’t stand to see them do something that hurts people with handicaps. It could be a stare, a comment, or even just taking a handicapped parking place wrongfully.

## **A Family Systems Perspective**

I am pleased that Nesbit decided to view the experiences of siblings with an exceptional brother or sister from a family systems conceptual framework. This perspective has a great deal of utility for deepening our understanding of the dynamics and the needs and strengths of the whole family. It also invites us to focus attention on the family subsystems of: couple, parents, extended family and, of course, the sibling subsystem to which the author turns his informed and insightful attention.

Entry into parenthood typically results in structural and functional changes within the family unit. The presence of an exceptional child can result in even more profound changes and potentially both negative and positive consequences for siblings. These consequences are well detailed in this book.

Two important attributes of the family system are: firstly, it is a self regulating social system with tacit roles and rules which govern behaviour as it pursues its important social functions; secondly, members of the system are interdependent, with change in one part affecting the whole. This latter aspect is humorously captured by Lavoie (1995) when he says, “A family is like a group of people lying on a waterbed because, as in families, whenever one person makes a move all the others feel the ripple.” (p. 4)

It appears that those families that can handle change and particularly the change required when there is an exceptional child are those with a reasonable degree of cohesion and adaptability. Some families adapt well to the additional demands and associated stress and this can sometimes intensify and strengthen already well-functioning roles and structures. Such challenges can evoke and help develop qualities and abilities that may have been latent prior to the arrival of a child with a disability. One mother and wife reflects on the positive impact on her marital relationship:

The doctor told me he had Downs Syndrome... I had to tell Frank. I was dreading it. I thought he would blame me and not want anything to do with the baby. Well, for the first few days after I told him, he didn't say anything about the baby. I was still in hospital. He came in with some flowers and said 'Sorry', that's all

– just 'Sorry'. After a minute he looked at me and said, 'I haven't been much help, but it's over. He's our baby and I think we will cope. We'll have a damn good try.' You know, we had been married for five years and I didn't think he had it in him...but we never looked back from that day. This little one really brought us together...he's brought a lot of love into this family. (Cunningham, 1987, p. 56)

There is certainly a need to know more about the factors that contribute to the resiliency and adaptability of families when challenged by the critical demands that come with having an exceptional child.

## A Cultural Perspective

There is also a need for educators and other professionals to understand families from a cultural perspective. As Lamorrey (2002) reminds us, “Each culture has its own explanations for why some babies are born with disabilities, how these children are to be treated, and what responsibilities and roles are expected of family members” (p. 67).

It is essential that these explanations and the expectations of families with whom we work be understood. Cartledge and her colleagues (2000) provide the following useful inventory of the cultural attributes of minority families with whom educators are likely to have professional relationships:

- The **extended family** consists of blood relatives that are multigenerational. The primary role of this kinship system is to ensure that the family provides for the welfare of all

members of the kin network at all times (e.g., child care, supervision, parenting, material and monetary resources, and emotional support to children and family members).

- **Mutual aid** is a common element in the extended family life of culturally diverse families. Family members often pool resources for survival and growth.
- **Fictive kinship** among nonblood-related people exists in diverse communities because of common ancestry, social plight, and history. Fictive kin also provide mutual aid, caregiving, and family support.
- **Racial identity** is an awareness of the history of one's own cultural group. Individuals exhibit pride and dignity through the maintenance of customs and traditions.
- **Religious consciousness** is the active participation in the cultural group's religious beliefs and practices. Reliance on faith and the church to support family life is an attribute (p. 33).

As Schulz and his associates (2006) see it:

In order to establish culturally sensitive relationships and to offer interventions with any family of a child with special needs, it will be appropriate for the professional to reflect on the following questions:

- a) What are the core cultural values of this family and how might they be different from mine?
- b) How are various roles and responsibilities likely to be distributed in this family?
- c) What beliefs might this family hold regarding human exceptionality? How might these influence their relationships with the affected child, in terms of expectations, parenting, disciplining, and so forth?
- d) What role does religion and other cultural institutions play in the life of this family?
- e) What might the family's educational values be and how might they view the role and intervention of a mental health professional? (p. 30)

### A Final Comment

I am privileged to write this lengthy Foreword for this most recent book by my colleague, Dr Wayne Nesbit. His ability to view the family through a number of conceptual lenses serves to broaden and deepen our understanding of families with exceptional children. It also provides a

meaningful framework to advance our understanding of those primary interpersonal attachments within sibling relationships.

There is considerable insight into the dynamics of those sibling attachments and the potentially positive and negative consequences when there is a disabled brother or sister. On this important matter the book is chock full of timely advice and recommended best practices for families with an exceptional child and all of those who work with them.

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## **Chapter 2: THE PLIGHT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH COGNITIVE DISABILITIES: SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL FACETS OF AN ARDUOUS EVOLUTION**

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### **BEGINNINGS**

In current society where social philosophers, with justification, regularly note that social evolution has not kept pace with technological scientific advances, it is heartening to trace over time the plight of individuals defined by Western civilization as intellectually or cognitively challenged. This article celebrates the positive evolution of social and educational thought concerning such individuals.

Professionals associated with intellectual disability need to know the contexts that have shaped this arduous evolution. As noted earlier by Kolstoe and Frey (1965): "While political philosophy is often thought of as distinct from educational philosophy, the close relationship between political philosophy and treatment of the disabled seems inescapable" (p. 3). There is both a temporal dimension and a cross-cultural dimension which must be considered when tracing the history of intellectual disability. Sarason (1985) suggests that mental retardation cannot be understood fully unless one examines the society, culture and history within which it occurs. Broadbrush sweeps are denied. Beirne-Smith, Patton and Kim (2006) caution against premature closure and simplistic conclusions surrounding historical issues:

While much of the progress made in the field of intellectual disabilities has been due to the unending and dedicated efforts of individuals, strong sociopolitical forces have also been at work to influence its development. When studying history, we must appreciate the social climate of a given time. In the past, as in the present, much of what has happened to people with intellectual disabilities has been determined largely by social and political factors (p. 4).

The treatment of individuals with intellectual disabilities has been fraught with issues and controversies which seem to defy closure. Some social thinkers have described it as a "recycling phenomenon." Long-standing issues remain just below the surface and then resurface as part of current debate.

Many people also think that the issues facing special education today are completely new. But if you read the historical literature of special education, you will see that today's issues and problems are remarkably similar to those of long ago. Issues, problems, and ideals arise, flower, go to seed, and reappear when the conditions are again right for their growth (Patton, Blackbourn, & Fad, 1996, p. 305).



## Antiquity

The treatment of and attitudes toward persons with intellectual disabilities can be traced to early civilizations including Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Chinese as well as during the early Christian period. More than 2000 years ago Plato suggested in *The Republic* that individual variations in intelligence must be the basic determinant of the social and political order in any workable society (Robinson & Robinson, 1976). Both Greek and Roman civilizations were aware that some citizens were cognitively challenged. The Greeks coined the term *idiocy* to describe persons who did not take part in public life - *those who did not hold office*. The origin of the term imbecile is the Latin word *imbecillis* meaning *of weak mind, feeble, without strength*.

Atrocities were not uncommon in early times. In ancient Sparta, malformed and less than healthy children were put to death. Only those deemed fit to become soldiers were permitted to live. The duty of mothers was to produce strong sons to fight in the Spartan army.

In early Roman times it was required that children be accepted into each family by their father. Early Roman law granted the father absolute power of life or death over his offspring. As with the Greeks, infanticide was an established practice in Roman society. In a formal household ceremony, the Roman father could accept or *not* accept into the family the newborn presented to him. Usually this was a routine matter and a source of family celebration, but this was not always the case. Occasionally, handicapped children were rejected and then abandoned or killed. The *Patria Potestas* endowed the Roman father with the privilege to sell, abandon, kill, offer in sacrifice, or otherwise dispose of his offspring.

That children (not only those with intellectual disabilities) have been harshly abused during the course of early history is not difficult to document. As noted by DeMause (1975), the ability to feel empathy is only of recent origin. The farther back one traces the history of childhood, the greater the likelihood that children would be killed, abandoned, whipped, sexually exploited and psychologically mistreated. In many cases, intellectual disability presented a further risk factor for abuse and neglect (Nesbit & Karagianis, 1982).

The social and educational treatment of individuals with cognitive challenges can be described as a gradual positive evolution, with better treatment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than during earlier times – but history has not always been kind. Individuals described as being cognitively challenged have been perceived as “burdens to society”, thrown to wild beasts, and at various points in history, have been utilized as fools and court jesters and described as “village idiots”. They were viewed paradoxically at one point both as “demon possessed” and as “les enfants du bon Dieu” (God’s children). Progress has been slow, difficult and not without interruption.

## Gradual Influence of Christianity

One of the positive influences affecting the social treatment of individuals with cognitive challenges in Western civilization was ushered in with the advent of Christianity. Its influence

was pervasive, bringing with it strides in the development of social conscience. Society's view of individuals with intellectual disabilities shifted to a more humane position. Religious teachings proclaimed that all individuals were "children of God," and as a part of creation, were worthy of life. Central in the Christian credo is the element of faith in which belief is not dependent upon understanding. In brief, a person need not be of high intelligence to be a believer or practising Christian.

Those with intellectual challenges were recognized as people needing to be cared for by society. Monasteries and asylums were constructed to meet the needs of these wards of the Church. Before 1700, when service was provided to individuals with special needs, it was protective in nature (i.e., providing housing and sustenance). This was often offered in the monasteries. Little evidence exists that systematic programs of training, education or service delivery were available (Beirne-Smith, Patton & Kim, 2006).

It is of interest to note that in antiquity and extending into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of intellectual disability was enigmatic stemming from the fact that people did not have a sophisticated knowledge base concerning the concept of intelligence which would facilitate understanding. Society associated the term mental retardation only with those displaying more severe limitations and involvements. In an era of wood, wind and sail, when manual labour played a much larger role in the workforce, milder forms of intellectual disability were neither defined nor recognized. As noted by Beirne-Smith et al., (2006): "Not until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did mild intellectual disability become a describable condition" (p. 5).

### **Impact of Humanism**

In addition to Christianity, another influence had an impact destined to help create a new social climate. Renaissance thought of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries prompted bold changes to the conceptualization of man. Although the Renaissance rightfully has been deemed important to the world in the realm of culture and the arts, the fact that it "increased man's willingness to look at himself and his environment more openly, naturally, and empirically" (Maloney & Ward, 1978, pp. 21-22) is particularly noteworthy.

"Renaissance thinking encouraged the philosophy of humanism, principally concerned with people's worth as human beings and their freedom to develop. The idea that all were created equal and had inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness was popular" (Beirne-Smith et al, 2006, p. 6). As further noted by these writers, "The prevailing social forces tended to refocus people's concepts of themselves and the world. The ultimate effects of these changes were reflected in the development of a climate conducive to the philosophy of humanism and the revolutionary fervor of the 18<sup>th</sup> century" (p. 6). The French Revolution which commenced in 1789 had as its spirited cry "liberty, equality and fraternity."

### **Educational Strivings Associated with Humanism**

Jean Marc Gaspard Itard, "a young medical man" in Paris, credited by some to be the father of special education, was the first researcher to extend the humanistic philosophy into the world of exceptionality. In the first documented research concerning intellectual disability, Itard attempted

to educate Victor, the Wild Boy of Aveyron, the world's most famous feral child. According to 1799 reports in the *Journal des Débats* the feral boy was a specimen of primitive society – "a degraded being, human only in shape; a dirty, scared, inarticulate creature who trotted and grunted like the beasts of the field" (Humphrey, 1962, p. iv). It is estimated that the boy had lived from his seventh almost to his tenth year in absolute solitude.

In his youth Itard was uncompromising in his belief in humanism, particularly as espoused by such writers as John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). With a knowledge (considered somewhat naive in the opinions of some of his contemporaries), Itard embarked upon a five year educational program with his student. Central to the program was Locke's concept of the *tabula rasa*, a term used to describe the initial condition of the mind before it is written upon by experience. He approached Locke's view of child development and the associated dictum that "sense provides all" with optimistic enthusiasm. According to Humphrey (1962), Itard believed "that he had only to find and apply the proper social and physical education in order to supply the mental content that would make the boy a normal human being" (p. vii). His five-year educational plan approached human development with an environmental stance, focused upon sensory input.

Perhaps Itard was naive and extended the philosophy of humanism to a convoluted extreme but his work strongly reflected a central core of humanism and its powerful impact upon educational thought.

Of the immediate success of Itard's work there is no question. In place of the hideous creature that was brought to Paris, there was to be seen after two years' instruction an "almost normal child who could not speak" but who lived like a human being; clean, affectionate, even able to read a few words and to understand much that was said to him. The news spread throughout Europe, and brought Itard a European reputation. Indeed the Emperor of Russia, through his ambassador, made him a flattering offer to settle in St. Petersburg. (Humphrey, 1962, XII)

Some contend that Itard's original mistake was apparently to assume, as the result of a somewhat "amateurish" philosophy, that environment could accomplish everything; that a boy who was not a normal human being could necessarily be made normal by the proper training. He failed to see that, even if he were correct in this supposition, the environmental corrective stimulation must be applied at the right time. Training may clearly have been too late (Harvey, 1962).

According to Blackstone and Berdine (1993) Itard's "through the senses" approach to the education of individuals with intellectual disabilities extended to other early educators such as Edouard Séguin (1812-1880), a French physician, who in 1866 published a methodology text titled *Idiocy and its Treatment by the Physiological Method*. According to Mercer and Payne (1975), Séguin was overly optimistic that "mentally deficient" people could be cured, i.e., gain normal intellectual functioning: "He [Séguin] believed in the manipulability of human behaviors and did not regard mental retardation as a permanent deficiency" (p. 110). His method was in essence a bombardment of the mind with stimuli provided through the senses.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952), an Italian physician concerned with early childhood education, further developed Séguin's elaboration of Itard's techniques, which came to be known as "sensationalism". As noted by Farber (1968) "Although the modern movement toward the education of the mentally retarded began with Itard and the Wild Boy of Aveyron, the diffusion of programs for retarded children living at home was sporadic until the beginning of the twentieth century" (p. 224).

Since that time there has been much discussion in psychological and sociological literature as to the relative part played by heredity and environment in determining human nature.

However, progress was slow during the 1800s. As aptly stated by Ellis (1975): By 1900 we, too, had lost our enthusiasm for training education, and habilitation of the retarded. The ebb in our attitudes was reflected in overcrowded custodial institutions, in the indictment of the retarded as criminal and degenerate, and in a forceful and highly vocal eugenics movement. To be sure, the humanitarian view of the retarded was in eclipse until after World War II. (pp. iv-vi)

## A NEW DARK AGE

### The Eugenics Movement

The eugenics movement, dating from Sir Francis Galton's publication entitled *Possible Improvement of the Human Breed* (1901), moved to the foreground. Galton had coined the term *eugenics* to describe "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race." Ways to prevent the number of individuals with intellectual disabilities from increasing became the major concern of medical practitioner and educator alike. So solidly were society's fears entrenched, that the period from 1900 to 1946 has become known to history as the "Alarmist Period" (Clausen 1967).

By 1915 the eugenics alarm had sounded widely, and discussion topics such as "uncontrolled mental deficiency" became preoccupations. What had been an exceedingly small and insignificant social issue mushroomed into a pressing social concern. Copious pamphlets, articles, and official reports documented the widespread alarm. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the public's view of individuals with a mental challenge was at a new low. The spirit and reality of bygone days when children with disabilities were considered unworthy of life had returned. References to "holy innocents," "eternal children," "heavenly infants," and "les enfants du bon Dieu," had given way to a less charitable view. The concepts of guardianship, universal kinship, and protection of such persons from an exploitive unkind society, were replaced by a fervent desire to protect society from the evils associated with the "damaged goods."

The true spirit of the early 1900s was captured in the words of Karl Schwartz (1908), the rector of an established church in Syracuse, New York.

The author holds that it is not a pessimistic view of life to wish to see a man get out of the world, who is not fit for it, and who has little or no chance of ever

becoming so. To one who anticipates the general upward trend of human life, it is evident that the occasional removal by society of an individual, or even of many individuals, may be necessary to the welfare of the social group. The hypothesis that individuals are virtually equal or ever can become equal in terms of social value, leads to the most monumental follies (p.83-84).

The tenor of the times is further illustrated in an article by Whitney (1929) entitled “The Control of Feeble-Mindedness”:

The biological process which we term heredity functions according to, and with the guidance of, certain well defined laws. One of the most fundamental laws of this biological process is, “Like begets like.” This indisputable law we have at our command. It is up to us to use it wisely by preventing the feeble-minded from begetting more feeble-minded (p. 12).

These expressions of fear, intolerance, hostility, and panic typified the reactions of Western man toward those whose lives were mentally challenged during this period (1890-1950 approx.). Social thought of the post-Industrial Revolution era lagged far behind technological advances. In fact, with reference to those with intellectual disabilities, social views became harsher. Among the historical influences noted by Adams (1971), the Puritan ethic with its emphasis on competence and success contributed to many pejorative views about those described as “mentally retarded”. Within this framework such individuals were perceived as an irredeemable loss rather than as a victimized member of society. Views such as those presented by Schwartz, and Whitney were typical of the times.

In 1902, Barr, a past president of the parent organization to the American Association on Mental Deficiency, delivered an address entitled “The Imbecile and Epileptic vs. the Taxpayer and the Community.” Describing mental retardation as the “mother of crime, pauperism, and degeneracy,” Fernald (1912) spoke to the Massachusetts Medical Society concerning “The Burden of Feeble-Mindedness.” He claimed that:

The feeble-minded are a parasitic, predatory class, never capable of self-support or of managing their own affairs. The great majority ultimately become public charges in some form. They cause unutterable sorrow at home and are a menace and danger to the community (p. 90).

As late as 1930 many professionals were expressing fear concerning the social consequences of the perpetuation of cognitive disabilities. In England, Berry and Gordon (1931) lamented the perceived “relative disproportion of poor stock to good” (p. 152) as a result of the restriction of family size in the upper strata, the advance of preventive medicine, and war losses: Emerick (1917) had expressed similar fears concerning American war losses noting that “the great misfortune of war is that it destroys our best blood and leaves the weaker brother at home to multiply” (p. 74) . So widespread were these fears that sterilization, segregation, and institutionalization gained popular support and acceptance.

Out of fear of overpopulation by those who were cognitively challenged, the sexual interests and activities of these individuals became magnified out of all proportion by the public. Although both sexes were presented as being promiscuous, women in particular were regarded as a source of potential danger to society.

It is certain that the feeble-minded girl or woman in the city rarely escapes the sexual experiences that too often result in the birth of more defectives and degenerates. Feeble-minded women are almost invariably immoral, and if at large usually become carriers of venereal disease or give birth to children who are as defective as themselves. The feeble-minded woman who marries is twice as prolific as the normal woman (Fernald, 1912, pp. 90-91).

Sterilization, or asexualization, was not without support as a proposed means to curb the threat to future generations:

It would now be well to prepare our several states to call to our assistance the surgeon's knife to prevent the entailing of the curse upon innocent numbers of yet unborn children (Perry, 1903, p. 254).

It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind (U.S. Supreme Court, May 2, 1927, cited in Davies and Williams, 1930, pp. 112-113).

Perceiving these persons as an immediate danger to society, Barr (1897) fervently urged for a growth in institutional facilities:

Assuredly if we are to arise to the responsibility of the times, to grapple with the enemy one hundred strong, which enters all homes alike and threatens the very life blood of the nation, we must enlarge our borders and extend our operations. We need space, and yet more space, and who than we better fitted to claim it? (pp. 12-13)

Byers (1916) concluded that "we know too much to delay longer" (p. 42), and urged that parenthood be prevented by permanent segregation of individuals with cognitive challenges in state-controlled institutions.

The size of institutions grew, with the "colony" of many hundred becoming the desired facility. Institutions grew—not to rehabilitate, not to improve the quality of life, not as a paternalistic gesture. Remote from population centers and social interaction they flourished, zealously committed to their custodial function.

Along educational lines, this did not mean that classes for children with intellectual disabilities were not in existence. In some instances, they served as mini-institutions. Murdock (1903), President of *The Association of Medical Officers of American Institutions for Idiotic and Feeble-*



*Minded Persons*, posited that special schools are “no doubt a necessity and do a good work” (p. 71), given the lack of sufficient institutional accommodation. Noting that some children sent to special schools should have been sent to institutions, Murdock emphasized the inappropriateness of attempting to educate such people to enter society. A New Dark Ages had been ushered in for those with intellectual disabilities.

## A PENDULUM SWING

As noted by Nesbit and Hadley (1987), “change is an interesting phenomenon. Sometimes it is deceptively simple and quickly accomplished; at other times it is extremely complex and spans many years. Most significant social changes are of the second type, not immediate nor the result of a unitary cause or event” (p. 23).

Gradually, over time, views concerning individuals with intellectual disabilities began to soften. One of the most influential spokesmen for a more positive view was Fernald who earlier had championed institutionalization and had warned society of the danger and burden associated with intellectual disability. In an about turn Fernald, who had been a central figure in the eugenics movement and had advocated that “tainted families should become extinct” (1912, p. 98), became a leading advocate for change. By 1919 Fernald’s writing concerning education reflected a view very different from his earlier thoughts on the subject. Noting that “we have begun to recognize the fact that there are good morons and bad morons” (p. 119), Fernald attempted to sensitize society to the rights of children having cognitive challenges: “It should be recognized that the defective child is entitled, even more than a normal child, to education according to his needs and capacity.... Provision should be made in the normal schools [teacher training facilities] for training teachers of defective children” (p. 118).

Looking back over the years, Fernald (1924) noted with pleasure an emerging positive view of persons with intellectual disabilities, commenting that “the rapid extension of the special class idea is a matter of history” (p. 207). No longer should these individuals be considered “an object of horror and aversion... who should be ostracized, sterilized, and segregated for his natural life at public expense” (p. 211). Consistent with his new view, Fernald advocated for education and limited social integration.

Murdock (1924), who earlier had been an avid supporter of large institutions, noted that “much can be done for the high grade mental defective” (p. 149). In a refreshing statement, Murdock acknowledged the role of environmental influences with regard to cognitive challenge:

We believe we have discovered that notwithstanding hereditary influences, they can be markedly influenced for good or evil, by their environment, particularly in the development[al] period. If properly trained and supervised many may become most useful citizens, capable of fulfilling an important field of usefulness in the economic life of the community. (p. 148)

These views were very modest seeds of change. Such views notwithstanding, little public thought or concern was given to the education or social integration of individuals with intellectual disabilities until the 1940s. As suggested by Begab and Richardson (1975), the public's concern had dissipated with the growth of institutions, and mental retardation was pushed temporarily into the background of social consciousness. With the disappearance of this population from public visibility came a corresponding reduction in public concern. In addition, issues related to the 1930s' depression and World War II were of greater priority than issues related to those with cognitive challenges.

## **Impact of World War II**

During the post-war years, many people reconsidered the plight of those in society who were cognitively challenged and began to confess to doubts concerning the philosophy and direction of existing services. Professional views varied greatly on topics ranging from institutional placement to eugenics. Everything was open to question during the 1930s and 1940s and this in itself was a healthy sign.

The shift in social attitude toward those with intellectual disabilities does not date from a single event. Rothstein (1961) linked the growth of interest in this area during the post-war years to four influences:

- A thorough revulsion toward the Nazi mass slaughter of persons with disabilities.
- An adamant, unashamed, and well organized parent movement.
- A reawakening of interest on the part of biological and social scientists.
- Public awareness of how little had been done for these "forgotten people." (p. v)

By the end of World War II, the number of exceptional individuals had increased. Individuals returned from combat with a variety of newly acquired disabilities including intellectual disability. In a grateful attempt to rehabilitate the returnees, the public disposition toward exceptional persons (including those who were cognitively challenged) became more positive. As noted by Begab and Richardson (1975), "Perhaps the most significant outcome of these efforts was the new insights gained regarding the remarkable restorative capacities of the human organism and resilience of the human personality" (p. 8).

## **Normalization**

If there is a specific concept which characterizes recent and ongoing social strivings (particularly since the early 1970s) with regard to individuals defined as having a cognitive challenge, it is "normalization". Basically, Western civilization has shifted from a traditional custodial model to an educational model when viewing the exceptional individual. Indigenous to this model is the belief that exceptionality must not be viewed as a reason to deny individuals the right to participate in society and maximize their potential through education – a functional prerequisite for social participation.

During recent decades in North America, four interrelated terms – *normalization*, *mainstreaming*, *integration* and most recently *inclusion* – have come at different points in time to signify the major shift in thought and direction that has taken place in the provision of educational services for exceptional individuals.

The concept of normalization has had, and is still having, a profound influence. Bank-Mikkelsen (1969), head of the *Danish Mental Retardation Service* is credited with first use of the term. He defined normalization as “letting the mentally retarded obtain an existence as close to the normal as possible” (p. 27). When introduced to North America in the *Report of the President’s Committee on Mental Retardation* (1969), it had great import for exceptional individuals. Zipperlan (1975) described the introduction of the concept as “the first breeze through a newly opened window” (p. 265).

Crediting the roots of the concept to Scandinavia, Wolfensberger (1972) broadened the definition to include all areas of human services and treatment defining it as:

Utilization of means which are as culturally normative as possible in order to establish or maintain personal behaviors and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible (p. 28).

Thus, in its basic form, normalization has come to mean that whenever possible the treatment of exceptional members of society should be as normal as that afforded other members of the culture in which they are living. That is, the entire range of life experiences must be made as near “normal” as possible.

## **The Parent Movement**

Parental concern for offspring with intellectual disabilities has had a major impact upon the provision of legal, social, medical, and educational services. Many parents had disagreed with and had not accepted the principle of mass institutionalization. Adams (1971) noted that, during the 1940s, middle-class families acquired a more sophisticated knowledge of their rights and were prepared to argue their cases skillfully.

*The Council for Exceptional Children* (CEC), founded as *The International Council for Exceptional Children* in 1922, grew in both size and influence as professionals and parents awoke to the realization that much better provisions were possible than the repressive lifestyle of institutionalization. The CEC became an advocate for securing the rights of the exceptional individual, a clearinghouse for information, and a professional focal point for special educators and parents.

During the 1950s parents rallied to think, work and cooperatively promote common goals and aspirations. This fostered the 1950 establishment of *The National Association for Retarded Children* (NARC) having as its basic goal the promotion of the rights and general welfare of persons with cognitive challenges. The NARC became a model for other parent advocacy groups as it grew in strength. *The United Cerebral Palsy Association* (UCP) and *The Association for*

*Children with Learning Disabilities* (ACLD) brought parents together in a union of strength and mutual support. Continuing in the tradition of the NARC and the CEC, *People First* came in to existence in 1974 as a self-help organization for those with mental challenges. Legislative recommendations of *The World Health Organization* clearly illustrate the rethinking of the 1950s concerning intellectual disability. There was a realization that neither sterilization nor institutionalization was appropriate. Clearly, the movement was in the direction of human rights, with the exceptional individual perceived as a member of society rather than as an adjunct to it. The United Nations 1959 *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* which defined the rights of all children was another major first step in the direction of social inclusion.

### **Ability Assessment**

Of interest and importance in the discussion of change, is the questioning attitude of the 1950s with regard to intellectual assessment and the intelligence quotient (IQ). Binet's intellectual measures, which since the time of their inception had been viewed as sacrosanct measures of natural endowment, were now viewed with a more skeptical eye.

As noted by Clausen (1967), the recognition of experiential and cultural factors as causative variables in cognitive disability served to reshape the concept of human intellect. With intelligence perceived as variable rather than as constant, modification of abilities became a central focus in the discussion of services for those with intellectual disabilities. It was posited that education should usurp the position of traditional custodial care.

## **INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS**

During the 70s the resurgence of interest in the education of exceptional individuals throughout the Western world prompted Canada, the United States and Great Britain to publish major documents to update their respective aspirations for special education in each country: *The CELDIC Report* (Canada, 1970); *Public Law 94-142 – The Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (U.S., 1975); and the *Warnock Report* (Great Britain, 1978). These three international documents had a profound influence in shaping and determining the direction of special education globally.

### ***The CELDIC Report (1970) – Canada***

*The CELDIC Report*, first of the three, was in many ways the trend-setter for the other two documents. In the mid-sixties, numerous people in Canada were concerned with problems presented by inadequate knowledge, treatment, services and education of children experiencing emotional and learning disabilities. Consequently, in 1966, *The Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children* was established to engage in a comprehensive nationwide study of such problems. Recommendations from the CELDIC inquiry contained in *The CELDIC Report* (1970), commonly known as *One Million Children*, were many and dealt with a wide range of problems associated with Canadian children defined as having special needs.

The Committee took as its basic premise the right of every child to the assistance that is required to realize his/her full potential. The intent was not that all children would require equal treatment; for some children would require assistance beyond that given to other children if they were to realize their potential. The most significant recommendation concerned proposed changes in the school system and the reorganization of special education. It was recommended that special education should function primarily in the regular classroom and not in segregated classes and schools. This was a major shift in thinking at the time. In the years, since the publication of *The CELDIC Report*, there has been a growing acceptance of what became known popularly as the “mainstreaming principle”. A further strong CELDIC recommendation was that the Government of Canada and the provincial governments should be responsible for setting standards and providing funds to make services available for the exceptional child.

According to the Commission, without the backing of Canadians, a new emphasis on helping exceptional individuals could not hope to succeed. Fortunately, following *The CELDIC Report*, such a change in attitude swept the country enabling many important favorable changes in provincial legislation concerning exceptional individuals. There is no question that *The CELDIC Report* played a significant part in prompting changes in the manner in which exceptional individuals are treated in Canadian society.

### ***United States Public Law 94-142 (1975) – United States***

With this Act the United States moved further than any other country in attempting to provide a meaningful life for exceptional children. This unique piece of legislation mandated publically supported education for all children with disabilities aged 3 to 17. The Act clearly indicated who would be considered to have special needs citing two criteria: (1) having one or more of the difficulties listed in the Act such as deaf, mentally retarded, orthopedically handicapped, emotionally disturbed, etc. and (2) requiring special education and related services.

*Public Law 94-142* defined a number of terms related to those with disabilities:

- “*Free appropriate public education*” was defined as special education and related services to be provided at public expense, under public supervision and meeting standards set down by the state. This would be carried out at all school educational levels and would conform to an *Individualized Education Programme* (IEP) written for each child.
- The “*Individualized Education Program*” concept required that a written statement of program for each exceptional child be developed at a meeting of the appropriate educational officials with teachers, and parents or guardians.

*US Public Law 94-142* represented a milestone in the education of exceptional children. Mandatory education for the child with special needs supported by public expense was a major step forward. States were now required to provide appropriate educational services in order to receive federal funds. It is also interesting to note that the Act stated that:

Handicapped children should be educated with nonhandicapped children where appropriate and should only be educated in separate classes or schools or removed from regular classes when the nature or severity of the condition is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

The Act had a significant impact on the education of children with disabilities. It created much discussion and renewed interest in special learners in the United States and other countries.

### ***The Warnock Report 1978 – United Kingdom***

*The Warnock Report*, published 1978, was the result of a five-year deliberation by a British Government Commission set up under the chairmanship of Mary Warnock to investigate provisions for exceptional individuals in the United Kingdom. The resultant document, entitled *Special Education Needs: Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Youth*, has become known as *The Warnock Report*. It was a comprehensive document and encompassed most areas of concern in the education of handicapped children in Great Britain.

The question concerning where exceptional children should be educated was a key focus. The Warnock Committee described integration in three forms: – locational, social and functional. An exceptional child placed in a special class within a regular school for example, would accomplish locational integration. *Social integration*, characterized by social interaction, would be facilitated if exceptional children played with other children on the school grounds. *Functional integration*, which incorporates both locational and social integration, would be achieved when exceptional and nonexceptional children jointly participated in academic educational programs.

The committee pointed out that special schools would and must continue for three groups: those with severe or complex disabilities who need additional facilities of a special nature and expert teaching which cannot be provided in an ordinary school; those whose behavior is such that it causes disruptions in the classroom or prevents them from forming social relationships; and those whose handicaps are multiple and prevent them from functioning in the regular school, even with additional help.

In concluding their report, the Warnock Committee encouraged a more active and concerned social attitude toward the handicapped: “There must be a general acceptance of the idea that special education involves as much skill and professional expertise as any other form of education, and that, in human terms, the returns on resources invested in it are just as great” (p. 355).

### **Supportive Canadian Strivings**

In the broader context of human rights in Canada, as applied to those with cognitive challenges, the federal *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1985) advocates on behalf of exceptional



individuals and is very positive in tone. The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is the federal and supreme law of Canada and has the power to override provincial legislation.

Crealock (1996) noted that provincial legislation is found in the Education Act of each province and territory. For students who are exceptional, the specificity of the law in each province varies from the minimal right for most students to attend school to the right of full inclusion in the general classroom. As pointed out by Winzer (2005) “Canadian provinces and territories have recognized the right to an education for all children in different ways, which can be broadly categorized [both] as mandatory and permissive. Mandatory legislation says that boards ‘must’ include students with special needs; permissive legislation allows, but does not require, the integration of such students” (p. 55). Winzer further points out that, at present in Canada, three connected factors – the inclusion movement, the willingness of advocacy groups to support parents, and interpretations of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* – are fuelling much of present court activity regarding educational rights. The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is, and should be, a reference point in establishing and maintaining the rights of all exceptional children and adults.

## CONCLUSION

Social systems are composed of individuals playing roles competently. If the person with a disability is to receive full membership in the community, he/she must assume a competent social role. The label “mental retardation” has carried with it through time a personality stereotype with associated behavioral expectations. A traditional social role has been designated by society. Unfortunately, it is the case that pre-existing negative perceptions still linger in some quarters and contribute to community definitions of mental retardation which confront those who have challenges as they integrate with society. The social perception of having an intellectual disability can, in itself, be disabling.

### Reasons to Celebrate and Hope

The definition of intellectual disability has drastically changed in recent years. Instead of relying on a traditional IQ score as the sole criterion for definition, the current definition calls upon multiple indicators to portray a more holistic perspective. This is a welcome change. The current *American Association on Mental Deficiency* (AAMD) definition of mental retardation is as follows:

Mental retardation refers to substantial limitations in personal functioning. It is characterized by significant subaverage intellectual functioning, **existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skills: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work.** Mental retardation manifests before age eighteen (AAMR, 1992, p. 1).

It must be noted that the “adaptive functioning skills” aspect of the definition must be fulfilled before perceiving that a person has an intellectual disability. *Adaptive behavior* is defined as the effectiveness or degree to which the individual meets the standards of personal independence and social responsibility expected of his/her age and cultural group. Since these expectations vary for different age groups, deficits in adaptive behavior vary at different ages.

The AAMD definition provides an exciting challenge for teachers and service personnel. It is interesting to note that in 2007 the AAMR changed its name to the *American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* (AAIDD) and replaced the term *mental retardation* with *intellectual disabilities*. (Schalock, Luckasson & Shogren, 2007)

### **Inclusive Education**

In recent years there has been a very active movement afoot directed toward the integration of exceptional children into regular school classes. Although there is much agreement concerning the merits of the normalization philosophy, the realities involved in its educational implementation have become the centre of a pervasive educational debate. The debate concerns “full inclusion” - the belief that all children irrespective of the degree, complexity or type of disability should be educated full time in the regular classroom.

Today, there are few who would actively oppose the educational integration of exceptional children who have the potential to thrive and succeed. Many, many with intellectual disabilities have been integrated successfully in regular education classes since the 1970s. The question is no longer unanswered whether exceptional children should be included in regular classes or be educated in segregated settings. The answer is a resounding “yes” in favor of inclusion with regard to the greatest majority of these children.

### **POST SCRIPT**

Improvement has been laudable in both social and education realms as noted by various writers in the field today. Howard (2006) presented the progress as follows:

During the past 25 years, we have witnessed significant improvements in the education and treatment of children and adults with mental retardation. After more than a century of almost complete exclusion and segregation from everyday society, people with mental retardation are beginning to experience some of the benefits and responsibilities of participation in the mainstream (p. 201).

As Sandra Kaufman (1999) pointed out, compared to just a few years ago, there’s a world of difference in the quantity and quality of services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (earlier classified as mental retardation).

With reference to the United States, Howard (2006) recently reflected upon progress with reference to the 1976 report of *The President’s Committee on Mental Retardation* which set out

the nation's major objectives for the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Howard summarized the four key objectives:

- Attainment of citizenship status in law and in fact for all individuals with intellectual disabilities in the United States, exercised to the fullest degree possible under the conditions of disability.
- Reduction of the incidence of intellectual disability from biomedical causes by at least 50% by the year 2000.
- Reduction of the incidence and prevalence of intellectual disability associated with social disadvantage to the lowest level possible by the end of the century.
- Achievement of a firm and deep public acceptance of persons with intellectual disabilities as members in common of the social community and as citizens in their own right. (abridged from Howard, p. 230)

Howard concluded that “although a great deal remains to be done to realize these goals, significant accomplishments have been made in each key area” (p. 230).

With regard to the ability of individuals who are defined as having a cognitive challenge, perceived inadequacies are often confined to their educational experience. We agree that many have “six-hour” deficits (President’s Committee on Mental Retardation, 1969). It is our firm belief that the overriding factor in an exceptional individual’s success or lack of success in community living is the quality of preparation provided by the school rather than the degree of mental retardation. With regard to work adjustment and social living skills, the school can do much to prepare the child to take his/her place in society. It is critical that curriculum planning start early to ensure that the acquisition of requisite skills is not left to chance or until the last two years of the senior program.

A major extension of the normalization concept in recent years has been the advocacy movement, having as its basis the advocate relationship - the person with an intellectual disability (the “protégé”), and a capable volunteer (the “advocate”), working together in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In collaboration with the various local citizen advocacy offices, such programs have become a major influence. A definite part of the social adjustment of adolescents with special needs relates to education of the community. The community must accept each individual and relate to him/her outside the pejorative, traditional framework. A grassroots interest is required. It continues as a long and winding road.

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### **Chapter 3: Language and Cognitive Ability Assumptions: The Interface Within Cultural and Special Needs Contexts**

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#### **Abstract**

*This paper explores the critical role that language and culture play in the assessment of cognitive ability in students. While research has long recognized the challenges of using standardized approaches to assess children from minority groups, educational practice continues to be dominated by traditional testing methods. The authors argue that within seemingly homogenous cultures who share language, significant variation exists that could negatively impact measurement of ability via language-loaded approaches. Using language typical of Newfoundland & Labrador (NL) culture the authors develop a standardized measure of verbal intelligence. The instrument is administered to practising educators in NL as well as five other provinces so as to illustrate cultural language variation and its possible impact on perceptions of cognition. The results serve as a reminder of the importance of examining cultural contamination and language variation when measuring cognition and add to the concern related to over-representation of minority children in special education programs.*

#### **Language as a Human Imperative**

Undeniably, language is at the core of human existence. Merleau-Ponty (1945) posited that thought and language are one — cognition being language; language, cognition. Although such a categorical stance can be challenged as dogmatic and nonveridical from a number of theoretical perspectives, the critical role of language in humanness is irrefutable. It is what defines and distinguishes creatures at the apex of the phylogenetic scale from those at the lower positions. It is through his use of symbols that man has usurped the ascendant position. Schmidt (1973) captured the essence:

In the long run it is language that will enable the average child, and even a relatively dull child, to outstrip the chimpanzee in problem- solving ability. Much more significant than this ability is that language will open up a world of human meaning that nothing can open up for the chimpanzee. (p. 24)

Cassirer (1946) in *Essay on Man* described man as *animal symbolicum*, the animal that creates symbols and a symbolic world. Gollnick and Chinn (2006) define language as a vehicle for communication, a means of shaping cultural and personal identity, and a way to socialize an individual into a cultural group. The fact that cognition has been shown to predate verbal

fluency, and can take various nonverbal forms, does not diminish its pivotal role as a functional requisite in humanness – it cannot be trivialized.

With language we transform, modify and shape much of our cognition. Through language we transcend time and are able to describe events temporally removed – to reflect on the past and conject the future. Language is a preferred performatory medium, nowhere more than in western civilization.

The direction of ontological development is toward more extensive and elaborate use of symbols. With maturity comes the ability to deal with abstraction, to function independent of the physically present, to introspect, to achieve meta-awareness, and to generate strategies and solutions. Language is *not just another* of the many attributes which help to define the course of human development.

Humans vary in their facility with language. They are not equally fluent nor are they equally capable of exploiting the power of language. However, most individuals strive to use language. Even individuals who are the most cognitively challenged try to find expression through language, albeit simplistic and arduously generated in many cases. In contemporary society individuals are evaluated both socially and intellectually by their facility with language. It is employed as a metric. Those who are denied language, or are restricted in its use, have since early times been described as disabled or developmentally delayed. Davis and Rimm (2004) posit that within the definition of intellectual giftedness the overriding trait “is that they [gifted children] are developmentally advanced in language and thought” (p. 35). Similarly, Porter (2005) views children’s precocious comprehension of language from an early age as a “robust indicator of intellectual ability” (p. 16). Given all of this, and the undeniable role of language in human functioning, cognitive ability assumptions founded upon language performance must be carefully considered, particularly within cultural and special needs contexts.

### **Language Differences and Bias in Cognitive Assessment**

Concern for the accuracy of standardized assessment for students of diverse cultural backgrounds has been documented in the literature (Armour-Thomas, 1992). According to Hilliard (1975) abusive use of cognitive ability tests has been present from the beginning of the IQ test movement:

It is interesting to note that when Henry Goddard, in 1912, administered the Stanford- Binet Intelligence Test to immigrants, some remarkable results were obtained to support arguments for restricted immigration. The test results established that “83% of the Jews, 80% of the Hungarians, 79% of the Italians, 87% of the Russians were feeble-minded.” (p. 18)

Still today there is an “Anglocentric” bias in a number of intelligence tests. Standard instructions may purport the evenhanded nature of the test and the interpretation of results, but at the same time, leave little latitude for cultural variations in vocabulary, language usage and experiential cultural differences. Gopaul-McNichol and Armour-Thomas (2002) address this topic suggesting

that "the construction of standardized assessment instruments, as well as the research on student performance that uses these instruments is equally biased as it reflects Western/Anglo/Euro epistemological traditions [in which] there is a tendency to generalize findings to other groups that do not share those perspectives. Often, studies do not include operationally definable constructs of culture and when they do, terms like *culturally disadvantaged* or *cultural deprivation* betray an ethnocentric bias" (p. 9).

For example, a youngster in a remote Newfoundland & Labrador outpost fishing community might respond to the test item, "What does C.O.D. mean?" with the statement "That's a fish b'y." Standard instructions regarding answer interpretation would rule out this response as legitimate. As noted by Hilliard "It is very likely that contextual observations of children actually functioning cognitively in regular situations would reveal patterns of intelligence which are systematically missed by standardized measuring situations" (p. 27). Hilliard further explains:

However, the *test format cannot handle novel responses!* In order for a standardized test to be scored, all possible correct answers must be anticipated. These are determined before the student who will take the test is ever known by name. A novel response which demonstrates high intellectual competence cannot be scored in the traditional format. Consequently, pupils with high intellectual capability may simply be missed because examiners do not know what questions to ask. (p. 23)

In brief, to be valid, tests must measure the attributes we think they are measuring. Scores based upon culturally contaminated test content may lead to invalid judgments concerning a student's learning characteristics. The assumption that all students enter the test situation with equivalent background experience is erroneous. Taylor and Whittaker (2009) describe a child's multiple worlds and "the cultural divide that can exist between the home and school" (p. 118).

Educators must examine interactions between cultural preparation and curriculum content. Generally, schools anticipate student behaviour based upon the dominant culture. For example, it is assumed that children will respond cooperatively to teacher instructions and will be positively motivated by verbal praise. But children are strongly influenced by personal experiences. If the expectations and values of the home are vastly different from those in the school environment, serious problems can result. As noted by Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow (2000), "an incorrect diagnosis can be made if a teacher misinterprets a culturally different child's behavior as disturbing or resistant" (p. 55).

Recent research on minority group students has posed many of the same questions as has cross-cultural research over time with regard to the ecological and environmental shaping of human abilities, accordingly, content for intelligence tests has been harshly criticized in recent years – often with reference to language-based items. A major problem underlying psychological assessment is the assumption that children have been exposed to comparable acculturation. Testing based upon this assumption is valid only when the assumption reflects reality. However, Samuda (1998) cautions, that ensuring accuracy of assessment findings for minority children is not simply a matter of selecting an instrument that is marketed as culture-fair. He stated that

"even the so-called culture-fair tests are really only culture-reduced because they assume that examinees have been socialized and educated in the culture in which the test originated" (p. 17).

Philpott, Nesbit, Cahill and Jeffery (2004), with reference to culturally- appropriate assessment, note that caution against the inappropriate use of standardized instruments is so prevalent that a school of measurement has arisen that attempts to address the issue. *Culturally-fair assessment* has become a growing discipline within the assessment field with an increasing number of instruments being published and an accompanying volume of literature evolving. Lewis (1998) described the emerging test development process:

The movement to so called culture -free and culture-fair tests was begun to counteract, or at least neutralize, the culturally loaded information and language items found in standardized tests. . . .The reduction of the influence of culture has been attempted by decreasing the number of test items with culturally laden content and by reducing the language components present in the test. (p. 222)

Over the years some researchers (i.e., Dove, 1974; Williams, 1974) have attempted to illustrate the cultural basis in language-based IQ measures and have considered the cultural and ecological shaping of abilities.

### **Language as a Defining Attribute in Special Education Placement**

A sizeable percentage of children classified as requiring special education or as having "special educational needs" are from culturally diverse backgrounds. Research indicates that the percentage is too sizeable. This is particularly true with regard to intellectual disability "where the conjunction of disorder (or presumed disorder), ethnicity, IQ tests, and special education has a rather nasty history" (Winzer, 2008, p. 196). Perhaps no other topic has received as much attention in discussion of special education as the over- representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse groups in special education programs.

Early research established that minority groups have historically been over-represented in special education programs. Kamp and Chinn (1982) reported that approximately one-third of the entire special education student population in American schools was composed of minority group children. In current special education programs as well, an over-representation of children from minority group homes is of significant concern (Hunt & Marshall, 2005). Skiba et al. (2008) posit that "the disproportionate representation of minority students in special education programs has its roots in a long history of educational segregation and discrimination" (p. 284). A critical question arises: Is special education placement referral based upon a child's documented special needs, or upon value judgments highly influenced by language usage and cultural background?

Gopaul-McNichol and Armour-Thomas (2002) argue for a bio-cultural perspective on intellectual functioning that relies on Vygotsky's socio-cultural model of cognitive development. This view on cognitive ability legitimizes holistic experiences where "...cultural forces shape and guide the development of language, cognition, and personality...various dimensions of human development are interdependent so that factors influencing one dimension are likely to influence other dimensions of the developing person" (p. 28). This is underscored by the realization that

there is significant diversity between cultural backgrounds, social experiences, and linguistic expression across Canada. Such a reality warrants an equally broad view of measurement that instead of relying on traditional IQ scores, calls upon multiple indicators to obtain a more holistic perspective on student functioning.

Padilla (2001), with reference to assessing First Nations populations, builds on this concern arguing that "...a paradigm shift is required, wherein the study of a specific ethnic group is valued for its own sake and need not be compared to another group, especially if the comparison is likely to be biased" (p. 23). Along a similar line, Ford, Grantham and Whiting (2008) view the under-representation of minority children in programs for the gifted as a function of the dominant role of traditional intelligence test scores in identification and placement decisions: "This almost exclusive dependence on test scores for recruitment disparately impacts the demographics of gifted programs by keeping them disproportionately white and middle class" (p. 294).

### **The Newfoundland and Labrador Context**

Newfoundland and Labrador is an insular province. This fact, coupled with the province's late entry into Canada in 1949, has influenced the shaping of language abilities. Possibly the most influential factor in the selection of culturally preferred skills has been the self-sufficient life-style of the numerous outport fishing ecologies which reflect the province's coastline settlement pattern.

The oral tradition of Newfoundland and Labrador has fostered a unique vocabulary linked to the sea. The language of the outport community has been described on occasion as a crude vernacular, an off-shoot of Orthodox English. Nonetheless, the outport community life has fostered a well-articulated oral language which is unique and certainly not lacking in colour. Response to the criticism that minority cultures are disorganized revitalizes the question raised by Cole and Brunner (1971) "Disorganized from who's point of view?" In the past, various language-based tests were administered to Newfoundland & Labrador students. Usually these tests reflected American middle-class culture. These students often fared poorly having had reduced contact with the mainland culture upon which these measures were standardized.

Although it is less so the case today, some still hastily conclude from testing results which involve language, that the verbal medium is underdeveloped in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Such a conclusion is in error. Language usage, special associations and work meanings which are built into culture, folklore and social conditioning continue to be problematic areas when trying to define individual abilities.

### **The Current Study**

Various ability tests which were biased in their content, to some degree by language as well as by cultural tradition, were administered in Newfoundland and Labrador schools in the past. Still today, it is a matter of some debate whether such tests gave a true representation of abilities of



Newfoundland & Labrador people. Of serious concern are the conclusions and educational assumptions generated on the basis of the results of such tests.

The *Newfoundland and Labrador Counterbalanced Intelligence Test (NLCIT)* was developed in 2006-2007 at Memorial University of Newfoundland with the assistance of students in the Faculty of Education engaged in teacher training. The test deals directly with the language, culture and social history of Newfoundland and Labrador. It is based upon vocabulary and expressions spoken and understood in the province.

From a pool of 48 suggested items contributed by Memorial University students, 30 items were selected for the final version of the test. Each of the 30 selected test items was correctly answered by at least 50% of a sixty member pilot sample of Newfoundland and Labrador educators. In essence, the *NLCIT* was developed to help heighten awareness of culturally loaded assessment.

Although the test may be approached with some degree of amusement, it does illustrate a serious assessment problem. The following are specimens from the test:\*

- 6 The term “CFA” refers to:
- a. a person who is a pest to neighbours.
  - b. an autumn apple that is fresh and clean.
  - c. a fisherman's arm that is tired from hauling fish.
  - d. a person who lives in Newfoundland but was born elsewhere.
  - e. a snack eaten just before going to bed.
- 21 "Birch broom in fits" is an expression used with reference to:
- a. a person who never stops talking.
  - b. a broom with too short a handle.
  - c. a person laughing loudly at a joke.
  - d. a small boat caught in a storm.
  - e. a person's messy hair.
- 30 A “crackie” is:
- a. a biscuit to have with tea.
  - b. a colourful noise maker for Christmas dinner.
  - c. a noisy crow.
  - d. a small ill-tempered dog.
  - e. a tea cup with a small crack.

The *NLCIT* was administered to practicing educators (as well as Memorial University Faculty of Education students) in Newfoundland and Labrador and to educators in five other Canadian provinces. It was hypothesized that Newfoundland and Labrador participants would obtain a

higher score on the test than individuals from the other provinces who, perhaps, have been exposed to the more global culture.

Samples were selected from the following locations:

1. Newfoundland & Labrador
2. New Brunswick
3. Ontario
4. Manitoba
5. Saskatchewan
6. British Columbia

At each of the selected centers a reference person, known by one of the authors, was contacted. A covering letter indicating the nature of the study, sample selection procedure, test instructions and 25 copies of the test were forwarded to each province. The tests were scored and descriptive data were obtained for each of the provincial groups involved. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of scores obtained on the *NLCIT* for each of the six provinces.

**Table 1**  
*NLCIT Test Scores by Province*

Province	Sample size	Mean	Standard deviation
Newfoundland & Labrador	25	21.76	3.19
New Brunswick	25	13.24	3.47
Ontario	25	11.04	4.22
Manitoba	25	9.80	3.28
Saskatchewan	25	9.92	3.17
British Columbia	25	8.92	4.21

Note: Maximum score = 30

It is interesting to note that achievement on the test appears as a function of distance from Newfoundland & Labrador – Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia achieving the lowest scores (see figure 1).

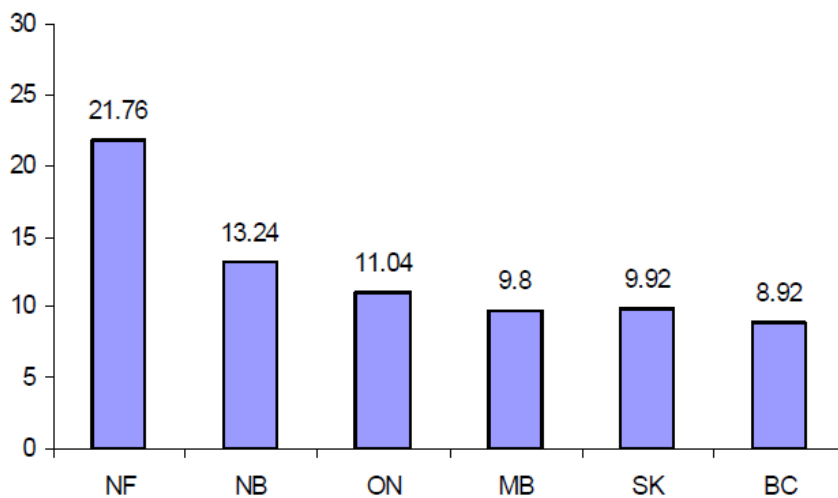


Figure 1: The mean score of six Canadian provinces on the 30 item NLCIT

The closer one physically gets to the province the stronger the accuracy of the instrument. Interestingly, such a pattern parallels linguistic variation and dialectical differences in rural communities.

### Limitations

The authors draw readers' attention to three limitations of the study presented in this paper.

1. The groups selected for comparison were not randomly selected. Therefore, no generalization of the results beyond the present groups is possible.
2. The *NLCIT* has not received extensive item analysis. Therefore, questions on the instrument may vary with regard to discriminating power.
3. It was not possible to obtain information on various participant characteristics that might have been influential to the scores obtained on the test.

## Conclusions

Although the research instrument employed in the study may in itself spark interest, the study helps to illustrate assessment issues associated with cultural and linguistic norms. The student in Saskatoon puzzling over the word "sleiveen" may not be so far removed from his Newfoundland and Labrador outport counterpart pondering the meaning of the prairie word, "coulee". The humour is lost when one considers that vocabulary, expression and other language skills are used in a serious vein as a key component in tests of intelligence. Subgroups within a larger culture vary in significant ways from each other. That is, they may have distinctive cultural patterns of their own, while sharing some traits and values of the macroculture (Banks, 2006).

As noted by Taylor and Whittaker (2009):

As with all individuals in a particular culture, those in the dominant society often view their culture as the "only" or "correct" viewpoint. Without an ability to look through other cultural lenses, individuals and cultures will frequently misunderstand each other (p. 119).

The *NLCIT* illustrates the effects of cultural influence, including language, on standardized instruments and the limited flexibility that such approaches have in factoring what Hiller (1975) initially referred to as "novel responses." Clearly, professionals using standardized approaches to assessment of cognitive ability, certainly those in culturally unique environs, must carefully scrutinize test scores and programming decisions based upon them. The purpose of this study was not to contribute to the plethora of instruments currently on the market for assessing student ability. Rather it provides a glimpse into the significant role that language and culture play in standardized assessment. By doing so, it validates the growing perception that there is no such thing as *culturally fair* assessment, but rather a need for closer attunement to *culturally fairer* practice. We present the argument that in the matter of sensitivity to fairness, cultures and linguistic variations must be dominant considerations.

\*The complete test and the scoring key are presented in Appendix A.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **The Newfoundland & Labrador Counterbalanced Intelligence Test**

Please circle the correct letter (a-e).

1. A "mummer" is:
  - a. a winter hat made of coarse wool
  - b. someone who doesn't appear often in public
  - c. someone who visits the hospital frequently
  - d. a Christmas visitor dressed in disguise
  - e. a fisherman who hires on as a seasonal crew member
2. Which of the following people has never been Premier of Newfoundland?
  - a. Brian Peckford
  - b. Tom Rideout
  - c. Fred Mifflin
  - d. Brian Tobin
  - e. Joseph Smallwood
3. "Twacking" refers to the activity of:



- a. hunting small game.
  - b. window-shopping.
  - c. sanding wood.
  - d. relaxing after a meal.
  - e. cooking a large meal.
4. A "spa-doodle" refers to:
- a. the moon in the sky during daytime
  - b. a noisy sea bird
  - c. a nighttime snack eaten outdoors
  - d. an alcoholic beverage made from home brew
  - e. a car with one headlight working
5. The Provincial flower of Newfoundland is the:
- a. Dandelion.
  - b. Sun Flower.
  - c. Carnation.
  - d. Mayflower.
  - e. Pitcher Plant.
6. The term "CFA" refers to:
- a. a person who is a pest to neighbours.
  - b. an autumn apple that is fresh and clean.
  - c. a fisherman's arm that is tired from hauling fish.
  - d. a person who lives in Newfoundland but was born elsewhere.
  - e. a snack eaten just before going to bed.
7. "Lassy":
- a. a common name for the family dog.
  - b. a sweet topping usually put on bread.
  - c. an apron with a bib, used while cooking fish.
  - d. a teenager who often answers others rudely.
  - e. a rope for tying up to the pier.
8. What is a "swallie?"
- a. A dead sea bird
  - b. An ocean swell
  - c. A rustic outhouse
  - d. A drink of rum or whisky
  - e. A baby white coat seal

9. According to the folk song "Lukey's Boat," the boat is painted:

- a. blue.
- b. green.
- c. orange.
- d. red.
- e. yellow.

10. A traditional sloped-roof Newfoundland house is referred to as:

- a. a saltbox.
- b. a bungalow.
- c. an a-frame.
- d. a stove lid.
- e. a stage head.

11. The term "coupie down" means:

- a. to play music with a lively beat.
- b. to row leisurely along the shore.
- c. to gather up wood for winter.
- d. to crouch close to the ground.
- e. to trip and fall in the deep snow.

12. In Newfoundland, what does "a time" refer to:

- a. period between dinner and dessert.
- b. a bountiful season of plenty.
- c. a house party.
- d. a raging storm.
- e. an upcoming election campaign.

13. In many outport communities, a "stage" refers to:

- a. a tool for carving.
- b. a jagged edge on a seashore cliff.
- c. a long plank used to get up onto a boat's deck.
- d. a building made of logs, used for cleaning fish.
- e. a rough step used to get up to one's front door.

14. What are "vamps?"

- a. work boots
- b. wool mittens
- c. hair ribbons
- d. fancy gloves.
- e. wool socks

15. A “yaffel” is:

- a. a deep-sea fishing net
- b. a tiny wooden boat
- c. an iron cooking pot
- d. an arm full of fish
- e. a fast approaching storm

16. "Old man's beard" is used in reference to:

- a. the scruff on a man's chin.
- b. yellowish coloured moss on trees.
- c. a plate of spaghetti.
- d. cobwebs in a window frame.
- e. ice hanging from the face of a rock cliff.

17. A “scuff” is:

- a. an evil person.
- b. a work break.
- c. a rough spot on the road.
- d. a jagged rock
- e. a lively dance.

18. "Panny-hoppin" is:

- a. the game of hopscotch.
- b. a traditional outport dance.
- c. jumping from one small piece of ice to another.
- d. the game of leap-frog on the beach sand.
- e. a traditional method of frying fish in outport communities.

19. What is a "piss-a-bed?"

- a. a drunken man
- b. a flower
- c. a soiled mattress
- d. a lazy person
- e. a cat's litter box

20. "Jigg's dinner" refers to:

- a. a hearty breakfast.
- b. a medicinal compound given to sick persons.
- c. a meal of boiled beef and vegetables.
- d. a bed time lunch.

- e. a popular treat -- deep fried cod and fries.
21. "Birch broom in fits" is an expression used with reference to:
- a. a person who never stops talking.
  - b. a broom with too short a handle.
  - c. a person laughing loudly at a joke.
  - d. a small boat caught in a storm.
  - e. a person's messy hair.
22. A "boil up" is:
- a. a wind at sea that suddenly begins to gust heavily.
  - b. going into the country and cooking food outdoors.
  - c. a political argument between neighbouring communities.
  - d. a disagreement that becomes too heated.
  - e. cooking vegetables for Sunday dinner.
23. A "sleiveen" is a:
- a. deceitful person.
  - b. small rope used to fasten a boat to the pier.
  - c. sled which is used to carry wood.
  - d. small fish used for bait.
  - e. very miserly person.
24. What are "toutons?"
- a. pieces of fried bread dough
  - b. fish that have been salted heavily
  - c. young mischievous boys
  - d. homemade slippers
  - e. dried up mud holes
25. A "bologna license" is:
- a. the permission to speak in a group discussion.
  - b. a permit to jig cod for one's own family.
  - c. a license to drive a heavy equipment vehicles.
  - d. a boater's permit to tie up to the wharf.
  - e. a permit to hunt a male moose.
26. What is a "raspberry grunt?"
- a. a fruit flavoured ice-cream custard
  - b. a bucket for picking berries
  - c. a homemade candy stick

- d. a square shaped berry dessert
  - e. a hearty breakfast roll
27. Besides meaning “askew” or “not straight”, the term "crooked" can mean:
- a. happy.
  - b. miserly.
  - c. contrary.
  - d. excited.
  - e. anxious.
28. Newfoundland was settled because of which resource?
- a. cod
  - b. iron ore
  - c. lumber
  - d. copper
  - e. whale oil
29. "Don't be coddin yourself" means:
- a. don't be underestimating your ability.
  - b. don't be bragging about your accomplishments.
  - c. don't be taking yourself so seriously.
  - d. don't be fooling yourself.
  - e. don 't be scolding yourself.
30. A “crackie” is:
- a. a biscuit to have with tea.
  - b. a colourful noise maker for Christmas dinner.
  - c. a noisy crow.
  - d. a small ill-tempered dog.
  - e. a tea cup with a small crack.

### Key

1.	d	7.	b	13.	d	19.	b	25.	e
2.	c	8.	d	14.	e	20.	c	26.	d
3.	b	9.	b	15.	d	21.	e	27.	c
4.	e	10.	a	16.	b	22.	b	28.	a
5.	e	11.	d	17.	e	23.	a	29.	d
6.	d	12.	c	18.	c	24.	a	30.	d

## Chapter 4: The Challenge of Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviour in the Inclusive Classroom Issues and Interventions

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### ABSTRACT

Inclusivity is the defining attribute of special education in both Newfoundland & Labrador (NL) and in western education in the broader context. The Pathways Model (2007), which has evolved over the last few years and has come to define special needs education, presents a pervasive spirit of inclusivity. This paper focuses upon the education of children with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) within the current inclusive model.

### Introduction

Increasingly, more children with exceptional needs are being accommodated in regular mainstream classes. In fact, it is only in instances where there are very "compelling reasons" (such as the safety of the child's peers, or the child's dignity being compromised) that programming does not align with an inclusionary model. With the thrust toward inclusion, more and more children with special needs are being educated within regular classroom settings. For the classroom teacher, with the help of categorical/non-categorical special educators, new challenges regularly appear. OCD is one such challenge.

### Definition and Overview

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is **not** caused by bad parenting, poverty, or other environmental factors. According to Summerfeldt and Antony (2002), OCD is an anxiety disorder that is associated with "*Obsessions*" and "*Compulsions*". OCD is defined by Kaufman and Landrum (2009) as "repetitive, persistent, intrusive impulses, images, or thoughts about something, not worries about real life problems" (p. 358).

*Obsessions* are the thoughts, images or impulses that repeatedly enter the mind, and feel out of the individual's control – they are the **mental** component of OCD. Obsessions are associated with troubling feelings that can take many forms such as anxiety and disgust. Common obsessions have a few broad themes:

1. Contamination (e.g., fears of germs, dirtiness, chemicals, AIDS, cancer)



2. Symmetry or exactness (e.g., of belongings, spoken or written words, the way one moves or completes actions)
3. Doubting (e.g., whether appliances are turned off, doors are locked, written work is accurate, etc.)
4. Aggressive impulses (e.g., thoughts of stabbing one's children, pushing loved ones into traffic, etc.)
5. Accidental harm to others (e.g., fears of contaminating or poisoning a loved one, or of being responsible for a break in or a fire)
6. Religion (e.g., sexual thoughts about a holy person, satanic thoughts, distressing thoughts regarding morality)
7. Sexual (e.g., thoughts about personally upsetting sexual acts)
8. Other miscellaneous obsessions having to do with themes such as lucky or unlucky colors or numbers, or with the need to know "trivial" details (e.g., house numbers, licence plates).

(Summerfeldt & Antony, 2002, from <http://www.anxietytreatment.ca/obsessive.html>)

According to Dornbush and Pruitt (1995), a small percentage of students – less than one percent – grapple on a daily basis with upsetting, repetitive thoughts that compel them to perform pointless behaviors to relieve their anxiety.

*Compulsions* are the result of the distressing feelings that characterize obsessions. They motivate people with OCD to engage in repetitive behaviors in a ritualistic manner, that may temporarily provide relief from their distress – they are the **behavioral** component of OCD. Those with OCD feel powerless to resist compulsions. King (as cited in Purcell, 1999) described the seriousness of compulsive behavior: "Children can sometimes act in near-delusional bizarre ways in their conviction of the potential of unrealistic dangers and the necessity of performing their rituals..." (p. 2). With severe compulsions, endless rituals dominate the day.

Like obsessions, compulsions can take many forms, which can include the following:

1. Washing and Cleaning (e.g., excessive showering, hand washing, house cleaning)
  2. Checking (e.g., locks, appliances, paperwork, driving routes)
  3. Counting (e.g., preferences for even or odd numbers, tabulating figures)
  4. Repeating Actions or Thoughts (e.g., turning lights on and off, getting up and down in chairs, rereading, rewriting)
  5. Need to Ask or Confess (e.g., asking for reassurance)
  6. Hoarding (e.g., magazines, flyers, clothing, information)
  7. Ordering and Arranging (e.g., need for things to be straight, sequenced, or in a certain order)
  8. Repeating Words, Phrases, or Prayers to Oneself (e.g., repeating "safe" words or prayers)
- (Summerfeldt & Antony, 2002, from <http://www.anxietytreatment.ca/obsessive.html>)

## **Educational Context**

Obsessions and compulsions not only cause problems in daily life but can interfere with a person's ability to learn. It is important for educators to become familiar with the warning signs/symptoms/behaviors linked to OCD. Sample classroom compulsive symptoms include: spending time unproductively involved in repetitive actions (e.g., retracing the same word repeatedly); counting and recounting objects; arranging and rearranging objects on a desk; and taking frequent trips to the bathroom. Purcell (1999) states that "teachers could be on the lookout for [behaviors] including: perfectionistic tendencies in student's work, many erasures, constantly falling behind in work, slowness in doing work for a student of normal ability, and difficulty in taking notes because a student tries to write down everything" (p. 9). Students with OCD may display poor concentration; school avoidance; anxiety/depression; lack of concentration/distraction (performing silent compulsions, such as counting or repeating phrases); disruptive behaviors (repeating phrases, or counting out loud); and an inability to finish work/being routinely late. According to Thiede (2006):

The symptoms of OCD contribute to the five main areas of difficulty (inattention, anxiety, socialization, compulsive disorders, and problems with testing or assignments) in a number of ways: Obsessive thoughts may lead to distraction during lessons, compulsions may prevent students from participating in class activities or finishing assignments in a timely manner, compulsive tendencies may cause students to fail exams even when they know the required information, and both the obsessions and compulsions may impair the student's ability to interact with peers socially and academically (p.15).

There are some treatment plans in place for OCD. According to various research behavior therapy and pharmacological treatment have both been successfully utilized with this form of exceptionality. Behavioral therapy techniques may help the individual to quell the anxiety arising from obsessions and reduce, or sometimes eliminate, compulsive rituals. Personal counselling is also a useful strategy in many instances. As well, there are many classroom approaches and strategies which may be of value in the classroom context – the focus of this paper.

## **Strategies and Interventions**

For these strategies to be of value, teachers must first be willing to make classroom adaptations and venture into alternate teaching strategies. It is important for teachers to be partnered with all individuals involved in the treatment – parents, physicians, and other educational professionals. According to Lucero (1999), it is important for teachers to "work with the students' parents...some parents may need to be educated about OCD – others will be very informed and welcome collaborative efforts from the school...ideally the parents and school personnel will work together to help the child" (from [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2199489\\_work-child-obsessivecompulsive-disorder-classroom.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2199489_work-child-obsessivecompulsive-disorder-classroom.html)). Collaboration with previous teachers is also of great importance.

As noted by Thiede (2006), classroom strategies and approaches currently focus upon five main areas of difficulty: **Inattention, Anxiety, Socialization, Compulsive Disorders, and Testing/Assignments.**

***Inattention*** is a common challenge area for students with OCD as they struggle with much difficulty to pay attention while distracted by obsessive thoughts. Classroom adaptations can be put into place to help ease distractions, such as carefully selected seating arrangements – the child being away from distractions, yet teacher visible. The use of proximity (teacher standing close to the student's desk) can serve as a reminder to stay on task. Students should be permitted to take frequent breaks if required. However, as noted by the OCD Learning Station (2009), “limit the number of trips a student makes to the bathroom, if this is an issue. You may want to determine the current number of times he or she goes to the bathroom to help set a reasonable limit” (from <http://www.personnel/academic-support-strategies/>).

It is important to engage students in topics of interest to keep them focused. There are many technology applications that can engage student interest and help increase motivation. If computers or other such applications are being utilized, it is important to make sure they are visible to the teacher, but not visible to the student's peers. Students with OCD do not want their behaviors to be on display to the other students.

***Anxiety*** is another common challenge area linked to OCD – given that OCD by definition is an anxiety disorder. Students with OCD have many worries and fears that build up to cause anxiety. People with OCD know their obsessions and compulsions are irrational and excessive, but they have little or no control over them. This is not the same as compulsive gambling or overeating. Although people with those problems also feel they cannot terminate their behavior, there is a degree of pleasure associated with the behavior. There is no inherent pleasure associated with OCD. As noted by Thiede (2006), people with OCD are fearful that their obsessive thoughts will somehow come true.

While to the observer these behaviors may seem "crazy," the person performing them is not. In fact, the person with OCD is aware of how his behaviors must appear and this may prompt a new fear, i.e., that others will think he or she is insane. This can lead to hiding symptoms. It is very important for teachers to communicate to their students that their unwanted thoughts are normal and thinking about distressing subjects does not mean that there is something wrong with them. According to Summerfeldt and Antony (2002) “about 90% of people have occasional intrusive thoughts and repetitive behaviors that are very similar to those that occur in OCD. The main difference is that people with OCD experience obsessions and engage in compulsions much more frequently than the average person, and are much more distressed by their symptoms” (from <http://www.anxietytreatment.ca/obsessive.html>). Thiede (2006) posits that anxiety generated by unwanted and "unacceptable" thoughts is so overwhelming that compulsive behavior loops are performed to relieve the tremendous stress despite their irrational nature.

Thiede states that "students with OCD may benefit from having alone time or time-outs where they can sit quietly by themselves in a quiet corner of the room or in the hallway to relax" (p.

27). A signal or cue between the teacher and student could also be arranged which may discreetly allow time-out. Teachers may also want to teach students relaxation techniques. As anxiety is common among many individuals, these techniques may be beneficial to all students and be performed as a whole class activity.

Change in activities may also be difficult for students with OCD. It is very important for teachers to help avoid unexpected change, as this is one major cause of anxiety for students with OCD. Teachers should try to warn students in advance to prepare for any transitions such as recess and lunch breaks, as well as if substitute teachers will be teaching in any subject area.

***Socialization*** may be a challenge for students with OCD. Students with OCD have been reported to have lower levels of social acceptance, self-esteem and social competence. They are often rejected by their peers. The MACMH (2009) points out that "students with OCD may feel isolated from their peers, in part because their compulsive behaviour leaves them little time to interact or socialize with their classmates – they may avoid school because they are worried that teachers or peers will notice their odd behaviors" (from [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org)). Students with OCD may avoid peer relationships. Their reasons for avoidance vary from individual to individual; some experience aggressive obsessions leading to fears that they will harm friends. Others may be worried that their actions may offend their peers. Therefore, an important strategy is to educate the student's peers about OCD in order to set a positive tone for interactions.

Another strategy teacher could use to prompt the student to interact with peers is through the use of appropriate group work. According to Purcell (1999), "teachers might facilitate interactions between an OCD student and his peers by having group projects whereby the students achieve goals cooperatively, this would get the OCD student to interact with others who may be able to also keep him on task by not letting him get bogged down by constant revisions or rituals" (p. 10).

***Compulsive behaviors*** is the next area of challenge to be considered. Compulsive behaviors are repetitive behaviors that occur in a ritualistic manner as a result of obsessions. Educators must become familiar with these behaviors, and to view them as associated warning signs. In addition, teachers must sensitize their entire class concerning the types of compulsive behaviors that may take place. It is vital that teachers realize that compulsive behavior is *not* a disciplinary problem and consequently discipline/punishment is unacceptable. When faced with compulsive behaviors, teachers should try to redirect the student's behaviors, and provide classroom accommodations. There should be encouragement to continue working despite compulsive symptoms.

The Tourette Syndrome Foundation of Canada (2001) suggests strategies that can be used when dealing with compulsions that affect reading as well as math. Some ideas presented for compulsions that affect reading are: provide books on tape, allow student to read aloud or into tape, chunk reading assignments and highlight important sections of longer reading for students to read. Also suggested is allowing someone else to read to the student; this may also be beneficial in creating peer relationships.

Packer (2004) recommends that:

For students with compulsive writing rituals, consider limiting handwritten work. Common compulsive writing rituals include having to dot i's in a particular way or retrace particular letters ritualistically, having to count certain letters or words, having to completely blacken response circles on test forms, and erasing and rewriting work until it looks perfect.

(From [http://www.tourettessyndrome.net/Files/tips\\_OCD.pdf](http://www.tourettessyndrome.net/Files/tips OCD.pdf))

Ideas presented for compulsions that affect math include: using grade-appropriate computer math tutorials, utilizing graph paper, and making a reduction in workload. The OCD Learning Station (2009) suggests "allowing the student to use a calculator to check math answers *one time* after he or she has completed the assignment or test by hand" (from <http://www.personnel/academic-support-strategies/>).

**Testing and Assignments** is the fifth area of challenge that relates to OCD and is worthy of discussion. This is very common among students with OCD as compulsive activities often take up so much time that students are left with incomplete assignments. As noted by Purcell (1999) "students may not be able to finish their work or may get far behind because they are erasing and redoing work" (p. 4). It is most important for teachers to be patient and work individually with the student.

Students with OCD may find that they struggle because of inefficient note-taking, time limits, test-taking, and assignment completion. *Understanding Tourette Syndrome: A handbook for educators* (2001) makes note of strategies that can be used when dealing with compulsions that effect note-taking, essays or written tests. Some ideas presented for note-taking include: allowing the student choices (such as choosing printing or cursive writing; choosing whether to use a pen, pencil or colored pencil). Students might use a computer for typing (particularly if the difficulty is trying to write the words or letters perfectly) and may be permitted to use a tape recorder to record teachers' comments, or be provided copies of teachers' notes. At times, a peer scribe may also be useful.

Teachers may also want to provide tutoring, or other supporting methods, to help students learn effective note-taking skills. In this regard Purcell (1999) notes:

At the secondary level, note-taking can be a serious problem for an OCD student because they generally try to get everything down and end up missing large segments of information they should have gotten. There are several structured systems that can aid a student in learning to take better notes. SQ3R employs reading comprehension techniques and skills that aid in note-taking and summarizing (p. 19).

One strategy for students struggling with task completion would be to set alternate time limits. There are many useful strategies for composing essays and written tests. According to Purcell (1999), "grades can be a difficult issue for some OCD students who have trouble finishing assignments or doing work that [they feel] is not perfect. Teachers may find it easier to help these students by figuring out ways to evaluate their work without the use of grades or by demonstrating ways that making mistakes can be fruitful learning experiences" (p. 10). Depending on their grade level, and the severity of OCD, testing accommodations may include additional time and/or a testing environment free of distractions.

Testing and assignments should be more flexible. Highlight or identifying the important sections and emphasizing these to the student help to sort out the parts that may be most important for upcoming tests. It is important that teachers work very closely with each student to determine which accommodations work best, so that tailored alterations can be made to assignments and tests (i.e., breaking assignments into smaller units, reducing workload, providing frequent feedback, substituting multiple choice for short answer questions). OCD Learning Station (2009) suggests assigning "fewer questions on a test – allow the student to write the answers to every other question, or write very short answers. Alternatively, produce a multiple-choice test format so the student does not need to write long essay answers" (from <http://www.personnel/academic-support-strategies/>).

A valuable piece of advice concerning homework assignment is provided by the OCD Education Station: "Refrain from sending class work home that the student has been unable to complete in school due to OCD difficulties. This can create additional stress for the student who is already distressed by OCD symptoms." Additionally, "work with parents to provide the student with two sets of materials and books – one for working in school and one for working at home. This alleviates stress over whether the student has the right materials to work within each location" (from <http://www.personnel/academic-support-strategies/>). The teacher should limit the amount of time spend on homework and accept whatever the child completes during that period. This serves to reduce stress.

Crow (2007) presents ten ways in which parents can assist the teacher in supporting their children with OCD in the classroom. Some have been previously mentioned but her suggestions help to reinforce the following:

1. **The teacher should be educated specifically about your child's disorder.** Parents should meet with the teacher prior to the beginning of the school year to talk about their child's symptoms, and what strategies are being used at home. Do not assume that the teacher is familiar with the disorder. Provide reading materials if necessary.
2. **There should be some leniency with respect to time limits.** The push for students to "hurry up" in order to finish on time can trigger anxiety. The teacher should recognize that anxiety may silently cause distractions that interfere with work. Also, some children have intense compulsions to fill in circles with pencil, erase repeatedly to get letters "perfect", etc. The child could be allowed to take



incomplete work home, or be allowed to turn in incomplete work if a good effort was made.

3. **Perfectionism should not be praised.** The teacher should not say, “Wow, Jenny, those letters are written exactly on the line.” The teacher should instead praise effort and note that mistakes are “okay”.
4. **Quirks should be quietly tolerated.** As long as the child isn’t interfering with her peers’ safety or ability to concentrate, rituals that cannot be controlled should be allowed, without drawing undue attention to them. Whenever possible, they should be ignored.
5. **Ward off teasing and bullying.** Unkind behavior from classmates makes anxiety worse. The teacher could select several very responsible, popular students in the class, pull them quietly aside, educate them about their peer’s condition, and ask them to ward off teasing and be supportive. Other children will tend to follow their lead.
6. **Look for triggers.** If the child has repeated episodes of anxiety or rituals, the times and circumstances should be noted. What is setting them off? Could certain stimuli or events be eliminated or altered so that the child won’t become so anxious?
7. **Have an “escape route”.** If the child becomes overwhelmed, a pre-arrangement could be made for the child to quietly leave the classroom and go to a safe location, or even sit in a chair in the hallway until his or her nerves have calmed down.
8. **One of the classroom mottos should be, “Everybody makes mistakes”.** School should be a safe place where kids don’t feel threatened or intimidated by the need to be academically perfect. Competitions involving scores on tests or homework should be avoided.
9. **Keep tabs on meds.** The school administration should understand what medications are being dispensed to the child, and the dosage. Any signs of bizarre behavior or symptoms which could be related to medication should be brought to the attention of parents immediately. Dosage changes should be reported to the school and teacher as soon as possible, so they can make observations and be in close contact with parents if anything goes wrong.
10. **Have frequent follow-ups.** Rather than assume that “no news is good news”, check in with the teacher, once a week if possible. Ask whether there are any new concerns. Look carefully at your child’s homework and pay attention to his or her general attitude about school. Serious problems should warrant working with your child [through a professional] to explore new behavioral or medical strategies.

(Abridged from Crow, 2007, from <http://special-needs.families.com/blog/ten-ways-to-help-your-child-with-ocd-or-anxiety-succeed-in-school>)

## Summary

When approaching Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, there are many classroom strategies which are of value in the inclusive classroom context. For teachers to make use of these strategies, they must first become familiar with OCD and the associated signs. Purcell (1999) advises that "School psychologists should provide in-service training to alert teachers about OCD. It is important that teachers understand OCD and behavior symptoms suggestive of it. If teachers cannot spot symptoms, a child may never be referred to the school psychologist for treatment possibilities and may struggle undiagnosed." (p. 9).

Once educated about OCD, teachers must educate the child's peers. Collaboration with all who are involved with the student is important – most essentially the parents. The teacher must work closely with the student to learn their strengths and needs. As astutely pointed out by the OCD Education Station Chicago (2009):

Very importantly, you [teacher] should speak directly with the student who has OCD about strategies that have helped him or her succeed academically. Sometimes, the student has devised a way or process to accommodate the difficulty he or she is having. Students, especially older students can be surprisingly inventive, and they may have developed an accommodation that can be implemented easily in the classroom.

(From <http://www.personnel/academic-support-strategies/>)

Students with OCD benefit from a well-structured classroom with a calm environment, clear expectations and smooth transitions. Teachers must create a welcoming and positive environment. They should not be perceived as part of the learning problems. Accent the positive!

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## **Chapter 5: The evolution of disability studies amidst school reform in Newfoundland and Labrador: A global perspective on local practice**

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### ***Abstract***

*This paper (a version of which was included in Focusing on Students: The final report of the ISSP/Pathways Commission (Government of NL, 2007) will offer a theoretical framework to the model of Student Support Services delivered in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). The province follows an interagency approach in the delivery of a diagnostic and prescriptive service model, despite efforts in recent years to use the language of inclusion. In exploring the development of this model, we begin with a brief review of the history of special services, both from a global and a local paradigm perspective. While the history of special education is a “fascinating and complex story” (Kauffman, 1981 p.4) which has been affected by social, psychological and educational events, we will attempt to discuss it along separate themes so as to afford a stronger analysis. Central to this, will be an historical context for a paradigm of disability services, including legislative support of special education and the emergence of both a cascade model of service delivery and individualized planning. This leads to an examination of the effects that the School Reform movement has had on special education and how it directly contributed to the emergence of inclusive education. With this background established, we conduct an examination of the local model, including a number of studies which have provided a critical analysis of its effectiveness. This paper concludes with suggested directions of inquiry based on the themes that this paper identifies. What surfaces is not only a framework for critiquing the current model but the articulation of the development of a service system that echoes global trends as well as continued global struggles. The realization that the challenges facing classrooms in NL are shared by educators on a global scale might well offer comfort as we begin to chart the course for a renewed and effective model of caring for all students.*

### **Evolution of special education**

A review of current service in special education must begin with an examination of the social, political and cultural contexts from which it has evolved. Vachou (1997) writes that “such an analysis is particularly urgent during an era of radical transformation, when industrial and economic preoccupations occupy the centre ground of educational politics” (p.4). As the province begins its review of current delivery models (in particular the social and financial costs of such services) this historical context is particularly relevant. Philpott (2003) writes that “Education in the province of NL has a rich and colorful history, shaped and influenced by its ties with Britain, America and its eventual union with Canada. As a colony of England, much of its early educational system was reflective of British standards and religious pedagogy” (p.1).

Given the province's rural profile and isolated status, its dependence on primary industry, it is no surprise that the evolution of educational services was affected by the province's financial limitations and high levels of illiteracy. The eventual confederation with Canada in 1949 brought about what Rowe (1976) referred to as "...an economic and psychological revolution that would create the cultural flowering which has transformed the face of Newfoundland..." (p.12). Nonetheless, education in the years following confederation continued to reflect its origin, anchored in a church-run system which segregated students by denomination, gender and economic status. One dramatic example of this parochial mindset is that at one point in the capital city, four schools were operated by the Roman Catholic system within a one mile radius: one for males who could afford school fees, one for males who couldn't and two others similarly structured for girls. Other religious denominations likewise operated schools in the same neighborhood under similar segregations. Such a system would remain relatively intact for nearly fifty years before it devolved, through an amendment of the Canadian Constitution (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002), into of a more inclusive and cost effective model.

The evolution of public education in NL would be facilitated by the establishment of Memorial University, which helped open the province to global influences (Rowe, 1976) . Central to this was the establishment of teacher training programs that helped raise educational standards in the province. The university recruited professors from outside the province who brought with them global paradigms of education, including a new view of the perspective of disability services. Following the Second World War, society had become increasingly aware of human rights, and by the 1950's the education of students with physical and mental disabilities was a hotly debated topic (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 1998). This debate found receptive ears within a society that was already embroiled in civil and the rights of women. In the U.S., the 1954 landmark court case of *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, which led to the desegregation of schools, initiated the argument "that fighting for the rights of the minority with disabilities parallels fighting for rights of racial minorities" (Friend, Bursuck, & Hutchinson 1989, p.9). Driedger (1989) refers to a civil liberties argument for "disability" as "the last civil rights movement" where parents began the lobby for the education of all children, regardless of mental or physical ability, within their neighborhood schools. The debate, however, was more significant than mere educational placement options; it reflected the evolving paradigm of disability services, shifting from a medical model that focused on deficits to a more affirmative perspective that valued difference (Johnstone, 2001).

At the same time, this evolving paradigm of disability service was reflected in Canada with a federal study on services for children with disability. *One Million Children*, the final report of The Commission of Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children (Roberts & Lazure, 1970), called for a radical shift in education, social, and medical service delivery for disabled students, and helped validate the growing debate of the rights of these children. Three essential educational concepts grew out of this report that would go on to contribute to future discourse of service delivery models:

1. Every child has the right to the education required to realize his or her full potential;

2.The financing of education for all students is the responsibility of the educational authorities; and

3.Students with exceptional learning needs should remain integrated with other students as long as possible (Andrews & Lupart, 2000. p.35).

Shortly thereafter, an examination of the services for these children in Atlantic Canada was conducted. In 1973 the *Kendall Report* made a number of far- reaching recommendations including “the consolidation and co-ordination of educational services for handicapped children in the four Atlantic provinces and increasing emphasis on education and training for such children within the framework of the family and the local school environment” (cited in Rowe, 1976. p.172). As a result, Memorial University initiated a diploma program in special education that was eventually extended to a full degree status in 1979 (Philpott, 2003a). Special education in NL thereby began its slow and controversial trek through what Smith et al. (1998) refer to as its four phases of segregation, integration, inclusion and empowerment.

### **Legislative defence**

While the *One Million Children* report and the *Kendall Report* would have a dramatic influence on future models of education in Canada, it was the United States who first enshrined in law the educational rights of disabled students.

In both Canada and the United States full responsibility is given to the regions (provinces and states) for passing and implementing educational legislation; however it, was the U.S. that passed federal funding laws in 1975 to help ensure the education of all students. American Public Law 94, “The Education for All Children Act”, would call for a free and appropriate education for all children in the least restrictive, non-discriminatory environment by using a cascade of delivery models with written individual plans to meet their needs (Salend, 2001). Following its inception in 1975, this American law would be revised four times before reaching its current version now known as IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1997). Canadian provinces would eventually follow suit with provincial legislation that ensured similar programs and delivery models (Weber, 1994).

The only children with disabilities who were receiving services up to the mid-1970’s in NL were blind and deaf students who, under government funding, were attending residential schools in Nova Scotia (Philpott, 2003a). Prior to this, any service for these children were viewed as charity, such as the work initiated in 1954 by NL philanthropist, Vera Perlin, who established a class in her church’s basement for “handicapped children”. Her work quickly led to the establishment of “The Association for the Help of the Retarded Child”, two years before the Canadian Association for Community Living was formed. Weber (1994) commenting on the history of parental organizations, identified that,



Political activism by parents and other advocacy groups on behalf of students with special needs, had - and continues to have - a powerful effect on the provincial governments...At the same time, it became an accepted, indeed encouraged, practice among professional educators, especially by the nineteen nineties, to involve parents far more extensively in day by day educational decision-making (p.10).

In the early 1970's, this parental activism resulted in the NL government's giving local school boards the option to enroll children with disabilities *if* they so wished (Encyclopedia of NF. V.5). This permitted schools to accept students with disabilities if schools had the will, resources and space. What emerged were highly segregated classrooms in the school building known as Opportunity Classes operated by well intentioned, though often untrained, workers. Placement that resulted from this optional clause continued until 1979 when the Minister of Education amended the Schools Act by changing the word *if* to *shall* and by so doing, established mandatory education of children with disabilities in NL schools (Philpott, 2003a).

This establishing of *Equal Opportunities Legislation* (Rothstein, 2000) as an argument for educational rights of children with exceptionalities echoed, in itself, a global trend seen in countries as diverse as Britain, Africa, and Greece, and was supported by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1979 (Philpott, 2003a). The process, however, also initiated two concepts that have remained central to special education: the individualized plan and the cascade model.

### **The Individualized Plan**

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) was envisioned as the framework for management approaches to disability services in the school setting. Originating from the 1975 American legislation as an accounting procedure to ensure that funding mechanisms were properly implemented and that allocated teachers were working with the appropriate students, the IEP grew to be the model of documenting and accommodating a student's individualized needs (Smith, 1990). Special education teachers designed these plans, which detailed the exceptionality of each student, his/her short-term and long-term goals, and the environment in which service would be delivered (Heward, 2000; Winzer, 2002). Legislated provisions stipulated informed consent and parental involvement in the development of this individualized plan, under the construct of collaborative decision making and parental empowerment (Brown, 1998; Rothstein, 2000). This parental involvement was reflected in NL's initial special education policy of 1986 (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002).

The IEP, however, like the broader field of special education, would become affected by the evolving perspectives of disability services, in particular a shift towards inter- agency case planning. The growth of a larger societal trend towards empowerment of the client (Maclean & Marlett, 1995) underscored the inherent risks in large macro system approaches to client care, and favored the establishment of a more client-centered approach with greater sensitivity to the

individual's wishes (Perlmutter & Trist, 1986). This paradigm shift from the traditional clinical approach of management to one with more social concern (Welch, 1973) was reflected in what Greenleaf (1977) called a "bottom-up model of servant leadership". Greenleaf advocated for a new approach to replace the traditional bureaucracy of the "top-down bureaucratic" process. Ungerleider (2003) spoke to this need for a student-centered model of education, where the need of the child supersedes the diagnostic criteria of policy. Stroul (1995) added to this with a call for the increased use of multi-agency teams in this planning process which prevents duplication of services, maximizes communication, and optimizes client empowerment. She states:

In order to best meet the needs of children and their families, integrated, multi-agency networks are needed to blend the services provided by mental health, education, child welfare, health, juvenile justice, substance abuse, and other agencies. These components must be interwoven into a coherent system with provisions for joint planning, service development, problem solving, funding, and evaluation of services (p.8).

This change in approach would eventually be reflected in NL's schools with a shift away from the traditional IEP to the adoption of an interagency approach to planning, later to become known as the Individualized Support Services Plan (ISSP) as generated from the *Model for Coordination of Services to Children and Youth with Special Needs in Newfoundland and Labrador* (Government of NL, 1996). That document outlined:

The individual support services planning process is a method used to identify the child's strengths and needs and to prepare an integrated approach to meet those needs. It is meant to be a collaborative process involving the child, the parents and service providers including school personnel, personnel from the Department of Health, Social Services, Justice and other relevant agencies working together to identify appropriate goals for the child and the approaches to achieve those goals. The strengths, needs and goals which are defined by this process are recorded, and this record is called an Individual Support Services Plan (p.5).

While initially envisioned for students who were accessing two or more service agencies, this ISSP would replace the IEP for all special education students, and introduce NL educators to a new approach to documenting and planning for the needs of students. In the following few years this new ISSP would become synonymous with special education in NL's schools and the required documentation would become a hotly debated issue (Dibbon, 2004). Nonetheless, the initial process of program development, begun under the rationale of legitimizing special education resources and teachers, would continue to dominate the field.

## The Cascade Model

The placement of students with disabilities along a continuum of educational settings (ranging from the regular classroom to a specialized facility) is a practice long established and anchored in legislation (Weber, 1994; Heward, 2000; Rothstein, 2000). This “cascade model” was first proposed by Reynolds (1962) as a means to outline the options of service delivery to individuals with disabilities in health care settings. It followed a pyramid model in which there was a continuum of placement options with the majority of individuals receiving care in their home settings and, depending on need, a minority would require services in a specialized facility. The model implied a preference towards the individual’s home environment but articulated that, depending on need, more segregated settings may be required. This cascade model was quickly adapted for use by educators in program planning for children with disabilities, following the American Public Law 94’s preference for the *least restrictive environment*, and continues to be the preferred model in Canadian schools (Jordan, 2007).

Educators viewed this cascade, or pyramid, approach with the regular classroom forming the base of the pyramid, the level where most children had their needs met without specialized planning. Moving up the pyramid, in decreasing numbers, other students would have their needs met in the regular classroom with some supports. Further up this pyramid, in lower numbers still, would be students who came out of the regular classroom at intervals to have their needs met in an alternate environment. Finally, at the very top of the pyramid was the recognition that a few students, because of highly specialized needs, required a separate classroom and curriculum. This resulted in students with very mild disabilities being accommodated in the regular classroom, while students with more significant or more intrusive needs received programming in placements that were more segregated. The needs of students with severe cognitive delays, for example, were attended to in separate classrooms while students with mild or moderate cognitive delay were in part-time regular and part-time separate classrooms.

While the IEP and the cascade model resulted in schools planning for students with disabilities, parents were challenging the quality of service that was being offered. Initial school placement for the majority of these children was often limited to placement options higher on this cascade which afforded minimal contact with age appropriate peers and a completely separate curriculum (Smith et al., 1998). In Canada, the 1982 Charter of Rights and Freedoms solidified the argument that discrimination based on physical or mental disability violated an individual’s rights, and fueled the debate over the interpretation of which placement on this cascade model was “least restrictive”. The courts were often asked to weigh in on this debate. Crockett & Kauffman (1998), in summarizing the legal interpretation of least restrictive environment, reported:

In law, the argument for least restrictive environment has never been an immutable rule of placement, but a rebuttable presumption favoring inclusion of children in regular classes and allowing segregation in certain instances...courts have given an equivocating answer to whether placement of

a child with a disability in a regular classroom is, indeed, the least restrictive environment. The ambiguous answer, in each case, is this: It depends (p.75).

One Canadian court case that received wide-spread attention was *Eaton vs. Brant County Board of Education* (1997). In ruling on what was the least restrictive environment, the Supreme Court of Canada in their decision made the following observations:

The Tribunal set out to decide which placement was superior, balance the child's various educational interests (taking into account her special needs), and concluded that the best possible placement [for Emily] was in the special class. It also alluded to the requirement of ongoing assessment of the child's best interests so that any changes in her needs could be reflected in the placement. A decision reached after such an approach could not be considered a burden or a disadvantage imposed on a child. For a child who is young or unable to communicate his or her needs or wishes, equality rights are being exercised on that child's behalf, usually by his or her parents. Moreover, the requirements for respecting these rights in this setting are decided by adults who have authority over this child. The decision-making body, therefore, must further ensure that its determination of the appropriate accommodation for an exceptional child be from a subjective, child-centered perspective, one which attempts to make equality meaningful from the child's point of view as opposed to that of the adults in his or her life. As a means of achieving this aim, it must also determine that the form of accommodation chosen is in the child's best interests. A decision-making body must determine whether the integrated setting can be adapted to meet the special needs of an exceptional child. Where this is not possible, that is, where aspects of the integrated setting which cannot reasonably be changed, interfere with meeting the child's special need, the principle of accommodation will require a special education placement outside of this setting (at p.244-245).

These legal interpretations would prove essential both in holding to a philosophy of specialized programs for specialized need and in validating the perspective of parents/educators who did not see the regular class as the only placement option. At the same time, it supported the challenge to segregated settings which was already well under way and becoming known as *The Regular Education Initiative*. Groups such as *The Canadian Association for Community Living* were lobbying hard against the cascade model, while other groups such as the *International Council for Exceptional Children* and *The Learning Disability Association of Canada* advocated for a continuum of placement options, based upon individual needs and the best interest of the child (Smith et al., 1998). Ungerleider (2003) comments on this divisiveness: "Attaching funding to students with particular characteristics has also created an atmosphere where the parents of special-needs students are pitted against the parents of the rest of the student population. What parent does not feel their son or daughter is not "special" and deserving of additional attention in some way" (p.139).

In NL, this cascade model was also reflected in the 1986 Special Education Policy Manual (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002) and would serve as the framework for a policy entitled “*Senior High Pathways*” that outlined a service delivery model for students at the high school level. It proposed five programming pathways, similar to the pyramid structure in Reynolds’ initial model, which a student could follow towards high school completion:

**Pathway One:** The regular curriculum without support;

**Pathway Two:** The regular curriculum with instructional and evaluational accommodations to meet the exceptional needs of the individual student;

**Pathway Three:** A modified or adapted curriculum, based on the student’s individual needs;

**Pathway Four:** A mixture of core curriculum and individually designed curriculum to meet the needs of the individual student; and

**Pathway Five:** A completely alternate curriculum to meet the challenging needs of the student.

This model was well received and won the A. David Treherne Special Education Policies Award for the Canadian Council for Exceptional Children for excellence in program development (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002). As with the evolution of the *Individualized Education Plan*, this 1986 *Pathways* model would also undergo a significant revamping and expansion into what is now known as *Pathways to Programming and Graduation: A Handbook for Teachers and Administrators* (Department of Education, 1998). While subtle changes have occurred, the model remains in place in all of NL’s schools, and parallels both Reynolds’ initial articulation in 1962 and the Province’s own 1986 model. It does, however, hold to a medical view of learner diversity with a focus on comprehensive assessments that categorize students along a number of “disabilities”, prior to service delivery. The Department would articulate its own diagnostic criteria for students to qualify for services under each of these categories, whether such criteria were reflective of medical standards or not. The Department, for example, would outline “Emotional/Behavioral Disorder” as a condition even though no label exists in the paediatric literature. Likewise, the Department would also subdivide this and many other categories such as “Learning Disabilities” and “Physical Disability” as being mild or severe (with the later receiving low-ratio teaching support), even though no distinction is made in the literature.

### **School reform movement**

While the evolution of services for students with disabilities in NL was reflective of global themes, including a cascade of services model as articulated in a written individualized plan, it would soon be affected by a push to alter education radically. By the late 1980’s, the rights of all students to a free and appropriate education were well entrenched in the legislation, and policy was clear as to how to develop individualized programs delivered along a cascade of placement options. Teachers were being well trained via an intensive course program in special education and, while few would have referred to it as a perfect system, there was a consensus that programming opportunities for exceptional students were significantly more established in 1990

than had been the case just one decade before. However, “even the most visionary of educators would not have been able to predict, from the vantage point of 1990, the shape that the province’s educational system would have in the year 2000. Most, however, could sense a rising wind of change that would sweep across the province in the next decade and create a radically different system of education” (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002. p.159).

The release of *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983) resulted in the school reform movement that has since dominated the educational agenda (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). The reform movement heralded sweeping changes in the structure and delivery of education in three main areas:

- 1.Higher standards, enhanced curriculum and a focus on educational outcomes.
- 2.A shift towards site-based management with less decision-making at the School Board level and more active involvement of parents.
- 3.An examination of special education so as to have one blended curriculum instead of two, parallel programs.

The impact of this movement on special education would be immediate and dramatic, both in its effect on curriculum changes and on the criticisms of traditional special educational programs that would quickly ensue. In NL this debate was immediate. The release of “Our Children – Our Future”, the report of the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, and Secondary Education* (Author, 1992) called for site-based management and increased local involvement in decision-making through the establishment of school councils. The report received wide support and became the basis for a major educational restructuring plan by the Department of Education. *Adjusting the Course* (Government of NL, 1993) detailed the government’s initial proposal for significantly reshaping the province’s secondary school system. Like many school reform documents across the country, it called for higher standards, improved curriculum and increased accountability for performance and decision-making.

The reform movement in NL was driven by four major forces: (1) declining enrolment and shifting demographics; (2) streamlining of services to prevent duplication; (3) financial restraints faced by the Provincial Treasury; and (4) a call for increased standards of competency among graduates (Philpott & Nesbit 2002). Within the next few years over 27 school boards would be reduced to five, a new curriculum framework would be introduced, and much debate in special education would arise. In fact, this debate was recommended in *Adjusting the Course* (1993), which called for a comprehensive review of special education as a whole. “*Special Matters: The Report of the Review of Special Education*” (Canning, 1996) dispatched a scathing critique of special education and made 220 recommendations for change.

While economic reform and management restructuring had become a reality, curriculum reform would not be abandoned. In 1995, the province became a partner in the Atlantic Provinces Educational Foundation (APEF) a joint curriculum framework implemented among the four



Canadian Atlantic Provinces. Central to this curriculum was a focus on outcomes in which assessment and raised standards were interwoven within the revised program. A set of *Essential Graduation Learnings* served as the foundation of the curriculum to guide the work of all educators, including special education teachers. It reflected a focus on inclusion, where supports and services were mandated to assist students in accordance with their individual ability levels in achieving the approved regional curriculum. The curriculum that special education teachers were delivering to students of very diverse ability levels had to reflect the goals and objectives of the regular curriculum, and the regular classroom was seen as the preferred place for this to be done. The curriculum guides outlined many ways to teach a concept and equally diverse ways to measure acquisition of the curriculum content.

This shift towards recognizing multiple ways to teach/assess the curriculum that was increasingly accommodating of learner diversity was well supported in the literature. Tomlinson (1999 & 2000), for example, referenced it as a approach which has since become known as *Differentiated Instruction*, quickly gaining favor in American schools. This approach outlined strategies to empower classroom teachers in adapting their instruction and evaluation to meet the needs of diverse students, oftentimes without having to access special education support. Moreover, *Universal Design* (Orkwis & McLane, 1998; Blamires, 1999; Jackson & Harper, 2002) would emerge as an approach to ensure that the initial design of the curriculum allowed for greater accommodation of diverse learners. Both of these concepts negate the need for individualized plans or special education placement for students on Pathway 2 in NL. Despite this solid current existence of a curriculum that reflects differing ability levels (curriculum developed via a concept that has since become known as *Universal Design*) with ample opportunity to *Differentiate Instruction*, students with special needs continued to require interagency plans and comprehensive assessments to access any accommodation seen as being outside traditional teaching approaches (Philpott & Nesbit, 2002).

### **Criticisms of Special Education**

Within ten years the province of NL had moved through a rapid and profound restructuring of its educational system (based on the school reform principle of site-based management), a shift towards interagency case planning (to promote empowerment of parents and reduce duplication of service), an articulation of a new interpretation of the cascade model, and the creation of a new curriculum framework (reflecting the global shift towards differentiating instruction). However, swirling around such tangible changes in policy and approach was a different view of special education: inclusion. As outlined in the history of special education, inclusion did not appear at any one point in this history but rather evolved from factors such as differing interpretations of least restrictive environments, mounting criticism of special education practices and a society that was becoming increasingly supportive of diversity issues. In fact, the call for a blended curriculum that arose from the school reform movement echoed the criticisms that had been mounting for years.

Hockenbury, Kauffman and Hallahan (2000) attempt to organize this criticism into seven emergent themes, saying that special education:

- 1.has become a place [placement option] that should become a service;
- 2.is now a separate system but should be an integrated system;
- 3.identifies and stigmatizes students but should be offered without labels;
- 4.has no particularly effective methods and could be replaced by good general education;
- 5.returns few students to general education but should return most;
- 6.has changed incrementally but should be radically reformed;
- 7.is needed now but should not be needed if general education is reformed (p.4).

Fuchs and Fuchs (1995) add to this list by questioning the research base upon which special education practices are built. They call for more research into special education and bridging “the divide between research and practice” (p.526) . However, Skrtic (1995), in a deconstruction of special education’s practices, questions whether additional research into a diagnostic/prescriptive approach to students’ needs is warranted and wonders whether a radically different view of diversity is needed. He argues that special education is anchored in “a theory of human pathology and organizational rationality”. The model, he posits, is based on a behavioral approach to diagnosing difference in order to rationalize a hierarchical system of fixed knowledge in which the student is a passive recipient of scientific interventions. Skrtic raises concern for the resulting marginalization and disempowerment of the student and his/her family. His criticisms are shared by Danforth (1999) who raises particular concern for special education’s reliance on a medical language to describe student need. Danforth cites Rorty (1991) in discussing the use of language in the professionalization of special education and how it can be used to rationalize interventions, practice, or lack thereof. Both Danforth and Rorty refer to this as the *validation trap* where only professionals have access to this language and therefore parental involvement is limited. They call for removing this language barrier and creating a focus on promoting democracy in educational practices. In encouraging a move towards greater equality in education, Danforth recommends four essential steps:

1. Switch from a focus on “equal opportunities”, to one of social justice that provides opportunities for dignity enhancing and empowerment.
2. Demystify the power of the professional in the decision-making process.
3. Focus on nitty-gritty details of what actually works.
4. Acknowledge the complexities of the struggle.

The works of Skrtic, Danforth and Rorty echo Foucault’s (1977) discussion on the social construct of disability, where “via observation and normalising judgments and examinations” (p.195) subjects are individualized and thereby stigmatized as *dis-abled*. Foucault argues that the process of focusing on students’ deficits, through a process of assessment, creates a diagnostic/prescriptive model that rationalizes stigmatization and discrimination. Allan (1996), in reflecting on Foucault’s work, argues that the medical nature of special education focuses on the deficits of the child and thereby supports a pattern of difference. The resultant power and knowledge that professionals gather contribute to the marginalization of the students and their families.

## The Emergence of Inclusion

Such criticism of a medical view of service delivery in contemporary schools, coupled with the school reform movement, advanced the presentation of inclusive education as a viable alternative to special education. While it can be argued that the entire history of special education has been one long road towards inclusion (Smith et al., 1998) the criticisms of special education would secure its place as the preferred perspective of learner diversity.

Crockett and Kauffman (1998), in reflecting on the debate surrounding inclusion, concluded that it is a broad construct with many different definitions and interpretations. Bloom, Perlmutter, and Burrell (1999) attempt to define it as “a philosophy that brings students, families, educators, and community members together to create schools and other social institutions based on acceptance, belonging, and community” (cited in Salend, 2001, p.5). Clark, Dyson, Millward and Robson (1999) advocate for yet a broader view of inclusion that is linked with diversity in our global community. O’Brien and O’Brien (1996) support this by mirroring the school reform movement’s call for inclusion as a “cultural force for school renewal” (p.31) where the benefits will extend to all students, their teachers and the community at large. Banks et al. (2005) comment that “the ideas of *culturally responsive classrooms* and *inclusive classrooms* are not entirely the same, but they are similar. Specifically, both terms suggest that schools and teachers need to develop classrooms that are supportive of children and accepting of difference. Within both of these conceptions, children’s strengths are emphasized and differences are considered a positive part of a learning environment because they allow children to share and experience diverse perspectives. In the past, children with exceptional needs were largely taught in isolated special education classrooms, and special education was associated primarily with a deficit orientation” (p.255). Sergiovanni (1994) references this cultural shift as community-building with a valuing of diversity that reflects the social fabric of our communities. Noddings (1992) argues that it is not merely about an evolving view of disability, but stresses that schools have a responsibility to promote an “ethic of caring” in our communities by way of positive classroom experiences for all children.

Touraine comments that these arguments are “the expression of the collective will... or even as appeals to modernity or to the liberation of new forces in a world of traditions, prejudices and privileges” (cited in Cooper, 1999. p.29). In recent years, writers such as Gale (2000) and Slee (2001) have built upon this notion of inclusion as an issue of liberation, and present an argument for social justice. Gale posits that all aspects of social justice have relevance to inclusive education including distributive justice (individual freedom and distribution of goods and services) and retributive justice (the process of attainment of goods and services within a social order) . It is, however, the third aspect of social justice, recognitive justice (the inherent value and worth of all citizens), which he feels bears the most relevance. He argues that in order for a society to be just, three conditions are required:

- 1.fostering respect for different social groups

- 2.opportunities for group's self-development and self-expression, and;
- 3.the participation of groups in making decisions that directly affect them (p.260).

Gale stresses that recognitive social justice approaches do more than permit participation in decision-making but add value to “the process that takes account of the interests of all participants or those that serve the interests of dominant groups” (p.264). This emergence of inclusive schools within a context of increasingly inclusive communities would challenge educators in both interpreting placement options and supporting students in achieving optimal achievement with regular curriculum. Banks et al. (2005) outline that “most educators understand that learning differences exist along a vast continuum, that human beings typically develop compensatory strengths (often formidable ones) to allow them to expand their learning even though they may have some areas of difficulty, and that strategic instruction can make a large difference in what students achieve. Many believe, moreover, that viewing disability as a type of insurmountable deficit is a socially constructed notion that is detrimental to children and should be challenged” (p.255). Hutchinson (2007), in exploring the Canadian context for this perspective, writes:

“Change in exceptional education is everywhere. Most provinces and territories have adopted one of the following terms: *inclusive education*, *inclusive schools*, *inclusive schooling*, or *regular classroom first*. Although the predominant approach in Canada is inclusive education, no jurisdiction uses the expression *full inclusion*. All provide alternatives to the regular classroom when the choice clearly does not meet the student's need.” (p.13-14)

### **Critical Analysis of this evolution**

While the evolution of special services in NL paralleled the global shift in thinking towards legislated rights, cascade of services, interagency planning, inclusive education and family empowerment, it would equally reflect the mounting criticisms. Ware (2000), commenting on the effectiveness of legislative rights, states that “...practice may align with the original intent of the law, but it can be argued that the spirit of the law remains elusive and unrealized” (p.45). This break between intent and reality surfaces in countries as diverse as Ireland, France, and America (Philpott, 2003a). Fulcher (1989), in exploring this breakdown, cites the work of MacDonald (1981) who outlines that there are really three types of policy: what is written, what is stated and what is actually done.

The research on parental involvement in individualized planning meetings is remarkably clear in raising concern. Vaughn et al. (1988) found that parents assume a passive and minimal role in the meetings. This finding was consistent with an earlier study by Goldstein, Strickland, Turnbull and Curry (1980) in which it was observed that individualized planning meetings tend to be short (36 minutes on average) with parents contributing less than 25% of the discourse. In a later study, Able-Boone (1993) found it was usually the child's mother who attended the IEP meeting.

Harry, Allen and McLaughlin (1995) conducted a three-year observational study and identified what they referred to as a token role for parents. They found that parental participation declined over time and their involvement was usually limited to securing signatures for consent purposes. Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) state, “Too frequently, professionals interact with families in a way that connotes expert power and many parents believe that they can contribute little to educational decision making” (cited in Turnbull et al., 2002, p. 96). Yanok and Derubertis (1989), in a comparative study of regular and special education parental involvement in education, found that legislative provisions had done little to ensure the increased involvement of special education parents.

Turnbull and Turnbull (2001) identify four categories of impediments to parental participation: psychological, attitudinal, cultural/ideological, and logistical. Quiroz, Greenfield and Altchech (1999) add three other categories: communication, menu-driven approaches and “teacher-knows-best mind sets”. Rock (2000) states that the “barriers to parental involvement are complex, numerous, and varied” (p.32) and calls for increased sensitivity to these factors by teachers, and for specific strategies to address these issues effectively.

Even within an interagency planning model, concerns continue for the marginalization of parents and families. Nash (1990), commenting on parents’ involvement in interagency meetings, found that team members “tend to communicate in ways that reinforce power and status differentials ... and that ... such power differentials are likely to exist on early intervention teams if family members are perceived as lacking power and influence” (p.322).

Raffaele and Knoff (1999) build on this notion of power differentials, especially for parents who are economically or socially disadvantaged. They suggest that schools need to be proactive in addressing this, thereby facilitating true participation. Case (2000) polled parents of special education children and found that the “parent-professional relationship remains one of disparity, with the professional persisting in the expert role” (p.287). Case also concluded that with interagency planning teams this problem was exacerbated by a lack of information sharing and a fragmentation of services. Tiegerman-Farber and Radziewicz (1998) add to this by stating, “If collaboration requires parent partnership, then schools are going to have to educate parents to function as equal partners” (p.184). They pose the issue of equality for parents in the planning process for their special needs child, citing that the reality of parental involvement differs from the theory. They write: “parents are not viewed as teachers of their children and are not accepted as advocates.... In fact, the very design of schools in terms of hours of instruction presents barriers for working parents [and that] most of the social problems experienced in schools can be traced back to the schism between parents and teachers (p.161).

Inclusive education has not been without its criticism, however, both in quality of service for children and teacher readiness to implement practices (Salend, 2001; Scrubbs & Mastropieri, 1996; Zigmond & Baker, 1995). While teachers tend to agree with the philosophy of inclusion, they call for additional resources, extra preparatory/collaboration time, and additional training

(Semmel et al., 1991; O'Shea & O'Shea, 1998; Lupart et al., 1996; Salend, 1999; Edmunds, 2000; Maich, 2002; Dibbon, 2004).

This concern among teachers for their ability to implement inclusive education would rise in the province of NL where the delivery of the Pathways model and the development of ISSP's eventually became so controversial (Dibbon, 2004) that Government would announce a review of the approaches in the spring of 2006.

## **The NL Context**

Since the introduction of both the ISSP and Pathways model, much has been written about their effectiveness. There have been several studies and three Government commissioned reports commenting on the delivery of special education in the province. These studies give a local voice in the literature on special education practices and discourse which often echoes the concerns that have already been identified in the global literature. The provincial Department of Education releases annual indicators of students participating in special education programs. A review of both sources of information can offer insights into the model's effectiveness.

## **Enrolment Indicators**

Table 1 (attached) provides an overview of student enrolment in the province, namely, the numbers of students enrolled in special education and the number of teachers assigned to meet their needs. Data is presented for the past ten years beginning in the 1995-1996 school year. The province implemented the Pathways model in the fall of 1998, while ISSP's were first introduced in 1996.

What surfaces in this table is a steady decline in the province's school aged population over these years – reflecting a 30.5% drop in enrollment. While the numbers of students in special education also dropped, the percentage of students who required supports grew by 4.2%. In 1995-1996, for example, 11.84% of the province's students were identified as requiring special education. That percentage has steadily grown to where 16.08% of the 2005 -2006 school aged population require services. If current trends continue, nearly one quarter of the province's children could be enrolled in special education within ten years. In a province with such a dramatic and steady decline in students, it is disconcerting to see a steady increase in number of students with disabilities. Similarly, the number of special education teachers has also increased by 11.8% in the past ten years. This reflects Government's acknowledgment that it spends more resources on special education per capita than any other province does (Government of NL, 2003) yet the province continues to have among the lowest level of literacy in the country (International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, 2005).

Tables 2 & 3 (attached) offer a closer look at the enrolment in special education since the Pathways model was implemented. Table 2 examines enrolment in non-categorical (mild delays)



special education, as defined by the Department. Several interesting points are illustrated. First, there is a dramatic rise in the number of students who are seen as having speech/language delays/disorders. Since 1998-1999 this number has grown by 91.3%. A grade-level examination of this phenomenon (though not presented here) will show that this diagnosis spikes around Grades 3-4, the point at which the “Developmental Delay (0-8 years)” category ends, and children need to be identified with some other condition to continue qualifying for service.

Another interesting observation is that there are no students in the province identified with exceptional ability. In fact, the students who were recognized in this category disappeared from the model in 2002-2003 school year. Dibbon (2004) voiced this: “Teachers were concerned that oftentimes students on Pathways Two and Three ‘learn to be helpless’, that the average and above average students are held back academically and there is no time for enrichment activities for the gifted and higher academic students” (p.26). This underscores concern for the province’s trend of escalating enrolment in special education. If Sattler (2001) is correct in assuming that 3-5% of the population is gifted, then the 16.08% rate of current enrolment in special education climbs significantly and alarmingly. Suddenly, the projection of one quarter of the province’s children potentially requiring special education seems more imminent than predicted.

Table 3 (attached) examines those students identified with severe disabilities on the new Pathways model. It shows dramatic increases in three areas: learning disabilities, health/neurological, and emotional/behavioral. At the same time, there has been a 72.4% decline in the students with severe physical disabilities and a 39.1% decline in students with severe cognitive delay.

Overall, this data raises concern that an increasing percentage of students are being diagnosed with exceptionalities in a population that is declining dramatically. Additional distress arises when we see anomalies like the trend towards severe disabilities and the absolute disappearance of “strengths”. The question surfaces whether this model has created a culture of pathology, where weaknesses are identified and strengths are ignored. More critical would be the system’s absence of early identification and intervention. Banks et al (2005) state that early identification and intervention would reduce the number of special-needs students and the severity of the difficulties they encounter. They argue that student success would be improved if information was more readily shared, and services coordinated when students begin school. The criticisms of special education, nonetheless, especially Skrytic’s (1995) comments regarding the theories of human pathology and organizational rationality, are echoed in these provincial statistics.

## **Provincial Studies**

While there has been no in-depth evaluation of the Pathways model in NL, there have been several studies conducted that have examined the perceptions and experiences of parents, teachers and students who participate in this model. More importantly, when these studies are combined, the themes that materialize could potentially serve as a guide to informing future practice and policy.

Young (2004) conducted a study of the experiences of NL students returning to school after onset of psychiatric illness. She interviewed a number of students and found that “communication and collaboration was limited or non-existent in their back to school transition. Consequently, respondents struggled academically and emotionally.” (Young, 2004, p.77). These students felt that teachers were not trained and that there was no interagency planning or sharing of knowledge of their needs. Subsequently, echoing the words of a highly articulate group of students, Young concludes:

What emerges is a clear call for drastic changes so that students with psychiatric disorders have options for obtaining a high school education in a safe and positive environment. The existing system, even with its well-articulated interagency approach to supporting students with diverse needs is failing. The policy and practice are as far apart, for these students, as could possibly be. While knowledge and services are clearly needed, sensitivity to the needs of students is paramount. (p.92)

This concern for the degree of effectiveness of the current system is reiterated in two studies that examine the perspective of parents. Moody (2003) explores the experiences of parents with children who have learning disabilities, and finds a similar breakdown in communication. “Professionals, while concentrating on specific problems, seemed to be working in isolation and lacked a team approach to sharing with each other their focus, the objectives/goals for a particular problem, and progress made” (Moody, 2003, p.78). These parents raised concern for a breakdown at every level, from initial identification of the problem to accessing agreed on supports. Moody reports that the parents’ resulting awareness of the system’s failure to meet the needs of their child results in the emergence of a private system of support where these families have to hire private practitioners to provide the service that the education system is mandated to deliver. “Mothers... therefore felt it was their responsibility to get the information from outside support professionals ... so as ... to present at school meetings when looking for resources that could improve a child’s learning environment” (Moody, 2003, p.79). Moody concludes that these families encounter untold stress, in both advocating for the needs of their children and the financial burdens encountered in accessing private services.

This development of a private system of special education was also reported in a separate study by Philpott (2004). In examining the experiences of parents with children who have obsessive compulsive disorder, Philpott reports findings similar to those of Moody: a breakdown in communication, significant family stress, conflict between home and school, and the emergence of a privatized system of support. In a scathing critique of the province’s interagency approach, Philpott summarizes parents’ experiences:

Parents’ growing disillusionment is heightened by the promises inherent in the language that reflects a political paradigm of shared decision-making, role parity and care provision. They frame this politicization of care as a sincere recognition of the legitimacy and severity of their child’s needs. Parents are

disappointed, yet they must continue to play the game. They become cynical about the language of a policy that articulates something radically different than they experience. They interpret the process as one that articulates procedures to *care for* children yet fails to ensure that the child, or the family, feel *cared about*. While the language of the policy frames a model that is built upon care, parents seldom see caring displayed in their child's daily school experiences or in how they are treated. The process is seen as politicizing an image of care that covers an absence of it (p.28).

While the experiences of parents mirror those of students, four separate studies on the experiences of teachers underscore the need for radical change. Walters (1999) and Edmunds (2000) both explored teachers' perceptions of their readiness to implement current models. What arises is concern for resources, training and time for collaboration, planning and meeting. While there is general agreement in the philosophy of models, concern surfaces for the ability to deliver what the model espouses. Maich (2002) offers an in-depth study into teachers' perceptions of collaboration, as articulated in provincial policies. Maich concludes that classroom teachers recognize this break between the language of a policy and their actual ability to deliver it in their practice. Maich writes: "As a result of barriers created by a lack of practical supports in the schools ... they did not practice collaboration in ways typically recommended in the literature, or even to the extent that they desired" (p.3).

A recent study by Younghusband (2005), exploring teacher stress in the province, offers further validation of this breakdown, and affirms that teachers share the stress that families report. She also reports the breakdown between what the policy says, how it is articulated and the system's ability to deliver it. She concludes:

In the current study, Pathways was identified as a major concern by teachers because of the need to modify the curriculum in different ways to accommodate the diverse needs of students. Frustration and accountability fears were high regarding this problem as teachers talked of struggling to meet their students' needs. Feelings of inadequacy and reduced self-confidence were understandable. "Impossible" was a frequently used adjective to describe the delivery of Pathways as the teachers tried to live up to demands placed upon them in this regard.

Concern was also raised in a provincial review of classroom services. *Supporting Learning: The Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 2000a) noted that a recurrent theme throughout the Panel's consultations was "a focus on educational delivery for students with special needs, most often referred to as special education (p.26)." Special education, they claimed, "dominated many Panel meetings and discussions in that the delivery of special education services, under the emerging "Pathways" model, involves not only the special education teacher but also the regular classroom teacher and a range of other professionals within and outside the education, health and justice systems"

(p.26). The Panel noted the level of attention special education has received in recent years, yet they were “perplexed by the degree of confusion and turmoil that still surrounds this area centering around teacher deployment, student assistants, Pathways and integration” (p.26). They called for stability in the entire area of special education, particularly in the way student support services are deployed, fundamental changes in the student assistant model, creative ways which would effectively and efficiently use present resources, clarification around who should qualify for what services, and the need to address the issues of “remedial” students. Of the Panels 86 recommendations, 9 were specific to special education.

Four years later, however, Dibbon (2004) found that little had changed. In his review of teacher workloads in the province, Dibbon noted that since the Pathways framework was introduced to the Provincial School System in the mid-1990’s, teachers have been expressing their concerns about the way the program has been implemented and the implications that it brings for teacher workload. He writes that in the minds of many of these teachers the policy is having an indirect and negative impact on students. There was also serious concern expressed about the amount of time and effort involved in the ISSP and related documentation processes. From a workload perspective, the main concerns focused on the excessive amounts of paper work and documentation, the many hours of evening and weekend work preparing ability-level resource materials and, for some, the many after- school meetings. There was also concern expressed that “due to a lack of sufficient resources at the school, district and department levels, it often takes far too long to carry out assessments and referrals that are required... (p.26).” Many other teachers had issues surrounding the composition of their class(es) and they were adamant that the composition of the class must be taken into consideration when students are being assigned, particularly students who are on Pathways 2, 3, or 4.

Surprisingly, the findings of these studies reproduce the criticisms that emerge in the global literature on special education. It appears to be well known that traditional models often result in family disempowerment, breakdowns in service and resulting frustration among all stakeholders, yet the province continues to hold to a diagnostic prescriptive model of support. Within a rapidly evolving social paradigm of inclusiveness, the province continues to diagnosis difference, focusing upon weaknesses in a highly medical view of diversity. What has resulted is a culture of pathology, where an increasing percentage of students are being diagnosed with disabilities and resources are being allocated despite being clearly ineffective. Ironically, the resultant concern is shared between students, teachers and parents who unanimously say that what the policy states is not what happens in the province’s classrooms.

As teachers compete for the necessary resources to do their job, there is an indication that the collegial model may be weakening. Dibbon (2004) presented evidence that teachers are beginning to blame each other for the high workload associated with the current Pathways model. For example, some classroom teachers see the special needs teacher as having an easy time with just one or two students at a time, and conversely, some special needs and special education teachers feel they are isolated from the rest of the staff and are carrying the brunt of the load of coordinating the special needs program. All are asking for help.

This cry for help, echoed by parents, was heard with the 2007 release of *Focusing on Students: The final report of the ISSP/Pathways Commission* (Government of Newfoundland, 2007). That document identified a “crisis of knowledge and leadership in the area of special education” (p.10) and set forward 75 recommendations that would set forth a plan of change. Central to the report was a challenge to dramatically shift from a system that documents and diagnoses difference to one that embraces the needs of all students in more inclusive learning environments. In doing so, there is an articulate call for shared leadership, by the Department of Education, the teachers union, the university and the school districts, to “create informed learning environments characterized by a pedagogic thoughtfulness towards working with families” (p.118). Sadly, however, in releasing the report, the Minister of Education announced that they were accepting 70 of the 75 recommendations, choosing not to accept 4 that were specifically aimed at giving parents a greater say. Within one month of the report’s release, outraged parents formed “Our Children First”, a coalition of disability groups united as a public “watchdog group” to pressure the Minister to accept all recommendations and to ensure their voice is not silenced. NL parents will no longer accept anything less than democracy in the education of their children.

## Summary

NL’s current model of Student Support Services has evolved from global trends in the provision of services to exceptional children. The current *Pathways* model echoes the *Cascade of Services* approach first developed in 1962 and now used in schools around the world as a means to recognize individual needs and to streamline delivery of services. The province’s *ISSP* reflects the individualized planning and documentation process developed as legislation began to mandate educational placement and specialized services. It has evolved with changing paradigms of case planning, to reflect an interagency model of collaborative decision-making striving towards empowerment of the child and family. This evolution reflects the global movement from segregation to integration and onwards towards inclusive approaches.

The challenges that the province now faces are equally reflective of global struggles. In fact, even a cursory glance at the literature reveals similar global criticisms of policy and practice. Chief among those is the clear breakdown between what policy outlines, how systems interpret it and what actual services are delivered to children/families on a daily basis. An examination of numerous studies on local practice reflects this breakdown in delivery and calls for change to limit the frustration of all stakeholders, and the blatant disempowerment of families. NL’s current model originally set out to do that, but somehow it has resulted in stress and confusion, as articulated by students, parents and teachers. Somewhere, between the initial development and subsequent evolution of policies that were anchored in knowledge, the province has drifted off course.

Not surprisingly, this *policy drift* is also supported by the literature. Wincott, (2006) in examining how policy diverges with implementation, comments:

Policy drift should not be seen as an alternative to notions of policy *inertia* - it is tempting to suggest that it is society that drifts away from the policy *status quo*. Strictly speaking it is social realities that change more than the policies themselves (although the latter may also alter – either insufficiently to keep up with social changes or even be subject to degradation). Policy drift may be best understood as a form of *mission drift* where social policies lose their normative moorings (p.25).

The process of establishing a contemporary mooring for learner diversity in NL should be guided by this literature. Its themes clearly negate blame and validate the struggles that the province is currently facing as typical in the evolution of policy and service. Certainly, it affords an opportunity to balance future initiatives with current knowledge so as to address the breakdown in services, and to create a model that will result in the empowerment that the literature calls for. Essential to this is a need to explore the power differentials that now marginalize families and place educators in adversarial roles with parents. Perhaps a point of departure for this process will be an examination of how the province continues to hold to a medical model of disability that has resulted in a hierarchy of “expert knowledge”. Central to this will have to be a frank discussion on why special education in this province tends to be managed by psychologists at the district level, and guidance counsellors at the school level, neither of whom has training in the area of adapting instruction (Philpott, 2003b). In order to move from diagnosing difference to embracing the needs of all students in our classrooms, leadership will have to move back into the hands of teachers.

Equally urgent is a need to define what exactly the province means by *inclusive education*. In the absence of a clear articulation of inclusive education (globally or locally), misinterpretation dominates the delivery of services. Nowhere is this more evident than in NL, where the current curriculum is reflective of the principles of *Universal Design*, with ample opportunities for *Differentiating Instruction*. Banks et al. (2005) argue that developing an inclusive practice goes beyond understanding special education policy and identifying specific instructional strategies that will help students with disabilities. Teachers must also know how to develop a supportive classroom community in which all students feel safe both with the teacher and with each other.

While re-establishing such a contemporary mooring for future perspectives of diversity “...may seem a Herculean task, it is politically more optimistic than the pessimism of structural approaches which in education have not offered policy makers a viable agenda. The politics of negotiations, discourse and their associated strategies derive from the view that policy is made at all levels and responsibility for the decisions made in one arena should be located with the social actors who make them” (Fulcher, 1989, p.16). In NL this process is increasingly led by parents who are determined to rewrite the discourse that defines service delivery to their children and politically demand effective programs. Perhaps no other aspect of contemporary education in this province typifies how far we have come since confederation as well as the direction we are taking. Parents in this province are demanding that democratic education is one that prioritizes the needs of the *individual* child and welcomes the family as a true partner in planning and decision-making.



**Table 1: Enrolment and Teacher Allocation**

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Special Education Students</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Special Education Teachers</b>
<b>1995-1996</b>	110,456	13,075	11.84	819
<b>1996-1997</b>	106,205	12,486	11.76	994
<b>1997-1998</b>	101,608	12,039	11.85	943
<b>1998-1999</b>	97,401	13,341	13.70	976
<b>1999-2000</b>	93,957	13,099	13.94	1006
<b>2000-2001</b>	90,167	12,747	14.14	1009
<b>2001-2002</b>	86,898	12,838	14.77	1000
<b>2002-2003</b>	84,268	13,034	15.47	970
<b>2003-2004</b>	81,458	12,369	15.18	950
<b>2004-2005</b>	79,439	11,986	15.09	938
<b>2005-2006</b>	76,763	12,342	16.08	916
<b>Change Over 10 Years</b>	-30.5%	-5.6%	+4.2%	+11.8

Source: Department of Educ

**Table 2: Non-categorical Allocations**

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<b>Exceptionality</b>	<b>98-99</b>	<b>99-00</b>	<b>00-01</b>	<b>01-02</b>	<b>02-03</b>	<b>03-04</b>	<b>04-05</b>	<b>05-06</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Mild Visual Impairment</b>	36	44	33	37	47	50	53	35	-2.8
<b>Speech and/or Language Delay/Disorder</b>	1159	1392	1838	1876	1831	1797	2103	2217	+91.3
<b>Mild/Moderate Physical Disability</b>	100	165	102	151	90	92	121	142	+42.0
<b>Mild/Moderate Learning Disability</b>	2968	2705	2667	2557	2758	2702	2812	2800	-5.7
<b>Mild/Moderate Health/Neurological Related Disorder</b>	243	183	216	279	279	312	331	363	+49.4
<b>Mild Hearing Impairment</b>	71	109	93	116	119	125	103	120	+69.0
<b>Exceptional Ability</b>	1400	1112	1024	1070	1034	758	-	-	-100
<b>Mild/Moderate Emotional/Behavioural</b>	537	567	650	662	784	753	744	697	+29.8
<b>Developmental Delay (0-8 years)</b>	774	965	1088	1099	1164	1157	1266	1339	+73.0
<b>Mild/Moderate Cognitive Delay</b>	2424	2353	2154	2198	2095	1947	1887	1864	-23.1
<b>Unknown</b>	2478	2309	1766	1706	1752	1389	1297	1684	-32.0
<b>Other</b>	-	-	-	-	-	113	163	-	-
<b>Total</b>	12190	11904	11631	11751	11953	11195	10880	11261	-7.2

Source: Department of Education

**Table 3: Categorical Allocations**

<b>Exceptionality</b>	<b>98-99</b>	<b>99-00</b>	<b>00-01</b>	<b>01-02</b>	<b>02-03</b>	<b>03-04</b>	<b>04-05</b>	<b>05-06</b>	<b>% Change</b>
<b>Moderate/Severe Hearing Impairment (Criteria A)</b>	68	91	67	49	60	55	65	56	-17.6
<b>Moderate/Severe Visual Impairment (Criteria B)</b>	32	37	27	24	27	67	21	26	-18.8
<b>Moderate Global/Severe/Profound Cognitive Delay (Criteria C)</b>	778	736	710	638	614	583	536	474	-39.1
<b>Severe Physical Disability (Criteria D)</b>	123	98	86	94	61	46	39	34	-72.4
<b>Severe Emotional/Behavioral Difficulty/Disorder (Criteria E)</b>	49	82	82	75	89	96	115	83	+34.0
<b>Severe Learning Disability (Criteria F)</b>	64	91	71	106	112	184	188	250	+290.6
<b>Severe Health/Neurological Related Disorder (Criteria G)</b>	37	60	73	101	118	143	142	158	+327.0
<b>Total</b>	1151	1195	1116	1087	1081	1174	1106	1081	-6.1

Source: Department of Ed

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## **Chapter 6: Assistive Technology for Students with Learning Disabilities: Perceptions of Students and their Parents**

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### **Introduction**

Assistive technology refers to “any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability” (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004). Relevant assistive technology for students with learning disabilities includes, but is not limited to, computer programs that provide text-to-speech (Kurzweil 3000), speech-to-text (Dragon Naturally Speaking), word prediction capabilities (WordQ), and graphic organizers (Inspiration).

Blackhurst (2005) suggests that assistive technology can be used to assist learning, to make learning environments more accessible, and to enhance independence amongst individuals with learning disabilities. Assistive technology can also help individuals to accomplish educational goals, and when used strategically, technology can help bypass conditions that once prevented students from obtaining higher levels of learning. The use of assistive technology may provide a compensatory alternative, and when embedded within quality writing instruction, improved achievement may ensue (MacArthur, 2009). When employed by a supportive teacher, assistive technology may also help students obtain success in reading and writing (Fasting & Halaas Lyster, 2005) and, when embedded within effective strategy instruction, assistive technology can provide the means for students to complete organized and well-written assignments that are reflective of their knowledge and skills (MacArthur, 2009).

Individualized education plans have increasingly recommended the use of assistive technology to aid the written expression of students with learning disabilities (Behrmann & Marci Kinas, 2002). Although recent regulations have included technology mandates and funding to support a variety of technology training and service initiatives, assistive technology is often not utilized to its full potential because the issues surrounding assistive technology service delivery are complex and involve much more than the basic operation of the technology (QIAT, 2000).

The purpose of this paper is to present students’ and their parents’ perspectives on assistive technology. Twelve students and their parents were interviewed for this study. All students were identified as having a learning disability and all were attending a special provincial demonstration school in Ontario, Canada. Provincial demonstration schools provide intensive and specialized educational programs for students with learning disabilities. These schools are designed to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities, and as a result, students are provided with intensive training on the use of assistive technology. The demonstration school discussed in this study provides its students with the most up-to-date training on the use of assistive technology, its educators know how to implement the technology in accordance with

the curriculum, and students leave the school feeling confident and competent in their use of the technology (Young, 2007; 2012).

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

The participants in the study were 12 students who had recently graduated from a provincial demonstration school, and their parents. In order to be eligible to attend provincial demonstration schools for students with learning disabilities, students must be formally diagnosed with a learning disability, with or without attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (demonstration school website). Students must have exhausted the resources of their current school board's program and require a residential program to assist in the development of personal life and learning strategies (demonstration school website).

The demonstration school which was the focus of this study accepts students in Grades 7 to 9, and these students range from 11 to 15 years of age when they are accepted into the program. This school follows the Ontario provincial curriculum within a highly individualized setting, with class sizes ranging from five to eight students. Depending on the progress made, students may attend the demonstration school for one or two years. Each year attendance at the discussed demonstration school is between 40 and 50 students and less than half of these students are in their second year of attendance.

### ***Data collection***

Parents and students participated in semi-structured interviews in their homes and the community library. Interviews with students lasted approximately 30 minutes and parent interviews lasted slightly longer. During the interviews, I asked parents, as well students, to provide information about their or their child's use of assistive technology prior to, and while attending, the demonstration school. The general focus of the interview was to identify the benefits as well as any challenges related to the use of assistive technologies.

### ***Data analysis***

Interview transcripts (12 student interviews and 12 parent interviews) were transcribed verbatim. I reviewed the transcripts to identify and define codes and categories. In order to minimize bias, a critical peer was used to validate the emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Transcripts were coded thematically using the qualitative data analysis software program ATLAS.ti. In order to ensure codes were applied consistently, and to check for coding drift over time, an undergraduate student independently coded 10% of the transcripts. In order to calculate inter-rater reliability, I compared the assigned codes for randomly selected portions of parent and student transcripts from both the first and second interviews. There was a 95%



agreement rate amongst coders, which is sufficient to move on to the final stages of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Member checks are an important component of construct validity and are arguably the most important criterion in establishing credible interview data (Mertens, 2005). After analyzing the data, I sent an overview of the findings to participants for feedback. Participants were provided with group data and parents were asked to provide feedback on the degree to which the research summary and selected quotes provided an accurate portrayal of their child's use of assistive technology.

## **Results**

Analysis of the data resulted in the identification of six themes of positive effects of assistive technologies and one category of negative effects. For each theme, I have included verbatim quotes from participants in order to provide a 'thick description' of their experiences. Pseudonyms are used.

### ***Persistence with tasks***

Assistive technology enabled students to finish tasks they would otherwise have been unable to complete. Assistive technology assisted Darren in English and history as he explained: "Because I can't read, the technology helps me read it; then I can understand it." Similarly, the technology enabled Derrick to write long exams: "If I didn't have Dragon and Kurzweil I wouldn't be able to write as fast or I wouldn't be able to check it over because I use Kurzweil to read it back."

### ***Demonstration of academic ability***

Assistive technology enabled students to demonstrate their academic ability. Derrick's mother explained as follows: "He relies on [Kurzweil] to read it so he can grasp it better... If he reads it himself he doesn't get the full meaning because he's missing words." Kurzweil assisted Sasha with test writing: "She feels much more successful knowing that she can have that read to her, rather than having to multitask by reading, and then processing, and then writing." Without technology, "[Nigel] would never be able to get it done because he wouldn't be able to get it read." His mother added, "Technology is productivity - being able to produce something that is grade equivalent... He's able to produce work that actually shows what his intellect is... He's able to do it, he's able to cope."

### ***Improvements in writing***

The assistive technology also improved student's writing. The software program Dragon

Naturally Speaking was essential for Frank because “There is such disconnect between what can come out of him by hand and what is going on in his head... If he lets it out verbally it’s remarkable, you get the whole picture, but if he’s got to write that out, it will not come out.” Nigel relied on Inspiration concept mapping software because “he can put it in the order he wants. Then he can go back, build on that, and have it flowing in an actual order.” Derrick benefitted from the technology because “he doesn’t have the spelling to write out the message with words he would like to use. If he doesn’t use his technology it looks like a Grade 2 or 3 student did it.”

### ***Compensation***

Assistive technology also enabled students to compensate for their learning difficulties.

Sasha’s mother commented regarding her daughter: “Her writing has increased exponentially because of Dragon... The technology has transformed her academic life.

The technology has given her freedom to understand her work, express herself, feel confident, and feel like she has ability – it’s invaluable.” Mike’s mother felt that with the technology, “his answers are lengthier and more detailed so he gets better marks” and Derrick’s mother commented that, “He can pretty well do anything they give him as long as he uses the technology to do it.”

### ***Confidence***

Assistive technology helped to boost students’ confidence. Derrick’s mother noted, “When it comes to the school work he wouldn’t have the confidence in himself without it.” Derrick added, “You just know I have to get my computer and I can do it... It gives you confidence - if it’s sitting there you know you’re fine.” Sasha added, “Knowing I can use Dragon to write makes me feel a lot better because I know the quality of my work will be better.” Kristine commented that “I feel way better [knowing] that I can get the same grades as other kids, knowing that I’m just learning differently.”

### ***Motivation***

Assistive technology positively impacted students’ motivation. Sasha, Frank, Mike, and John were motivated as the following comments illustrate: “with my technology I can do better quality work”, “I can finish with a certain mark”, and “I know with the technology I can actually complete it.” Derrick felt his motivation came from the technology:

“Everything goes back to the technology because I can go to it whenever I want and I can always help myself.” Three students and three parents felt assistive technology made students “less motivated because it’s a hassle... In class it takes too long to get up and going.” (Nigel). Jamie and Daniel felt a stigma surrounded the use of technology.

Daniel said, “It is motivating because it helps you read, but if you’re the only one in the class with it, it makes you feel different.”

### ***Frustration with assistive technology***

Rhys didn’t like using his technology “in school because it takes too long to set up and everyone is looking at you because you have a laptop.” Three parents felt assistive technology could be frustrating and four students discussed the downfalls of the technology. Sasha’s mother felt “it can be frustrating to train it and frustrating to know all that you need to know about it.” While Kristine agreed it was a pain to train Dragon, she felt “It’s better that we have it because it takes less time on tests and you don’t have spelling mistakes.”

### **Conclusions, limitations and implications**

Perceptions of students and their parents confirmed that students were positively impacted by the use of assistive technology at the demonstration school. These results suggest that students who have learning disabilities, as well as students who are English language learners or students who are motivated by technology, may benefit from the use of technology to support learning.

The students in this study were selected to attend the demonstration school because they had very weak academic achievement, particularly in reading, with mostly grade equivalents of 1 to 3 on standardized tests. At elementary school, student’s learning disabilities prevented them from experiencing academic success; and as a result, one would expect that the use of assistive technology would have a positive impact on their academic achievement. The demonstration school was known for its implementation of assistive technology. Its educators understood the technology and provided students with the most up-to-date use. Given these conditions and given that all the participants for this study came from the same school, the technology may not have the same positive impact in other school settings.

Only a few researchers are conducting systematic, well-designed research that can lead to confident conclusions on how the use of assistive technology affects learning (MacArthur, Ferretti, Okolo, & Cavalier, 2001). In addition, little research has been conducted on the use of assistive technology in inclusive schools (Watson, Ito, Smith, & Andersen, 2010). The demonstration school provided an ideal environment for assistive technology use as teachers were familiar with these programs and knew how to facilitate their use within the general education curriculum. In order to make informed decisions about the selection and use of assistive technology, additional research could investigate strategies to better support students in their use of assistive technology in the general education classroom. Edyburn (2009) argued that much remains to be done to improve the quality of special education technology research. However, if future studies are longitudinal in nature and students are provided with sufficient support to ensure they are proficient in their use of assistive technology, results may be found that are congruent with those presented in the study reported on in this paper. In terms of

implications for practitioners, general educators and special educators need to become more familiar with assistive and instructional technology so that they can embed this technology within their instruction to meet the needs of all their students (Chmiliar, 2007; Chmiliar & Cheung, 2007; McGhie-Richmond, Specht, Young, & Katz, 2011).

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## **Chapter 7: Distance Education in Rural High Schools as a Solution to the Dropout Problem among Gifted Students**

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### **The dropout problem among gifted students**

This position paper argues in favour of the need to use distance education to address the dropout problem among gifted students in rural high-schools. Gifted students may be high academic achievers (Howley, 2009) yet, they may also be characterized by underachievement and, as a result, dropout of high school (Landis & Reschly, 2013). Student engagement is characterized by academic, behavioural, cognitive and affective involvement in the educational environment yet gifted students may experience lack of engagement (Landis & Reschly, 2013). These students cite lack of challenge, irrelevant busywork, and courses that are not appropriate to their instructional needs as factors that contribute to their lack of engagement or boredom and ultimately their decision to dropout (Landis & Reschly, 2013; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000).

Gifted students in small rural schools may be at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts in terms of educational opportunities (Barbour, 2007). The disadvantage may be because, as Hannum, Irvin, Banks and Farmer (2009) found, rural schools are often geographically isolated and have limited resources, both financial and human, which influence the ability of the school to offer specialized or enrichment courses suitable for the needs of gifted students. As a result, the schools offer fewer courses with less variety (Barbour, 2007).

Small rural communities pose other challenges for gifted students including the distance to enrichment programs and services and lack of resources (Howley et al., 2009). Gifted students in rural communities often have few opportunities to interact with other high-achieving students (MacIntyre and MacDonald, 2011; Barbour, 2007; Howley et al, 2009). Lack of interaction with other gifted students may result in gifted students not receiving the “critical academic stimulation and enrichment needed to support their full cognitive, social and academic development” (Howley, Rhodes, & Beall, 2009, p. 521).

### **Distance education for gifted students**

Through the use of distance education, small rural schools have the opportunity to expand student learning opportunities and improve the variety and number of courses available to gifted students (Barker & Hall, 1994; Husu, 2006). In some small, rural schools, distance education has been the only solution that allows them to offer specialized and advanced courses (Barker and Hall, 1994; Hannum et al., 2009). Howley et al. (2009) found that “using technology such as teleconferencing, interactive video, and e-classes to provide advanced coursework to bright students” has been effective.

Through access to more course variety using distance education, gifted students may have the opportunity to choose courses based on personal interest and academic needs (Barker and Hall, 1994; Husu, 2006). While catering to the interests of individual students is difficult to accomplish in a traditional classroom (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000), an online environment allows students an opportunity to choose from a wide range of courses. Allowing students to study topics of interest and providing choice can be effective in enhancing interest and motivation which strongly impacts student learning and engagement (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000).

Failing to obtain course credit is a “critical determinant in gifted dropouts’ decision to leave high school” (Landis and Reschly, 2013, p. 232) therefore course completion rates as well as student satisfaction are important factors to consider when evaluating any intervention for gifted student dropouts. Course completion rates of online students in K-12 schools have been increasing along with student grades and satisfaction (Simonson, Schlosser & Orellana, 2011). Howley et al. (2009) and Wallace (2009) found that gifted students have had success and expressed satisfaction with advanced courses offered online.

### **Overcoming the obstacles to use of distance education for gifted students**

Barbour (2007) found that students in distance education need to be academically successful, self-disciplined and prepared for independent work. They also need to have strong study and computer skills (Irvin, Hannum, de la Varre, Farmer, & Keane, 2012). Ensuring the physical presence and support of an adult in the K-12 environment is also necessary to make distance education work well (Southwick, 2003). Students in the distance environment require guidance, motivation and support provided by a classroom teacher to develop the independence, self-discipline, and self-monitoring needed (Husu, 2006). Gifted students are, by definition, high academic achievers thus making them ideal candidates for online courses (Wallace, 2009).

Creating virtual classrooms in which students are linked with video conferencing can provide support to students (Husu, 2006). Consideration should be given to high-bandwidth connections, in addition to ensuring interaction between students and teachers (Kes, Williges, and Rosson, 1997). Baggaley and Klass (2006) found that audio-conferencing software can provide an interactive video conferencing experience for students while overcoming the requirements for broadband connections to which students may not have access.

Small schools are challenged by a lack of money, infrastructure, technology and human resources (Lovvorn, Barth, Morris, and Timmerman, 2009; Barbour, 2007; Simonson et al, 2011; Hannum et al., 2009). Therefore, consideration should be given to designing distance education courses for gifted students in rural schools that follow the principles of universal design to ensure that schools with older technology are still able to provide access to a wide variety of courses for the gifted students within their school (Elias, 2010).

While lack of social interaction is cited as one of the greatest barriers in distance learning (Muilenburg & Berge, 2005), using a wide variety of tools, including discussion forums, synchronous and asynchronous class time, and email (Barbour, 2007), can increase this social interaction. Owens, Hardcastle and Richardson (2009) found that use of multiple communication channels was more effective in engaging students and may influence student satisfaction. “Increasing student involvement in online environments is a direct means to improving learning outcomes” (Bower, 2011, p. 64). This social interaction is necessary to help ensure gifted students remain engaged in their learning (Landis & Reschly, 2013).

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## **Chapter 8: Is there a need for a practicum experience in the Bachelor of Special Education Program at Memorial University? – Teachers’ and administrators’ perspectives.**

Edith Furey

### **Abstract**

Using open-ended survey questions, experiences and opinions regarding the extent to which a practicum course in special education prepares special education teachers to teach students with exceptionalities in individual, in-class grouping and inclusive settings is explored. Perceptions of 29 pre-service special education teachers, 20 practising teachers and 18 administrators were sought regarding the need for a practicum course, reasons for requesting a waiver of the course and recommended changes to the practicum. Findings indicate that pre-service teachers perceived more positive benefits of the practicum than practising teachers. Pre-service and practising special education teachers and administrators felt that the practicum better prepared special education teachers for individualized than inclusive instruction. Implications of findings are discussed within Memorial University’s mission, values and principles.

### **Context for the Research**

The Special Education Working Group in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, while engaged in their ongoing efforts to ensure relevancy of courses in the Bachelor of Special Education Degree Program, questioned whether Education 3650 a practicum course of three (3) credit hours was necessary since many of the teacher candidates completing this Degree Program have already finished an introductory and extended internship experience as part of their initial Bachelor of Education Degree Program. The question regarding the importance of a special education practicum experience has become more timely within the current provincial context of an expanding role of special education teachers in inclusive classrooms (Government of NL, 2011).

Recalling the meaningfulness of my own special education practicum experience at Memorial University in the early 1980s, I pondered whether my taken-for-granted assumptions about the critical importance of a special education practicum were consistent with current perceptions of special education teacher candidates, practising teachers and administrators. Although I had also experienced a semester -long internship during my Bachelor of Education Degree Program as well as seven (7) years as a classroom teacher, the special education practicum course had provided a means for me to create new knowledge by extending my theories and practices of teaching and learning while engaging in authentic hands-on experiences of helping students meet their individual learning needs. I recognized that research-based practises and programs have changed since my special education practicum days and that many of the cardboard games I developed have been replaced with effective technology and more contextualized learning experiences in inclusive environments. However, I assumed that my “storied life” of engaged conversations with peers, instructors and cooperating teachers regarding educating students with exceptionalities and the opportunities for observation and constructive guidance about special education teaching practices which I had experienced and valued were still considered meaningful and relevant by special education teacher candidates as well as practising special



education teachers and their school administrators (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). The use of narrative to explore the interconnectedness between personal and academic experiences, values and beliefs has been explored in previous issues of the Morning Watch. With my practicum story, I entered the world of preservice and practising teachers and administrators through their responses to open-ended survey questions as I tried to understand their perceptions of the special education practicum experience at Memorial.

Historically, within national and international contexts, the need for improved special education teacher preparation has been identified and field experiences in special education preparation programs continue to be reconfigured to meet professional standards (Brownell et al., 2010). In addition, although identification in the literature of the need for improvements in special education teacher preparation programs and research regarding the nature and effectiveness of special education practicum experiences was widespread, I quickly realized that research regarding perceptions of preservice special education teachers, and school, district, university and provincial administrators was not as prevalent (Ergenekon et al., 2008; Sindelar et al., 2010).

To address this gap in the literature and to provide a forum for teachers and administrators to explore the meaningfulness and relevance of the current practicum experience, a review of the practicum course in the Bachelor of Special Education Degree Program was undertaken. Surveys, comprised of open-ended questions, regarding perceptions of the extent to which the practicum course prepares special education teachers for individual and inclusive instruction, were completed by preservice and practicing teachers and administrators. Sixty-seven (67) respondents completed the surveys; 29 of whom were preservice teachers who were completing or had recently completed the practicum. Twenty (20) of the respondents were practising special education teachers and graduates of the Degree Program while 18 of the participants were in administrative roles as either, course instructor, coordinator of undergraduate studies, principal, cooperating teacher, district program specialist for student support services or provincial consultant for student support services.

Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. However, results based on quantitative analysis are presented in this paper, while qualitative analysis of the data will be discussed in follow-up issues of the Morning Watch. Simple and combined percentage values, frequency counts and rank ordering were used to explain and reflect upon the data. The following common themes emerged from the survey data which are followed with discussion of related literature (Glasser & Strauss, 1967).

### **Theme 1 Preservice and Practising Teachers Recognize the Need for a Practicum Experience**

*Preservice and practicing teachers were unanimous in their recognition of the need for a practicum course; 96.15% of preservice teachers and 80% of practising teachers identified a need for a practicum course.*

The research literature has identified several benefits of the special education practicum experience including easing the transition into the role of special education teacher, helping decrease stress and anxiety related to special education teaching and increasing special education teacher retention.

*Transition from role of student to teacher.* Practicum in special education has been described as the most important component of an effective special education teacher preparation program (Recchia & Puig, 2011; Conderman, et al., 2012) . Practicum offers opportunity for preservice special education teacher candidates to transition from the role of student to that of teacher through active inquiry and engagement in authentic teaching and learning environments (Clifford et al., 2005; Conderman et al., 2005). Preservice teachers become socialized into the teaching profession through development of improved collaboration and communication skills and supportive relationships with schools, students, cooperating teachers, university supervisors and parents (Leko et al., 2012; Ergenekon et al., 2008).

*Decrease in stress and anxiety.* Beginning special education teachers who lack adequate initial preparation often experience increased stress and disillusionment about teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Rice, 2003). Engaging in practicum experiences has been associated with teachers' positive perceptions of teaching competence and attitudes toward diversity, feelings of self-efficacy as well as improved student performance (Leko et al., 2012; Ralph et al, 2007; Neville et al., 2005).

*Increase retention.* Limited practicum experience has also been identified as the most significant factor affecting the attrition rate of special education teachers, particularly beginning special education teachers (Boe et al., 2007; McLeskey et al., 2004, Connelly & Graham, 2009). According to The National Center for Education Statistics, 29% of new special education teachers without practicum or internship experiences left the profession within five (5) years compared with 15% who had completed field experiences (Conderman et al., 2005).

## **Theme 2      Teachers and Administrators Request Increased Practical Hands-on Experience**

*Preservice and practising special education teachers noted that the practicum experience needs to provide more opportunity for practical application of theoretical knowledge. Only 39.28% of preservice teachers and 17.64% of practising teachers described the practicum as a hands-on experience. Practicing teachers identified the need for less focus on theory and more on practical application including inclusion and hands-on experiences.*

Like the research findings of this study, other research has identified teachers' preferences for practical experience of course content. This practical hands-on experience has been associated with reducing the theory-practice gap.

*Teachers preferred practical application of course content.* The most frequent change suggested to teacher education programs has been the need for more thorough and hands-on

application of learning for teacher candidates (Conderman et al., 2012; Ergenekon et al., 2008). Hands-on application of learning through authentic practicum experiences allows relating of experiences with skills and dispositions while developing new knowledge (Kold, 2005).

*Theory-practice gap.* The literature also confirms that practicum experiences are often disconnected from coursework and teaching responsibilities (Bay & Parker-Katz, 2009; Conderman et al., 2012). Preservice teachers are frequently required to complete knowledge and theoretical course content prior to application of learning (Leko et al., 2012). Thus, it is critical

that practicum experiences help close the gap between theoretical and practical components of teacher education (West & Hudson, 2010). However, in addition to practical application of course content, the importance of theoretical understanding cannot be ignored (Ergenekon et al., 2008; Conderman et al., 2005). Understanding of underlying theories of test development, learning, and exceptionalities is required in order to competently develop and implement general and child-specific practices with the goal of empowering teachers to form their own theories and beliefs to guide their teaching and learning.

### **Theme 3      The Need to Extend Duration of the Practicum Experience is Identified**

*When asked “What if any changes are needed to Education 3650?” the most frequent suggestion by preservice teachers (55.55%) and administrators (37.50%) was that the practicum should be of a longer duration similar to an internship in order to “delve into the full role of a special education teacher,” collaborate with special education teachers, and plan and participate in individualized education programs (IEPs). Practising teachers on the other hand were less concerned with the practicum being of a longer duration as long as it occurred in inclusive settings. Only 31.25% of practising teachers identified longer duration as a needed change to the practicum.*

These views align with the recurrent concern expressed throughout the literature regarding inadequate length of the special education practicum and the need for extended practicum placements (Ergenekon et al., 2008; Connelly & Graham, 2009). Studies of special education teacher education have demonstrated benefits of extended practicum experiences to the overall quality of the special education teacher preparation program (Ralph et al., 2008). Extended practicum opportunities offer preservice teachers sufficient time to acquire and improve knowledge of content subject matter and pedagogy as well as engage in active inquiry based practises (Boe et al. 2007). In addition, sufficient duration of practicum allows preservice and practising teachers time to utilize specific evidence-based teaching strategies in their practicum placements and to offer active experiential learning opportunities, e.g., inquiry based practices and collaborative and problem-based learning experiences as well as curriculum accommodation and differentiation, assistive technology, increased collaboration and IEP development (Sharma et al., 2012; Leko et al., 2012; Conderman et al., 2005; Brownell et al., 2005; Ergul et al. 2013). Duration has also been identified as a strong predictor of special education teacher retention (Connelly & Graham, 2009). Other factors interacting with duration of practicum and affecting special education teacher retention include teacher characteristics, the school environment,

administrative support, and increased special education student enrolment (Billingsley, 2003; Brownell et al., 2010).

#### **Theme 4      Requesting a Waiver of the Practicum is Not Always Teachers' Preference**

*Only two (2) preservice teachers and four (4) practising teachers in this study had requested a waiver of the practicum course. The unanimous reasons for requesting a waiver were prior teaching experience and the requirement that the practicum be completed while on St. John's campus. Most (83%) of the six participants who requested a waiver were teaching in rural areas. The literature is consistent regarding connections between sufficient practicum hours and adequate preparation for special education teaching roles (Connelly & Graham, 2009).*

However, alternative routes to completion of special education teacher education programs are increasing and include waiving or substituting the practicum with a more content-oriented course (Conderman et al., 2005).

National and international requirements for admission into the special education program usually require candidates to hold an acceptable prior degree in education. However, it cannot be assumed that this prior degree provided an appropriate practicum experience for preservice special education teachers. Although differences in theoretical foundations of teaching and learning between special education and general education teacher preparation programs are narrowing, differences remain. General education teacher preparation programs frequently adopt more constructivist theories of teaching and learning with emphasis on specific subject matter pedagogy, whereas special education teacher preparation programs usually involve a combination of positivist and constructivist theories of teaching and learning including competency-based approaches and evidence-based teaching strategies for students with specific exceptionalities (Brownell et al., 2005).

#### **Theme 5      Preservice Teachers feel Better Prepared for Group and Inclusive Education**

*Twice as many (38.45%) preservice teachers, as practising teachers (17.64%) and administrators (17.64%) indicated that the practicum adequately prepares teachers for inclusive teaching and recommended the need for practicum placements in inclusive rather than in pull out settings. Similarly, 59.25% of preservice teachers and 11.76% of practising teachers felt that the practicum adequately prepares them for teaching groups of students. On the other hand, almost all preservice teachers (92.00%), 90.00% of practicing teachers and 56.25% of administrators believed that the practicum prepares special education teachers for working with individual students.*

*Practicum under-emphasizes inclusive teaching and learning and over-emphasizes individualized instruction.* Other research studies have concluded that preservice teachers feel better prepared than practising teachers for teaching in inclusive environments (Winter, 2006; Recchia & Puig, 2011). Preservice teachers in Sharma et al.'s (2012) study also indicated feelings of improved efficacy in inclusive instruction.

Preservice teachers' more positive perceptions of preparedness for teaching within inclusive structures may be influenced by increased emphasis in teacher education programs and calendar descriptions towards inclusive teaching (Sharma et al., 2012; Kuyini & Desai, 2007). Such a structure focuses on understanding and enhancing the student's learning context or environment rather than over-reliance on fixing student deficits through individualized instruction.

However, special education teachers require preparation to teach across both inclusive and pull-out environments within the school setting (Recchia & Puig, 2011; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2011). Effective pull-out interventions have reported positive outcomes including increased teacher awareness of the need for and nature of flexible teaching for all children as well as comprehensive development of their special education teacher identities (Recchia & Puig, 2011). Through inclusive practices, preservice and practising special education teachers are helped to become more mindful of "values of pluralism" and disability theory while cautious of any unintended consequences of pull-out practices (Baglieri et al. 2011).

#### **Theme 6: Memorial University practices its underlying values and principles.**

This research has allowed the researcher an opportunity to contribute to available research concerning the usefulness of practicum in special education teacher education and the involvement of special education in school-community partnerships. However, most importantly, the research has demonstrated Memorial University's recognition of its obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and its commitment to quality and excellence in the delivery of its programs and services. The research solicited perceptions of preservice and practising special education teachers and administrators regarding Education 3650, a special education practicum course. The Special Education Committee in the Faculty of Education listened and were responsive to the people of the province and have maintained the practicum course in its perceived rightful place within the Bachelor of Special Education Degree Program.

#### **Summary**

Preservice and practising teachers' and administrators' views were generally reflective of the research in special education teacher preparation. There was strong recognition among participants of the importance of the practicum experience in the Bachelor of Special Education Program, as well as the need for continuation and possible extension of the practicum. While participants valued the practical hands-on experience of the practicum, they were not as positive regarding the utility of theoretical foundations of special education teacher preparation. Participants identified the current emphasis of the practicum on preparation of teachers for individualized settings, while expressing the need for increased practicum experiences in group and inclusive settings.

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# **Part 12**

## **Additional Readings**

- 1. Participation and Attrition of Children in Kids of Steel**
- 2. The Silence of Teachers**
- 3. Government and the Academy: Will the Twain Ever Meet?**
- 4. A 40-year legacy of scholarship: When parallel lines intersect**
- 5. Religion and Education in The Morning Watch, 1973-2013: Curriculum**
- 6. Teaching English in Taiwan: Social, Cultural and Economic Implications**
- 7. My journey: Interpreting the English industry of South Korea**
- 8. Building on the Past: A Short Reflection on Starting Out, Ending Up, and Hoping Still**
- 9. Okay, Well How About Applied Liberal Education? Making a case for the Humanities through Medical Education**
- 10. Experiences of a Body Out of Place**
- 11. When animals tell stories**
- 12. Personal Presentation Through Dress as it Relates to Becoming a Teacher**
- 13. Searching**
- 14. Globalism, Neo-liberalism, Public Schools and Higher Education: Is Your Academic Institution Moving Toward Corporate Model Under Globalism and Neo-liberalism: What Is Being Said and Done Around You And What Should You Observe, Say And Do?**

## **Chapter 1: Participation and Attrition of Children in *Kids of Steel***

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One of the goals of contemporary society is to immerse its children in sport. The benefits of exercise have been well documented and these include decreases in common stress symptoms such as anxiety, depression and anger, enhanced self-concept and enhanced quality of life (Berger & McInman, 1993). Although youth participation in sport is seen by society as a desirable endeavour and the intent is to promote lifelong participation in sport, research has suggested that youth participation in sport is precarious. In a study of youth participation in sport Seefeldt, Gilliam, Blievernicht and Bruce (1978) reported a progressive decline in participation after age 12 for both males and females, and the rate of attrition in youth sports has been estimated to be approximately 33% per year (Petlichkoff, 1996; Saap & Haubenstricker, 1978, cited in Burton, 1984).

A number of reasons have been suggested for attrition and children may drop out for different reasons (Lindner, Johns, & Butcher, 1991). Guppy, Feltz, Horn & Weiss (1982 cited in Klint & Weiss, 1986) found that competitive swimmers dropped out because they had other things to do, they were not as good as they wanted to be, did not like the pressure, wanted to play another sports, and that the swimming was boring. Klint & Weiss (1986) reported that attrition in gymnastics was the result of having other things to do, not liking pressure, lack of fun, taking too much time, not being as good as they wanted, not liking coaches, not being able to be with friends, injuries, training being too hard and anxiety. Burton (1992) found that expectancy for future success was related to attrition in adolescent wrestlers and perceived ability has been linked to attrition (Burton, 1984; Roberts, 1978). Finally, participating in an activity may also reflect a "trial and error" process in which children try an activity to see if they like it and dropping out may be an indication that the activity was not suitable to them (Petlichkoff, 1996; Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989; Burton, 1984).

In comparison to many sports, *Kids of Steel* is unique in structure. The events themselves are open to any child under the age of 16, demand considerable effort with minimal skill, an event at a single venue typically occurs once per year, and well developed training programmes for young children are not common. In contrast, sports such as soccer or judo require a time commitment from the child (e.g., registration for a season with regularly scheduled practices and games) and offer programmes for skills development. *KOS* does not require an extensive time commitment from the children and most children who participate do not have coaches.

This structure suggests that some reasons for attrition seem more likely than others. Reasons such as taking too much time, training being too hard and not liking the coaches probably do not apply to most children participating in *KOS*. Most children do not train for *KOS* (although many might belong to a swim club) and most do not have coaches. However, the reasons of "trial and error" and expectancies for success may be applicable to the *KOS* setting. *KOS* operates on a "drop in" basis, meaning that any child who wishes to participate need only to show up at

registration. Thus, a *KOS* event may attract a substantial number of children who just want to try the sport.

Given the relatively high attrition rates in sports as children age, this study examined attrition rates of children in triathlon from a number of different venues. Do children drop out at high rates? Are there distinct patterns of participation?

## Method

Data were obtained on 822 athletes in 40 *KOS* races 13 venues across Canada, of which 9 venues were annual events. Data collected included the name of the athlete (solely for the purpose of matching records), age category, completion time and rank in the race. If the child started the race but did not finish (DNF), or was disqualified (DQS), that child was included in the dataset as having participated but time and rank were recorded as missing. If the child did not start the race, he/she was considered to have not participated. Children in the age categories below 8-9 years were excluded (infrequently reported), as were children in team events or those in age categories higher than 16 years.<sup>1</sup>

## Results

Attrition rates were modelled using hazard and survival analyses using MPlus, version 4.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 1999-2006). A hazard analysis asks the question “When is a child most likely to drop out of racing?” A survival analysis asks the question “Having raced a certain number of races, what is the probability that the child will race again?”

The results of both analyses are presented in Figure 1. At the y intercept (number of races=0) all of the children will participate: the probability of dropping out is 0 and the probability of racing is 1.0. The hazard analysis (probability of dropping out) indicates that the greatest attrition occurs after the first race. Approximately one-half of children raced only once, and another 30% drop out after the second race.

While the highest probability of dropping out occurs at the first race, there is a steady decline in the probability of dropping out as the number of races increases. As children gain more experience and race more frequently, they are more likely to continue to race. Yet, there is a “saturation” point in which racers who have considerable experience stop racing.

The survival analysis (probability of racing again) reflects this pattern. There is a dramatic drop in the likelihood of participating a second time. Approximately one-half of those children who participated in a *KOS* participated in a second race. However, only one-quarter of children raced a third time, and the probability of participation continued an inverse exponential decline as the number of races increased. Yet, as the number of races increased, the participation rates stabilized.

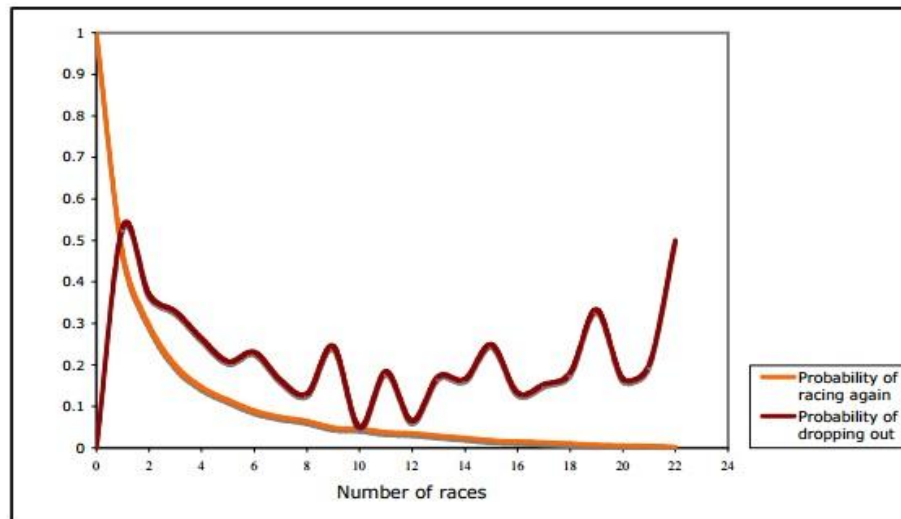


Figure1. Probability of racing based upon number of races completed.

## Discussion

The results of the hazard and survival analyses may be interpreted as describing several patterns of participation. The first pattern is the *try-it-and-see* or *one-time racer*, a child who shows up to a venue, tries it, and does not race again which is a common occurrence in sport (Petlichkoff, 1996; Weiss & Petlichkoff, 1989; Burton, 1984). This describes approximately one-half of all racers. The second pattern, approximately 20% of racers, is the *give-it-another-chance* or *two-time racer*, that child who decides to try a second race. A third pattern is the *immersive experience*. This pattern describes children who race in multiple venues over a period of years. Approximately 10% of the racers will race more than six times, and 5% will race ten or more times.

If children approach triathlon with a “try it and see” attitude, it seems that a significant portion of children do not find the sport appealing, as indicated by not racing a second time. There are many possible explanations: lack of training opportunities limits children’s enjoyment; scheduled local races conflict with other events; children find the sport unappealing. There is little in the data that speak to the reasons for attrition.

Whatever the reasons, these results are important because the attrition rates are much higher than the 33% reported in previous studies (Petlichkoff, 1996; Saap & Haubenstricker, 1978, cited in Burton, 1984). Given high rates of childhood obesity (see Canning, Courage, Frizzell & Seifert, 2006 for a discussion), the need for physical activity is critical for well-being. Understanding reasons for attrition becomes ever more important. What is it that attracts children to an activity, and why do they choose to stay or leave?

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1Approval for the study was obtained from the Interdisciplinary Committee for Ethics in Human Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland under the conditions that racers, venues and sources of data not be identified. Specific questions concerning source of the data may be addressed to the author.

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## **Chapter 2: The Silence of Teachers**

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### **Introduction**

Community schools have been under siege in Newfoundland and Labrador for almost fifty years. In the name of reform, there has been a consistent and persistent effort to "reform" these valuable social and educational resources out of existence. Fueled by a false belief that bigger must be better and mistakenly convinced that smaller schools were holding back educational progress, hundreds of these community assets have been eliminated. Today, we have more children, even the youngest ones, travelling longer distances, for increasing amounts of time, in pursuit of a purported improved educational opportunity.

The first Royal Commission on Education headed by Dr. Phil Warren in the mid 1960's initiated school consolidations. Dr. Warren concluded that the large number of small schools and multi-grade classrooms in the province were a major impediment to educational progress. Children could not learn as well in such educational settings, claimed the Commission.

In the *Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth* (1967/1968) Warren recommended a dramatic program of closure and consolidation. As a result hundreds of small rural schools were closed. There were major problems with education and schooling in the province at that time. The challenges, however, were more rooted in economic disparities, poor teacher training, inadequate resources and an archaic denominational system than the scale of schooling

Unfortunately, the Royal Commission stigmatized small schools and multi-grade classrooms as the problem. Once that seed was planted, it became the conventional wisdom that dominated rural educational reform. The true worth of community schools was lost to our educational leaders. It was not lost for parents, children and teachers who experienced that value every day.

### **The Consolidation Wars**

Ever since that first Royal Commission, at various times, the province and/or the districts initiate another round of closures and consolidations. These initiatives are usually accompanied by reports (*Our Children Our Future*, 1992; *Structuring the Education System: A Public Consultation Paper for Educational Change in Newfoundland and Labrador* 1996) that perpetuate the myths and conventional wisdom related to small community schools. The narrative is always the same: bigger is better, closure and consolidation will save money and improve education, if parents really care about their children they will agree to close their local school and bus their children to a distant one.

## **The Silence of the Teachers**

Unfortunately, a very important voice was missing from the public discourse: teachers. No current teacher or administrator participated in any of the public meetings. None wrote letters to the paper or called in to open line shows or made comments on social media such as Face book. Even teachers who were parents with children in the schools affected were silent. This absence of their voice really concerned me on a personal and professional level.

This was most unfortunate because teachers, in my view, have essential professional knowledge and understanding of the value of small schools and their role in the sustainability of rural communities. Who better understands the value of educating children close to home? Who better appreciates the deleterious effects of bussing on children's health, safety and achievement? Who better understands the disappointment felt by students when denied the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities? Who better understands the supportive and nurturing atmosphere of small schools especially for at-risk children? This unique professional knowledge should be part of the decision making process.

Were teachers denied permission to speak on these issues? Were they not allowed to participate in this important public discourse? Why? Was their professional knowledge a threat? Perhaps they were intimidated into silence by events several years ago when two teachers dared speak critically and publically about educational matters? Were they then taught a lesson?

The last time I checked Canada was still a democracy and one of the principles of that democracy is the freedom to speak freely on important public matters. When important voices are silenced we are all losers because we are denied the insight and understanding of those who live and work in our community schools. As one of my colleagues is fond of saying, "To silence teachers is silence the moral conscience of education." I have to wonder as well what lessons in democracy and freedom are we teaching our children if teachers feel they must be silent.

### Chapter 3: Government and the Academy: Will the Twain Ever Meet?

Gerald Galway<sup>i</sup>

When Nathan Caplan (1979) published his seminal work on two communities' theory, I was a newly-minted teacher. Beyond the learning that took place in my classroom, I had little concern for the theory and practice of knowledge mobilization or *research utilization*, as the field was originally termed. But life takes unexpected turns. Some years later, after I left classroom teaching to work in a ministry of education, knowledge transfer became part of my stock-in-trade. During much of my tenure in government I worked in the areas of assessment, research and planning. This involved the typical work associated with monitoring and reporting on educational outcomes, but there was also a primary and more immediate responsibility – feeding the political appetite for information, statistics, comparisons and talking points in defense of government's position on any given educational issue. The Minister is the voice of the government and when s/he “goes out publicly” on any policy issue, any and all information and resources are brought to bear – with remarkable efficiency.

In a government department, the rules and conventions are entirely different from those of schools, universities, and perhaps from any other public agency or institution. There is an old adage that says “any would-be government's first priority is to get elected and their second priority is to get re-elected.” In my experience, senior bureaucrats – the ones who survive successive governments – understand these rules very well. The practice of public administration is tightly coupled to political considerations, such as popularity and favorable public opinion. However, “permanent” public servants must strive to find the right balance in their interactions with elected officials and this is often a risky proposition. On one hand they must mediate their policy advice and direction through a research-informed, public interest lens. On the other hand, in order to gain the trust of the Minister, they must stay close to the politics side of policy-making. Too far towards the political can paint an official as partisan, but, a rigid focus on regulations and processes can earn them the reputation of being inflexible and rules-bound. The line between public service and political service is, therefore, fuzzy and difficult to discern.

In government, executive appointments to senior public service posts are made through “Orders in Council”. It means that senior public servants serve “at the pleasure of the government” and they may be removed at any time, at the discretion of the party in power. One of the ever present conflicts, therefore, in the life of any senior bureaucrat is how to advocate for sound public policy while remaining cooperative and accommodating to political directives.

The move to a university environment has taken me away from the day-to-day machinations and pressures of life in the public service. This has not only been physically and mentally invigorating; it has enabled me to reflect on how my practice as a policy advisor could have been different – driven less by political pressure and need to deal with the immediate problems of the day and more by sober reflection and research evidence. In this short paper I consolidate some of these reflections, examine the role of public servants in mediating policy evidence and explore the challenges associated with mobilizing academic research in a political environment. I draw

on my lived experiences and research on evidence-based policy to describe the research and policy communities and to suggest ways the two might be brought closer together.

### Life in the Public Service

People have been studying and writing about governance for centuries. In 1651, Thomas Hobbes published *Leviathan*, in which he explored the nature and functions of government. Hobbes described government as a system whereby citizens confer political power to a smaller group of individuals to make rules (legislation and policy) on their behalf – decisions that are expected to foster the public good. The public service represents the enabling apparatus for the elected government, however; the extent of its involvement in shaping public policy is open to question. One view of public governance represents public servants as just that – ‘servants’ or functionaries whose purpose is to simply execute policies and initiatives formulated by the polity, (Aucoin, 1995); policies that are often driven by political factors. A more deprecatory strain of this conceptualization depicts public servants as a ‘necessary evil’ for enacting government policy (Barzelay, 2001; Lynn, 1996). To many people, the word ‘bureaucracy’ connotes ‘bad public administration’ and is often expressed pejoratively, accompanied by adjectives such as ‘incompetent’, ‘indifferent’ or ‘bloated’. Even the term ‘bureaucrat’ itself is rife with deprecatory connotations – mindless bureaucrats; bureaucratic mentality, and empire-building bureaucrats. Goodsell (1985) cites an 1981 American Press article as a prime example of a media metaphor capturing popular disgust with the public service; the bureaucracy is described as “a brontosaurus of unimaginable size, appetite, ubiquity and complexity” (p. 2). Such characterizations are widespread, even finding their way into reference books. The Merriam -Webster Dictionary, for example, provides four definitions of bureaucracy including this one: “a system of administration marked by officialism, red tape, and proliferation”. In short, there is a general distrust of the bureaucracy in the historical literature – a “perception of a runaway bureaucratic machine” (Goodsell, 1985, p. 58) dating back millennia; from references in ancient Chinese stories about ‘difficult bureaucrats’ to Western references such as the century-old French term ‘paperasserie’, which means, ‘caught up in paper’(Lindblom& Woodhouse, 1993).

An alternative perspective casts public servants as “policy gatekeepers” who act for the public good and whose role is to identify public issues, evaluate policy proposals against the best research available, and provide frank and fearless advice about policy options – oftentimes to an unreceptive audience. Paul du Gay (2000) has argued that the Westminster form of government has traditionally afforded a robust policy development role to non-elected senior officials. While civil servants remained relatively anonymous from a public perspective, du Gay notes that the “convention of ministerial responsibility never required that ministers should be the policy-makers and officials merely the advisors and administrators” (p. 90). In major departments of government, he argues, it would be a practical impossibility for ministers to know and actively participate in all policy decisions. Thus, the traditional role of the bureaucracy was not simply to perform a managerial function. The real constitutional check or ‘sober second look’ occurred as a result of a permanent, independent public service, whose function was to serve the interests of the public and not to be beholden to any political party or faction. Du Gay (ibid.) writes:

Public bureaucrats work within a political environment: that is their fate. Most of what they do has potential political implications, even activities of an apparently routine nature. [...] Awareness of the political nature of their work, an expertise in the dynamics of the political environment within which they have to operate, is a crucial competence they have to master. However, this political dimension does not make them partisan political actors in their own right. [...] The public bureaucrat may be a political beast but she is not a party political beast. This is a crucial difference (p. 141).

I struggled with this ambiguity throughout my 16 years in government, but especially in the second half of my tenure when I served as a senior education executive. Because a minister's term of office is short (typically less than four years), their actions are often, perhaps necessarily, mediated by political considerations; but the bureaucracy is intended to be a relatively permanent fixture. Its operation and ethos is intended to be governed by different parameters and different values. The most significant of these is respect for public versus political interests. The casting of politicians as policy leaders is born out of the notion that a public servant is a "servant to the public", but in practice this idea has been corrupted to mean "servant to the government" as represented by the Minister. This view depicts senior public servants as instruments of political processes but with a severely limited role in policy formulation (Wilson, 1999).

One difficulty with these arrangements is that under a more traditional model, public servants were free to provide impartial advice without fear of reprisal; however, this independence is changing. Knight and Lingard (1996) observed that the public service has become more politicized, a change they describe as *ministerialization*. The practice of placing political appointees into more or less permanent senior executive and senior advisory positions has increased the power of political interests within the bureaucracy. Although scholarly references to the politicization of the public service are rare within the Canadian literature, some are beginning to emerge (e.g., AuCoin, 2004; Dutil, 2008). As I have argued elsewhere (Galway, 2008) this practice places the provision of independent advice in jeopardy and creates an impoverished policy environment. These changes mean that non-political policy advisors must weigh the risk of providing independent advice against the safer path of remaining neutral or dispassionate in the face of political decision-making and 'groupthink'.

Another problem with this paradigm is that there have been well-documented changes in public management accountabilities – a shift to distinctive private sector driven principles, themes, styles and patterns of public service management (Barzelay, 2001; Galway 2012; Kettl, 2000) and these have also created greater risk for public servants. The alignment of government departments with corporate managerial principles tends to further restrict opportunities to provide honest and independent advice to politicians in the formulation of policy decisions, but it places more direct accountability for the execution of such decisions in the hands of bureaucrats. Under such arrangements, as many of my colleagues and I learned, public servants share the risk associated with failed policies without necessarily having had very much input into their formulation.

## Life in the Academy

A variation on the famous Winston Churchill quotation goes something like this: “policy is like sausage – you don’t want to see either being made”. As a government insider working in a ‘line department’ I had first-hand knowledge of how the proverbial policy sausage was prepared. My journey from public servant to academic was shaped by questions about how we could change the recipe and make education decisions that were informed by a broader confluence of factors.

As a researcher I wanted to understand how the knowledge gained through independent research could figure more prominently in the policy decisions of government. This was the work I undertook nearly a decade ago when I began the transition to an academic life.

Part of the pan-Canadian study I completed in 2006 also centered on the respective policy roles of politicians and public servants. It showed that senior public servants were cognizant of the risks and problems of a heavily politicized policy environment and that they adapted their practice by developing certain techniques to influence policy at the developmental stage. Through direct or indirect negotiation or through the provision of selective policy advice, senior bureaucrats felt they could successfully influence some decisions to be consistent with what they understood as sound public policy. Although the political actors who were part of that study represented public servants as having no substantive role in policy formulation, they did concede that their professional advice and internal knowledge were valued. These findings seem to signal an implicit recognition of a more robust policy role for senior public servants and a tacit acceptance, on the part of ministers, of a shared policy relationship that is constantly being negotiated and re-negotiated.

Part of the *raison d’être* of a social scientist is to influence public policy through research and public discourse, yet we know that political actors resist the influence of external research-based knowledge. There is little to suggest that elected policymakers pay much attention to independent research, even when it is available and accessible. As Levin (2001) comments, “[t]he political world is ...shaped by beliefs more than facts” (p. 14). Relative to the range of other forms of evidence, political considerations, such as public opinion and media spin are highly valued, while external (university-based) research has very marginal standing (Galway, 2006). My work with politicians suggests that education research is seen as foreign and detached from the policy questions that were important to government. Moreover, politicians consider the critical stance taken by some researchers on education issues to be wrought with political risk.

## Discussion

The foregoing discussion suggests that the marginal direct impact of research on government policy described by Caplan (1979) over three decades ago is still valid in the Canadian educational context today. In Rudyard Kipling’s (1892) poem, *Barrack-room ballads*, he lamented how poorly the British and the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent understood one another:



*Oh, east is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet.*

Today, we might apply the same maxim to the separation between government and the academy. Researchers and education policymakers have, for some time, been criticized for walking different paths (Levin, 2001, 2003a, 2003b; Neilson, 2001; Sheppard, Galway, Brown & Wiens, 2013; Slavin, 2002, 2003; Stone, Maxwell & Keating, 2001), and this detachment seems to have grown stronger as school boards and education departments struggle to meet the demands of an increasingly impatient public. Some theorists place responsibility for infusing more research into education policy with policymakers – for deliberately ignoring research-based knowledge. Others accuse researchers of ignoring important policy areas in education (Lindblom &

Woodhouse, 1993; Neilson, 2001; Pring, 2000; Stone, 2002) charging that they must do more to disseminate and promote their research, and to make it more relevant and accessible to policy makers.

Political actors and researchers still operate in two worlds, where their values, accountabilities and motivations are entirely different. Governments and their ministers are in a constant public struggle for legitimation – a pressure not necessarily felt or understood by researchers. While the generation of research knowledge is inscribed in the academic community, it has only marginal relevance for political decision makers. Their world is consumed with the more immediate problems of governance – sustaining the economy, providing public services, avoiding and deflecting criticism and maintaining the support of a fickle public. As I have argued elsewhere, the changing social and technological landscape of education in Canada has led to a kind of ‘democratization’ of public education policy whereby political decision makers feel considerable public pressure for continuous reform and readjustment (Galway, 2006). In such circumstances, policy makers come to value political-democratic policy evidence (the human element) over research-based forms of evidence.

The two problems discussed in this paper – the politicization of public-sector decision making and the underutilization of research knowledge are connected. For political actors, basing policy decisions primarily on research evidence would likely be considered technocratic and politically risky. This begs the question: How then might things be different? How can research matter more in how policy makers exercise the authority granted them by the electorate? And perhaps more to the point, what actions from knowledge producers might help bridge the two communities and partially disrupt the political influences on education decision making?

The research and lived experiences I have described here suggest that if we are to have any meaningful influence on policy, the cultural separation between government and the academy must be upset, so that the contexts of knowledge production and policy development are better connected to one another. Put simply, there must be active engagement with political actors. One way the education policy process could be different is if there were a more robust and trusted channel through which independent research evidence could enter the policy

arena. A promising avenue through which this type of change could be accomplished is by researcher engagement with the mid-level and senior-level public servants.

Although there appears to be no agreement on the extent of policy involvement, many authors agree that bureaucrats, either overtly or tacitly, play a significant role in policy development (Birkland, 2001; Goodsell, 1985; Majone, 1989; Lynn, 1996; Levin, 2004; Stone, 2002). Notwithstanding their views about the policy roles of public servants, political decision makers say they value the knowledge produced or compiled by ministry bureaucrats. The decision makers I interviewed placed a high value on material that had been produced or vetted by insiders, a finding consistent with Majone's (1989) claim that the policy analyst plays a pivotal role in determining what mix of evidence goes into policy documents and how that evidence is presented. This suggests that knowledge may well originate in independent scholarly research, but until it is acquired, authenticated, restated and repackaged by ministry staff, such research is not likely to figure into the policy mix.

The preceding discussion suggests that education researchers and academic administrators could greatly enhance the proclivity for better evidence-informed policy by working to make external research more familiar and less risky for policymakers. This, I suggest, could involve consideration of how academics represent their research in the public, and where appropriate, moderating the critical stance some scholars portray in commenting on the policy directions of government. While certain traditions of inquiry lend themselves to critical review of social institutions and processes (Creswell, 1998), the findings from this study suggest that consistently vociferous critical commentary on the policy directions of government may serve to position academic research as foreign and threatening to policymakers. When academic researchers publicly argue for a strict (research) evidence-informed approach to policy, they may inadvertently overlook the political dynamic of a policy situation, and situate themselves as adversaries. An alternative approach would be for researchers to moderate criticism of existing policy and situate themselves as catalysts for change. This would involve opening a dialogue with senior public servants towards 'selling' the value of university-based research to politicians as part of the 'package' of policy evidence that informs a systematic approach to policy development. Political actors make choices in the context of an overwhelming and widely diverse set of public expectations. Researchers, therefore, must also be open to a personal research agenda that involves attention to active policy issues. Otherwise, some education research in Canada may continue to be housed in rarely-accessed on-line journals or in the tomes of university libraries, the subject of discussion with other researchers, working within the same community, but unfortunately, somewhat disconnected from the site of policy development. Finally researchers must be prepared to engage with political actors themselves – even occasionally coming to their defense – instead of mostly framing the education decisions of government as 'bad policy'. Researchers could use the political process to their advantage by becoming sensitive to the influence of the mass media on politicians and using the popular media as a means of drawing attention to their research.

Kipling's epic ballad chronicled the conflict between two strong forces, the Britons and the native Indians, but it ends on a hopeful note, when both sides make overtures to try and understand one another. Throughout my career, first as a public manager and policy advisor and

now as a researcher and university administrator, I have had the benefit of working in both communities. The inherent conflicts between political decision making versus research-informed policy are not insurmountable, but challenging the problem requires that we find ways to develop new understandings about the two communities and to bring them closer to one another.

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## Chapter 4: A 40-year legacy of scholarship: When parallel lines intersect

Kirk Anderson

The Morning Watch is celebrating a 40-year legacy of social policy and educational discourse in 2013. This modest contribution to the Morning Watch scholarship, I have written will come in two parts. In the first part I will share the narrative of my personal journey as a Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) graduate and scholar. In this part I will draw on insights gained through my experience and research since 1973 to comment on the systems we serve and why we choose to live here. In some ways this reflects a mathematically impossible journey as my career parallels the legacy of the Morning Watch yet has significant intersections with the Morning Watch and its 40 year run. For the second part of this narrative, I will link two approximate endpoints (The 70s and now) therein-linking two salient social issues typical of the Morning Watch's social edge and research.

### Part 1: The Morning Watch-there and then

*The system in which we serve:* The Morning Watch is a creation of professors from Memorial University's Faculty of Education. Our Faculty has almost 90 years in teacher education and research. Taking a guess at the cumulative expertise, if our faculty average 25 years of educational experience times the equivalent of 60 faculty members, we have over 1500 years of experience. We are, without doubt, the foremost authority on teaching and learning in this province. However, we are not just a provincial entity, we are also highly ranked nationally and internationally.

Having worked at three other universities, benefited from some empirical research, and participated in a variety of international development projects, I am able to see the strengths of our 'excellent' faculty and our high performing school systems all of which contribute to the social fabric these organizations serve. Yes, we have issues, but as Joey Smallwood once wrote "*No Apology from Me.*" The most significant finding I have, after 20 years in our school system, followed by 12 years working in both the most advanced (the Canadian system which includes Newfoundland and Labrador's) and the most dire systems, is the conviction that we are building on a strong system. Thus, our role is to improve and, borrowing a term from The Brian Peckford era Royal Commission Report, to keep "*Building on Strengths.*"

This province is a special place, Memorial as its champion, is a special university, as is the faculty I serve and the journal the Morning Watch has become. The Morning Watch started in 1973. It is full of many powerful pieces from scholars and practioners. The contributors from this faculty and province have published locally, nationally and internationally. Having looked at some of the treasured volumes of the past 40 years there is no other journal so deeply rooted in educational and social issues relevant to this province and indeed it also has merit for those far beyond our boundaries. I published my first piece of academic writing in the Morning Watch in 1994, a small piece on success in small schools. I contributed a second article on the emerging scholars of Canadian educational leadership in 2010. Beyond this writing, my most recent Morning Watch effort will be included in one of the 40th anniversary editions, coming out later this year, called *Indigenizing the Academy* co-edited by Dr. Maura Hanrahan and myself.



*On being from here:* Imagine you were able to attend a great university, do a great degree (three actually) with great faculties (two from Education and one from Science) at that university, live a great career, and then to return to where it started and actually lead one of those faculties. This is where my life has taken me. I was born in Shoal Brook, Bonne Bay (my grandmother as midwife), and completed high school in Corner Brook (Herdman Collegiate and Regina High School). I attended Memorial University (in Corner Brook and St. John's). In 1978, I completed my first degree, a BSc. In 1981, I graduated with a BEd from our Faculty of Education, and again in 1987 as I completed a Masters in Education, all at MUN. I did stray a little and completed a PhD from the University of Toronto, but MUN is my home campus, plain and simple.

I started teaching in Makkovikin 1981 (J.C. Erhardt Memorial School), then moved to Cartwright (Henry Gordon Academy), eventually to Woody Point (Bonne Bay Central High School and Bonne Bay Academy), Lark Harbour (St. James All-Grade) and finally the North Shore Bay of Islands (Templeton Collegiate). I have been a professor at the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Calgary, the University of New Brunswick, and now Memorial University of Newfoundland. I wanted to outline this as I feel this eclectic mixture of experiences, enables a unique perspective for comparison and possibly some insights as well.

*On choosing to live there or here:* Decades ago on a Western Newfoundland open line radio show, a somewhat hostile caller challenged guest speaker Peter Fenwick. He was running in an election as leader of the NDP. She questioned his motives, arguing that because he was not 'born here' he did not share the same commitment to the province as those that were. This is an unfair challenge facing many newcomers and long-time residents. His response was eloquent and I often think of it. He responded (to para-phrase him) "*Yes, but unlike those that were born here, I made a deliberate choice to make this my home.*" Therein lies the deepest of commitmentsto this place.

While living in Fredericton, working as an Associate Dean with the Faculty of Education, I faced a 'life happens' awakening. I enjoyed working there, they were a great faculty, and with strong leadership. However, in 2009 I attended a reunion of sorts in Halifax where the WonderfulGrand Band(WGB) was also playing a concert. This band was all the rage in my last couple of years at MUN, so hearing WGB produced lots of nostalgia, and I even found a few long lost friends who had also moved away. Following this experience I had to wrestle with a realization that many of us face in a way I had not done before. I had been away from Newfoundland for about eight years, but up until that point, I do not think I actually believed I had moved away. In the hours of driving back to Fredericton, I was drifting down memory lane and then back to the direction I was actually headed. At some point during the drive, it struck me that I had moved away-I was not going to live in Newfoundland anymore! This might seem odd, but many of us view moving away as temporary, and then life just kind of happens. It was not a happy feeling, somewhat fearful even. My sense of identity with Newfoundland and Labrador is strong and I was not sure what to do with how I felt. I know I did not make a deliberate choice to make New Brunswick my home, but the drive passed, the feelings subsided and life continued to happen.

Life is also strange sometimes, somewhat reconciled with my life in New Brunswick, happy in my work at UNB, in the summer of 2010 I saw an ad for “*Dean of Education*” at Memorial

University. I was not sure what to do. I had passed up one other opportunity to seek a faculty position at MUN as I did enjoy my life at UNB, but this was a unique opportunity. I knew I had built up a credible resume but one never knows about hiring processes. I did apply, was interviewed, and here I am writing this piece of reflection for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Morning Watch as Dean for the faculty that has housed it for these 40 years and it is almost 40 years since I started as a student at MUN.

## Part 2: The Morning Watch-then and now

In the second part of this 40-year reflection, I want to raise the two critically salient concepts I alluded to above: the first, our accent(s) and dialect(s) and the second our Indigeneity. The first was the subject of strong debates about 40 years ago as many rose to defend the legitimacy of our accents and dialects in the face of outright contempt. It may be time to come back to this. The second relates to the ending of the forced invisibility of Indigenous peoples within our province. This is ending and the growing awareness of our Indigenous reality seems to hold great promise in adding to the richness of our social fabric. This is something we need to build on.

*What was important 40 years ago is important today-respecting our accented way:* Being a distance educator based in Alberta and New Brunswick, I would note how my students would respond once they established that my accent was from Newfoundland. I have often compared this to the experience of seeing a person for the first time having no awareness that they were of a different race. We hold stereotypes based on culture, race, gender, dialect and indeed accent.

Beyond our notions of vernacular and standard English, David Corson, a former professor of mine, spoke often of the negative biases held against those from different social cultural backgrounds by the dominant hegemony and their use of dominant language conventions. He outlined this in an article *The Learning and Use of Academic English Words*. His view was that students who used text and speech that was seen to be ‘richer’ in Greco-Latin phrases were considered to be intellectually superior by instructors not because of the sophistication of the argumentation, ideas, or complexity but because of ‘our’ bias towards the word content (Corson, 1997). Has this type of social cultural language bias been at play in our Newfoundland and Labrador context? I think so. Remember, it was once believed that a truly educated scholar also spoke Latin.

Corson’s work was considered ground-breaking research in the late 1990s. Yet this thinking was noted much earlier in the Morning Watch as several articles were published in the very first issues of the Morning Watch in 1970s on this subject in relation to “Newfoundland Englishes” (Singh, 1996).

The struggle with accents and dialects continues today. Over the years, at Memorial, there have been particular courses designed to remove the Newfoundland dialects and accents from its students. Is it the case, that to be seen as a truly educated Newfoundlander and Labradorian one also has to surrender one's accent and relative language usage? I actually do not think so, but it does worry me sometimes.

*What was important 40 years ago is important today-respecting Indigenous ways:* Forty years ago, in 1973, I graduated from a school system and society that essentially denied the existence of Aboriginal peoples in this province. The Beothuck became extinct, killed off by the Mi'kmaq who were brought in by the French to help fight the English. We loyal Britons were the result—that was the Newfoundland narrative of our history for a long time. Yet, folklore and family lore told a different tale. The Morning Watch serves a role in giving voice to the researcher who shares this rediscovery. As a boy I knew my family had Mi'kmaq and Inuit ancestry. My father and grandfathers had been to Labrador so our family knew about the Inuit and Innu as well. Therefore, this part of my life had mixed feelings. How do we 'right' the inaccurate, albeit grammatically correct, versions of our history? I guess this is also part of seeking the answer to the question: what is new in history? It is with these questions that I leave you now and invite you to watch for the *Indigenising the Academy* edition of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Morning Watch series. In this special hard copy edition of the Morning Watch, Maura Hanrahan will look at how Indigenous peoples were portrayed then and should be honoured now.

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## Chapter 5: Religion and Education in *The Morning Watch*, 1973-2013: Curriculum

Noel Barrett Shuell<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

“The most unusual and one of the most interesting facets of schooling in Newfoundland is the nature and extent of church involvement” (Cooper, 1975, p. 4). For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, the schools were owned and operated separately by several Christian denominations and were all funded by the government. In late 1997, a change in the Canadian Constitution authorized the province to replace the four denominational school systems with a single, nondenominational system for Grades Kindergarten to 12. In order to secure this change, however, the province bound itself with a constitutional requirement to include religious education<sup>2</sup> in the school curriculum, and also to allow religious observances in any school where parents request them. (Elliott, 1998)

On this occasion of its 40th anniversary, I will survey the articles published since 1973 in *The Morning Watch*<sup>3</sup> which studied this distinctive feature of provincial schooling. Attention to the interaction of religion and education began in the very first issue (Gushue, 1973a) and continued in more than 30 papers for the next 25 years (Elliott, 1998). These papers studied only two general areas of the interaction: religion as a subject in the school curriculum; and religious denominations as major authorities in the school system. Since 1998, no papers about religion and education have appeared in *MW*.<sup>4</sup>

In this paper, I will review what was written about religious and moral education in the school curriculum. In a subsequent paper, I will review studies of the denominational education system in which religion, history, philosophy, and governance were central and intertwined topics.

In the first 25 years of *MW*, 10 papers discussed ingredients of the school curriculum related to RE. Eight papers focused on the moral dimension of religion; one discussed its narrative or mythic dimension; and the last described the framework for RE curriculum and instruction in the new secular school system.

### The Moral Dimension<sup>5</sup> of Religion: Moral Education

One dimension of religion is its attention to human relations and actions, usually called its moral or ethical dimension. In the 1979 winter issue of *MW*, nine papers were published as a “Symposium: Values in Curriculum.” Eight papers focused on moral values; and the ninth (Clark, 1979), on intellectual values which are central to the conduct of modern science, e.g., preferences for scientific method and testable hypotheses.

The structure of the symposium was this:

1. A keynote paper (Cochrane, 1979) whose author had recently published a study of moral education<sup>6</sup> in Canada<sup>7</sup>;
2. Four comments about Cochrane’s paper (Covert, McCann, Magsino, and Jackson, all 1979);

3. Four discussions about values (intellectual or moral) in the science, literature, social studies, and RE curricula (Clark, Brown, Jones, and Shuell respectively, all 1979).

Cochrane (1979) proposed “that a justifiable goal for a program of ME would be to produce ‘morally autonomous agents’” (p. 327). ME should entail at least six processes in which students have –

1. regular experience of personal rights and responsibilities;
2. frequent opportunities to practice moral decision-making and to make mistakes in doing so;
3. practice of logical reasoning in all subject areas;
4. practice of logical reasoning in every aspect of life in the school;
5. awareness of moral and other issues in every subject area; and
6. opportunities in all their studies to analyze and evaluate their own contemporary culture.

Cochrane claimed that denominational schools and RE are inimical to authentic ME because they rely primarily on “values socialization” (p. 326), that is, on indoctrinating students and conforming them to the moral values espoused by the denomination. He also rejected “attacks from the ‘soft liberal left’” (p. 326) which are implicit in most public secular school systems, which propose that moral values are subjective and relative and cannot be demonstrated rationally, and which rely on “values clarification” and the promotion of tolerance for all moral beliefs.

Cochrane favoured a revision of school programs wherein ME would be a subject area in the timetable, would receive special emphasis in arts and social studies courses, and would be included as an objective in all courses.

In his response, Covert (1979) highlighted two special strengths in Cochrane’s views. By emphasizing the importance of rationality and practice, he connected ME with all the other subjects in the curriculum. Second, Covert praised the depiction of ME as “an all pervasive process that cannot be confined to one course or even the academic portion of the school. Everyone engaged in the schooling enterprise is involved in making moral decisions” (p. 336).

McCann (1979) praised Cochrane for his determination to do something rather than nothing toward helping schools create “morally autonomous agents” (p. 337). However, McCann found the proposed ME concept and process too individualistic and therefore simplistic. School change is unlikely to happen without the social change required to liberate morality from religion by building it on rational foundations. McCann recommended that Cochrane’s program for ME in schools identify the barriers within society against authentic moral development and propose ways to destroy them.

Magsino (1979) rejected the claim made by both Cochrane and McCann that the only genuine morality is one derived from critical reason. He argued that religion necessarily includes morality and that religious morality is genuine both in its methods and its contents. He thereby affirmed that ME exists abundantly in the provincial denominational schools. Acknowledging,

however, that provincial schools function within a democratic society which prizes and requires critical reason, Magsino joined Cochrane in recommending that secular ME be included in the school curriculum together with the already existing religious ME.

In the final response to Cochrane's paper, Jackson (1979) commended Cochrane for providing a detailed overview of ME in light of which school practice can be interpreted and assessed. However, Jackson identified a practical dilemma in implementing a ME program in which moral values and practices are studied, criticized, and judged:

1. On the one hand, if the school community is in general agreement about morals (as, e.g., in a denominational school), it will have little incentive to criticize them.
2. On the other hand, if the school community is in general disagreement (as, e.g., in a large secular urban school), it will have little ability to develop an effective ME program.

The remaining papers in *MW*'s symposium discussed, with no reference to Cochrane's keynote paper<sup>8</sup>, the content and methods of ME in three curriculum areas. Brown (1979) affirmed that "literary works have a moral dimension" (p. 354) because the attitudes and norms people rely on to guide their actions toward others, themselves, and nature are constantly displayed in literature. He identified at least four objectives which should be included in "teaching the moral dimension of a literary work" (p. 355):

1. become aware of moral issues;
2. identify alternative moral values;
3. identify how literary works relate to the values of one's own times; and
4. evaluate the consequences of actions.

Jones (1979) discussed values in the social studies curriculum, many of which are moral values. He proposed, from a curriculum used in Alberta schools, both a definition of "values" and some criteria for evaluating them:

1. Values are guides to one's behaviour.
2. Values may help improve one's relationship with one's social and physical environment if they are clear, consistent, and defensible in light of the life goals of each member of society.

Jones especially insisted that more was required in social studies education than helping students clarify values. He acknowledged that values clarification is necessary in values education; but it is not sufficient because low levels of cognitive achievement (namely, knowledge and comprehension) about values often result in "dogmatic and unsubstantiated outcomes" (p. 346). He recommended that teachers aim their classroom instruction at achieving student behaviours which manifest advanced cognitive achievement (such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of values) regarding issues and policies learned in social studies.

In the final paper of the symposium, Shuell (1979) argued that, although the province's RE programs differed among themselves in subject matter and goals, they must all include values



education as subject matter. RE necessarily gives special attention to religious values; but it also includes value realms which overlap with other subject areas in the school curriculum such as moral, social, and environmental values. Shuell named six processes or strategies which must be included in RE regardless of the specific program: values socialization, transmission, clarification, classification, evaluation, and development. These same processes are also relevant for teaching and learning non-religious values throughout the school curriculum.

Overall, this symposium focused almost completely on moral values. Only Cochrane and McCann claimed that religious schools hinder, perhaps even prevent, effective ME. Magsino rejected their claim explicitly on philosophical grounds; as did Shuell, implicitly, on methodological grounds.

The other papers gave no attention to this issue.

All the papers generally agreed on the following:

- Many opportunities for ME occur throughout the school's curriculum and its daily life.
- Students may benefit by experiencing ME as a separate subject area.
- ME should be highly valued and strongly implemented in every school, religious and secular.

### The Narrative Dimension of Religion: Storytelling

Ten years after the symposium on moral values, Collins (1989) highlighted another ingredient of religion, its narrative or mythic dimension. She described some reasons for the increased emphasis on stories in contemporary RE, both as subject matter and as instructional method. In the major religious faiths, storytelling preceded the development of creeds and theologies. Especially important is the "original story" which adherents learn early in their involvement with a religious tradition: e.g., for Christians, the life and work of Jesus; for Jews, Moses and the exodus from Egypt; for Muslims, the life and revelations of Muhammad; for Buddhists, the life and enlightenment of Gautama. Whatever historical experiences these original stories may communicate, they all depict spiritual experiences which are central to the religious faiths, and therefore to RE.

Also important in contemporary RE are stories about the faithful, past and present. Thus, in Christian RE, one learns stories not only about Jesus but also about faithful Christians from the beginning to the present, and about present-day students, teachers, and others who try to live as faithful Christians. Stories engage the imaginations, minds, and emotions of students and are, therefore, ideal content and method in RE.

### RE Curriculum and Instruction in Secular Schools

Another decade passed before the last paper about RE curriculum appeared in *MW*. Writing at the beginning of the first year of nondenominational schooling (1998-1999), Elliott (1998) summarized the history of the denominational system and its abolition, described the framework

for RE curriculum and instruction in the new system, and suggested some ways for denominations to participate in and contribute to the new structures.

The official rationale for the new curriculum emphasized that students and religions had many personal and societal concerns in common, e.g., the meaning of life and death, the conflict between good and evil, the ingredients of a good or happy or worthwhile life, and the nature of spiritual experience. Also, because the modern world is both secular and multi-religious, the school is obliged to help students prepare to live in and contribute to it - that is, help them learn, first, the world-views common in their own society and, second, those found in quite different societies worldwide.

The overall approach in the new RE curriculum was to be non-confessional; that is, the school would socialize students into learning about religions, not into practicing them. Cognitive content included the following:

- knowledge about the major world religions and secular belief systems, their interactions with societies and cultures in which they are found, and their “influences . . . on local and global events” (p. 565); however,
- “major attention will be given to Christianity because this reflects contemporary Newfoundland society and its heritage,” and also to the “spirituality and religious traditions” of the students (p. 565).

Affective content in the new curriculum included the following:

1. “respect for different belief systems” and appreciation of “the intrinsic worth of each of these religions for [their] adherents”;
2. “respect . . . for the place and role of parents and faith communities as primary influences on the faith lives of young people”; and
3. acknowledgment “that human beings share essential truths and experiences that are much more important than those which divide them” (p. 565).

Acknowledging his own possible bias as a former executive officer of the Integrated Education Council, Elliott generally favoured the establishment of a single school system and the development of principles for a common nondenominational RE curriculum. “The result will, no doubt, be a strong curriculum and with periodic modifications will help prepare the students of this province to face the challenges of the twenty-first century” (p. 565).

## Discussion

Most of the *MW* papers reviewed above derived not from RE but from other subject areas in the school curriculum. Illustrated in all the papers, however, is that RE is essentially interdisciplinary in both its topics and its methods, with especially close connections with literature, history, social studies, and ME.

The symposium on values in 1979 could have been sidetracked by Cochrane’s disjunction between socialization and ME - connecting the former with mindless RE and the latter with

rationalist ME. Elsewhere in his paper, however, he urged that social context and processes are required for the education of morally autonomous agents. Fortunately for the symposium, the other eight papers either challenged his dichotomy or simply ignored it.

Finally, the non-confessional RE curriculum which began to be developed in 1998 was not a values-free undertaking. Especially in its affective goals, it emphasized the development of positive attitudes toward religion, not critical ones. Studies of its subsequent development since 1998 are needed, and are overdue.

## Conclusion

On average, *MW* published one paper every four years about religion and education in the curriculum of provincial schools. However, such papers appeared on just three occasions, ten years apart, within the journal's first 25 years. The topic has received no attention in the past 15 years. Inasmuch as the inclusion of religion in the curriculum of secular schools is still quite rare in North America, the editors should perhaps consider actively soliciting relevant papers for future issues.

The most successful and interesting exploration of this topic was in 1979 - the symposium on values in the curriculum. Perhaps the editors should consider using this format more frequently in future issues.

While religion in the curriculum received little attention in *MW* during its first 25 years, papers about religion in the governance of schools were relatively abundant. These will be reviewed in a sequel to the present paper.

## Abbreviations

ME	Moral Education
RE	Religious Education
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Morning Watch</i>

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<sup>1</sup>Noel Barrett Shuell, Ph.D., retired in 1999 from the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland, as associate professor of religious education.

<sup>2</sup>Hereafter, religious education will be referred to as RE.

<sup>3</sup>Hereafter, *The Morning Watch* will be referred to as *MW*.

<sup>4</sup>Although published later, McCann (2002) seems to have been written in 1992 after the release of *Our Children Our Future*, the final report of the 1990 Royal Commission on education.

<sup>5</sup>For teaching and learning about religion, several dimensions or aspects can be distinguished, namely, the narrative, experiential, ritual, doctrinal, moral, social, and historical dimensions. See, e.g., Ninian Smart (1969). *The Religious Experience of Mankind*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

<sup>6</sup>Hereafter, moral education will be referred to as ME.

<sup>7</sup>Cochrane, D. & Williams, D. 1978. The stances of provincial ministries of education towards values/moral education in public schools. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 3(4), 1-14.

<sup>8</sup>It seems to me unlikely that these authors were aware of Cochrane's paper.

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## **Chapter 6: Teaching English in Taiwan: Social, Cultural and Economic Implications**

Steve Meadus

### **Introduction**

A couple years ago I returned to Memorial University, from Taiwan, to prepare myself for teaching in the Western World. I, like many young University graduates from the English-speaking world embarked on the adventure of teaching English as a second language in a foreign country. A teacher's motivation for taking on such an endeavor may vary considerably from person to person. A commonality, however, rests in how English teachers are viewed within the larger society in which they teach. Once teachers signs their first contracts, they become connected to the society where they teach culturally, economically, and politically while taking on the responsibility of becoming a purveyor merchant of cultural capital. The ability to speak English translates into economic success in the minds of many non-English speaking people. In my experience, however, I perceived a sense of resentment towards the overwhelming demand for English Instruction. This resentment was rooted in a country's cultural values which were seen as being threatened by the English initiative.

This paper will explore my journey in teacher preparation from Newfoundland to Taiwan and back to Newfoundland. Using my experience, teaching in Taiwan from 2007 to 2010, I will suggest the symbolic nature of the institution of English language instruction and the cultural and social importance placed on the teaching profession.

### **First Impressions of Taiwan**

In my third week of teaching English as a second language to children in Taiwan, I was told that after recess, I would need to go to a small room on the top floor of the kindergarten where I was teaching and stay there (with the other English teachers) until someone came to collect us. When I inquired as to the reason for this bizarre request, I was told that the 'government' was coming to the kindergarten for an inspection and we English teachers had to be out of sight. Taiwan had passed a law that prohibited English instruction to kindergarten students based on the belief that children of that age needed to focus on Chinese study before starting to learn a foreign language.

As I sat on the floor of this small, dark room with the other ESL teachers, we whispered to each other about the absurdity of the situation. We were all legally employed teachers who taught at other schools later in the day. We found it strange that the school would receive warning of an impending inspection. Stranger than that was the fact that the school had a huge banner on the side, advertising English instruction (in English and Chinese) with a picture of a foreign teacher holding hands with Taiwanese children. It was obvious to us teachers that there must have been a blind eye turned to us and that these inspectors were probably paid off or just going through the motions as delegated by the department of Education.

I taught in southern Taiwan in a city of 1.5 million people. My wife and I left Newfoundland with nothing more than a visitor's visa and the name and number of our recruiter. Within two



days of our arrival in Taiwan, we had jobs, scooters, an apartment, and cell phones. It was immediately clear to me that there were many classrooms all around the island filled with students and not enough teachers to instruct them. Our recruiter often asked me if I had any friends back home that would be interested in coming to Taiwan. There was a sense of desperation in the English teaching community where the supply of teachers was not reaching the demand for instruction. Many English-speaking travellers without proper credentials were even hired as substitutes. These teachers would come to Taiwan on visitor visas and take day trips to Hong Kong every two months so that they could legally re-enter Taiwan.

The foreign population numbered around fifteen thousand, most of whom were English teachers. The area of town where I resided was even nicknamed “Little Canada” as so many of us teachers lived there. In the schools, we were treated almost like celebrities. We had little responsibility relative to Chinese staff and our services could not possibly meet the overwhelming demand. The students came from affluent families who could afford the inflated tuition costs which helped to pay our salaries.

Taiwan is very unique in terms of its political structure. Many people whom I spoke with resented the island’s affiliation with Mainland China and admired the capitalistic style of democracy epitomized by the west. The English language seemed to symbolize this lifestyle for the Taiwanese. Though English was not widely spoken, it was written on billboards, t-shirts, and advertisements throughout the city.

### **English Language as a Significant Symbol**

I will examine the notion of symbolic interactionism in relation to the English language as a significant symbol in Taiwanese society. According to Robson (2013), *Symbolic Interaction Theory* states that individuals construct the meaning of symbols through social interactions with emphasis on language and the idea of the self. By this definition, we define things in our world based on our experience and interactions with others. According to Blumer, (cited in Robson, 31) people generate *significant symbols* (e.g., the institutions of learning English and myself as an English teacher) through the use of language which creates a deep web of meaning for these symbols.

The fact that I can speak and teach English is of little consequence in Canada. There are many other people like me and there is very little demand for ESL teachers. However, the situation in Taiwan is quite the opposite, where English seems to be connected to money. Advertisements in Taiwanese newspapers and billboards almost always include an English phrase, regardless of the likelihood of Taiwanese people being able to read or understand it. If the message is not in the phrase itself, then what is the meaning associated with such advertisements? According to many copywriters in Taiwan, the use of English in advertisements is aimed at creating a certain atmosphere. Therefore, these advertisements are meant to evoke “the desired effects and socio-psychological impacts” (Hsu, 223). If the use of English, in advertisements, translates to heightened consumerism, then English must symbolize something of great social importance to the Taiwanese people.

The young students that I taught did not have an innate appreciation for the English language. What they knew about the importance of learning English was taught to them by the older generation. Globalization has come to dictate the economic world through the English language and learning it will greatly improve the chances of these Chinese-speaking students for future success.

Children see their parents place great importance on learning English and this is interpreted as a process of socialization as values and beliefs are passed down and modified through the generations. The parents of my students held great respect for me as a teacher and showed their appreciation through gifts and gestures on a regular basis. I feel as though I was symbolized as being a tool for their children's future success. Of course, one could make that claim for teachers everywhere, but being an English teacher in Taiwan held special meaning for parents.

So if there is a shared meaning of English as profitable knowledge in Taiwanese society, then why was I made to hide from government officials as they searched the kindergarten in which I worked? Isn't meaning supposed to be adapted by the *generalized other* and shared throughout a society? Critics have pointed out that symbolic interactionism is focused too much on the individual. Upon first reading this claim, I found it puzzling that the theory stated that a society comes to share these meanings. In reference to the Taiwanese views on the English language, there is obviously a group of people who do not share the same meaning of English as the advertisers and parents mentioned previously.

Government policy seems to speak for citizens who view English instruction as a threat to traditional language and culture. Many people of the older generation of Taiwan migrated to the island from Mainland China in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and have held on to traditional Chinese culture. Policies aimed at keeping English instruction out of Taiwanese kindergartens reflect a clash of meaning. When looking at English instruction in Taiwan through the perspective of symbolic interactionism, the bridge between micro and macro effects is not yet fully formed. I believe that life experience plays an important role in meaning making and can cause very opposing views regardless of communication within a given society.

## Conclusion

My experience of teaching English as a foreign language in Taiwan was an incredibly rewarding one with fond memories and great friendships made. I would recommend it to anyone looking for adventure and a broadening of the mind. The purpose of this paper, however, is to point out aspects of the English teacher identity that I was unaware of when I ventured overseas. I looked at the job opportunity as a means of travel. I didn't consider that what I was teaching and representing had such far-reaching implications that affected a country's economic, social, and cultural identity.

Although I left Newfoundland to be a teacher, I feel that I have returned home with a worldview that

has been heavily influenced by my time spent in Taiwan. Back in Newfoundland, the Faculty of Education and Memorial University is enabling me to further my education and continue to evolve as a teacher, future students and teacher colleagues will contribute to this evolution. In a time when globalization is in full swing, I was able to play a small part in the future successes of my students in Taiwan as well as gain a new appreciation for the idea of cultural preservation. Once I left the English-speaking world, I found that “English” in a foreign society, was viewed from very diverse perspectives.

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## Chapter 7: My journey: Interpreting the English industry of South Korea

Stephen Walsh

In the fall of 2005 I went to South Korea to teach English. When I first arrived, a movement sometimes called “English Fever” was in full swing. This fever was evidenced by the abundance of western English teachers on the streets of the industrial provincial town in which I lived. I had taken a TESOL course some months earlier where the instructors regaled us with stories of the adventure and riches that could be attained by teaching English overseas. I chose South Korea because I knew someone who lived there. I ended up staying for over five years. During that time I taught English at public schools, private schools, small academies, chain schools, and at international companies. I was able to observe first hand that English and globalization were having a palpable impact upon Korea. I will discuss different factors that allowed me to get a job, certain details of those jobs, and some of my impressions of the affect that English is having on that country, and my return to Canada.

### Background

As a first language, English is the third most populous after Mandarin and Spanish. Like Spanish, English owes its ubiquity to a history of imperialism. The British Empire expanded around the globe and subjected the populations of distant lands to its native tongue. More recently, English’s predominance among world languages can be attributed to the economic domination of the US, specifically, and the effects of globalization and neoliberalism generally. English is the foremost language of academic journals, advertising, broadcasting, cinema, music, travel, post-secondary education, and international bodies (Crystal, 2003). It is the pervasiveness of the English language that legitimizes it and compels speakers of other languages to learn it. The value of English is based in the fact that it is the language of the powerful political and economic forces of the globe. The future of English as the new *lingua franca* is still being debated, but its present influence worldwide is undeniable.

South Korea has a population of about 50 million situated within an area slightly smaller than the island of Newfoundland. At the end of the 1950s, South Korea emerged from the shadow of its crippling civil war with a per capita income of less than US\$100. By 1996 that figure had grown to over US\$10,000 (Park & Mah, 2011). Compare that to the growth of income in Canada from about US\$ 2000 to US\$20000 over the same period (Statistics Canada, 2013). As of 2010, South Korea had the 13<sup>th</sup> highest GDP in the world (Uk & Roehrig, 2010). This unprecedented growth would have been impossible if South Korea did not open up its borders to international markets and the byproducts that come with it.

### Ease of Employment

Finding a job in South Korea was a surprisingly easy endeavor. I thought there would be a maze of red tape that would need to be disentangled to obtain employment in a foreign country but the process was often streamlined by the employer. A quick glance at websites like Dave’s ESL Café shows that there are plenty of jobs for the taking. My first employer sent me to Pearson International Airport where I met a man who gave me a ticket to South Korea. My visa was

approved in days. The school provided houses for all its teachers; a common practice at private academies. Prior to obtaining my second contract, I arrived in the country with nothing. After a hectic week of interviews and an overnight jaunt to Japan to process my visa, I had a job secured.

The filling of positions is often mediated by a recruiting company that simplifies the hiring process for foreign nationals. The recruiters are well-paid for placing native speakers in the constantly turning-over English teaching positions. The interviews are often little more than finding out when the candidate can arrive in the country. Potential teachers are enticed with benefits such as pension contributions, health care, housing stipends, severance pay, and relatively lucrative contracts. Once in the country, the opportunity for making money ‘under the table’ through private tutoring is often too much for some ex-pats to resist.

The credentials required to teach in the private industry are minimal. Most academies only require a degree from a recognized university or college. The focus of the degree rarely matters. Biology majors and graduates of English literature are often regarded equally by potential employers. Even an education degree affords a candidate minimal preference. I had obtained a Teacher of Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate but it seemed to bear little weight compared to my qualification as a native speaker of a western country.

I received a job because of Korea’s growing demand for English. My most significant credential was the cultural capital I wielded by virtue of my native language. Even though I had limited training as a teacher, my authority as an English speaker overrode other proficiency concerns.

## **Teaching English**

My first year was the most diverse of the more than five years that I spent in the country. I worked in a private academy that catered to the English demands of young and old. I taught young professionals looking to improve their ‘soft skills’ in the morning before they rushed off to work. At lunch I practiced with company managers trying to adapt to the changing demands of an international company. I gave lessons to housewives learning English for status and enjoyment in the afternoon. Finally, late into the evening hours I instructed school aged children who were trying to do little more than to live up to their parents’ expectations.

After this whirlwind introduction to the English industry I moved to Seoul, the vibrant capital, and worked for another private institution that focused on teaching school aged children. It was a franchise academy and its name had been established in educational circles. The school had textbooks and an online component that students were required to complete before each class. In the following contract I worked for an afterschool program that was the public school’s attempt to capitalize on the thirst for extra-curricular education. Seen in a different light, this afterschool program was the government’s system to provide some options for less affluent families. The programs were usually cheaper than their private counterparts and were offered at public schools. Finally, I worked for a private school in which I was the grade three English teacher. This final experience was most congruent with the public education system that we have in Canada because it was an institution where the children went during the day and matriculated from grade one to six. As a private elementary school, it enjoyed a measure of prestige. The tuition was not as

prohibitive as other high-status institutions despite this distinction, and a lottery for admission was held in the interest of impartiality.

## **Looking Back**

I am often conflicted about how to view my experience in South Korea. On the one hand I was relieved to get a job with a degree that has only limited employability options in Canada. I enjoyed a level of financial security that I would not find in my own country. Initially the job was easy because the school at which I worked expected little more than a warm body, as long as it spoke native English. I also enjoyed what I would call 'reverse racism' where my race was seen as a positivism from which I reaped many social and economic benefits. It was not until later that I began to consider the macro-level mechanisms that were at work and the role I was playing in perpetuating them.

I realized that, for better or worse, English is an international language. I believe that there can be great benefits in having a common language through which we can all communicate, but the tangential effects that the spread of English is having on the cultures of the world is obvious. In recent history English has spread because of globalization and the world capitalist system. This new, more subtle domination can be described as cultural imperialism. I have heard it referred to as coca-colonization. I spoke with Koreans who held this critical view of the presence of English in their country. They would bemoan the necessity of learning the foreign language and the expenses of time and money that it entailed. On the other hand, I knew Koreans that regarded English simply as a tool that the wielder could use to benefit themselves, their families, and their country. They did not worry about the history of the English language nor did they see it as a threat to their culture.

Korea has a rich history that is demonstrated by the complex traditions surrounding respect and the hierarchies of status. I recognized this most viscerally while teaching managers and team leaders at a large, international company. These men were older than me and had high positions in the organization. They were in the habit of receiving respect from younger members. Due to a tradition of Confucianism, however, they were compelled to hold me in high regard because of my status as a teacher. This reverence for the one who teaches is beginning to erode in Korean society as the younger generation begins to feel more and more entitled in an increasingly neoliberal society. Faith in public schools is dwindling as parents and students turn to private institutions to provide quality education. In traditional society the teacher was unconditionally respected, where in a neoliberal society the consumer is always right. If the teacher cannot perform, the forces of the market will induce economic penalties. This is a positive arrangement from an educational standpoint. Teachers that don't reach standards of excellence will be persuaded to improve their practice or leave the profession altogether. The problem occurs when we look at it in the context of economic realities. A significant portion of education, not just English, is being provided privately and is subject to the laws of supply and demand. As teachers or businesses prove their ability to achieve results, their demand grows. With this rise in demand follows a heftier price tag. As a result, the best and most respected education becomes attainable only by the highest classes of society. The place of English in Korean society today can be seen as a microcosm of the larger trend of neoliberalism. Those that possess a high level of English efficiency tend to be regarded as having high status. In this way, English becomes a form of



cultural and economic capital. The stereotype is frequently reproduced in popular media where the Korean who is fluent in English is cosmopolitan and hip, while the one who struggles with the language is an out-of-vogue country bumpkin (Lo & Kim, 2012).

I enjoyed the lifestyle that I was able to carve out for myself in South Korea. A big city has endless excitements, diversions, and novel activities to fill one's time. Living in a foreign country is an eye-opening experience. I felt quite welcome in South Korea but it was never truly my home. Besides wanting an education degree, I desired to return to the land of my birth where language is never an impediment and I implicitly understand the people and the customs. Perhaps it is true that to go far, one must return.

In the end I left South Korea to obtain my education degree from a Canadian university and legitimize my practice. I knew I wanted to teach but I felt I was missing an important foundation that I needed to become a better teacher. The Faculty of Education at Memorial University provided me with that foundation. I was able to apply many of the experiences that I had accrued to the classes that I was taking in the course of my degree. After completing my education degree I feel like I have a theoretical base to supplement my practical experience. I know that without my experiences in South Korea I would have interpreted my training at MUN much differently.

My experiences alone are not enough to understand the macro-level forces that have caused such rapid change in South Korea, nor is it sufficient reading material for anyone who wishes to undertake a similar journey. However, by looking at my personal interpretation of the English industry, we can see some of the effects that rapid change is having on education and culture in South Korea.

It is my hope that those that are considering teaching abroad can gain some insight from the experiences and interpretations I have put forth. So in closing I will offer a few suggestions to the interested. Firstly, do your research. Jobs are easy to come by and after reading through numerous postings they can begin to look the same. Despite this, the reality of each job can vary widely. Make a list of questions about details that are important to you before you schedule any interviews. Next, talk with people that have lived and worked in the place you will be going. Speaking with someone who has lived in a country of interest can help you consider aspects of life in that country that you may overlook. When doing this, however, remember to have an open mind and reserve your own judgment for when you are settled in your job and your community. The place you are going to is not Newfoundland. Comparing the difficulties of life abroad or the unfamiliar culture in which you are immersed to the comfortable and familiar life at home will rarely produce a positive state of mind. Immerse yourself in the language and the culture, get involved in the community, and enjoy yourself.

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## **Chapter 8: Building on the Past: A Short Reflection on Starting Out, Ending Up, and Hoping Still**

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I was an undergraduate student in Faculty of Education in the 1970s, a time during which the halls of what is now the G.A. Hickman building bustled with throngs of students. We were wall-to wall, and all the office doors were open, to our gaze if not our entry. Many of us had come in from very small 'outport' communities that, back then, were thriving, not dying. We were among those small few from every community who went to university, which usually meant MUN. And while St. John's, or 'town', as we called it, offered all kinds of temptations and we were free to 'run wild like Billy goats', as our parents might say, come weekends or holidays, we couldn't wait to get back home. Home was where the real action was - among friends and families and at the times that came from a gathering of both that outmatched any dance at Paton College or the Thompson Student Centre. Yet, little noticed by us then, each return became a measure of distance and change - in our communities and ourselves.

But we had left home and all it meant to study teaching - a good career choice back then and one that was imaginable. There were teachers in every community. You either could or could not see yourself as one. If you could, you found yourself here, in the Faculty of Education. We were young beyond years. We carried ourselves loose and carefree and wore long hair, Indian cotton tops and blue jeans, and we smelled of a mix of marijuana and patchouli oil. We were concerned with fairness and one another. We had no great sense of being 'less than' in any larger scheme of things. Yes, there were 'the townies' and 'the baywops', but in that rivalry each side won as we came together to learn and to love. More often our differences helped to build resilience rather than defeat. Problems with self-esteem were, well, not problems. That concept had not yet become fashionable here, which is not to say that any one of us was unmarked by the very struggles of being and living.

In our classes, no one said much, when we bothered to go, with the exception of a few who most of saw as taking themselves far too seriously. We listened and wrote and smoked cigarettes and couldn't wait for it all to be over to go to the Breezeway Bar or Big Bens. While we didn't really get to know our professors, there was always a sense that they knew who we were even if they did not care what we were doing. In that way, it was like a small community. Someone always had their eye on you and, if push came to shove, they had your back, too. Our professors were a cast of characters, warm or cruel or indifferent or broken, just like everyone else we saw day in and day out in the home communities we had left. But our professors were there and that seemed important, then. Their presence was an anchor that provided some sense of a home away from home.

There were two rooms in the Faculty of Education that we all loved. The cafeteria on the fifth floor was as essential to our lives as the Breezeway Bar. The women who staffed it knew it and us didn't matter if, on occasion, we were a dime or two short the price of a coffee; they would top up the difference. It was a place you could come to sit, to read, to finish an assignment or to study people, especially professors. Did they know they were being studied? We were the unofficial ethnographers of the Faculty. We were like television viewers watching a character in some unfolding drama, trying to figure out their motives, actions and relationships. We watched longingly, wanting to be them and, perhaps, to replace them. It is the arrogance of the young to think this way.

The second room was the Curriculum Materials Centre. Regardless of how cold it may have felt elsewhere, it was always warm and inviting there. All those books and the stories of inspiration and optimism they contained overwhelmed my senses. And the women who stacked the shelves, signed out our books, and answered our questions with an enthusiasm that left you feeling smart and important and accepted were among the most loving and caring you could meet. It was possible to feel safe and accepted. We studied under their watch and felt how they valued us and believed in what we were doing. Of course, they weren't under any illusions about our less studious sides; many of them were mothers, too, and they knew how to measure and balance and to see into the soul of people.

We competed at sports or for boyfriends or girlfriends, but not for grades. It seemed there was little fuss about them, at all. As long as we passed, could come back the next semester, and continue toward graduation - that was all that mattered. We studied together, shared notes, and helped one another in whatever ways we could. That was what you did. Of course we also fought about differences that seemed big then and are hardly memorable now. I think we had perspective and we had community. We belonged with someone if not everyone, and we were happy. We fell in love, put our work aside, got hurt, and tried to regroup to get through exams, heartbroken and not. We moved on. It was the time of our lives.

By the early 1980s, some of us began the second round, a return, this time for graduate study. By then we had lived in other communities as teachers and learned some of what it meant to be at the front of the room and all that it entailed. We knew a little of what it was like to be 'out on our own' in a world unfolding in broad strokes and movements. A realization of what we did not know sent many of us back to school again, more humble and self-aware now. We worked harder and played, too, in that liminal space a graduate student occupies. Lines were blurred and we found ourselves drinking and dancing with the same professors we had watched from afar as undergraduates. Those were heady days of theory, desire, and possibility. Ideas came with us over dinners and drinks, on drives, and in casual conversations. The world got larger and, at the same time, sadder. Our minds and bodies were falling into places we had not imagined.

Fast forward twenty years and I have found my way back to the Faculty of Education, now as a professor who had already spent many years 'away', elsewhere. The return was a dream-come-true, to work in a place committed to this place, its people, and an education for and of them. The day of the job interview I walked into the building and that smell that had not ever left my nostrils, the deep familiarity of a place that is part of your molecular structure. Other things were less familiar although some of those subjects of my character studies of years ago remained, still.

It is never easy to change position in relation to our ideals. It is disorienting and, often, disappointing. It is not only that 'things change' but that we do, as well. The sands shift in all directions and we are adrift, left to long for something lost and to hope for something not yet. And even if, at the mercy of memory, nothing feels real anymore, returns offer their own opportunity for reflection.

As a young undergraduate student, the thought that this place was a lonely one would not have

occurred to me. But I see now it is a lonely place. Where is everyone? Fewer students gather fewer times. They hang out online, together with no one and not really anywhere. And why is it so rare to see professors sitting and talking to one another outside a scheduled meeting? I wonder when it changed? Was it like an event - sudden and irreversible? Or was it like a disease - slow moving and subcutaneous?

Regardless of what happened or how, things are different now. It is not the place where I studied but it is the place where I work. And as I watch the remaining representatives of that time continue to toil, I want to remember what it is they built here with others, and inside me, too. I want to be thankful for the community that awaited me when I first came here as a student, the one that nurtured my ill-formed dreams and that provided a loving space in which I could learn and grow.

The presentism that haunts so many things erases so much, yet it seems foolhardy to forget that for decades before now there were those who forged out something important and worthwhile, on which many built and continue to build. As we try to find our way forward in what are, at best, uncertain educational times, we might do well to ponder and to honour the contributions that framed this very specific response to a people and place. In presentism there is often smugness, an assured belief that we have progressed, improved, bettered. I guess it depends on that place in the pew again, and the beliefs and values you honour as you sit there.

Things change. But the need for community does not. The gift of community, belonging, and acceptance that enveloped me in those early days as a student remain desirable features of a Faculty committed to moving forward in communion with all its constituents. It is never too late to build such relationships, if we make them our priorities. And a home away from home as a place to work, grow and relate will never be an outdated notion. Now, as new and younger colleagues arrive and gather together in their newness, I rejoice that some other kinds of community are emerging.

Careers aside, what matters most is how we feel in these hallways of this building, at times when we think no one is looking, and how we feel heard, even when we are not saying much aloud at all. That's the kind of place where I studied and learned; it is still the kind of place where I want to work and teach. Looking back may offer some insight into what direction to dream. In the words of Jean Vanier, "Maybe the world will be transformed when we learn to have fun together. I don't mean to suggest that we don't talk about serious things. But maybe what our world needs more than anything are communities where we celebrate life together and become a sign of hope for our world. Maybe we need signs that it is possible to love each other". Signs by which to learn and to live.

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## **Chapter 9: Okay, Well How about Applied Liberal Education? Making a case for the Humanities through Medical Education**

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### **Abstract**

Often, the defense of the humanities in universities rests upon the benefits that they confer on society. The stakes for such a case are especially high given recent austerity processes underway, post-economic crisis. However, I argue that an emphasis on social benefits risks undermining the educational value of the humanities. I also claim, somewhat paradoxically, that the worth of the humanities has a certain kind of applicability or potential that can recommend itself to a variety of places in the university. Such an argument does not make a direct case for the humanities as distinct academic fields. However, by showing how liberal education is integral to education in professions that serve the public good, such as medicine, I aim to show that the humanities can play a crucial educational role. Accordingly, the humanities should be supported for salient educational reasons of public value or merit.

### **The Crisis of the Humanities**

Once upon a time, a solid grounding in the humanities was considered to be an essential component of what it means to be educated. This perspective benefited from a rare consensus between the philosophy of higher education and the public's sense of the role and purpose of the university. This might sound like revisionist history, but I use the term "consensus" in a relative sense. No doubt the humanities have always faced some kind of scrutiny from those inside and out of the academy. In fact, liberal education has been subject to ongoing debates about the influence of the marketplace and its role in preparing future generations.<sup>1</sup> However, it seems clear that the humanities, and the liberal education that served it, was generally thought to deserve a special place in a person's educational life. So long as the humanities were granted this special place, universities were largely free to offer a liberal education on the terms that they saw fit.

This arrangement is clearly over. On the one hand, the situation of the humanities has had a particularly rough time over the past few decades. We've seen a number of admirable defenses of liberal education in response.<sup>2</sup> But the trend has crossed a threshold. An entrenched economic crisis seems to have been the final straw for a society that has written the vision of education in primarily economic terms. For the humanities, this serves as a kind of double humiliation. First, education's agenda was "broadly" defined as an engine to economic growth and social mobility. Liberal education is not well-suited to such aims. But as long as governments were able to provide funding, and universities were able to maintain enrolment numbers, the humanities could be supported as a kind of luxury or as a signifier of tradition and prestige. However, recent developments in higher education seem to indicate that the humanities cannot be supported even as an indulgence. Government shortfalls in university funding have so far shown that the humanities, and the model of liberal education that relies on them, will be the first to go.

For those working in the humanities, the short-sightedness of this approach is obvious. But this only seems obvious because their ongoing initiation into those values that make the reasons for preserving humanistic liberal education self-evident. These reasons are not so evident for policy-



makers struggling to keep shrinking budgets in check. This poses certain justificatory challenges in defending the existence of the humanities in the university.

We might be to try and show that the humanities confer measurable benefits to society. We could make the case that arts students are more employable than business students. Or maybe that philosophy can be used to develop effective social policy. Such a strategy is short sighted and sells the humanities short. Stanley Fish, for example, has recently argued that we should reject a justificatory structure that relies on pointing out the short-term benefits for the community at large. Accepting the structure only serves as a tacit admission of guilt to the charge that the humanities are not pulling their weight. At the worst, if the arguments for short-term benefits turn out to be inconclusive or unsound, the humanities have no recourse but to admit defeat, having legitimated the structure. Fish summarizes the appropriate approach, as he sees it, as follows:

When it comes to justifying the humanities, the wrong questions are what benefits do you provide for society (I'm not denying there are some) and are you cost-effective. The right question is how do you...fit into what we are supposed to be doing as a university. "As a university" is the key phrase, for it recognizes the university as an integral unity with its own history, projects and goals; goals that at times intersect with the more general goals of the culture at large, and at times don't; but whether they do or don't shouldn't be the basis of deciding whether a program deserves a place in the university.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than play the game of economics, a game the humanities cannot win, universities should educate decision-makers on the role and purpose of the university. Such an approach is more honest, even if it is no more likely to be effective than any other.

Fish's advice may not turn out to be good strategy. But it moves the argument a step forward by making a crucial distinction between the benefits of the humanities as academic fields of study and the benefits of participation in humanistic activities such as poetry reading or philosophizing. Too often, the justification of the humanities conflates the former with the latter. Academics value the opportunity to undertake sustained scholarly inquiry about the textual consistency of Kant's moral theory or Ovid's influence on modern literature. But such investigations may have no immediate benefits to the community and its undertaking is not quite the same as getting enjoyment from reading Ovid or reflecting on the one's own moral life from reading Kant. There is a serious error in trying to justify the academic value of the humanities by forcing it into an instrumental framework. If we want to continue the humanistic tradition in the former sense, we need to develop a clear account of the value of the humanities as academic disciplines within a university first and foremost.

I will leave this argument as it stands. It seeks to take a perceived weakness (the lack of "relevance" in liberal education) and aims to show how this perception is informed more by as much a failure to understand the role and purpose of the university as anything else. But I also think that it is incomplete. In stressing the importance of remaining unapologetic about the academic value of the humanities, and in trying, understandably, to maintain the integrity of the internal values of the university, the argument passes over the educational value of a humanistic liberal education. Philosophers of education are well aware of such arguments though the works of R.S. Peters and Paul Hirst, among others. Like academic values, the educational values

proffered by liberal education may not be hard pressed to justify themselves on today's economic stage. But neither must it mischaracterize itself as a process that offers little to its students other than an opportunity to briefly in what academics value about their work.

In the traditional story of liberal education, the humanities offer an initiation into forms of knowledge and understanding that are of intrinsic worth or value. Such worth is not directed to particular ends, nor is it restricted to a specific intellectual caste. It is something that is of value to humankind. Now the question is this: can liberal education conceived in this way continue under such trying circumstances? After all, it is the unusual nature of the intrinsic worth argument that makes it difficult to demonstrate to those outside of the academy – because it is supposed to be dissociated from particular practical concerns we can't really demonstrate its value by showing how it can further economic aims or policy goals. This suggests rough going for liberal education into the future.

### Medical Education in the Humanities

Medical education in North America has an interesting relationship with the universities. In the late 19th century, most schools of medicine were fairly unregulated. However, the modern medicine we see today has largely been shaped and influenced by the publication of Abraham Flexner's report on medical education. "The Flexner Report" resulted in nothing less than a wholesale dismantling and reconstruction of medical education into the regulated and standardized form seen today in Canada and the United States.<sup>4</sup> The report exerted a cultural, as well as institutional, influence: Flexner's report firmly established the professional identity of physicians as experts in modern sciences and a conception of medical practice as a technical discipline.<sup>5</sup> This conception was once seen as an orthodox educational ideal.

Clearly, such a conception was not value - neutral and reflects a particular set of assumptions about the nature of medical work and its basic aims. This has led to significant challenges as medical practice makes the transition to the 21st century.

Physicians increasingly face complex questions regarding patient well-being and professional obligations. Accordingly, professional bodies such as the Carnegie Foundation have called for a more progressive focus in medical education, acknowledging that training focused on scientific knowledge is insufficient in this respect.<sup>6</sup>

These challenges require a more substantive approach than developing decision-making skills. In fact, medical education has also struggled with an overall focus on the patient as a person as opposed to an object of medical study. Consider the example of the ethics of patient communication. Mishler's landmark study of patient-doctor communication revealed systemic, dehumanizing communicative interaction between patient and doctor.<sup>7</sup> Adopting Habermas' theory of communicative action as an analytic framework, Mishler studied communicative interactions between patient and doctor and discovered that they were consistently characterized by a refusal to acknowledge the lived experiences of the patient. Consider the following recorded interaction. In this incident, the doctor is assessing the patient's stomach complaints:

Doctor: How, how soon after you eat it?

Patient: Well...probably an hour...maybe less -

Doctor: About an hour?

Patient: Maybe less...I've cheated and I've been drinking which I shouldn't have done -

Doctor: Does drinking make it worse?

Patient: [I drink] enough to make me go to sleep at night...

Doctor: One or two drinks a day?

The interaction seems typical. However, the significance and meaning of patient's statements about "drinking to sleep" and "drinking which I shouldn't have done" play a particular role in her life, health and well-being. These statements, which reflect significantly on the patient's quality of life, are ignored by the physician and are reduced to diagnostic information such as "how many drinks per day?" The "context-stripping" and abstracting standards of the biomedical approach orient the direction of physician's questions and the interpretation of reported problems.<sup>8</sup> According to Mishler, the biomedical and technocratic "voice of medicine" undermines and distorts mutual dialogue and human interaction. As a consequence, the humane dimension of medical practice is severely compromised.<sup>9</sup>

Mishler's study and subsequent challenge to medical schools to prepare future physicians for more humane interaction has inspired much work in doctor-patient communication.<sup>10</sup> His and similar work has led to a general shift in emphasis on the critical role played by the humanities in broadening the professional formation of doctors.<sup>11 12</sup> One of the central objectives of this shift is to expand the professional identity of physicians beyond technical apprenticeship and to "humanize" medical practice via engagement with the ideals of liberal education.

Despite the spirit of this reform, there appears to be little philosophical reflection in contemporary medical literature on the conceptual linkages between liberal education, on the one hand, and medical educational scholarship, on the other. As a consequence, attempts at implementing a humanistic conception of medical education is often distorted due to a misunderstanding of the educational ends and appropriate means of humanistic and liberal education.<sup>13</sup> Despite Mishler's challenge, for example, education in communication is predominantly treated as a mere means to a more accurate or clinically sound diagnosis and not as a way of addressing patient needs within a broader context of well-being. On this view, the patient remains a strictly scientific object of clinical study.<sup>14</sup> While medical education may require a humanistic perspective, such an aim is consistently undermined by a model of training that remains dominant, evinced by a consistent failure to appropriately develop the relationship between liberal education and medical education.<sup>15 16</sup> I argue that it is within this relationship that we can develop an account of the humanities that may have an important role in our current educational context. If the historians are right and liberal education often finds itself having to renegotiate its place in the larger community, perhaps this move is another stage in the negotiation.

Here I want to make a case for what would best be called applied liberal education. Applied liberal education is, as I see it, an education that integrates the aims, value and pedagogy of liberal education in a way that helps fully realize the humanistic dimensions of more specialist professions such as medicine. It is “applied” insofar as it offers resources and perspectives that are lacking in and can address problems that seem intractable to professional education.

Applied liberal education is best characterized by contrasting it with how liberal education is usually adopted in medical education, and moving on from there. The humanities in medical education are at present guided by an unreconstructed Oakshottian version of initiation. The fault does not lie with Oakshott. Rather, medical education misappropriates the initiation ideal in ways that leave medical students viewing the humanities as ineffectual and indulgent.

On this model, medical students are exposed to forms of thought such as philosophy and literature as distinct and disconnected academic disciplines. The idea is that students ought to, along with physiology and immunology, master humanistic bodies of knowledge such as ethics and apply them in medical practice. In medical ethics education, for example, students are required to develop an understanding of what Moreno calls the “bioethics mantra”: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.<sup>17</sup> Once students learn how to apply these principles to particular medical cases, their humanistic education in ethics is largely complete.

William Stempsey characterizes this approach as a “quarantine” of humanistic disciplines that undermines their educational value.<sup>18</sup> This model lies closer to Fish’s account of the humanities as fields of academic study that transmit internal intellectual standards. This model may be good for justifying the humanities as a research enterprise in Faculties of Medicine, but medical education is mistaken in thinking that academic values make for good educational values, and that these values in turn make for good professional practitioners. Stempsey characterizes the mistake in the following terms:

Philosophy, theoretical ethics, history, and literary studies are not liberal arts in this sense, but humanities. Those of us who work in these fields see them as academic disciplines, with canonical works and bodies of knowledge that constitute the discipline. We want our medical students to acquire the liberal arts, and not necessarily to become experts in the particular disciplines of the humanities. However, humanities are often taught as ends in themselves and not as vehicles for the liberal arts. When this is done, the connection between the liberal arts and the humanities is easily lost.<sup>19</sup>

At the other extreme, when literature is taught in medical schools it is often used as a means of transmitting medical “rules” or lines of practice.<sup>20</sup> The misdirection of initiation into academic values or technical knowledge only serves to reinforce a model of medical education that is itself defined by a dominant biomedical culture.

Applied liberal education, on the other hand, emphasizes that the humanities are a way of disclosing the moral and ethical dimensions of professional practices such as medicine. In the Oakshottian tradition, liberal education initiates pupils into “an intellectual, imaginative, moral and emotional inheritance”, engagement with which promotes self-knowledge and understanding of the human condition.<sup>21</sup> If a general liberal education involves an initiation into these humanistic values as we understand them in our daily lives, applied liberal education simply

seeks to promote an understanding of these values as they play out in specific contexts of professional practice. Taking the time to counsel a bereaved family member, explaining a difficult diagnosis, helping a parent make a complex decision that will have long-term consequences for their child – such moments require an inheritance of human meanings, values and beliefs if they are to be realized appropriately in medical practice. This inheritance is by no means a side-concern to the business of medical work. Differential diagnoses require dialectical thinking; history-taking demands a sense of narrative.<sup>22</sup> And while these situations clearly require a sound knowledge and understanding of biomedical principles, physicians that exercise these capacities in a moral vacuum cannot carry out their work. Therefore, the humanities can and should have substantive and seamless integration with medical education. This will involve translation – ensuring that the meaning and values of the humanistic tradition are disclosed in the activity medical practice itself, not imposed on medical practice as if they were some foreign body. For example, liberal education's literary tradition facilitates our ability to place ourselves in the lives of others. Dickens, to use the common example, helps us to understand the struggles of poverty. In an applied liberal education focused on medical education, the literary tradition can help disclose moral dilemmas as they play out in medical contexts, emphasizing the patient's experience as these dilemmas play out. Vincent Lamb's *Bloodletting and Miraculous Cures*,<sup>23</sup> about the struggles of medical students practicing in a Toronto hospital, is one example. Through the philosophical tradition, future physicians can become aware of the complexity that these dilemmas take on in the clinical setting. To extend Stempsey's analogy, this means neither treating the humanities as something to be quarantined, nor as a curative. Rather, a classical humanities education is vital to the life of medical practice.

#### Applied Liberal Education: Applied but not Instrumental

In order for an applied liberal education to be a viable philosophical project, I have a certain view of professional practice in mind. I believe that moral professions such as medicine, teaching and social work are essential in delivering primary social goods such as health, education and social support. These professions are fundamentally moral in character by virtue of the essential role that they play. The activities of these professions are not simply regulated by moral principles; rather, they are defined by them. An applied liberal education is essential in making this moral dimension salient. Goods that were once delivered by non-specialist citizens in the larger community (think, for example, of the role that the neighbor once played in providing social support with the relative anonymity of urban life today) are increasingly relying on these professions for their delivery. As society undergoes increasing specialization and division of moral labor, the general liberal education that once played a key role in helping to disclose the value entailed by the humane care and support of others must be supplemented by an applied liberal education that can help professionals realize these values in their specialized moral task. In higher education we have been very good at ensuring that our technical, scientific and economic principles have been contextualized for professionals as a way of dealing with the pronounced differentiation of modern society. We have not been so good at adapting humanistic values for such specialized roles.

Applied liberal education might be thought to be a contradiction in terms. If a defining feature of liberal education is that it is not directed to particular ends, how is applied liberal education not simply a watered-down, instrumentalist take on the humanities? Consider R.S. Peters' claim that liberal education can be legitimately extended to the professional preparation of teachers:

[Liberal education] usually suggests the refusal to harness disciplines to any practical or utilitarian ends; the determination to explore them for their own sake and to pursue paths intimated by what is internal to the disciplines themselves. But, I would suggest, it could also be extended so

that one could describe a vocational training as liberally or illiberally conceived and implemented... In the case of education and politics there is a further reason why disciplines must be presented in this liberal way; for neither education nor politics are useful arts or branches of technology in any straightforward sense in the way in which some might claim that medicine and engineering are.<sup>24</sup>

For Peters, liberal education can only be extended to the professions if they meeting something like a “liberal arts” criterion. Education incorporates many various and complex ethical, aesthetic, and psychological questions that cannot be reduced to specifiable, technical aims. Medicine is presumably different in this respect. It fails the liberal arts test.

There are at least two ways to respond to this critique. I will offer them for areas of further focus for developing a relationship between philosophy of education and medical education. This is a relationship that medical education could surely benefit from, and from which a persuasive case for a modern liberal education could be defended in an educational era marked by increasing pressure on the humanities.

First, I think it is clear from that Peters’ exclusion of medicine from the liberal arts is mistaken. A conception of medical practice reduced to a determinate aim such as “life-extension” is far from sufficient. The fact that such a conception may have taken on a life of its own in our hospitals is not something to be celebrated, just as we should not celebrate a conception of teaching as promoting high test scores. I believe Peters’ dismissal of medicine is more a consequence of the ascendance of a Flexnerian ideal of medical practice in the public mind. As we have seen, such an ideal fails to grasp the humanistic core of medical practice. The persistence of such an ideal is understandable. Whereas teacher education had influential advocates such as Peters, Hirst and others to keep the ideal of education as a moral practice alive, medical education has had few such historical analogues.

Second, I think that we need to look more closely at the relationship between liberal education, professional education and modern life. True, these were questions that preoccupied earlier writers on liberal education. But modernization has only intensified these questions. Mulcahy asks, “What does it mean to be an educated person in the 21st century?”<sup>25</sup> He suggests that we reframe liberal education in terms of modern life, but not in an instrumental or goal directed sense.<sup>26</sup>

[A] particular feature of liberal education...is its capacity to prepare students for dealing with the persistent and common demands of living...many aspects of work have a lasting quality, are common to various forms of work, and may be encountered by most people in the course of a working life. It is these aspects of work that become the main focus of attention...not the particular requirements of specialized forms of work, such as may be found in a particular job.<sup>27</sup>



Like Peters, I think that Mulcahy is perhaps focused too sharply on the technical aspects of professions. In the education of that I have called “moral professions”, such as medicine, we need to prepare individuals for the role they will play in promoting public goods such as health care and social support. While humanistic values may play a role in preparing people for life generally, there is an acknowledged intensification of these values in such professional contexts. In other words, we have to do a better job of preparing our students for life as moral professionals. This will require specialized technical knowledge as well as a naturalized understanding of how those values play out in practice. Physicians may know that we ought to recognize and value the unique experiences of others in our everyday interactions. But how is this insight translated into a medical context where diagnostic thinking requires that we abstract from the particulars to some degree? Taken in this sense, applied liberal education may have a positive educational influence for both individuals and the community. However, this influence is not directed to specific instrumental ends in the sense that Peters and Mulcahy have in mind. It is a proper understanding of the intrinsic human value of moral professions in modern life.

### Conclusion

I have tried to develop a preliminary account of liberal education that can stake out a continued role for the humanities in trying educational times. It lacks the contrarian gesture that Stanley Fish has in mind. Nor does it map out any particular strategic or economic aim likely to catch the attention of university funders. However, even if our educational fortunes turn around and the humanities fall back into favor, I believe that the case for applied liberal education identifies an important dimension of professional education that must be addressed if the humanities are to continue to play an important educational role in modern life.

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## Chapter 10: Experiences of a Body Out of Place

Rikki Smith

I am a female from Newfoundland, Canada. I am five feet tall and weigh 100 pounds. I have short, brown hair; big, brown eyes; and almost always have a smile on my face. I can usually be found in school (admittedly, sometimes in the office), at the gym, or on a running trail. Guess my age, level of education, and occupation. I am willing to bet you are thinking: ‘15, maybe 16 years old at the most’; ‘grade school’; and ‘student’. I am actually a 28-year-old behavioural special needs teacher holding a B.Ed., a B.S.Ed., and have recently completed my M.Ed. I work with students (mainly secondary school males) who exhibit extremely violent and challenging behaviours. Already in my career, I have had the opportunity to be a deputy head teacher of a private special school for students with behavioural and challenging needs, in the United Kingdom.

Appearances can be deceiving. This is a well known fact, yet people continue to make assumptions regarding roles, occupations, and positions based on appearance, and wait to be disproved later, once the receiver of such assumptions has proven him/herself. People, who are on the receiving of these assumptions are, what Nirmal Puwar (2004) refers to as, ‘bodies out of place’. Regardless of the qualifications, education, or intelligence of a person in any given position, he/she can be deemed as in, or out of, place in his/her own work environment by outsiders solely based on observable traits such as race, gender, names, body size, speech, and even attractiveness. As someone who is constantly being viewed as young and inexperienced, rather than as a respected educational professional, after reading Moira Gatens’ review of Puwar’s book, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place* I felt compelled to reflect upon, and share, my experiences as a ‘body out of place’. The theoretical perspective of Gatens’ article created my purpose for this paper.

Gatens writes a fantastic review of Puwar’s book. The review is short and to the point, yet edgy and extremely touching to anyone who can relate to her experience as a body out of place. Gatens begins with a personal experience to illustrate her frustration with the assumptions made about her by others. Gatens, a philosophy professor, recalls standing in the philosophy department’s administrative office one day when a student, being seen to by a male administrative assistant, was trying to get her attention, even though she was otherwise occupied. Gatens sums up the experience with the student seeing only one of the two employees of the university as “appropriate” to help him. The student’s assumption that she - the female - was the administrative assistant and the male in the office was simply passing through, is entirely wrong (Gatens, 2007). Why is it, even in today’s modern world, if there is a man and a woman in a university department office, the woman is assumed to be the administrative assistant and the man is assumed to be the professor? To the student, the male administrative assistant was a body out of place even though in reality he was simply doing his job. Gatens, on the other hand, while seen by the student as a body in the right place in the administrator’s office, is indirectly seen as a body out of place as a professor.

Judith Butler proposes a theory about gender roles in her book, *Undoing Gender*. She explains that the terms and conditions, which constitute a person’s gender, are constructed entirely outside of that person; that the viability of one’s own “personhood” is essentially dependent on social norms (Butler, 2004). Basically, we can defy gender stereotypes all we like but it is going to take

a while to undo the mental expectations of males and females that have been instilled in society since the beginning of time.

Alfred Lubrano (1989) in his article, “Bricklayer’s Boy” discusses bodies out of place on a more personal level – the difference in class between him and his own father. They were, as Lubrano put it, “...related by blood, separated by class”. He never understood his father and his father never understood him. They were, however, “college buddies”

– his father was redoing the brick work of the college Lubrano attended. They would often catch the subway home together at the end of the day with little to discuss. Society may have expected Lubrano to follow in his father footsteps and become a bricklayer. However, Lubrano studied hard enough, and his father worked hard enough to support him, so that would not happen. Deserving or not of his college degree and occupation as a reporter, Lubrano fits into society’s blacklisted group, labelled by Puwar as “bodies out of place”.

Gatens also summarizes an incident mentioned in Puwar’s book, where a ‘black’ parliamentarian is mistaken for a member of the cleaning staff and is quickly reminded by a ‘white’ colleague that the elevator he was currently using was only for Members of Parliament (Gatens, 2007). From Gatens’ article, the rest of the story is unknown. However, I would love to have seen the ‘black’ parliamentarian’s reaction, as well as the look on the ‘white’ parliamentarian’s face when both men arrived at the same destination in the building. Gatens then questions what causes so many cases of ‘mistaken identities’ and turns to Puwar’s book for answers. Making such sweeping assumptions says a great deal about bodies; the space they occupy; and the sense of belonging to certain spaces (Gatens, 2007).

In her article, “What’s in a Name?” Itabari Njeri discusses the assumptions made about her based solely on her name. She describes how disappointed some people are when she explains she is from Boston. Others ask if they can call her “Ita” for short, to which her response is something to the effect that her name requires no short version. Then there are the people who ask her what her “real” name is. Essentially, her name would be accepted by the public if she was either from away, or if they could call her something for short (probably so they could pronounce her name). However, the fact that she is from Boston, and does not “look the part”; what she is calling herself must not be her “real name”. We make a number of assumptions, such as the person’s culture, religious beliefs, and even social status based on a name, alone (Njeri, 1994). When assumptions are made about people based on their names, they are seen as being out of place within their own body. Amazing how society has the power to make us feel so out of place, even in our own skin!

Gatens (2007) contends that Puwar’s book, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*, is masterfully written and evocative with original and empirical research. It can, therefore, explain a great deal about the human body, behaviours, and socially constructed spaces. According to Puwar (2004), the human body, in itself, cannot exist as a questionable entity. Instead, it is constructed through social and political practices as being male/female; white/black/Asian/etc; able/disabled; normal/abnormal; and so on. These very constructions of bodies have a history that drives our thoughts and everyday behaviours. Such ideals have been so entrenched into society, and albeit, our ways of thinking, that these beliefs and actions are uncontrollable. We claim not to make assumptions and judgements, yet the fact that there is conscious effort not to judge a person in a space, is evidence that we are wired to believe certain spaces (occupations, roles, positions, etc) are for certain people only.

Let me ask you something. When I say “successful business person” what pops into your head? My money is on you picturing a white male in a business suit, possibly carrying a briefcase. So scrap the suit and the briefcase and what are you left with? That’s right, a white male. Amoja Three Rivers (1991) boldly states society’s assumptions that people, when referred to in the general sense, are white. Obviously if we meant someone of another race or skin colour we would state it – “That coloured man...” or “The African American doctor...” right? Despite the statistics that four fifths of the world’s population is of colour (Rivers, 1991), white skin is seen as the norm. This norm is the reason MPs, who just happen not to be Caucasian, are assumed to be in the wrong elevator.

On the other end of the race spectrum, is Jeanne Park (1990) discussing the pressures of being Asian in an American school system – where, as an Asian, your “place” is at the top of your class, and, heaven forbid, you slip one space. That would defy all stereotypes about Asian intelligence. Park recalls an elementary school teacher saying to her, “You’re Asian; you’re supposed to do well in Math”. What kind of message is that sending to her, as well as to her twenty or so other classmates?

Not only is the human body socially constructed, but the spaces occupied by human bodies are as well (Gatens, 2007). For every space to be occupied by a body, there are assumptions of circumstances and goings-on for that space. Certain elevators are only for MPs and even if you are an MP but don’t look the part, be prepared to be treated with a little less respect because you have just committed a mismatch crime. Guilty as charged for holding a ‘white elite’ position even though you are not white. Women and non-white bodies in positions that are expected to be filled by masculine white men, while liberating, disrupt the sound relationship between gender, race, and space (Puwar as cited in Gatens, 2007). The previous God-given right for white males to hold elite positions is slowly, but progressively, dissipating. However, our beliefs and actions are taking a little longer to catch up, causing us to make assumptions and judgements about bodies in, and out of, spaces. Gatens (2007) concludes her review stating that Puwar’s research is ‘deeply edifying’ and that her book, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*, should be a mandatory read for any person who occupies any space.

I have been on the receiving end of such assumptions more times than I care to remember. While my encounters with ‘entitled elites’ has not been as harsh as others might experience when assumptions are made about their race, my gender and size have generally been the grounds for total strangers to question my presence in a certain social space. In my first year of teaching, I remember a substitute teacher’s attempt to usher me into a grade six bus line on my way to the guidance counsellor’s office after school. She was mortified when I explained I was 23 years old and the grade two teacher there. My reply was that it did not feel very nice to be scurried into a line of eleven-year-olds with her hands on my shoulders.

During my second year of teaching, I was scolded twice in my first week of work. The first time was when a teacher saw me, from back on, entering the staff room and quickly shouted, “And where do you think you’re going young lady?” I was assumed to be a student, based on size I assume, and was quickly being refreshed on where I was, and was not, allowed to be in the school. That was, of course until I explained I was the new special needs teacher. A second time was when I was faxing a letter in the office and the vice principal came into the office, only seeing me from side on, and said, “Excuse me, you can’t touch...”. My reply was a quick smile and “Good morning, Angela”. Both times I was seen as a body out of place.

While substituting on a school sports day, students were allowed to leave early as long as parents were around to pick them up. As I noticed one child's parents outside the classroom door, I dismissed her. The mother came into the classroom, and told me that I had no right to let her child leave; that her teacher needed to okay it first. I explained I was the teacher for the day and her daughter was allowed to be dismissed. The mother apologized as she was under the impression that I was a grade six perfect.

All of the above incidents were minor and certainly laughable once the situations had passed. As I became older and more serious about my teaching career, assumptions that I was a body out of place started to become more frustrating and offensive. While working in the United Kingdom, I took on the role of deputy head teacher (similar to a vice principal) to cover a maternity leave, and was then offered the job permanently for the following year. While in the role of acting deputy head, I was required to attend deputy meetings ever so often. I remember walking in to those meetings only to have several other deputies look at me with inquisition while others were sociable enough to ask if I were actually a deputy head teacher. The fact that I was a foreign teacher; was young for a deputy anyway; and looked even younger than I was, left many of them puzzled. Throw into the mix that the school I worked at was a private all-boys school for behavioural and challenging needs, and I had almost everyone in the room staring. Some of them began to see that I was actually a fair, yet firm and consistent disciplinarian and teacher. Others, I think, never did take me, or any of the issues I raised in meetings, seriously. I worked extremely hard to get into a deputy position but when it was time to return to Newfoundland, the battle began all over again.

I realize schools vary in their cultures. All schools do not operate the same way. There is great variety and differences between and among schools. The schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are no exception. It is a general knowledge that to find a place to teach in St. John's is extremely difficult. I was particularly interested in finding a substitute teaching position in schools where my skills may appropriately be applied. With a behavioural background and extremely effective classroom management skills, I felt confident that I would be able to substitute almost anywhere. I was sadly mistaken. As other teachers may have also experienced, I was actually told by one vice principal on a substitute-teacher orientation night that I wasn't exactly the type of teacher they were looking for as their students were extremely challenging and they needed someone who could take control and enforce firm boundaries. How did she know that I was incapable of doing those things solely based on my appearance? I wonder if she had carefully read past my contact information on my resume, whether she would have seen that I had spent three years teaching children between the ages of six and fourteen in extremely challenging contexts. I was probably exactly what they were looking for. They just could not see what was right in front of their eyes. Instead, I was quickly dismissed based on, what I assume was, my five-foot-tall, 100-pound, female appearance.

When the vice-principal realized I had something to offer, I eventually got a break. My name got passed around a little and, when a behavioural itinerant got put off on sick leave for two weeks, her principal called me up and asked me to fill in for her. Owing to the nature of an itinerant position, I worked for an entire week without even seeing the principal of the school out of which the itinerant worked. I contacted him through email and telephone. Into the second week, the principal asked if I could come in and meet with him. When I showed up at his office he said, "Can I help you?" I told him who I was and apologized for being a bit early. He stared at me for a while and then said, "Oh." Another pause while he looked me over again. Then he said, "This



is your resume?" I replied, "Yes. Were you expecting me to be a brute of a woman?" He smiled and shook his head, then asked me to sit down. A complete mismatch of body and space exhibited here. All I could think was, 'Thank goodness I was asked to do the job before he had a chance to look at me'. I now work for this man. I teach in a behavioural unit in his school.

My most recent experiences of appearing to others as a body out of place are the reactions I get from my new junior high, and high school students and their parents/guardians during intake meetings. The principal introduces me as the student's teacher and immediately, the parent's jaw drops and the student grins from ear to ear. However, my students quickly learn that I am not a pushover and that I do not tolerate unacceptable behaviour. As for the parents, they eventually are put at ease once their child's behaviour begins to improve. I am not a miracle worker but I am much more than my petite exterior lets on.

While people tell me that I should be flattered that others think I am so young and petite, in my occupation I find it quite offensive. Prior to being heard out or proving myself, I am immediately dismissed as I am often assumed to be young, naive, inexperienced, passive, incapable of leading, and therefore, ill-respected in the education field, based on my physical appearance. Being labelled "cute" may be sought out by some women but I see the term as extremely debilitating to my professional accomplishments.

Everyone's experiences of assumptions and judgements cast down from 'deserving elites' is going to be different in nature. However, it is important to share them as doing so creates knowledge and sensitivity in schools surrounding this type of literature. Sharing these experiences can also empower others in similar situations to ensure they continue to prove themselves as deserving of the positions that they currently, or some day would like to, hold. If we only have access to those forms of recognition, which "undo" a person in a given space, recognition will become, and remain, a site of power with the forever differentiation between who qualifies for those places and who does not (Butler, 2004). Everybody has a place and that place should be decided by no other body than the one that occupies it.

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## Chapter 11: When animals tell stories

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### Abstract

In his poem “Mute Swans” Canadian poet Patrick Lane writes: “There are no stories, but that I make them so.”

“Something About Rabbits”, is a prose poem, ostensibly a “story” about a rabbit colony at the University of Victoria, my alma mater. But another narrative enters this piece: that of the young law student learning a new discourse - a new way to investigate reality and document it.

As a legal analyst and poet, I ask myself: What is the relationship between our everyday experience of things and the words we use to describe what happens? In the legal milieu, words and narratives often escape from their original compound and propagate. My poem asks: What happens to our sense of meaning or truth when language is cut off from the physical experience which first led to “the story”?

#### Something about rabbits

It all began at the university residence, or so it is said. A dorm room, a student alone, but he has two rabbits in a cage and we know where that leads. By the time you can tell them apart, the “he” and “she” have turned into “they”.

When I arrive, I think I know about names, the birds and the bees. But in the amphitheatre, my first law professor says: *“You must ask yourself what the reasonable man on the Clapham Omnibus would do in the same circumstances.”*

The boy lets the rabbit family loose in the field. The colony becomes a continent, plants and grasses stripped, million-dollar turf an *aperitif*.

In second year, I learn about guilty and innocent: *“We are advocates, not finders of truth”*. This time we wear robes.

Outside moot court, I witness foreign students feeding rabbits they think are *wild*. At Easter they name newborns. Some are run over on their way to find food. At a fundraising dinner, university donors are given stuffed rabbits as gifts.

In my last year, I find myself lost in what they teach is a *“legal fiction”*.

Under cover of darkness, the administration captures rabbits old and young, cages and flies them to a rabbit *sanctuary* in Texas.

At graduation I receive parting words: “*Watch what judges do, not what they say.*”

Soon the headline reads: *Trouble in Texas: Canadian rabbits escape from their compound, are shot with rifles, farmers angry over lost produce.*

At the university, new students arrive, drawn in by the story of wild rabbits alive on campus. When truth dawns, these fresh young minds dig up lawns in protest. They plant vegetables in memory of the dead they never knew.

*De minimus no curat lex*: the law does not concern itself with trifles.

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## **Chapter 12: Personal Presentation Through Dress as it Relates to Becoming a Teacher**

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\*This research was supported by a Faculty of Education Research and Development grant.

### **Abstract**

In a limited study at the Memorial University of Newfoundland we explored dress amongst pre-service teachers during their internships as they moved towards becoming professional elementary or secondary teachers. We utilized both individual interviews and individual portrait photographs. From the narratives of the participants three common themes emerged: the existence of teacher dress codes, changes in dress, and dress as communication about self. Participants reported feeling very aware of negotiating a balance between dressing for others and dress as a means to communicate about self. We noted an emerging sense that good teaching can be associated with the acceptance and exploration of the concept of social and cultural difference for both educators and students. The research is significant because we know that role models are important to children and youth and we believe that students need a broader range of models about what is appropriate. The results make a contribution to knowledge about pre-service teacher dress, sketch a bigger picture about the operations of power in schools and classrooms, and help to show how images form an important part of our knowledge base. Additionally, our results are relevant for the broader education community such as school boards and teacher organizations, where they may contribute to the revision of existing policies, as well as to the development of new ones.

How does a university student change their appearance, moving from casual dress to that of a professional elementary or secondary teacher? In a limited study at the Memorial University of Newfoundland, this question was explored through use of both individual interviews and visual observations. Here we use the terms dress, clothing, costume, appearance and adornment, to mean body modification including clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, glasses, make-up, body decoration, tattoos, accessories and other possibilities (Weber & Mitchell, 1995).

While the dress of students entering schools as interns is largely the choice of the individual, there are guidelines for pre-service teachers to follow. In the Eastern School District of Newfoundland there exists an unwritten dress code, which recommends that clothing should reflect a 'business casual' standard. In order to promote a professional work environment it is suggested that denim jeans should not be worn. Yet despite these guidelines there is nevertheless an overall impression that dress standards are declining (Dr. B. Sheppard, former CEO of Eastern School District, personal communication, November 12, 2009). Are pre-service teachers aware of this trend? How would they respond to this statement? While there are no formal attire guidelines developed by Memorial's teacher education office, prior to internship students are

advised that appropriate dress may garner respect from others. Further, university supervisors reinforce this recommendation in later discussions (Mr. H. Blake, Coordinator (Field Services), personal communication, November 13, 2009). Anecdotal reports from interns note that senior teachers and cooperating teachers set the tone for dress and in some cases speak with interns about their choices (Dr. G. Galway, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs, personal communication, March 22, 2012). How do pre-service teachers respond to such advice? Do they find that they gain more respect from students when they adhere to certain clothing standards? Have they tried a variety of dress options and noticed differences? What kinds of messages are conveyed through dress, both to colleagues and to students? Personal presentation of those in transition from university student to an intern teacher is not well documented. Therefore we chose to explore this topic.

Memorial University offers a primary/elementary program that prepares students for teaching positions from kindergarten to grade six. It is offered as both a first and a second degree, which includes field experiences in schools as well as an internship. An intermediate secondary program prepares students for teaching positions from grades 7 to 12. It is open to graduates with first degrees that include two teaching subjects. The program is undertaken over three semesters, the middle of which is spent as a full-time intern in schools.

### Dress Amongst Pre-service Teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador

This study queried whether a student's presentation of dress evolved over the course of the internship. Are some experiences common to pre-service teachers based on gender, age, school culture or other variables? These questions were considered in the context of the professional socialization of selected Memorial University of Newfoundland pre-service teachers during the fall and winter of 2010. At that time the group was transitioning from university students to teachers during the internship.

We tailored our methodology to best describe and understand the visual aspects of experience. In this way quality and depth were added to the findings as compared to those of earlier investigations (Weber & Mitchell, 1995).

### Literature Review

Employing an interdisciplinary approach, which implied the notion of teacher as a cumulative cultural text Weber and Mitchell (1995) found that pre-service teachers' dress is important to their sense of identity. If clothing is a language, it is, similar to verbal communication, a socially determined activity. When asked to draw an ideal teacher, the pre-service teachers that Weber and Mitchell interviewed depicted uniformity with the attire being plain and conservative. Male teachers were portrayed as somewhat unkempt. These images reflected the prevailing norm of middle-class respectability. Expressing sexuality was understood as problematic. However, the authors note that teachers and pre-service teachers are aware of social expectations and may, in fact, by 'disguising' themselves according to socially sanctioned images.

There is no doubt that clothing demarcates gender (Atkinson, 2008; McCarthy, 2003; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). Clothing in the drawings studied by Weber and Mitchell was also employed by the pre-service teachers to examine stereotypes; they associated dressing in a certain manner with teaching a certain way. The depictions by some changed over the course of an internship in



response to particular school situations. Additionally, as well as helping identify the teacher, dress was understood by the pre-service teachers as a pedagogical strategy to establish respect, order and a serious working atmosphere and to exert control.

Blaikie (2007, 2009) adopted arts-informed methods to explore how female academics used dress as a strategy to negotiate scholarly identity and authority. Gathering data through interviews and photographs, she employed poetry and paintings as well as analytical prose to report her findings.

Using the same methods Blakie's (2011) investigation of the male professoriate found that dress is a self-reflexive social, personal and political statement, which challenges or confirms gender and social roles. Social acceptance judged by gender and sexual orientation was central. The latter were revealed in a policed socio-cultural, personal and visual aesthetic of the body and clothing that was understood to be scholarly.

Barney (2009) utilized a/r/tography as the methodology in his study in which he invited a public secondary school art teacher and her students to explore concepts of dress while inquiring through artistic processes. Barney asked what understandings are provoked by concepts of dress investigated in relation to artist, researcher, and teacher identities? Dress was found to be both oppressive and potentially liberating. New understandings and "redescriptions" of artist, researcher, and teacher identities developed. For example, a teacher is not one who transmits fixed bodies of knowledge to generate new understandings, but rather one who occasions learning. Teaching and learning co-existed and were not separate within the identities of teacher and student. Nor were they balanced and equal. Instead they were relational, shared and shifting processes.

The research of Weber and Mitchell (1995, 2004, 2006), Mitchell and Weber (1999), Blaikie (2007, 2009, 2011) and Barney (2009) all describe research with Canadian populations. However, we pondered what a study of dress and teacher interns in Newfoundland would reveal. The culture of Newfoundland is considered to be unique within Canada. It is possible therefore, that this aspect of school culture in the province may be distinctive.

Recently studies regarding social acceptance of gay, lesbian and/or transgender identity have become more common in North America. Might this be an aspect of identity that some student interns struggle to communicate or conceal in the classroom (Atkinson, 2008)? As well, body modification in the form of tattooing (Blair, 2009) and plastic surgery has gained popularity amongst young people. Do such changes form a part of some pre-service teachers' self-presentation through dress (Colbert, 2008)?

### Theoretical Framework

Two concepts frame this research; Goffman's ideas about performance linked to impression management (1959) and Butler's notion of performativity (1993). Goffman discusses "impression management" as a means by which a person adjusts their posture, facial expressions or clothing to match any given situation. The impetus is to give the right 'impression' to those we meet. Additionally, he suggests that people attempt to present an idealized version of the character they are performing. In our study, this character is the teacher, who reflects the values

of society. Thus, wearing an appropriate costume enables the teacher to be recognized more readily which, in turn, contributes to the social inscription of the teacher.

Goffman's Shakespearean metaphor (1959) for everyday life – "all the world's a stage" – suggests that people perform their identities to an audience in a conscious, bodily way (on the surface). This notion seems straightforward and obvious -- however, what might lie beneath or behind such displays of self? In this common sense view we are thoughtful actors with agency, making choices, and are equipped with some kind of coherent inner self. But what is the relationship between our outer performance and our inner consciousness? Judith Butler's notion of performativity is helpful here (1993).

In introducing performativity, Butler suggests that there is no natural body that exists before the body is culturally inscribed. We *do* gender through repeated "acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (p. 25). In other words, gender is a performance; it is what you *do* at particular times, rather than a universal *who you are*. Configurations of gender have come to seem natural in our culture, but it does not have to be this way. Rather than being a fixed characteristic in a person, Butler promotes the mobilization of a proliferation of genders -- and therefore identities.

We argue that Butler's concept of performativity (1993) can be helpfully read as extending into other realms of life. We are not born to teach, but rather, through a set of repeated acts, laboring within the tight parameters of a regulatory framework, we *do* teaching. We perform the teacher, framed by the regulated "script" of teaching. And a part of the teacher's script includes the presentation of oneself through costume.

Thus, while teachers in schools are still expected to conform in various ways, and appropriate dress works to convince other people that one is a teacher (Goffman, 1959), teachers also have to convince themselves through repeated and appropriate acts of 'dressing like a teacher' (Butler, 1993). Further, our awareness that we are performing to a script does not make the script disappear. Nevertheless, such knowledge offers us an opportunity to engage in reflection, and the possibility to choose other options. Therefore, we examined the norms that govern pre-service teacher self-presentation.

## Methodology

We used interviews and visual methods (Pink, 2001) to take a critical approach. By comprehending the reflexivity and experience through which visual materials such as photographs were produced and interpreted, we met the challenges of understanding local visual cultures as well as the ethical issues raised. Drawing on the insights of photography theorist Victor Burgin (2010), who argues that visual culture involves both self-consciousness and unconscious processes, we focused on the production of meanings through images. Our work draws on interviews with, and photographs of, selected pre-service teachers' self-presentation through dress. We directed particular focus on digital portrait photos, a good source because the material is easily accessible. Portrait photos are an important but, until recently, relatively overlooked source of insight into teacher dress. The photos, taken by individual teachers and their photographers, often include multiple subtle details, thus offering unusual insights not only into teachers' work and personal histories, but also into the nature of the teaching experience and cultural understandings of teacher self-presentation during an era of transition. Within such an

environment, photos take on immense importance. These photos, when read through the lens of teacher interviews, Weber and Mitchell's (1995, 2006) contemporary understandings of teacher dress, and the theoretical lenses of Goffman's concept of impression management (1959) and Butler's notion of performativity (1993), allow for a deep engagement with the articulation of contemporary teacher experience.

#### *(i) Digital Photographs*

The pre-service teachers used their personal digital cameras for the project. A minimum of one photograph a week was desirable with these being collected electronically by the researchers. The photographs were then used to aid analysis. Additionally, they were used, with permission, for publication as illustrations of the narratives that emerged from the interviews.

#### *(ii) Sampling*

Eight pre-service teachers comprised of six females and two male students, beginning their teaching internships, were invited to participate in this study. Researchers were particularly interested in the experiences of males as their views have seldom been explored, however a perfect balance was deemed not necessary. It was noted that few males enroll in the primary-elementary integrated program.

#### *(iii) Data Collection*

At the end of the internship participants were interviewed. Transcripts from the digital recording sessions were supplemented with notations made either during the sessions or shortly thereafter. In addition, photographs submitted were used as visual referents adding further credibility. Stories emanated from these pictures and would be used as illustrations, points of reference and aides to memory.

#### *(iv) Instrumentation*

Our interview questions served as guides to establish a research based relationship with the participants. Students were invited to recall stories of how they developed their professional style of dress. The majority were open questions that took the form of a semi-structured interview. This allowed the interviewer to prompt participants in order to gain further insights. Since the success of the study depended to a large extent on eliciting high quality information, the methodology of asking and listening was important. *The Ethnographic Interview* by Spradley (1979) was used as well as the organizing concepts from art educator Feldman (1987) as guides. All interviews were transcribed.

Narrative analysis and analysis of narrative (Polkinghorn, as cited in Kramp, 2004) were employed. This involved looking at the whole story before addressing excerpts. Rereading helped us discern particular themes for each narrative. These expressed the essence in abstraction. Participants' experiences were embodied and temporal and their language was preserved. Kramp finds that metaphors are often used as organizing images in narratives. Perhaps this is because, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue, metaphors structure our conceptual systems, and any abstraction requires layers of metaphor. Indeed, they claim, non-metaphorical language is useful only to describe physical reality, and because metaphors arise from our

experiences they are culturally specific. Thus, since we accepted that language is a source of evidence to aid in the discovery of conceptual systems, it followed that in our research we aimed for a holistic understanding of each story. Polkinghorne's 'narrative analysis' (as cited in Kramp, 2004), based on narrative reasoning produces a story created by the researcher based on those elicited from the participants. Constructed in this manner, our story fits the data while at the same time ordering and bringing a meaning to it that is not apparent in the data themselves. This is a "method that returns a story to the teller that is both hers and not hers; that contains herself in good company" (p. 120). The research product was reviewed with the participants.

Next, we moved inductively to identify themes found in individual narratives that suggested a common theme between a variety of narratives. This is what Polkinghorne (as cited in Kramp, 2004) calls 'analysis of narratives' which draws on paradigmatic reasoning. This approach was useful for understanding abstractions. The data was then organized in an appropriate structure to make it accessible.

## Preliminary Results

### *(i) Bracketing Interviews*

The researchers conducted bracketing interviews to examine our own experiences relating to standards of dress. Through this process we became aware of the presuppositions provided by our experiences, thus as the study continued we interacted with an awareness of these biases.

We found a common abstract theme of 'appropriateness'. While we have taught in a wide-variety of settings, several of which supplied varying interpretations of what constitutes appropriate dress, there were nevertheless, some unifying threads. The teacher, it seems, should wear something that communicates formality, class aspiration and clear gender assignment within a particular local context (McLeod, Bride, & Stevens, 2010). Reflecting on our experiences we argued that strict norms of appropriateness in relation to a teacher's dress standards offer youth role models only within a narrow range and generally work to discourage the acceptance of social and cultural difference. Additionally, prescriptive dress norms are unfair to teachers in that some good teachers may run afoul of these often-unwritten codes and face either formal or informal 'discipline' from their administrators, other teachers, parents or students.

At this stage of the analysis of the intern teacher narratives, three common themes emerged: the existence of teacher dress codes, changes in dress, and dress as communication about self. Below we offer excerpts from the narratives of our participants.

### *(ii) Dress Codes*

All participants observed various codes in relation to teacher dress. Participants used the terms professional and appropriate to explain what they saw. Some agreed with what they found and argued that it offered potential for student management and enhancement of teaching as a profession. However, some were troubled that they needed to conform to the way that others dressed.

Jennifer thought that the parents of her high school students and also the principal would consider an ideal teacher look to be, *“Professional, conservative, clean-cut... Nothing low cut or high cut, not ridiculously high shoes, not a lot of cleavage – very conservative.”* She thought teachers should not wear anything *“...that’s loud and flashy or inappropriate.”* Attire that Jennifer considered to be inappropriate for a teacher included, *“Low cut, tank tops with spaghetti straps...really short skirts, platform heels.”*

Reflecting on the internship Jennifer could see that her mode of dress functioned to demarcate her as an adult who deserved respect:

*I think it has a lot to do with...my classroom management, in how the students interact with me as well. I know I have far fewer issues in my classroom because they had already perceived me as an adult.*

Lindsay used the terms professional and appropriate to describe her approach to dressing for the internship:

*I guess, most importantly it was about...being professional...I was there to do a job. I always made sure that...my clothes were respectable for students, and not...inappropriate clothing, and just looked professional.*

When queried further about what inappropriate dressing entailed she explained that it might include, *“revealing, low-cut shirts. I don’t know. Short skirts, stuff like that is not really appropriate for school.”*

Jody, another participant, recalled being told by the staff in the Memorial University teacher education program that professional dress was expected: *“It was kind of like be as professional as you can. You know, you should wear this shirt and tie and da, da, da, da, da...”* The students were guided that: *“it doesn’t really matter where you go; you should...dress the part and play the role.”*

Nevertheless, Jody referred to on-going discussion amongst interns about dress standards. As educators interact with the public, his view was that they should dress in a professional manner. He argued that this standard would assist in improving their image:

*From my perspective...what society sees...the teaching profession...is that it’s not really a profession...so I think it’s important to at least dress the part and act the part and... build that kind of authority.*

Jody had a strong interest in fashion and received compliments from university staff, and his co-operating teacher and principal about the way he dressed during his internship. He stated that the dress code for teachers can be described as, *“Conservative...professional...stylin’.”* This comment reflects what Jody perceives around him, what he is told by authorities (and has come to believe), and what he desires in teacher dress. Jody exerted his agency in relation to dress; he has strong notions of what constitutes professional dressing and understands how it can work to his advantage and to the advantage of the profession.

On the other hand some participants troubled the notion of “professional” dress. They argued that they could be good teachers regardless of whether they conformed to the way that others dressed, and looked forward to a future where when they had gained job security they would feel freer to dress as they wished.

In regards to her internship experiences Kayla described her dress in the following way, “*dress pants, maybe a buttoned-down shirt, or...a nice sweater.*” She observed that standards of dress for a teacher seemed to be mostly influenced by her colleagues’ opinions, “*I feel like the way you dress is more for your colleagues and the people you are working with so they perceive you as a professional.*”

She was conscious of her junior status during her internship:

*I needed to wear dress pants. I needed to look nice...I did feel that pressure to dress that way because I felt like I had a reputation to build...and if I dressed more laid back,...I might not be taken as seriously...I did feel that I had to do that even though I would rather...you feel like you had to build that reputation with the other teachers, and you don't want to be viewed as slack because you dress a certain way...I feel that just starting out, it is a lot of pressure to conform...in the way I dress...you have to conform to what is expected. Like if not, you're going to get the shaft type thing, right? ...I don't think it's intentional. I think it's...what's been put on us through society....I feel like if I were to go into a classroom...dressed like this (on the day of her interview Kayla was casually dressed in denim jeans and a hooded sweatshirt) they probably wouldn't think I was a teacher....It's like a lack of...respect. They won't see you as...someone in a professional position.*

She recounted a story to support her conclusion:

*One day...I wasn't feeling sick enough to stay home, but I wasn't feeling the best, and I was like - you know what, I want to be comfortable today....Friday is Jeans Day...So this Thursday I wore my jeans...on a Thursday, yes - lord forbid....I came in and I went to my cooperating teacher. I was like, “I'm wearing my jeans today. I just wanted to be comfortable...She said...“Yes, go on, I don't care”...but...I noticed when I walked into the staff room you kind of got the second look right to –  
“She's wearing jeans.” They never said anything to me. The principal and the vice-principal were there, and they never said a word, but you could tell that they took the second look.*

Kayla hoped that in the future her choice of comfortable dress for teaching would not be significant to others. From this she generalized that teachers should be allowed to establish their individual choices:

*I feel like once you develop the relationship that maybe isn't as important ...For my internship, I was being graded the entire time, whereas if I had my own teaching position and I established rapport with my colleagues, I think I would tend to dress less and less dressy...once you get more comfortable in your*



*role...it's how you feel. If this makes me feel more comfortable – like wearing what I'm wearing today, a hoodie...I feel I will be more comfortable teaching...If dressing up in dress pants and a button-down shirt is what makes someone more comfortable in their role  
... then that is what they should do...not necessarily one or the other. It's what you want and what makes you comfortable. I'm me. Does that shock you?*

Another participant, Jodi, had a strong sense of style. She saw dress as art and had made and altered clothing. She described her sense of style and dress as follows: “*My style is very funky. Normally, like outside of school, I know it's very original. A lot of people make fun of it but love it at the same time. It's weird. I shop at thrift shops.*”

In speaking about the transition from being a student to teaching, Jodi reflected on the process:

*I'm trying to learn right now, and I don't think it would be the same when I am actually teaching, but at this point...I know I'm not normal. I'm trying to do everything as normal as I should to get as much as I can and get as much positive...acceptance because I know some people can be thrown off from piercings and things like that...and I don't know what normal is...I have some sort of wrong thing in my brain about how to be socially normal.*

Jodi started an internship in Ontario. Half way through that internship she had an accident and injured her ankle quite badly. As a result of this, she moved back to St.

John's and began a new internship the following semester. Jodi's experiences in her first internship seem to have greatly impacted how she dressed when she began her second internship in Newfoundland. When asked directly about her self-presentation and the way that her first supervising teacher treated her, Jodi said, “*It could have made a difference. Well, you can't know for sure; but if your look is something that he was not...if you didn't fit the proper gym teacher look....*”

About her second internship Jodi recalled needing to fit in to be accepted and liked by colleagues. She said:

*For me it is absolutely about fitting in, so I try to mirror my cooperating teacher. Absolutely, but it's also because I'm in gym, right? Sweats and comfy's, but...I wouldn't normally wear joggers. I had to go buy brand-name clothes, and I know I shouldn't have. I didn't have to, but I did...because I wanted everybody to like me. That's what my teacher wears, and that's what all the kids wear.*

However, Jodi felt that once she was safe in a teacher position, she could let her own style and self shine through:

*Once I'm gainfully employed in the system and in the union...then I will wear whatever I want to wear, and...I'm sure mostly it's in my own head, but that's how I feel more comfortable. You know, I feel comfortable doing the best possible thing to get the job, and then the most socially accepted...and then once I'm there, then I think that people would know me anyway, and I don't think it's really that big of a deal how you dress...I think it would maybe spark...something in some*

*other people. Like, “Hey, look at Miss, she’s weird.” “That’s cool.” You know...I can be different too if I want to be want to be different.*

### *(iii) Changes in Dress*

While several participants spoke of knowing in advance how they ‘should’ dress as a teacher and therefore conformed, others recalled that they ran into surprises, which influenced them to change their way of dressing during their internships. The advantages of conforming included blanketing differences or blending in; not getting in trouble; communicating with others; and changing one’s mindset towards becoming a teacher.

Natalie, was surprised how her dress changed over the course of her internship:

*I’m a jeans person and...you can only wear jeans on Friday, so...that’s definitely different, but I’m really surprised now. I had two internships, so there was...four or five months...and now...this shirt – I wouldn’t have worn that before.*

When describing some of her changes in style, Natalie commented that it was as simple as seeing a teacher wear a style of clothing, liking it, and adopting it. Referring to the shirt she wore for the interview she said, *“This was a type of style that I saw other teachers wearing, and I liked it...and it’s comfortable too.”*

Alluding to a teacher dress code, she reflected on her new sense of style and wanting to fit in:

*I definitely wear different clothes now than I did even at the beginning of the semester...Blending in with the group and not standing out too much and not getting in trouble. And it makes it easier to...maybe communicate with the other people...I found beforehand when you’re studying the teaching, you were always a student, always a student, so learning to be a teacher, dressing like one, it definitely helps your mindset change in order to become a teacher.*

### *(iv) Dress as Communication About Self*

Despite acknowledging the dress codes they perceived during their internships, all of the participants spoke of wanting to express themselves even if it was only in a minor way such as an individual colour preference for a shirt. Whitney concluded:

*I want to look nice, professional, but I want to still have my own style involved. I don’t want to look like everybody else. I want my personality to show through; and especially now I am working with young children, I want to look...just kind of fun, professional...comfortable, but it’s still me.*

## Discussion

Participants in our study reported feeling very aware during their teaching internships of negotiating a balance between dressing for others or fitting in and dress as a means to communicate about self. They acknowledged and observed implicit dress codes related to the

culture of various schools. This is set against a background where not long ago in Newfoundland schools and school boards would have been quite prescriptive over dress.

No doubt as a result of their cumulative school related experiences, pre-service teachers had strongly held and frequently unexamined assumptions about what constitutes ‘appropriate’ or ‘professional’ dress. Some of their personal beliefs and attitudes around professionalism and related boundaries were defined by dress. However despite having just completed intensive studies with the aim of qualifying as a teaching professional, while several acknowledged this aspect of their future work, few explicitly critiqued it.

Several participants expressed that they felt the need to fit in during their internships, while some participants discussed how their dress changed over the course of their internships. This relates to our argument that dressing like a teacher may be key to becoming one. We speculated that teachers are expected to conform, and through a process of impression management (Goffman, 1959), ‘appropriate’ dress works to convince others that one is a teacher. Additionally, it may be the case that in extending Butler’s (1993) theorizing about performing gender to ‘doing’ teaching, individuals also have to convince themselves that they are teachers, which they achieve through repeated acts of ‘dressing like a teacher’. The awareness that teachers are performing to a script presents the opportunity to reflect and perhaps choose other options. If pre-service teachers become aware that they are unconsciously following a ‘script’ they may think of the many other valid ways of becoming a teacher. This larger concept has significance as part of a democratic education, which can better prepare children and youth to contribute to a complex and constantly changing world. There are many ‘right answers’ and ways of being.

For all of the participants one function of dress was to communicate about self, and Jodi’s observation that she tended to resist the notion of what is ‘normal’ and her assertion of her belief that she should be allowed to be different if she wants to, speaks to an emerging sense that good teaching can be associated with the acceptance and exploration of the concept of social and cultural difference for both educators and students. For example, Kayla’s views on dress were also reflected in how she supported children in their exploration of gendered dress:

*There was this little boy in my class...he loved to wear the aprons and have bandanas on his head and go around and clean everything...In playtime he would go straight for that. Has a purse over his arm and we’re like, “Sure, go ahead!” ... in the class we would support...whatever you want....If he wanted to go and dress out and be a little maid, which is a stereotypical girl role, he could do it. All of it was encouraged.*

### Significance of the Research

Students need role models that represent a more diverse cross section of our society. We know that dress can function to relay important messages about social difference related to gender, class, race, ethnicity, religious orientation and sexuality, particularly for non-conforming teenagers eager to announce evolving identities (Pascoe, 2007). Our emphasis on visual subjectivity adds new insights to scholarship on the contemporary visual culture of education. Our balance between the published research literature and portrait photos paired with narratives, is a new methodology that offers new ways of assessing the relationship between the scientific

understanding of pre-service teacher self-presentation, on the one hand, and subjective experiences and understanding, on the other.

This research is also significant because we know that role models are important to children and youth. Additionally, teachers perceive strong messages from their administrators, school boards, the community and parents as to 'appropriate' ways to dress. We believe that students need a broader range of models about what is appropriate. Also, since many teachers leave the profession in the first five years, we wonder if the imposition of narrow standards of dress might be one of the reasons that they do so. The results from our research make a contribution to knowledge about pre-service teacher dress, sketch a bigger picture about the operations of power in schools and classrooms, and help to show how images form an important part of our knowledge base. Additionally, our results are relevant for the broader education community such as school boards and teacher organizations, where they may contribute to the revision of existing policies, as well as to the development of new ones.

### New Research

This research led to Dr. McLeod's current project *Teacher Dress in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Funded by a SSHRC/VP grant, she is applying the same methods but with the added benefit of video interviews. Dr. McLeod questions what social, cultural and personal factors shape how teachers present themselves. What do teachers in Newfoundland and Labrador understand as normative 'appropriate/professional' dress? How much beyond normal is not 'normal'?

### Acknowledgement

Thanks to Dr. Kate Bride for her contributions to various drafts of this paper.

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### Chapter 13: SEARCHING

Dorothy Vaandering  
Memorial University

*Re-searcher.*

*Re-search-er.*

*Re-search-er.*

*Again and again*

*I search.*

*I am one who searches*

*again*

*and again.*

*I am a searcher--*

*a re-search-er*

*because of what was*

*when I was*

*young.*

*-Dorothy Vaandering  
Memorial University, NL*

Daily I awaken surprised to find that I am officially called a researcher. I never set out to be this; yet I realize that I have always been, and that perhaps this is the essence of what makes us human. bell hooks, in a chapter describing her early years, touches my experience of reaching this “unsettled destination we find ourselves in” (Badenhorst, McLeod, & Joy, 2013).

I came to theory because I was hurting ... I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing. I came to theory young, when I was still a child. (hooks, 1994, p. 59).

As I set out to write my narrative of becoming a researcher, images of early days and years surfaced to punch me in the gut so that throat tightened and eyes filled. There would never be enough words to describe this phenomenon of becoming a researcher. Yet, intrigued with words and how visually and repetitively they can be arranged to hold more than the definitions assigned to them, I turned to poetry “the fusion of three arts: music, storytelling, and painting”



(M. Peacock, as cited in Guiney Yallop, 2010, p. 85). In this way, letters and sounds were shaped into words and lines to be experienced, with little need to explain.

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## **Chapter 14: Globalism, Neo-liberalism, Public Schools and Higher Education: Is Your Academic Institution Moving Toward Corporate Model Under Globalism and Neo-liberalism: What Is Being Said and Done Around You and What Should You Observe, Say And Do?**

Readings Compiled by

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This compilation of readings has four parts:

1. Introduction 2. Purpose 3. Organization. The organization part is divided into three sections. The first section, presents a brief annotated bibliography of eighteen selected books that shed light on the interaction among higher education, globalization and neo-liberalism. The second section includes synopses, book descriptions and editorial book reviews of five books that appear on Amazon.Com. The third section tackles the question: Is your academic institution moving towards becoming a corporate like institution under the influence of globalism and neo-liberalism? This is done by way of presenting relatively lengthy excerpts from Giroux's *Take Back Higher Education*, and from Gerard Delanty's article, "Does the university have a future?" and from an article by Jan Currie, "The neo-liberal paradigm and higher education: a critique". 4. This last part presents larger perspectives on globalism, neo-liberalism, public schools and higher education, suggesting how market institutions and investment in education can, at times, serve public interests.

### **PART ONE**

#### **Introduction**

Neo-liberal globalization has become a buzz-word of our time. It is, then, no surprise that many of our colleagues have been writing on this and related topics such as the transformation of modernity, collaboration, technology, the turn to downsizing over the past several years (see the articles by Drs. Kim, McCann, Kennedy, Barrel, and Singh's reflective notes on downsizing, modernity, cultural worker and leadership in the previous issues of *the Morning Watch*, the 2006-2007 issue, *Multiple Perspective...*). In fact, I wrote in 1977 that "Future educational systems will have to either adjust to the new world economic order which is being put together now or mediate it. An important element in mediating one's social milieu is to understand it as comprehensively as possible." (Singh 1977, p. 105). My intention in that article was to discuss some of the basic concepts related to the on-going debates on the critical and complex issues in the area of the then new international economic order, international relations, international cooperation, and national development. In the same article I reviewed many books and documents that contained blue-prints for organizing educational systems, and for learning and teaching in the future. For that reason, at the end of the article, I provided a lengthy reading list for Social Studies teachers, educators with a diversity of interests, undergraduate and graduate students planning to work in schools, and those who occupy decision-making positions who might find the suggested reading useful. The feedback to that and other similar articles I earlier wrote for my students and other stakeholders in education was encouraging and positive.

Over the years many more writers have raised a myriad of questions about globalization, and how its various aspects affect higher education and K -12 public education. For example, Giroux (2004) asks: “How do we understand the university in light of both the crisis of youth and the related crisis of the social under neo-liberalism? How can the future be conceptualized given the erosion of the social and public life over the last 20 years and the corporatization of higher education?” (230). With similar concerns about how to act now for creating a better future, Heather-Jane Robertson (1998) and Maud Barlow and Heather- Jane Robertson (1994) have raised many questions about neo-liberalism and the functioning of multinational corporations and have analyzed the assault of globalization on Canadian public schools using the frame work of “class warfare”, while David Berliner (1996) wrote about the myths, fraud and the attack on America’s public schools using the idea of the “manufactured crisis” and Engle (2000) about market ideology vs. democratic values in relation to the struggle for control of public education. At another level of analysis, George Ritzer (1995) wrote about the MacDonaldization of society and everyday life in the age of neo-liberal globalization. John Hoben’s article in this issue of the *Morning Watch* also discusses problems related to market ideology and higher education. In different ways, among many others, these books and articles offer some suggestions and guidance as to how to understand problems existing in everyday life and how to take practical actions in the age of neo-liberalism.

I compiled the material presented here in January 2005, basically for discussion, educational, and individual and collective awareness purposes. I have slightly updated the material by way of providing more references in the end, which are not cited in the body of this paper. Those extra references capture recent discourses surrounding existing form of neo-liberalism and globalization, how they perpetuate conditions for various forms of domination and exploitation of millions of people globally and locally, and what needs to be done to eliminate or reduce effects of those conditions on the lives of those who find themselves dominated and exploited in all spheres of daily life-economically, socially, psychologically, politically, morally, ethically and legally. Together, readings cited in this paper critically engage ideologies of “There Is No Alternative”, “The End of History” and “The End of Ideology”. Instead, these readings articulate a sense of hope, possibilities and a stance that demonstrates that there is an alternative to neoliberal globalization. This stance is rooted in the moral and ethical commitment to acting as enabling human beings, individually and collectively, having the political will and the desire to create sustainable societies and cultures based on equitable human relationships at global, local and regional levels. Before we move to part two, a cautionary note may be in order: the readers may not quote directly from this article; for that purpose they should check the original articles and books that I have cited here in.

## PART TWO

### Purpose

It is in the spirit of the goals expressed above that I have put this article together at this time. The hope is that this material, to some extent, may enable readers (students, especially graduate students, colleagues, teachers, and other stakeholders in education), to understand how the institutional discourse in universities and schools of neo-liberal globalism trickles down as a bureaucratic response to actions and demands of those who wish to mediate complete and unbalanced corporatization of universities and public schooling, and how

administrative/managerial response homogenizes the social understanding of the counter corporatization demand within its managerial parameters. This neo-liberal globalism concerns itself with: downsizing, outsourcing, efficiency, accountability, standards, micro-management, fiscal responsibility, centralizing of administrative authority, deskilling of academic and non-academic staff, streamlining curricula, on-line delivering of course through using various technological devices, nationalism, patriotism, localism, immigration, diversity of experiences and aspiration, just-in-time (JIT) and just-in-case (JIC) approaches to higher education and schooling, and social stratification based on race, class, gender, special needs, sexual preferences. My colleagues and I have done a variety of work in our local contexts in order to make sense of some of these trends within globalism. In particular we have written about how these trends have surfaced in many local and global educational reform reports since the 1980s (Singh, "Making sense of the educational reform reports, part 1 and 2", *The Morning Watch* Books, 1991, Vol. 1). Therefore, in light of our recent local work, and works done by others internationally, I am interested in encouraging everyone interested in education and society to become a "reflective researcher and educator" as Burnaford et al. have suggested in their (2001) book. Singh et al. (2001) have provided a review of literature on the notion of "reflective educator" in their research on teacher internship program and education of future educators in Newfoundland and other countries. I also suggest that each student and teacher become an apt actor in the field of institutional ethnography as developed by Dorothy Smith, a Canadian feminist sociologist (Smith 1987, 1990a, 1990b) and Campbell and Gregor (2004). Carroll (2004) comments that institutional ethnography, according to Campbell and Gregor, "aims to answer questions about how everyday life is organized". In their book, the relationship of micro to macro processes is "conceptualized in terms of ruling relations". Further, Carroll points out that the notion of institutional ethnography, as developed by Campbell and Gregor, "is remarkably well suited to the human service curriculum and the training of professional and activists. Its strategy for learning how to understand problems existing in everyday life appeals to many researchers who are looking for guidance on how to take practical action." It would seem that many of these ideas – functioning as reflective educator and researcher, and as ethnographer in various situations - are related to other concepts such as people functioning as intellectuals and cultural workers at various specific sites as developed by Giroux, and others working in the areas of cultural studies, colonial studies, critical race theories, critical negotiation perspective, and verities of postcolonial studies. Singh (*The Morning Watch*, 2006-20007 issue, *The Multiple Perspectives* ---2007) has reviewed aspects of this discourse as it relates to downsizing process in an academic unit. Besides the perspectives of functioning as reflective researchers, educators, intellectuals and cultural workers, Kaufman (2003), Mills (1959) and Cherryholmes (1988) provide other critical ways that offer guidance on how to take practical action. For example, Kaufman has discussed some of those ways in her book in an engaging and accessible style. However, below I will focus on strategies for learning how to understand and solve problems that exist in everyday life as suggested by C.W. Mills and Cherryholmes.

C. Wright Mills in his classic book, *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) talks about the idea of the sociological imagination. He defined the sociological imagination as "... the capacity to shift from one perspective to another - from the political to psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budget of the world; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry. It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote

transformations to the most intimate features of the human self - and to see the relations between the two. Back of its use there is always the urge to know the social and historical meaning of the individual in the society and in the period in which he has his quality and his being (p. 7, 1971-72 print).

In this book among other things, Mills suggested that we ask the question "...what varieties of men and women now prevail in this society and in this period? And what varieties are coming to prevail? In what ways are they selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made sensitive and blunted?"(p. 7). Mills was interested in what kinds of 'human nature' are revealed in the conduct and character we observe around us as well as what is meant by 'human nature' for the features of the society we are examining.

Cleo Cherryholmes in his book, *Rethinking Education* (1988) offered another strategy of rethinking educational discourse and practice which my students and I have found very helpful on how to take practical action. According to Cherryholmes "'rethinking education, discourse-practice' means looking at what practitioners and researchers [in any profession] say and do ..." (p. 2) He then explains his ideas related to the notions of discourse, practice, and discourse-practice. He goes on to identify and critique prominent structural themes in education discourse and practice. He draws upon the ideas of Foucault, Derrida, Rorty, and Habermas. Cherryholmes states that "as societies and professions develop, what is said and written and accepted as true changes. Discourse and discursive practices are relative to time and place." (p. 3) Furthermore, what we say and do involves communication. He states that "communication is action as well as interaction; subject to multiple readings and interpretations; anticipatory of the ideal speech situation; bounded by time, place, and the exercise of power; and subject to deconstruction" (p. 167). In this communication perspective, listening to the perspectives and voices of others is a critical and reflective activity. Listening and hearing are not the same processes. Many scholars now believe that these insights relating to the communication process were most forcefully developed in the works of George Herbert Mead in his discussion on the development of "the social self", and now extended by contemporary continental scholars such as Habermas and others (Odin, 1996; Denzin, 1992; Aboulafia 1986, 2001; Aboulafia, Myra Bookman and Catherine Kemp 2002).

How do we bring these ideas and concepts to our own world? Following Mills and Cherryholmes, we can ask ourselves who are the significant men and women in universities and the public schools? What do they say and do in those contexts? How do they communicate issues related to education and society, globalism and neo-liberalism, and the relations between local and global interests? What ideologies and mindsets lie behind their thinking and action? In university contexts, of course, these men and women are officials of the university (presidents, deans, directors, head of departments, board members, faculty and student union executives, and sometimes prominent professor and researchers) who have considerable power in the management of the university. Therefore, it is important to observe what they say and do in a variety of sites (public meetings, university committees, convocations, varieties of celebrations, and other official and non-official gatherings on the campus and using communication channels such as internal memos, reports and newspapers). Similarly, at the level of K-12 schooling, such men and women are principals, vice- principals, department heads, school board officials, officials of various parents' organizations, officials of the government departments, especially

departments of education and, other stakeholders interested in the public education, such as those working in the media and the cultural industry. It is important to have varieties of intellectual tools in one's hand (i.e., concepts, theories, perspectives, research methodologies; pedagogical and educational models for social and political actions; awareness of local, institutional and situational knowledge; perspectives such as social production of knowledge, archeology of knowledge, social positioning by experts and intellectuals in social structures through uses of power relations, queer theory, disability studies, whiteness studies, militarization studies, critical decolonization, genocide and human rights studies, and lessons learnt through the outcomes of various local, regional, national and international social movements) in order to be able to observe what those men and women say and do, and what their "cultures" are. (Singh, *The Morning Watch*, 2006-2007 issue, *The Multiple Perspectives---*, 2007, chapter 77, 827- 833). Having such intellectual tools are necessary, if not essential, in order to gain insights and guidance to understanding dynamics of events taking place around our daily life, and to know how to take practical action. How should we go about observing what is being said and done around us, and what should we observe, say and do if we desire to keep schools and universities functioning as sustainable and egalitarian academic institutions, while taking into account necessary adjustment that must be made to meet the demands of globalization forces?

The compilation of work done by selected scholars in this paper and their perspectives, I believe, provide some guidance on how to tell if the academic institution in which we work is moving toward a corporate model under globalism and neo-liberalism.

### PART THREE

#### Organization

The material in this paper is put together in a certain fashion, as the intention is educational. There are three features that characterize the organization of the paper.

First, the paper presents a brief annotated bibliography of eighteen selected books that shed light on interaction among higher education, globalization and neo-liberalism. This is intended to enable readers to access a large spectrum of arguments, made by various scholars, as sensitizing background material to allow greater appreciation of emerging trends in higher education.

Secondly, the paper includes synopsis, book descriptions and editorial book reviews of five books that appear on Amazon.Com: Books. I have selected these recent books which are used widely. I use these books in graduate and undergraduate courses which deal with the topic of globalization, neo-liberalism, higher education, K-12 schooling, democracy and other related issues such as role of technology in delivering on- line courses vs. face-to-face teaching and learning. Of these books, two are by Henry A. Giroux and Susan Giroux (*Take Back Higher Education* (2000)] and, *The Terror of Neo-liberalism: Cultural Politics and the Promise of Democracy* (2004), two are by Manfred B. Steger (*Globalism: The New Market Ideology* (2001) and, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (2003) and, one by Michael Engel (*The Struggle for Control of Public Education: Market Ideology vs. Democratic Values* (2000). These reviews on Amazon provide readers with quick information on these books.

Thirdly, the paper presents relatively lengthy excerpts from Giroux's *Take Back Higher Education*, and from Gerard Delanty's article, "Does the university have a future?" and from an



article by Jan Currie, "The neo-liberal paradigm and higher education: a critique". The latter articles appear in Odin, J.K. and Manicas, P.T. (Eds.). *Globalization and Higher Education* (2004). As a university teacher for the last thirty-five years, my students and I have found that sometimes, somewhat long, full length excerpts are needed be savored properly. Moreover, long excerpts more often better serve readers. In the final analysis, indeed, students and others have to aspire to read the works of these authors themselves. The intent here is to help busy people have access to current and crucial information.

## SECTION A

### Selected Annotated Bibliography

Aronowitz, Stanley. *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning*. Boston: Beacon, 2000. Aronowitz attempts to connect labor market issues with education in a useful way, even though he finds no justification for employing the new technologies to higher education.

Berube, Michael, and Cary Nelson (eds.). *Higher Education Under Fire: Politics, Economics and the Crisis of the Humanities*. New York: Routledge, 1995. This volume focuses on the recent cultural wars. Those interested in the right-wing plomitic may find Barry Gross's discussion the most interesting.

Clark, Burton R. *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation*. Oxford: Pergamon, 2001. Sheldon Rothblatt writes (on Amazon): "Here is an exploration, at once empirical and conceptual, in language that is sharp and effective, of the way we live now. Clark looks for and finds pathways out of current difficulties that address that old dilemma in the history of universities: how to escape from the vexations of the present without losing sight of the qualities that made universities so very special in the first place."

Cole, Jonathan R., Elinor G. Barber, and Stephen R. Graubard (eds.). *The Research University in a Time of Discontent*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. Contributors to this volume include five presidents (two emeriti), one VP (of Rockefeller), two provosts, the CEO of the Academy of Sciences, the president emeritus of the Association of American Universities, the editor of *Daedalus*, and three well-known neo-conservative social scientists. They mainly defend current practices in higher education.

Currie, Jan, and Janice Angela Newson (eds.). *Universities and Globalization: Critical Perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1998. This volume provides comparative commentary on higher education in Australia, America, Canada, Norway, France, and NAFTA's impact on Mexican universities.

Delanty, Gerard. *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society*. Buckingham, England: Open University Press, 2001. Odin and Manicas write that "if we had to pick one book, this would be it. Delanty offers a very well-informed account of the modern university in transition, from its beginnings to today. He seems to have read everyone that is pertinent.... and has put it together in a convincing way. He argues that

the late 1960s and 1970s were critical, both as regards "organized modernity," a dramatic shift in the production and legitimation of knowledge, and then as regards the self-understanding of the university. But unlike those who hold to grim scenarios (either postmodern or instrumentalist), he offers that the role of the university could be enhanced in a direction that would contribute to more democratic and cosmopolitan forms of citizenship.

Duderstadt, James J. *A University for the 21st Century*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. Duderstadt writes as a former president of the University of Michigan. He mainly focuses on the governance issues and states that "the history of higher education in America suggests that, in reality, the faculty has had relatively little influence over the evolution of the university" [247]. He also discusses the causes and consequences of "privatization," and the challenge of the new technologies that could promote "the growth of entirely new learning organizations" (304).

Inayatullah, Sohail, and Jennifer Gidley (eds.). *The University in Transformation: Global Perspectives on the Futures of the University*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2000? This volume provides very good comparative material on higher education.

Jarvis, Peter. *Universities and Corporate Universities: The Higher Learning Indf in Global Society*. London: Kegan Paul, 2001. Jarvis talks about McDonald's Hamburger University and the British Open University. He makes a point by quoting Kenny Wallace that "traditional universities are no longer the dominant-players in the creation and communication of knowledge, especially in cyberspace. Just-in-case education has moved to just-in-time and just-for-you ... [Plato.com](http://Plato.com) has arrived" (113).

Lucas, Christopher J. *Crisis in the Academy: Rethinking Higher-Education in America*. New York: St. Martin's, 1996. In reviewing this book, Odin and Manicas state that the book provides "a historical account that demystifies some prevailing beliefs, for example, about general education, tenure, open admission, the culture of faculties, and governance. Lucas offers some very positive ideas for reform, including, for example, abandoning the idea of a disciplinary department as an autonomous unit for resource allocations and redesigning administrative configurations that would enable realizing clearly articulated goals, which include the development of skills, general education, vocational training, and then assessing the outcomes: an effort at "truth-in-advertising." The volume is weak on new technologies and their potential." (257)

Readings, Bill. *University in Ruins*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996. Odin and Mnicas write that "the basic argument is that the modern university came into existence as an embodiment of German idealist thought, mediated by Humboldt and Newman, and had as its goal the transmission of 'culture.' But since 'the nation-state is no longer the primary instance of the reproduction of global capitals, 'culture'-as the symbolic and political counterpart of the project of integration pursued by the nation-state-has lost its purchase" (12). Readings concludes that 'we should try to replace the

empty idea of excellence with the empty name of Thought.' Unlike 'excellence,' Thought 'does not masquerade as an idea' (160). (257)

Rothblatt, Sheldon, and Bjorn Wittrock (eds.). *The European and American University Since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. The book contains the most useful set of historical and comparative material.

Ruch, Richard S. *Higher Ed, Inc.: The Rise of the For-Profit University*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. This book is an extremely helpful description of the rise of the for-profit educational institutions and the consequences for the non profits. For Ruch, "the question and the challenge is not whether to become more responsive, but how to do so in the face of a tradition of resistance, a history of inertia, and a system of decision making that inhibits quick decisions and rapid response to change" (151).

Slaughter, Sheila, and Larry L. Leslie. *Academic Capitalism: Politics, Policies, and the Entrepreneurial University*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999. The authors conclude: "We see academic capitalism in general, and science and technology in particular, as bringing about broad change in higher education to the point where the center of the academy has shifted from a liberal arts core to an entrepreneurial periphery" (207). The authors provide two very persuasive "scenarios," a worst case and a best case (242-245), but neither is encouraging.

Smith, Charles W. *Market Values in American Higher Education: The Pitfalls and Promises*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000. Odin and Manicas write that "Smith finds a number of 'false diagnoses and faulty cures,' for example, serious misreading of the fiscal and *organizational* realities, which have resulted in a 'paste and mix response' to growth in higher education. He argues that we need to decide what we want and determine clearly what we have, and concludes with some 'guiding principles' and specific recommendations." (258)

Solomon, Robert and John. *Up the University: Recreating Higher Education*. Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley, 1993. Odin and Manicas write that the authors have "-- one very powerful thesis: universities exist to teach undergraduates, but indeed, they are currently structured so as to make this nearly impossible. The obstacles begin with corporate administration, and extend to distortion regarding 'research,' the Ph.D. dissertation, the institutionalization of departments, and the reward system of faculty, including cynical "teaching awards" and the tenure system. The Solomons reject nailing the faculty as 'easy targets' (e.g., as with Sykes's *Profscam*) and argue for strong faculty governance; but they are not clear whether many (or most) faculty are clear themselves about what they should be doing and just cannot, or whether the typical faculty's warm endorsement of 'liberal education' suggests that they are serious victims of ideologies that sustain all those practices that they rightly condemn." (258)

Spring, Joel. *Education and the Rise of Global Economy*. Mahwah, NJ.: Erlbaum, 1998. The author had argued (in *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State*, 1972) that "only elimination of government -operated schools could produce the freedom of thought required for the exercise of democratic power" (xi). Spring now considers this to be naive

"in the face of the uncontrolled power of global corporations." So, now he thinks that "the right to an education should include an education in human rights and democratic power."

Sykes, Charles J. *Pro/scam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education*. New York: St. Martin's, 1990. The author views the professorate singularly as responsible for most of the problems in higher education. Sykes states that: "The story of the collapse of American higher education is the story of the rise of the professorate. No understanding of the academic disease is possible without an understanding of the Academic Man, this strange mutation of 20th century academia who has the pretensions of an ecclesiastic, the artfulness of witch doctor, and the soul of a bureaucrat. Almost single-handedly, the professors have destroyed the university as a center of learning and have desolated higher education". (Quoted by Solomon and Solomon. See above, 204f).

White, Geoffrey D. (ed.). *Campus, Inc.: Corporate Power in the Ivory Tower*. Amherst: Prometheus, 2000. This book offers essays by "leftish" critics of higher education.

## SECTION B

<Amazon.com> Globalization, Neo-liberalism, Public and Higher Education

The following editorial reviews of books appear on Amazon.Com: Books. They are reproduced here only for educational purposes. The text in bold letters below represents the material taken from Amazon.Com.Books:

Globalization: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions) by [Manfred B. Steger](#)

### Synopsis

'Globalization' has become the buzz -word of our time. A growing number of scholars and political activists have invoked the term to describe a variety of changing economic, political, cultural, ideological, and environmental processes that are alleged to have accelerated in the last few decades. Rather than forcing such a complex social phenomenon into a single conceptual framework, Manfred Steger presents globalization in plain, readable English as a multifaceted process encompassing global, regional, and local aspects of social life. In addition to explaining the various dimensions of globalization, the author explores whether globalization should be considered a 'good' or 'bad' thing - a question that has been hotly debated in classrooms, boardrooms, and on the streets.

### Product Description:

This book offers a stimulating introduction to globalization and its varying impacts across, between, and within societies. It is a highly readable text that contributes to a better understanding of the crucial aspects and dimensions of the developments and transformations that go by the name of globalization.

Customer

Avg.

Reviews

Customer

[Write an online review](#) and share your thoughts with other customers.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★★ A superb brief introduction to a complex issue, August 19, 2004

Reviewer:

[Robert W. Moore](#) (Chicago, IL USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

TR RN

This truly is a dazzling brief introduction to a subject that could not be covered even by a very long book. As Steger points out, the fact of globalization is the predominant issue of our time. Far too many, as he points out, tend to treat the subject in monolithic or simplistic fashion, focusing on merely one aspect of globalization, and assuming that that aspect defines all of globalization. Anyone familiar with Thomas Friedman's *THE LEXUS AND THE OLIVE TREE* (who is frequently described as a "hyper globalizer") will recognize one such very narrow approach. Despite his brief space, Steger wants to do justice to the complexity of the subject. For the past decade, most writers on globalization have focused on economic globalization, but Steger emphasizes that the process has political, economic, religious, cultural, environmental, and ideological conditions.

Many people who tackle the question of globalization seem to want to know, "Is this a good or bad thing?" Steger is anxious to emphasize that this does not admit of an easy answer. Clearly, the massive increase of economic inequality--which occurs both on international and national levels, e.g., wealth has more and more been concentrated in the industrial countries of the northern hemisphere, and within those countries, more and more in the hands of a small economic corporate and investing elite--is not a good thing, but that is not the only aspect of globalization. Steger seems to suggest that there are both significant advantages and some lamentable dangers in globalization.

The one aspect of globalization concerning which Steger is clearly and rightfully concerned is the promotion of globalization in the ideological terms of the Neoliberal project of promoting free markets over all other concerns. The term "Neoliberal" might throw some people, since the leading Neoliberal of recent decades would include Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and most members of the George W. Bush administration (though also many in the Clinton administration, including Clinton himself). Too many are unaware that Reagan and Bush are not conservatives by traditional understandings of the label: they both pushed for massive governmental intrusion into the markets, in taking an active role in eliminating regulation, and actively employing the government to control the economy, none of which are conservative projects. One reason that the Progressive movement gained so much steam during the

McKinley, Roosevelt, and Wilson years was observing the extraordinary corruption and narrow concentration of wealth (and subsequent economic inequality) that resulted from an unregulated market economy. Steger, along with a host of others, points out that with the unfettered promotion of free market capitalism with little or no governmental regulatory control (Neo-liberalism's big project) is once again resulting in extreme economic inequality. Numerous studies, to some of which he refers, have undermined one of the central claims of the Neo-liberal project: that expanding world markets spreads wealth throughout the world; in fact, it actually shifts wealth into the hands of a very few, a trend that has been taking place not only on a global scale, but on the national level as well (e.g., according to Federal Reserve statistics, in 1979, 1% of the population possessed 20% of the wealth in the U.S., while in 1997 the top 1% held 37%, a percentage that has surely exploded following the two massive Bush tax cuts). What I believe Steger could have emphasized even more is that economic inequality is likely going to be THE world issue in the decades to come, as it is likely to become the major issue in American politics as well (given a thirty year history of a massive shift of wealth from the middle class to a very small number of citizens).

My one complaint with the book is that many of the figures and graphs were close to unintelligible. Also, given the small format, sometimes the text and text boxes were laid out rather awkwardly. I found the annotated bibliography to be of great help in mapping out future reading (I sometimes wish that publishers would require all authors of academic books to provide either an annotated bibliography or a bibliographic essay; over the years I've probably learned of more good books to read in this fashion than in any other).

I have read several of the volumes in the Oxford University Press Very Short Introductions series, and this easily ranks as one of my favorites. I highly recommend it to anyone wanting to gain a handle on one of the crucial issues of our time.

*Globalism: The New Market Ideology* by  
[Manfred B. Steger](#)

### *Synopsis*

Globalism: The New Market Ideology rejects the notion that we find ourselves at the end of ideology and that democracy has won. Instead, Steger argues that the opening decade of the 21st century will constitute a teeming battlefield of clashing ideologies. The chief protagonist is the dominant neoliberal market ideology Steger calls "globalism." Although globalism constitutes little more than a gigantic repackaging of old laissez-faire ideas, it deserves the label "new market ideology" because its advocates have been able to link their quaint free-market concepts with cutting-edge "global talk." At the same time, globalism has already encountered serious ideological challengers from both the political left and right. The anti- WTO protests in Seattle and the demonstrations against the IMF and World Bank in Prague are just the opening salvos of the coming battle over the meaning and direction of globalization. After identifying and evaluating the five central claims of globalism--including assertions that "globalization is inevitable," "nobody is in charge of globalization," and "globalization benefits everyone" -- Steger offers an overview of the counterclaims made by anti- globalist forces. Since this ideological struggle will deeply influence the crucial political and ethical questions of the new century, this book seeks to provide readers with an understanding of how dominant beliefs



about globalization fashion their realities, and that these ideas and values can be changed in a more egalitarian direction.

*The Terror of Neoliberalism (Cultural Politics & the Promise of Democracy)* by [Henry A. Giroux](#)

### Synopsis

This book argues that neo-liberalism is not simply an economic theory but also a set of values, ideologies, and practices that works more like a cultural field that is not only refiguring political and economic power, but eliminating the very categories of the social and political as essential elements of democratic life. Neoliberalism has become the most dangerous ideology of our time. Collapsing the link between corporate power and the state, neoliberalism is putting into place the conditions for a new kind of authoritarianism in which large sections of the population are increasingly denied the symbolic and economic capital necessary for engaged citizenship. Moreover, as corporate power gains a stranglehold on the media, the educational conditions necessary for a democracy are undermined as politics is reduced to a spectacle, essentially both depoliticizing politics and privatizing culture. This series addresses the relationship among culture, power, politics, and democratic struggles. Focusing on how culture offers opportunities that may expand and deepen the prospects for an inclusive democracy, it draws from struggles over the media, youth, political economy, workers, race, feminism, and more, highlighting how each offers a site of both resistance and transformation.

### Product Description:

Neo- liberalism has become the most influential ideology of our times. It guides both Democratic and Republican policies and, increasingly, those of European and developing countries worldwide. Influential cultural critic Henry Giroux assesses the impact of neo-liberalism and points in this book to better approaches to building real democracy.

Neo-liberalism, too commonly regarded an economic theory, is a complex of values, ideologies, and practices that work more broadly as a "cultural field." Giroux argues that its cultural dimensions erode the public participation that is the very foundation of democratic life. Under neo-liberal policies, Giroux shows, populations are increasingly denied the symbolic, educational, and economic capital necessary for engaged citizenship. Giroux assesses the impact of neo-liberalism on the language of democracy, race, education, and the media, offering alternatives necessary to restore our democratic institution.

*Take Back Higher Education: Race, Youth, and the Crisis of Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Era*  
by [Henry A. Giroux](#), [Susan Searls Giroux](#)

### Synopsis

At the beginning for the new millennium, higher education is under siege. No longer viewed as a public good, higher education increasingly is besieged by corporate, right -wing and

conservative ideologies that want to decouple higher education from its legacy of educating students to be critical and autonomous citizens, imbued with democratic and public values. The greatest danger faced by higher education comes from the focus of global neo-liberalism and the return of educational apartheid. Through the power of racial backlash, the war on youth, deregulation, commercialism, and privatization, neo-liberalism wages a vicious assault on all of those public spheres and goods not controlled by the logic of market relations and profit margins. Hijacking Higher Education argues that if higher education is going to meet the challenges of a democratic future, it will have to confront neo-liberalism, racism, and the shredding of the social contract.

#### Product Description:

Higher education is under siege. No longer viewed as a public good, it is attacked by businesses who want to refashion institutions in the image of the marketplace. Higher education is the target of cultural conservatives who have undermined academic freedom and access by deriding the academy as a hotbed of left-multicultural-radicalism and anti-Americanism. The historic mission to educate students as citizens motivated by democratic values is overshadowed by profit margins. Giroux and Giroux argue that the greatest danger faced by higher education comes from corporatization and educational apartheid. If higher education is to meet the challenges of a democratic future, it must encourage students to be critical thinkers and citizens, as it vouchsafes conditions for educators to produce scholarship in the service of an inclusive democracy.

*The Struggle for Control of Public Education: Market Ideology Vs. Democratic Values*  
by [Michael Engel](#)

#### Synopsis

Those making decisions about education today argue that market strategies promote democratic educational reform, when really they promote market reform of education. Michael Engel argues against this tendency, siding with democratic values and calls for a return to community-controlled schools.

#### Product Description:

"One hundred years ago, children were kept out of school to be used as a cheap factory workforce; today, they are kept in school to become a cheap workforce in the factories of the future."

Seduced by the language of the market economy, those making decisions about education today argue that market strategies promote democratic educational reform, when really they promote market reform of education.

Michael Engel argues against this tendency, siding with democratic values-- which encourage openness, creativity, social awareness, and idealism, whereas market values uphold individual achievement, competition, economic growth, and national security.

Behind the façade of progressive rhetoric, advocates of these corporate models have succeeded in imposing their definition of school reform through federal and state policy makers. As a result, communities lose control of their schools, teachers lose control of their work, and students lose control of their futures. Engel attacks the increasing dominance of market ideology in educational policy and extends his critique beyond such trends in school reform as vouchers, charter schools, and "contracting out" to include issues such as decentralization, computer technology, and standards.

The debate over privatization amounts to ideological warfare between democratic and market values. The question is not so much about "school choice" as it is about the values Americans want at the root of their society. Unprecedented in its value-based challenge to the threat of market ideology to educational policy, *The Struggle for Control of Public Education* is a sophisticated call for a return to community-controlled schools and democratic values. This argument offers theoretical and practical models crafted in the contemporary feminist and social reconstructionist tradition. Readers interested in the study of educational policies, philosophy, and policy will find this book engaging.

Customer      Reviews      Avg.

Customer Review:

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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful: Misunderstands both  
Democracy and Markets, November 5, 2003

Reviewer: [Nathan Barclay](#) (Huntsville, AL United States) - [See all my reviews](#)

This book had me both seriously annoyed and seriously confused within just a few pages. In the finest Orwellian tradition, the author redefines "democracy" to include some sort of socialist or quasi-socialist concept of economics that is taken for granted but never clearly defined. Thus, when he argues for "democratic" education, what he really argues for is an education system that follows his view of what a "democratic" society ought to look like - a view that he labels "democratic" without regard to whether it's what the majority wants.

The author correctly emphasizes the importance of cooperation toward shared goals to a democratic society. But he completely misses the fact that cooperating voluntarily in smaller groups is often better than fighting each other in the political arena over who gets to force their will onto everyone. As a result, he does a gross injustice to those of us who view the application of market forces in education not merely as an exercise in self-interest but as a way to achieve the fundamentally democratic goal of helping as many families as possible get as much of what they want as possible in their children's schools.

I do think the author has some worthwhile points regarding the dangers of some particular "reform" ideas that attempt to partially incorporate market principles without incorporating the

most important market principle of all choice. But even those would come across a lot better if the author didn't display an almost blind hatred toward markets.

Reviewer: "[snozzberry](#)" (Austin, TX USA) - [See all my reviews](#)

I originally picked up this book because of its Civic Education chapter. After I read that (excellent) chapter, I started reading other parts of the book as well.

If you care about the future of our schools, our children, and our country, you should read this book. Engel will open your eyes to the real and disturbing trend of corporate influence in public education.

In his conclusion, he urges you to get involved with your local school board, which never receives much input from the community. Go to the board meetings, find a candidate you support and help him/her win, run for the board yourself...just do SOMETHING before it's too late and we've lost control of our schools.

Was this review helpful to you?

## SECTION C

Is Your Academic Institution Moving Towards Becoming A Corporate Like Institution Under The Influence Of Globalism and Neo-liberalism?

Is your academic institution moving towards becoming a corporate like institution? What should we observe to be able to say – yes, it is becoming like a corporate institution. And what should we say and do if we want to keep it as an academic institution while at the same time adapt to changes ushered by globalization, neo-liberalism, and corporations based on the logic of the market? How can we find in - between ways to do both? This section includes lengthy excerpts (see the introduction above) from the writings of Gerard Delanty, Jan Currie and Henry A. Giroux. I have selected these excerpts with the hope that they will offer readers some intellectual and practical tools (language, concepts, theories, research data and perspectives) which will offer them guidance on what to observe and how to take practical action. The text in bold letters below represents the material taken from their writings.

What Is A University?

Let us first proceed by asking the question: entitled “Does the university have future?” following:

What is a university? In his article Gerard Delanty (241-243) states the “The DEBATE ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY today is very different from some of the major debates on the university over the past century and a half. The grandiose and programmatic visions of the modern university *in* the seminal works of Cardinal John Henry Newman, Karl Jaspers, Talcott Parsons, Jurgen Habermas, Alvin Gouldner, and Pierre Bourdieu reflected the self-confidence of the university as an institution with a moral and cultural mission. Today the debate has shifted to a defensive stance on the one side and on the other to a largely negative view of the university as an anachronistic institution clinging to a modernity in ruins. On the whole the current debate is dominated by the liberal view of the university as a bastion of high modernity and the postmodern thesis of the obsolescence of the university along with the institutions of modernity

in the allegedly global age of informational capitalism. It is the aim of this chapter to offer an alternative view to these positions that look either to culture or to technology.

The liberal conception of the university goes back to the mid-nineteenth century, having its roots in the idea of the university proposed in Cardinal John Henry Newman's famous book, *The Idea of the University* (1852). More of a conservative idea than a liberal one, the aim of a liberal education, according to Newman and many who were to follow him, is to transmit the received wisdom of the past into the minds of youth in order to secure the passing on of tradition. The liberal view of the university thus held to a conception of the university that was essentially reproductive rather than creative of new knowledge. In this view, with its origins in English pastoral care and liberal Irish Catholicism, science and the world of research was subordinated to teaching. This vision of the university was resurrected in the 1980s culture wars by conservative and radical liberals alike. Traditional liberals such as Allan Bloom in his *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987) saw the high and universalistic culture of the university under attack by the low and relativistic culture coming from politics and popular cultures. Others, such as Russell Jacoby, saw the universalistic intellectual being overshadowed by the expert, leading to intellectual paralysis of the university. Despite the defensive and varied nature of the liberal response, there was never any doubt that the university could withstand the intrusion of the low culture. As exemplified in the classic work of Pierre Bourdieu, the university houses "state nobility," in which forms of cultural capital are perpetuated.

In the 1990s, as the culture wars abated, another and more potent debate took place that was less defensive than offensive in tone. This has generally been part of the postmodern attack on modernity. The post modern critique—as in Bill Readings' well-known book, *The University in Ruins* (1996), which was reiterated in Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* (1997)—argued that as an institution of modernity the university would suffer the same fate as the nation-state. Globalization, it was argued, is eroding the presuppositions of the university as an institution that serves the state. The result is the end of knowledge along with the end of modernity and the end of the nation-state.

Typically, some of the arguments that were given were that the university is becoming dominated by market values instead of academic values; partnerships with industry are replacing the pact with the state that was forged in the modern period; science is fleeing the university and being conducted more and more outside the university in laboratories in major corporations. The assumptions behind these positions were that globalization was bringing about the end of the nation-state and that the university always rested on a universal form as defined by a particular understanding of modernity. Even in those accounts that did not use postmodern theories—such as the argument about "mode of knowledge production" and the rise of academic capitalism in general—a wide spectrum of writers announced the marginalization of the university.

Against these two scenarios my contention is that a sober look at the university in the longer perspective of history reveals a slightly different picture. The university today is indeed in transition but not in a terminal phase. The assessment in this chapter will be neither one of modernist self-confidence nor one of postmodern crisis. Globalization in fact offers the university the possibility of fulfilling what is perhaps its key role, namely, to provide institutional spaces where cognitive models for society to learn can emerge. In this respect the

role of the university cannot be reduced to the specific forms that knowledge takes. Rather, it is the role of the university to connect these cognitive forms.”

Under the sub-heading of “KNOWLEDGE AND THE UNIVERSITY”, Delanty (243-244) explains what is a university? In his words:

“What is a university? The Latin *universitas* simply designated a defined group of people pursuing a collective goal and in that sense it suggested something communal. The term was not exclusively applied to universities and indeed many of the ancient universities -Plato's Academy or Aristotle's Lyceum-did not use the term. Universities emerged around the idea of governance, and the many forms of the university from the early middle ages on reflected the diversity of forms of governance, ranging from craft guilds to municipal corporations to state schools. In any case, underlying the university was the attempt to govern something called knowledge. But like the university, there is a diversity of forms of knowledge, making its governance increasingly elusive.

It is useful to begin by defining three kinds of knowledge. We can speak of knowledge as science, knowledge as action, and knowledge as cognition or reflection. Knowledge as science is the most obvious kind of knowledge. It refers to academic knowledge, the creation of new knowledge by scientific inquiry. In contrast to knowledge as science we also have knowledge as action, which might be more broadly called knowledge as doing or praxis. The history of Western thought has been deeply divided on whether this constitutes knowledge. Plato drew a sharp distinction between the high culture of knowledge and the low culture of opinion and banished all forms of opinion from the world of the logos. This was the basis of all of the main forms of modernity. However, many of the oppositional currents in modernity drew on doxa, ranging from Aristotle's and Marx's *Homo faber*, that humanity makes itself in its own image by action, to contemporary views of the validity of common-sense, everyday, tacit, and local forms of knowledge. Thus, practical knowledge could be a form of pragmatic knowing, that is, knowing by doing. Today the demarcation of science from nonscience is becoming more and more difficult as a result of the growing availability and hence contestability of knowledge, the delegitimation of expertise, and the uncertainty of knowledge.

This suggests a third kind of knowledge, namely, knowledge as cognition. Knowledge is more than knowing in the theoretical and practical modes but is an essentially reflective process. This notion of knowledge is best captured by Hegel's idea of phenomenological knowledge, or in more contemporary terms, by the idea of reflexivity. Knowledge is a transformative and critical endeavor. Cognition pertains to a broader category of knowledge and consists of the capacity to create new things, ways of action, structures from the existing forms and ways of doing things. In this sense it is neither purely theoretical nor practical.

The argument made in this chapter is that it is the third kind of knowledge that the university is to develop. Clearly the first kind of knowledge, knowledge as science, is a central task of the university, but it is not the only one. The growing salience of knowledge as action does not exhaust the forms of knowledge. With this differentiated view of knowledge, some further distinctions can also be made with a view to a provisional definition of the university. In the university, four functions-research, teaching, training, and cultural transformation-are combined. These functions broadly correspond to the roles of researcher/scientist, teacher,



trainer, and intellectual. The diversity of universities is a reflection of the numerous ways these functions are combined.

Looking at the extraordinary diversity of universities that have existed in history—from the ancient, medieval, and modern forms—we can say that the university is an institution that expresses these four functions in a variety of ways. In this respect, what is particularly interesting is how different cultures of knowledge are realized in the university. My thesis is that universities can be seen as a site of cognitive struggle whereby different cultures of knowledge have been formed and have entered into conflict with each other. In the brief sketch that follows I argue that there has been a progressive realization of knowledge as science, knowledge as praxis, and knowledge as cognition. In my view, virtuality, the current technological revolution, does not amount to something fundamentally new but is simply a new space in which old forms of knowledge can be expressed in new ways.

In their book, *Take Back Higher Education*, in a chapter entitled “Toward the Possibility of a Democratic Future”, Giroux and Giroux write about Higher Education and the Crisis of the Social (223). In this section they comment on functions of higher education. In their words:

There is a distinguished tradition of educational thought in the United States extending from Thomas Jefferson and W E. B. Du Bois to Jane Addams, John Dewey, and C. Wright Mills, in which the future of the university is premised on the recognition that in order for freedom to flourish in the public realm, citizens have to be educated for the task of self-government. Jane Addams and John Dewey, for example, argued that public and higher education should provide the conditions for people to involve themselves in the most pressing problems of society, to acquire the knowledge, skills, and ethical responsibility necessary for "reasoned participation in democratically organized publics."<sup>20</sup> C. Wright Mills challenged schooling as a form of corporate training and called for fashioning higher education within a public philosophy committed to a radical conception of citizenship, civic engagement, and public wisdom.<sup>21</sup> Education in this context was linked to public life through democratic values such as equality, justice, and freedom, rather than as an adjunct of the corporation, whose knowledge and values were defined largely through the prism of commercial interests. Education was crucial to individual agency and public citizenship, and integral to defending the relationship between an autonomous society-rooted in an ever-expanding process of self examination, critique, and reform-and autonomous individuals, for whom critical inquiry is propelled by the ongoing need to pursue ethics and justice as matters of social conscience and public good. In many ways, the academy has remained faithful, at least in theory, to a project of modern politics whose purpose was to create citizens capable of defining and implementing universal goals such as freedom, equality, and justice as part of a broader attempt to deepen the relationship between an expanded notion of the social and the enabling ground of a vibrant democracy. (224)

Giroux and Giroux continue:

“Higher education (as well as public education) cannot be viewed merely as a commercial investment or a private good based exclusively on career-oriented needs. Reducing higher education to the handmaiden of corporate culture works against the critical social imperative of educating citizens who can sustain and develop inclusive democratic public spheres. Lost in the merging of corporate culture and higher education is a historic and honorable democratic tradition that extends from John Adams to W E. B. Du Bois to John Dewey, one that we have mentioned repeatedly throughout this book, that extols the importance of education as essential for a democratic public life.” Education within this tradition integrated knowledge and civic values necessary for independent thought and individual autonomy with the principles of social responsibility. Moreover, it cast a critical eye on the worst temptations of profit making and market-driven values. For example, Sheila Slaughter has argued persuasively that at the close of the nineteenth century, “professors made it clear that they did not want to be part of a cutthroat capitalism.... Instead, they tried to create a space between capital and labor where [they] could support a common intellectual project directed toward the public good.” Amherst College President Alexander Meiklejohn echoed this sentiment in 1916 when he suggested:

*Insofar as a society is dominated by the attitudes of competitive business enterprise, freedom in its proper American meaning cannot be known, and hence, cannot be taught. That is the basic reason why the schools and colleges, which are presumably commissioned to study and promote the ways of freedom, are so weak, so confused, so ineffectual.”*<sup>20</sup> (254-255)

Giroux and Giroux further elaborate (284-285) by saying that:

“Eric Gould argues that if the university is to provide a democratic education, it must “be an education for democracy... it must argue for its means as well as its ends... and participate in the democratic social process, displaying not only a moral preference for recognizing the rights of others and accepting them, too, but for encouraging argument and cultural critique.” For Gould, higher education is a place for students to think critically and learn how to mediate between the imperatives of a “liberal democracy and the cultural contradictions of capitalism.” We think the university can do this and more. How might higher education become not just a place to think, but also a space in which to learn how to connect thinking with doing, critical thought with civic courage, knowledge with socially responsible action, citizenship with the obligations of an inclusive democracy? Knowledge must become the basis for considering individual and collective action, and it must reach beyond the university to join with other forces and create new public spheres in order to deal with the immense problems posed by neoliberalism and all those violations of human rights that negate the most basic premises of freedom, equality, democracy, and social justice. Higher education is also one of the few spheres in which freedom and privilege provide the conditions of possibility for teachers and students to act as critical intellectuals and address the inhumane effects of power, forge new solidarities across borders, identities, and differences, and also raise questions about what a democracy might look like that is

inclusive, radically cosmopolitan and suited to the demands of a global public sphere.<sup>104</sup>

Under such circumstances, the meaning and purpose of higher education redefines the relationship between knowledge and power, on the one hand, and learning and social change on the other. Higher education as a democratic public sphere offers the conditions for resisting depoliticization, provides a language to challenge the politics of accommodation that subjects education to the logic of privatization, refuses to define students as simply consuming subjects, and actively opposes the view of teaching as a market-driven practice and learning as a form of training. At stake is not simply the future of higher education, but the nature of existing modes of democracy and the promise of an unrealized democracy—a democracy that promises a different future, one that is filled with hope and mediated by the reality of democratic-based struggles.<sup>105</sup>

### What to Observe?

The challenge of neo-liberal globalization is there and has to be faced creatively. But what should one first observe to say that one's academic institution is being transformed and becoming commercially oriented and getting away from performing its traditional democratic functions as discussed above by Delanty and Giroux. The material assembled below provides readers with descriptions of transformation of Australian universities and with reviews of many other studies. This material, I believe, provides a good strategy for learning how to understand problems existing in academic institutions and in the everyday lives of people who work in those institutions, and who as researchers, intellectuals and cultural workers are looking for guidance on how to take practical actions.

Jan Currie (2004) in an article entitled “The Neo-liberal Paradigm and Higher Education” talks about Australian universities. In a sub-section in this article entitled “Transformation of Australian Universities” (54-58) she states the following:

“Australia's higher education system became a deregulated and commercially oriented system within a decade of major reforms. A number of initiatives came into play from the mid-1980s through the 1990s, all working to privatize the costs of education.

In 1985 the Labor government ended the Overseas Student Program that provided aid to Third World students, and it permitted universities to charge full-cost fees to overseas students. This resulted in one of the largest increases in the proportion of international students studying in any country in the world. For example, in 1986 there were 20,000 aid students and 200 trade students from overseas. By 1991 there were 6,000 aid students and 48,000 trade students. From 1989 to 2000 the number of overseas fee-paying students quadrupled from 21,112 to 95,540.

In 1989 certain postgraduate courses were made liable to fees; in 1994 the restrictions surrounding these courses were almost entirely removed, effectively leaving postgraduate course work a fee-paying domain. Then from 1998 the Coalition (Liberal Party and Nation Party) government permitted universities to enroll a proportion of private Australian undergraduate students. Crucially, these measures were accompanied by falling levels of

government support for individual students, with the amounts payable reduced and income tests tightened. Between 1984 and 1996 the proportion of students unable to obtain government support almost doubled, increasing from 35.1 percent to 61 percent.

According to Marginson (1997), as a result of such measures, proportion of higher education income contributed by students (through fees and other charges) rose "from 3 percent to over 24 percent in the decade following the Dawkins (Minister responsible for higher education) reforms, while the proportion coming from government sources (fell from 91 percent to 62 percent." Allied to this, public funding declined relative to the increase of student enrollments. Between 19 and 1998, Marginson notes, "student enrollments increased by over percent while the real value of operating funds per full-time student I by around 15 percent." In the three years since 1998, government funding continued to fall so that it now represents approximately 50 percent of all funding for universities.

Marginson and Considine (2000) suggest that, due to these reform universities in Australia changed "more in the 1990s than in the previous 40 years." They also argue that "neo- liberal policies have bf enforced with greater rigor in Australia than in the USA. Fiscal constraints have been tighter and competition reform has been harder.' line with this, many academics believe that intellectual traditions being forcibly displaced by market directives. Tony Coady (1996), professor of philosophy at Melbourne, writes about the threat that the r practices pose to "intellectual virtues such as honesty, intellectual courtesy, indifference to the mere fashion in ideas, and a dedication to regulative ideal of truth." Not only is there a loss of the humanities the critical role of professors, there is also a change in the working l of academics. An Australian study, *Unhealthy Paces of Learning*, found that the majority of staff worked above a forty-hour week and the average for full-time academic staff was 52.8 hours per week. Some 83 percent of all academics and 77 percent of general staff reported increases in workload since 1996, with a majority working in departments that have lost staff. In another national study of Australian academics, McInnis reports that the great majority of academics talked about loss of morale and the deterioration of overall duality and working condition.

Perhaps the most marked characteristic of the corporatized university is its downgrading of collegiality. As a result, success is individualized and highly tailored to the needs of the entrepreneurial institution. Another potential casualty of the corporatized university is academic freedom. It appears that cases restricting academic freedom are on the increase in Anglo-American universities and are taking different forms than half a century ago when loyalty oaths and one's political ideology, were more often questioned. The commercialization of research and partnerships with industry are limiting the public sharing of research findings. When academics try to publicize results unfavorable to industry sponsors or criticize the university itself, university managers do not always support the academics but act to silence them. In extreme cases, they have dismissed or suspended faculty from the university. Industry sponsors try to obtain confidentiality agreements in their contracts with universities, delay publication of research findings until patents are obtained, or secure other rights over the intellectual property.

An Australian report (Kayrooz et al., 2001) discusses the threat to academic freedom of the increasingly commercial environment in which universities work. This study asked if academics saw a deterioration of academic freedom due to commercialization. Ninety -two percent of respondents reported a degree of concern about the state of academic freedom in

their university. Seventy-three percent of the sample thought that there had been deterioration in the state of academic freedom. Respondents sounded the warning that both industry and the university can interfere with academic freedom, industry on political and commercial grounds and the academy on ideological grounds. The study found some direct interference; for example, 17 percent said they were prevented from publishing contentious results. Also, almost half of the sample reported a reluctance to criticize institutions that provided them with large research grants. However, most respondents were concerned about the indirect impact of commercialization, which has produced substantial systemic effects on their experience of academic freedom, such as the intensification of work, the pressure to attract research funding from industry, the emphasis on fee-based courses, and the shift to more corporate management structures.

More specifically, academics commented on how the emphasis on fee- based courses was affecting academic standards, the shift in orientation to more business-oriented courses, and concerns over intellectual property. Marginson notes a number of tensions within the current system.

In this context, the creation of a globalized international sector has led to fundamental tensions-tensions between the globalization of education and the fulfillment of local-national needs; tensions between international education and domestic education; tensions between commercial and noncommercial operations and objectives; and tensions between the private interests of universities, now redefined as self-managing corporations, and public goods. There has been a zero-sum trade-off between resources for teaching and for corporate development, and since 1995, a zero-sum trade-off between the increased participation of domestic undergraduates and the growth of foreign students.

This is just one instance of how the push toward the market can lead to a contortion of public universities. As governments ask universities to reduce their financial burden on society through privatization measures, individuals working in universities increasingly are being asked to "pay" for themselves and to account for how they spend taxpayers' money, whether on research, teaching, or other activities. The present writer investigated this process in three American and three Australian universities and found that legislators were interfering more in the lives of academics in both countries. Since 1991, the proportion of Australian government funding based on performance indicators has continued to rise for university research. Within institutions, parallel systems of distributing resources based on research are usually enforced and teaching performance indices are developed for internal university allocations. From the sample interviewed, it is evident that the respondents are experiencing increased accountability. The vast majority, slightly more than 85 percent in both Australian and American universities, said that accountability had increased, and no respondent reported that accountability had declined over the past five years.

In addition to the way academic activities are scrutinized, there is a perception that information is gathered without any clear vision of how it will be used. The emphasis on performance indicators and the increasing corporatization of universities have taken their toll on the service component of academics' work. Performance indicators are based on quantifiable measures and they usually measure what is easiest to count. This reduces the wide range of activities to a more narrow focus on publications of a certain type- international, refereed journal articles and

books published by "respectable" academic publishers-and grants of a certain type, usually national competitive grants. Teaching and service to the community are generally dropped from these calculations as too difficult to assess.

Marginson and Considine (2000) identify five principal trends, which characterized Australian universities across the board in the mid1990s, and summarize the managerialism implemented in many Anglo-American universities in the 1990s:

- A new kind of executive power, including a will to manage and to manage according to "good practice."
- Structural changes, including the replacement of collegial forms of governance with senior executive groups, moving from more formal to semiformal types of power.
- A move to produce flexibility of personnel and resources, through industrial deregulation and the use of soft money and commercial companies outside of the main legislative rules of the university.
- A decline in the role of academic disciplines, as a result of new super deans or executive deans who control several disciplines and are often drawn from outside of academic disciplines.
- A pattern of devolution supporting centralized control and increased line management authority.

In the end, as Marginson (2001b) notes, there are limitations to the enterprise university. It has short-term goals and is little concerned with community interests. In sum,

It is not viable to use corporate self-interest to drive higher education's contribution to democratic culture, equality of social opportunity, or cultural diversity and cultural maintenance. Rather than maximizing all economic outputs, it maximizes short-term utilitarian outputs and private goods but weakens longer-term capacity and public goods.

Jan Currie concludes by saying that:

Despite all the potential dangers of enterprise universities, many still defend the move to privatize universities in Australia. Clive Hamilton (2001) identifies three vice-chancellors who have all contributed to the right-wing think tank of the Centre for Independent Studies and are the most forceful advocates of globalizing universities: Vice-Chancellors Lauchlan Chipman of Central Queensland University, Alan Gilbert of the University of Melbourne, and Steven Schwartz, formerly of VU Murdoch University. Hamilton states:

These Visionaries argue that cuts in public funding and greater reliance on private finance have been good for universities as they have compelled them to become more internationally competitive. More deregulation and greater market-orientation are required, as this will put more power in the hands of education consumers where it properly resides.



He notes that "the most striking feature of the world of the Visionaries is the absence of any discussion of the contribution that universities can make to the cultural and social richness of a nation." Neo liberal globalization enshrines the market as a source of freedom. Not all vice - chancellors in Australia agree that competing in a free market environment is beneficial for universities. In a recent statement, even the generally conservative Australian Vice - Chancellors' Committee (AVCC:) argued against the market approach to higher education:

There is no example where the application of assumed pure market forces has brought a higher quality, more effective university system. A fully deregulated system exists nowhere. Local, national and international influences together with government intervention affect any market. There is no guarantee that a distorted market will produce the outcomes that are required in the national interest. The market is prone to failure.

Privatization is not always the answer to increasing freedom or creating a society based on the public good. If citizens are going to create healthier and wiser societies, there is a need to shore up public funding for universities and ensure that they continue to have the right to freedom of inquiry and persist in their role as "critic and conscience" of the nation. Also, if universities are going to be models of institutions for the general society, there is a need to shore up democratic collegiality against the rush to managerialize all aspects of decision making. Examples of faculty involvement in governance in the United States suggest that managerialism can be tempered with collegial government. Finally, adopting business practices may be prudent in some aspects of university management; however, there is a need for caution against picking the latest fad and applying it in the university culture. The need to maintain scholarly integrity, peer review, and professional autonomy is central to the legitimacy of universities and a move toward managerial mutability can be an attack on all three.

Jan Currie (44- 68) talks about globalization and universities and makes many more points that one can use to observe the direction in which one's academic institution is moving and for guidance on how to take practical actions. In her words:

Most governments want universities to serve their national interests in the global marketplace and there is an increasing tendency to emphasize the practical and technical value of higher education. Students now look upon universities in an instrumental way to serve their individual, economic goals. One key economic element is to recognize that educational products can flow very easily across borders, creating a borderless higher education system. To take advantage of the fluidity of boundaries, universities, like transnational companies, are forming alliances to deliver education on a global scale, using Internet technology.

Governments in liberal market economies are also beginning the move to privatize universities, essentially by reducing public funding. However, privatization of higher education takes many forms. It includes allowing more private universities to be developed in a country, creating spin-off companies as part of public universities, establishing for-profit universities, and developing for-profit arms of public universities. It may mean a movement to a user-pays system, where students pay increasing amounts for their university education when previously

it was an entitlement with no fees or very small tuition costs. This has increasingly led to the corporatization of universities, or treating universities like businesses.

Are there benefits in this move to privatize and corporatize universities? And does neo-liberal globalization create new opportunities as well as potential disadvantages for universities? How are the tools of globalization, such as the Internet and e-mail, transforming universities?

#### POTENTIAL BENEFITS

- Spread of access and opportunity
- Internationalization and increasing tolerance
- Increasing Links with Industry and Creating Greater Economic Growth
- More Efficient Operation

#### POTENTIAL DANGERS

- Increasing Inequality
- Skewing Education Toward The Market And Vocationalism
- Widening Of Inequalities
- Lowering Standards And Quality

Regarding some of the micro-processes of globalization, such as the accountability movement, there are questions raised about its consequences as well. Birnbaum (2000) analyzes a number of management fads in higher education and why most fail to endure in universities. He quotes a number of studies that show that management fads usually do not deliver what they promise. Most are adopted from the business or government sector and then are diffused into higher education as quick-fix solutions. The quality assurance movement, including total quality management (TQM), benchmarking, performance-based budgeting, responsibility centered budgeting (RCB), performance-based appropriations (PBA), balanced scorecards (BSC), and management for results (MFR), were fads that started in the business sector, then were applied to education and seem to follow the cycle of "early enthusiasm, widespread dissemination, subsequent disappointment, and eventual decline."

University managers seek out these business practices to try to increase the efficiency of their organizations. Yet, many studies conclude that what is good for the world of business is not what is good for higher education institutions.

Applying the practice of quality assurance from the business world to universities may lead universities to adopt market rather than intellectual standards. Generally, academics do not see how quality audits will improve teaching and learning. Many assert that the reduction in

funding has reduced quality and that quality procedures just add another layer of administration to their workloads without increasing quality. A former Australian vice -chancellor (O'Kane, 2001), writing before her resignation, concluded that quality in Australian universities had declined, citing these reasons:

- Staff are considerably busier, more stressed, and older than they were, on average fifteen or so years ago, and therefore have less time for informal contact with students.
- Class sizes are bigger and contact hours are sometimes lower. Students tend not to get the detailed guidance they got from tutors when groups were smaller.
- Many students are working part-time now, so that they have less time to devote to their studies.
- Staff have fewer opportunities to travel overseas, meaning that international contacts are in some ways weaker than they once were, increasing the isolation of the Australian system.
- Facilities are poorer.
- Fewer technical staff mean that laboratories are not maintained at the levels they were in the past.

O'Kane pointed to a widespread demoralization of staff leading to a decline in quality, which may not be a direct result of massification of the system. However, all of these factors together indicate that quality exercises are not likely to cure these ills.

- Increased Managerialism And Secrecy Of Decision Making

At a managerial level, universities are experiencing changes in the style, structure, and nomenclature of management directed toward more streamlined administration, greater control over spending, and more flexible staffing practices. In line with this, there are explicit attempts to move universities from collegial to executive decision making. The question may be posed whether globalization propelled this move toward managerialism or whether it would have occurred without the development of a global economy and its accompanying global practices. What is clear is that an increase in managerialism occurred simultaneously in a number of universities around the globe, leading to borrowing of practices from the world of business, seen as "best practices" and mainly derived from American businesses.

A number of commentators in Australia, the United States, and Canada observed this shift in power from academic departments to central administration. This change was accompanied by a new kind of fundamentalism suggesting that managers have all the answers and that answers to managerial issues are to be found in imitating business practices. Corporate managerialism assumes that managers should make the most important decisions and make them quickly, leading to restructured institutions whose streamlined operations give only a few people the information on which to base decisions. But of course this stands in direct opposition to

assumptions regarding procedures of hiring and firing faculty, including tenure, and assumptions regarding the faculty control of curriculum, including programs.

In making these changes, management delineates which aspects of decision making academics can be involved in and which aspects the administration should control. Academics have never been central in allocating resources in the United States or Australia. Nevertheless, they sometimes have had a voice in various aspects of budget allocation and more control over academic policy, but even that role is declining. In Australian universities in the past decade, there has been a tendency to silence academics and other whistleblowers and to change the style of decision making to smaller groups making more secretive decisions. One of the reasons Australian University councils deliberate in secret is to enable them to discuss commercially sensitive information. They often exclude academic staff from their inner circles for fear of criticism of the commercial decisions taken.

- Changing Nature Of Academic

A number of writers have discussed the changing nature of academic work around the world. A Carnegie Foundation study on the academic profession in fourteen countries found a professoriate under strain, with expansion of higher education occurring at a time of diminishing resources. Academics in many of these countries reported pressures to be more entrepreneurial, to teach larger classes, to be evaluated more often by students, to survive on fewer research dollars and relatively lower salaries, and to be generally more productive. Also, many of the respondents were concerned about the more hierarchical, more rigid governance structure and expressed dissatisfaction with governance arrangements. Scholars around the world felt alienated from central administration, and fewer than 10 percent felt that they played a key role in governance at the institutional level. The present author interviewed 253 academics in Australia and the United States in the 1993- 1995 period and found a high level of concern among academics that the enhanced accountability requirement associated with increasing managerialism and the restructuring of universities had produced a greater emphasis on entrepreneurialism that impinged on institutional autonomy and individual academic freedom. Several studies also found staff to be demoralized and dissatisfied with the increasing intensification of work.

- Intensification Of Work

Intensification of work is evident in most occupations as managers reduce staff and demand higher productivity. As in other professions, multiskilling is now the order of the day as most knowledge workers have to extend their skills to learn new software programs and become computer literate at a fairly sophisticated level. For academics, this includes the skills to deliver and teach courses online. Brabazon (2001) concludes that Internet-based teaching actually increases academic workloads because "*somebody* needs to design the content and layout. *Somebody* needs to write the Web pages. *Somebody* needs to ensure that hypertext links are up - to-date. *Somebody* needs to create evaluative criteria. *Somebody* needs to administer the students' results." Moreover, she suggests that current Internet teaching is not relieving academics staff of face-to-face teaching but it is a time-consuming addition to very full working days. And e-mail messages add yet more work. "Hour-long) blocks must be set aside to read and reply to an ever- increasing stream) of professional, academic, research and teaching inquiries" (Brabazon, 2001).

The cost of online and distance education is another concern) because it takes money away from face-to-face teaching. Even though universities may have generated more revenue due to fees from overseas students, industry grants, and consultancies, the increased revenue has not gone toward teaching but toward other costs, including higher salaries for managers, offshore recruitment, and marketing. Therefore, student-staff ratios continue to climb and teaching becomes more stressful as academics have to teach more students, in more modes, be available 24/7 due to e-mail, fax, and phone access, and do more of their own secretarial work and marketing of their courses.

- **Regimentation And Loss Of Collegiality**

A number of factors have contributed to the fragmentation of academic staff. The increased use of e-mail to communicate has meant that staff offices right next to each other send e-mails rather than talk face to face about an issue. Of course, this is more efficient, yet the loss of human contact takes its toll. Another major factor contributing to the fragmentation of the notion of a community of scholars is the ideology competition. The competitive neutrality principle has exacted its toll making academics compete with one another as though they are on a level playing field. However, this level playing field never exists in reality. Universities are differentiated by history, age, reputation, location, size, types of courses offered, and so on. Departments are equally differentiated by similar factors. And academics by their very location in certain departments, in certain universities, are almost never on an equal playing field. Yet, the notions that the market knows best and that competition brings greater efficiency and that the competition must be based on a neutral stage has meant that formulas that do not differentiate among various types of institutions, departments, or academics are used to set performance indicators and distribute resources. This competitive ethos pits one academic against another, one department against another, and one university against another.

This leads to a game of individuals in the survival of the fittest that fragments the university.

- **Loss Of Traditional Values**

What are some of the traditional values lost in the new enterprise universities? How have market forces changed our conception of a university? Four key traditional values of universities may be lost in the rush to privatize, commercialize, and create enterprise universities: the public interest value of universities, critical dissent and academic freedom, professional autonomy and scholarly integrity, and democratic collegiality. All of these overlap in some way to help produce students who will become the educated citizens of tomorrow with a social conscience and a desire to see a more just and democratic world.

Singh (2001) identifies a range of social purposes that can yield public benefits, including the facilitation of social justice and the ability of higher education to function as "critic and conscience of society." As Singh points out, "the social purposes of higher education are losing their resonance in the rush to make universities accountable within the logic of the market."

Commercialization, as noted above, is having an impact on academic freedom, often seen as a key legitimating function of the university. When this principle is in good health, academics are given the freedom to teach with passion and introduce controversial ideas that will challenge

students to be more critically thinking citizens. Collier (2001) asks: "If the market is the measure of all things, and if only the 'fittest' institutions *and individuals* are likely to survive, where does such an economic rationalist discourse leave the 'inquiring soul' of the academic?"

An established principle, in fact a truism, is that the integrity of a university depends on the integrity of its scholars. This integrity, in its turn, depends upon honesty in scholarship and developing consistently high standards in assessing one another's work. It is important for academics to exercise independent judgment where there is no self-interest involved. Scholarly inquiry should be open-minded, and not influenced by any particular interests that are served by the results. Without the integrity of researchers and a certain amount of objectivity, what becomes of scholarship and a university's service to the public in producing knowledge based on the public interest?

Lastly, to produce both educated and active citizens, universities need to develop and maintain a culture of democratic collegiality. Managerialism, however, leads to just the opposite, as noted above. Are any of the values still visible within Australian and North American universities? To what extent has the transformation of universities into enterprise universities crushed these traditional values and what kinds of universities have been created? With the acceleration of work and its intensification, along with the pressures to garner funds from industry and wealthy individuals, enterprise universities are making it very difficult for academics to hold on to these traditional values.

Now we turn to work by Henry Giroux and Susan Giroux for guidance on what to observe and how to take practical actions within academic institutions. In their book *Take Back Higher Education* (272-285), they state that (274-275):

Neoliberalism's obsession with spreading the gospel of the market and the values of corporate culture has utterly transformed the nature of educational leadership, the purpose of higher education, the work relations of faculty, the nature of what counts as legitimate knowledge, and the quality of pedagogy itself. It has also restructured those spaces and places in which students spend a great deal of time outside of classrooms. Increasingly, corporations are joining up with universities to privatize a seemingly endless array of services that universities once handled by them selves. University bookstores are now run by corporate conglomerates such as Barnes & Noble, while companies such as Sodexo-Marriott (also a large investor in the U.S. private prison industry) run a large percentage of college dining halls, and McDonald's and Starbucks occupy prominent locations on the student commons. Student identification cards are now adorned with MasterCard and Visa logos, providing them with an instant line of credit. In addition, housing, alumni relations, health care, and a vast range of other services are now being leased out to private firms to manage and run. One consequence is that spaces once marked as public and noncommodified - spaces for quiet study or student gatherings - now have the appearance of a shopping mall. As David Trend points out:

*student union buildings and cafeterias took on the appearance -or were conceptualized from the beginning-as shopping malls or food courts, as vendors competed to place university logos on caps, mugs, and credit cards. This is a larger pattern in what has been termed the "Disneyfication" of college life . . . a pervasive impulse toward infotainment . . . where learning is "fun," the staff "perky," where consumer considerations dictate the curriculum, where*



*presentation takes precedence over substance, and where students become "consumers." 82*

Commercial logos, billboards, and advertisements now plaster the walls of student centers, dining halls, cafeterias, and bookstores. Everywhere students turn outside of the university classroom, they are confronted with vendors and commercial sponsors who are hawking credit cards, athletic goods, soft drinks, and other commodities that one associates with the local shopping mall. Universities and colleges compound this marriage of commercial and educational values by signing exclusive contracts with Pepsi, Nike, Starbucks, and other contractors, further blurring the distinction between student and consumer. The message to students is clear: customer satisfaction is offered as a surrogate for learning, "to be a citizen is to be a consumer, and nothing more. Freedom means freedom to purchase."<sup>83</sup> But colleges and universities do not simply produce knowledge and values for student, they also play an influential role in shaping their identities. If colleges and universities are to define themselves as centers of teaching and learning vital to the democratic life of the nation, they must acknowledge the real danger of becoming mere adjuncts to big business, or corporate entities in themselves. At the very least, this demands that university administrators, academics, students, and others exercise the political, civic, and ethical courage needed to refuse the commercial rewards that would reduce them to simply another brand name or corporate logo.

Giroux and Giroux point out that as globalization penetrates deeper into academic institutions certain professions will be affected (272). In their words one can observe the following things happening:

As globalization and corporate mergers increase, new technologies develop, and cost-effective practices expand, there will be fewer jobs for certain professionals -resulting in the inevitable elevation of admission standards, restriction of student loans, and the reduction of student access to higher education, particularly for those groups who are marginalized because of their class and race.<sup>72</sup> Fewer jobs in higher education means fewer students will be enrolled, but it also means that the processes of vocationalization---fueled by corporate values that mimic "flexibility," "competition," or "lean production" and rationalized through the application of accounting principles threaten to gut many academic departments and programs that cannot translate their subject matter into commercial gains. Programs and courses that focus on areas such as critical theory, literature, feminism, ethics, environmentalism, postcolonialism, philosophy, and sociology involve an intellectual cosmopolitanism or a concern with social issues that will be either eliminated or cut back because their role in the market will be judged as ornamental, or in the post 9/11 era, "unpatriotic," as we discussed in chapter 1. Similarly, those working conditions that allow professors and graduate assistants to comment extensively on student work, provide small seminars, spend time with student advising, conduct independent studies, and do collaborative research with both faculty colleagues and students do not appear consistent with the imperatives of downsizing, efficiency, and cost accounting.<sup>73</sup>

And they say that students will be affected in certain ways:

Students will also be affected adversely by the growing collaboration between higher education and the corporate banking world. As all levels of government reduce their funding to higher education, not only will tuition increase, but loans will increasingly replace grants and

scholarships. Lacking adequate financial aid, students, especially poor students, will have to finance the high costs of their education through private corporations such as Citibank, Chase Manhattan, Marine Midland, and other lenders.

And (273) they state:

Of course, for many young people caught in the margins of poverty, low-paying jobs, recession, and "jobless recovery," the potential costs of higher education, regardless of its status or availability, will dissuade them from even thinking about attending college. Unfortunately, as state and federal agencies and university systems direct more and more of their resources (such as state tax credits and scholarship programs) toward middle- and upper income students and away from need-based aid, the growing gap in college enrollments between high-income students (95 percent enrollment rate) and low-income students (75 percent enrollment rate) with comparable academic abilities will widen even further.<sup>76</sup>---

And, they (273-274) continue:

Those students who enter higher education will often find themselves in courses being taught by an increasing army of part time and adjunct faculty. Given personnel costs- "of which salaries and benefits for tenured faculty... typically account for 90 percent of operating budgets"<sup>79</sup> -university administrators are hiring more part-time faculty and depleting the ranks of tenured faculty. Applying rules taken directly from the cost-effective, downsizing strategies of industry, universities continuously attempt to cut budgets, maximize their efficiency, and reduce the power of the professorate by keeping salaries as low as possible, substituting part-time teaching positions for full-time posts, chipping away at or eliminating employee benefits, and threatening to restructure or eliminate tenure. Not only do such policies demoralize the fulltime faculty, exploit part-time workers, and overwork teaching assistants -they also cheat students. Too many undergraduates find themselves in oversized classes taught by faculty who are overburdened by heavy teaching loads. Understandably, such faculty have little loyalty to the departments or universities in which they teach, rarely have the time to work collaboratively with other faculty or students, have almost no control over what they teach, and barely have the time to do the writing and research necessary to keep up with their fields of study. The result often demeans teachers' roles as intellectuals, proletarianizes their labor, and shortchanges the quality of education that students deserve.<sup>80</sup>

What should one observe in the area of cost effectiveness? According to Giroux and Giroux (268-269):

In fact, when business concerns about efficiency and cost effectiveness replace the imperatives of critical learning, a division based on social class begins to appear. Poor and marginalized students will get low-cost, low -skilled knowledge and second -rate degrees from on- line sources, while those students being educated for leadership positions in the elite schools will get personalized instruction and socially interactive pedagogies in which high-powered knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving will be a priority (coupled with a high-status degree). Under such circumstances, traditional modes of class and racial tracking will be reinforced and updated in what David Noble calls "digital diploma mills."<sup>61</sup> Noble underemphasizes, in his otherwise excellent analysis, indications that the drive toward corporatizing the university will take its biggest toll on those second- and third-tier institutions

that are increasingly defined as serving no other function than to train semi-skilled and obedient workers for the new postindustrial order. The role slotted for these institutions is driven less by the imperatives of the new digital technologies than by the need to reproduce a gender, racial, and class division of labor that supports the neoliberal global market revolution and its relentless search for bigger profits.

Held up to the profit standard, universities and colleges will increasingly calibrate supply to demand, and the results look ominous with regard to what forms of knowledge, pedagogy, and research will be rewarded and legitimated. As colleges and corporations collaborate over the content of degree programs, particularly with regard to on-line graduate degree programs, college curricula run the risk of being narrowly tailored to the needs of specific businesses.

Further one needs to observe changes taking place in the area of issues related to intellectual. Giroux and Giroux say (270-272) that:

On-line courses also raise important issues about intellectual property—who owns the rights for course materials developed for on-line use. Because of the market potential of on-line lectures and course materials, various universities have attempted to lay ownership claims to such knowledge. .... Julia Porter Liebeskind, a professor at the Marshall School of Business, points to three specific areas of concern that are worth mentioning.

First, the growth of patenting by universities has provided a strong incentive "for researchers to pursue commercial projects," especially in light of the large profits that can be made by faculty.<sup>67</sup>----

Second, patenting agreements can place undue restraints on faculty, especially with respect to keeping their research secret and delaying publications, or even prohibiting "publication of research altogether if it is found to have commercial value."<sup>68</sup> Such secrecy undermines faculty collegiality and limits a faculty member's willingness to work with others; it also damages faculty careers and prevents significant research from becoming part of the public intellectual commons. Derek Bok concisely sums up some of the unfortunate consequences, particularly in the sciences, that plague higher education's complicity with the corporate demand for secrecy:

*It disrupts collegial relationships when professors cannot talk freely to other members of their department. It erodes trust, as members of scientific conferences wonder whether other participants are holding information for commercial reasons. It promotes waste as scientists needlessly duplicate work that other investigators have already performed in secret for business reasons. Worst of all, secrecy may retard the course of science itself, since progress depends upon every researcher being able to build upon the findings of others, investigators.<sup>69</sup>*

Finally, the ongoing commercialization of research puts undue pressure on faculty to pursue research that can raise revenue and poses a threat to faculty intellectual property rights.....

As universities make more and more claims on owning the content of faculty notes, lectures, books, computer files, and media for classroom use, the first casualty is, as Ed Condren, a UCLA professor points out, "the legal protection that enables faculty to freely express their

views without fear of censorship or appropriation of their ideas."<sup>71</sup> At the same time, by selling course property rights for a fee, universities infringe on the ownership rights of faculty members by removing them from any control over how their courses might be used in the public domain.

How is leadership in academic units changing under corporate culture? What should one observe? Giroux and Giroux point out (231-232):

Leadership under the reign of corporate culture and corporate time has been reconceived as a form of homage to business models of governance. As Stanley Aronowitz points out, "Today ... leaders of higher education wear the badge of corporate servants proudly."<sup>44</sup> Gone are the days when university presidents were hired for intellectual status and public roles. College presidents are now labeled as Chief Executive Officers, and are employed primarily because of their fundraising abilities. Deans of various colleges are often pulled from the ranks of the business world and pride themselves on the managerial logic and cost-cutting plans they adopt from the corporate culture of Microsoft, Disney, and IBM. Bill Gates, the CEO of Microsoft, and Michael Eisner, the CEO of Disney, replace John Dewey and Robert Hutchins as models of educational leadership. Rather than defend the public role of the university, academic freedom, and worthy social causes, the new corporate heroes of higher education now focus their time and energies on selling off university services to private contractors, forming partnerships with local corporations, searching for new patent and licensing agreements, and urging faculty to engage in research and grants that generate external funds. Under this model of leadership the university is being transformed from a place to think to a place to imagine stock options and profit windfalls.

There is a difference between the notions of leadership and management. What should one observe in this area? Giroux and Giroux suggest (259):

As corporate culture and values shape university life, corporate planning replaces social planning, management becomes a substitute for leadership, and the private domain of individual achievement replaces the discourse of participatory politics and social responsibility. While it is difficult to predict what the eventual consequences might be, Derek Bok argues that university leaders have not paid enough attention to this trend. He predicts that if the commercialization of higher education is not brought under control, the institution could end up cheapened and trivialized. He writes:

*One can imagine a university of the future tenuring professors because they bring in large amounts of patent royalties and industrial funding; paying high salaries to recruit "celebrity" scholars who can attract favorable media coverage; admitting less than fully qualified students in return for handsome parent gifts; soliciting corporate advertising to underwrite popular executive programs; promoting Internet courses of inferior quality while canceling worthy conventional offerings because they cannot cover their costs; encouraging professors to spend more time delivering routine services to attract corporate clients, while providing a variety of symposia and "academic" conferences planned by marketing experts in their development offices to lure potential donors to campus.<sup>35</sup>*

Changes are taking place in the area of faculty relationships as corporate culture re-defines the notion of time. What should one observe about time in academic units? Giroux and Giroux (232-233) explain:

Corporate time provides a new framing mechanism for faculty relations and modes of production and suggests a basic shift in the role of the intellectual. Academics now become less important as a resource to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to engage the future as a condition of democratic possibilities. In the "new economy," they are entrepreneurs who view the future as an investment opportunity and research as a strategic career move rather than as a civic and collective effort to improve the public good. Increasingly, academics find themselves being de-skilled as they are pressured to teach more service-oriented and market-based courses and devote less time to their roles either as well-informed public intellectuals or as "cosmopolitan intellectuals situated in the public sphere."<sup>45</sup>

Corporate time not only transforms the university as a democratic public sphere into a space for training while defining faculty as entrepreneurs; it also views students as customers, potential workers, and as a source of revenue. As customers, students "are conceptualized in terms of their ability to pay. . . . and the more valued customers are those who can afford to pay more."<sup>46</sup> One consequence, as Gary Rhoades points out, is that student access to higher education is "now shaped less by considerations of social justice than of revenue potential."<sup>47</sup> Consequently, those students who are poor and under-served are increasingly denied access to the benefits of higher education. Of course, the real problem, as Cary Nelson observes, is not merely one of potential decline, but "long term and continuing failure to offer all citizens, especially minorities of class and color, equal educational opportunities, "<sup>48</sup> a failure that has been intensified under the corporate university. As a source of revenue, students are now subjected to higher fees and tuition costs, and are bombarded by brand-name corporations who either lease space on the university commons to advertise their goods or run any one of a number of student services, from the dining halls to the university bookstore. Almost every aspect of public space in higher education is now designed to attract students as consumers and shoppers, constantly subjecting them to forms of advertising mediated by the rhythms of corporate time, which keeps students moving through a marketplace of logos rather than ideas. Such hyper-commercialized spaces increasingly resemble malls, transforming all available university space into advertising billboards and bringing home the message that the most important identity available to students is that of the consuming subject. As the line between public and commercial space disappears, the gravitational pull of Taco Bell, McDonald's, Starbucks, Barnes and Noble, American Express, and Nike, among others, creates a "geography of nowhere,"<sup>49</sup> a consumer placelessness in which all barriers between a culture of critical ideas and branded products simply disappear."<sup>50</sup> Education is no longer merely a monetary exchange in which students buy an upscale, lucrative career, it is also an experience designed to evacuate any broader, more democratic notion of citizenship, the social, and the future that students may wish to imagine, struggle over, and enter. In corporate time, students are disenfranchised "as future citizens and reconstitute[d] ... as no more than consumers and potential workers."<sup>51</sup>

And what is the value of knowledge under corporate time? What to observe for guidance on how to take practical actions? Giroux and Giroux further elaborate (233-234):

Corporate time not only translates faculty as multinational operatives and students as sources of revenue and captive consumers; it also makes a claim on how knowledge is valued, how the classroom is organized, and how pedagogy is defined. Knowledge under corporate time is valued as a form of capital. As Michael Peters observes, entire disciplines and bodies of knowledge are now either valued on the basis of their “ability to attract global capital ...potential for serving transnational corporations. Knowledge is valued for its strict utility rather than as an end in itself or for its emancipatory effects.”<sup>52</sup> Good value for students means taking courses labeled as “relevant” in market terms, which are often counterposed to courses in the social sciences, humanities, and the fine arts, which are concerned with forms of learning that do not readily translate into either private gains or commercial value.

### A Larger Perspective

Giroux and Giroux say that:

We are not suggesting that market institutions and investments cannot at times serve public interests, but rather that in the absence of vibrant, democratic public spheres, unchecked corporate power respects few boundaries based on self-restraint and the greater public good, and is increasingly unresponsive to those broader human values that are central to a democratic civic culture. We believe that at this point in American history, neoliberal capitalism is not simply too overpowering, but also that "democracy is too weak."<sup>16</sup> Hence, we witness the increasing influence of money over politics, corporate interests overriding public concerns, and the growing tyranny of unrestrained corporate power and avarice refashioning education at all levels. The economist Paul Krugman recently described a cultural revolution of values afoot in American life equal to that of the sexual revolution—one that reflects a neoDarwinian ethic that shows no concern for the widening of already vast inequalities between rich and poor, black and white. (*Take Back Higher Education*, p. 254)

And Delanty says that:

Against these two scenarios my contention is that a sober look at the university in the longer perspective of history reveals a slightly different picture. The university today is indeed in transition but not in a terminal phase. The assessment in this chapter will be neither one of modernist self-confidence nor one of postmodern crisis. Globalization in fact offers the university the possibility of fulfilling what is perhaps its key role, namely, to provide institutional spaces where cognitive models for society to learn can emerge. In this respect the role of the university cannot be reduced to the specific forms that knowledge takes. Rather, it is the role of the university to connect these cognitive forms.

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# **Part 13**

## **Book Reviews**

- 1. Reviews of, Closed Minds? Politics and Ideology in American Universities by Bruce L. R. Smith, Jeremy D. Mayer and A. Lee Fritschler and Patriotic Correctness: Academic Freedom and Its Enemies by John K. Wilson**
- 2. Review of, Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope by Bell Hooks**
- 3. Review of, University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex by Henry Giroux**
- 4. Review of, learning to Leave the Irony of Schooling in a Coastal Community by Michael Corbett**
- 5. Review of, Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide... And Why It Matters by Barbara Coloroso**
- 6. Review of, Legal Dimensions of Education: Implications for Teachers and School Administrators by Jerome G. Delaney**
- 7. Review of, Reading & Teaching Henry Giroux by Clar Doyle and Amarjit Singh**
- 8. Review of, Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations by C. Ernst & D. Chrobot-Mason**

**Chapter 1: Reviews of, Closed Minds? Politics and Ideology in American Universities by Bruce L. R. Smith, Jeremy D. Mayer and A. Lee Fritschler and Patriotic Correctness: Academic Freedom and Its Enemies by John K. Wilson**

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Bruce L. R. Smith, Jeremy D. Mayer and A. Lee Fritschler, *Closed Minds? Politics and Ideology in American Universities* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

John K. Wilson, *Patriotic Correctness: Academic Freedom and Its Enemies*, (Boulder CO: Paradigm Press, 2008).

Conservative critics of the state of higher education in North America perceive a myriad of problems from a decline in academic standards and accompanying grade inflation to the abandonment of the traditional curriculum (especially in the humanities and social sciences) in favour of politicized “identity” studies. They blame these and other ills on a process of decadence and decay that, they insist, started in the tumultuous 1960s, and led to the downfall of authentic education. They maintain that special pleadings on behalf of women and minorities have led to “reverse discrimination” and “victimology.” Throw exotic intellectual fashions such as postindustrialism, postcolonialism, poststructuralism and postmodernism into the mix, and they declare that we have a recipe for an academic Armageddon.

In addition to the evisceration of the curriculum, conservatives pay special attention to “political correctness” which, in their peculiar view, poses a severe threat to academic freedom. Not only do they say that it has become impossible to embrace conservative principles, but the dominant “liberal-leftists” are charged with poisoning classrooms by preaching their ideology while simultaneously barring conservative scholars from employment, promotion and equal standing on campus. Instead of teaching literature or history as rigorous academic disciplines, liberals are accused of indoctrinating naïve students with radical ideas that often epitomize profligacy and, occasionally, border on treason. Moreover, not only formal teaching and learning are affected. They fret that normal student and teacher behaviour is constantly under scrutiny. They worry that women, gays and lesbians, adherents of diverse religious faiths or members of ethno-racial minority communities are quick to be offended by any casual remark, and are affronted whenever, as, they are made to “feel uncomfortable.” They are anxious that they may say or do something in all innocence and find themselves in the hands of the “thought police.”

Finally, conservatives are disturbed by an apparent change of attitude toward education on the part of their students. This indictment normally contains two parts. First, it is held that many, if not most, students arrive on their postsecondary campus woefully ill-prepared for serious study — both attitudinally and intellectually. “Progressive” education in elementary and secondary schools is accused of producing an undergraduate population that is barely literate, hopelessly devoid of even the most elementary knowledge of society and culture as well as of science and mathematics. Second, this crop of alleged dunderheads is also said to be possessed by an incredible sense of entitlement, which leads them to expect faculty to cater to their needs, demand little genuine work and reward their arrogance and ignorance with high grades in the bargain. As a result, the conservative propensity to deal harshly with apathy and incompetence

raises another flag — the admonition to treat students munificently lest unforgiving students place a commendable career in jeopardy through the instrumentality of “teacher evaluation” forms.

Now, setting aside any arguments concerning the veracity of this admittedly minimalist conservative jeremiad, one issue emerges from among the others — academic freedom. The main conservative argument appears to be that identity politics, political correctness and student empowerment combine to hamper free expression, and that bias and prejudice in the classroom, in hiring and promotion are almost exclusively directed against conservative teachers. In the alternative, they contend that both liberal and radical ideologues are free to attack traditional social values and institutions at will.

The two books under review take quite a different position. Smith, Mayer and Fritschler’s *Closed Minds?* is a comprehensive and well-researched study that meets and exceeds traditional academic standards of thorough examination and clear, dispassionate exposition of a topic. Wilson’s *Patriotic Correctness*, on the other hand, is somewhat livelier and slightly angrier; it makes many of the same points, but shows a little more fire in the belly.

*Closed Minds?*, it should be promptly noted, is a production of the prestigious Brookings Institution in Washington. Formed in 1916 and originally affiliated with Washington University in St. Louis, it claims to be “the first private organization devoted to analyzing public policy at the national level.” It is certainly one of the most respected independent “think tanks” in the United States, and is the public policy research institute most frequently cited by the American media. Generally considered “centrist” in its political stance, its pragmatic but innovative studies have been influential in high government circles for decades, and it has even been credited with devising or refining much of the successful post-World War II Marshall Plan.

The research reported in this volume includes original survey data and analysis, focus groups and extensive interviews with both major and more modest figures in postsecondary education. The temperate and disinterested results reveal a very different picture of the nature and effect of ideology in the university. It cannot be denied, of course, that the majority of professors in the humanities and social sciences lean somewhat to the left on the political spectrum; however, *Closed Minds?* presents three important caveats. First, conservative and populist critics rarely mention that faculty in other areas such as business administration, economics and some of the so-called “professional” schools drift somewhat to the right. So, the overall balance of political opinion is much more even than is often portrayed. Second, even where there are politically committed and articulate teachers, students are rarely distressed by any apparent “bias.” Quite the contrary, many students seem to believe that professors who are passionate about their subjects are providing just the sort of thought-provoking education that universities are intended to offer; thus, as long as such teachers are tolerant of dissenting opinion and fair-minded in the assessment of student performance, there is “no harm, no foul.” Third, complaints that the preponderance of liberal teachers in some departments make it difficult for conservative-minded scholars to win appointments in prestigious institutions do not seem to hold up. Yes, most faculty may be centre-left in their personal and even their professional opinions, but that is largely because brilliant conservative thinkers largely eschew a career in the classroom. There is far more money to be made and, perhaps, a more congenial work environment to be found, in the private sector.



Where the authors display special insight and offer a credible criticism of their own, is in the teaching of what used to be called “civics,” and now percolates through many disciplines in the liberal arts. The problem with postsecondary education, they claim, is not the presence of bias in the classroom or the faculty lounge, it is precisely the opposite. Political correctness may have involved an exaggerated concern for “feelings” as opposed to thoughts. However, because of populist assaults on “elitism,” the Republican regimes which have controlled the White House for twenty of the past twenty-eight years, and the increasing fiscal dependency on the state and private corporations, universities have become timid, and now tend to shun vigorous political debate. The fact is, then, that there is a political chill in the air, but it comes not from the left but from the right. Of course, it is often possible to find some centre of radical thought wherein feminists or neo-Marxists of one sort or another are able to hold court. These are, however, usually small, marginalized segments of the academic community. Their influence is seldom what they once hoped for, and their critics continue to fear it to be.

Apart from displays of dyspepsia by right-wing interest groups, *Closed Minds?* concludes that there is delicate ideological peace on campus — so much so that students are not being educated to become active and effective participants in the polity as much as efficient producers, compliant consumers and submissive citizens. If this is so, ideological peace has been purchased at far too high a price.

John Wilson approaches the same situation and comes to somewhat similar conclusions, but his methods are somewhat less “objective” and his language is considerably more robust. *Patriotic Correctness* takes direct aim at, what Wilson considers to be the real and enduring threat to academic freedom, namely ideologically driven right-wing advocates who have launched an assault against the college campus, and are in no mood to take prisoners.

Wilson is not without evidence for his position. His major proposition is not that “9/11 changed the world,” but that it did change the context of American political culture. Flag-waving patriots, religious fanatics, xenophobes, nativists and populists of various descriptions were given leave to act out their resentments against all those whose ideas and actions could be described as corrosive of traditional American values. The usual suspects were easily identified and the fight was on. Ethno-racial minorities that dared to identify a history of ill-treatment, pursuers of unconventional lifestyles, women, and openly gay and lesbian people were immediate targets. Soon, students and teachers whose academic work involved or implied any significant measure of social and political criticism followed. Throwing up their hands in horror that scientific hoaxes such as evolution and global warming were being calmly accepted by most universities, and apoplectic at hints that the al-Qaeda attacks might have been related to aggressive US policies and could be interpreted as some form of “blowback,” the ideologues went into action.

In Wilson’s narrative, the major villains are zealots such as David Horowitz who has been carrying on a holy war against treacherous professors whose mission seems to be to convert American youngsters into a phalanx of quislings who are always inclined to “blame America first.” Ever since he broke with his radical, Marxist and proto-hippie colleagues in the depths of the sixties, became an apostate and surfaced as a leader of the neo-conservative right, Horowitz has busied himself lobbying for his Academic Bill of Rights in state legislatures. In its typical form, it involves protecting students from teachers by banning openly political speech. He also

pays money to students to “rat out” their professors and to supply him with film, tape and ever newer information technology that reveals leftist professors making left-sounding statements. The result is his book, *The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Professors in America* (2006).

Others get their come-uppance from the vituperative right as well. Condemnations of specific institutions such as Antioch College, particular individuals including Noam Chomsky and ideas involving almost any criticism of Israel abound. As Wilson lays out in meticulous detail (there are 1,233 footnotes in only 214 pages of text), there may not be a vast right-wing conspiracy as Hillary Clinton once mused, but there is certainly a vast number of like-minded right-wingers who seem sincerely persuaded that the universities are cesspools of subversion, and that it is the task of red-blooded Americans to expunge them so that the clean, clear admiration of God, country and decent living can return.

Some of this is truly unnerving, but Wilson is not content to describe an academy under siege. He closes his book with a wider critique of the corporate and military influence on academic administration, for-profit diploma mills, efforts to ban faculty and staff unions, and the general ambiance of what he calls “Wal-Mart University.” He also points out that academic organizations such as the American Association of University Professors and public groups such as the American Civil Liberties Association, while noble in their defence of liberty, are insufficient to ensure the protection of academic freedom fully and expeditiously. He therefore calls for a new initiative which he tentatively calls the Institute for College Freedom. As he envisions it, ICE would “engage in five main projects: research, education, policy advocacy, defense of individual rights, and global advocacy for academic freedom.” Those who are especially sensitive or have already been singed by the fires from the right might find this proposal attractive.

Less daring or desperate souls will also be energized by *Closed Minds*? Appealing to a larger tradition and incorporating a longer time frame, the authors appeal to students, faculty and obsequious administrators alike to refresh their memories of times when universities were not as “risk-averse” and did not cater almost exclusively to the vocational and stolidly practical matter of preparing young folk for the workplace. Critical and reflexive education is, after all, essential to any future to which people can seriously commit themselves and any education worthy of the name. Smith, Mayer and Fritschler would dearly like to have it back.

Both books are plainly and exclusively about circumstances in the United States of America. Canadians, however, can read both for useful instruction in the current academic culture in America, as well as for some general understanding of academic freedom as it is confronted by acrimonious argumentation from the political right.

Equally important are the possible comparisons and contrasts between the experience of American academicians and the fate of university professors in Canada. Although rarely as dramatic as our cousins to the South, Canadian postsecondary educators have our own turbulent history with political and corporate interference and censorship. Dozens of cases come to mind, but among those that feature prominently are those of Frank Underhill at the University of Toronto in the early 1940s, Harry Crowe at the precursor to the University of Winnipeg in the mid-1950s, Marlene Dixon at McGill in the 1970s, and David Noble at Simon Fraser University in the first decade of this new century.

It would be ill-advised to draw many direct parallels between Canada to the United States both regarding the special circumstances of terrorism and the general academic climate and political culture. At the same time, the rising significance of corporatism, populism and, to a lesser degree, religious fundamentalism is at least similar in each country. The dominance of the Republican political agenda in the US and the comparative popularity of the Reform- Alliance- Conservative mélange in Canada hint at similar patterns of belief and behaviour. If nothing else, it is safe to say that this is not a time when intellectualism is held in high regard and academic freedom tops few voters' lists of important issues in either country. Accordingly, people interested in the genuine independence of the academy and its autonomy in terms of both governance and finance from the dominant institutions of our increasingly corporate society have much to ponder. Those seeking an American perspective to complement our own would do well to read both books.

## Chapter 2: Review of, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* by Bell Hooks

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Hooks, b. (2003) *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. London: Routledge

Bell hooks, despite her celebrity, writes in a style which is remarkable for its accessibility and candor. Having established herself as a world renowned critic of culture, race, gender—and, critical studies in education more generally—hooks, in the present volume looks at these themes within the parameters of pluralistic, compassionate communities in a fragmented, harsh, and, alienating age (49). Theoretically, this critical communitarism finds its roots in an eclectic array of cultural influences and theorists, and, hooks own experiences growing up in the segregated, patriarchal, American south.

For hooks, critical teaching, far from being merely abstract and “academic” takes its form through interaction within living, vibrant, cultural communities. Hooks’ conception of education as the practice of freedom necessitates creating classrooms where teachers and students alike can become empowered and transformed as they dialogue in intimate, educational settings. Bringing together the public and personal aspects of teaching to create “classrooms without boundaries” (13), hooks reflects upon her own personal experience and the racism and oppression she has faced as a black feminist scholar working within an educational system dominated by “white male capitalist patriarchy”.

Such confessional aspects of hooks’ text emerge in her analysis of what she terms “psychological splitting wherein someone teaches only in the classroom and then acts as though knowledge is not meaningful in every other setting” (44). Expressing the thoughts of many contemporary critical scholars working in the Academy, hooks notes how, “as an intellectual working as an academic I often felt that my commitment to radical openness and devotion to critical thinking, to seeking after truth, was at odds with the demands that I uphold the status quo if I wanted to be rewarded” (22).

For hooks, the university in many ways espouses a set of values which are predominantly white, middle class and which emphasize an informal sensibility which often removes emotion and passion from teaching environments. In contrast to this sterile regimen, hooks argues for the importance of feeling and desire if the classroom is truly to become a place of radical possibility. However, she cautions, the reification of institutions over communities and local cultures often forces us to recreate our identities in profoundly limiting ways as “unwittingly we become our own gatekeepers... as we close down the imagination’s right to say and do what it needs” (170).

For hooks, the refusal of emancipatory, compassionate pedagogies, though it has many cultural and institutional underpinnings, is, like racism itself, a choice (53). In her words, “professors who are most wedded to conventional hierarchy are those most interested in applying a parental paradigm to professors and students” (145). Quite often, hooks maintains, this is a dynamic which is also closely related to inequalities of class, race and gender and what she terms “the eroticization of domination” (148). Yet, in contrast, education as the practice of freedom is about

service as committed intellectuals strive to help individuals find communities where they can at once experience the transformative power of freedom and belonging (83).

Taking a stance against a competitive educational ethic which relies on shame and fear, hooks notes the importance of family and friendship in creating learning communities where knowledge is rooted in deep networks of human relationships (93; 127) For hooks, power isolates and dehumanizes us as it hampers our ability to exercise the imagination as a vehicle of compassion and emancipation. Bridging the gap between other and self with a proleptic radical hope, hooks emphasizes the importance of what Mary Grey calls the “prophetic imagination...a fully public imagination, belonging to the public domain, inspiring the full range of communities belonging to it to commitment to fuller visions of well being” (196).

Yet, as a “dissident intellectual” (187), hooks argues that to overemphasize the public nature of critical education misses the importance of challenging conventional pedagogies’ rigid distinctions between teachers’ private and professional lives, much as it depersonalizes the classroom by presenting it as a place where we frequently take refuge in passivity and detachment. Always, hooks argues, education is performative and relational as identities are created through teaching and learning and “we are transformed...by our collective presence” (174)

Speaking of performative identities in a reflexive manner, it is difficult to find fault with hook’s motives, her devotion or practical commitment to cultural politics. However, given that identity is relational, it is important to ask whether such confessional, personalized accounts sometimes cause us to forget the difficult and rather profound questions arising out of such radical work. By this I am not trying to call for a more comprehensive, coherent articulation of critical practice (though hooks does indeed provide this elsewhere in her work), but, mindful of my own ambivalence, I am suggesting the danger of glossing over issues which people like hooks live and confront morally and intellectually on a daily basis.

Although critical scholars and cultural critics share a marked aversion to the word rigor, we must not, as hooks suggests, allow compassion to be mistaken for a lack of political will or mental focus. Indeed, part of the ongoing struggle for critical scholars involves engaging the everyday without compromising those aspects of our work which hooks terms “intellectual”. Quite often, this involves teaching against the grain in ways whose straightforwardness and accessibility belie their sophistication and complexity. While this is predominantly an issue of audience and the discipline’s political aims, given the simplistic, pejorative interpretations of many on the right, it is an issue worth addressing— particularly in relation to someone as forthright and brilliant as hooks.

But this is a problem which also arises on the part of those within critical communities who violate the terms of trust and fidelity which committed political activists and intellectuals share. All too often, perhaps, newcomers to critical disciplines internalize the field’s lexicon and frameworks without recognizing the challenges posed by a pedagogy which seek to engender radical personal and political change. In contrast, recognizing the challenges – existential or otherwise – inherent in such pedagogical spaces requires deep courage and commitment. Realizing the costs of struggle, then, we must always remain aware that the cultural and personal space we call community, like subjectivity itself, is part of a broader struggle to wrench hope and

desire from authoritarian domination and despair. A work in progress, then, but work nonetheless.



### **Chapter 3: Review of, University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex by Henry Giroux**

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Giroux, H. (2007) *University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*. Paradigm Publishers

For Henry Giroux, in an era of atrophying publics, higher education has become increasingly burdened by the collective threats of militarization, corporate globalization and a resurgent “ideological fundamentalism” which have undermined the inherited democratic institutions and traditions of Western culture (209). Towards this end, Giroux’s *University in Chains* serves as a compelling reminder of the daunting challenges facing the contemporary university in an age of neoliberal profiteering dominated by a proselytizing gospel of state terror.

For Giroux, the university has a crucial democratic function as a public sphere in which civic education can provide the opportunity for critical, reflexive dialogue regarding the responsibly, ethics and moral obligations of citizens and educators. Yet, increasingly, this civic obligation has been displaced by a conception of education as a commodity, and the university as a producer of skilled workers for the burgeoning military-industrial-surveillance apparatus (209). The possibility of reasserting a critical, civically minded university culture is frequently preempted by power hungry neo-conservatives and crusading free market neo-liberals for whom education is either a waste of public funds or an opportunity to promulgate militant, xenophobic values (184).

According to Giroux, the seemingly indomitable, many headed hydra of media propagandizing, militant capital and the corporatization of popular culture have all contributed to the marginalization of critical democracy. Giroux notes that public education has become equated with technical vocational training as opposed to meeting the needs of an informed critical citizenry. And yet, at the same time as the neoliberal ascendancy has led to this crisis of confidence, both liberals and the left remain reluctant to see culture as a productive site of struggle (210).

Likewise, Giroux emphasizes the prevailing apathy within the Academy and the public at large which has frustrated the possibility for collective resistance to corporate and militaristic agendas. Here, he finds parallels with the ideological intolerance of the McCarthy era and reminds us of the need to protect democratic institutions as cultural mooring lines securing us from the wholesale destruction of democratic life. Giroux situates these issues within a perfect storm of authoritarian values and hegemonic realignment as such ideological currents find expression within the university in a number of ways including: the erosion of tenure; the proliferation of sessional contracts; the decline of the traditional humanities along with other critical disciplines; the oppressive conservatism of funding regimes; the growing influence of corporate managerial ethic; spiraling tuition fees; the disproportionate influence of corporate and military funding; and, waning democratic values.

Giroux believes that to combat the growing power of neo conservative and neo liberal discourses, requires that we recognize the importance of education as a dialogical activity engaged in by public intellectuals and critical citizens appraised of the dangers of neglecting the civic implications of education as a public good. Consequently, Giroux urges the end of hierarchical and exploitative labour practices which have reproduced glaring social inequalities and created a fragmented, polarized professorate. Moreover, he also notes the importance of combating growing threats to tenure and academic freedom through intolerant conservative public discourses and opportunistic administrative cultures (204)

Instead, given the inevitably political and public nature of higher education, Giroux advocates a resurgent political activism grounded in broad alliances between student groups, faculty and community associations which may collectively challenge the powerful corporate military industrial complex which has infiltrated university culture. Critical pedagogy, consequently, must offer a telling critique of the rapidly changing nature of university education in an increasingly commercialized, authoritarian culture. As such, it represents the need for a radical realignment of the left in response to recent efforts by neoconservatives to colonize public institutions and dramatically alter the landscape of democratic politics.

Unfortunately, then, a culture of myopic individualism, proliferating corporate power and commodified culture, have all made the contemporary practice of emancipatory pedagogy increasingly difficult. Disempowerment, inequality, marginalization and oppression, are all connected to the struggle to make critical cultural literacy a key stratagem for a revitalized emancipatory politics. Rather than a dichotomous conception of the public and private spheres, Giroux argues for a public pedagogy augmented by the theoretical framework of cultural studies which is sensitive to the myriad challenges of everyday life. Indeed, although all of these cultural factors threaten a perilously positioned university at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, critical pedagogy offers great promise in the ongoing fight to reclaim public spheres as a border crossing discipline orientated towards examining the pedagogical importance of culture.

Unmistakably, then, the intellectual discipline which Giroux describes is at heart radical and transgressive. The question, however, is whether the pendulum has swung too far. Indeed, the earth shattering, socio-political changes of recent decades have limited the possibilities for concerted democratic action to such an extent that the necessity of collaboration across public spaces must be acknowledged if the university is to move outward from a position dominated by technical rationality, bureaucratic myopicism and crippling cynicism. Certainly, given Giroux's description of recent history, this is a question which is anything but rhetorical. Undeniably for educators concerned with the rising tide of unfettered authoritarianism, Giroux's work, rather than being disengaged or myopically cerebral, challenges the reader on political, moral and ethical grounds to transform indignation into an active, praxis-orientated, critique. More than anything perhaps, Giroux's book emphasizes the increasingly high stakes of academic politics and the danger—even the irresponsibility—inherent in continued complacency or blinkered, careerism.

## **Chapter 4: Review of, learning to Leave the Irony of Schooling in a Coastal Community by Michael Corbett**

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Corbett, M. (2007). *Learning to Leave the Irony of Schooling in a Coastal Community*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

In this volume Michael Corbett demonstrates the remarkable depth of his knowledge as well as the care and sensitivity with which he encounters rural cultural settings. Quite simply, in his empirical and cultural study of the coastal fishing town of Digby Neck, Nova Scotia, Corbett asks why contemporary schools have failed rural communities and, more importantly, what can be done about it?

In answering this timely question, Corbett critiques the conventional tendencies to present the rural as being somehow deficient or emblematic of a pathology of place (33) As Corbett notes, the typical formulation of the rural education issue is constructed around the untenable assumption that rural inhabitants must learn to sever irrational regional attachments which hinder any prospect of individual mobility and success. This modernist, deficiency construct model, views rural communities as fated to languish hopelessly beyond the pale of modern, progressive, post - industrial society.

In response to such reductive approaches, Corbett emphasizes the broader structural, economic and cultural dimensions of rural education. Taking cues from a wide variety of theorists, including Marxist, postmodern and Foucaultian thinkers, Corbett suggests that reflective critical educators may want to ask whether: i) there is in fact a rural problem at all; and, ii) whether the educational system is part of the structural and ideological forces which help to maintain such inequalities.

In this vein, Corbett sees schooling within a framework of rural agency, identity and cultural capital whereby decisions to forgo schooling are often “rational” choices. In Corbett’s words, “[c]ould it be that rural resistance to formal education can be understood as recognition that one’s social capital is localized and of little value in the face of the placeless and individualistic mobility ideology of liberal schooling?” (29) As part of such a conceptual model, Corbett sees the unique symbolic capital and practical logic of rural communities as simultaneously underrecognized and central to the reconceptualization of the relationship between modern schooling and complex, rural societies (45, 46). And yet, for Corbett, such a reconceptualization is only possible if educators begin to develop a more sophisticated and situated comprehension of resistances which moves us towards an understanding of “what indeed is being resisted, how, where and particularly with what results” (68)

Notably, Corbett finds the work of Manuel Castells as offering unique insights into the rural relationship between identity and agency. As Corbett notes, “the search for community is a creative process of constructing what Castells calls ‘resistance identities’ which oppose the ‘legitimized identities’ constructed for us in the context of civil society and its state apparatuses” (69) Seen within this context, educational underachievement is assessed in relation to powerful

communal relationships and local cultural capital which situates rural lives between overlapping, competing modernist and rural discourses (63). While teachers conceive of rural cultural politics and forms of perception as ill informed, naïve, or overtly romanticized, Corbett emphasizes how “Castell’s resistance identities result in the formation of communities of resistance that stand in opposition to the metacommunity of civil society, the democratic ideal citizen, which is the object of most visions of key state apparatuses” (58)

But, for Corbett, not all identities are unproblematic from a moral or political perspective. Reinventing rural pedagogy, he maintains, requires confronting the sexism and racism found in many rural communities (269). Particularly salient in this regard is the role of gender, given the fact that the levels of retention and achievement among females were significantly higher than that of males in the area surveyed. Corbett suggests that a substantial part of male educational resistance or ambivalence arises from rural constructs of masculinity, since “education failure fits into a longstanding male tradition in many families, and being ‘born and bred’ a fisherman involved establishing an identity resistant to schooling” (244). Moreover, he adds, male resistance has not significantly declined even in the wake of a severe crisis in the local fishery with devastating impact upon local economies. Corbett explains this phenomenon as consistent with a stoic culture predisposed to weather downturns in the fishery and the association drawn between formal education and powerful corporate and scientific interests implicated in the fishery’s abrupt decline (245).

According to Corbett, given the nuanced nature of rural cultural realities, transformative rural education must build on the failures and misperceptions of the past in order to articulate a more responsive, place- based, pedagogy. First and foremost in this regard, is the need to ensure that “schooling...be connected to the specific struggles and problems encountered in specific rural locales” (269). As Corbett points out, such positionings are also consistent with his characterization of the diversity and nuanced complexity of rural lives. In his words “what I found on Digby Neck is not a discourse of entrapment, but multiple discourses of strategic decision- making, which are more consistent with Castell’s resistant identities and which are formed as a community based response to big government and big capital” (247).

However, there is also the perennial, seemingly unsolvable rural problem of outmigration as the educational system attempts to come to terms with “how rural schools transform economic capital into mobility capital for elite students” (271). While learning to leave may indeed be part of the needs of individual students and their communities, rural education must not be engrained with a cultural narrative of rural decline and fall which functions as a reductive, self fulfilling, prophecy. Seen within this context, the crux of the rural educational issue remains centered around our capacity as educators to “imagine rural schools as sites of resistance to the forces that threaten families and communities without at the same time falling back into simplistic notions about community” (272) As part of this challenge Corbett sees the need to integrate place- based pedagogies with local knowledges as a means of creating a “third space” outside of increasingly standardized and centralized educational institutions and curricula (273). Unlike alienating modernist pedagogies, communal identity and individual freedom intersect in such cultural spaces where liberation includes “the power to choose how and where to construct an identity and to discover where one belongs” (273)

Corbett’s book, then, offers a compelling synthesis of critical analysis and empirical field work. By framing the mobility issue in terms of the larger context of capital relations – in particular,

the pull and push factors at work within complex rural communities – it offers many suggestions for further research and analysis in this challenging (and often neglected) area of educational research. In particular, we might further explore how competing identities and truth regimes play out within school themselves as sites of contestation and systemic struggle. Such a genealogy of rural resistance identities may also require coming to terms with the concrete forms of organization and intervention that rural resistance has historically taken as well as the current forms that offer promise for the formulation and expression of collective, localized, resistance movements. Finally, such a broad- ranged approach may also necessitate examining the positioning of other postsecondary institutions, and indeed rural scholars themselves in relation to the complex intersecting currents, of neo Marxism, progressivism, liberalism, post-modernism and the recurrent themes of class, race and gender.

While these questions and many more stem from the difficult issues confronted by Corbett, this is an important book which clears the way for future collaborative educative projects. Corbett takes a much needed turn away from contemporary mobility based approaches given that, as Conrad wryly notes, “out migration hasn’t served the region well as a development strategy” (13) Rather than seeing the challenges facing rural communities as emblematic of individual ignorance, moral failure or apathy, Corbett clears the way for a place- based pedagogy which is open to taking its direction from rural residents themselves in a manner consistent with a more egalitarian and dialogical educational vision. Remarkably, Corbett’s work has opened a window into a border land where suffering and promise exist side by side as a veritable point of confluence for modern and rural cultures wherein critical educators can find novel directions for counter hegemonic struggle against authoritarian pedagogical practices.

## Chapter 5: Review of, *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide... And Why It Matters* by Barbara Coloroso

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Review of *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide... And Why It Matters* by Barbara Coloroso. Toronto: Viking Canada (Penguin), 2007

Barbara Coloroso is best known for her work on effective parenting, school discipline and bullying. In this book, she turns to an infinitely more terrifying, yet (she argues compellingly) related, subject. I postponed reading *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide* for a long time because of its sombre and disturbing topic, but in fact it is in some ways a strangely optimistic book. In proposing the use of her model of bullying as a way of working towards preventing genocide, Coloroso makes this seem like an attainable goal. This is both a strength and a weakness of the book: a strength in that it offers a practical and hopeful approach, rooted in educational practice; a weakness in that she lays herself open to charges of oversimplification, and lack of political analysis and historical training. Indeed, the latter critique sent *Extraordinary Evil* to join *The Grapes of Wrath*, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, the Harry Potter series and *The Canterbury Tales* on the long list of books that have been banned from classrooms. Following complaints from members of the Turkish community, the Toronto Board of Education dropped the book from the reading list for a Grade 11 course on genocide and crimes against humanity<sup>1</sup>, apparently on the grounds that Coloroso was not a historian (Desjardin, 2008; Hammer, 2008). However, she states herself that she writes not as a historian but as "an educator, a parent, and a former nun" (Coloroso, 2007, xxiv) and bases her arguments on insights from her knowledge of bullying and her experiences working with genocide survivors in Rwanda through the Tumerere Foundation<sup>2</sup>.

As to the charge of oversimplification, early in the book Coloroso quotes Sebastian Haffner, author of *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*, who writes:

Real ideas must as a rule be simplified to the level of a child's understanding if they are to arouse the masses to historic actions. A childish illusion, fixed in the minds of all children born in a certain decade and hammered home for four years, can easily reappear as a deadly serious political ideology twenty years later (Haffner, cited in Coloroso, 2007, xxvii).

The book should be read in this light. Its historical, cultural and political analysis of the three genocides it uses as examples (the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire; the Jews, Roma, and Sinti in Europe; and the Tutsi in Rwanda) could clearly be more nuanced and more extensive. How could this not be the case? By now there are vast archives and bodies of scholarly work on all of these examples and Coloroso does refer the reader to many key texts. Her own approach is indeed, in some respects, simplified. Yet the book has much to say to parents and teachers who wish to create caring communities and to raise children who have the courage to do good in the face of evil.



Claude Lanzmann, who made the film *Shoah*, posited the "obscurity of the very project of understanding [genocide]". Yet Coloroso, while agreeing with him, argues, "[t]hat should not prevent us from studying it. Genocide is not outside the realm of ordinary human behaviour... " (p. xxi). Calling genocide "the most extreme form of bullying", she describes the latter as "a far too common system of behaviors that is learned in childhood and rooted in contempt for another human being who has been deemed by the bully and his or her accomplices to be worthless, inferior, and undeserving of respect" (Coloroso, undated). She applies her model of the "bully circle" to the three cases the book draws on. According to the model, bullying involves a cast of characters surrounding the bullied person or group. These characters include: A. the bully/bullies (planners, instigators, and perpetrators); B. henchmen (who take an active part but do not instigate); C. active supporters (cheer the bully on and reap benefits from the bullying); D. passive supporters (get pleasure from the pain inflicted); E. disengaged onlookers (turn a blind eye or do not take a stand); and F. potential witnesses (know they ought to help but do not act) (pp. 82-3). Genocide involves this same cast of characters and similar scripts.

Coloroso argues convincingly that in cases of genocide, as with bullying, conflict resolution will not work. She uses the events in Rwanda to illustrate this, showing how the United Nations failed to act, at least in part, because the genocide was scripted and understood internationally as "ancient tribal animosities" or as a civil war. Because of this, the role of the UN was understood as being to oversee a ceasefire. Instead, the genocide should have been recognized for what it was (and Coloroso believes that, again as with bullying, there are clear indicators common to any genocide) and stopped forcefully, the perpetrators brought to justice and reparations made so that the community could find ways to heal, or at least to coexist.

Based on her deconstruction of the causes and consequences of genocide, both to the victims and to the world, Coloroso proposes conditions through which she believes the "empty slogan of Never Again" can become real (Coloroso, undated). The book considers the problem as an educational one and draws on the southern African concept of *ubuntu*, the idea that each of us depends on the well-being of the community and, if anything harms that community, each one of us is diminished. If the potential for bullying and genocide can be nurtured from a young age, as Coloroso argues, so can the capacity to do good. "[R]epeated acts of courage and bravery strengthen and perpetuate... acts of kindness and daring" (pp. 124-5). The book tells the stories not only of the unimaginable horrors of genocide but also of acts of extraordinary bravery and compassion.

As I read the book I was thinking of Sylvia Ashton-Warner's belief that the mind of a child has "two vents; destructiveness and creativeness [and that] to the extent that we widen the creative channel, we atrophy the destructive one" (p. 33). This idea seems to have some connection to Coloroso's insight that "[t]he more one does good, the easier it becomes to do more good [and] the more one acts cruelly, the easier it is to be cruel again" (p.141), that if evil is banal, as Hannah Arendt argued, so is good. For many teachers, perhaps especially those interested in Arts based education, Ashton-Warner's idea seems intuitively right, but it is difficult to reconcile with the knowledge that cultured and creative people have been responsible for the most brutal war crimes and for genocide. Indicted war criminal and *génocidaire*, Radovan Karadzic, is a prize-winning poet and Adolf Hitler was a painter. The issue is not one of degree of talent, but that the development of creativity alone is clearly not enough. Perhaps Coloroso has it right and the antidote to destructiveness is not being creative but simply doing good. She asks us to consider what we can learn from people who were resisters, defenders, and witnesses in each of these

genocides. "Can they give us a clue as to how we can raise generation of children who care deeply, share generously, and help willingly? Can they show us the antidotes for the most virulent agents ripping apart the fabric of our humanity -- hating, hoarding, and purposely harming one another?" (Coloroso, undated). For educators and parents, it is a place to start.

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## ENDNOTES

1. The book appears to have been reinstated later.
2. The Tumerere Foundation is run by survivors of the genocide, with little funding and few resources, to create a refuge and provide educational possibilities for orphans of the genocide. The foundation can be contacted at [tumerere@inbox.rwanda](mailto:tumerere@inbox.rwanda).

## **Chapter 6: Review of, Legal Dimensions of Education: Implications for Teachers and School Administrators by Jerome G. Delaney**

John Hoben  
L.L.B.

Delaney, Jerome (2007). *Legal Dimensions of Education: Implications for Teachers and School Administrators*. Calgary: Detselig

This volume has the rare distinction of simplifying the convoluted, sometimes cryptic, vagaries of education law. A former teacher and administrator, as well as a professor of education, Delaney surveys the full gamut of legal educational issues including: *Charter* rights, criminal law, tort liability, administrative law and due process, disciplinary law and procedure, as well as the burgeoning areas of copyright and intellectual property rights. Though wide ranging, the key aim of his text is to provide teachers and administrators with the knowledge necessary to ensure that they are able to both protect themselves and to ensure that

“[c]ommon sense and a reasonable modicum of caution should prevail and thus students are afforded the degree of professionalism they deserve” (74)

As Brown and Zuker note, “education law is a dynamic, invigorating and intellectually stimulating discipline because it is constantly evolving” (2002, p. v). Fortunately, despite such rich complexity, Delaney’s text is concise, clear and well structured with succinct concluding sections and a wealth of citations for those who wish to delve more deeply into the subject matter. From fights at schools, extracurricular mishaps, to copyright issues and questions of criminal responsibility, schools, Delaney reminds us, can no longer be seen as areas in which interests, rights and conflicts exist beyond the pale of legal norms. Reflecting the fact that the law is a body of knowledge which has meaning only in its real world application, Delaney’s text is replete with questions and scenarios for classroom discussion.

Such a book is both useful and timely as the scope of modern litigation has come to encompass even the most mundane aspects of schooling. In many ways, sensationalist media coverage of legal issues tends to lend the impression that the law is primarily a punitive social mechanism to be feared. In contrast, for Delaney the function of legal knowledge is often simply to provide teachers and administrators with greater insight into the options they have as their disposal as well as their attendant risks (112). Drawing on personal experience as a high school administrator (112) Delaney notes how often the law may provide a means of resolving conflict by providing a set of shared fundamental principles.

Indeed, he insists, there is a moral dimension to the need to have educators inform themselves about legal issues in order to fulfill their duties as conscientious professionals. In his words:

Educational policy is a significant part of the lives of teachers and school administrators. More so than ever before, school boards and ministries of education are preoccupied with developing and implementing policies to give direction to the everyday front line

work of educators. What is motivating this may have something to do with the litigious society we're living in but the reality is that policy permeates all aspects of the K-12 school system. It is incumbent on today's teachers and school administrators to be knowledgeable of and conversant with, as is reasonably possible, the plethora of policies found on school boards....throughout this country. (107)

As his comments suggest, Delaney's book serves as an apt reminder of how knowledge of basic legal principles, particularly those regarding civil and criminal responsibility, and professional misconduct provide a means of allowing teachers to develop a rough and ready way of navigating the fast paced realm of everyday schooling. This is a worthwhile aim given that, despite the increasingly litigious nature of contemporary society, teachers often lack knowledge of the most basic legal principles.

Towards such an end, Delaney suggests that the law forms a crucial part of the broader public dialogue which cements school communities and cultures.

Recognizing the law as a dispute resolution mechanism, Delaney allows readers to familiarize themselves with the most basic legal principles through application, analysis and shared reflection. Through such a "hands on" pedagogical approach, the law becomes both a principled and pragmatic form of problem solving which teachers can utilize to think about their own school environments.

In this way, Delaney provides an approach which moves beyond the memorization of legal rules and norms to cultivate the ability to recognize salient differences across a broad range of educational settings.

By illustrating some of the contemporary challenges existing in the no man's land lying between contemporary scholarship and applied practice, this text brings to mind many of the tensions inherent in the broader fields of legal education. Although the plain language movement, together with wide ranging legal reforms, have sought to make the law accessible and understandable to all citizens, quite often legal texts fail to realize this simple ideal. At its essence, perhaps, legal education is simply about taking the steps necessary to ensure we have a teaching profession, and, by extension, a citizenry that is well apprised of its most fundamental rights and responsibilities. As Lloyd Weinreb has recently pointed out, in many ways understanding the inter-relationship between the informal mechanisms of culture and the iterations of formal legal processes provides important insight into how the law is socially constructed and transmitted:

Law gives expression to a community's values and in turn shapes the community and affects conduct in ways vastly more pervasive and far-reaching than the judgments of a court. Nevertheless, adjudication is the means by which law takes hold formally and finally and, in a sense, has its concrete being. If close attention to the process of adjudication provides no guarantee that the laws applied are sound, it is also true that the laws are applied, they remain general and abstract and, however sound in principle, are vulnerable to

distortion and error. It is, therefore, of first importance that the adjudicative process be understood. (Weinreb, 2005, p. 161)

To extrapolate, we might emphasize the importance of a comprehensive legal education for teachers who are, in many ways, the custodians and guardians of our society's future workers and citizens. Like Weinreb, Delaney points out that it is essential that the law be understood as a process involving those whom it governs as learners and participants. Arguably, the efficacy of our legal system is contingent—at least partially—upon shared broad based competencies and perceptions. Both Weinreb and Delaney, then, see the law as a process, a body of knowledge and a form of reasoning which is dependent on the exigencies of a shared social language.

By precept and example, then, this book reminds us that despite our rapidly changing social reality, teachers need not become neurotic about the possibility of transgressing legal standards. In Delaney's words, "it has been said that today we are living in a highly litigious society. Simply stated, it means that more so than ever before our citizenry is quite keen on their individual rights and are prepared to advocate for those rights" (13). Teachers too, Delaney reminds us, have rights and unless they are informed they risk becoming the unwitting servants of arbitrary power. In a plain spoken, but knowledgeable voice, the author reminds us that universities, professionals and school boards alike must share responsibility for educating the future citizenry who are the inheritors of our society's most cherished democratic values.

From the perspective of critical educators seeking to empower their students; administrators who want to become more aware of the most common legal pitfalls of educational practice; or even, parents who wish to learn more about the legal dimensions of the schooling system, this book affords a valuable opportunity to become apprised of the legal rights and responsibilities that often have a direct bearing on the complex, rapidly evolving world of public schooling.

*Legal Dimensions of Education* is a starting point in a much broader dialogue aimed at reclaiming teaching as a respected, empowered profession. Quite simply this book is an inexpensive, concise means of allowing teachers to familiarize themselves with the basic tenets of their legal rights and duties – essential reading for all those endeavoring to become more informed and effective educational professionals.

## **Chapter 7: Review of Reading and Teaching Henry Giroux by Clar Doyle and Amarjit Singh**

John Hoben

Doyle, C. & A. Singh (2006). *Reading & Teaching Henry Giroux*. New York: Peter Lang.

While many agree on the need for radical democratic education in contemporary classrooms, few books provide any concrete insight into the forms such pedagogical objectives should take. In contrast, in *Reading & Teaching Henry Giroux*, Clar Doyle and Amarjit Singh move in iterative fashion between theory and practice to create a teaching stance which is ever mindful of critical pedagogy's transformative vocation. Quite appropriately the authors remind us that their chosen subject, Henry Giroux, is one of the preeminent figures in contemporary critical pedagogy, a pioneering voice in media and cultural studies, and a passionate proponent of democratic education. The author of dozens of books and countless peer reviewed articles, Giroux has helped establish critical pedagogy as an often influential discipline, whose reach extends beyond academia, into high school classrooms and broader culture. Beyond the elitism, territorial infighting and reactionary conservatism of the traditional Academy, Giroux insists on the importance of the public dimension of the intellectual's vocation as central to the viability, as well as the interdependence, of democracy and the contemporary university. For Giroux, behind narrow, often disciplinary calls for enhanced rigor, accountability, and standardization lies a drive towards dispirited, alienating and ultimately dehumanizing educational systems. Schooling, as an instrument of dominant discourses becomes a-historical, depersonalized and reified, presenting knowledge as simply instrumental, objective and divorced from teachers' personal lives (56, 57).

Against such oppressive institutional realities, Doyle and Singh argue, counter discourses can be found and situated through critical pedagogy's tactical concern with the exigencies of power and myriad ways in which inequality and injustice express themselves in everyday life and its most important institutions, schooling included. The authors point out that "Giroux claims that language should be studied not only as a technical and expressive device but also as an active agent in the production of various texts and institutional powers" (28). Not surprisingly, then, debates about language often become a way of policing meta-discourses about power and schooling in ways which limit the possibilities for change inherent in emergent, public disciplines. For Giroux, in his own words, "knowledge must be linked to the issue of power, which suggests that educators and others must raise questions about its truth claims as well as the interests that such knowledge serves" (53). Yet, this emphasis on constructivism is not tantamount to a reductive relativism, since Giroux's work is unashamedly concerned with the search for a more democratic and socially just society.

As such, Giroux's emphasis on the construction of knowledge, the public pedagogical nature of culture, and the formative influence of media and language are all orientated towards furthering the struggle for deep democracy. For Doyle and Singh, education requires a continual attempt to connect and reconnect teachers and learners in the search for a more intimate, critical and caring schooling environment. In many ways this book is the product of such a philosophy—a handbook for understanding the full range and complexity of Giroux's thought—without sacrificing accessibility for intellectual sophistication and depth of thought. This book provides a



comprehensive, often detailed, exploration of Giroux's work, and more importantly, it has connotations for educators who seek to make a difference through their chosen profession—in ways which challenge its most fundamental assumptions. It is also one which, as Giroux says, underscores the importance and power of “pedagogy as a mode of witnessing, a public space in which students learn to be attentive and responsible to the memories and narratives of others” (53). For the authors, this tendency in Giroux's work perhaps is a response to contemporary culture and its struggles. Ironically, as popular culture has become more and more corporatized and the influence of the military-industrial-surveillance complex has deepened, teaching has become increasingly deskilled and insularized. This contradiction in many ways serves as a reminder of the need to emphasize the role of teachers as “transformative intellectuals”: thinkers and doers whose primary function is to serve as democratic agents for critical engagement and social justice.

As Doyle and Singh contend, Giroux's work points to teaching being a form of cultural politics since “the role of teachers cannot be understood without reference to the place of schooling, the power of ideology, and the needs of democracy, as well as the other spheres that help explain how personal identity and social reality get constructed” (26). More importantly, however, Doyle and Singh devote much of their text to orienting readers to possibilities for using Giroux within their own classrooms and pedagogical encounters. While critical education may challenge standardization it does need tactics and ways of mapping the contemporary educational reality and the enormous challenges it poses for cooperation and coordinated dissent. In this vein, the authors highlight three strategies for using Giroux's work within the classroom, these include: i) asking students to question the interests and ideological location of textbook producers and curriculum materials; ii) encouraging students to “discuss these issues in historical and comparative contexts”, often by placing them in a local, regional and global set of inter-relations as well as a historical and socio-cultural context; and iii) by discussing the production of curricular knowledge from a Canadian perspective since quite often curricular materials originate from, or are heavily influenced, by American sources (91, 92). As a complementary strategy, Doyle and Singh also describe how Giroux writes to combine the interconnected strands of public issues, ideological and cultural influences and concrete tactical strategies (95). Together, such a combination of pedagogical and academic strategies enable the authors to describe in detailed fashion how they use Giroux's writing to guide and inform their own work with undergraduate students, graduate researchers and teacher interns.

“A teacher who is attempting to teach without inspiring the pupil with a desire to learn” said Horace Mann “is hammering on a cold iron”. Doyle and Singh take Mann's admonition to heart by showing how Giroux's approach can form a transformative influence in the lives of students and teachers alike. For Doyle and Singh, Giroux's writings have also enabled them to develop more informed and effective classroom management and teacher education practices. To such an end, the authors also outline a critical internship teaching model based on Giroux's public transformative pedagogy which they term a Reflective and Critical Internship Model (RCIT Model) (135). Here they draw on the experiences and concerns of teaching interns and base their approach on the ongoing educational challenges highlighted by these students. Through this model and by referencing the voices of students and interns, they seek to give voice to a “pedagogy of affirmation” which makes use of “five forms of action: a) describing and

contextualizing, b) bringing and recognizing cultural capital, c) engaging in communication, d) examining and problematizing dominant practices and discourses, and e) functioning as intellectuals and cultural workers” (158). A central part of this approach involves using “reflection and the production of local theories” to allow “teaching interns [to] empower themselves” (163). It also requires recognizing how students and teachers have been devalued and “overburdened by discourses of despair” (77). Yet, as innovative and useful as this pedagogical model proves, Doyle and Singh, despite emphasizing the radical possibility inherent in Giroux’s work, resist oversimplifying the challenges of teaching for transformation:

“As we have claimed above, the role of the intellectual is much more than a mantle placed on teachers. This is not a job for which one applies. We stress to the students and teachers we work with, that being an intellectual, in this critical sense, can in fact be a burden. For many teachers it is easier to accept the prepackaged curriculum content and the objectives that are printed in the teacher guides. The role of intellectual for teachers means that this is no longer enough. Now the responsibility is to shape the very purposes and conditions of school. This is where teachers have to take responsibility for their own work. Interns remind us of the constraints that are imposed by the curriculum, as well as by the rules and regulation set by local school administrators. In fact, one of the biggest challenges we face is to convince students that as teachers they can have power. At this crossroads, we encourage students to remember teachers who had power—who gave themselves power. We never try to down play the difficulty of this. Rather, we prompt these teachers, and would be teachers, to move quietly but definitely towards such moments. Reminding them that as transformative intellectuals, we never really arrive. We remain in progress. Of course we have to remind ourselves of this also. (148)”

Here, Doyle and Singh aptly emphasize the importance of commitment and the danger of becoming radicals in name only. They remind us that quite often established interests have strong, often negative and sometimes vindictive reactions to radical critique. Whether or not such a reactionary stance arises from a conscious decision to oppose radical democratic change, or simply, naked self-interest, it is a real concern for those pushing for change. There are costs to teaching against the grain, balanced only by a sense that one is living and teaching in a fashion which is at once, fulfilling, and, deeply authentic. These are real issues for conscientious teachers teaching to youth hemmed in by a “politics of disposability” where the concerned citizen becomes the victim of a carnivalesque gulag culture dominated by irreverence, mistrust and diversion. For Giroux and these authors, the security state is the fractured skeleton around which an empty commodified culture of instant gratification and despair, is lulled into a calf like stupor as democracy plods onwards towards an unknown, and uncertain nightmarish future.

Seeking to avoid such a cultural fate by questioning essentialist politic paradigms, Giroux challenges the political left and right alike by emphasizing the essential role played by the dissident and activist in creating vibrant democratic cultures. Mapping the terrain of “politics after hope”, as Giroux says elsewhere, requires us to challenge the false economies of power and pleasure offered by the corporate media’s seductive dream machine. A key question at the heart

of this book, then, requires us to consider how can teachers find a way to create fulfilling pedagogical engagements in an increasingly troubled, dysfunctional and disenfranchised culture? In its simplest sense, Doyle and Singh suggest, the flip side of alienation is the burden of taking responsibility for radical teaching from the margins. Rather than seeing students as objects to be acted upon or interfered with, Giroux, Doyle and Singh promote pedagogical encounters which use hope and the imagination to create engaging, transformative learning experiences. As this seconded teacher's comments point out, those within the schooling system often underestimate the transformative power of hope and enthusiasm:

"I'm going back to a classroom when I finish this job in April, and I'm going back with some good ideas. I'm going back with some new combinations of pieces of literature that I have never put together before, some new insights. I think I'm going back a little bit revived. I believe, too, when the school board selected me, or when my principal selected me, they may have had that in mind. It's not exactly been retraining, but I think it has been a source of revitalization and so it's been good for me. And I hope it's been good for my interns. (Jo) (171)

As this educator suggests teaching should not be about training the life and vitality out of students—it should be an opportunity for sharing and exploring— finding reasons to celebrate love and hope. Likewise, according to Doyle and Singh education for Giroux is simultaneously an intensely public, self reflexive endeavor. In this nexus perhaps is the crux of critical democratic education, as the everyday and the political interfuse and constitute each other as provocative, challenging and inspiring. Democratic public life, at once relies on institutions and the reproduction of public interests as personal concerns. This is a relationship which is continually changing, meaning that the critical educational project always is preoccupied with examining this connection and the ways in which publics have coded and recoded the fractious dialects of power. Like Freire's concrete pedagogical strategies aimed at helping learners achieve a new form of critical cultural literacy, the best tactics of the critical pedagogy tradition are often simple, direct and use the learner's everyday environment to provide new ways of contextualizing life experience through language to create a mindful agency that pushes back the boundaries of the possible.

The politics of representation, then, Doyle and Singh insist, is notable for its ubiquity and contentiousness. Constructing youth through the social engineering of failure and social stratification ignores the revolutionary promise of schooling as a site of shifting hegemony and disavowed desire—a site of borders and thus the realization of the need for revolutionary border crossing pedagogies. Using an eclectic mix of postcolonial, critical, postmodernism, feminist and liberal theory, Giroux encounters contemporary culture through history by using a critical literacy fueled by imagination and hope. Such tools are coupled with the stark realization that we live in a century confounded by the open-endedness of new vistas and haunted by the ghastly history of war which dogs us from our bloodied past. Breaking free of our collective hatreds and phobias requires intense emotive, intellectual efforts towards a reemergence of freedom and a form of social justice which embraces both tolerance and the freedom of the individual will. As always such big questions are played out as a stance against the thoughtlessness and banality of institutional realities. Teaching not only by precept but by example, Doyle and Singh demonstrate how the theoretical and cultural work of Giroux makes a concrete difference in teachers' everyday lives.

They also show how Giroux has inspired and informed their teaching practice which, at its heart, shares a common, critical and imaginative theme of viewing “pedagogy as a form of cultural and political production rather than simply a transmission of knowledge and skills” (152). As such, this book explores central educative themes in ways which are recursive, sophisticated and engaging, representing a thoughtful affirmation of teaching and public agency, in a time wherein a rapidly dissolving public conscience falls increasingly victim to a crusading cultural politics of fear.

## **Chapter 8: Review of, Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations by C. Ernst & D. Chrobot-Mason**

Margaret Wakeham

Ernst, C. & Chrobot-Mason, D. (2011). *Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Over seven billion people live on the planet Earth, each one an individual with distinct beliefs, associations, languages, and practices. Our characteristics and communities define us as persons, influence our affiliations and create boundaries around us. Boundaries protect us but also limit our capacity to know each other, to work together, to honour our differences, to harness the richness of our varied talents, and to develop common purposes. Finding common ground is not always easy. Forging liaisons across boundaries, whether between continents or across the hall, requires a special set of attributes and an exceptional kind of leadership. *Boundary Spanning Leadership: Six Practices for Solving Problems, Driving Innovation and Transforming Organizations*, (2011) by Chris Ernst and Donna Chrobot-Mason, offers a six step process to help transform boundaries into frontiers of growth. When followed, these steps produce, what the authors describe as, the *Nexus Effect*, where differences intersect to produce transformative results.

Chris Ernst, who writes in the academic and popular press, is a faculty member of the Center for Creative Leadership, a world-wide non-profit organization headquartered in North Carolina. Donna Chrobot-Mason has a Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology from the University of Georgia, and is an associate professor at the University of Cincinnati. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason base their book on ten years of global research and practice at the *Center for Creative Leadership*. Their message is relevant for a myriad of fields including politics, business, service and education. They write in straight-forward prose suitable for a range of readers. To demonstrate the need for boundary spanning leadership, the authors provide real life stories of leadership practices from around the world, from small towns in the United States, to non-governmental agencies in the developing world, to multi-national corporations. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason's observations are important to anyone who strives to bring people together for collaborative endeavours, whether modest or elaborate.

*Boundary Spanning Leadership* is divided into five parts. The first section argues for a new kind of leadership in today's world. Subsequent sections offer detailed information and examples of the steps of the process. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason argue that boundary spanning leadership means finding common understandings, goals and practices, ensuring alignment of resources with needs, and sowing commitment to the superordinate group while retaining the identities of the constituent groups. Drawing upon their experiences and research, they contend that divisions occur more in groups than in systems. Insufficient trust, disrespect, insecurity, and the absence of a common purpose, can undermine group success.

Ernst and Chrobot-Mason believe divisive forces in groups occur along five major boundary lines: *vertical, horizontal, stakeholder, demographic and geographic*. Vertical boundaries are typically hierarchical, nested in traditional notions of rank, span of control and power. Horizontal boundaries occur along functional and divisional lines. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason describe

stakeholder boundaries as the influence of external partners and alliances; demographic boundaries as the complete range of gender, racial, educational, age and other differences in the workplace; and geographic boundaries as the physical distances that separate locations, cultures and clients.

Ernst and Chrobot-Mason report that *horizontal* boundaries, when individuals and groups need to collaborate in organizations along non-hierarchical lines, present the greatest leadership challenges for leaders. Stakeholder, demographic and geographic boundaries also pose significant demands for groups and organizations. The authors contend that without appropriate leadership practices, destructive conflict may emerge among colleagues of dissimilar backgrounds for professional, demographic, cultural, internal and external, geographic and other reasons. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason caution us to be aware of and ready to address the forces that divide us. They remark that when groups come together, good things or bad things may happen. The book uses several examples to illustrate how effective boundary spanning leadership helps prevent and mend divisions.

Ernst and Chrobot-Mason postulate that *identity* and *belonging* are the two core conditions leaders need to recognize and manage as they seek to engage disparate groups in shared actions, and overcome the gap between the perceived *us* and *them*, the *in* group and the *out* group. The authors cite psychological studies to support their claims that groups form quickly. Groups may compete with each other in unhealthy rivalries to the detriment of the organization, or work successfully together for shared gain. Leaders play a critical role in establishing a connection with and among their constituents, in how they present themselves as leaders and demonstrate themselves to be ethical, fair and trustworthy. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason use the analogy of geological faults to suggest that leaders who ignore the warning signs of widening divisions, worker disquiet, and anxiety, risk creating major fissures and significant upheaval in their organizations. The authors identify four major sources of organizational disruption: *breach*, (one group seems favoured over another); *side-swipe*, (one group inadvertently disrespects another causing a major incident); *submersion*, (a group imposes its identity on another group); and *clash* (where neither group is prepared to accommodate the other).

According to Ernst and Chrobot-Mason, organizations have much to gain from enabling groups to collaborate, share knowledge, harness skills, and bring together their unique assets. The authors state that successful boundary spanning leadership is deliberate and planned. Their six practices of boundary spanning leadership help close the *divide* and lead to where boundaries become frontiers and “...powerful human forces – differentiation and integration-intersect in transformative ways (p. 11)”.

Ernst and Chrobot-Mason use the symbol of a spiral to show the process of boundary spanning leadership, beginning with the *divide* at the bottom, followed by *managing boundaries* (*buffering* and *reflecting*), upward to *forging common ground* (*connecting* and *mobilizing*), and finishing on top with *discovering new frontiers*, (*weaving* and *transforming*). Each of these steps is explained with case study references and illustrations. The authors use an example from post-apartheid South Africa to illustrate *buffering* (p. 87). They describe how the leaders of an insurance company intervened to prevent a seemingly minor incident about staffroom milk from becoming a major cultural conflict. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason describe how buffering practices help create safety, manage the flow of information and forge shared identities. *Reflecting* generates respect



through intergroup interaction, by surfacing and acknowledging deeply held assumptions, seeing what is common among them, honouring differences and being patient.

In the section on *Forging Common Ground*, (*connecting* and *mobilizing*), the authors describe how a senior oil executive played a leadership role in bringing together dissimilar community interests to devise a plan to reduce green house gas emissions. Through creating a neutral third space with opportunities for group members to build personal relationships, this leader facilitated connections between group members, created conditions where people began to trust one another, to listen to and to respect each other, and to work together. These ties helped build bridges across communities and produced creative solutions to difficult questions. *Mobilizing*, say the authors, means developing a shared vision, a collective identity, a group culture with artefacts and stories to represent who the new group is and what they stand for, while continuing to respect the composite sub-group identities of their constituents.

The last piece of the process, *Discovering New Frontiers* (p. 130) contains two important practices: *weaving* and *transforming*. Leaders weave when they extract differences from within groups and incorporate them into the larger whole. Leaders transform, say the authors, when they bring groups together, cut across boundaries and help groups reinvent themselves. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason cite the case of a children's aid organization in India that employed boundary spanning strategies to overcome numerous challenges of language, religion and culture to achieve its aims. The authors explain that the goal of their six point process is to achieve the *Nexus Effect*. "When safety, respect, trust, community, interdependence and reinvention characterize the interactions between groups, those groups will achieve something together above and beyond what they could achieve on their own (p. 219)."

Ernst and Chrobot-Mason's *Boundary Spanning Leadership* provides important information for those who lead both formally and informally in organizations. Their book is especially relevant for the challenges of today as we work together across boundaries of diverse personal, social, cultural and professional realities. Many readers may see in Ernst and Chrobot-Mason's work, an extension of earlier thoughts by key contributors to organizational theory. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is relevant, where physiological, safety, belonging, self-esteem and self actualization inform human action.

Sengé's (1990) work on organizational learning, personal mastery, mental models, team learning and systems thinking, comes to mind as do the arguments of Argyris (1999) on the importance of people, groups, relationships and non-defensive exchanges. Mintzberg's (1983) evolution of hierarchical arrangements in different formal organizational models, as well as Weick's (1990) definition of loosely coupled organizations in dynamic situations, provide important complementary information for those who read this book. Schein's (1993) observations on culture, inter-group trust, respect for differences and developing common goals, the importance of informal groups and the power of deeply held assumptions are also worth consulting. Transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), is present in boundary spanning leadership, when followers go beyond what is necessary, feel valued and respected and transcend the transactional reasons for contributing to an organization. "Boundaries are defining characteristics of organizations, and boundary roles are the link between the environment and the organization (Aldrich & Herker, 1977, p. 217)".

*Boundary Spanning Leadership* reinforces numerous theories on organizational leadership and goes a step further in plotting definitive steps to bring disparate groups together for a common purpose. For those who seek step by step guidelines for boundary spanning leadership practice, this book will be especially helpful. For those who prefer illustrative examples, these are also present. For those who reject a systematic prescription for human interaction and leadership, this book may not be for you. As we continue to support collaboration as preferable to isolation in today's organizations, Ernst and Chrobot-Mason remind us that the actual process of realizing effective intergroup cooperation is neither easy nor guaranteed. Informed skilled leadership and deliberate strategies are necessary to turn boundaries into transformative frontiers.

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# **Part 14**

## **Exordiums**

- 1. Technology-Mediated Learning: Guest Editorial**
- 2. Funds of Knowledge: Illuminating the Voices**
- 3. Implementing Technology within Universally Designed Literature Circles**
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## **Chapter 1: Technology-Mediated Learning: Guest Editorial**

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Technology-Mediated Learning is a broad term that encompasses the wide variety of uses of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in teaching and learning. Once upon a time and not that long ago, teaching technologies or tools were limited to chalkboards, books, pens and paper. Electronic tools might have included overhead projectors, televisions and tape recorders. These tools would have been primarily controlled by the classroom instructor and would “have tended to reinforce instead of reinvent existing norms” (Murphy & Rodríguez-Manzanares, 2014, p. 99). Thus, these tools would have merely afforded a very limited number of activities, primarily that of transmission and in one direction only - i.e., teachers use a chalkboard or overhead to transmit information to students who use pens and paper to receive the information. One-to-many broadcast mode with centralized control of the tools was the norm.

There is a well-quoted anecdote borrowed from Papert (1993) about surgeons and teachers who travel one hundred years into the future. Whereas the change in the operating room with its modern electronics bewilders the surgeons, changes in the classroom are hardly noticeable to teachers. That anecdote may have been relevant 20 years ago in 1993 but not in 2013. Campus classrooms at Memorial University of Newfoundland (Mun) are an example. Compared to a decade ago, the main floor of Mun’s university library has undergone a visible transformation. Instead of a passive space of row after row and shelf and shelf of books, the space has been transformed into an active Commons or learning hub. The Commons offers access to a broad range of electronic tools as well as to personnel who help students use these tools in support of their learning. Students’ broad access to tools is not only visible in the Commons. In corridors, classrooms and even cafeterias, students are using a wide range of complex electronic tools. All over North America, students are increasingly using technology in support of their learning. In fact, Bates and Sangrà (2011) observed that, in over 90% of post-secondary institutions, students are using online learning management systems.

The time-travelling professional on Mun’s campuses from 1993 to 2013 would be as bewildered as the surgeons who travelled one hundred years into the future. It is not only the prevalence of new tools that might surprise them but the ubiquity of tool use beyond the classroom. This increased use outside the classroom has been made possible by mobile technologies. Instead of the clumsy desktops of the 90s, students use portable devices that fit in the palms of their hands. These devices offer them access to software (often free) to support their learning and their social connectedness. Their notes may be stored in an online dropbox or a cloud. Their discussions may take place using online tools that organize threads. Their entire course may be available online so that they do not need to come to campus every day. More than ever before, students are connected, communicating and collaborating using powerful and empowering tools in and out of the classroom. These new norms around tool use are paralleled by new forms of control. For example, students are less dependent than in the past on gaining access to information through an intermediary such as an instructor, professor or librarian. The new tools have also changed their communities by broadening them to include individuals who are geographically dispersed and diverse. Community members do not need to be in the same

room to share ideas or knowledge: the tools they use are not dependent on physical place. The outcome of all this new technology in teaching and learning means that students are potentially more empowered and more in control of how, what and where they learn.

In a context of learning, the more tools students have at their disposal, potentially the better the outcomes. Of course, it is how the tools are used that is most important. A powerful tool is useless in the service of someone who does not see its potential or understand how to use it. Researchers determined long ago that merely putting more media into the hands of students does not make a difference. Use of media does not fundamentally change the activity of learning particularly when that media supports primarily or solely broadcast transmission. In 2013, the tools do not merely support the transmission of information in audio-visual formats to receiving students. The tools of this very early part of the new century make it easy for students to effectively produce information, share knowledge, and create and disseminate artefacts in diverse forms.

This issue on Technology-Mediated Learning highlights the potential of the new tools of this century to engage students in forms of activity that were not possible in the past. What makes this issue particularly “special” is that the majority of authors are former or present students of the Faculty of Education at Mun. What also makes it ‘special’ is its inclusion of different forms of writing including position papers, literature reviews and personal reflections. I would particularly like to draw readers’ attention to the first two items in this issue: the critical reflections by Smart and by Barnes. These reflections are in multimedia format in YouTube. The inclusion of this format is in recognition of the possibilities for new forms of representation and dissemination made possible by putting powerful tools for creation into the hands of students. The two critical reflections allow us to gain insight into the possibilities for the future of Technology-Mediated Learning. Smart describes the technology-rich, open, meaningful and student-centered learning of the future. Barnes describes the future’s “flexible, open and adaptive” learning institutions.

The inclusion of position papers is in recognition of the role technology can play in addressing common problems and meeting needs in teaching and learning. Lister’s paper argues in favour of reliance on distance education in rural high schools as a solution to the dropout problem among gifted students. Both Stokes and Barnes advocate for use of technology to improve opportunities for timely feedback and review during traditional face-to-face lectures. Manzer makes the case for providing support to struggling readers using technology-assisted reading. Blackmore explains how electronic games can support problem-based learning. Likewise, Saqlain’s and Young’s contributions to the issue also illustrate the role that technology plays in overcoming problems and meeting needs. Saqlain’s outline of the history of distance education and e-learning in Newfoundland and Labrador illustrates how technology-mediated learning emerged in this province as a response to problems of distance. Young’s study of students with learning disabilities highlights the role that assistive technology can play in supporting students with special needs.

Beyond technology’s capacity to solve problems and meet needs are the opportunities it creates for new opportunities to emerge. Mawhinney’s review of the literature illustrates how online assessment can help monitor student understanding, improve academic programs, and enhance student learning. Stevens provides insights into the types of opportunities that evolved in

Newfoundland and Labrador as a result of the introduction of distance-learning technologies while Hewitt offers an enthusiastic personal reflection on how use of blogging enhanced teaching and learning with elementary school students.

Four papers in this special issue focus not on how technology solves problems but on the problems that can arise with its use. Barbour and Mulcahy examine enrollment trends in schools participating in online learning in Newfoundland and Labrador. The authors question whether a higher percentage of rural students enroll in basic-level courses at schools where academic-level courses are only available online. Vincent's paper takes aim at criticisms of online and distance learning for undermining academic integrity. Dolmont takes aim at those who argue in favour of greater controls over technology such as institutions and governments that practice Internet content filtering. To avoid causing problems, technology needs to be carefully integrated. That is essentially the premise of Barbour and Adelstein's study of high-school students' perceptions of effective online course design.

In closing, I'd like to thank the special edition co-editor Michael Barbour. Finally, thank you to all those who answered the call for submissions to this special issue and who took the time to contribute.

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## **Chapter 2: Funds of Knowledge: Illuminating the Voices\***

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This issue of *The Morning Watch* focuses on illuminating the reflections, perspectives, and lived experiences, of its contributors, as funds of knowledge. It privileges the unique nature and perspective of each submission, as a distinctive and significant connection to the fundamental nature and the essence of the Faculty of Education.

During a Faculty Council meeting in 2012 a new member to the faculty, expressed an interest in looking back and learning more about the Faculty of Education - its roots and its evolution. This idea was illuminated during the 2012 Memorial Reunion celebrations when Faculty of Education Alumni came together to celebrate their connections to the Faculty, to Memorial, and to each other.

The call for submissions to this Special Issue went out in the fall of 2012 and a year later we have submissions from retired and current faculty, students, practicing and pre-service teachers and other alumni who link their lived experiences, their research, and their journey in education to Memorial University's Faculty of Education. The result is a rich meandering collage of experiences which extends and illuminates the boundaries of the Faculty of Education to classrooms in Korea and Taiwan; to religious and moral education in the school curriculum; to significant others as reading teachers; to interdisciplinary study on immigration and settlement; to Royal Commissions; to authoring children's books; to government bureaucracies and research; to family literacy; and, rural - urban connections.

### **\*Acknowledgements**

The editors would like to thank all the contributors for their commitment to sharing some aspects of their journeys, through this issue of *The Morning Watch*.

### **Chapter 3: Implementing Technology within Universally Designed Literature Circles**

Carole Mackenzie (M.Ed.

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Having all students read the same book conveys a message to students – that everyone has the same interests and reading abilities. The traditional practice of all students reading the same novel is being replaced by those which take into account a student's needs, abilities and interests (Wu, 2013). Kids love the choice, discussion, and the freedom to read at their own pace. Exposing students to the joys of discussing a good book is an essential life skill that can be carried into adulthood. Literature circles allow and encourage the exchange of information and ideas through discussion, journaling and digital communication, and can be perceived as inclusive practice as there are a variety of adaptations that can be used to accommodate various reading abilities. The literature circle process can enable students to learn and practice reading strategies, be exposed to a variety of rich texts and engage in conversations and writing that will promote critical, creative and reflective thinking. Through the use of technology students can conduct research, improve keyboarding skills, experience online collaboration, practice appropriate use, and learn how to produce a variety of multimedia presentations. Using technology within the literature circle process can help to ensure that all students are included.

No longer is literacy about what students can accomplish using pencils and paper (Cavanaugh, 2006). Literacy can be developed using current technology and demonstrated through various multimedia. Technology can be used to assist and accommodate students with special needs or it can be used as an enhancement to a process that is already in place. Adding web 2.0 technologies can ensure that all students remain included, engaged and able to fulfill the curriculum competencies. The teacher's job as the provider of information is shifting to a position of coach, facilitator and manager of technology (Afshari, Bakar, Luan, Samah, & Fooi, 2008). It is only logical that today's classroom pedagogical practice should effectively include and integrate all that computer technology can offer (Klages, Pate, & Conforti, 2007).

Technology is changing the face of education with more teachers and students using devices in support of learning. However, schools are finding it difficult to keep up with the fast paced nature of technological advancements. A student is more likely to have experience operating a mobile device outside of school than from within. Therefore, a student is more likely to use a device for social purposes rather than to advance education (Beleslin & Tapavicki, 2013). Educators need to teach students how current technologies can support and enhance regular classroom learning while ensuring responsible and appropriate use. All students need to develop digital literacy and make a commitment to being responsible digital citizens. Digital literacy requires students to be able to communicate, research, create and problem solve using technology and digital citizenry requires students to do this in a safe and appropriate manner. Digital communication should be considered and developed appropriately.

#### **Literature Circles**

While explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, vocabulary and comprehension strategies are critical elements of learning to read, writing and collaborating about reading are also important in developing literacy (Brownlee, 2005). For both students and teachers, the heart of education is based on the art of collaboration (Klages, Pate, & Conforti 2007). Literature

circles contribute to student collaboration because readers interact with the text and with others who have read the text (Klages et al.). Literature circles have been used as a way to encourage students to engage in natural conversations about literature they read (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). There are many variations of the process that have been suggested; however, the main goals of the process consist of stimulating conversation, collaboration and reflective thinking and writing.

According to Harvey Daniels' (2003) literature circle process, students chose their books from a reading selection and rotate through a variety of discussion roles (i.e., creator, discussion director, word wizard and connector). Students are expected to arrive at their book meetings having read to an assigned page and their discussion role completed. Daniels' (2003) practice does not align with 21<sup>st</sup> century initiatives surrounding independent and personalized learning as students who are competent readers are held back reducing their enthusiasm for the process and lessening their exposure to a variety of other books.

Faye Brownlee (2005) presents the idea of fluid groups and the elimination of roles. Brownlee suggests that students should be able to read at their own pace without restrictive discussion roles. Using Brownlee's approach, students are able to read from the selected books, complete journal entries, comprehension activities and choose another book as soon as they are ready. Fluid discussion groups are constantly changing and include students who are reading different sections of the story. More capable readers may attend more than two meetings per week while moderate or slower readers may attend the same meeting for a couple of weeks. This allows for differentiation. Faster readers do not feel that they are being held back and moderate or slower readers are given the opportunity and needed time to engage in more conversations about the book.

Teachers can be uneasy about managing a process where all students are reading different books at varying rates and completing comprehension activities independently. However, fluid groups can work smoothly and effectively providing that the foundations of this approach have been achieved (Mackenzie, 2014). Students need explicit instruction and practice in reading strategies and on how to journal and complete the required comprehension activities. Teacher modelling, practice and the gradual release of responsibility can ensure that students are able to work independently and at their own pace.

Reading strategies and journaling should be taught before beginning the literature circle process. Students will need to learn what reading strategies help them understand stories they read. Teacher modelling, activities and practice should be provided to allow students to recognize and understand how to make connections, inferences, and visualizations. Students need to be introduced to reading strategies and encouraged to use reading strategy language when discussing content. Students also need to be taught to search for "golden lines" that spark connections, questions, inferences or visualizations. Golden lines are words or sentences in the book that stimulate prior knowledge, connections, questions, opinions or emotional responses. Journal submissions provide a quote and response to the quote and students are required to write their responses in advance of their circle meetings. Students must be taught that the quality of their written responses will depend on the lines they choose. Students need direct instruction on how to connect their thoughts and ideas with the story details. Students need to connect new knowledge from the story to what they already know. Young students or those unfamiliar with this process may begin writing basic and direct connections. As students become more familiar

and confident with this process, their journaling and conversations become more sophisticated (Mackenzie, 2014).

Students need to feel that they are safe to express their ideas, therefore, over assessment and correction of journal writing is not recommended (Brownlee, 2005). While student's work needs to be read, over correction of conventions may lessen the confidence and motivation for this process. This is particularly true for young students and those who struggle with written output. Deficiencies in writing can be addressed under other writing outcomes. What is important is that students are presenting their opinions, reactions and understandings of the readings at their cognitive level as well as listening to the ideas and thoughts of others. See Appendix A for a sample rubric on journal responses.

Brownlee (2005) suggests that teachers create a schedule for book talks and post it within the classroom so students are aware of their meetings. Students who have completed the book may be given the opportunity to return to a meeting if there are not enough students available for the group. Literary discussions typically begin with the "say something" strategy where a student begins by saying something general about the book while the others listen carefully; this process continues until all members have had their say (Brownlee, 2005). What follows is a systematic process of all students sharing their written responses and a lively discussion based on the students' written responses. Building capacity for deeper opinions and discussions about the stories is crucial. Students should be encouraged to tease others about what's coming next in the story but avoid spoilers (Brownlee, 2005). Students should be taught the strategy of waiting their turn to talk when there is a pause in the conversation. Literature circles can develop a deeper understanding of stories and create life-long readers (Cavanaugh, 2006). Bookmarks can be made to highlight reading strategies and conversation and writing prompts (see Appendix B). Writing prompts are useful as journal starters, and if discussions get off topic, students can use their bookmark prompts to bring the conversation back to the story. Teachers need to model the motto "we need a circle and not a line" (Mackenzie, 2014), and use this practice to guide the physical formation of their literature circles.

### **Limitations of Literature Circles**

The literature circle process offers opportunities to develop language skills and interactions and gets students engaging in deeper cognitive thinking. Although literature circles can be an effective process to encourage active discussion and cognitive development, there are limitations to consider (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). While the main purpose of literature circles is to encourage students to engage in deep and natural conversations about the books they read, instructional enhancements are necessary to accommodate all students in reading, writing and oral language (Cavanaugh, 2006). In inclusive classes there are students who read below, at and beyond grade level. Students with disabilities require specific accommodations within the literature circle process. If the content is not differentiated to suit the needs of the class, students who struggle with reading and writing can feel excluded from this process (Cavanaugh, 2006).

Face-to-face discussions can be dominated by a small number of students and students who are eager and anxious to share their ideas can overwhelm the shy or struggling speaker (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). Students who are intimidated by face-to-face discussions require specific accommodations to ensure their safety, comfort and inclusion. Students with selective mutism can be extremely bright yet be unable to converse due to extreme anxiety surrounding

organizing and processing thoughts. Students with selective mutism can find participating in discussions uncomfortable and extremely challenging (Bell, 2007). Students who are extremely shy or who have difficulties regulating their behaviour will require accommodations during literature circle discussions. In addition, gender differences can contribute to awkwardness during discussions, particularly if the fluid group has one male and three females, as some students may find this awkward and be less than eager to participate (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). Teachers should consider the need to develop conversation and the need to provide a safe and comfortable environment in which to contribute (Bowers-Campbell, 2011).

Individuals who are less efficacious or those struggling with self-regulation may be less inclined to remain focused and on task. Often students with learning disabilities have additional struggles such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, making it particularly challenging for them to remain focused and be a productive member of the group. This may frustrate students who are on-task and lead them to doubt the effectiveness of literature circles. In addition, literature circle discussions can be too dependent on the presence of an adult; once a teacher or facilitator moves from the group, the discussions can collapse (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). The role of the facilitator is to ensure that the discussions run smoothly and remain on topic, and that students receive equal opportunities to express themselves. Students require guidance and support in making sure that they remain on task and are respectful of the thoughts and ideas of others (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). An inclusive process ensures that each student in the circle has the opportunity to share their initial “say something” and their responses. Nevertheless, students with particular needs may require more time and encouragement to share and respond to others.

In traditional literature circles there are typically about six book selections for primary students, and to accommodate the larger class sizes, there are approximately eight book selections for intermediate students. Each book group requires a volunteer to facilitate the group discussions. The facilitator must have read the book and be prepared to discuss it along with the students. Support staff, principals, librarians, parents, and grandparents can act as facilitators; however, it can be a challenge to find volunteers that are available to assist on a regular basis for approximately six weeks. Intermediate students can run their own meeting if the group is highly motivated to remain on task and follow the regular process. Nevertheless, making sure that the meetings run regularly and on time can be challenging. Traditional literature circles are limited by time and space and the discussions can be finite. In addition, the teacher must ensure that the parent volunteers are appropriately screened and prepared to follow the literature circle protocol (see Appendix C). Privacy issues can arise during discussions and it is important for teachers to discuss this with volunteers and provide a list of strategies to stimulate conversation without risking inappropriate disclosure from students. Teachers should speak with volunteers to discuss the importance of ensuring students focus on the details and the events of the book. Planning the time for meetings, training facilitators, and ensuring that confidentiality is upheld can be problematic; however, professional guidance and open communication with volunteers can lessen the risk. Additional challenges occur when students with special needs are absent from school for a variety of medical reasons. Fortunately, technology can alleviate some of these challenges and provide accommodations for all students to succeed.

### **Assistive Technology**

Assistive technology refers to any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1990 (IDEA) P.L. 101-1476). Assistive technology can range from low-tech devices such as finger grips to high-tech devices such as iPads, laptops, interactive whiteboards, document cameras, as well as programs offering text-to-speech, word prediction and graphic organizers. Grant (2009) recommends the use of Inspiration, WordQ and Kurzweil. Assistive technologies can be used to bypass barriers that prevent students from successfully completing a task (Haq & Elhoweris, 2013). For example, students with written output challenges can sidestep the disability through the use of an Alpha smart, laptop, iPad or tablet. Assistive technology can increase a student's motivation to engage in tasks (Grant, 2009).

## **Technology to Support Writing**

The writing process requires individuals to combine motor, cognitive, linguistic and social skills to communicate effectively (Batorowicz, Missiuna, & Pollock, 2012). During the pre-writing stage students brainstorm, plan and organize their thoughts. Inspiration ([www.inspiration.com](http://www.inspiration.com)) offers an online graphic organizer where students can brainstorm and organize their ideas. Inspiration was created for intermediate students while Kidspiration ([www.inspiration.com/Kidspiration](http://www.inspiration.com/Kidspiration)) was created for primary students. In alignment with the principles of universal design, this program can be used to support the pre-writing activities of students who are achieving below, at, or above grade level. While struggling writers may use Inspiration or Kidspiration to brainstorm ideas prior to writing, all students can use this tool to plan journal entries, blog and complete comprehension activities. Students can use the internet for research and embed videos or music within their online organizers. Graphic organizers can also be converted to a linear outline to support the writing process. All students require tools to plan and organize their ideas prior to writing and Inspiration is a valuable tool to support these endeavours (Grant, 2009).

During the writing phase, WordQ ([www.goqsoftware.com](http://www.goqsoftware.com)) and Co-writer ([www.donjohnston.com/products/cowriter/index.html](http://www.donjohnston.com/products/cowriter/index.html)) can offer support with word choice, ideas and text-to-speech functions. WordQ and Co-Writer are word prediction software programs which are equipped with built-in dictionaries which can be used to help students construct sentences. The effectiveness of the program will depend on the student's understanding of beginning letters and sounds or the program's ability to recognize phonetic similarities.

Depending on a student's level of distractibility and ability to make use of the selected word choices, word prediction programs can either be emancipating or restricting. While WordQ does not have a grammar check feature, Evmenova, Graff, Jerome, and Behrmann, (2010), suggest that students and teachers appear to prefer WordQ over other word prediction programs.

During the revising stage text-to-speech, spelling and grammar checkers are important tools as students can reread and listen to their typed work to check for errors in spelling or grammar. Reading the text aloud and using text-to-speech technology can allow students to recognize errors in their grammar and spelling (Haq & Elhoweris, 2013). While research shows promising results for writing support using assistive technology, Bartorowitz, Missiuna and Pollock (2012) remind readers that research is complex. Not all studies have been completed using up-to-date program features and there are numerous variables to consider when assessing the effectiveness of a program on a particular student. Literature on assistive technology stresses that any program used to support writing should be carefully considered, matched with the student's specific needs



and abilities, and embedded within quality instruction. Teachers and support staff should discuss assistive technology at all Individual Education Plan meetings, and report cards should include all assistive technology that has been successfully and unsuccessfully applied. The teacher and support staff can then decide to continue, discontinue or find an alternative that would better suit the needs of the child.

## **Technology to Support Reading**

Mixing literature circles with web 2.0 technologies tap into students' digital literacy skills and their desire for peer interaction and can inject interest and engagement in an already successful process (Edmondson, 2012). Using Kindles and other e-readers to compensate for reading difficulties can build hope and renewed motivation for reading (Miranda, Johnson, & Rossi-Williams, 2012). While the e-reader has many features that can assist with making text accessible, research on the benefits of e-books on comprehension is scarce (Schugar, Smith, & Shugar, 2013). The interactive features of e-readers make it easy for students to take notes while they read; however, reading from a handheld device is not the same as a computer screen as the handheld devices are smaller, leading to eye strain and fatigue (Connell, Bayliss, & Farmer, 2012). Fortunately, students can increase the size and darken the font on these smaller devices helping to alleviate this problem. Students can use e-readers independently; however, it is important to monitor how students use the options as young children can be drawn more to the interactive features than to the text itself (Getting & Swainey, 2012), and the features of some e-readers can create distractions which interfere with comprehension (Schugar et al., 2013).

Educators need to be mindful of the purpose and goal of assistive technology (Anderson-Inman & Horney, 2007). What is needed is more specific design features that keep students supported and engaged in the reading and "an electronic reading environment that intelligently transforms text into something that supports comprehension and extends meaningful learning" (Korat & Shamir, 2007, p.153). Dictionary options are valuable but they can confuse students when there are several meanings to choose from. It would be beneficial for the student if the device not only displayed the meaning of the word, but the meaning within the context of the story. In addition, design features that could assist readers in identifying interesting quotes or events for journaling would be beneficial (Korat & Shamir, 2007). E-readers should not be overused or used to replace books on a consistent basis as there are concerns that students may overuse the dictionary and other features (Schugar et al.). While there is limited research on the effects of e-readers on comprehension, students are highly motivated to use these devices (Connell, Bayliss, & Farmer, 2012), and these devices offer promising results in raising the confidence and comprehension of struggling readers.

When an individual feels that they are not good at a particular skill, they will lose the motivation if support is not provided (Dickey, Randolph-Eddy, & Bowman, 2012). Kurzweil 3000 has been described as the most interactive tool for decoding, fluency and comprehension (Kanitkar, Ochoa, & Handel, 2012), and despite its restrictive price tag, in most schools Kurzweil 3000 remains the leading text-to-speech software program used to support reading. Textbook pages can be scanned and uploaded onto the screen where students can highlight, take notes, summarize, and listen to the text being read at varying speeds. Kurzweil 3000 can slow reading enough for readers to decode and process (Kanitkar et al., 2012), and individual words are highlighted as they are read aloud, helping to improve student's sight word vocabulary and comprehension of the text (Strangman & Dalton, 2005). Kurzweil can blur the lines between

general and special education (Dicky et al., 2012). Students with learning disabilities may need to use Kurzweil 3000 to compensate for their poor decoding or reading comprehension abilities; however, their typically achieving peers may prefer to use the read back function to support their editing of text. While reading and listening to a book selection on Kurzweil 3000, students might slow the reading to search for “golden lines” or key ideas. These ideas can be dropped into Kidspiration to assist in the planning and organization of journal or blog entries. Students may choose to compose a response using WordQ for support in spelling and word choice.

## iPads

While some schools or school districts may opt to purchase site licenses, Kurzweil 3000 is typically only purchased by schools for a small number of users due to cost restrictions. On the other hand, there are a vast array of free and reasonably priced apps that offer similar support in writing, word prediction and reading. The UDL tech toolkit website (<http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com>) is a wiki developed by educators for educators that provides access to free software in a variety of academic domains. The following apps can support literacy and students with disabilities.

### **Supportive writing apps.**

Abilipad (<http://appytherapy.com>) offers text-to-speech and word prediction.

Idea Sketch ([www.nosleep.net/](http://www.nosleep.net/)) allows students to draw mind maps, plan presentations, and develop organizational charts.

MyStudybar (<http://isu.edu/disabilityservices/mystudybar.shtml>) offers a floating toolbar with applications appropriate for struggling readers and writers.

Popplet ([www.popplet.com](http://www.popplet.com)) is a graphic organizer used to map and connect ideas.

SimpleMind ([www.simpleapps.eu/simplemind/](http://www.simpleapps.eu/simplemind/)) is a graphic organizer used to brainstorm and map ideas.

Texthelp (<http://www.texthelp.com/UK>) interacts with web pages to offer text-to-speech, translator and dictionary support tools.

### **Supportive reading apps.** *The following apps provide text-to-speech.*

Firefly (<http://www.fireflybykurzweil.com>) provides text-to-speech for iPads. Need to be a fully licensed user of Kurzweil 3000 to access this as a free app; however, you can access free text-to-speech using the accessibility features embedded within the iPad.

Blio ([www.blio.com](http://www.blio.com)) provides text-to-speech for e-readers.

iPads can be used to promote independence and individualized learning (Cavanaugh, Hargis, Munns, Kamali, 2012). The iPad has shown promising results when used for inquiry based projects (Cavanaugh et al., 2012). The popularity of the iPad is due to its user-friendliness and portability, making the iPad a highly engaging tool that can be utilized anytime and anywhere

(Cavanaugh et al., 2012). iPads can assist students for whom English is a second language. The dictionary and translator options provide English language learners with the flexibility of being able to communicate while on the move (Cumming & Rodriguez 2013). Students who are less confident in their abilities to experiment with the English language are more willing to practice within the comfort of their own home. From audio textbooks, movies, videos and internet access, the iPad offers English language learners with the necessary tools to advance their language skills.

There are few controlled studies on the benefits of using iPads to support students with learning disabilities; however, McClanahan (2012) shares a pre-service teacher's action research project based on a student with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and lagging reading skills. After a variety of strategically planned iPad lessons that included word recognition, making inferences, and sequencing, the student's reading level improved a full grade level. Using the iPad improved the student's focus and he required less prompting to remain on task (McClanahan, 2012). Equally significant, was his improvement in metacognition and confidence. The teacher encouraged the student to listen to himself read and this helped him to be more reflective about his reading and consider ways to improve (McClanahan, 2012). The iPad is a tool that can support a prescriptive and individualized program for each student. The mainstream nature of iPads and other portable devices provides a successful introduction to technology for students with various challenges (Cumming & Rodriguez, 2013).

### **Overcoming Challenges**

A rubric is a list of criteria and expectations that is used to assess or evaluate an assignment or project. The rubric shows where a student is being successful and areas in need of improvement. Teachers should invite students to provide input on how an assignment or project will be assessed or weighted. Students who are included in the process of creating rubrics are more likely to take ownership of the assignment, demonstrate extra effort and produce work of good quality (Weber, 2014). Rubrics can serve as a scoring guide for students, teachers and parents to recognize what is going well and what still needs to be accomplished. Fluency, grammar and punctuation can be an additional focus area, and students may be required to read their posts with a friend and/or instructor before posting it to the blog. The rubric criteria should also include the length and frequency of posts. Students should be expected to post at least twice per week and be required to respond to others by asking questions for clarification or adding to the ideas of others. Teachers should be the administrators of the site, post on comments that others are able to read, and speak to students about any posts that needed to be revised, edited or deleted.

Teachers should begin typing instruction as early as possible. Traditional programs include: All the Right Type (<http://www.atrtonline.com>); or Dance Mat Typing (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/z3c6tfr>), a colourful website with motivating graphics, varying levels of difficulty, and words of encouragement. Students' access to technology at home may far surpass what is available within schools (Afshari, Bakar, Luan, Samaha, & Fooi, 2008). Encouraging blogging at home allows students to continue their conversations and gives parents the opportunity to follow or contribute to the blog. Having students bring their own device to school can alleviate the need to rely on the school iPads or computer lab (Mackenzie, 2004).

Teacher training is crucial as teachers need to feel confident that they are able to implement and support students in the use of a variety of technologies. However, the appetite for using technology in the classroom can be varied because of a lack of technological knowledge and equipment. Students are digital natives and are comfortable using technology; on the other hand, many teachers are digital immigrants who have had to rely on professional development and a supportive leader to introduce and support the use of technology in the classroom (Prensky, 2001). A one-day professional development opportunity isn't sufficient to build confidence and capacity in using new equipment or applications. What is needed is an administrator or interested staff member who is willing to support others in the use of technology. With strong administrative support, teachers can be given the time and the resources to use technology in their own teaching and share their experiences with other teachers (Su, 2009).

Getting technology into schools depends on a supportive and creative leader who is willing to create a technological vision and a desire to try and experiment with new practices (Cavanaugh, Hargis, Munns, & Kamali, 2012). Once school principals are on board, getting the technology into the hands of teachers, along with appropriate professional development, is the key to encouraging new practices (Cavanaugh et al., 2012). Once most teachers experience the benefits of the iPad, they will be motivated to want to use it more. Seeing how the devices can improve independence and engagement in learning is often enough to get teachers on board (Cavanaugh et al., 2012). Tech-savvy teachers can support each other in the use of technology within the classroom.

### **Melding Literary Circles and Technology**

Kindles, Kurzweil 3000, or other text-to-speech programs should be made available to all students as this will normalize them as tools that everyone can use. Schools should purchase the Kindle audiobook version which is more expensive but allows for an authentic voice instead of a monotone computer voice which is not a good match for students with fluency challenges. While students can't read the story from the Kindle audiobook, it does offer more authentic voices, which can greatly enhance the reading experience for students with disabilities, and students can listen to the story while following the text in their novel.

The literature circle process begins by choosing a literature selection in collaboration with students, the librarian or another teacher. The literature may be organised around a theme and there can be novels, picture books, graphic novels, or poems included in the selections. The books must be highly engaging and appropriate for the grade level (Brownlee, 2005), and must be carefully selected based on student interest, reading level and alignment with curriculum objectives. It is important for teachers to choose high interest books for literature circle sessions and topics that will generate discussion and provide opportunities for connections. The books must be relevant to the student's lives and teach knowledge that provides opportunities for critical, creative and reflective thinking. Books should appeal to both genders, the topics must be highly engaging, and the content should be manageable yet challenging for each student (Getting & Swainey, 2012).

There are times during the literature circle process where gathering sufficient volunteers to run book talks can be a challenge, and as a result, blogging can be an alternative to the book meetings. Teachers should facilitate meetings combining discussions and guided reading

sessions as this will provide them with the opportunity to listen to students read, support the completion of comprehension activities, and address any blogging questions, comments or misconceptions. Students are more likely to blog about readings, events or actions that confuse them as opposed to discussing them face-to-face (Kitsis, 2010). Online discussions provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their comments before responding. In addition, online journaling offers students with disabilities the opportunity to carefully construct their thoughts and reply to the various comments. Students are able to revisit their ideas without interruptions or the time constraints surrounding face-to-face interactions. Online discussions can improve equal participation among members and researchers claim that shy students can come across as equally or more reflective than vocal students (Bowers-Campbell, 2011). In addition, blogging may help to support communication across genders. “Integrating technology into literature discussions enables authentic reading experiences that honor the voices of all students with diverse ideas, communication styles, confidence levels and abilities” (Bowers-Campbell, 2011, p.557). As an alternative or addition to face-to-face discussions, blogging can be an effective platform for students to engage in discussions that widen their readership.

Blogs and wikis can facilitate a digital literature circle community (Edmondson, 2012), and there are a variety of blogging platforms available for teacher use (e.g., Blogger, Kidblog, Moodle, and Think Quest). Kidblog (<http://kidblog.org/home/>) provides teachers with tools to help students safely navigate the digital and increasingly social online landscape and allows students to exercise digital citizenship within a secure, private classroom blogging space. Kidblog is a safe and secure site, which allows students easy access with effective privacy settings. Educators can set the privacy setting high, allowing only the posts they have read to be posted in the discussion forum. Students should be exposed to blogging expectations and the importance of digital citizenship (see Appendix D).

Once the books and technologies are in place, the book presentations can commence. To increase excitement and curiosity, the teacher may use YouTube videos to present the novels. Alternatively, Animoto (<https://animoto.com>) offers the ability to create video presentations for each of the books. The graphics are eye-catching and the music can be matched to the theme or topic of each book. Video book presentations can offer flexibility and relieve the challenge of coordinating facilitators to do this job. Introducing the books by video alleviates the challenges associated with student absences as students can watch the videos at home or later in the classroom. Book introductions can be a whole afternoon affair and students are usually required to sit for a lengthy period of time. This is particularly challenging for younger students or those with special needs. The videos can be paused to offer explanations and answer questions if required. As an alternative to physically choosing their first choice of novel, students can post their preferences to the blog (Edmondson, 2012). This can encourage students to make choices based on personal interest and ability rather than being influenced by friends. Indicating book preferences on the blog provides teachers with the opportunity to sit down and review student choices and speak to students individually before they are assigned their first book. This provides the needed time to ensure that the books are downloaded on laptops and Kindles are ready for students who had chosen more challenging stories.

Teachers can embed YouTube videos introducing the literature into Kidblog. This allows students to watch the book trailer if it had been missed or simply refresh their memory about the book. Once students understand how to navigate the blog, they should blog on their first book



choice and why they were drawn to this book. Additional questions should be posed to activate prior knowledge. Activating prior knowledge is important so that students can link what they read to what they already know. This can be achieved through the blog. Sometimes educators expect students to make connections when in fact they have limited experiences to be able to do this effectively. Text-to-text and text-to-world connections require more sophisticated thought. Teachers can present multimedia material that can offer opportunities to make connections; poems, stories, videos, images, and songs with similar topics or themes can be posted to the blog to allow students to develop these strategies.

Students can be provided with a list of blogging prompts on a 3 x 3 choice board grid. For example, students could choose from a variety of options such as:

- What character would you like as a friend and why?
- As an interior decorator, how do you think your favourite character would decorate their bedroom?
- What do you think your character would like for his or her birthday?

Questions should be created to encourage critical and creative thinking. Rather than asking students to discuss their favourite part or their favourite character, choice boards should offer questions of specific relevancy to the lives of students and require deep and creative thinking. Teachers should use choice boards within the blogging process, and the questions must be relevant to the student's lives and stimulate deep cognitive thinking. When questions connect and relate to the life of students, responses show an increase in critical and creative thinking (Mackenzie, 2014). The questions provide structure for beginning writers and bloggers, and teachers can easily match the questions to the theme or topics of the books. Teachers can create choice boards that encourage students to make connections and inferences, pose questions and discuss transformations, and entice students to provide opinions and reactions. Choice boards can be differentiated and embedded within the blog to cover reading strategies and the elements of the story (see Appendix E).

Blogs encourage students to engage in meaningful conversations with classmates, share connections, ask questions, make inferences, and share thoughts and opinions about a selection of books. Furthermore, blogging can promote writing development. iPads can be used to compose blogs and produce a variety of mini comprehension assignments. iPads can also be used to introduce books and explain why their peers should read it, and students can take turns asking and answering questions about their favourite book in the selection. In addition, iPads can be used to create a video about a book, add props and music, and transcribe the video.

Literature circle sessions should last six to eight weeks, and the final culminating project should be based on Project Based Learning, which allows students to plan, communicate, and make decisions surrounding tasks to complete an independent project. Depending on the grade, students create songs, poems, games, art projects, writing assignments such as sequels, wanted posters, magazines, and movie trailers. Projects that involve technology can be offered and aligned with a student's learning preference. Teachers can introduce a variety of apps and applications that tap into a student's preferred way of demonstrating their learning while



promoting digital literacy skills. The following apps have been chosen to explain how to support students within the literature circle process.

Students who prefer to learn through discussion with classmates may enjoy ScreenChomp. This free app allows students to communicate and solve problems together through an interactive whiteboard which allows messages to be sent from one user to another and supports collaboration, the sharing of ideas, and group problem solving. Students might use this app to create a group journal entry where one student chooses the “golden lines” and responds, then passes the writing to others for their input and additional thoughts. This app would also be useful in teaching students how to write longer more sophisticated journal entries (<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/screenchomp/id442415881?mt=8>).

Edu.gloster would appeal to students who enjoy creating posters as a culminating activity. This app allows students to work together to create an interactive product such as wanted posters or advertisements presenting their favourite story or character. Web images, videos, drawings and photos can be embedded to create a unique poster created by two or more students. This is a free application (<http://edu.glogster.com>).

Students who enjoy deep reflection may be drawn to WordCollage. This app supports students in their vocabulary development and highlights the key features of text as words are presented in various sizes and colours depending on their significance in the text. This app can support students in recognizing key words and ideas within stories as it creates colourful collages from the web or downloaded texts, which can be shared with teachers or friends. Word Collage is \$0.99 (<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/word-collage/id527057508?mt=8>).

Little Story Creator is a free app which allows students to create live books using videos, illustrations and photos. Students might create their own illustrations and videos based on a book, and students can use this app to support the retelling of a literature circle story (<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/little-story-creator-digital/id721782955?mt=8>).

Drawing Desk - Draw, Paint, Doodle, Sketch is a free bundle app that offers a host of options for drawing, painting and doodling and students are able to import images from other social networking sites to design and recreate new images. Prior to writing, students might use the Sketch desk to quickly map a favourite story. The Photo desk allows students to edit their images, add frames and colour, and the app allows students to import and export their creations. This app can support students in developing the reading strategy of visualization (<https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/drawing-desk-draw-paint-doodle/id588358613?mt=8>).

Student assessment should be ongoing and conducted throughout the literature circle process using a variety of assessment tools. Written feedback, observations, interviews, self-assessments, videos and photographs, as well as rubrics, are many ways to gather evidence of a child’s learning. Assessment for learning takes priority and students must be given consistent feedback through the literature circle process. According to the principles of Universal Design for Learning, assessment must be flexible, adaptable, varied and timely, and it must be used to improve future student learning (<http://www.cast.org/udl/>).

## Recommendations and Conclusions

The literature circle process should not be stagnant; it should continuously evolve to reflect students' needs, interests and skills, and there are numerous ways in which the process can be enhanced and extended. Educators often expect students to function collaboratively in a group and are surprised when things fall short of their expectations. Students require specific instruction on how to respond to others, take turns, and wait for pauses before speaking. Students should be provided with the opportunity to view others engaged in literature discussions (Mills & Jennings, 2011). This can be achieved through video presentations which allow students to view how discussions are achieved through respectful dialogue with everyone having their say. Knowing how to respond, waiting for pauses to speak, and making sure not to dominate the conversations are necessary skills to ensure the discussion process is a success.

Students need to be taught how to respond to the posts of others and should practice this skill before blogging. Teachers must demonstrate ways to piggy back on the ideas of others or ask questions for further clarification and understanding. Taking time to ensure that students are aware of the privacy concerns and understand the importance of ensuring anonymity while blogging is essential. Once assessment rubrics are designed and students are following the privacy expectations of the blog, educators might consider reducing the restrictions on who can visit the blog. Once parents have been apprised of the privacy concerns and the expectations of the blog, they might visit the blog with a comment or two. This would expand readership, show students that others care about what they say and write, and likely have a positive impact on student's motivation to write. Expanding the audience can be achieved once all privacy expectations are addressed and followed.

Choice boards can be used as discussion prompts on the blogging platform. A choice board can be created for each reading strategy, the story elements, and for expressing opinions, reactions and emotions. This will provide focus and scaffold younger students. The discussion prompts require that students use story details to form their creative responses and provide opportunities to develop critical thinking. In addition, students should create a digital story based on a literature circle book (Tobin, 2012). Students begin by choosing their favourite story, creating small groups of three or four and dividing the roles of director, producer, writer and editor between them. The director oversees and makes final decisions, edits, revises and coordinates the photos and videos. The producer keeps members on task, ensures everyone is involved and keeps track of all the paperwork. The writer should be someone who enjoys writing and a member who is responsible for creating the script and making sure that it matches the storyboard. The editor should be someone who enjoys computers, editing movies and ensuring that the images match the storyboard (Tobin, 2012). Creating a digital story is an inquiry-based activity which encourages students to collaborate, ask questions, interpret the content and include personal connections. The book becomes the basis for inquiry and interpretation of how the digital story should look (Tobin, 2012).

Society expects that to the best of their ability, educational institutions provide personalized instruction for their child and the technology to support it (Cavanaugh et al., 2012). However, some schools embrace technology while others avoid it. Reluctance to use technology stems in part from the cost of training and providing one-to-one technology support. While technology such as Kurzweil 3000 can assist students living with a disability, it can greatly enhance

instruction for all students. The literature circle process provides an inclusive program where students can read content at their own level and at their own pace with the aid of technology. Once a teacher is comfortable with the fundamentals of literature circles, the process can be enhanced and adapted to meet the needs of all students in the inclusive classroom.

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Appendix A - Rubric for Journal / Blogging Responses

Category	1 Not there yet	2 Getting there	3 Better	4 Wow!
<b>Quote</b>	Quote has been chosen and written in journal.	Quote has been chosen and written in journal within "quotation marks".	Quote has been chosen and written in journal with quotation marks and page number.	Powerful quote has been chosen and neatly written in journal with quotation marks and page number. Student is able to choose quotes that "have life" and "spark emotions and reactions".
<b>Journal Responses</b>	Writing response is basic and obvious.	Writing response is more detailed and thoughtful. Students are beginning to write detail about their connections.	Writing responses are more detailed and thoughtful. Student is beginning to use a variety of reading strategies to analyze what has been read. For example, Connections Questions Inferences Visualization Transformation	Writing response is clear, detailed and thoughtful. Student uses a variety of reading strategies to analyze the events and characters of the story. The student is able to connect their response back to the story with thought and detail. Student shows a deeper understanding of the story events and characters through their responses.

Created by Carole Mackenzie



**Conversation Starters**  
**and**

**Continuers**

**Can you please repeat...**

**Have you read any other books by this author?**

**That reminds me of a time when...**

**I think...**

**I wonder why...**

**I hope...**

**I predict...**

**Let's get back on track...**

**Reading Strategies:**

*Connecting*

*Visualizing*

*Questioning*

*Predicting*

*Inferring*

*Transforming*

**Journal Writing**

**Starters:**

**This reminds me of...**

**I remember...**

**I can visualize...**

**I would like to know why...**

**I wonder why...**

**I predict that...**

**After reading this part of the story, I think...**

**I believe...**

**In my opinion...**

**I agree/disagree...**

**I now think that...**

## Appendix C - How to Run a Literature Circle Group

- 4 Students should have their book, journal entry and pencil with them.
- 5 All participants sit in a circle.
- 6 Sometimes students will share where they have read to in the book to ensure that they don't give anything away.
- 7 Decide who will begin.
- 8 A student reads their quote/event, page number and response.
- 9 Then, all students are expected to "say something" about this response. This may include comment about what it reminds them of, a question they have, or a general comment about the book.
- 10 All students participate in the "say something".
- 11 The next student reads their quote and response, again, all students "say something".
- 12 Repeat until everyone has read their quote and response
- 13 When appropriate to do so, students and the facilitator can encourage students to add to their response. For example, has the student provided enough detail, have they connected their ideas back to the story?
- 14 If there is time at the end and everyone has participated, then the group can discuss questions they may have, other books they have read by the same author, their likes and dislikes about the book, challenging vocabulary and so on.
- 15 Please ensure that the discussions focus on the book. If you sense a student is sharing private information about themselves or their families please stop them and direct the conversations back to the details of the story.
- 16 Remind students about their bookmark if they are unsure of how to begin.

*Created by Carole Mackenzie*

## Appendix D - Being a Responsible Digital Citizen Contract



### **Blogging**

- Appropriate words, responsible use.
- Watch videos only on the blog. No clicking on YouTube.
- Use Microsoft Word to type blog entry and then edit before posting.

- *Do not* include any personal and private family information in your blogs.
- Check and read work carefully before posting.
- Write at least 10 complete sentences.
- Answer daily or weekly questions on the blog.
- Read and respond to other student and teacher blogs.
- Provide suggestions for the blog.



### **Computer Lab and Personal Devices**

- f* Place device in container at the beginning of each day.
- f* Ensure devices are being used for lessons only.
- f* No filming or recording of students, unless this is part of a lesson or activity and permission is given.
- f* Appropriate use, responsible use.
- f* Keep password safe and secure.
- f* Ask for permission before searching on the internet or using other applications.
- f* Place device in container at the end of the lesson or activity or pack the device carefully in backpack and take home.
- f* Remember to bring your own device the next day.

I promise that I will follow the above guidelines so that I am able to Bring Your Own Device. I can demonstrate that I am a Responsible Digital Citizen.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Images retrieved from*

<http://www.monroe.k12.nj.us/cms/lib07/NJ01000268/Centricity/Domain/493/Kidblog%20logo.jpg>

*Created by Carole Mackenzie*

## Appendix E - Choice Boards for Literature Circles Blogging Prompts

### Connections

Choose a character and write about how the character is like you. How is the character different?	Compare this book with another book that you have read.	What have you learned from this book?
If you could be a character in this book, who would it be?	Write a song or poem about a character or a place in the story.	Choose an event and write about how it reminded you of something you have done in the past.
Imagine you are the author of this story, explain why you chose to write this book.	Who would you recommend this book to? Explain why.	Did any of the characters or events remind you of something that you have seen on TV or the internet?

### Characters

What characters would you like as a friend and why?	What character would you like to invite to dinner?	As an interior decorator, how do you think your favourite character would decorate their bedroom?
What do you think your character would like for their birthday?	What would your character do if they visited the classroom?	Discuss two emotions that your character felt, what made the character feel this way?
Which characters do you like the most? How would the story be different if this person were not in the story?	Describe your least favourite character and why?	What would your character do if they were to visit this school and classroom?

Similar grids can be made for the strategies of questioning, visualizing, transformations, and inferences as well as for the setting, plot, conflicts, and theme. Blogging prompts can be modified to suit the book contents and theme.

*Created by Carole Mackenzie*

## **Chapter 4: Inclusive Education and the Twenty-First Century Learner: What Do We Need to Do?**

Sonya Burden

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The world is rapidly changing and teaching in the twenty-first century is not immune. New knowledge in every discipline is increasing exponentially every moment. It is impossible to keep up with new discoveries. Educators today need to create inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of the twenty-first century learner. These objectives can be met by a shift in pedagogy, often referred to as pedagogy 2.0. Teachers need to create learning environments that focus on process, disposition, collaboration and values rather than facts alone. Students need to be metacognitively aware of themselves as learners, able to monitor their learning and set goals to push their learning forward (Archambault, Wetzel, Foulger, & Williams, 2010). Today's classrooms need to engage students in their learning through authentic, relevant inquiry. If schooling is to be relevant for today's students, the goal of education must be to help them acquire the knowledge and skills that will allow them to think, live and work productively in the constantly evolving digital age. In my opinion achieving this will require classroom practices to shift from teacher centered to learner centered. This shift can be facilitated through the integration of new internet technologies, Web 2.0.

### **The Teacher Can no Longer be the Center of Attention**

When I reflect on what a typical classroom looks like, my representation includes the teacher at the front of the room, acting as the information source and providing direction for all students; a sage on the stage. As a teacher letting go of this role is a struggle, as I have not experienced anything else as a student. Learning-centered classrooms incorporate teaching strategies that focus on the needs, preferences, and interests of the learner. In learning-centered classrooms the teacher is the facilitator, students are given choice and learn skills rather than facts. Technology can play an important role in restructuring teaching and learning practices. Teachers, however, must take a leading role in designing appropriate learning environments that effectively incorporate technology, if they wish to help their students learn well with technology (Potter & Rockinson - Szapkiw, 2012).

### **Using Technology to Differentiate Instruction**

Essential learning objectives and expectations provide the overall focus for instruction, assessment and evaluation. While being responsive to the readiness and learning preference of the student, the differentiation of instruction continually works towards the essential and overall objectives from the curriculum. Similarly, if technology is to support the differentiation of instruction, it must work towards these essential learning objectives.

Once we determine what we want our students to learn, it now becomes important to find out more about our students. Understanding our learners allows us to better support their learning. Getting to know student interests, readiness and learning preferences allows us to effectively

differentiate instruction. Technology can provide a variety of ways to understand our learners. Similarly, technology can go on to support intentional and responsive instruction, assessment and evaluation of students.

Assessment is a critical piece of differentiated instruction as it helps to identify the most effective strategies and activities that will encourage student learning. While traditionally thought of as occurring at the end of learning, assessment can take place throughout the course of learning, embedded in the instruction. Once we determine what we want our students to learn, we now need to determine how we will evaluate their learning at the end, as well as assess their progress as they make their way through the content. Assessment for, of and as learning asks us to consider how we intend on using the variety of tasks and assignments that are used in the classroom. Assessment for learning is more commonly known as formative diagnostic assessments. Assessment for learning is the use of a task or an activity for the purpose of determining student progress during a unit or block of instruction. Teachers are now afforded the chance to adjust classroom instruction based upon the needs of the students. Similarly, students are provided valuable feedback on their own learning. Assessment of learning is the use of a task or an activity to measure, record and report on a student's level of achievement in regards to specific learning expectations. These are often known as summative assessments. Assessment as learning is the use of a task or an activity to allow students the opportunity to use assessment to further their own learning. Self-and-peer assessments allow students to reflect on their own learning and identify areas of strength and need. These tasks offer students the chance to set their own personal goals and advocate for their own learning. As with any learning strategy, task or activity, technology can provide a variety of opportunities for assessment. What is important to consider is how the information gathered by these technology-supported tasks will be used.

### **Web 2.0, is it the Answer?**

New internet applications were not designed specifically for educational purposes. In addition, the application of conventional tools (office applications, concept mapping and web tools) in educational settings is, in most cases, an isolated 'add-on' to regular teacher-centered classroom work. It is reasonable, therefore, that teachers are less receptive to the learning opportunities offered by new internet usage than their students (Jimoyiannis, Tsiotakis, Roussinos, & Siorenta, 2013).

I believe there are three arguments for using new internet usage in education. First, the forms of learning activities cultivated within web 2.0 are widely endorsed as important, based on current thinking regarding the nature of 21st century learning. Second, new internet usage offers enhanced learning opportunities by engaging students in a new world of information sharing and social learning. Lastly, students are generally ready to engage with new internet technologies.

I feel that Web 2.0 applications have tremendous potential to empower individual learners and to build and interconnect learning communities; however, teachers must have a plan for each tool utilized in order for the technology to achieve a positive effect. Students frequently use new web tools but the focus is on playing and leisure. Students tend to hold a more positive view on computer use outside of school than in school because they enjoy the freedom for exploration and experimentation it allows. School computer use tends to be marred with technical



limitations, inaccessibility, and constraints of school policy (Phirangee, 2013). Removing barriers such as these need to be given priority.

From dialogue with other teachers, it is evident that generally educators have high perceptions regarding the usefulness and applicability of Web 2.0 tools in teaching and learning, even if they do not know them by that name. From my experiences, however, there appears to be a gap between teachers' positive perceptions and their actual integration of Web 2.0 technologies in classrooms. Closing this gap is where we need to put our immediate focus as we move forward in our efforts to improve education in the twenty first century.

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## Chapter 5: Introduction

Susan Dintoe and Margaret Wakeham,  
Faculty of Education  
Memorial University

This edition of *the Morning Watch* presents an eclectic mix of articles. Tim Seifert's selection describes how agency affects learning, and Chris Martin examines the role of the humanities in the professional preparation of physicians. Susan Dintoe considers the impact of new copyright legislation on distance learning, and Margaret Wakeham reports on a recent book about boundary-spanning leadership.

Tim Seifert's article looks at agency as essential to successful self-regulated learning. What makes the learner want to learn, practice, persist, improve, and share skills? Does self confidence build success or does success nurture self confidence? What is the role of self-worth? Seifert asserts "that agency is the catalyst and impetus that initiates and sustains self-regulated behaviour". This article describes how skateboarders enjoy freedom, control, challenges, independence and self expression and Seifert links these observations to learning in general.

When all is said and done, teaching is a uniquely human endeavour, and education is a manifestation of our humanity. The student-teacher relationship is at the heart of education, and is fundamental to the development of agency. But agency is central to our humanity. It allows us to play, explore and build.

The status of the humanities in today's universities is in jeopardy according to Chris Martin. Martin, a post doctoral student in the faculty of medicine, argues that society should place a greater value on the humanities especially for the preparation of professionals such as physicians. The humanities have already become the poor cousins of the professional schools, nice to have in times of plenty but, expendable when there is a financial crunch. The reader is asked to think about how the study of humanities benefits all of society not just professionals.

...as long as governments were able to provide funding, and universities were able to maintain enrolment numbers, the humanities could be supported as a kind of luxury or as a signifier of tradition and prestige. However, recent developments in higher education seem to indicate that the humanities cannot be supported even as an indulgence. Government shortfalls in university funding have so far shown that the humanities, and the model of liberal education that relies on them, will be the first to go.

Humanities play a vital role in society, according to Martin and they should be supported "...for salient educational reasons of public value .... Susan Dintoe has contributed a piece on copyright laws and distance education. Her article reminds us that regulating the exchange of intellectual property is complex, especially for educators. Adults at work and students of any age can engage in distance learning. The materials used in the distance learning process are often accessed from the library, the computer or the internet. These materials are authored, or written by individual experts who own the materials. The ownership of these materials has been copyrighted. The

copyright laws of Canada with the exception of fair dealing have been argued and supported by the famous case of CCH, (2004) which established that fair dealing encompasses use of copyrighted material for private study purposes. The students and the public for example, photocopy the copyrighted materials, from the library. The fair dealing exception, as an important part of the copyright act, protects those who make copies for the purposes of learning, as noted in the Copyright act and CCH, (2004) case. International trade agreements, TRIPS and WIPO also affect Canadian copyright acts. These acts have a direct effect on distance education. Federal legislators in Canada are poised to pass new laws that risk limiting fair dealing.

Margaret Wakeham provides a book review on Ernst and Chrobot-Mason's 2011 work, *Boundary spanning leadership: Six practices for solving problems, driving innovation, and transforming organizations*. Chris Ernst is a faculty member of the Center for Creative Leadership, a world-wide non-profit organization headquartered in North Carolina. Donna Chrobot-Mason has a Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology from the University of Georgia, and is an associate professor at the University of Cincinnati. Their book is based on ten years of global research and practice at the Center for Creative Leadership. Ernst and Chrobot-Mason propose a six step process for leaders of any organization to follow in order to achieve what they describe as the Nexus Effect.

Ernst and Chrobot-Mason postulate that identity and belonging are the two core conditions leaders need to recognize and manage as they seek to engage disparate groups in shared actions, and overcome the gap between the perceived us and them, the in group and the out group.

Ernst and Chrobot-Mason contend that boundary spanning leadership begins with recognizing the divide that exists between groups, managing the boundaries, forging common ground and ultimately discovering new frontiers. The authors emphasize the need to pay greater attention to the assumptions and practices people bring with them to the shared endeavours of groups.

This edition of *the Morning Watch* will cause one to reflect on the small pushes that propel a skateboarder, the critical informed thinking that shapes the professional mind, the laws that govern the exchange of intellectual property and the kind of leadership that transforms boundaries into frontiers of possibilities.

## **Chapter 6: Running With the Lions**

Clar Doyle

On a clear day when the midday noon  
Tangles with the frames of your Best-bet day-planner  
You will find him striding ahead  
Dodging the low hanging branches While eyeing the tips of the tops  
Of the best birch trees Searching for gems, that Dave Gems that he can pare  
and share  
Fashion and polish  
Then pass on to the out hands  
Of those who struggle for the precious stones  
Of word and light  
If you hear him breathing behind you  
It is because he sees something beyond The hazed horizon  
Do not be bothered if he passes you  
In your leisured track  
For he runs with the lions, that one

## **Chapter 7: Teaching with Digital Technologies in University and School Contexts: Research and Professional Development using TPACK**

Roberta F. Hammett  
Pamela Phillips

### **Abstract:**

This article will discuss what undergraduate students (preservice teachers), graduate students (in-service teachers) and university instructors say about their experiences with and knowledge of digital technologies for teaching and learning. The research data come from a version of the Technological, Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) survey (Schmidt et al. 2009-10) administered to university instructors and Education students. TPACK, as a framework for both research and teaching with technology, looks at three domains of knowledge - content, pedagogy and technology - and their interconnectedness. Our research was intended to document the experiences of technology integration for students and instructors in our university and local schools and should thus inform university teaching and professional development activities, particularly in Education.

### **Introduction**

Research literature worldwide indicates that, while integrating digital technologies at all levels of education enhances learning (Bates & Sangra, 2011; Tamim et al., 2011; Hansen, 2008; Weigel, 2002), teachers and university instructors often do not do so effectively (Georgina & Horsford, 2009; Hew & Brush, 2007; Selwyn, 2007). Learning how to use technologies in education is particularly important for future teachers (Keengwa et al., 2014), though barriers persist (Etmer, 2005; Borko et al., 2009; Brown & Warschauer, 2006) and arguments continue as to how best to achieve this goal (Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2012; Tondeaur et al., 2012; Yilmazel-Sahim & Osford, 2010). Current literature indicates that personally experiencing integration of technology is most effective, whether in one's own courses or in mentoring situations (Flanigan, Becker & Stewardson, 2012). Research also indicates that experiencing technology integration within appropriate content areas and in relation to particular pedagogies is also preferable (Harris, Mishra & Koehler, 2009; Lawless & Pellegrino, 2007).

Our research was intended to document the experiences of technology integration for our students and instructors in our university and local schools. As there is an increase in online courses and in the use of educational technologies in our university, we wanted to gain some insight to just what knowledge of educational technology our university instructors have and what knowledge our preservice teachers were taking with them into the schools and what related practices they were experiencing there. Our preservice education programs were under review and reconstruction, and the emphasis on technology education shifted to an integrated model with technology learning generally either an optional course or integrated within education courses. We decided to use the TPACK survey (Schmidt et al. 2009-10; used with permission) to ask undergraduate students (preservice teachers), graduate students (in-service teachers) and university instructors to share their understandings and describe their use of technologies in their classrooms. We feel this study contributes to our institution's vision for teaching and learning: "Information and communication technology tools are employed appropriately to enhance the

quality of the teaching and learning experience and facilitate access for all students” (Memorial University, 2011, s. 1, para. 1). In addition, further exploration of the research literature would be useful for informing future instructional design work at our institution and future professional developments for faculty.

## **TPACK Model**

TPACK (<http://www.tpack.org/>) is a framework for thinking about and researching the effective integration of technology into learning environments and the nature of knowledge required by teachers for effective technology integration. At the core of the TPACK framework are the three primary forms of knowledge: content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and technological knowledge (TK), and four more knowledge bases that lie at the intersections: pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), technological content knowledge (TCK), technological pedagogical knowledge (TPK), and the intersection of all three concepts to make up Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). We see TPACK as the basis of effective teaching with technology. Understanding its elements and their intersections will enhance ways digital technologies may be used in all educational settings.

## **Research Method**

During a four-week period in summer 2012, we administered the survey using Survey Monkey to our institution’s Education faculty and online instructors and to preservice teachers (undergraduate Education students) and inservice teachers (graduate students in our Master of Education programs). During the fall 2012, we administered the survey to our institution’s instructors with a Desire2Learn course shell. In fall 2013, we surveyed targeted classes of preservice and inservice teachers.

We asked participants to provide demographic information and then self-assess their knowledge of and level of agreement with each aspect of TPACK on a likert scale. In the survey, depending on the group being surveyed, there were approximately 12 statements about different content knowledges (CK), 7 about pedagogical knowledge (PK), 6 about technological knowledge (TK), and 32 about their multiple intersections (CPK, CTK, TPK, and TPCK). The TPACK survey also included three long answer questions that elicited a written response and additional comments, intended to help us better comprehend what participants understood as technology integration. Many of the respondents did not answer these questions.

## **Findings**

The findings we are presenting in this article summarize the results from all groups surveyed (preservice teachers, teachers in our Master of Education programs, and university instructors) and data from the interviews conducted in winter 2014. We analyzed the quantitative survey responses of each group using SPSS.

Most of the responses for all groups and all questions fell into the “agree” and “strongly agree” categories. Thus all respondents were expressing confidence in all of the TPACK categories and



intersections. Technological knowledge statements were scored lower (60s) than technological pedagogical knowledge statements (90s), leading us to wonder about this seeming contradiction. Another area of lower agreement was related to professional development and being able to provide leadership in technology integration.

Long-answer responses seemed more revealing, though equally contradictory in that respondents described a wide range of experiences with technology. Preservice teachers, responding to the question about technology in their university educational experiences responded in these sample ways:

9. "The use of technology in my education program was obsolete. The most that a Smart Board was used for was to put up a power point presentation...."
10. "...I have so rarely experienced any professors making appropriate use of technology.... I have had one professor who I can say 100% understood what she was doing with her technology, and actually pushed my knowledge about integration with the curriculum."
11. "In the Education course about Learning Technologies for Teachers, we created many computer projects that can enhance learning, such as the creation of WebQuests and videos based storybooks."

Preservice teachers, responding to a question about technology use during practicum in schools, also described a wide range of experiences:

11. "My cooperating teacher did not have any technology background and was not using any sort of technology in her teaching approaches.... I introduced various websites the children could use to help with their literacy...."
12. "I have not. My cooperating teacher used the smartboard as a glorified projector and was not familiar with more recent technologies."
13. ..."Overall technology was incorporated in most lessons from morning attendance to math, socials and science lessons. Mainly I would look up interactive activities online and create activities on the SmartBoard for the students and my co-operating teacher supported the use of technology in her classroom and would get me to show her how to use it."

In the written portions of the survey, we asked graduate students (teachers) to "Describe a specific episode where one of your colleagues or district personnel effectively demonstrated or modeled combining content, technologies and teaching approaches in a classroom lesson." These sample responses indicate that often PD is about technologies (TK) rather than their pedagogical and content uses (i.e., TPK and TCK):

- "Have received PD on technology usage but content and teaching approaches were not the focus. I have learned from other teachers ways to effectively combine technology, content and approach."

- “I have not witnessed any colleagues or district personnel effectively demonstrating or modeling combining technology, content and teaching approaches.”
- District personnel/colleagues demonstrated the IWB....

Our institution’s instructors, in their responses to questions about their use of technologies in their classes and their professional development opportunities, gave responses which indicated that many are not comfortable using technology, are scared of using media ineffectively, and feel somewhat isolated when learning about technologies.

In analyzing the responses to the long-answer questions, we also sorted them according to Papert and Harel’s (1991) descriptions of learning theory with technology: Instructivism (passive learning process with the instructor or text sharing knowledge with the learner), Constructivism (with the learning engaging in activities to construct knowledge by building on experiences, particularly in social interaction, and Constructionism (whereby learners engage as constructors and, importantly, producers of their own personal representations of knowledge). Our findings indicate that the majority of technologies are being used by instructors, teachers, and preservice teachers in instructivist and constructivist ways to support delivering content and to engage learners. The pedagogy behind the use of the tools was not evident in most responses and the questions did not evoke any evidence of these technologies being used in a constructionist way, with students participating in the creation of digital resources to convey their research and understandings. For example, interactive whiteboards (IWBs) are being used for presentation purposes or to engage students. For example, one teacher described students who were engaged by selecting correct answers on a Smartboard or moving items around. Also, a preservice teacher described a teacher who used a multimedia jeopardy game to review material for an upcoming exam. Students were involved by choosing the questions and attempting to answer before revealing the answer. A university instructor described using PowerPoint this way: “I typically only use powerpoint to project images. This can be useful in foreign language classes in order to prompt students to use the language to describe the pictures.” We would describe this as a constructivist approach. Another example we categorized as “constructivist” was the description of a professor who “spontaneously hooked his iPhone up to the projector and speakers and actually had us listen to the first three words/ beats of various song. From this, we had to guess the song and the genre.” (Preservice teacher). In another instance, to engage students, a teacher “used an iPad app, Sight Word Sentence Builder. Students had to put the words in the correct sequence. It helped them with the conventions of writing but in a fun-engaging way.”

### *Insights from Interviews*

In addition, we conducted interviews with university instructors to better understand their technology use. Instructors surveyed and interviewed may teach fully online, fully face-to-face in the classroom, or sometimes online and sometimes in a classroom.

This statement represents a common response: “I wouldn’t consider myself stellar in knowing about and using technology to present content, but I am open to suggestions/new ideas.” From instructors we also heard:

- Their technology competence survey answers relate to ‘everyday’ technologies of home, office and classroom;
- They desire more and better ‘plug and play’ technologies in classrooms;
- CK and PK are related to expertise, but often students from different faculties taking their courses present challenges that technologies and innovative teaching help solve;
- The Internet provides them with excellent teaching resources (e.g. videos, specialized sites);
- They say: “We don’t know what we don’t know – multiple opportunities for PD of multiple types are needed: tips, mentors, how-to sessions, just-in-time instruction....”

Most commonly classroom instructors use the Desire2learn space as a repository for lecture notes and other content. Desire2Learn, by its design, is a tool for course administration, for distribution of supplementary materials, and for a variety of modes of communication. Thus it may be used in instructivist, constructivist, and constructionist ways.

## Conclusions

Few of our respondents made explicit the pedagogy behind their use of technologies. We heard few examples of technologies being used in constructionist ways, with students participating in the creation of digital resources to convey their research and understandings. We are not intending to convey value judgments about these learning theories or pedagogies. We understand that in classrooms there are times for listening to shared knowledge, for constructing knowledge collaboratively, and for re-presenting knowledge. Within our Faculty of Education, we have noted a rise in occasions of displays and presentations of student work and research, with courses often ending with mini conferences in which education students present research to their classmates and the invited public. We see these as constructionist activities.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning (<http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework>), which stresses the integration of skills into the teaching of core academic subjects, is currently influencing K-12 and higher education contexts. If constructionist learning becomes more important as current pedagogy accepts (Daskolia & Kynigos, 2012; Laurillard et al., 2013), particularly in K-to-12 classrooms, then "[h]igher education has a key role in helping students refine, extend and articulate the diverse range of skills they have developed through their experience of Web 2.0 technologies" (Hughes, 2009, p. 9). Web 2.0 technologies should be more easily available and appropriate professional development opportunities to learn their use provided for university instructors as well as preservice teachers.

At our university, The Comprehensive Framework for Teaching and Learning (Memorial University, 2011) supports 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. It recognizes work that is engaging, supportive, inclusive, responsive, committed to discovery, and outcomes-oriented for both educators and learners. The outcomes-oriented, qualities and attributes that Memorial wishes graduates to exhibit are in line with the goals of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning. Our university is already promoting and supporting other technologies that can be accessed within Desire2Learn, such as chat rooms,

blogs, wikis, Online Rooms (Blackboard Collaborate) for synchronous voice discussions, and Elgg (a social networking platform with multiple affordances).

Generally speaking, as our tool kit of technologies and pedagogies increase, we as instructors move from using technology for course administration, whereby there is no change in the learning experience, to enhancing the course and thus learning possibilities. When we begin to think about purposes for adding technology and what activities or learning should be done in class or outside of class (using the flipped classroom approach), we encourage our students to develop their own understandings of pedagogy and technology introduction. TPACK provides a vision to help guide good teaching and learning and to effectively integrate technology into the learning environment. Explicit teaching of TPACK, especially TPK is important. Respondents indicate they need to know what they don't know; that is, more explanation of what constitutes effective technology integration. We thus recommend that the TPACK framework be incorporated in professional development and in teacher education programs, making the link between technology and content and pedagogy and technology more explicit.

We heard how teachers in schools sometimes learned from preservice teachers and other times taught them technology uses. Similarly, some instructors provide excellent experiences with technology integration to their students. Professional development and mentoring for all constituents – instructors, teachers, and preservice teachers – can create a teaching-learning cycle in which each group learns from and teaches to the others (see Figure 1).

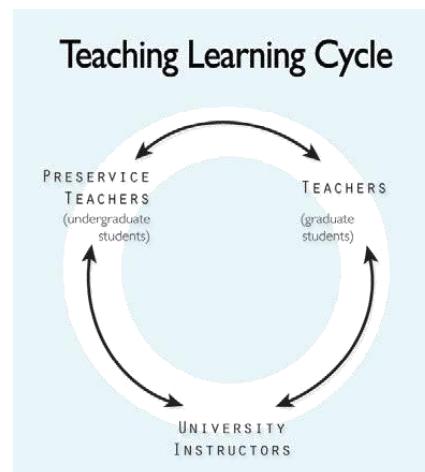


Figure1: Teaching Learning Cycle

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<sup>1</sup> We acknowledge the contribution of Lisa St. Croix, Gerry White and Cathy Wicks, our colleagues in this research and SITI presentation.



## **Chapter 8: A Tribute to our Colleague and Friend, Dr. David Dibbon by**

Bruce Sheppard

It is an honor to write this tribute to David Dibbon—a friend, colleague, teacher, scholar, educational administrator, school board trustee, Dean of Education, husband, father, and son. In whatever role we knew him, from whatever vantage point, he stood apart as someone special!

I first met David just as he was beginning his career in educational administration. He was vice-principal of a school in Norman's Cove, Trinity Bay. His special leadership abilities and charismatic personality were readily apparent! It was clear that he would most likely have an outstanding career as an educational leader. This first encounter marked the beginning of our longstanding professional friendship and scholarly collaboration.

David was committed to research focused on improving schools and school systems in Newfoundland and Labrador and elsewhere. He was passionate about enabling schools to become better places for students to learn and for teachers to work. He was a transformational leader and change agent who had great dreams of what public education could be. He had a gift of innovative thinking, a visionary spirit, and the tenacious patience required to successfully lead meaningful educational reform. Having observed those qualities in David, one participant in the Faculty's school leadership development project in West Africa observed that "the only legacy that will preserve David's memory with us is to keep a united front and work in our respective countries to transform the leadership landscape in our educational institutions towards excellent performance." This latter comment that was endorsed by many other participants reveals that David's contribution to educational reform extended well beyond his home environment!

In addition to his devotion to his work and to the improvement of education locally and globally, David always found time for his colleagues, his friends, and his family, especially his parents, his wife Janice, and their two daughters, Katherine and Lauren. Having worked and travelled with David quite a lot over the last few years, I learned a great deal about his love for his family. They were never far from his thoughts. He kept in regular contact with them when he was away from home, and always made certain that he returned with "a special little something" for each of them.

It was a privilege for me to have been a part of David's life. Although much too short, his, was a life well lived! He was a determined, visionary, collaborative, goal-oriented, caring person who loved life and all that it offered. Through both his scholarship and his practice, he made a significant contribution to our Faculty of Education, to Memorial University, and to K-12 education in Newfoundland and Labrador and elsewhere. His many awards and public recognitions reveal that his, was a distinguished career of considerable import! His enthusiasm for that next big project was infectious, and a huge component of his and his colleagues success. Dr. Kenneth Leithwood, David's doctoral dissertation supervisor and editor of one of David's last publications, wrote:

David's contributions were powerful and his work ethic more than remarkable.... Energy, commitment, integrity are all words that begin to capture my image of David. Would that we had many more like him. But he was one of kind and will be sorely missed as a colleague, scholar and friend (Leadership and Policy in Schools, 10:125, 2011).

David--a caring and beloved family man, a cherished colleague, a scholar and friend--will be missed by many, but never will he be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to have known him!

## **Chapter 9: They Do Something Very Powerful-They Teach**

Clar Doyle

A number of years ago I was doing an interview with a CBC reporter at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University. That sharp reporter sensed that there was something “almost exciting and positive about the place.” I agreed, and said, “Yes, because we are working with young people who do something very powerful-they teach”.

It remains my contention that we do even more than help educate people to teach: we help build, sustain, produce, and reproduce a culture. And, in so doing, we, at this Faculty, have helped inform and shape a place, a community, a province. I am not claiming that we as a Faculty trotted out our robes and burdened Faculty Council and Senate with pointed plans to name, date, and stamp a culture: but, we did help inform and shape a place, a community, a province.

For my morning watch purpose here I am saying that culture relates simply to the way of life of a group of people. If we take time to examine how culture is expressed in our own lives, what forces influence culture, and what factors cause cultures to change, we quickly see that the Faculty of Education, over a long time, cannot but be a key player.

If a culture is made up of material and non-material features or traits, how do we represent that culture? How do we reproduce, and, more significantly, how do we produce a culture? So, for me, this is an intriguing question. In a real sense we are both producers and products of our culture. The notion of culture is a powerful one when it comes to understanding how a university and society are locked together. We all can believe, with our students, that meaning is constructed through the many ways we live and share experience, how we value the material and non-material things around us, and how we see each other.

It is my studied belief that we at the Faculty of Education value, and have valued, our students, and the strong ground they walk on. We value the places they come from, and where their people came from. It helps to see that much of our work has to do with the production of attitudes, values, knowledge, and identities, which takes place in great variety. What we do, what we teach goes far beyond transmission of information. Like you, I have had the pleasure of working with good and gifted people who are aware of this responsibility and power.

It is not always easy to deal with the difference of culture. In our classes we have students who represent very different cultures. Our students come to class with different sets of values, different belief systems: we have students who would put very different things in their suitcases if they had to leave home suddenly.

Part of our job, what I call the bigger job, the illusive job, is to help students respect their own cultures. This means that their cultures need to be affirmed if they are to be the building blocks of learning. It has been shown we can begin by sharing our students’

beliefs, values, and experiences; therefore, we then encourage them to bring the wider world into their frames of reference. Then they can cross borders [As my grandfather used to say, “Then you can go places”]. We are sometimes tempted to act as if we can inject knowledge and critical thinking into students. The other stuff is harder!

It is crucial for students to be able to critically examine their own values, beliefs, and experiences in the face of other values, beliefs, and experiences. It is not easy for students to temper their own values and beliefs because they are often embedded. Such values and beliefs, and the experiences that grow out of them, are often treated as given and fixed. I believe that, by dint of our own belief systems, mind-sets, and pride-of-place, we have “slipped the surly bonds” of attempted colonial thinking and brought many of our students with us.

We also have the opportunity to pick and poke at our identities, personal and communal, as well as to represent ourselves to the world and to ourselves. The biggest lamentation for me is to see how we are willing to represent ourselves; how we are willing “to play the fool,” for the crass enjoyment of others. Far from playing the theatrical fool, Al Pittman in the wonderful *West Moon* deals with themes of a sense of place, a belonging, and being forced to leave home. The characters in the play are dead but have their voices restored on All Souls’ Day. Although dead, these characters remain preoccupied with the petty concerns of daily life, except when they come to learn that their families and friends all have left the community and that they are now alone. Now there is nobody to tend their graves or remember them.

We can talk about *Landscapes of Memory*: we need to celebrate memory — even the memory of the young—especially the memory of the young. I see how the memory of communities gets lived out in drama scripts, painted landscapes, and written into stories and poems. How do we write, paint, play, and sing the things we feel? How do we help each other, our children and our students, write, paint, play, and sing the way they feel? How do we hold precious the worlds of the imagination? How do we allow, recognize, and encourage “fits of imagination” in our children and students? How do we balance the sparks of imagination and our curriculum outcomes? How do we do that? First of all, we have to allow ourselves fits of imagination.

We then can put our daily work in a wider context. We can see curriculum as “the stories we tell our children.” We might go about it in tangled ways, with complex structures, but curriculum is the story we tell our children. We have to every once in a while see beyond the outcomes. I’m not, of course, decrying outcomes, but it is crucial that we see them as the GPS of education. [In some ways, we might have been better off, professionally, before the outcome revolution. Then, we have to ask ourselves, professionally, what are we doing]. We can say that curriculum is about *identification and identity*. The process of identification and the location of identity are at the very core of what we do in education. This is one of my favourite themes as it stresses that curriculum and public education are not simply about teaching outcomes, for example, but about forming people. That is a powerful claim. That is the lofty business that you are about!

The work we are talking about here needs to grow out of the shared life of a community and is performed for the community and in this way become part of the produced culture of that community.

As a people, a society, we can nurture ourselves or we can blight our souls. We need to be careful not to kill off the mystery. We need to encourage an appreciation of the wonder and mystery of the human person. When we claim that only what can be measured and proven and tested is worth our attention, then we are heading down a dangerous hill. We are setting ourselves up for a cultural moratorium. What is deepest about us, most human about us, we cannot measure or prove, or use or analyze. Soul-making has its own language! The use of memory is a crucial part of that. We can use language that is imaginative and transformative, but we do also use language that is limiting and damaging. What we say to each other is important. We need to recognize what is helpful and resist that which is crippling. We can preserve that which truly represents us and continue to see the great value in indigenous expressions of creativity. We do something very powerful.

# **Part 15**

## **Academic Journeys**

- 1. Your academic journey**
- 2. Through a Graduate Student's Eyes: A Narrative Inquiry Surrounding the Graduate Student's Academic Journey**
- 3. Ph.D. Shock: Typical Challenges Ph.D. Students Face**
- 4. Teaching as a Ph.D. Student in Education: Reflecting on My Own Experience**
- 5. A Constructivist Lens for Professional Learning**
- 6. Epiphanic Moments in the Search for Myself as an Educational Researcher**
- 7. Window**
- 8. The Dual Challenges of Academia: Teaching and Research**
- 9. Our Academic Journeys as New Female University Administrators**
- 10. Overcoming Personal Challenges That Have Impacted My Academic Journey: A Narrative**
- 11. My Critical Incident, Which Led me to Becoming a Researcher**
- 12. Expanding on My Answers to the Interview Questions**
- 13. Be Passionate, Positive, and Persevere: My Research Journey as an International Graduate Student**



## **Chapter 1: Your Academic Journey**

Edited by

*Sharon Penney*

*Gabrielle Young*

This issue of the Morning Watch called for papers that focused on the individual academic journeys of graduate students, faculty, and staff. The call asked authors to consider their prior knowledge and what they would have liked to have known prior to entering their studies or their position. We asked authors to provide a narrative of how they navigated their studies (students) or their current positions (faculty and staff), how they balanced family and friends while studying or navigating their positions, and lessons they learned that would help others in similar circumstances or positions.

Many of the submissions are narrative or autobiographical in nature. The submissions are organized chronically, with six papers focusing on graduate students, three papers from new faculty, and four papers from tenured professors and administrators. Themes from graduate students focused on struggles to succeed in high school, gaining entry to graduate programs, cultural adjustment and recommendations for helping graduate students succeed.

### **Reflections from Graduate Students**

Zanele Myles is a Master's of Education student who is studying the impact of self-advocacy instruction on elementary and secondary students. Zanele reminds readers that the school environment is not necessarily a safe place for diverse students, as students with learning disabilities may be perceived as being deficient amongst those in their school communities. Zanele notes that individuals with learning disabilities need to develop a „voice“ so that they can be heard when their learning needs are not being met. Students with learning disabilities need to learn the necessary skills to become their own self-advocates, and they need to learn techniques that will assist them when dealing with negative experiences associated with being labeled as having a learning disability. Zanele encourages the reader to remember that individuals can go a long way when they believe in themselves, have self-determination, and are willing to work hard.

Lisa Weber is a doctoral student who reminds the reader that teacher support can have a positive influence on a student's self-perceptions. Lisa highlights the importance of reminding students to focus on the process, which is often more important than the final product. While individuals will be faced with challenges and obstacles that will try to impede their progress as an academic, the support that teachers provide can improve a student's feelings of academic efficacy and ability to master goals. Lisa reminds the reader that when someone cares about the progress you are making, and puts forth an effort to support you in your journey, there are very few obstacles that cannot be overcome.

Xiaolin Xu is a doctoral student who reports that for students to reach the summit of their research journey, they must be passionate, positive, and persevere. One's research journey may be a challenge; this is especially the case for international students who are faced with language and cultural differences. Xiaolin reminds the reader that one must pursue a research

topic they are passionate about in order to be provided with the necessary motivation to sustain their journey. When faced with challenges along one's journey, one should be equipped with a positive state of mind, as focusing on one's strengths can support future goal attainment. The academic research journey can be both difficult and lonely; therefore, we remind students that you must draw upon your inner strength, as perseverance becomes a key factor for academic success.

Bahar Haghighat is a doctoral student who reminds the reader that doctoral research requires a completely different set of educational and psychological skills. Unfortunately, research has demonstrated that mental illness is on the rise among academics (Shaw, 2014). Bahar recommended that graduate students: 1) be aware of the negative impact of social isolation and expand their networks; 2) join a group – such as a book club, writing group, or research group; 3) avoid perfectionism; 4) take up a new hobby; 5) seek to be challenged; and 6) build strong relationships with supervisors and supervisory committees. Bahar provides specific recommendations and reminds graduate students to steer clear of perfectionism, which encourages one to set goals which are unrealistic and beyond reach, and can lead to anxiety, fear of criticism, fear of failure, and failure to produce anything at all.

Ahmad Khanlari is a doctoral student who reflects on his graduate studies and makes recommendations to support future graduate students. Ahmad recommends that graduate students be assigned a thesis supervisor upon commencing their studies. This can help students think about their research and become acquainted with program requirements. International students may experience challenges surrounding communication skills, and may benefit from sharing office space with other graduate students. Graduate students can also benefit from seminars or workshops on: writing and publishing academic papers; scholarships, awards, and grant proposal writing; and employment opportunities. In addition, graduate students can benefit from required courses designed to help graduate students become acculturated within academia. Ahmad suggests that it is important for graduate students to be involved in academia, through participation in research grants or in research groups and through work as teaching assistants. In addition, Ahmad recommends that graduate students devote at least an hour a day to academic writing.

Cheng Li is a doctoral student who suggested making teaching practice an integral part of Ph.D. programs in education based on her reflections on her first teaching experience as a graduate student in a Canadian university. Through the process of teaching a graduate course online, she developed a better understanding of herself as a teacher, enhanced her knowledge base in teaching and learning, and more importantly, gained a sense of professional accomplishment which was distinguished from her previous career and teaching experiences. When confronted with a limited academic job market, Ph.D. students have to rigorously prepare for their future careers. Students can be supported in preparing for their careers by having enhanced access to opportunities to be engaged in various professional activities and receiving supports and supervision in exercising the practical skills necessary to implement various teaching practices or other activities.

## Connecting with the Research Literature

In regards to graduate students, Rigg, Day and Adler (2013) noted that higher education institutions have a responsibility to work towards improving student self-efficacy and engagement in academia and to decrease the possibility of exhaustion and burnout in students. Rigg et al. suggested that institutions build supports through providing specific programs and supports from advisors. These authors suggest that advisors should take interest in their students in regards to their academic lives as well as their personal and professional lives. They also recommended that institutions take care in providing advisors and to provide alternative advisors when a student's advisor is unavailable.

Higher education is seeing increased diversity in their student population, but institutional structures are often slow to provide supports for their diverse student population. In general, institutions of higher education are not changing to meet these diverse needs; rather they expand the numbers of students and use the same traditional approaches to education (Hussey & Smith, 2010). Moving into a post secondary environment is considered a major change or transition.

This transition can be especially difficult for international students, for becoming "literate at university involves the process of socialization into cultural knowledge. However, rules and mores of that culture are rarely explicit, thus the process of socialization is largely unconscious" (p. 159).

Pidgeon and Andres (2005) studied the first year experiences of international and domestic students at four universities across Canada. The authors found that international students were more likely to develop relationships within their ethnic groups leaving less opportunity to interact with domestic students. International students reported that cross-cultural relationships were difficult due to language barriers surrounding English slang or Canadian culture, whereas relationships with their own culture provided students with a shared understanding. International students also reported physical adjustments, surrounding food and climate changes.

As a university that has embraced the increased presence of international students, it is important to understand how international students differ from students who are from Newfoundland or who are Canadian. Tseng and Newton (2002) interviewed two international students, one from Africa and one from Asia, about their experiences and perceptions of studying abroad. The article highlighted how these students coped with the transition to a new country by focusing on self-care (including physical well-being, self-examination and obtaining help from others). Through a grounded study analysis of the data, the authors provided the reader with the following themes and recommendations. "*Know self and others*" focused on understanding the differences between cultures, which is a "significant step toward making the adjustment to study abroad life" (p. 595). "*Make friends and build friendships*" highlighted the need for international students to form friendships with both international and domestic students as a means of adjusting to life in their host country. "*Expand individual worldview*" was recommended as a way of understanding their host country and adjusting to studying abroad. "*Ask for help and handle problems*" was recommended as one of the best solutions for adjusting to studying abroad. "*Establish cultural and social contacts*" suggested that international students get to know their host country by getting involved with and participating in activities. International students were also

recommended to “*Build relationships with advisors and instructors*”, become proficient in the English language, and use the tactic of letting go (p. 595).

## **Reflections from Faculty**

David Gill, Assistant Professor, Memorial University, brings the reader through critical periods in his own education. He supplements his article with collaborative evidence from his parents, former teachers and former colleagues. David guides the reader through his educational experience by discussing his early years and his sense of being confined while in school. He reported that, “I was stuck in school and there was no getting out despite how I felt”. David interviewed a teacher from his past and reflected on the impact this teacher had on his education. He also discussed his perceptions of small multi-grade schools, with the interview highlighting the need for staff to work together and provide a vision and culture of collaboration and helping. David then moves us to his years in his education program and the various influences, stating that the most meaningful aspects of his education were those that connected to his early education and experiences. David concludes by discussing his teaching and the lessons he learned while finding his way as a new teacher.

Dr. Sylvia Moore, Assistant Professor, Memorial University (Labrador Institute), discussed the challenges of being a new academic, in a new community, responsible for developing a new Inuit Bachelor of Education program. Sylvia began her article by reflecting on the questions from the interview for her current position. She highlights the difference between surface learning, as learning about something, and deep learning as learning “from” place and people. Sylvia highlighted the challenges of adjusting to academic life, learning the work, and learning about the workplace while being isolated from other education faculty. She also suggested there are challenges associated with balancing the personal and the professional expectations surrounding the position.

Dr. Heather McLeod, Associate Professor, Memorial University, uses poetic inquiry in her submission entitled “*Windows*”. The poem was inspired by her father who died 40 years ago, but left her with his own poetry and writing on philosophy. Through her father’s writing, Heather explores and reflects on her relationship with her father, and in the process of doing so, she is able to better understand and reflect on her family history.

Dr. Laurie Anne Hellsten and Dr. Lynn Lemisko are both Associate Professors at the University of Saskatchewan, and both chose to move into administrative roles early in their careers as academics. Laurie and Lynn outlined the history of change at the University of Saskatchewan as the institution moved from a teacher scholar facility to a research-intensive university. Their article outlined the history of the college, subsequent changes to their graduate and undergraduate programs, and the skills and knowledge required of administrators. These authors also outline challenges they encountered, including workplace bullying, resistance to change, politics and not being able to move away from the “drama”, and faculty members getting their way because of lack of confrontation. In addition, they discussed challenges surrounding individuals not participating in the change processes involved in revising programs, and having those same individuals criticize the outcomes and undermine administration.

Dr. Ken Stevens, a recently retired Professor at Memorial University, reflected on the influences of his teachers in regards to his academic writing. He traces his confidence in writing to his elementary experiences, highlighting the importance of teachers and their impact on children. Ken discussed the perceptions and challenges of being an early academic, challenges surrounding the lack of confidence in teaching, and not knowing or even wanting to ask for help. He continued to discuss the lack of understanding surrounding being an academic; stating that it isn't all about teaching, but rather research, and writing for publication. Ken brings us on his journey of discovery and learning about teaching and research.

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## **Chapter 2: Through a Graduate Student's Eyes: A Narrative Inquiry Surrounding the Graduate Student's Academic Journey**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reviews a student's academic experience, while he was studying as a Master's and Doctoral student in education. The researcher used personal narrative as a self-reflexive approach to examine challenges he encountered in his academic life, as well as the lessons he learned from his academic journey. This paper also provides graduate students with strategies to overcome challenges they may experience.

### **Introduction**

During their studies graduate students encounter many challenges that may hinder their progress. They may also encounter opportunities, which can help them through their journey. However, the stories of graduate students are often overlooked. It is my intention to contribute to the body of research that examines graduate students' academic journey, by telling my personal narrative.

As defined by Czarniawska (2004), "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions" (p. 17). A personal narrative approach enables researchers to document their simultaneous thoughts, feelings, and actions that they were engaged in. The use of personal narratives, which is discussed in several documents (e.g., Denzin, 1997; Lawlis, 1995; Lieblick, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998), enables researchers to make a coherent whole of disparate events. In the personal narrative, the researchers not only tell the stories about what happened, but also bring out the manner in which individuals interact, which is hidden behind the stories (Franzosi, 1998).

The purpose of this narrative study is to tell my story surrounding the challenges and the lessons I learned as a graduate student. Furthermore, this paper aims to reflect on strategies I implemented to improve my learning environment and enhance my achievement.

The research questions addressed in this study include:

1. What challenges may students encounter during their graduate studies?
2. What strategies can students implement to overcome the challenges?



## **My Initial Experiences as a Master's of Education Student**

As an international student who had no experience conducting research in the field of education, I found the first year of my Master's degree quite challenging. Although I had successfully finished my Bachelor's and Master's degrees in the area of Electrical and Telecommunication Engineering, I can say that the first year of my graduate degree in Education was the most difficult year of my academic journey. I can identify my challenges as three different categories, namely: 1) supervision issues; 2) challenges with socialization; and 3) minimal professional meetings.

### **Supervision Issues**

In the field of education, when students start their graduate studies, they have no supervisor; an advisor is assigned to them. There was no exception for me, and I had no supervisor when I started my Master's of Education. As a result, I was unclear as to my thesis topic; and unsure which courses I needed to take. It was a very challenging situation for me, especially as my background was in engineering, and I had no background in the field of education. I finished my Master's of Education in two and a half years; however, I would have finished in less than two years if the department had assigned a supervisor to me, from the beginning of my studies. Having a supervisor from an early stage not only helps students to start to think about their final research as early as possible, but also helps them become acquainted with the new environment and program requirements, such as submitting the ethics proposal.

Another advantage of having a supervisor from the beginning is that students would have a supportive person if they wanted to apply for grants and awards. Although I was assigned an advisor to whom I could ask questions and seek advice, I did not receive enough support from him. For example, in the first semester of my Master's degree, I wrote a proposal to apply for a grant and I asked my advisor to review it and advise me if the proposal should be changed. I also asked him to write a letter of support for me, as it was a requirement for this particular grant. His answer was quite disappointing and discouraging: "Your graduate research at [... University] does not require funding from outside sources. It is too early in your graduate program to ask me for letters of reference."

I tried to convince myself that it was too early to request a letter of reference, but I realized that many of my friends in other departments had received letters of support from their supervisors, even in the first month of their study. I did not expect to receive an excellent letter of support, but a very basic letter, so that I could apply for that grant, was a reasonable expectation. Even though it was too early for such a request, I was sure that I needed *some* financial support, as the provided funding package could only cover my tuition fees. I expected to be encouraged to seek external grants, even though he could not write a reference letter for me. The way my advisor treated me completely shut down my desire to apply for external grants.

There were other situations in which I did not receive adequate support from my advisor. For example, he was interested in supervising me and asked me to write a proposal. When my proposal was ready, I asked him to set up a time for a short meeting to discuss it. He wrote me back: “I am quite busy marking the prototypes in [course ...] at present. I might have more time later in the semester.”

When reading his email, I decided to contact another faculty member and ask him or her to supervise my thesis. I spent a few days contacting other faculty members, but I only received one response from a professor who asked me to write a research proposal. I wrote a proposal and met her in person. In the meeting, she advised me to contact her after one month. When I contacted her, she wrote me back: “I will have to decline the offer. I will be on administrative and sabbatical leave for the next 18 months, thus would not be in a position to supervise.”

It was a stressful time for me for I was told that if I could not find a supervisor, I would have to switch to a course-based Master’s program, and if I did so, there would be little chance for me to pursue my education at the Ph.D. level. I felt totally lost in the environment due to the lack of formal support.

### **Challenges with Socialization**

I was extremely lonely in the first year of my Master’s degree. As an international student, my first challenge was a lack of communication skills. Despite this challenge, I tried to get together with some of my classmates. However, most of my classmates were teachers who were studying as part-time students and had no time for such kind of gathering. Also, most of my classmates were doing a course-based program and had no idea about the thesis-based program and supervision challenges. Furthermore, almost all the courses that I had taken were offered in the evening (5 to 8 pm) and there was little chance to talk with my peers before or after the class.

While I was experiencing this loneliness, I noticed that students in other departments had their own office spaces: they would go to their offices every day and would talk with their peers. I thought that if I had an office space, I would have a chance to visit more graduate students, share my experience with them, and ask for their advice. I applied for an office space in the department and very soon I was given a desk. However, I was the only person who was using that office space and no one else came there, although there were three more desks in my room. It was totally disappointing, and, after a few weeks, I preferred to study at home and stopped going into the office.

### **Minimal Professional Meetings**

During my Master’s degree studies, I always wondered why there were no talks, seminars, or workshops within the department. As a student who was new to the field of education, I had many questions about academic writing in this field. However, there were no seminars or workshops offered to graduate students to help them write academic papers and publish them. There were also no workshops to inform students about

different scholarships and awards, or to advise them on how to write a good proposal for awards. Furthermore, I was continually wondering about my future and my career, but there were no workshops or talks to inform graduate students about the different kinds of job opportunities during their studies or after their graduation. Furthermore, although the degree was a Master of Education, I was surprised that there were no teaching assistantship positions. I believe that having the opportunity to work as a teaching assistant not only helps graduate students to experience effective teaching, but also helps them to make connections with other students as well as other faculty members. I believe these kinds of experiences and meetings help graduate students feel they belong to the community, and to not feel left alone in their academic journeys. I also believe that coordinating these kinds of workshops, meetings, and positions not only helps students to feel connected to the community, but also helps them in their journey and improves their progress.

### **My Second Year as a Master's of Education Student**

The beginning of the second year of my Master's program was totally different than the previous year. In the second year, I received some formal support from the Associate Dean and from other faculty members. I also received relational support from my classmates and my wife. This collective support helped me to find the right way in my journey.

#### **Formal Support**

During the first year, I had the privilege of being provided with Research Assistantship positions. Working as a research assistant helped me to make connections with faculty members. At the end of the second semester, I asked one of the professors, whom I had worked with as a research assistant, to supervise my thesis. Unfortunately, she was unable to take any new graduate students, but she spoke with other faculty members and recommended me to them. She also encouraged me to write a proposal and to send the proposal to her in order to be provided with feedback. Based on her feedback and advice, I wrote a very strong proposal; however, I could not find a supervisor until I talked to the Associate Dean of the graduate program. He spoke to some of his colleagues about me, and one of them finally agreed to supervise my thesis. It was the end of my stress surrounding finding a supervisor.

In the second year of my study, I worked as a research assistant with another professor over three consecutive semesters. This professor was very supportive; she encouraged me to apply to a Ph.D. program and generously spent her time with me to advise me on how to prepare the application documents, as well as how to apply for external grants through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). In the process of applying, I also received formal support from two other professors with whom I had already taken courses. Receiving this amount of formal support was very encouraging and made me determined to move forward.

## **Relational Support**

At the end of my first year, I had built a close friendship with one of my classmates. Having a friend with an academic background in the field of education was a great opportunity for me to become more familiar with the regulations of the education department. Furthermore, we set up several meetings to think about interesting and important topics for research and publication. I also received never-ending support from my wife, who always encouraged me to publish papers, and to apply to a Ph.D. program. The friendship and support I received from my classmate, along with my wife's support, strongly encouraged me to study harder, attempt to publish some articles, and apply for doctoral studies.

## **My Doctoral Study**

After being accepted into a Doctoral program, and based on my prior experiences in my Master's degree, I assumed I would not encounter similar challenges to what I had previously encountered. Although it is too early to evaluate my doctoral program, as I have just started the second semester of my studies, I can say that there are some challenges. The nature of these challenges differs from those experiences faced before. I am conducting research in a well-known research group, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, which leads me to believe in my abilities. However, I found the first semester of my doctoral program quite overwhelming. While I was strongly motivated to carry out my research and contribute to the group through hard work, I realized that there were too many things that I needed to learn, and my learning curve was too steep. Another challenge I encountered in the first semester was that the university regulations are not clear; not only for me, but also for students who are in the third year of their doctoral program. I witnessed the stress of one of my colleagues who is preparing to submit her comprehensive exam essay, as there are no clear guidelines for the essay.

Recently the department has designed a pass/fail course, which is compulsory for all doctoral students, in order to help them get to know the regulations and the expectations. Each session of this course has two parts. In the first part (the first 1.5 hours), every week one faculty member comes and talks with students, tells students about the department regulations, and advises them about different challenges that they may encounter. In the second part (the second 1.5 hours), the course instructor talks with students about different academic issues, or asks them to reflect on the papers that were assigned for that week. The assigned papers are also related to graduate studies and accompanying challenges and issues. This course was very useful for me and helped me to become acculturated to the academic environment and its rules. This course helped students get to know the faculty members, their research interests, and their projects. It was also good for students to know other doctoral students and share their ideas together.

## **Lessons Learned and Advice for Graduate Students**

The first lesson I learned is that building relationships and effectively communicating with professors is very important for graduate students, so my first advice is to try to communicate with faculty members in your department. One way to have this kind of communication is to work as a research assistant or teaching assistant; therefore, even if you do not need financial support, I suggest applying for these positions. If possible, try to become involved in their research projects, ask them to advise you about important research topics, and ask them to share their own challenges surrounding their graduate studies with you. As a research assistant, I had the privilege to interview 15 faculty members about their academic journey, and I found their experiences and advice very useful.

The second lesson I have learned is that having a group and working as a team is very important and provides a sense of the community. Therefore, my second advice for graduate students, or other students who want to pursue their education at the graduate level, is to build relationships with other students. I suggest trying to form a group with other graduate students who have the same research interests, in order to share your ideas with each other. In our research team, we made a reading group consisting of two Doctoral students and three Master's students. Each week, one person is responsible for suggesting a paper: we all are committed to reading the article and sharing our thoughts at the meeting. However, our final goal is not just reading articles; we aim to publish together in the near future.

The third lesson is that writing is very important. I have been talking with many graduate students and professors, and I was told that writing a thesis and papers is one of the most difficult parts of graduate studies. Based on these accounts, the third advice is to spend at least one hour a day, from the beginning of your study, to practice academic writing.

## **Conclusion**

Graduate studies can be challenging for students, regardless of their academic background or their prior successes. In order to overcome challenges and successfully finish their studies, graduate students need to implement effective strategies. This narrative paper reviewed a number of challenges the author encountered, and discussed the supports he received to overcome these challenges and the lessons he learned along the way. The paper suggests strategies for graduate students who may experience similar circumstances in their own studies.

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### **Chapter 3: Ph.D. Shock: Typical Challenges Ph.D. Students Face**

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#### **Feelings**

When I started drafting this article about my first year as a Ph.D. student, I found myself writing a success story featuring me as its hero. My initial draft was awful; it looked like one of those books claiming they can make you rich, thin and successful in thirty days! I stopped writing for a while and then my supervisor suggested a book, *Bird by Bird*, by Anne Lamott (1994). Written as a guide for writers, Lamott advises —good writing is about telling the truth! (p. 3). So, let me tell you the truth. I am a very normal, ordinary Ph.D. student, and like many others, I have experienced many ups and downs during the first year of my Ph.D. journey. Unfortunately, I don't have any secrets I can divulge or any magic formula to make you a successful Ph.D. student. However, I thought I would share my story for those of you who have just started your doctoral program and want to avoid disappointment.

I started a new life in St. John's, Canada, with my admission to the Ph.D. program in Education. Although the culture shock of experiencing an unfamiliar way of life in a foreign country is always challenging, joining a Ph.D. program was what I can call a real shock. I am originally from Iran with a Bachelor degree in Counseling Psychology, and I got my Master's degree in Educational Psychology in Malaysia using quantitative methods with little background in the philosophy of research. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (2015) defines cultural shock as —a feeling of confusion, doubt, or nervousness caused by being in a *place* that is very different from what you are used to. In my case, being in a Ph.D. program has been very different from what I experienced as a Master's degree student, and I felt confused and disorientated soon after my first class. Doctoral research requires a completely different set of educational and psychological skills.

I remember the first time I read the course outline for my first Ph.D. course. The topics to be covered were about the philosophical foundations of research, theory, epistemology, etc. I realized my knowledge about research was immature, basic and limited. While I read Google was always open on my laptop to help me search for the meaning of terms that were new to me including —ontology, —axiology, —epistemology and —discourses, to name just a few. After reading I had to write a proper reflection on what I barely understood. It was a painful process! As a student who enjoys participating in discussion, sitting in a class quietly was especially challenging. I have always been an achiever at school. I received straight A's and graduated at the top of my Master's degree program. However, all that external validation I was accustomed to suddenly stopped.



**“After reading an assigned article about theory in my research course several times without complete understanding, I left the library and sat in front of Burton’s pond, staring at the ducks and every major form of mental illness surfaced - delusion, panic disorder and self-loathing...”**

Excluding my mom, I was not honest with myself, or others, when I began to feel my Ph.D. program was becoming a real struggle. I hesitated to ask for help and I didn’t talk about my concerns with my supervisor, my department, or my support services. I waited until things turned into a crisis and, as a result, I got the lowest mark I’d ever received.

**“I talked to my mom, crying:  
„Mom, I’m no longer exceeding expectations.  
I feel disabled. What if I can’t handle it?  
What if I disappoint my supervisor? What if I fail?” And  
I crumbled. I felt lost.  
My mom looked at me worried,  
her daughter never cried over her study.”**

**The thoughts in my mind drove me crazy:  
“My classmates, my supervisor, and my professors are going to find out I  
don't really belong here. Admissions made a mistake.”**

My first semester finished while I was struggling to adjust to my new academic life. It took me a semester to acknowledge my depression symptoms and ask for help. Finally, I visited my doctor, I went to the counseling center, and slowly I began to heal. However, I felt ashamed to admit to my family, my peers, and even my close friends that I saw a doctor and counselor for my depression.



**Semester break began  
while I was in a deep hole,  
shouting from the bottom: “I’m stuck,  
it’s dark,  
and I’m overwhelmed”.  
I knew that I couldn’t  
continue like that,  
so I took a hard look at my life.**

I believed using counseling services was a sign of failure. Despite my feelings, I knew there were other Ph.D. students suffering like me. Among the Ph.D. students (my friends) I know around the world, I have seen very real problems like depression and anxiety. Studies increasingly show mental illness is on the rise among academics (Shaw, 2014). Unfortunately, it is rarely discussed openly and academic institutions are accustomed to ignoring psychological distress among Ph.D. students, creating a —culture of acceptance around mental health issues in academia (Shaw, 2014).

### **Some Tips to Cope With Typical Challenges Ph.D. Students Face**

In the text that follows, I provide a few important pointers based on my experiences and what I have learned along the way and what I think every Ph.D. student should know.

#### **Be Aware of Isolation and Expand Your Network**

During the New Year holidays when the Iranian community (MUNIRANIAN) prepared to celebrate Yalda night, the longest and darkest night of the year and the northern hemisphere’s winter solstice, I joined a Yalda choir group and started socializing. In Persian culture, —Yalda symbolizes the triumph of light and goodness over the powers of darkness. For Iranians, Yalda is a night when friends and family gather together to eat, drink, sing and read poetry until well after midnight.

*"With all my pains, there is still the hope of  
recovery, Like the eve of Yalda, there will finally be  
an end."*

- Sa'adi (Persian poet)

During those practicing sessions, my —Ph.D. Yalda nightl got slowly brighter! The most important part was seeing other postgraduate students from different fields talking about their challenges. I started to realize the process is pretty much the same for almost every postgraduate student.



**It was like they were  
looking at me at the bottom  
of the dark hole, saying:  
“Hey Bahar!  
We know what it's like  
down there, and  
you're not alone”.**

I realized I needed a social life while working on my program. I truly believe there is need to talk about the sense of intense isolation experienced by many doctoral students. Over the course of their average working day it is typical for most Ph.D. students to not speak to anyone until evening. Doing such solitary work, one sometimes ends up feeling completely cut off from humanity. This is not widely acknowledged, and many prospective doctoral students aren't aware of or prepared for this.

### **Join a Group (Book Club, Writing Group, Research Group)**

Find appropriate networks and join to make connections with other professionals with the same research interests who may be able to provide help and advice while you work on your thesis. My supervisor introduced me to a research exchange group working in the arts and health (NLCAHR), and through them I met other researchers, community activists and artists who aim to explore how the arts are connected to health. This type of collaboration, as well as forms of personal and professional networking, has provided several benefits for me. Most importantly, I identified a new research opportunity for my doctoral project, what Chambers (2004) beautifully calls, —Research That Mattersl – research that matters to me, research I am really passionate about.

### **Relieve Yourself from Perfectionism**

I truly believe that perfectionism is a real enemy that disguises itself as a helpful, encouraging friend. Some people may protest and argue perfectionism helps people to accomplish their best work and achieve their goals. However, I agree with Anne Lamott's

(1994) description of perfectionism as —a mean, frozen form of idealism‖ (p. 31) that encourages us to set goals which are unrealistic and beyond reach. Setting high goals can create anxiety, fear of failing to produce perfect work, fear of making mistakes, and fear of criticism. Even worse, it can result in procrastination and the failure to produce anything at all.

Over the past three semesters I learned if I don't overcome my perfectionism, I would not be able to get very far in my life or academic career. To remind myself of the danger of perfectionism, I often listen to Brené Brown's fantastic TED talks (Brown, 2010) about the power of vulnerability. I am reminded of —the capacity to engage in our lives with authenticity, to cultivate courage and compassion, and to embrace — not in that self-help-book, motivational-seminar way, but really, deeply, profoundly embrace the imperfections of who we really are‖ (Brown, 2015,19:01).

### Take up a New Hobby



**My roomies at the  
office - sitting in  
their swimsuits,  
waiting for me to  
finish my work  
and go to the pool.**

*"I'm in a rhythm, held by the water." (Landreth, 2013)*

My counselor suggested I try meditation to increase my ability to deal with life's inevitable stresses, to increase my concentration, and to reduce my depression symptoms. I've tried meditation and yoga, but they did not work for me. I found them boring and I couldn't keep myself motivated to do them regularly. I decided to start swimming, which works well for me as a sport as well as a meditation and mindfulness activity. When I am in the pool, swimming, I feel free of any self-consciousness, and as Landreth (2013) describes, —In the pool, we all just do what we're capable of, whatever that is. And once you're swimming, no one else is counting, no one muttering \_she didn't do much' or \_she's slow'. We're all here, is what counts.‖





**I joined the MUN Crocheters" and Knitters" Society,  
a group of MUN students (mostly graduate students),  
who get together  
one hour weekly  
to knit, talk and have fun.**

I suggest you find a fun activity for yourself. There is no fixed formula, if you don't enjoy yoga, that's fine; yoga is not the only way to slow down our hectic, contemporary lives. Sit and think about what makes you really happy and relaxed, consider the availability and its cost (both financially and time wise). There are several ways to have fun and relax your mind for a moment; there are awesome mental and physical benefits from some old-fashioned hobbies (like knitting and gardening).

### **Challenge Yourself**

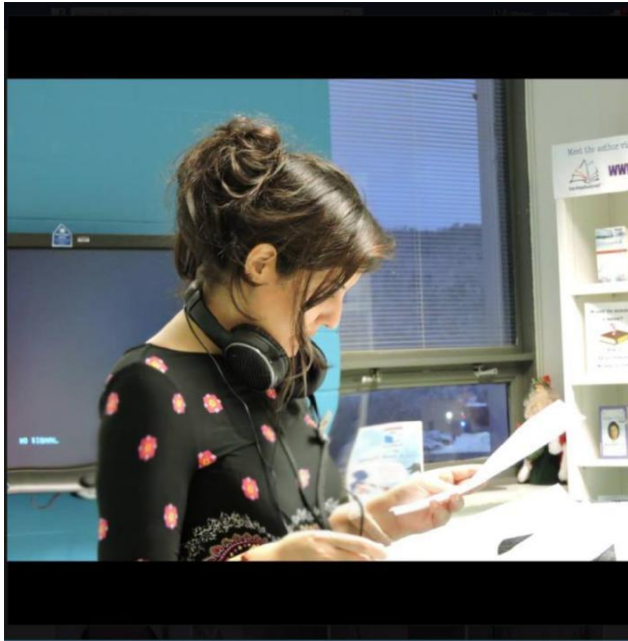


My supervisor and supervisory committee constantly keep me posted in regards to events related to my research areas, as well as new books and articles I might be interested in reading. At the beginning of the winter semester, I received an email from one of my professors about the SSHRC storytelling contest in which participants must tell a story about a SSHRC funded project. I'm a very visual person with a personal interest in using cameras and pictures, so using arts-based research methods (Baron, 2008), I decided to make a video. My three-minute video *Dress Like a Teacher* (Haghighat, 2015), examines how teachers' clothing can support social and cultural differences and was based on a project by my supervisor. I explored how social, cultural and personal factors shape how



teachers present themselves. During the first month of the winter semester, I put all of my efforts into making my first video. I felt alive again; it was a great learning opportunity and a chance to be creative. It also gave me energy to heal, to be motivated, to study harder, and to boost my confidence.

### **Build up a Good Relationship with Your Supervisor and Supervisory Committee**



**A comment on my Facebook profile picture  
(taken during the video recording day).**

Despite all of the challenges, I am lucky to have a very understanding and supportive supervisor who has made this journey much easier for me. Yet many doctoral researchers are not so fortunate. What I can say, however, is that you should see your supervisor as a collaborator on your project. If your supervisor is not getting in touch with you regularly, don't simply sit and wait for him/her to tell you what to do – that's what I did at the beginning and still do a bit now. Your situation might be different, and some supervisors may have a very traditional approach and be very hard to deal with from your perspective. However, the sooner you take control of your project, and build the best POSSIBLE relationship with your supervisor, the better!

### **Enough Regrets for the First Ph.D. year**

I believe our time as doctoral students is a time when we learn so much about ourselves. I learned that I had not formed an identity beyond making people proud of me. I learned to cope with failure, to make mistakes. I learned it was okay to rely on other people and ask for help. I'm not exactly sure what to do as I move through this process, but I'm working

on it. I understand that there are many difficulties and problems in doing a Ph.D., but I'm still learning, allowing myself to make messes in order to find out who I am in academia, why I am here, and what I'm supposed to do. I have learned to —embrace my brokenness

(as cited in Popova, 2014), reflect on my experiences, and move on.

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## **Chapter 4: Teaching as a Ph.D. Student in Education: Reflecting on My Own Experience**

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Most universities recruit new faculty members from doctoral degree holders who can show their credential and potential in research and teaching, the two major types of work for new faculty members. As can be seen in many faculty position advertisements, applicants gain attention when they can provide records of teaching accomplishments at the undergraduate and graduate level, and demonstrate commitment to teaching innovation. Teaching experience is not only a necessary baseline criteria for university employers to select their new faculty members, but also a valuable asset with which the Ph.D. graduates are able to increase their competitiveness in the academic job market. In order to prepare graduate students for future academic careers, universities usually provide teaching-skill training by means of workshops and sessions of student career development, and teaching assistant positions for graduate students to assist professors with tasks of grading and tutoring. These two types of programs to a large extent support Ph.D. students in building their conceptualization of teaching and developing their teaching skills. However, neither of them offers the opportunity for Ph.D. students to be exposed to and engaged in a comprehensive and complex process of teaching that a course instructor is supposed to experience.

In many universities in Canada, student professional development programs only provide trainings surrounding general teaching skills regardless of graduate students' disciplinary backgrounds. Ph.D. programs rarely list course instruction as an integral part of the requirements for Ph.D. studies. As a result, graduate students seldom have access to gaining teaching experience specifically in their research field. The experience of course instruction, though recognized as a valuable asset in the job market, becomes a blind spot situated in the intersection of Ph.D. programs and student career development programs, but not covered by either of them. Many academic supervisors consider teaching less important than other components of the Ph.D. training, such as doing research and tutoring (Jepsen, Varhegyi & Edwards, 2012). This little emphasis on practical teaching in the training of Ph.D. students probably occurs because, in academic settings, the obligation to teach and the desire to do research are usually perceived as two opposing forces that are hard to balance. Course instruction can be a time-consuming endeavor for professors who want to devote more time to research, publications and conferences.

However, little research has been documented on doctoral students' perspectives on experiences of course instruction in relation to their current studies and future employment. The purpose of this study is to explore my understanding of course instruction in relation to my current Ph.D. studies. To achieve this goal, I draw on my own experience of teaching an online course at the university level, examining how this teaching experience contributes to my current Ph.D. study and research, and how it

reframes my conceptualization of being a teacher. Through this critical self-examination of teaching as a Ph.D. student, I will make suggestions on the components of Ph.D. training for the purpose of improving quality and productivity of graduate education.

### **Initial Self-Expectations**

I was informed of the appointment as the instructor of an online course in early 2015 when I was in the second year of my Ph.D. program. Teaching the online course as a Ph.D. student instructor would be a great opportunity to advance and enrich my academic journey in terms of extending my teaching experience, interacting with various students and seeking inspiration for future research. Besides these high expectations, this short-term online teaching appointment indeed activated my passion for teaching that had been repressed for two years.

Two years ago I prepared for the departure for my Ph.D. studies in Canada after serving as a faculty member in a university in China for over ten years. Suspending the profession was not because I didn't enjoy working with students and professors, but because I wanted to achieve a breakthrough in my academic career through further study and new experiences. I still remember how difficult it was to say farewell to my students and colleagues, experiencing emotional moments over and over again. In my case, studying in Canada was not for the intent to pursue a higher academic degree, but as a way to create and present a better "me" with not only broad and profound knowledge, but also a global vision of education. Teaching the online course was expected to inform me of an online course system that I hadn't experienced before—how the course was designed, delivered and evaluated, how the teacher-student communication was achieved, and how online learning can be supported. Through teaching the course, I could expand, enrich and enhance my experiences in course instruction.

Looking through the background information on the students who registered the in course, I found myself surrounded by a fantastic group of teachers with whom my interaction would produce nuanced insights and perspectives worthy of exploring in my future teaching and research. It was a group of second language teachers, most of whom were teaching at various levels of French immersion programs in different regions of Canada. Some had cross-cultural experiences teaching ESL (English as the second language) in Korea and Bangkok. This online course drew together second language teachers no matter where they were and what languages they taught. Being part of this online community of language teachers brought about memories of my time in China communicating with my colleagues about the ways of teaching, the progress of the course and students' performance in class.

I was fully aware of my primary role as the instructor for the course which focused on issues in second language education. From a background of applied linguistics and education, I expected that the course instruction would provide me with the opportunity to communicate with people who share the same interests in theories and practices in second language education. More importantly, it would be a great achievement of my teaching if some students felt supported, engaged and inspired throughout the learning

process. However, I never assumed online instruction to be an easy job, but rather a great challenge that I had never encountered before. It was a graduate-level course in an online environment where the delivery of instruction, teacher-student conversations, and feedback on assignments all depended upon online exchanges. To make sure there wouldn't be interruptions and issues due to technological problems, I booked a tutorial from the online teaching supporting department and learned how to use the virtual class system. Another concern was the way of communication with students. In this online course there wouldn't be verbal interactions face to face with students, nor illustration through use of speech and body language. The only forms of instructor-student communication were emails and posted messages, which largely relied on written text. I kept telling myself to be extremely cautious in regards to my language use when expressing views and attitudes concerning students' assignments, so that misunderstanding could be minimized.

### **Instruction and Communication**

The subsequent instruction and communication with students was the most satisfying part of my memories of the course instruction. In the process of teaching as a Ph.D. student, I was able to connect my previous profession with current Ph.D. study, and apply the theories I learned to the practice of course teaching.

In response to a student's assignment on motivations for second language learning, I suggested a socio-cultural perspective as an alternative approach. My research interest surrounds unexpected and complex learning behaviors that cannot be explained under the conventional psycho-linguistic construct. From a socio-cultural perspective, desires for learning another language is always related to a learner's life experience and understanding of the world. After a few exchanges of emails, I was delighted to receive a message from the student who expressed her excitement for learning another angle to view language learning. In her email, she made a list of literature on socio-cultural aspects of second language learning for further reading and exploration. That moment was extremely rewarding for I shared her joy of learning and reaped the fruit of my commitment.

While other moments of instruction were not as exciting as the above, they served as reminders that I needed to keep an open mind to theories and views with which I wasn't familiar. One of the assignments required students to create a PowerPoint slideshow to discuss an issue in second language teaching and learning. One student selected to present the topic of "learning disabilities". At the sight of this unfamiliar topic, my intuition was that "disability" was an inappropriate word for students' learning and attention issues. To say a child has learning disabilities equates to labeling the child with an innate impairment in their ability to learn. Who is qualified to make this judgment? On what criteria can this judgment be made? With these questions in mind, I conducted a quick search of the literature and found a few relevant articles. After reading them, I formed a clearer concept of "learning disabilities". It is a medical term used by psychologists, therapists and special education experts to refer to certain learning disorders and difficulties that are diagnosed through specialized testings. In the feedback on the assignment, I emphasized that teachers were not qualified to judge which students

had learning disabilities, but were able to support those who had been diagnosed. Although I took a long time to do research before giving the feedback, I felt relieved that I didn't make a prompt judgment on her assignment. From students' assignments, I discovered alternative perspectives on language teaching and learning, and gained a critical understanding of my previously learned knowledge. In order to become a qualified teacher and reflexive researcher, I need to have a humble mind and rigorous attitude towards students' expression of views.

An unexpected experience was that my role of graduate student could also be supportive to the learning of distance students. A few days before the deadline of an assignment, a student asked if she could use non-peer-reviewed articles in the essay because downloading the peer-viewed was very expensive. As a matter of fact, the online resources of the university library are free of charge to all registered students and can be accessed by using their ID number and the password. Based on my experience as a graduate student, I immediately provided her information on how to contact the library to get the password for downloading, and how to use delivery service of the library. Eventually she downloaded the articles she needed and was grateful for my information and support. At that moment, I was more of a learning partner than an instructor, as I shared my experience with another fellow student who was struggling in her independent study.

Although teaching was time-consuming, it provided an opportunity to shift between roles of teacher and graduate student, and sometimes be both. Through online course instruction, I was able to combine my past professional experience with the present Ph.D. studies, building coherence of my academic journey. In contrast to the difficult time in transitioning from a full-time lecturer to a full-time student in the first year of my program, this year was fulfilled when I was able to be involved in a dual community of language teachers and graduate students, where my roles as a course instructor, second language teacher and graduate student could be integrated into a new professional identity.

### **Reconsideration of Teachers' Power**

Teaching is not always rewarding and encouraging. I inevitably experienced challenges and confusion in the process of online teaching, most of which were coincidentally related to ways of teachers' use of power. Unlike the conventional face-to-face classroom, an online course offers a unique learning environment where students can achieve deep learning outcomes with more space for expression of their voices and more control over their learning (Anderson & Haddad, 2005), while teachers' authority over the learning process is reduced. Based on my belief in the emancipatory and empowering role of education, ideal forms of educations are those in which students' voices are



valued in the way that teachers' power should be reduced. However, I made a subtle change to this view after gaining a better understanding of teachers' authority at different stages of teaching through a grade-related request from a student.

After issuing the grade for an assignment, I unexpectedly received an email from a student. In the email, she mildly expressed her dissatisfaction with her grade and requested a higher mark. Never having this experience before either as a teacher or as a student, I was confused about how to deal with such demand from students. This student might expect a higher score based on her investment of considerable time and efforts in the assignment. However, if I elevated her score, it would be unfair to the students who better fulfilled the assignment requirements. Eventually, I turned to my supervisor whose advice saved me from the dilemma—while it may not be uncommon for students to make such a request, instructors must stick to the same criteria in evaluating the whole class. Having confirmed that I treated everyone's assignment fairly, I gained more confidence in accounting for insistence on the grade. Instead of changing the score, I provided the student with more details on which aspects in the assignment to be improved. This experience made me reflect on my previous view of teachers' power in evaluating and assessing students' performance. While a teacher can be a guide and a learning partner in the process of learning, his/her authority in evaluation of students' performance must be defended under the condition that the same criteria should be fairly applied to every student.

There were other instances in which the teacher's authority needed to be exercised cautiously in order to ensure the progress of the course. For example, a few students asked for an extension of the assignment's deadline offering various reasons.

Undoubtedly taking an online course at the graduate level can be very difficult for off-campus students with insufficient face-to-face exchanges with teachers and other fellow students. Moreover, adult students have to manage the balance between their study and their work and family. An extension of due date would allow them more time to write, correct and edit the assignment. However, I gave up the idea of giving the due date extension eventually based on two major concerns. The first was maintenance of fairness in evaluation. Was the due date extension for the few students fair to the others who achieved timely completion and punctual submission of the assignment? Was it appropriate to involve submission time in grading the assignment? Another concern was students' progress of course learning. The regular time allocation for one assignment was two weeks. A delay of deadline for one assignment consequently shortened the time for completing the next one. Using the power to disapprove a request for deadline extension doesn't necessarily suggest that the teacher is arbitrary, if teachers' power over the process of teaching and learning is exercised in an appropriate way for the benefit of the whole class.

The way of teacher's exercise of power may impact students' development of critical thinking and creativity. It can also be utilized to ensure the progress of student learning and the quality of course instruction. Reducing teachers' power is not a fundamental solution to student empowerment. Teachers must recognize the significance of their

power in promoting students' learning and maintaining progress of the course, while minimizing its negative influences on students' creativity and autonomy.

### **Conclusion**

Through the process of teaching a graduate course online, I developed a better understanding of myself as a course instructor, a second language teacher and a graduate student. My reservoir of knowledge in teaching and learning was expanded and enhanced. More importantly, I have gained a more complicated understanding of teachers' power in class. This teaching experience supports the coherence and consistency of my academic journey developed over years and across diverse countries, from a teacher, to a student, to a researcher.

For students in the graduate program of education, gaining teaching experience goes beyond building up qualifications for a future career in schools and universities. The practice of teaching can be a valuable opportunity to reconstruct, enhance and expand knowledge and understanding of education through the process of instruction and interaction with students. Furthermore, research-oriented Ph.D. students will be able to enact and adjust their educational ideologies, attitudes and beliefs, and in return involve their insights and reflections in further research.

Based on the reflections on my own experience, I propose that teaching should be an integral part of graduate student training for Ph.D. degrees. The practice of course instruction is for the benefits of students' ongoing studies as well as their future academic careers. In the department of English at Cornell University (Cornell University, n.d.), every Ph.D. candidate is required to teach at least one year as part of the program requirements, under careful supervision of an experienced professor. Another example is Yale University (Yale University, n.d.), where graduate students are supported with services of teaching-related training and matching to teaching opportunities in departments and programs other than their own. International graduate students in Yale University are provided additional assistance in improving competence in the oral content delivery, so that they can get equal access to teaching positions as the local students.

To ensure the quality and productivity of the course instruction by student instructors, it is essential to establish a comprehensive system of support, which may include open access to information on teaching opportunities, matching services, professors' supervision and teaching-skill training. This goal can only be reached through cooperation, coordination and even compromise among various departments and sections of the university. While participation of graduate students in teaching contributes to diversity and multiplicity of teaching culture at university, it indeed poses new challenges to the institutional structure of graduate education.

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## **Chapter 5: A Constructivist Lens for Professional Learning**

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### **The Reluctant Teacher**

I am a reluctant teacher. Like many, I spent my undergraduate years not knowing exactly what I wanted to do and the question loomed larger as I neared the end of my degree.

This was a greater concern for my father, who couldn't fathom what I would do with a history degree. I wasn't sure either, but I enjoyed history so much I pushed those questions and thoughts out of my mind for the time being. I knew one thing; I wasn't going to be a teacher. My mother was a teacher, her uncles were teachers, our family friends were teachers, but it wouldn't be me. I was determined to break the cycle, but how?

Technology was my answer. I always had a fascination with computer technology, so after finishing my undergraduate degree I enrolled in a graduate-level information technology diploma program. At the time I didn't know this would actually become the catalyst that would spark my teaching career. An internship was required and I ended up working as an information technology consultant for my local school district. It was here that I was first introduced to the Newfoundland and Labrador technology education curriculum and professional development - both of which would become great influences on my future teaching career. One of my tasks during this time was to prepare technology education resources for professional development. More than preparing the material, I was also asked to deliver professional development sessions to teachers. This was my introduction to teaching in a professional setting, and to my surprise, it wasn't that bad.

Moving forward I had choices to make. With little work available for technologists at the turn of the century, and based on my exposure to teaching during my internship, I reluctantly started to think about an education degree. This was a humbling experience as I had stated publically for years, to my entire family and social circle, that I would never be a teacher. My mother even tried to discourage me, but I moved forward and graduated a year and half later with a speciality in technology education.

With my shiny new credentials, I managed to land a job with the Avalon West School District working at Amalgamated Academy in Bay Roberts Newfoundland and Labrador as a learning resource and social studies teacher. At the time, information and communication technology (ICT) skills were in great demand throughout the school system. The federal government had incentive programs to encourage the integration of technology at the school level and the district's plans were focused on the same. In retrospect, I'm pretty sure I was hired for my technological and not my teaching ability,

as I had little of the latter. In my first year teaching, I was asked to develop and deliver an ICT professional development session for the district. Twelve years and a Master's degree later, I'm still very active in professional development, or to use the current moniker, professional learning. Professional learning facilitation has become like a second job. It's from this point of view that I've developed a frame of reference for one area of possible inquiry that overlaps directly with my primary professional role – that of a teacher with constructivist leanings.

### **My Constructivist Stance**

I've categorized myself generally as a constructivist teacher and I realize that this statement is very value laden and vague, so before moving forward I should clarify my stance. Constructivism can be framed as a way of understanding the nature of knowledge and learning and is an epistemological and ontological underpinning of many educational practitioners and scholars, but it is by no means a simple idea. Generally speaking, I believe learning happens when knowledge is constructed by individuals through activities and that knowledge is not neutral. Knowledge isn't something to be discovered, it's something that is made and constructed (Cunningham & Duffy, 1996; Efran, McNamee, Warren, & Raskin, 2014; Fosnot & Perry, 1996). This is a simple definition and there is still considerable debate surrounding the ideas of individually created, socially created, or the combination of both individually and socially created knowledge (Phillips, 1995). I'd like to think I fall within the combination camp of this debate and from here it becomes easier to analyze my grounding assumptions about teaching and professional learning in general.

Cunningham and Duffy (1996) state that grounding assumptions are just that, assumptions. They can never be proven, but they are important in forming the basis for our understanding of the world.

Although I'm not entirely comfortable with the idea of filling the role of a researcher, any of my future research aspirations have been directly influenced by my development as a student and teacher. From my earliest classroom experiences to my graduate work, I have been exposed to learning environments that have been purposefully engineered with constructivist ideals in mind. I remember student-centered social studies projects in elementary school, many student-led science experiments and projects in intermediate and high school, and design projects in university. As a teacher, I've naturally gravitated towards working with colleagues that share this pedagogical view and have actively worked to re-construct and improve on the models that I lived through as a student and teacher. These experiences have had a huge influence not only on my teaching practice, but now on my emerging identity as a pragmatic participatory educational researcher (Gill, 2015).

### **Conceptualizing Inquiry**

Teaching has not come easily to me. Heated conversations with students, internal and external conflicts regarding curriculum delivery, the politics of school leadership, and the

demands of meeting the needs of every individual student have all shaped me as an educator. It is through the combination of my past and present experiences that my personal pedagogy is continually developing – that of taking a student-centered approach where learning is accomplished through doing rather than passively engaging in out of context lessons (Gill, 2015). As my personal pedagogy has continued to develop, I've also brought these ideas into the area of professional learning. It is through this connection that I've arrived at my potential inquiry - the idea of merging the lessons I've learned from creating student-centred constructivist learning environments into the sphere of professional learning. Although hardly novel (Brand & Moore, 2010; Keiny, 1994; Wilson & Berne, 1999), it is germane in my local community and is deeply rooted in my professional persona.

One of the historical issues with professional learning in my jurisdiction has been its lack of alignment with classroom practice. There has been an oxymoronic approach that has seen persons of authority dictate, through instructionist methods, visions of constructivist classroom practice – basically an attempt to inject constructivist practices into the classroom through an instructionist lens. From my observations and countless collegial conversations this has been viewed as a self-defeating strategy. With these things in mind, my inquiry could focus on the relationship between constructivist professional development and changing teacher practice within the context of local professional learning communities. More specifically, from a design-based research perspective, I am assuming this inquiry could possibly contribute to both basic and applied forms of knowledge creation (McKenney & Reeves, 2012) in the area of learning theory and the development of a professional learning framework. My hope is that this work will enable educators to manage educational change in a much more self-initiated, self-directed and context dependent manner.

### **Design Based Research and Professional Learning**

One of my challenges as an educational researcher, interested in the development of meaningful professional learning, is to try and understand the relationship between what is known in terms of learning in a school setting and the learning of adults in professional settings. If we want schools to embrace the idea that students need to create and recreate while taking an active role in their learning (Edutopia, 2009), then we may have to invest some serious thought, time, and resources into teacher learning – both pre-service and in-service. I don't think it's enough to offer isolated, context independent professional development based on an instructionist model. It's time to immerse professional learning in the very practice that it seeks to promote in the classroom. But this statement itself may only be conjecture, as my educational jurisdiction may very well already be moving in this direction. Certainly my involvement in coordinating systemic, meaningful, and context dependent professional learning gives me a biased perspective. To really grasp the theoretical underpinnings of this issue, I'll have to move from conjecture into the realm of evidence and theoretical principles as outlined by McKenney and Reeves (2012). With this in mind, educational design-based research may be suitable for framing the problem and articulating a solution.



Gardner (2011) states that “the number of variables entailed in describing educational systems is so enormous that any hope of controlled experimentation, or of scientific modeling, must be suspended” (p. 348). This statement rings true for me within the framework proposed by design-based research proponents and my personal experiences as a teacher. Education is a messy business, and the possibility of isolating discrete variables that will have global implications seems farfetched. If design-based research is suitable, and I move forward with this approach to inquiry, I take comfort in its flexibility and focus on theory and application (Barab & Squire, 2004). In my role as a design teacher, the concepts of the regulative research cycle are familiar. McKenney and Reeves (2012) outline that all educational design research models tend to follow three phases: First, the initial orientation phase which involves the exploration and analysis of an existing situation – professional development in my jurisdiction may be out of balance with current constructivist understanding about the nature of learning. Second, the design or development phase which involves the drafting and prototyping of solutions – my attempt to develop constructivist professional development learning environments in the context of my local community. Third, the evaluation or empirical testing phase where the results are feed back into the design cycle – my tweaking of the system based on teacher feedback, observations and analysis before the next iteration. These ideas parallel the design problem scenarios that I teach on a daily basis and I feel very comfortable with this aspect of educational design research. Sometimes I wonder if I’m too comfortable with these ideas and if this bias will blind me to new and innovative ways of implementing educational design research. On the other hand, I have no experience articulating basic theoretical principles from applied design solutions, and in true constructivist fashion, I believe the only way I can satisfactorily come to grips with this is to actually go through the process in a meaningful and grounded way. As the radical constructivist Ernst Von Glaserfeld noted in a 2005 interview, good teachers have always known that students need to build their own knowledge and that knowledge isn’t something that is ready made and can be transferred to the learner (Lombardi, 2010).

It is from this perspective that I feel I need to engage in educational design-based research rather than simply continuing to read about it.

### **The Reluctant Researcher**

The transformation from teacher to researcher is going to be a challenge, a challenge I think about almost constantly now. Researcher is such an imposing title and it’s one that I’m not comfortable with at this moment. Within my professional community, I know that the title researcher can still hold negative connotations related to the outsider, the observer, the meddler, and the know-it-all – someone not grounded in the contextual reality of the group they are trying to study. Even so, Anderson and Shattuck (2012) assertion that design-based research may not be meeting the challenge of moving tested interventions to a wider audience intrigues me. From my professional experience educational interventions have a tendency to pay lip service to their professional learning components. Is this a gap in the research? If it is, could my proposed inquiry possibly help close this gap? In my profession, moving away from classroom and school experiences tend to degrade one’s credibility. With this in mind, two questions remain: if

I immerse my emerging identity within a pragmatic, participatory paradigm based on a constructivist epistemology, is there hope that I can live in both worlds and can the design-based research approach facilitate such a life?

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## **Chapter 6: Epiphanic Moments in the Search for Myself as an Educational Researcher**

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### **Abstract**

In this auto-ethnographical paper the events, experiences, and ideas surrounding the development of my personal pedagogy as a K-12 public school teacher are explored in relation to my potential transformation into an educational researcher. Auto-ethnographical work combines elements of ethnography and auto-biography in an attempt to understand the cultural context of a given phenomenon. Through an exploration of several epiphanic experiences as both a student and a teacher, I attempt to analyze their influence on my self-conceptualization as an emerging educational researcher.

### **Introduction**

I am a teacher, not a researcher; I self-identify with a culture that is at arms-length from the culture of professional research. Researchers in my school culture generally fall into the category of “they”. As in, “they” don’t know what they’re talking about because “they” don’t live our experience. “They” can say whatever “they” want, but “they” are out of touch with our reality. “They” pretend to care about educational issues, but “they” are more concerned with renewing their research grants. Teachers can conduct research, but this is the exception not the rule. It is much more likely that teachers will be the subjects of research and that the level of participation will vary. This has been my experience as a teacher and now I face a very daunting question: Why would I ever consider joining the ranks of “they”? To consider this question is to seriously reflect and analyze who I am as an educator and how I’ve arrived at my current position. Can I actually make the transition from professional educator to researcher or is this a false dichotomy, supplanted in my subconscious by my experiences and cultural connections? Maybe it’s not a transition after all, but a process of becoming as outlined by Tedlock (2011). Becoming involves being changed by our experiences and although Tedlock (2011) articulates that this usually refers to experiences abroad, I would argue that this could also apply to someone moving into areas of potential within their personal or professional lives. The idea that we shape our experiences, and they, in turn, shape who we are, is one of the key points of my reflection. I am not an isolated individual. I am, and have been, a member of multiple overlapping communities that have influenced my thoughts, actions, and perceptions of what it means to be a teacher and what it will mean for me to be an educational researcher. This brings me back to my original questions of

who am I as a teacher, how did I get here, and how is this going to influence the researcher I will become.

### **Approach and Limitations**

In an attempt to frame answers to these questions, I believe I must start by sketching an outline of what I think are some of the critical periods of my own educational experience. Within this vein, I will attempt to create an auto-ethnographical narrative of these events in relation to developing an understanding of myself as an educational researcher. Hamilton, Smith, and Worthington (2008) frame narrative inquiry as the process of studying, thinking about and sharing experience through story. Chase (2011) reinforces the idea that narrative is a legitimate way of understanding one's actions or the actions of others in relation to making sense of a larger meaningful whole. As I will be the subject of this inquiry, I will try to employ an auto-ethnographic approach of critically analyzing my position as a researcher. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) outline that auto-ethnographical work combines elements of autobiography and ethnography to illuminate and analyze personal epiphanic moments in terms of broader cultural experiences. It is within this framework that I will attempt to reconstruct the developmental process that has shaped my personal pedagogy and potential research position.

Working within the realm of auto-ethnographical narrative presents some challenges. There are limitations to working with memory and I've tried to lessen these limitations by supplementing my memory with textual artifacts, recordings and transcriptions of several conversations with former teachers and colleagues and several pieces of personal correspondence with current and former colleagues. During the conversations, I tried to pose open-ended questions in an attempt to let people speak freely about their experiences and not lead the conversation too much in one direction or the other. I have also purposefully selected these experiences. Even as I state their importance as reference points, I acknowledge that they are just a cross-section of a complex tapestry that contributed to my personal development, first as a student, then as a teacher, and finally as a potential researcher. I also acknowledge easy access to people that could either corroborate or refute my claims was a key factor in choosing these moments. Hopefully being aware of these shortcomings and enacting appropriate counter measures will help keep me honest in my endeavour.

This process has given me a fresh perspective on past events and has sharpened my focus on a number of different ideas related to my current practice. An analysis of the themes that are found within these sources will possibly shed some light on the development of my personal pedagogy and its influence on my developing position as an educational researcher. With any luck, this journey may turn out to be an important step in mediating the internal conflict between myself as teacher and myself as researcher.

### **The Early Years**

"Every child is a project, and has a different potential, even the gifted aren't gifted in everything" (personal communication, November 21, 2014).

I wasn't overly excited about school as a child. I remember or have constructed a memory about a turning point in my attitude toward school. It was early in my scholastic career, and although I can't pinpoint the grade, it was definitely in the primary years. I remember having what I would now call an epiphany; I was stuck in school and there was no getting out despite how I felt or what I did. Math, spelling, language and the rest of the curriculum had replaced my freedom to explore the world on my own terms and there was no turning back. Heavy stuff for a six or seven year old. Moving forward in my education I learned to deal with these feelings and apparently learned my lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic, although I can't remember much about those lessons. What I do remember are projects. Projects that gave me back some of that freedom I lost as an exploratory pre-school child.

I vividly remember making and self-publishing books, cooking, creating social studies projects and actively working with my peers on things that had meaning for us. I attended a small school, what my mother describes as a family school (personal communication, November 21, 2014). The school had a fluctuating population of no more than fifty students and my mother was one of the teachers. I was in her class for a large portion of my primary and elementary schooling. Looking back at my experience at this school I've always attributed the participatory nature of my early education to the small number of students, but while having a conversation with my mother regarding these early years something else surfaced from her perspective as a teacher. She reminded me that numbers aren't everything, she indicated that it was indeed easier to create student-centered learning activities with smaller class sizes, but more importantly the teachers have to be willing to engage, build and implement learning environments that foster student self-reliance and exploration (personal communication, November 21, 2014).

My mother related that she had many professional influences that grounded her as she developed her own personal pedagogy. The work of Howard Gardner helped cement her belief that children are individuals, and that achievement can take on many different forms and that it comes at different times. More importantly, the Christian belief that every individual is special and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity was a big influence in shaping her teaching practice. So, it was within this learning environment that my foundation of teaching and learning was laid. Moving forward, moments in my education that emulate this exploratory learning environment seem to anchor and influence my personal pedagogy to this very day.

### **The Middle Years**

"Ultimately the goal that I wanted to have in terms of my teaching and what was happening in the school was that the kids were engaged and involved and that they were given opportunities to try new things" (personal communication, November 23, 2014).

It seemed like everyone wanted to be in Mr. R's class. He was a new principal, new to teaching, new to our school and was willing to try different approaches and to do almost



anything to motivate and engage his students. Moving into the middle school years, my memories are more lucid. The hands-on activities I experienced in my elementary years continued through this phase and as I took the opportunity to speak to Mr. R. in the present, it became apparent that this was not by accident, but by design. At the time of his arrival, unbeknownst to me, the school was at the brink of being closed because the student population had dwindled to under twenty students. As I spoke to him about that time he revealed some interesting insights that I never had access to before from my perspective as a student. He told me that together with the other teacher on staff, my mother, they formulated a deliberate plan to consciously focus their efforts on creating a learning environment that was student-centered, engaging and fun (personal communication, November 23, 2014). They felt without moving in this direction, the school would surely close as there were other options in town under the denominational school system that was in operation in the province (“The Collapse of Denominational Education: Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage,” n.d.; Williams & Press, 1992).

Again, a flood of memories bombard my senses when I recall this time. We were a multi-grade school and it was very natural for primary, elementary, intermediate and secondary students to work and play together. We never questioned that the bigger students looked out for the younger students, and as younger students, we always looked up to the bigger students as role models and heroes. It was in this structure that we were given opportunities to lead, explore and create within areas that had interest to us as individuals. This didn’t mean that the curriculum was abandoned or that we never did a worksheet or wrote a note. Mr. R. made it quite clear in our conversation that they understood there are many different ways to meet a curriculum outcome and as much as they could, the staff created opportunities for their students to try new things in meaningful ways. It was this philosophy that led to things like theme weeks for science, language arts and social studies. Science fairs stand out in my mind, and I remember the anticipation of waiting to start work on our projects, experiments and presentations. The whole week was dedicated to the project, and I remember a sense of ownership in the creative process of problem solving and experimenting and it wasn’t just for a grade, it was for the fair. A fair that we had a part in setting up and organizing. A fair where we presented our findings to our family, friends and other community members. The fair, as Mr. R. told me, was deliberately designed to engage and empower the students in a cross-curricular manner that had meaning (personal communication, November 23, 2014).

As my last conversation had poked a hole in my scheme about student population, I asked about the relationship between the small student population and the staff’s belief in their hands-on approach. I received a similar answer as before, that it wasn’t necessarily the small number. Although it may be easier to pull off with smaller numbers, it was the willingness of the staff to work together in formulating a vision, acting on that vision, and helping each other and the students along the way that made the difference (personal communication, November 23, 2014). As the student numbers began to rise and new staff were hired, a culture had already been cultivated at the school and these new members generally bought in and became collaborators in the process. It was a strange experience, almost surreal, talking to Mr. R. about his personal pedagogy, leadership and the professional learning community, or as he would like to say, the family learning

community that was developed during his time at the school. If I had a cross-reference checklist of things that I try to accomplish in my professional relationships and teaching practice to compare to what he described, all of the boxes would be checked. It is only becoming apparent now how influential these middle years were on my own personal pedagogy and approach to teaching and learning.

As I moved forward into new schools for my secondary and post-secondary education, I feel this sense of collaboration, community and family was lost. I remember pockets of creative and innovative teaching practices during these years, but for the most part they were practiced in isolation with what I felt was no real connection to the larger school communities that I found myself associated with. It wouldn't be until my teacher training that I would regain this sense of family and community within an educational sphere.

### **The Training Years**

One of the strategies I tried to use in that course was to let it be known from the beginning that I wasn't the expert in any of these areas, that you as the student brought your particular expertise and set of background life experiences and then my role was to bring that out through the variety of activities we did in class and the range of assignments to open your awareness and understanding of what was around you and perhaps, and more importantly, a better awareness of what skills and strengths you had and what students in the class had. It was trying to open up people to a better understanding of the potential they had (personal communication, November 15, 2014).

I give them [his students] a design problem, and I try to remind them that the solution will come over time. So, in more recent years I've been trying to let kids know it doesn't matter if your solution works or not, it's OK, just go back and try it again (personal communication, November 19, 2014).

Twenty strangers sit in a room. Computer monitors flicker, the silence broken occasionally by short bursts of small talk. Everyone seems anxious, nervous almost, or maybe it's just me. This is the scene that flashes through my mind as I remember the Faculty of Education's Technology Education cohort gathering for the first time in the summer of 2002. As a small cohort, representing approximately ten percent of the entire Faculty's education class for that year, we were cast into a unique situation. Although I didn't know it at the time, this was the beginning of my induction into a close knit community of educators that spanned my home province and beyond. Not only a group of diverse educators, with a wide variety of teaching styles, approaches and pedagogies, but also a group which had developed a culture based on students constructing knowledge and developing skills through problem solving and collaboration. Our little group would also grow very close over the coming semesters and the sense of family that emerged was very reminiscent of my early educational experiences. It was here that I began to examine the other side of the educational coin, what did it mean to teach and who would I be as a teacher?

It was in that same room that I heard the word constructivism for the first time. It was also in that room that I learned about the design process and the idea that failure and re-design were integral to the learning process. Mr. W. was an instructor during that time, and in a recent conversation he reminded me of those early days. He shared with me that the problem-solving approach of technology education in Newfoundland and Labrador continues to overlap with other areas of the curriculum he currently teaches. As a teacher, it's alright to let your students fail, if they know they can always start fresh and that everything we do doesn't come down to a final mark or grade (personal communication, November 19, 2014). The idea that solutions to problems take time to develop and that our initial thinking may only lead to more questions is paramount in the pedagogy of technology education within my local context. It is guiding principles such as these that helped shape my teacher training experience.

In that room with us was another individual. An individual who wasn't directly tasked with teaching us about technology education, but was nonetheless in a position to guide and mentor. Over the years I've been able to keep in contact with Mr. B. and many of the ideas sparked by our many conversations have stayed with me. While taking Mr. B's environmental education courses, the idea of what we would now call differentiated instruction came into play. Mr. B. never looked at the class as a homogenous group capable of completing the exact same outcomes, and he would push people to their limits. If that meant a biology major did something different than an art major, so be it (personal communications, November 15, 2014). In a recent conversation and as articulated in the quote above, Mr. B. reminded me that he never expected anyone to view him as the expert, rather it was important that the expertise be developed from our collective strengths. This idea of socially constructed knowledge and collaboration is something that I try to incorporate into my practice on a daily basis, whether it's at the intermediate or post-secondary level.

Looking back, the things I took away from my training that had the most value to me were directly connected to similar moments in my early education. I hadn't realized it yet, but the ideas and values that I had experienced and were becoming a part of me were about to collide with another reality.

### **The Teaching Years**

I think kids learn by doing and that they have to be engaged and you can't do unto children and you can't do unto adults, you have to connect things and make them authentic for them and you have to be engaging. [Teachers need to be] guiding [students] and being there to facilitate and helping them learn how to ask questions and how to find the answers to those questions rather than us always providing the perfect question and then the way to get to the perfect answer, because I don't think there is any such thing (personal communication, November 20, 2014).

"Fuck you then, bitch!" The words still ring in my ears. I can still see the hatred in his eyes, and hear the venom in his voice as he slammed his fist into the steel door frame

over and over again, just inches from my face. Just minutes before, I was supervising students in my school's learning resource center computer lab when I inadvertently derailed this young man's plans of perpetrating an act of violence against another student. My simple statement that he wasn't on the list and that he'd have to go to one of the other assigned areas of the school was all it took to shift his focus from the other student to me (School Discipline Report, 2004). This is one of many defining moments in my early teaching career and graphically illustrates the root of an internal conflict that was growing inside me as I struggled to find my footing as a new teacher. Although this incident wasn't directly related to a class, it cemented a sense of chaos that surrounded me and sharply delineated that I might not be prepared for this career.

Many new teachers don't have the skills to deal with classroom management or behavioural issues in general, and I was no exception (Doyle, 1985; Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). The contrast between what I wanted to do, and what I could do because of a lack of skill in this area, was causing me to experience what I would now consider to be a moment of cognitive dissonance.

As a new teacher trying to fit into an established school culture, this internal conflict began to grow. At the time, I was teaching primarily intermediate science and the dominant form of instruction at the school was transmissive. Although, at the time, I appreciated this instructional approach's emphasis on classroom management, it wasn't satisfying for the students or me. It was very difficult to think of doing anything different in a classroom setting. In my other role as learning resource teacher, I was in the middle of leading a multi-class project-based unit of study in language arts that incorporated problem solving, technology integration, group work, and creativity through a wide range of knowledge representation and student synthesis. This was in stark contrast to my classroom teaching and, based on my experiences as a student, I definitely felt more comfortable with the project-based approach.

I had the opportunity to speak to a former colleague that worked with me in those early years in an attempt to isolate some of these thoughts and the origins of my hands-on student centered approach to teaching. Mrs. P. was a guidance counselor at my school early in my career, and later moved to the role of principal. During our conversation she recalled a moment that crystalizes the experiences described above. I had come to speak to her about my class and she told me that during my visit I was very unsettled by the fact that I couldn't move in a direction that was more in line with engaging students in meaningful learning. At that time, the culture of the school remained very traditional and she believed I felt trapped by student behaviour and professional peer-pressure to conform to the status quo of instructional expectations (personal communication, November 20, 2014). Through this discussion I came to the realization that I wasn't trying to fight the status quo. I was simply searching for a way to align my teaching practice with my experiences as a student, but in doing so I was going against the predominant cultural grain of my school community. In the context of this inquiry her interpretation seems very plausible and helped close a gap in my personal pedagogy narrative.

This all brings me back to the questions of who I am as a teacher and what it means to teach, something that I've struggled with for my entire professional career. As I move forward in my career it has taken on another angle: What does it mean to be an educational researcher? Where do I find myself within the never-ending spectrum of paradigms and how will this influence my inquiry, not only for my dissertation, but for the rest of my career? Heavy-laden questions indeed, an almost impossible task for someone barely six months into a doctoral program. Taking the time to think through how I arrived at this moment has been challenging. Many of the experiences and perceptions that helped build this narrative have been floating freely in my subconscious with no real anchor point. It has only been through this concerted effort that I have been able to connect the dots in an attempt to understand my perspective on teaching and learning. Having a greater understanding of my perspective gives me a compass for charting my course as an educational researcher.

### **Self-Analysis of Personal Pedagogy**

Memory is a tricky subject and some would argue that it is not a good source of data or knowledge. I would counter this assumption with the premise that without memory there is no knowledge. Audi (2010) contends that without memory we could not recall past events or shape perceptions of events, as they would only exist in the present moment. It is important to understand the difference between believing something happened and recalling something that actually happened (Audi, 2010). This is why I thought it important to have conversations with people who have shared experiences with me, to mitigate the possibility of constructing imaginary moments.

The auto-ethnographical narrative presented above crystalizes several critical points in my educational journey, but they are still only a fraction of the experiences that have brought me to an understanding of my personal pedagogy. Taking a critical stance on the experiences outlined above, I can see patterns emerging that have affected my development as an educator. These moments hold meaning for me and highlight patterns that have been re-enforced over time. Repeatedly, the ideas of student-centered, hands-on learning emerged from my memory and conversations. The idea of students exploring, creating, participating, and finding their own way in a supportive environment also emerge as key points. With these things in mind, it would be tempting to categorize myself as an adherent of any number of learning theories with a student focus. Multiple intelligences, social constructivism, mastery learning, expansive learning or inquiry-based learning fit nicely, but I believe would be artificial and too confining.

As a litmus test, I even went so far as to ask several current and former colleagues how they would describe my teaching philosophy. I asked via email and only told them it was for a self-comparison and didn't elaborate or ask any leading questions. Phrases such as: student driven, student centered, holistic approach, inclusive classroom, authentic learning experiences, meaningful curriculum, team approach, interactive, and all students are participants emerged (personal communication, December 1, 2014; November 22, 2014; November 23, 2014). These phrases seem to mirror the experiences explored through my auto-ethnographical narrative. With this added layer of perspective, it would

be even easier to pin-point my place on a continuum of teaching and learning theories, but I refuse. What I believe is closer to my perception of reality is that I try, and often times fail, to treat each student I encounter as a complex and unique individual. Within this context I hope I will have the opportunity to help, not hinder, my students in their pursuit of understanding the world in which they live. In trying to live out the above statement, I find myself constantly searching for diverse ways of reaching my goal, and in this way I reject the idea of compartmentalizing my personal pedagogy into any discrete category. It is from this mindset, shaped by countless personal experiences, that has brought me to the question of who I will be as an educational researcher.

### **Becoming an Educational Researcher**

Now I find myself in a quandary. In rejecting the idea of placing myself into a pre-defined teaching paradigm I must face the fact that at some point in my doctoral studies I will be required to define and justify my position within an educational research paradigm. While I feel comfortable, based on my experience as a student and teacher, situating myself within a paradigm, further situating myself within the continuum of methodologies and methods will be difficult at this point. I have yet to define the inquiry of my dissertation and feel hesitant to move beyond defining my philosophical underpinnings, as moving beyond this point without a clear area of inquiry would be an exercise in futility. Futile in the sense that by pre-defining my methods I may unintentionally restrict the reach and scope of inquiry. Through this reflexive exercise I have come to think that it would be better for the inquiry to inform the methodology. With this premise in mind and at this particular point in my development as an educational researcher, I would feel comfortable placing myself on the educational research paradigm as a pragmatic participatory researcher.

Pragmatic in the sense that I have no problem in the possibility of actively mixing methods in the attempt to develop a problem-solving, action-oriented inquiry process as outlined by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011), I find value in this idea because I have little interest in being an outsider and would rather be an invested active participant within the context of inquiry. Levin and Greenwood's (2011) statements that “pragmatism builds a direct link between theory and praxis.” and “reflection proceeds from acting in a real context, reflecting on results, and then acting again” (p. 29), reinforce my interpretation of the practical and grounded implications of subscribing to a pragmatic paradigm. The interwoven nature of theory and praxis is a foundational component of my self-conceptualization as an educational researcher and complements a participatory world view.

To subscribe to the participatory paradigm is to acknowledge that everyone within a particular context needs to be involved in the project being undertaken and that the knowledge created is communal (Dryden-Miller, Kral, Maguire, Noffke, & Sabhlok, 2011). To be more specific, Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) outline that ontologically and epistemologically reality and knowledge are co-created within a value laden context. Moving back into the pragmatic side of my self-conceptualization these ideas generally fit within my worldview, but I have difficulty with the ontological stance as strictly



outlined by Lincoln et al., (2011). I am uncomfortable with the idea that reality is completely co-created through social interactions and interpretations. This admission is a crystallization of an internal conflict that continues to grow as I seek to find myself as an educational researcher. At this point, I feel much more comfortable with the idea that there is a reality, but this reality is subject to our value laden interpretations (Krauss, 2005). I think this struggle is indicative of the process and may never end as I continue to grow as a researcher.

The ideas outlined above represent things that have value to me, they have axiological significance in this context. Perry suggests (as cited in Hart, 1971) that values stem from interest and that there is no value unless there is reciprocation between an object and an interest-taking subject. In this case the object would be the ideas surrounding participatory pragmatic research and I am the interest taker. If I see no value in this approach, the object, it would have no meaning and therefore my interest will be lost. It is my hope to develop enough self-reflective capacity to recognize the value of a particular approach and the ability to move to a more appropriate framework of inquiry when needed. Of more practical importance at this time is how my placement on the educational research continuum will affect the focus of my future inquiries.

### **Possible Areas of Inquiry**

Within the auto-ethnographical context and philosophical research framework that I've sketched out through this reflexive exercise, it has become clear that my possible areas of inquiry are far reaching. More specifically, many areas of inquiry within the public K-12 education system resonate with my personal pedagogy and educational research leanings. Student-centered approaches to learning, authentic learning, teacher collaboration, student and teacher engagement, inclusive educational practices, shared leadership, and multi-aged student relationships are just a few of the areas in which I could develop research inquiries. Regardless of the specific area of inquiry, I will attempt to engage in the process from a participatory lens in the hope of gaining a full and rich understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon in question.

### **Conclusion**

The creation of my auto-ethnographical narrative through a process of personal and shared recollection has been both empowering and liberating. Not only has this given me the opportunity to critically think about and reflect upon the impact my lived experiences have had on shaping my world view in relation to education, it has also enabled me to focus on my emerging role as an educational researcher. Synthesizing this narrative has not been an easy task as recalling and reliving some of these experiences have been emotional. However, it was only through this creative process that I was able to construct a narrative that brought meaning to these seemingly isolated events. All of the experiences that were a part of the narrative had a common theme: The idea of actively participating in the learning process. This idea held true when I was an elementary, middle or university student, it held true when I was a beginning teacher learning my craft, and it still holds true for me now as I delve into the realm of researcher. At the end

of this paper, I am convinced that descriptions can only shed light on the surface of phenomena and that if I continue down this path I must remain true to my educational heritage and immerse myself in my area of inquiry regardless of the challenges this may present. Do I still want to be an educational researcher? After analyzing this narrative, I'm still unsure of my answer, but like all good stories, hopefully this one will leave the audience wanting to know more.

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## **Chapter 7: Window**

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*Time* magazine asks “Is God dead?”

And, Dad, you wonder.

Digesting

*The United Church Observer*,

Buber’s philosophy,

*Modern European Poetry*,

*The Screwtape Letters*.

A workingman, writing a „window“ early death.

Decades pass your tattered poems mute scrawled on

graph paper, foolscap, manila,

*Safeway* and *Super Value* writing tablets, used envelopes,

*Travel Lodge* notepaper, orange *Daily Colonist* stop

delivery notices, a *Miracle Sandwich Spread* box top.

Your window, my gift,

my professorship, your dream.

### **Inspiration and Biography**

Inquiring through and with poetry enables me to reflect on my relationship with my father after his death. This poem focuses on my father’s desire to belong to the world of ideas, and the legacy he left me. A workingman who died at a young age more than 40 years ago, he passionately pursued knowledge and justice through philosophy and poetry. Although he prized higher education, for financial reasons he was unable to attend university. He wrote poetry and essays as a way to process his experiences, and his

writings are now part of my research. They enable me to know him better and to link my early home experiences to the world of higher education. I am an Associate Professor (arts education) at Memorial University. I am interested in how this inquiry deepens my thinking about research, writing and teaching. Through the lens of poetry, I have been able to see beyond the received family history of who he was and get a more layered and nuanced picture not only of him, but also of the social forces that shaped him and in turn shaped me as a researcher and social activist.

The poem has been published as part of a paper:

McLeod, H., & Ruebsaat, G. (2014). "The Receiver No Longer Holds the Sound"  
Parents, Poetry and the Voices We Create in the World. *Education*, 20(2), 27-49.  
<http://ineducation.ca/ineducation/article/view/182>

The poem is also under consideration for publication:

McLeod, H. In Kathleen Quinlan (Ed.) *How Higher Education Feels: Poetry that Illuminates the Experiences of Learning, Teaching and Transformation*.

## **Chapter 8: The Dual Challenges of Academia: Teaching and Research**

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When people know I am a professor they often ask what I teach. This seems to me the wrong question. The question should be, what is your area of research? In the public's mind, professors are teachers because that is the dimension of an academic role that is most visible. I cannot think of any academic who was appointed to a position in a university based on his or her teaching record. It is one's research, or potential for research, that is of particular interest to appointment committees. What distinguishes university professors from teachers in other tertiary educational institutions is that they are expected to undertake research and publish papers in learned journals, write books, present papers at international conferences and generally contribute to the development of knowledge in their fields – as well as teach. Managing the research and teaching aspects of academic life can be a challenge and, to be successful, teaching should be informed by research. In the initial years of academic life this dual relationship can be difficult to manage.

### **My Academic Journey**

My career as a writer began with a punishment. I was punished for not taking my swimsuit to school in grade five in New Zealand, preventing me from participating in the class swimming lesson in the school's pool. I was nine years old and conscious that I was much thinner than my peers. The last thing I wanted to do was remove my shirt in front of the girls in the class. The punishment was to remain in the classroom by myself and to write a story for the teacher by the time the rest of the class returned from the pool. While my classmates were learning to swim, I learned to write. I had a free hand in writing what I liked. I had read about the great fire of London in 1666 and decided to write a poem about it. I remember it started "From house to house the fire spread, great buildings fell and shattered." Unfortunately, the teacher glanced at this epic poem, spanning three pages of rhyming verse, when she returned with the class and then crumpled and put in the bin. She did say, rather suspiciously, that there had already been a poem written on this topic and asked if I had copied it. No, I created my own poem about the great fire of London and wished I could keep it. I did not like to retrieve it from the bin under the teacher's desk. Next day I had somehow forgotten my swimwear and towel once again (actually my mother had packed them in my school bag but I pretended they were not there) and had to stay in the classroom and write another story. This time I wrote about the feelings of my cricket bat being taken out of the closet and oiled and then used for matches over the summer. Other stories and poems followed on a daily basis. I enjoyed having the freedom to write about whatever I wanted and the teacher each day glanced at my efforts and then binned what I had produced. Years later when I had children I used to write stories and create poems about mythical animals (a Chinese cat, a dog who could



climb trees) and today they are being re-told to my grandchildren. In between these creative writing periods, my life has been spent as an academic in universities in New Zealand, Australia and Canada with periods also in the United Kingdom. What I gained from my early life in elementary school was the confidence to write and the knowledge that I could produce stories and poems. It was a long time after my childhood writing until I published my first paper.

While my creative writing began as a punishment, my academic career began with a misconception. As an undergraduate student of the humanities and later as a high school teacher, I thought academic life looked like an appealing although somewhat curious way to make a living – reading books and then talking about them in lectures and tutorials with students. I did not realize that academics were also expected to write books, publish articles in learned journals, review and edit manuscripts and generally contribute to knowledge in their fields of expertise. Writing for publication is a key part of an academic's life, but it is not always the most visible aspect of it.

Almost all my working life has been spent teaching and engaging in research in universities. This necessitated a different way of writing from what I did in my childhood and youth. Academic work involved writing for serious publications that would, hopefully, be read by my peers. In spite of my interest in creative writing as an elementary and high school student, writing for academic publication was daunting. My first academic appointment, in the mid-seventies, was for a fixed term as a Junior Lecturer in Education. I was in my twenties, much younger than anyone else in the Education department of the New Zealand University, and aware that all my colleagues appeared to be successfully writing for academic journals. Writing for publication was, not infrequently, a topic of conversation over coffee and lunch breaks. How, I wondered, did one get a paper published? I read reprints of journal articles in my field as well as related fields and began to acquire a scholarly library of books and journals. The more I read, the more I became aware that I was in a university appointment and had not yet published a single paper. It was worrying. What could I write about? I was still completing a graduate degree and my thesis was far from complete. As well as working on my degree, I had lectures to write and to deliver to students who all seemed to be much older than I was and who were mostly teachers. Keeping one lecture ahead of the students was a challenge that made writing for publication difficult.

### **Challenge One: Learning to Write a Lecture**

My career began with an opportunity towards the end of my Master's degree year through an appointment in a different university. The position was for a fixed term and was designed to give potential young academics an opportunity to teach while completing their degrees on a full salary with benefits. It was exciting and different from the two years I had spent as a high school teacher in a large city school. I was given a small office in the Education Department, located on the top floor of a gothic, ivy-covered building and a timetable that only required me to teach one day a week, for two consecutive hours. My workload looked very light after being a high school teacher, but this was deceptive. Nobody gave me any ideas how to prepare and deliver a lecture, but the elderly head of

department advised me that this university had high standards and that students would expect a lot of rigor in my lectures. I had never written a lecture and did not have any idea how to go about preparing one. The thought of asking a colleague was out of the question - I was in awe of them and, to be honest, in awe of many of my students, most of whom were teachers with far more experience in classrooms than my two years. How could I write a lecture that would meet the expectations of the head of my new department, my colleagues and the third year students in my assigned Sociology of Education course?

The first challenge facing a newly appointed academic is the urgency of preparing lectures. It is likely that most new appointees will be more familiar with research than university teaching, but courses have to be developed and lectures prepared and delivered at appointed times. The writing of lectures is an important matter for new academic appointees and for many, including the writer, this was a hurdle to be overcome before anything else, including writing for publication, could be considered. Formal lectures were expected of me. Some of the older professors wore academic gowns while they delivered their lectures. One even wore a black gown to lecture to his solitary graduate student. My first lecture was a terrifying experience. I did not own an academic gown and had very little idea whether or not I had enough content. I knew from my days as a student that those professors and lecturers who read their lectures were almost always tedious and boring. I knew that for my own self-confidence as a Junior Lecturer I had to write a lecture in full, even if I spoke from it rather than read it to the students.

My initial lectures were the outcome of earnestness, anxiety and over-preparation. My lectures had too much content, too many references and they were not well organized. I was very self-conscious about my age and grateful that my students took my lectures seriously, in spite of my lack of classroom experience. My weekly time with the students for two consecutive hours was supposed to be in the form of a lecture, not a discussion group. I am sure, on reflection, other professors had discussions in their two-hour time slots with students, but it did not occur to me to do so. I kept thinking about the head of department's expectation that my lectures would be rigorous and I interpreted this to mean sociological theory from which to organize and interpret schools, teaching and learning. I could have brought in my students' classroom experiences to complement my rather theoretical lectures, but failed to do so. Nobody complained and I hoped my lectures would satisfy the head of my department and justify his appointment of me from another university.

Before the end of my fixed term initial academic appointment in New Zealand, I emigrated with my wife and infant daughter to a tenure-track position in an Australian university. In my new Australian lectureship I had four new courses to teach and many faculty meetings to attend. By this time I had some understanding of how a lecture should be prepared, but in this university I was expected to lecture to first year students for a whole academic year. Unlike my first academic position in New Zealand, which required two consecutive hours a week lecturing to 30 third year students, the Australian faculty expected me to take over the first year course called "Education and Society" and to make sure it was relevant to Australian students. This seemed sensible but I did not know

a lot about Australian education or Australian society and struggled in my first year to meet these requirements.

Writing a first year lecture to be delivered to hundreds of students proved to be different from writing a lecture for senior undergraduates or for graduates. I had every possible advantage in writing first year lectures in my new Australian position: I had been a competitive public speaker and debater as a schoolboy so I was used to standing up and talking in front of people. I had completed a course of teacher education by this time, and had both high school and university teaching experience. Nevertheless, I struggled with my first year lectures in spite of these advantages. I wondered how to make my presentations more organized and interesting and came to a surprising conclusion. In my anxiety I realized my lectures were overloaded with content and were delivered at a fast clip. I decided that in future, after preparing first year lectures, I would then reduce the content to a one-page outline of key points under a few headings and sub-headings and give a copy of this to each student as they took their seats in the lecture theatre. I have followed this approach in my lecture writing at all levels ever since. The key points have to be stated clearly and a coherent structure of the topic must be evident to students as the lecture is delivered. By reducing lectures to a single page, considerable discipline was self-imposed that enabled me to talk to key points rather than trying to keep to a script. I still found it necessary to write lectures in full, but the single page outline / handout, enabled students to follow the lecture, organize their note-taking and made for a more relaxed presentation from the lectern.

A lesson I learned from my first two years as an academic (when I was, in fact, a graduate student at the Masters level) was that a good lecture had to be like a good news story. The key points and purpose of the lecture had to be provided in the opening paragraph and this focus had to structure the content. To be able to write a lecture this way a professor has to know his or her subject matter very well and be able to defend if necessary, the position taken on a given topic. In my initial years of writing lectures I did not know my subject matter well enough to be able to do this.

The preparation of lectures will always be an important and time-consuming aspect of academic life. In my early years of academic life in New Zealand and Australian universities this was by far the most time consuming aspect of my job and I could not help but think of myself primarily as a teacher. It was a surprise therefore to hear a colleague from another faculty in my Australian university who had received negative feedback for his less than satisfactory lectures claim “these are research positions, not teaching positions.” Nobody, he declared, was ever appointed to a university faculty as a teacher. Academics, he believed, were appointed for their research output or research potential. In the early years of my academic journey the preparation and delivery of lectures was demanding and unrelentingly time-consuming and I wondered how this colleague could claim they were not teaching jobs. As I moved further along my academic journey, I came to the conclusion that he was right – academic positions are primarily about research, but teaching is important too.

## **Challenge Two: Research and Publication**

The next step in my academic career was the preparation of a paper for a national conference. This involved standing in front of my peers and informing them about my fledgling research project. This was even more worrying than writing lectures for students who were mostly more experienced teachers than their lecturer. My first conference paper was written for The Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand at a meeting at the University of Auckland (Stevens, 1974). It was difficult standing and talking about my research in front of an audience of seasoned researchers and I felt as though my career was on the line. The presentation went smoothly and I fielded a few questions afterwards and sat down with relief. Actually, writing a formal conference paper was more straightforward than preparing my initial lectures.

I realized that all my colleagues were writing about their research but I had, at this early stage of my career, nothing to write about and therefore nothing to publish. During my brief career as a high school teacher before my initial academic appointment there had been major changes to the national social studies curriculum. I knew a little about this, and at the university I was lecturing in the Sociology of Education, a not entirely unrelated field of education. I decided to write about the sociological implications of the new social studies being implemented in New Zealand schools (Stevens, 1975). The journal I wrote for was not peer-reviewed. It was a publication for high school teachers in New Zealand and articles in it were short – two to three thousand words. I wrote my first article for this journal and sent it off to the editor and waited for a response. To my relief it was accepted and was published a few months later. While this was not a scholarly journal and publication in it was not a major scholarly achievement, it was, in my academic career, a breakthrough. Just seeing my name in print confirmed that I was able to write for publication. My next article was more academic in nature and was published in a minor peer-reviewed journal in Australia (Stevens, 1979).

After four years lecturing in the Australian university and getting tenure there, I returned to another academic position in New Zealand. There were three new courses to develop and teach and I envied my colleagues who all seemed so established with their courses with reservoirs of lectures to draw upon. A big difference between the Australian and New Zealand universities was that whereas I taught almost every day in the former, all my teaching was concentrated on Mondays in the latter. I had four free days in which to write, plus weekends. After a couple of months in the new position in New Zealand the head of department called in to my office and asked what I had published since I had been there. This was embarrassing. I had not published anything at all but I told him of my plans. He smiled and left. This was a serious research establishment and I was expected to be a productive scholar, not in the area of teacher education as in Australia, but in the academic study of education. This was subsequently reinforced with the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor who requested all faculty to forward to him, for his perusal, each and every publication as soon as they appeared in print. Each week, appended to the university's newsletter, the Vice Chancellor listed, department-by-department, the publications he had received and from whom. He then opened an area of the library where every article, book and even book review he had received was

displayed for all to see and this was updated weekly. It became embarrassingly clear to the whole university community which departments and the individuals within them were productive in a scholarly sense, and those that were not. It was very important for one's name and publications to appear regularly in the Vice Chancellor's lists. This practice put faculty across the university under pressure to publish scholarly research and to have it listed and then made available for scrutiny by colleagues and students. It got worse with the introduction of quarterly reviews of publications. The Vice Chancellor (or President) would have agreed with my Australian colleague in believing the primary role of an academic was research and publication.

For a young academic the pressure to undertake research and to publish it could, at times, be overwhelming. Apart from writing a graduate dissertation, the issue facing young academics is finding a field of research that is of long-term interest and in which one hopes to establish a personal niche and make a name for oneself. If the personal niche is to be sustainable, it has to be grounded in a deep interest in and knowledge of the subject. In mid career I realized that my childhood on a sheep and cattle farm in New Zealand, accompanied by attendance at a small rural school and, for a time, being a full time student of the New Zealand Correspondence School, was my academic apprenticeship. The focus of my research for most of my academic life has been the provision of education in rural and remote areas. I undertake research in the inter-related areas of rural schooling, distance education and e-learning. The early years of my academic life were spent undertaking research in several different and unrelated areas of education, all of which I found interesting, but it was not until I began a tenure-track position in an Australian university that I discovered my academic roots and my academic *raison-d'être*.

Not long before my arrival in Australia a federal government report identified several areas of disadvantage in that country's education system, one of which was the provision of rural schooling. I was encouraged by the Dean of Education to consider undertaking research in rural areas in the central north of Australia and in due course, was funded for this undertaking. For the rest of my time in Australia and upon my return to a New Zealand university, rural schools, teachers, students and their issues became the centre of my academic life. I undertook fieldwork in rural schools in several regions of New Zealand, from the far north of the country to the far south. In Australia my research focused on extreme geographic isolation in the states of Queensland and Western Australia. I wrote academic papers and attended conferences regularly in both countries. When it was time for a full year sabbatical leave I elected to move to the University of Victoria in British Columbia where I was fortunate to be asked to help the Dean respond to recent criticism leveled at all universities in that province. A recent Canadian report had pointed out that not enough was done to prepare British Columbian teachers for small rural schools in the north, located far from the lower mainland. At the Dean's suggestion I reviewed a Knowledge Network television course called *Education in the Small Community* and then was paid to revise and update it together with a book on rural education for students. In the course of this project I underwent an academic transformation. I entered Canada as a rural educator and left six months later as a rural and distance education specialist. The time I spent in British Columbia opened my eyes



to the possibility of distance learning and I became very interested in its applications in rural communities.

Soon after my return to New Zealand the Internet was introduced to education and it did not take long for me to realize that this could advance both rural and distance learning. At a memorable meeting at a small rural school in the South Island of New Zealand, a (pre-Internet) proposal was considered whereby it would link with nine other rural schools in the region using dedicated telephone lines to connect interactive white boards. Students could thereby be taught together using speaker-phones and white boards in a small range of specialist classes such as economics, Japanese language and agriculture. The idea of schools teaching and learning collaboratively was a new one and when the Internet was introduced to this successful rural education experiment it led to the creation of virtual classes and new ways of teaching, learning and the organization of schools. I had found what became a long-term research interest for which my personal background in a rural farming community was an ideal apprenticeship. Soon I was discussing the problems of networking small schools with a colleague in Akureyri in the north of Iceland (Stevens, 2002), and at the University of Helsinki where research was under way to connect small schools in the far north of that country (Stevens, Kynaslahti & Salminen, 1996). Later this work briefly connected with Russian scholars at Moscow State University where the teaching of physics via satellite was being organized in small schools in Siberia (Sandalov, Shkhareva, Barry, Piper & Stevens, 1999). It was exciting, challenging and above all, collegial, as in Iceland, Finland, Russia and New Zealand, we were all trying to solve the educational and policy issue of providing extended learning opportunities for students who attended small schools located far from major centres of population. The final part of my academic journey was my appointment to a Research Professorship at Memorial University of Newfoundland as the Industry Canada Chair of TeleLearning and Rural Education. In this capacity I have continued and expanded my research interests in small schools, distance learning and e-learning in Canada and worked with a wide variety of people across the province.

### **Lessons from my Academic Journey**

Now that my academic journey is almost over it is appropriate to reflect on it. I feel fortunate in having had such a long and interesting career in universities in several countries, meeting many students and having cultured and intelligent colleagues. I have now been teaching in universities for over forty years, but when I reflect on my life in academia, I think some things could have been better, particularly in the early years.

Unlike most of my colleagues in New Zealand, Australia and Canada, I entered full time work in faculties of Education at a very young age with only two years of school teaching experience preceding my first academic appointment. I was afraid to ask colleagues for advice about writing and delivering lectures, thinking they may consider me incompetent and not worthy of tenure. I had to work out my own way of writing lectures and find my own way into print. I needed a mentor and did not have anyone to turn to. It would have been very helpful if a colleague had attended some of my early lectures and provided critical comment on them. A lesson I learnt is *not to be afraid to ask colleagues for help*



*in organizing and getting feedback on lectures and on drafts of journal articles.* I did not do this and so led a rather solitary, anxious and monastic academic life in my early years.

In my Australian appointment, when my main teaching role was to lecture to a full year first year course, a friendly but critical mentor would have been particularly helpful. I have noted above that I had every possible advantage for taking first year lectures with over two hundred students, but in spite of this, writing and delivering a formal hour long lecture was difficult. Content had to be well organized and presented in an interesting, informative and, at times, humorous way. I had to work out how to do this because delivering a formal lecture to over two hundred students is different from the more relaxed senior undergraduate or graduate class with far fewer students. I did not know how to ask for professional advice and none was forthcoming. *A lesson I learnt is that first year lectures are often the most demanding teaching a faculty member will engage in.* To be successful, the organization, timing and delivery of material is critical. The first year lecture is not a forum in which to explore details, but to provide a panoramic view of one's field, and, ideally, to be both informative and entertaining. To do this it is necessary to know the discipline well and to speak about it with authority. In all the universities to which I have been appointed, very few colleagues enjoyed lecturing to tiered masses of students. Some would do anything to avoid it so it was common for newly appointed faculty to be presented with large introductory courses. In my third academic appointment I felt that I was not so much teaching as making public appearances in front of in excess of four hundred students several times each week. Large first year classes can be daunting for young academics. In my experience, they require very intensive preparation.

There is tension inherent in academic life between teaching and research. To be an effective academic competence in both domains is necessary. Teaching and research are linked by one's ability to communicate. A good university lecture will be informed by research, including a professor's own publications that contribute the body of knowledge in one's discipline. It is necessary to be able to communicate ideas effectively – to write interesting and stimulating lectures – as well as develop interesting insights through one's research and publications. *A further lesson I learnt, although it took years to understand it, is that teaching and research in universities are inextricably intertwined.* As a young academic I was unsure of the relationship between research and its publication, and teaching. An academic appointee with no body of research of his or her own, will probably not deliver interesting and insightful lectures. These days such a person will probably not be able to remain in academia.

A further tension in academic life is the assumption one is an expert in one's field. Academics have very privileged lives – reading, writing and engaging in research with intelligent people. The expectation that one is an expert in one's field can be daunting. The longer I have been in academia and the more papers I have published, the less expert I seem to feel in my subject. I don't know why this is the case, but it is. As well as writing books and peer-reviewed journal articles, I have written for newspapers and popular publications and spoken on radio and been interviewed on television. I know that my views are not the last word on the subject. *An important lesson as one's career*

*develops, is to be humble.* Any field of academia is constantly evolving. Even if you are continuously contributing to your field through research publications, there are always going to be areas of it about which you are not going to be knowledgeable. I felt awkward and a little embarrassed on the few occasions on which I have been described as an expert. There are so many dimensions of my field about which I do not have a deep understanding, that I remain conscious of my lack of expertise.

It is very different teaching in a Canadian university after spending decades in New Zealand and Australian institutions. After five years as a research professor in Canada, not being required to teach at all, I approached a Canadian academic in New Zealand and asked if he found the local students different from what he had experienced in North America. He replied that if he went in to a lecture theatre in a New Zealand university and said “good morning” the students would probably write this down on their lecture pads. If he went into a Canadian lecture room, students would expect to participate in the proceedings. While New Zealand and Australian universities these days encourage diverse teaching styles, I found teaching in a Canadian university at the conclusion of my term as a research professor very different from the way I engaged students in the other two countries. My Canadian students did not expect formal lectures and did not seem to appreciate them when I tried this way of teaching. I quickly established that my Canadian students were indeed quick to engage in discussion and were skilled in collaborative work. This led to some very lively learning that I found myself looking forward to each week. I would not have dared try this in my early years as an academic in New Zealand. I had not been taught this way and did not know anyone who used collaborative teaching and learning that is common in Canada. *A lesson here is that one can learn a lot from one’s students.*

### **Final Thoughts**

I have concluded after four decades teaching and undertaking research in universities that I largely agree with that Australian colleague who stated that we are primarily researchers. The problem is, we are more than this. Academics are usually expected to teach, engage in research and also contribute to university administration and to the cultural and intellectual life of their communities and societies. Many people can manage two of these requirements but it is difficult to be active as a teacher, researcher and administrator. Looking back over my career, particularly my most prolific years of research and publication, I was not much different from the monks who occupied cells in medieval universities in which they illuminated manuscripts. The difference in the twenty first century is that the academic cells we occupy are electronic, with telephones, email, computers and the Internet. The production of books and scholarly papers is often lonely and exacting in contemporary electronic academic cells, just like the work of medieval monks in early universities. It can be difficult explaining to family and friends just what you do to earn a living. It can be difficult explaining that much of what you do is not the public dimension of academic life – making public appearances called lectures in front of hundreds of students several times a week – but working in solitude to complete manuscripts that will, hopefully, be published and contribute to knowledge in one’s discipline. Today, when people ask me what I teach, I still feel this is the wrong

question. It can be very difficult to explain academic life. It can be very public and very solitary. Nevertheless, for those considering an academic career opportunity, my advice is to seize it. There is no other life like it.

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## **Chapter 9: Our Academic Journeys as New Female University Administrators**

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One fundamental challenge facing higher education today is the development, attraction, and retention of extraordinary leaders (Rubin, 2004). Faculty leadership in academia is necessary to ensure “high-quality teaching, innovative curriculum, cutting-edge research, intellectual enrichment, student engagement, improved student outcomes, greater faculty citizenship, a more democratic environment, a campus more responsive to community needs, and other important outcomes” (Kezar et al., 2007, p. 21). However, there is little published research on the journeys of female academics who acquire leadership positions (Kleihauer, Stephens, & Hart, 2012). It is important for female leaders to share their challenges and tribulations since it can be “therapeutic, healing, and affirming” (Kawalilak & Groen, 2010, p. 6), especially for other women in pursuit of leadership roles in academia. We are two mid-career female academics who chose to take on new leadership roles and the purpose of this study is to explore our personal and professional journeys in these roles.

### **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

An academic leader or administrator is an academic who has taken on a management role such as chair, head, assistant/associate/vice dean or dean of an academic unit (Franken, Penny, & Branson, 2015; Peterson, 2015). Academic managers are traditionally elected by members of the faculty (Winter, 2009) and the positions are often rotating and temporary (Peterson, 2015). Because academic administrators tend to re-enter their previous faculty roles at some point, there is often an accompanying expectation that they continue their programs of research (Peterson, 2015). The workload of today’s academic administrators is considerable and has been associated with a significant amount of stress (Peterson, 2015).

Women are less likely to be in prominent academic leadership roles (Thanacoody et al., 2006) and the under-representation of women in decision-making positions has been highlighted as an area of specific importance in the higher education sector (European Commission, 2004). Understanding the experiences of successful female leaders in their journeys provides for effective learning, growth, and development for both the leaders

themselves and aspiring female academic administrators (Kleihauer, Stephens, & Hart, 2012; Madsen, 2010). Common factors that appear to contribute to successful female leaders include a strong family upbringing, spousal support, and excellent mentoring (Kleihauer, Stephens, & Hart, 2012). Using a resiliency framework (making positive adaptations in spite of serious threats or significant adversity to adaptation or development; Masten, 2001), we asked ourselves what factors in our lives made it possible for us to navigate our journeys into academic leadership.

## **Methodology**

In this study we used a modified version of duoethnography (Sawyer & Norris, 2013) to explore our journeys as post-tenure females in university faculty administrative positions. Duoethnography draws from autoethnography (Ellis, 1999), and currere (Pinar, 1994), and is a reflective, conversational approach to conducting qualitative research (Ceglowski & Makovsky, 2012). Similar to autoethnography which legitimatizes the researcher's use of her own experience and emphasizes subjectivity (Ellis, 1999), the purpose of duoethnography is to understand how different people experience a phenomenon differently given their own past experiences (Sawyer & Norris, 2009). Like autoethnography where the goal is "to tell a story that readers can enter and feel a part of" (Ellis, 1999, p. 674), the collegial conversation between the researcher-participants allows for the integration of the individual stories (Sawyer & Norris, 2009). Although duoethnographies are typically written in script-form where the participant-researchers are the characters (Sawyer & Norris, 2009), we chose to use a set of guiding questions to stimulate our conversation and provide structure to our dialogic exchange. Following convention, we used italics (Norris, Sawyer, & Lund, 2012) to present personal researcher-participant voice.

## **Context of Our Study**

Historian and philosopher R. G. Collingwood (1939, 1994) argued that past action can only be understood when we utilize all of our knowledge about the situation in which the actions took place. Hence, we must understand the historical context within which our stories unfolded. Lynn began her term as Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Programs and Research on 1 July 2008 and her term ended on 30 June 2013. Laurie began her term as Associate Dean, Graduate Studies & Research on 1 July 2011 and continues in this role until at least until 30 June 2016. However, our overlapping journeys into our roles as university administrators began prior to our appointments and are related to unfolding of events within our College and the larger university.

## **Institutional Context**

Our stories are set within a time of transition at the University of Saskatchewan and in the College of Education in particular. Beginning in 2003 and continuing into the present, the University of Saskatchewan set out to engage fully in integrated planning. Each College on campus was required to develop a "College Plan" that meshed with the University Plan and strategic directions. This began a time of heightened emphasis on research,

while retaining the Teacher–Scholar model in which faculty are expected to employ their research and scholarly work in their teaching of undergraduate and graduate students. This research emphasis became even more intense in 2011 when the University of Saskatchewan became a member of the group of research-intensive universities known now as the U15 (see <http://u15.ca/>). Along with the emphasis on research, the institutional planning process promoted heightened emphases on Aboriginal Education and engagement, enhancing the student experience through innovative undergraduate and graduate programming, and community engagement and outreach.

### **College of Education Context**

This time period also represented a time of transition(s) in the College of Education. A new Dean was brought into the College on July 1, 2003 with the directive to submit a College plan in the Fall of 2003.

A Systematic Program Review [SPR] of the undergraduate teacher education program was conducted in 2002 and the results were shared with faculty in February 2003. Some College Departments had also undergone graduate program reviews in 2003. Not only were programs examined during this time, resource deployment (human and financial) was also scrutinized. Results included a reduction in faculty teaching load from 6 to 5 one half course equivalents, rationalization of staff workloads, by examining what work needed doing and how, what work was done that was no longer required, and what work will need to be done in the future. [Note that similar examinations of graduate programs and campus wide human and financial resources were conducted in 2012 to 2013 in a process labeled “TransformUS”.]

Between 2002 and 2009, the demographics of the College of Education Faculty also changed dramatically. In 2002-2003, approximately 80% of the faculty in the College of Education were senior members (i.e., had served as a member of the College from 20 to 30 years), while 20% of the faculty were newcomers. By 2008/09 we had experienced a large number of faculty retirements, while many new faculty members had been hired. At that point in time, approximately 80% of faculty were newcomers, while 20% were senior members. With the campus wide TransformUs process, another demographic shift occurred with retirement packages offered to long serving faculty members. The College lost seven senior faculty members to this initiative in 2013-2014.

Between 2002 and 2011, the leadership team in the College also changed structure and complexion. At the beginning of this time period, the four-person team was primarily composed of male leaders, including the Dean and two Assistant Deans, with a female in the role of Associate Dean, Graduate Studies. By 2011 the all-female leadership team was reduced to three: The Dean, the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research and one Assistant Dean (this position was in process of transitioning to Associate Dean) related to undergraduate programming.



## **Impact of Larger Institutional Innovations**

Based on the recommendations of the external reviewers who participated in the 2002 - 2003 appraisal of our undergraduate program, we began to work on a redesign of this program. As we worked toward innovation in our undergraduate programming, there were significant changes to planning processes undertaken by the University of Saskatchewan at large. Integrated planning processes were perceived in some quarters as one aspect of the corporatization of the university and something of an intrusion into academic freedom. While these issues were not of major concern to the administrative team in the College of Education, it is possible that some faculty resistance to the efforts toward internal program innovation was related to their reactions to the new planning processes introduced by central administration of the university. Similarly, our College efforts to deepen our research culture including efforts to encourage inter-departmental collaborations involved a reorganization of staff which may have been seen by some faculty as a threat to the departmental structures desired by some faculty members.

It was also difficult to develop program coherence across disciplines in a departmentalized College. One of the innovative features of our undergrad program renewal efforts was the attempt to develop a cohesive and coherent program rather than a collection of courses. However, to achieve coherence we needed to develop our program using an interdisciplinary rather than a multidisciplinary approach, which proved to be a difficult task in our departmentalized College. Asking our four departments, Educational Administration, Educational Foundations, Educational Psychology and Special Education, and Curriculum Studies (each holding particular perspectives and expertise) to develop an integrated coherent undergraduate program can be likened to asking the Departments of Economics, Political Science, Philosophy, and Psychology to collaboratively develop a single, integrated and coherent undergraduate program. Likewise, and in conjunction with broader institutional initiatives, efforts in the College toward development of interdepartmental research teams and efforts to collaborate across departments in offering Master's programs and the design of an interdepartmental PhD were met with some suspicion and anxiety.

## **Our Dialogic Exchange**

**Where were you in your academic career when you made the jump into academic administration?**

**Lynn.** A year and a half after I was hired, the results of the SPR were shared with faculty and as a departmental representative on the Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC), I became intensely engaged in discussions around our response to the program review. When UPC decided to embark on a deep revision of the program, I became Chair of the Undergraduate Program Renewal Sub-Committee and over several years I worked alongside the Assistant Dean and other committee members to develop a series of actions plans that would take us toward a renewed undergraduate program. As part of our second College Plan, it was decided that a faculty member should be appointed to a position that would be responsible for

enhancing relationships and experiences of teacher candidates and alumni. A colleague was appointed as the first Director of Teacher Candidate & Alumni Affairs in 2006-2007 and when she took up an appointment at another university, I became the new Director, serving in this role until I became Assistant Dean in July 2008. While doing this work, I was, of course, also working toward tenure – which I received in 2008 - and promotion to Associate Professor, which I received in 2009. Unfortunately, with the way in which undergraduate program renewal was unfolding, I did not feel able to take time away for a sabbatical, which I could have applied for in 2008-2009.

**Laurie.** In my case, my first foray into academic administration came within four years of being hired (and prior to tenure) when I agreed to become the Graduate Chair of my Department. The opportunity to move into an Associate Dean's position came about for me during 2009-2010, two years after receiving tenure and the year after I received promotion to Associate Professor. I actually applied for the position and received it only to go on sabbatical for a year. I think it was helpful to have that sabbatical year immediately preceding my start as a new Associate Dean because it allowed me to set myself up for administration in a way: I tried to complete the supervision of a couple of students; I tried to set myself up with research studies that could carry me through my term without requiring me to seek additional external funding as a PI; and I developed a few manuscript ideas that I hoped to follow through on during my administrative term. So I felt like I was able to do both some house cleaning as well as house renovations prior to beginning my role. I officially started my administrative role as Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Research in my College in 2011-2012.

### **How did you decide to go down this path?**

**Lynn.** Although I had never envisioned myself as an administrator and I vocally resisted this idea - my commitment to undergraduate program renewal and graduate program invigoration prompted me to apply for the position when the incumbent indicated he was going to retire. I saw myself as an educator of educators. Based on my evolving understanding of best practices in teacher education, I became deeply committed to the undergraduate program renewal which was unfolding in our College since release of the SPR data in 2003. I thought that in the role of Assistant Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Research) I would have the opportunity to work closely with the Undergraduate Program Committee, the Assistant Dean (Student Affairs, Partnerships and Research) and all other interested stakeholders toward achieving the goals for undergraduate program renewal as laid out in our College Plan. I knew that achieving our program renewal goals would involve collaborative work with undergraduate teacher candidates, College of Education faculty, administrators and staff, ATEP Directors, partner teachers and school divisions, other university colleges and units, as well as provincial stakeholders, including members of the Board of Teacher Education Certification. I believed that my capacities to work in collaborative relationships was a strength I could bring to the role.

**Laurie.** I too never had a strong ambition to become an academic administrator. I had been a fairly successful Graduate Chair in my department and had really enjoyed working with (supporting and mentoring) graduate students in my department for a period of about three years prior. In that role, I had the opportunity to help direct new graduate program development, I was involved in some scholarship envisioning, and had developed a working group to support graduate students applying for external funding. To me, the opportunity to move to Associate Dean (Graduate Studies and Research) came at a crossroads in my career, in that my term as graduate chair was ending. I thought that it would be fascinating to do what I had already been doing at a College level and to expand what I considered to be a fairly successful personal research journey thus far (including success as a PI/co-PI of both SSHRC and CIHR) to something greater. I looked forward to opportunities to mentor others on their academic research journeys. In hindsight, although I never wanted to be an academic administrator explicitly, I had a record of taking on leadership roles.

**What skills and abilities did you think you were bringing to the position?**

**Lynn.** I figured my work experience especially as Chair of the Undergraduate Program Renewal Sub-Committee, as member of the Undergraduate Program Committee, and as an instructor who worked collaboratively with faculty and teachers on a variety of integrated course/field experience teaching and research projects had helped me hone skills and capacities which enhanced my ability to be of service as Assistant Dean. These skills and capacities include: listening, negotiating, relationship building, risk-taking, conceptualizing, actualizing, budgeting, perseverance and enthusiasm.

**Laurie.** I thought that I had developed (perhaps inadvertently) a set of skills and experiences that would serve me well in the role including: being a former graduate chair, experience with the College of Graduate Studies and Research, membership on a variety of College and University committees, experience adjudicating post-doctoral fellow awards for SSHRC, my research interests in best practices in Graduate Education, my experiences applying for external research funding from a variety of sources, and experience teaching the graduate research classes that I would ultimately be responsible for coordinating...

**Unlike teaching (no required teaching duties associated with either of the roles), there was an expectation that personal programs of research continue. How did you envision the administrative role would affect your personal program of research?**

**Lynn.** I figured that in the role of Assistant Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Research) I would have the opportunity to further develop and enlarge my research investigations into the efficacy of various approaches in teacher education. With the expectation that the Assistant Dean (Undergraduate Programs and Research) be involved in “systematic data collection” and the “fostering of research projects”, I figured that I could enrich my research program and that I could further contribute

to scholarly understandings about the shape and direction of undergraduate program renewal specifically, and teacher education, in general.

**Laurie.** As I said earlier, I figured that there would be a negative impact on my personal research in that I didn't think I would have the time or energy to be the PI of any large externally funded grants while in this role. I tried to be proactive and became involved in a number of research opportunities at the co-applicant level instead and continued to seek those opportunities throughout my role. However, on more than one occasion, my passion for research has gotten the best of me and I have applied for a couple of externally funded research grants as the PI during my time as Associate Dean. Unfortunately, (or fortunately?), I have been close but not successful... One piece I didn't expect was that I frequently became very involved in the development of funding applications as a co-applicant and I ended up much more involved than many other co-applicants – and some of these applications have been successful. Because of my experiences leading such projects as a PI, I think it was natural for me to become really involved in the application but I am beginning to feel a bit burnt out.

**As a new administrator, what would you have liked to know prior to entering the role of Assistant or Associate Dean?**

**Lynn.** In my life before the academy I had some experience with budgeting and „people“ management, so I knew something about these aspects of my role. I would have liked to have known more about university governance structures. How does central administration work and where are the supports for our role (and where are they not?) I also would have liked to know more about strategies for dealing with difficult people – conflict resolution approaches. While I figured I was a pretty good negotiator, I really didn't know enough about how to work with people who were resistant to change.

**Laurie.** I would have liked to know more about working effectively with an administrative support person. As a faculty member I was not used to having direct support and I found it difficult to determine how best to work with someone in that way... I hadn't been trained in supervising employees and it took me some time to figure that all out (I am probably still trying to figure that out)! I also wish that someone would have told me how much of my life would be spent in meetings. Well – actually, I think someone did tell me but I didn't really believe the volume or how the meetings would dictate every inch of your life. Four years in and I still have difficulty finding the time to do the work required of the meetings and have not yet found the perfect way to extricate myself from meetings where my presence is requested but not entirely mandatory. The work needs to get done regardless and although I learn something from every meeting I attend, I find myself sometimes wishing I could just be at my desk working instead and feeling resentful that it isn't the case.

### **What was your biggest surprise as you began your new role?**

**Lynn.** Having witnessed the difficulties experienced by the incumbent in the role of Assistant Dean, I wasn't naïve enough to believe that I would be able to successfully achieve the program renewal goals we had laid out without solid support. I knew that the majority of faculty would need to be in favour of whatever new program we designed. I remember promising, during my public presentation (part of the application process for the job of Assistant Dean) that I would work my "butt off" over the next five years in hope of bringing in a renewed program, but that it would take the commitment of an entire team to achieve this goal. What surprised me, though was how some faculty used academic bully techniques to get what they want rather than reasoned discussion – some willing to be the loudest talker, insisting that certain process or procedures be using despite these not being required – their ignoring of reasoned arguments put forward by others – asking for evidence, but not providing any themselves – those who are willing to say or do almost anything – be rude, yell, insist on something being true without evidence – and who get their way because others do not want to be confrontational.

**Laurie.** Probably my degree of naiveté up to this point. I too was struck by how differently some colleagues would treat individuals in "upper administration". But I think I was most surprised by how political the position was. As a faculty member, I was able to pick and choose what drama I would allow myself to be drawn into whereas in my role of Associate Dean I was quickly "baptized" into this new world I hadn't even realized existed – it was like a whole other level – with leaders and opposition leaders, vocal minorities, pawns, alliances... for the first few months in my role, I felt like I was on some academic survivor game show. As I near the end of my term as Associate Dean, I have realized that the ability an administrator has to see the forest rather than just the trees that most faculty see in their roles is a huge advantage; however, much like the movie *The Matrix*, once you have been in this administrative role, you can't go back to being ignorant about the politics that surrounds you.

### **How did you navigate your position? What were/are some of your challenges?**

**Lynn.** In teacher education there is a long history of deeply held, and deeply varying beliefs about what educators need to know and be able to do - these different beliefs lead to deep divisions regarding what teacher education should look like at our institution. I found it challenging to engage all faculty in the decision-making process and difficult to identify multiple pathways for engagement. Rather than engaging in conversations to express beliefs and try to work through differences, some faculty did not respond to the repeated invitations to participate in the ongoing discussions and negotiations and then criticised ideas that were co-constructed by colleagues, arguing that decisions were coming from the top down. Other people were apathetic or were too ready to say – been there, tried that– some are engaged, but become disengaged when resistance increases. I was also challenged by individuals who were unwilling to live by the democratic

decisions made by the majority of faculty. Instead, these individuals created the alliances Laurie spoke of earlier, and strategized a way to keep chipping away at and undermine the work of the administrators.

**Laurie.** I think one of my biggest challenges has been the turn-over in the administrative team I have experienced during my term as Associate Dean. To date, I have experienced three different Deans and three different Assistant/Associate Deans Undergraduate. It has been challenging to figure out how to work best with each of these different individuals. With each change there has been a shifting of priorities accompanied by changes in how the administrative team operates. For example, sometimes the team aspect has had particular emphasis while other times I have worked quite independently... And who is considered a member of the team also changes. I wonder sometimes how much more I would have liked my position had there been more consistency in those I worked for and with.

**Lynn.** There also appears to be a fairly strong “Us versus Them” culture at our institution. What I mean is, the us equals faculty members and unionized staff members while them equals anyone in administration above the level of Department Head. I specifically recall a colleague indicating that she was giving much thought to become Assistant Dean, Student Affairs and Partnerships, because she didn’t want to become one of them. Furthermore, in hindsight, there were several organizational structures (including policies and procedures) that impeded or encumbered collaboration and collegiality. It is surprising to think of the power these structures possess and to realize that the structures can actually shape ways of thinking. For example, the departmental structures can shape faculty identities and loyalties to the point where individuals see themselves as members of a particular department rather than as a member of the larger educational/research community. The structures can contribute to or deepen divisions that already exist, arising out of differences in beliefs about what educators need to know and be able to do.

**Laurie.** Another challenge I have experienced is that my accountabilities mostly involve helping others to get things done – I have found it difficult at times to directly determine how effective I have been in my role. As a faculty member you can always look at your teaching evaluations or the number of grants received or manuscripts submitted for some evidence of your productivity and success. Now part of my role is enhancing the research culture of my College – how do I determine how effective I have been at that? I delegate a lot of work, and as a team, a lot has been accomplished. But who can take credit for that? Yes, these things happened under my watch but does that mean I can take credit for that?

**How did you navigate your position? What contributed to your success (and how did you define success in your role)?**

**Lynn.** In my role I defined success as: development of a revised program and garnering the associated approvals – team building – deepening of good relationships with partners and staff – building a culture of collaboration –



enhancing research in teacher education. When the team and I were successful, I think it was for some of the following reasons: First, I had a terrific administrative mentor and an administrative partner (Dean & Associate Dean) with whom I could share issues and concerns, could bounce ideas around with, and do some prediction testing and planning. Second, I made it a priority and thus made numerous attempts over time to engage as many faculty members, teacher candidates, and multiple partners in discussions, planning and design of a renewed program. Third, I demonstrated respect for the knowledge and skills that everyone brings to the table— from faculty to Programs Office and School Division personnel, to teacher candidates, to in-service teachers and seconded teachers and the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation. My leadership style involved openness and responsiveness in communication – including face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations, newsletters, email, etc. I also tried to keep the end (the big goal/ big picture) in mind – that is, enhancing the teacher candidate learning experience, and in our case, ultimately, enhancing the learning experiences of the students (children, youth and/or adults) with whom our teacher candidates will work. Lastly, I networked and engaged with others who do research in teacher education from across our College but also nationally and internationally.

**Laurie.** I think I was very lucky in that I too experienced a very strong mentor and early on I was also to identify other individuals from other Colleges in similar positions with whom I felt comfortable sharing some of my challenges. I was able to share ideas and get some feedback when things felt in danger of going off the rails. I think I was also fortunate that in the end I am a very good fit for the position I have been doing. For example, my job really has revolved around helping others, whether it is faculty research or graduate students, which ties nicely to my leadership style, which is very service oriented. I have avoided, for the most part, a large target on my back, but instead worked to develop supports and resources for my colleagues – opportunities for internal research funding with transparent and fair adjudication processes, supports for faculty manuscript writing while at the same time supporting graduate students through developing funding opportunities. For the most part, I have been able to develop a shared collaborative vision and utilize a team approach in this role.

**What advice would you give to other faculty members who are considering taking on an administrative role?**

**Lynn.** I think you need to learn how to take the broad view and to see the big picture. As Laurie said earlier, it is difficult as a faculty member to have the broad view but it is really necessary as an administrator. I also think it is important to understand how finances influence possibilities. The best ideas in the world may not be possible because they cost too much and not everything can be done on a shoestring budget. It is important to maintain a program of research because one day you may not be in the administrative role anymore. I found it helpful to plan research that is connected to the administrative work you are doing. And be

respectful of everyone's knowledge and skills. Communicate, communicate, communicate. And if at all possible, build or join a team.

**Laurie.** I think it is important to know and then to consider whom you will be working with. For me the personal and professional relationships are key. I truly enjoy being part of a team and the creative energy that comes from working together and creating something bigger than oneself; but to be an effective team, to come up with innovative ideas, you need to be able to trust your teammates and feel respected and know that you play an important role. I also think you need to be sure you are comfortable with the accountabilities in the position. You have to be willing to work hard to get those things done and if you personally see the accountabilities as being important, it will be easier to put in the efforts required to be successful. I think a role in academic administration takes a lot out of a person – you give up a lot – work more hours, lose out on family time, forced to manage increased stress – it has to be worth it in the end and if you end up on a team or even all alone, you will need to ask yourself are all the things you gave up worth it?

**What lessons did you learn that would help others in similar circumstances? Would you “do it” again?**

**Lynn.** You need to be able to let go because in the end, you cannot control anyone or anything but yourself or how you will act react in different situations. You also need to define success for yourself and to resist letting others define it for you. You also have to realize that you cannot lead if no one is willing to follow. It was important for me to be part of a team and I quickly realized that making change in an institution requires a team.

**Laurie.** I am still unsure if I want to seek renewal of my term for another 5 years; although my indecision is also fed by personal circumstances. I think time will tell though of the impact my decision to go into academic administration has had – I do believe that taking on this role has held me back a bit with respect to my personal program of research – on the other hand, I know I have gained a lot from these experiences as well.

**Lynn.** I also realized that there are some things that you can do, but that other things lie in the hands of others, so do not sweat that which does not lie between your hands – as the old saying goes: “May the universe grant you the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, the courage to change the things you can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

## **Discussion**

As new academic administrators, we could be considered akin to second-career academics (Barrett & Brown, 2014) because academic administration and leadership was not our original professional goal. Similar to the second-career academics described in a study by the Memorial University Faculty Writing Group (Young et al., n.d.), our career

path to academic administration was “somewhat accidental” (p. 2) and “definitely unexpected” (p. 3). We were also comparable to the academic managers described by Peterson (2015) in that we too had “never aspired to become a manager” (p. 8). Like the female participants in the Memorial University Faculty Writing Group (Young et al., n.d.) who entered academia because of a passion for their subject area, we ventured into academic administration because of a passion for teacher education and curriculum (Lynn) or a passion for research and mentorship of new faculty and graduate students (Laurie).

Like previous research (Kleihauer, Stephens, & Hart, 2012; Young et al., n.d.), supportive colleagues and mentors also recognized our gifts and talents and encouraged us to pursue academic leadership. The support and encouragement made it easier to embark on the leadership journey. Although we may have obtained and then survived our respective administrative terms, without the support of colleagues and mentors we certainly would not have thrived without their support. We believe mentorship is essential at all levels of the academy and is especially important for female academics. As stated by Kezar et al. (2007), “the value of role models and mentors cannot be underestimated” (p. 17).

Neither of us received any formal preparation or training prior to stepping into our roles as academic leaders but rather we relied on our previous related experiences. However, not all faculty will have developed a portfolio of leadership experiences because taking on leadership roles prior to being awarded tenure could be at “great peril” (Kezar et al., 2007). Lack of formal training for academic administration is not uncommon. Research suggests universities tend to offer few effective formal opportunities for middle leaders (Franken, Penny, & Branson, 2015), causing new middle leaders in higher education to feel unprepared for their positions (Inman, 2009). Although our institution held some internal professional development events, once ensconced in our roles, we also found it very helpful to participate in a week long university higher administration course put on by the Center for Higher Education Research and Development of the University of Manitoba (<http://umanitoba.ca/centres/cherd/programs/annual/umc.html>).

For us, the role of academic administrator and leader has been both challenging and rewarding. Establishing curricular change is not easy - department structures can lead change and innovation but can also be dysfunctional due to personal and territorial issues (Kezar et al., 2007). The leadership roles we have played have provided us with a view or perspective of the academy that is inaccessible to those outside managements and which we believe will prove invaluable over the course of our careers wherever we journey. In the words of a new academic administrator, upon entering academic leadership your “world just completely expands... it shifts you into a completely different perspective” (Franken, Penny, & Branson, 2015, p. 10). Furthermore, the personal relationships we have developed and fostered as part of our leadership journeys will ultimately “make the most difference to change” (Kezar et al., 2007, p.21).

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## **Chapter 10: Overcoming Personal Challenges That Have Impacted My Academic Journey: A Narrative**

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I come from humble beginnings, and as a result, I have had challenges and obstacles that many people do not face until later in academic life or perhaps not at all. Growing up I had several factors that the literature has identified as significantly contributing to a student's decision to drop out of school. For example, my father has a Grade 10 education and my mother completed her high school credits as an adult learner (Orfield, 2006), and I come from a low-income family (Laird, DeBell, Kienzl, & Chapman, 2007). In particular, to higher dropout rates among girls, my parents displayed preferential treatment of my brother (Leung & Zhang, 2008), and I frequently took on greater responsibilities at home with the household management (Cairns, Cairns, & Neckerman, 1989; Ersado, 2005; Gleason & Dynarski, 2002). However, instead of allowing these factors to deter me from my academic goals, they contributed in a positive manner by instilling in me perseverance, resiliency, and determination to realize my educational goals.

### **When I Decided to Attend University**

From a very young age, I have always wanted to become a teacher. When I was in elementary school, I wanted to be able to write on the blackboard and 'boss' other people around. Once in high school my motives became more altruistic – I sincerely wanted to help students who found it a challenge to achieve success in school. While in high school I encountered a series of events that had a negative impact on my life. At the age of 15 I moved out on my own, at age 16 I almost failed all my Grade 11 courses, and at age 17 I became friends with the wrong people. As a result of these events, I was losing my focus, my confidence, and my purpose.

While attending high school, June Pollard, my attendance secretary, kept sending detention slips to my homeroom because my Chemistry teacher kept marking me absent, although I had officially and gladly dropped the course. Day after day I would go down to the main office in order to rectify the situation. At first I considered this an inexcusable inconvenience, and, while I made my displeasure very apparent to her, June was always kind and smiled a genuine smile when she saw me. After a couple of weeks I began to anticipate the detention slips because she was one of the few staff members at the school who displayed patience and understanding towards me, even when I was not always considerate towards her. She eventually transferred to a different high school (and my Chemistry teacher eventually stopped marking me absent), so we would only see each other when she came into where I worked part-time after school. During these brief interactions, June would frequently encourage me to follow my dream of becoming a teacher. I doubted my capabilities, and myself, but she never did. In my last year of high school, I decided to apply to three universities and I requested a reference letter from her for my application packages. She agreed, and one night soon afterwards she arrived at work to show me



the rough draft of her letter. I felt foolish crying in the middle of K-Mart, but I was genuinely surprised and touched that someone who only knew me casually could see past my hurt and anger and describe so many positive qualities about me. Needless to say, I was accepted into all three universities, and this is how my life as an academic began. Her interactions with me clearly demonstrate the findings of Fall and Roberts (2012), who concluded that teacher support can have a positive influence on a student's self-perceptions.

### **When I Decided to Pursue a Ph.D. Program in Education**

Since moving to Newfoundland in 2008, I have had a difficult time trying to secure a permanent position with the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District. The number of substitute teaching days I worked was inconsistent from week to week and tutoring students was beginning to become tiresome. Over the years I've worked a number of part-time jobs in order to ensure I maintained a steady income to cover my monthly expenses, but I did not find any of these solutions personally or professionally satisfactory. So after taking a three-year break upon completing my Master's of Education thesis at Memorial, I decided to apply to the Ph.D. program and to teaching positions outside the province. I decided to base my decision on the outcome of my applications. I received my acceptance letter, so I am here in Newfoundland for another few years for a Ph.D. in Education.

While I have only completed eight months of my Ph.D. program thus far, I have already faced several obstacles and challenges specific to transitioning to life as an academic. My first significant obstacle was my difficulty in obtaining a second reference letter for my application process. Since I had graduated from the M. Ed. program three years earlier, I found it difficult to secure a recent academic reference. I contacted my current supervisor, and asked him what I should do, and without hesitation, he wrote me a recommendation letter based on our few brief meetings and the samples of writing I had shown him. I am very grateful that he made this decision and I believe that his support early on in my doctoral journey had an impact on my acceptance into the program.

### **My Journey as a Doctoral Student**

Within days of trying to acclimatize myself to academia once again, I was strongly encouraged by my doctoral committee to compose and submit a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funding application, a difficult task for even the most experienced faculty. While meeting the reading and writing requirements of my graduate courses, I also spent a significant amount of time reading as many journal articles as I could and composing several drafts of my application for feedback and editing. I was becoming frustrated with the process because I felt unfamiliar with the content of my research topic, unsure of the methodology, and inarticulate about what I needed to convey in my application. I attended the SSHRC writing workshop, read successful applications, and asked for advice and feedback from faculty members, yet I did not feel confident that it was meeting the requisite standard. Discouraged, I sent an email to all my committee members a couple days before the deadline thanking them for their support and input, but I had decided not to submit an application at this time. My mind was made up; I would re-apply next year.

One of my committee members replied to my email with a very supportive and encouraging email. He acknowledged that it is a difficult process and that I probably would not have my application accepted, but I shouldn't discount all the learning opportunities this application process brings with it. He commented on the progress of my various drafts and how I should not give up because I was very close to completing the application process. Because of this, I reconsidered and decided to submit a completed SSHRC application. While I was not successful in this endeavour, my committee member's kind words helped provide me with the inspiration I needed to persevere with this challenging and daunting task, while helping me stay focussed on the process, which is ultimately more important most times than the production of the final outcome.

As part of my journey as a first year doctoral student, I was required to present a doctoral seminar. I decided to present my doctoral research because I wanted to receive feedback from those who attended and to practice my ability to answer difficult or unexpected questions regarding my research. I required guidance and feedback regarding the content and direction of my research framework and methodology and I was worried that without guidance, the philosophical content of my research would be underrepresented or unclear.

Another one of my committee members willingly set aside the time to provide me with written feedback on my PowerPoint slides and to hear me practice my presentation. She helped me streamline my presentation, to articulate aspects of my study that needed to be included in the presentation, and to feel confident enough to present the early stages of my doctoral research to faculty members. Even though she confessed that she is unfamiliar with John Dewey's philosophical premises and assertions and how they relate to education, her insightful questions helped to draw out the points I wanted to raise during my seminar. As a result, I received positive feedback from those who attended my seminar and I am more confident about preparing for my next presentation.

### **Conclusion**

As a doctoral student, I still face several challenges and obstacles, including developing an understanding of the university structure, adopting the culture and language of academia, establishing a balance between my personal and academic life, and developing a more definite understanding of my roles and responsibilities within academia (Crane, O'Hern, & Lawler 2009; Fogg, 2002; LaRocco &

Bruns 2006). In addition, in alignment with the research literature, the transition from my career as a special education teacher to a career in academia can result in feelings of isolation and loneliness (Crane et al., 2009). I know that there will always be challenges and obstacles that will impede my progress as an academic, but from my personal experiences, I have learned that when someone cares about the progress you are making and puts forth an effort to support you in your journey, there are very few obstacles that cannot be overcome, and as a result, the support that teachers can provide can improve a student's feelings of academic efficacy and ability to master goals (Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007; Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

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## **Chapter 11: My Critical Incident, Which Led me to Becoming a Researcher**

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Since I was young I wanted to become a teacher. This goal would eventually lead me to undertaking my Master's of Education and becoming a researcher in this field. The dream of becoming a teacher was clear, despite my difficulties in school. At the age of five I was diagnosed with having a learning disability (LD), and at eighteen I faced one of my life's main obstacles: as a student with LD, I needed to complete a formal psycho-educational assessment to be accepted into university and obtain accommodations. Consequently, I met with the school psychologist who assessed my intelligence through a set of tests in order to see what accommodations I would need in university. With extra assistance I had done well in high school until this point, and had already applied to a special program in university that supported students with LDs.

The final meeting, which took place between the school psychologist, my parents, and myself, was a turning point for me. The school psychologist told my parents and myself that, because I read at a grade six level and had difficulties in processing and working memory, she thought that I would not be able to handle university, and that I would be much better off in a community college setting. After she said this she asked me to head back to class as she wanted to talk to my parents alone. I left the room feeling very upset and discouraged. Half-way to class I recall gathering my determination, turning around and heading back to the room where the meeting was being held. I interrupted the school psychologist and I told her that it was my dream to go to university and that I was very capable because of my tremendous perseverance and effort. In fact, research states that reading ability is not a clear indicator of someone's overall intelligence (Gresham & Vellutino, 2010). With the right accommodations in place, I could study at a university level. I was not going to take the school psychologist's word as truth.

My parents told the school psychologist that they would like another opinion and would hire a private psychologist to conduct a second assessment. After undergoing another battery of tests, which included a face-to-face interview, the private psychologist wrote a detailed report and concluded that with accommodations in place, I could excel in university and go on to accomplish my life goals. As a student with a LD, I was extremely lucky and fortunate to come from a family where my parents were well educated, critical, and aware of both their own rights as parents and my rights as their child with a LD. They were informed about their options and knew that they had the right to ask for a second opinion regarding my formal assessment.

As a teacher I believe in all my students and what they are capable of doing; I don't judge them on what they can't do, but evaluate them on what they can accomplish. As Drover, the Learning Disability Coordinator of the Meighen Centre at Mount Allison University states, "students with learning disabilities do belong on campus, and we should not

undervalue their strengths. They are more like the typical first year student than they are different. With careful selection, adequate and appropriate preparation and on campus support, students with learning disabilities can succeed in every field” (Drover, 2010). Individuals can achieve their goals when they believe in themselves, have determination, and are willing to work hard.

This meeting with the school psychologist had a profound impact on me as a learner, a teacher, and now as a researcher who is studying the impact self-advocacy instruction has on both elementary and secondary students. I decided to pursue further studies in this area because in Canada it is estimated that the incidence rate of LDs range as high as 10% or more of the population (LDAO, 2011). This statistic implies that more than one in ten children have a LD, which is a high number when we consider that there is usually at least 25 students in a typical classroom. A substantial number of students with LD become over-dependent on adults and peers. They also gain a low sense of self-efficacy, develop an external locus of control, and fail to complete school or become disengaged at an early age (Palmer, et al., 2012). In turn, school policies and practices often perpetuate a culture that is violent, one that is burdening, harming, and violating to a significant number of students, which consequently hinders their learning and self-esteem (Watkinson, 1997).

The school environment is not necessarily a safe place for diverse students, particularly those with LD whom are thought of as being deficient among the school community (Ferri, Connor, Solis, Valle, & Volpitta, 2005). Repetitive destructive experiences and failure in school for these students can become a negative cycle that is hard to break. In order to restore this negative cycle, children with LD need to feel supported by their teachers and their peers, as well as work through the existent painful experiences that they might have already endured due to these negative experiences. They also need to develop a „voice“ and to be heard when their needs are not being met or when they need to ask for accommodations. Most importantly, students with LD need to learn the skills to become their own best self-advocates. They need to learn techniques that will assist them when dealing with negative experiences, such as being labelled as having LD. By learning effective communication skills, they can create empowering self-scripts and express their frustration in positive ways.

The fact is that students with LD need to practice self-advocacy before entering high school (Mishna, Muskat, Farnia, & Wiener, 2011). It is important that they, as early as possible, become aware of their own strengths, needs, and interests, and begin to communicate their choices and decisions effectively (Hart & Brehm, 2013). As a researcher, I would like to examine how best to instruct students with learning disabilities in acquiring self-advocacy skills that will assist them in accomplishing their academic and life goals. I plan on designing a mentoring program where junior high students with learning disabilities can work together with post-secondary students who also have a LD. By providing a safe and inclusive environment, students will engage in creating peace-building circles, small group activities, and role plays. The topics that will be included in the program will focus on building relationships, communication, learning needs and accommodations, as well as, goal-setting and problem-solving.

I feel grateful to have had the self-confidence, self-awareness and self-advocacy skills to head back to the meeting between the school psychologist and my parents and to stand up for what I knew I could accomplish. I would not be where I am today completing my Master's degree if I were not able to express myself at that meeting. My desire as a researcher is to both explore ways to promote the development of self-advocacy in students, as well as be able to design mentoring programs that will provide a space where students come together as a community to learn from older more experienced peers who also have LD. In turn, they may learn how to become successful in accomplishing their goals, as well as gain skills in self-advocacy, self-determination and self-awareness that will improve their life in and out of school.

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## **Chapter 12: Expanding on My Answers to the Interview Questions**

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### **Abstract**

This article is a reflection on my recent career change to academia and my work in Memorial University of Newfoundland's (MUN) Indigenous Teacher Education program in Labrador. It focuses on two of the questions I was asked during the interview, what I have learned since accepting the position and aspects of relationship building that are important to working in community-based Indigenous Education. I examine some of the challenges I have encountered as a new academic and offer strategies that I have used to overcome these struggles.

### **Introduction**

I want to begin this story by acknowledging the traditional lands of the Innu and Inuit where I live and work in Labrador. I am a professor at Memorial University of Newfoundland's (MUN) Faculty of Education. I work at the Labrador Institute in the community-based Indigenous Teacher Education Program, more specifically the Inuit Bachelor of Education that is a partnership between MUN's Faculty of Education and the Nunatsiavut Government.

I am new to working as an academic and to Labrador and they are intertwined in my life. I came to the academy by way of a meandering path that took me through numerous university campuses and degrees, a career in K-12 education, and a commitment to Indigenous education. I am a Mi'kmaw mother and grandmother and, as such, I have a vested interest in the education of my children, my grandchildren, and the future generations of children. Mi'kmaw Chief Darlene Bernard of Lennox Island First Nation gives voice to the fundamental values of my work in education: "At the end of the day it's about the children; it's always about the children" (Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2006).

As I consider my journey to the academy, I reflect on my interview for this position in community-based Indigenous teacher education, my first two years of work, and some of the challenges I have encountered as a new professor. I begin with two of the questions the search committee asked me that are particularly important to my contemplation. The first question was: "What do you know about Labrador?" and the second was: "How will you know what the needs of the community are for teacher education?"

### Question One: What Do You Know about Labrador?

At one point in the interview I was asked what I knew about Labrador. I answered the question by listing the establishment of Goose Bay when the American Air Force Base was built here, the Innu protests of the low-level flying, the decline of the caribou population, and the construction of the Lower Churchill project. I was not satisfied with my answer, which was made worse by my limited ability to elaborate on any of these items. The knowledge I had came from media and books, not from lived experience.

Several years ago a Mi'kmaw Elder explained to me that when we learn *about* something, it is "surface learning", but when we learn *from*, it is through observation and personal relationship with the other that the learning takes place. Learning *from* is "deep learning" (personal communication, October 23, 2009). I had some knowledge *about* Labrador but I did not have a relationship with the people or the place.

The centrality of relationship is a key element in Indigenous understandings of the world and building relationships is an essential part of developing community-based education. Little Bear (2009) describes the involvement of community as "a key aspect in the education of Aboriginal peoples. Because Aboriginal people understand the world in terms of relationships, the inclusion of community in the learning process of Aboriginal people is fundamental" (p. 22).

### Developing Relationships in the Community

The first relationships that I developed in Labrador were with colleagues at the Labrador Institute. The small staff is an eclectic group of academics representing disciplines such as biology, geology, folklore, history, archaeology, and anthropology. Although I am a member of the Faculty of Education, my daily interactions in academia have been with scholars outside the field of education. I have also developed relationships with other educators through the community consultations in which I have been involved as well as the through the collaborative work with the education staff of the Nunatsiavut Government. It is implicit in the work to develop a community-based teacher education program that I was the Faculty of Education's presence in Labrador. This required that I be seen and known in the community. To this end I got involved in community events and volunteered on community non-profit boards. It was through these activities that I came to know more people.

Rather than the usual academic concentration on teaching and research, my initial scholarly work has been to build relationships with people and to work collaboratively with others in my work. This work goes by various names: decolonizing education, indigenizing education, and developing culturally relevant or culturally responsive education. In order to do such collaborative work, Kovach (2009a) emphasizes the importance of academics developing relationships with Indigenous communities, work she says, that cannot be measured by the same scholarly standards as research output is measured. Thus, it is typically not valued in the same way in academia (p. 66-67). In discussing what scholars and researchers require in order to collaborate with Indigenous peoples, she writes, "They have skills borne of relationships with Indigenous

communities; they know when to step up and when to step back... my experience tells me that these folks have humility, a sense of humour, and are attuned - all of which are relational skills (p. 65).” As I reflect on my experiences in the last two years, I consider how I have further developed my relationship skills.

**Humility.** Ms. C. (personal communication, June 4, 2015), a friend and community activist in Labrador, recently shared a story about humility. Several years ago she was learning to be a fire keeper for the sweat lodge ceremony. The task requires that the person use a shovel to move the hot grandfather rocks from an outside fire to a pit inside the lodge. Ms. C’s forearms and face were getting burned from the intense heat because, as she described it, “In my pride of being given such an honour, I kept going to the fire tall and feeling proud. A wise woman, who was also a fire keeper, approached me and advised: „Be humble. Stay low to the fire.”” To me, this story is a profound metaphor for working in community and the importance of humility.

As a relational skill, humility is about being open and listening to the truth of others. I understand it to mean that my truth is not the only truth and it is through such a stance that the contributions of others are valued. In *As if Indigenous Knowledge and Communities Mattered*, Ball (2004) writes: “educators and administrators who come from outside the community must not only respect its unique pattern of relationships but recognize that their own worldviews and traditions (institutional or otherwise) originate from within a particular culture and tradition” (p. 466).

As I think about humility and sharing different perspectives of the world, Mussell’s (2008) explanation of openness to learning from others resonates with me. “One is called upon to be open to learning and to become changed for the better by the other; everyone and everything is a potential teacher in the ongoing journey to wholeness” (p. 336). I realized there was much I would have to learn in order to situate the curriculum of the Inuit Bachelor of Education in the Labrador context and infuse it with Inuit culture and values. To do this, I have had to remain open to learning from the people and this place, both of which have indeed been my teachers.

**Humour.** Sharing laughter within a relationship contributes to good feelings and “good and right relations” (Hodgson-Smith, 1997). Having a sense of humour, as a relationship skill, is one way of maintaining good relations with others. Humour can ease tension during difficult conversations and helps to maintain good feelings amongst people. As I consider my work in Labrador, I realize that being able to laugh at one’s self is an integral part of working in community.

It was not until I watched *Qallunaat! Why White People Are Funny* (Sandiford & Martin, 2006) that I appreciated, in a humorous way, some of the differences between Inuit and non-Inuit ways of thinking about the world. The film challenges such things as culturally irrelevant curriculum and the scientific objectification of people. It does this in a humorous, non-confrontational way so that the focus is on issues, not people.

**Attuned.** It is important to have an open mind and a good heart when interacting with others. Being attuned to others is to approach the other with respect, which requires an understanding that comes from listening and from learning. Steinhauer (2002) quotes a Cree manual when she writes: “Respect means you listen intently to others” ideas that you do not insist that your ideas prevail. By listening intently you show honour, consider the well being of others, and treat others with kindness and courtesy” (p. 73).

Learning as much as I can about Inuit culture and values in one way to become more attuned to the people here. The National Committee on Inuit Education (2011) describes the vision for Inuit education. Included in this overview of Inuit worldview and the principles that govern life are: “showing respect and caring for others; being welcoming, open and inclusive; developing collaborative relationships to work together for a common purpose; environmental stewardship; knowledge and skills acquisition; being resourceful to solve problems; consensus decision-making; and serving” (p. 72). Knowing these principles helps me to be attuned to Inuit people.

As a result of the collaborative work between the Faculty of Education and the Nunatsiavut Government, there will be both a teacher education program offered by Memorial University and a concurrent Inutittut language program offered by the Nunatsiavut Government. Language is “a repository for all of the collective knowledge and experiences that a people, a society, or a nation has” (Little Bear, 2009, p. 22) and knowing an Indigenous language is a way to be more attuned to the people who speak that language. Knowing Inutittut is not essential to my daily communications but understanding the importance of language rejuvenation and supporting such work reflects a respectful orientation to the goals and values of the Indigenous community.

### **Relationship with the Land**

In addition to learning from the people here, I have also learned from the land. Absolon and Willett (2005) explain that one component of researcher location is in relationship to the land. I have lived most of my life on the South Mountain in southwest Nova Scotia. My home there is at the headwaters of the Mersey River watershed, on the shore of a small lake named after my great-grandfather. My grandfather and great-grandfather were both trappers and guides and my memories of them are enveloped in the stories they told of their lives on the land. I have learned from my family and from other community Elders the lessons of living in a respectful relationship with the environment.

My Labrador home and workplace are on the shore of a river that goes by several names: Mishtashipu, Grand River, Churchill River, and Hamilton River. The variations in these names reveal much about the different peoples and histories of this area. My connection to the land of Labrador began with my connection to this river. I walk along it, watch in anticipation as the ice begins to break up in the spring, and canoe it. I live close to Muskrat Falls, the site of the Lower Churchill hydro project that is now being constructed. The project has impacted the river, the economy, and the politics of Labrador. Living downstream from the dam gives me a vested interest in the quick clay on the shore of the river and the rate of methyl mercury contamination in the fish. As I

use my computer to type the words on this page, I remind myself of my own use of electricity generated by the harnessing of river power. I continue to learn all that I can about the engineering of the dam and the impact on the river and the life of the river. I meditate on my personal accountability for my needs and wants, my respect for and obligations to this land, and the consequences of the construction for the coming generations.

### **Question Two: How Will you know?**

A second question I was asked in the interview for this position was about creating a community-based education program. Even though there had been discussions between the Aboriginal groups and the Faculty of Education, there were not yet any decisions about the program. The question was: “How will you know what the needs of the community are for teacher education?” My answer would, no doubt, give some indication of my approach to developing community-based education.

#### **Listening**

As I contemplated a response, I grasped for concepts and words from my many years of study, particularly the research methods, place-based learning, and Indigenous education courses. I thought of Cora Weber-Pillwax (cited in Steinhauer, 2002) who says that she always waits “for that one glorious, culminating second when I know the whole answer to one question. I have been relearning that moment will not come, at least not while I am in thinking mode” (p. 69). I moved from academic thinking mode to lived experience and back again. I offered the only answer that I could formulate; the only answer to which I could be true. “I would listen to people,” I said. As Joseph (2008) points out, listening to the stories of others connects us to their lives. It “validates experience and feelings and represents a significant step” both toward the establishment of, or the restoration of, human relationships (p. 214).

Listening requires that we quiet our internal voice, open our minds, and, as Baldwin (2005) suggests, “accept an invitation into experiences that are not our own” (p. 7). Working in community requires respectful listening to one another; that we listen with compassion. Archibald (2008) advises that we listen, with “three ears: two on the sides of our head and the one that is in our heart” (p. 8) and, according to Hart (2010), collaborative relationships require “deep listening and hearing with more than the ears” (p. 10). When I practice deep listening, I have to separate my own needs or goals from those of others. I listen to try and relate to the speaker. When I can “relate to” another, I am also in “relationship with” the other. Sharing dialogue through listening and the associated skill of speaking are foundational components of communication. Graveline (1998) promotes that in sharing circles, human connections can develop “at a depth uncommon in the Western educational context” (p. 148).

I reflect on the ideas I have listened to as the community-based teacher education program has been established. The first is that Indigenous teacher education has to have high standards with the same academic expectations and rigor as all teacher education

programs. A second idea is that graduates require solid skills in teaching to ensure they know how to develop strong academic skills in students. And a third message is an unresolved question about language. Schools have played a role in language loss but they may now play a role in language retention and rejuvenation. This is an important and ongoing discussion for Labrador Indigenous communities.

## **Challenges**

I have experienced two main challenges since I began working in the academy. The first is the challenge to adjust to life in the academy. There are many things I have had to learn about the work and the workplace and, since I am based off-campus, this challenge includes finding ways to stay connected to my colleagues in the Faculty of Education. The second challenge is common to all working people. It is the struggle to balance my personal life and my professional life, to find ways to rejuvenate myself, and to stay grounded in my own values and life journey.

## **Adjusting to Life in the Academy**

The academy is a new workplace for me but it is not an unfamiliar place as I have spent 13 years studying in universities. When my third child was six months old, I enrolled in courses at the University of New Brunswick. A year later, my husband who was a military officer, was transferred to Calgary and I took up studies there. And a year after that, we moved to Yellowknife. Personal computers were becoming common but the internet was not widely used and distance education was limited to printed materials sent via surface mail.

The University of Manitoba and the Canadian Armed Forces collaborated to find a solution for armed forces personnel and their family members who wanted to obtain university degrees. This was often a struggle because of frequent moves that denied them the opportunity to complete studies at one university. The University of Manitoba developed a program whereby required courses could be obtained from other universities and would be accepted towards the intended degree. The stipulation was that two courses must be from the University of Manitoba and they provided numerous choices through correspondence courses. In addition to the University of New Brunswick, the University of Calgary, and the University of Manitoba, I transferred courses from Dalhousie University, St. Thomas University, and Athabasca University and met the requirements for an undergraduate degree in psychology. I subsequently received a Bachelor of Education, a Masters of Arts in psychology, two Masters of Education, and finally a Ph.D. in education. Although I think of myself as new to the academy, it is more a matter of it being a new workplace for me.

**A new workplace.** I was a teacher and school administrator for twenty years before coming to the academy to work. I was very passionate about working in public education and it was a familiar environment to me. I knew where to go or who to ask if I had a question, I was acquainted with the regulations and policies, and I was knowledgeable about contracts and working conditions. Although I had not planned a career move, I was



very interested and had the credentials to apply for the job in Indigenous education when it was advertised. I was offered the position and moved to Labrador in August 2013.

Since this was the first time I had worked in a university, I needed to learn about the academy as an organizational structure and as an employer. I experienced a steep learning curve that was marked by my own frustrations of not even knowing, at times, the right questions to ask. I paraphrased Stan Wilson when I reminded myself that, even if I did not know how to do something, I must, when asked, do it the best way that I know how (as cited in Steinhauer, 2002, p. 69).

**Connecting with colleagues and the Faculty.** There is a Faculty writing group that meets weekly on the main campus. When I expressed interest in joining, this group of women went out of their way to ensure I could participate via video conferencing. In addition to being a support group for academic writing, it was a frequent and reliable collegial opportunity for me to listen, ask questions, and learn more about academic life. I have also become friends with some of my colleagues and they are supportive in many ways. I use technology to attend meetings and to participate in Faculty Council. I also use it to teach in my graduate courses so that students can join my face-to-face classes through video conferencing as an alternative to on-line classes. Technology poses many challenges but it is critical given my location, my need to connect to the Faculty, and the geographic isolation of some graduate students across Labrador.

### **The Challenge to Balance the Personal and the Professional**

Balancing home and work has always been a challenge for me as it is, I expect, for all working mothers. I now watch as my two oldest daughters take up the trials of being committed mothers, who are engaged in graduate studies, and work in a meaningful way for their Mi'kmaw community. Like me, they say that the way to balance home and work is to not distinguish between them but rather to take on a life where the work we do is an integral part of our lives.

**Self care.** On January 11, 1995 the school secretary came into my classroom and said, "I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news but your house just burned down." According to the official report, the electrical fire was smoldering for several hours that morning while my children and I were still sleeping. No one was injured but all of our material possessions were destroyed, including my computer and all material related to the graduate program in which I was enrolled at the time. We found temporary housing and, when the snow melted, my children and I began to construct a house for ourselves. I arose very early, worked on my thesis before I left to teach for the day, and after returning home, I sawed and hammered until dark. I learned to build a house as I went along, beginning with knowing how to bolt a top plate onto a concrete foundation and culminating with interior finish work. I developed skills in using tools and I learned to be more precise in measuring. Building the house taught me that motivation and perseverance trump.

I remind myself of this story and I tell it to others because learning and overcoming adversity is part of the human journey. I think of the words of Lorri Neilsen (Cox, 2008) describing her perspective on such experiences:

My stories and others' stories are all necessary so that we can help each other learn not who is right or who knows more, but what really matters. How to be wise, how to listen deeply, how to change ourselves so that we can change the world around us. (p. 110)

My professor for the last two courses in my graduate degree in literacy challenged me to find another way of expressing what I had learned. I made a medicine wheel quilt in the four Mi'kmaw colours that represent the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of life. In each quadrant of the wheel I fastened one article that represented Mi'kmaw ways and one that represented non-Indigenous ways, as they relate to my family's life. For example, a child's moccasin and a hand knit sock stood for the physical aspects of life. The project was powerful and is reflected in my own teachings when I encourage students to demonstrate their learning through alternative formats.

**Finding a guide.** I have reflected further on the role of key people in my academic journey. I thought back to one piece of advice I was given after accepting the position with the Faculty of Education. A former member of my dissertation committee suggested to "get yourself an Elder. Community work is hard work and you will need someone to guide you." Upon convening Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Justice Murray Sinclair advised each commissioner to have a "spiritual adviser" to support them in the work that would be challenging. "And there are going to be times when we ask ourselves whether it's worth it. We're going to ask ourselves whether we can do this or not" (Kennedy, 2015, n. p.). He emphasized that all three commissioners had a responsibility to take care of their own health, adding "If this commission fails because you fall down and can't get up, then no matter what the good reason is that you can't make it, this commission will always be seen as a failure." These words resonate with me because I stepped into a role important to the university engaging with the Indigenous community to develop a new program. I realized that if I were to fall it would indeed reflect badly on the university.

I work with Elders and Traditional Teachers in Nova Scotia but it was important for me to connect with a Labrador Elder. I did so and she has guided my understanding of the people, the place, and my role here. She has helped me to be culturally grounded, which Kovach (2009b) defines as "the way that culture nourishes the researcher's spirit during the inquiry, and how it nourishes the research itself" (p.116). It is this Elder who has supported me in keeping true to my own ways of knowing, doing, and being in the world. When I am grounded, I am able to rejuvenate my energy and keep myself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually balanced.

## Conclusion

I began to teach in the academia after many years as a student in graduate and undergraduate studies. Although I have had other careers, my work in academia has involved much new learning. I have had to admit to myself that what I do not know is far greater than what I do know and I have had to continue to gain knowledge that is important to my work in community-based Indigenous teacher education. I have developed meaningful relationships with the people of Labrador, which required that I hone my relational skills: humility, a sense of humour, and being attuned. I have listened with an open mind and a good heart. And I have connected to the land and to this place.

Colleagues and Elders are all an important part of my life as I learn more about my new workplace. An Elder guides me and helps me stay grounded in my life. She reminds me of my strengths and she reminds me to care about people more than the job. I reach out to stay connected with colleagues on the main campus. These relationships guide me and the work I do.

Msit Nokmaq

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## **Chapter 13: Be Passionate, Positive, and Persevere: My Research Journey as an International Graduate Student**

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Be passionate, positive, and persevere. This is what I have learned through my research journey as an international graduate student. I believe being passionate about your research project is the most important thing, and that is the reason my supervisor often encourages me to choose research topics that I am truly interested in. Apart from your passion, you also need a positive attitude to help you go through the difficult times in this long journey. Research has shown that international students experience many difficulties in adjusting to university life in foreign countries, and those difficulties are “compounded by being in an unfamiliar culture and surrounded by challenges of communication and language” (Tas, 2013, p. 2). As an international student, I have met many challenges, such as language barriers and cultural differences. However, I strive to keep a positive state of mind by focusing on my strengths and using them as catalysts for achieving my goals. In addition to passion and a positive attitude, you also need a tremendous amount of perseverance to keep you going for as long as it takes to succeed. Since research can be a hard and lonely journey, perseverance becomes a key factor for academic success.

My research journey started four years ago when I came to Canada and began my Master’s in Education at Memorial University. After I graduated from my two-year Master’s program, I entered a Ph.D. program and continued to pursue my passion for research. I never thought that I would become a doctoral student before I came to Canada, but I gradually changed my mind. I became more confident in my reading and writing competences and I found out that doing research is my passion. In the past four years I have had many unforgettable experiences and I have experienced both good and tough times. Many of my experiences are emotional experiences. Recent studies address the important role that emotions play on students’ academic achievement. They suggest that positive emotions can help students achieve their academic goals, while negative emotions may lead to students’ exhaustion and burnout (Cotterall, 2013; Rigg, Day & Adler, 2013). In my paper, I would like to critically examine my emotional experiences instead of ignoring them or suppressing them. Since visual arts are highly effective for generating emotions (Leavy, 2009), I use four photographs that I have taken to describe my personal and professional life over the past four years. I hope these photographs can help me express the thoughts and feelings that might be hard to put into words and also help my own experiences resonate with the experiences of other students.

## **My First Year in Canada**

My first year in Canada was the most exciting year for me since everything was new to me. I really enjoyed the courses that I was taking since they were very inspiring and engaging. The photograph below was taken in a class in which the professor gave students the chance to lead class activities and a fellow student invited us to show how we perceived teachers through clay. The sculpture on the right was what I made and the classmate next to me made the other. It was interesting to see that we all portrayed teachers in different ways, and I learned a lot through interacting and collaborating with other students in class. In my first year of study, I not only gained the knowledge and skill that I need for doing educational research, but also learned the importance of embracing teaching as an opportunity to inspire, engage, and empower students.



Photograph one: The most inspiring learning experience I have had

## **My Second Year in Canada**

I began my to write my Master's thesis in my second year. My thesis was about exploring the development of teacher identities, and my participant was an English-as-a-second language (ESL) teacher who had taught for over thirty-eight years. I interviewed her once a week and after each interview I went back home to transcribe the recorded interview. The picture below was taken on my way home. There was a snowstorm that day and nobody was on the road. It was then that I realized that living abroad by myself was not easy. Although people around me were very supportive, I still felt a sense of loneliness in my research process. This was the time that I learned to build my inner strength. According to Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, and Ramia (2008), all human beings feel lonely or isolated at some time in life. However, many factors intensify the feeling of loneliness that international students experience, such as the unfamiliarity with the local environment and the lack of family support and social networks (Sawir et al., 2008). In order to reduce my sense of loneliness, I took part in many volunteering activities, which provided me with the opportunity to make more friends and build my network in the local environment. I agree with Sawir et al. (2008) that "the creation of stronger bonds between international and local students in the educational setting... is key to a forward move on loneliness" (p. 148).





Photograph two: If winter comes, can spring be far behind?

### **My Third Year in Canada**

I started my Ph.D. program in my third year in Canada and I was very excited about this new journey. However, doing a Ph.D. was much more stressful than I had imagined, especially at the beginning of the program. I was fine with completing assignments and presentations, but I got very frustrated when I found it hard to join in the class discussions. Lack of oral proficiency in English and fear of making mistakes were two big barriers for me to actively participate in the class discussion. Liu and Jackson (2008) point out that lack of proficiency in English is not the sole factor that leads to student reticence in second language classrooms. Fear and anxiety can also hinder students' active participation (Liu & Jackson, 2008). Therefore, it is important for international students to be aware of how fear and anxiety can negatively impact their academic performance. In addition, I was not very familiar with the topics discussed in the class and there were many theories I had not heard of before. I wish that I had had more background knowledge surrounding the theories and concepts before taking this course. My suggestion for future international doctoral students is to search online for simplified explanations of the theories that you do not understand or watch online videos that provide brief introductions to those theories. Through enhancing your background knowledge, you can better prepare for Ph.D. coursework.

I eventually got through a difficult part of my Ph.D. program, and in the process of doing so, I developed a strong relationship with my supervisor and other professors. As Tseng and Newton

(2002) suggest, "the relationship between the international student and faculty (especially one's major academic advisor) has a significant effect on international students' learning" (p. 595).

The picture below was taken at the end of semester when the professors and students had a potluck together. For me, it was a celebration of my hard work, my courage, and my positive attitude that year.



Photograph three: A little celebration of my hard work

### **My Fourth Year in Canada**

Now in the fourth year, I have become used to living in Canada, and I regard St. John's as my "second home." Currently, I am preparing for my comprehensive exam and working on the research proposal for my dissertation. The picture below was taken in last September when I walked along the East Coast Trail for the first time. I think a research journey is like a hiking trail. When you stand at the starting point, you are not sure what you will experience, whether you will see good scenery, and how long it will take to finish your journey. I see new research projects as a new journey. No matter how much research you have done before, it is great to start with a fresh mind and to allow for unexpected experience.



Photograph four: Standing at a new starting point and no shortcut

I think a research journey is full of excitement, surprises, challenges, and uncertainties. The process of doing a Ph.D. program is like an emotional roller coaster since you may experience many emotional ups and downs during this process. However, I never regret doing a Ph.D. program and continuing my research journey. What I need to do is to keep working hard and to be passionate, positive, and to persevere.

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## **Part 16**

### **Rural Health and Education**

**Chapter 1: Guest Editor's Introduction**

**Chapter 2: Healer of Tomorrow**

**Chapter 3: Teaching and Learning: Simulating Rural Trauma**

**Chapter 4: Glutching, nish, and other idioms: reducing misunderstanding and improving patient safety during patient-clinician encounters in Newfoundland and Labrador**

**Chapter 5: Rural community as Context and Teacher for Health Professions Education**

**Chapter 6: Rural Medical Education in New Zealand**

**Chapter 7: Teaching Near and Far - Broome, Western Australia**

**Chapter 8: Exceptional students, exceptional technology**

**Chapter 9: Cultural connection through PBL**

**Chapter 10: Kate Bride: Academic and Friend**

**Chapter 11: Conclusion: The Work of Indigenizing the Academy**

## Guest Editor's Introduction

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I am writing this introduction from the *Akademik Ioffe*, a ship that is taking me to remote and rural places like Sable Island and Francois, iconic places to visit, where we are challenged both to deliver rural health and to provide health education for learners. I am the ship's doctor, and hope I do not encounter the kinds of clinical challenges that characterize practice in these small faraway places; if somebody gets sick or is injured aboard, or in Francois where there is no road, it is a far different proposition to care for them than in the university emergency department (ED) where I normally work. Similar challenges exist for delivering rural and remote health professions education (HPE).

MUN's medical school's mission states that students should receive the same quality of education wherever in the province they are learning; in reality it can be challenging far from the academic centre.

The articles in this collection are written by physicians and medical educators from near and far. Close to home, Dr. Sara Matheson writes about colorful and mysterious words used by many Newfoundlanders to describe their ailments and how, in order to understand and treat their patients, physicians must first appreciate the nuances of local language that form the basis of their communication.

Dr. Heidi Mayer from faraway rural New Zealand [NZ] teaches post-graduate physicians (called registrars in much of the Commonwealth), and describes a creative and popular program for rural teaching and learning in that setting.

A seven hour flight West of NZ in Broome West Australia, Dr. Christina Herceg works at the oldest established Aboriginal health centre in that state. She teaches registrars both in her clinic and via distance technology when they are working and studying in the outback (rural Australia), which may be as many as 3000 km away.

From the other side of the globe, Dr. Jill Allison and her Nepalese colleagues write about attracting, training and retaining rural physicians using a community-based and socially responsible partnership with Paton Academy in Kathmandu.

Interviewing several learners, clinicians and medical education experts, Tina Bankovic writes about simulation, a tool used by health professionals to practice a variety of skills without risk to patients. Simulation helps teach rural medical students and also helps rural graduate physicians to maintain skills that, while seldom needed, they must on occasion execute flawlessly in an emergency. In a second article these authors describe how simulation is used to train Aboriginal healers of tomorrow in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Healers of Tomorrow**

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Rural communities historically have difficulties recruiting and retaining doctors; doctors fulfill a placement or short-term contract, but then often leave for urban opportunities [1]. As a result, many rural residents lack long-term continuity of care. When a rural community also happens to be aboriginal, the problem gains another layer: short-term doctors do not stay in the community long enough to learn the culture or the traditions, including traditional medicine and traditional attitudes towards healing [2].

One potential approach is to train medical professionals from within the communities [3]. The hope is that, once trained, these professionals can bring these skills back home, combine them with their own knowledge of local and traditional medicine, and practice in the communities they came from.

Part of the role of the Faculty of Medicine's Aboriginal Health Initiative is to recruit medical students from aboriginal communities. However, according to the Initiative's Director, Dr. Carolyn Surges-Sparkes, "We weren't moving as deep into the communities as we needed to." The initiative wanted to "start planting the seeds" of possible health care careers when students were still young, before they were even considering university (personal communication October, 2015).

In an attempt to plant those seeds, Memorial University of Newfoundland's (MUN) Aboriginal Health Initiative ran a five-day camp for aboriginal high school students from across Newfoundland and Labrador in August, 2015. The camp, called the Healers of Tomorrow Gathering, exposed twelve high school students from across the province to health care careers via activities and discussions of areas like nursing, pharmacy and medicine. MUN'S Faculty of Medicine participated by offering two days of simulation workshops.

Activities were chosen by Dr. Sturges-Sparkes and by members of MUN's Clinical Learning and Simulation Centre based on two sets of criteria (personal communication, October, 2015): what teenage learners would enjoy, and what was logistically possible (specifically, what equipment was possible to transport from St. John's to Corner Brook and back). As a result, students participated in six simulation activities, varying from



proper hand-washing, to IV insertion on a simulated arm, to suturing, to checking vital signs on a baby mannequin.

### **The Gathering: Bridging Schools of Medicine**

Dr. Sturges-Sparkes points out that Westernized and aboriginal concepts of medicine are fundamentally different. For example, “[many aboriginal cultures] don’t call it health; they call it well-being. In the Miqmaq language, there is no word for health – only healing.” The Miqmaq culture sees humans as perpetually in the process of healing (the mind, heart and spirit in addition to the body). This is broader than the Western view, which defines health as the absence of disease.

The Healers of Tomorrow Gathering aimed to promote knowledge exchange between these spheres. While the workshops and activities focused on teaching Westernized medicine, the discussions focused on finding and examining the parallels and differences between Westernized and traditional aboriginal medicine. Each day of the camp ended with a nightly talking circle in which aboriginal students and elders had an opportunity to talk about their own traditional medicine. Elders brought in samples of plants traditionally used as medicine in Labrador and in the Corner Brook area. A highlight of the camp for many members of the MUN team was the realization that purple, one of the colours serendipitously chosen as a theme colour for the camp, was the traditional colour of healing.

Students and elders alike expressed gratitude, both in nightly talking circles and in their post-program evaluations that the camp organizers made an effort to “acknowledge aboriginal culture and aboriginal knowledge.” But Dr. Sturges-Sparkes wants to deepen that dynamic from acknowledgement to full-on collaboration, dissolving the separation between the “Westernized ways” and the aboriginal traditions: “My hope is that in future camps, we can work with aboriginal people to bring these ideas and their understanding right into the simulation activities.” The next round of the camp, slated for the summer of 2017, will see elders brought in at the curriculum-planning stage to help create culturally relevant scenarios to support the simulations.

In the future, Dr. Sturges-Sparkes hopes the program might expand to include Grade 9 students, and will eventually look for other ways to reach even younger students, which will involve the Aboriginal Health Initiative going into the communities rather than bringing the students out. She says the program aims to tell young aboriginal learners, “These career possibilities are within your grasp.” For many aboriginal students, medical careers are “not in their radar of possibility at all.”

Dr. Adam Dubrowski, Academic Director of the Clinical Learning and Simulation Centre and a co-organizer of the event, adds, “We hoped to help these kids see that being a health care provider is a viable future option for them, that the learning process is not so different from the process that they are familiar with, and that the profession is very rewarding. If this was an effective way of convincing them to come and get a healthcare degree, they would then go back to their community and provide these

services there. This may introduce sustainability and stability of health care delivery in aboriginal communities” (personal communication October, 2015).

### **“Indigenous” Learning: Is there such a thing?**

Dr. Dubrowski notes that in aboriginal culture, knowledge is often transmitted by elders showing the younger generations how to perform a task, and then allowing them the opportunity to perform that task. This process closely mirrors simulation-based medical education.

Simulation-augmented learning is supported by Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle, which asserts that effective learning occurs when a learner progresses through a four-stage cycle [4]. In the First Stage, the learner participates in a concrete experience. In the Second Stage, the learner reflects upon that concrete experience, either on their own or under the guidance of an educator or facilitator. In the Third Stage, learners form abstract concepts and generalizations drawn from the first two stages; now the learner gains understanding of how the learned content can apply to other contexts. In the Fourth and Final Stage, the learner uses the abstract concepts and generalizations constructed in the Third Stage to test hypotheses in future situations, resulting in new experiences.

This four-stage cycle closely parallels what happens in traditional forms of aboriginal education. Dr. Dubrowski explains with an example: “An [aboriginal] youngster is taken hunting. He or she has a concrete experience: - say, during that hunting session, no game is caught. An elder will provide feedback, demonstration, perhaps an anecdote or a story from the past. The youngster connects the two experiences and forms a representation of what should have been done, and how this can be applied in various situations. He or she will utilize this new set of skills and test it next time they hunt.”

Research shows that children within indigenous communities who have not had contact with non-indigenous communities generally have a much more hands-on way of learning [5, 6]: this research does indeed support the idea that aboriginal learners may benefit more from simulation activities than from lecture-based learning. However, Dr. Sturges-Sparkes is not convinced that hands-on learning is necessarily exclusively better suited to aboriginal learners. Nowadays, young learners are increasingly better suited for simulation than for lectures, no matter what their family or cultural background. “We need to factor in the fact that when kids arrive at university now, they may learn differently than previous generations because of technology,”

Therefore, Dr. Sturges-Sparkes concludes, the kinds of learning activities one needs to appeal to this generation are different from those of previous generations. If there once was a gap between indigenous and non-indigenous learners regarding lecture-based learning, technology may very well be sealing that gap; simulation and other hands-on activities may now be more appealing—and more effective—for young learners in general.

*We would like to acknowledge Carolyn Sturge Sparkes (Coordinator, Aboriginal Health Initiative) and Barry Trenchard (Medical Education and Laboratory Support Services Clinical Learning and Simulation Center) of Memorial University of Newfoundland for their help with this project. Also, the International Grenfell Foundation for funding the camp.*

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## Teaching and Learning: Simulating Rural Trauma

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Last summer, third-year medical students Desmond Whalen and Chris Harty donned scrubs and monitored the vital signs of a mannequin.

That might sound like an ordinary occurrence for medical students at Memorial University. Simulations like these are a large part of medical education in Canada, and medical students quickly become adept at performing a variety of procedures on lifelike mannequins. But Whalen and Harty's experience was somewhat different. They performed the whole procedure on camera – in a helicopter simulator.

Whalen and Harty were filming a teaching scenario they went on to publish along with a team of doctors and researchers from Memorial University of Newfoundland's Faculty of Medicine and the Marine Institute [1]. The scenario describes a dramatic case: a boy is rushed to the Emergency Room after an accident on ice renders him unconscious. The boy appears to have a blood clot in his brain. His doctor phones a neurosurgeon, who recommends the patient be transferred to a tertiary care centre in St. John's via helicopter. En route, the doctor discovers a problem with the patient's airway. The helicopter must make an emergency landing so the doctor can fix the problem before continuing on to St. John's.

The case was based on a real-life scenario from a rural community in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). The idea of rewriting a true story for the purposes of medical education is nothing new. Neither is using video, a medium whose authenticity and comprehensiveness make it an attractive teaching tool [2]. What is unusual about this case, according to Dr. Tia Renouf, Chair of Emergency Medicine at MUN's Faculty of Medicine, is that the scenario features rural doctors, who may see a much broader scope of medical cases than their urban counterparts (personal communication, October, 2015). They might be called upon to practice anything from anaesthesia to home care for the elderly. The farther away from a city a physician practices, the broader that scope becomes [3].

Scenario co-author Whalen, who completed a series of rural placements shortly after filming the video, feels drawn to rural medicine for precisely that reason. “You have to be a jack-of-all-trades,” Whalen explains. Ask him how his placements went, and his eyes sparkle as he describes the wide range of procedures he saw, such as laparoscopic hiatal hernia repairs, vasectomies and both simple and radical mastectomies. The vast numbers of learners who line up for bedside teaching in urban areas mean that it is unlikely a medical student would have the opportunity to observe all of these procedures (and more) on a single rotation.

Rural doctors face some obvious challenges. Though they see a wide range of health problems, they typically see each specific occurrence less often. This includes what is known as *high-stakes, low-frequency cases*, rare situations that rural doctors must manage expertly, regardless of how infrequently they occur. Many physicians feel inadequately prepared to deal with these kinds of cases in rural practice [4].

### **Simulation as a Solution**

Medical education offers a solution to this: simulation. This immersive technique can be used to teach and learn a variety of skills, knowledge and attitudes [5], and is now a standard part of health professions education. Students practice on task trainers (simulated body parts), on high-fidelity simulators (computerized mannequins with lifelike heartbeats, breath and mannerisms) and on standardized patients (everyday people playing the role of patients) before entering real-life clinics to treat real-life patients. Simulation allow learners to practice high-stakes, low-frequency scenarios *before* they commence work in remote areas and provides a risk-free learning environment [6]. Simulation also facilitates continuing medical education (CME), allowing practising rural doctors to perform simulated versions of critical medical procedures in between real-life occurrences, so that, should one strike in real life, these doctors feel ready.

“There's nothing like being in a situation where something goes wrong to teach you what can go wrong. You never forget that”, explains Dr. Renouf (personal communication, January, 2016). The obvious advantage with simulation is that whatever goes wrong, does so in a safe learning environment that is risk-free to patients.

### **Transportation in Rural Healthcare**

Dr. Mohamed Ravalia, a 30-year practitioner in Twillingate, NL, identified this particular story as an ideal teaching tool, because “[I]t outlines the potential hazards in transporting patients from a rural/remote site to a tertiary care centre, particularly when air transportation is used as the mode of transfer” (personal communication, September, 2015).

Some rural cases require sophisticated interventions that are unavailable in the immediate area; often transporting the patient to a larger tertiary care centre is the only option for managing the injury—and, sometimes, for saving the patient's life.

But transportation itself is risky and complex. Unlike a hospital, where support and equipment is available, the team in the air is limited to the equipment, the personnel and the expertise they have brought on board. A rural doctor might have to perform, in a noisy jostling helicopter, a high-stakes/low-frequency procedure they have not performed on stable ground for years.

Thus, for the rural doctor, transportation and healthcare are closely entwined.

Dr. Renouf, who herself has many years' experience with rural medical evacuations in Australia, Micronesia and the Canadian North—sometimes over 350 kilometres from the nearest tertiary care centre—feels that air transport should receive consistent curricular attention, particularly for learners who intend to practice in rural areas.

This is an educational opportunity for simulation. “Simulation offers the opportunity to practice these scenarios in a controlled environment and ensures that the nuances of medical transportation become second nature to physicians,” explains Whalen.

Performing a medical procedure in a moving helicopter will not feel quite so daunting if the sensation of the helicopter itself feels familiar to the doctor – a familiarity that a simulator can help the doctor attain.

“We have an excellent medevac system in this province,” notes Dr. Ravalia, “and a dedicated flight team is accessible in most life threatening situations. Exposure and experience with medevacs in a more structured manner would certainly be beneficial to MD's and trainees in rural and remote settings.”

Dr. Adam Dubrowski, Academic Director of MUN's Clinical Learning and Simulation Centre and a co-author of the case, refers to Specificity of Practice – a sports theory that also applies to education. Dr. Dubrowski explains:

“To become better at a particular skill, you must perform that skill in the environment in which it will be performed. The underpinning mechanism is that context drives action. In medical education, and in this case, teaching students how to intubate a patient in a simulated emergency room may be less than ideal if they have to perform the action in a rushed manner in a helicopter, as the context – that is, the instrument availability and placement, light condition, space, noise levels, et cetera) are fundamentally different” (personal communication, February, 2016).

There are obvious limits to just how much a medical professional can train. Medevac helicopters, like emergency rooms, are spaces prone to what Dr. Renouf calls the



“unpredictably unpredictable.” While one can never fully be prepared for everything that can possibly occur during a risky medical intervention, particularly one that involves transport (case in point: this scenario’s emergency landing), one can practice performing procedures in, for example, moving environments. In other words, the helicopter itself does not necessarily have to be a source of unpredictability.

### **Video as a bridge**

Video can be helpful to depict simulated cases. Videos are “authentic and illustrative,” and present what de Lang et al. (2007) [2] refer to as a “comprehensive view” – allowing viewers to see not only the clinical side of things, but also the bigger-picture details, such as communication, in this particular case between doctors, helicopter pilot and air traffic control. Videos might also be more easily committed to memory [2]. Finally, Kozma (1991) [7] noted that video might provide students with mental representations of things they themselves have never experienced and connect them to real-life situations. For example, de Lang et al. (2007) [2] found that watching videos allowed students to better visualize medical conditions that they had not yet encountered in their training (or in real life). The team behind the helicopter-simulation scenario hopes that this scenario will, similarly, allow students to better visualize the medical transport process, as well as some of the potential complications that can arise in transit.

*We would like to acknowledge Robert Brown and the Offshore Safety and Survival Centre Research Unit of the Marine Institute for allowing us to use the helicopter simulator and for their help running the simulation.*

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**Glutching, nish, and other idioms: Reducing misunderstanding and improving patient safety during patient-clinician encounters in Newfoundland and Labrador**

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*“I was going over the bridge when I found my chest and was all overcome. I said to my wife - I’m all in”*

As physicians, we have all been taught that “history is 90% of the diagnosis”; and I am willing to bet that we have all struggled through a patient interview made difficult by a language barrier. But it is not just foreign language that poses a dilemma; dialects, colloquialisms and slang can also affect our interpretation of what a patient is trying to say. As Burnum (1984) states “We do not and cannot care for the patient we do not understand” [1]. Clear communication is vital to patient safety, diagnosis and management.

It is generally agreed that patient safety is predominantly about the proper design of health systems and patient care processes, but of equal importance is the art of communication. The most common underlying cause of serious adverse events resulting in death or permanent loss of bodily function in the United States is communication failure [2]. Communication failures come in many forms – failure to recognize language or health literacy barriers to patient/family understanding, or failure to transmit important patient information when handing a patient over to the care of another physician, among others [2].

In 1991, O’Dwyer [3] introduced the idea that physicians in Newfoundland and Labrador need to recognize dialect differences in order to improve communication between patients and physicians. In his article, a small number of examples were given which were taken from two sources:

The Dictionary of Newfoundland English and the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive. Not only will awareness and understanding of the Newfoundland dialect improve communication, but it will also reduce the misrepresentation of symptoms, thereby improving patient safety.

Newfoundland and Labrador has a unique dialect and recognition of this difference is vital to health care in this province. The aim of this article is to highlight the need for healthcare practitioners in this province to understand the variety of dialects, as well as celebrate our wonderful culture. Between 2009 and 2015, our research team has collected examples of unique words or phrases used by patients, from physicians working across NL.

The study identified 106 discrete words or phrases that were felt to be unique to NL. Many were identified by multiple participants. Participants were also asked to interpret what the word or phrase meant and to indicate the clinical setting in which it was used. The responses were heard in a variety of settings, including family practice, the emergency room (ER), specialist's clinics, in-patient wards and in discussion with other healthcare providers. Each discrete word or phrase was then cross referenced against bodies of work related to the NL language, which include, "Devine's Folk Lore of Newfoundland" [4], "The Dictionary of Newfoundland English" [5] and "The Newfoundland Tongue" [6].

Many words or phrases had multiple spellings or multiple interpretations, and some were identified in many different regions of the province. Table 1 below presents a number of the results collected; a complete list is available by request from the principal investigator (Dr. Sarah Mathieson). Interpretation refers to those provided by study participants, while Definition refers to the definition of each word/phrase as found in the aforementioned references. Spellings used will be as presented in the aforementioned references where any discrepancy was noted.

While some of these words and phrases may seem natural to some of us, many will be unknown. As a clinical clerk I looked after a woman admitted for non-ST-elevation myocardial infarction (heart attack). Each day I asked if she had any pain and each day she said "just a smurting". If only I had known then what I know now.

Word/Phrase	Interpretation	Definition
scram	numb and tingly	cramped, paralyzed or stiff from disease or injury
served me barbarous	treated me badly	bad or atrocious in quality or condition
roach	hoarse	of a voice, deep, rasping, hoarse; distorted
squish	not straight	askew; out of alignment; in desperate straits
rind	scrape	to scrape the skin off; to skin the knee
glutch	swallow or gulp	a gulp or swallow; throat
I'm all in	short of breath	beat out
overcome	anxiety; short of breath; pre-syncope (faint)	-
giddy	dizzy; unbalanced	-
lost my nature	erectile dysfunction; sexual problems	to become impotent; nature = sexual drive
poisoned	frustrated	annoyed, irritated, disappointed; disgusted
a scrunching and a gnawing	crepitus	scrunching = to produce a crushing, grating sound
smurts/smerts	hurts, pain	pain or sting
fish or no fish	to have to do it	regardless of circumstances, expression of determination
nish/niche	tender, painful, soft, unwell, sensitive, paresthesia (numbness)	soft or tender, sore or inflamed, delicate, brittle
find	pain, sore, aware of a problem with a body part	to feel a sensation (discomfort or pain), to suffer from, to act as a midwife "she found the child"
hard pain	very painful, extreme, intense	-

Table 1: Selected words or phrases found to be unique to Newfoundland and Labrador.

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## Rural Community as Context and Teacher for Health Professions Education

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**Abstract:** Nepal is a poor, landlocked country located on the Indian subcontinent between China and India. The challenge of finding human resources for rural community health care settings is not unique to Nepal but the health sector has made significant improvement in national health indices over the past half a century. However in terms of access to and quality of health services and impact, there remains a gross urban-rural disparity. In order to achieve its stated mission of improving rural health in Nepal by training medical students and other health workers to have real-life experience of rural areas and develop an attitude of working in rural areas among its graduates, Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) has adopted a model of community based education termed “community- based education and learning (CBLE)” as one of the principal strategies and pedagogic methods. This article outlines the PAHS approach of ruralizing the academy which aligns with the concept of community engagement in



health professional education. We describe how PAHS has embedded health education in rural community settings, encouraging the learning context to be rural, fostering the opportunities for the community and peripheral health workers to participate in teaching-learning as well as evaluation of medical students, and involving community people in curriculum design and implementation.

Nepal is a poor, landlocked country located on the Indian subcontinent between China and India. With a population of 30 million, nearly 83% live in the rural areas that are mainly hills and mountain regions. Per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per capita Gross National Income (GNI) are projected to be US\$ 703 and 717 respectively and about one fourth of the population (25.16%) lives below poverty lines [1]. Health expenditure per capita remains low at US\$18.09, out of which 55% is borne by households (out-of-pocket) at the time of service [2].

The challenge of finding human resources for rural community health care settings is not unique to Nepal. However, the small country has been innovative in its attempts at overcoming primary health care challenges. The implementation of a network of Female Community Health Volunteers is one of the examples where these volunteers serve as a conduit of primary health care information, support and care in a system that also utilizes task shifting and upskilling to fill health care needs [3]. As a result Nepal's health sector has made significant improvement in national health indices over the past half a century [4]. However in terms of access to and quality of health services and impact, there remains a gross urban-rural disparity. For example, while the national average life expectancy is about 67 years, it is about 10 years lower for the remote rural population [5] and the infant mortality rate in the rural mountainous areas is more than double that of urban areas [6].

One of the reasons for such disparities is a lack of high quality health services in rural and remote areas partly related to ineffective medical education, inefficient deployment and poor retention of health human resources there. Two-thirds of the estimated 4,000 physicians engaged in the health sector are concentrated in urban areas [5] while rural health care facilities remain understaffed. Past attempts at bridging the gap have included the development of the MD General Practice (MDGP) program in the 1980s as collaboration between the Institute of Medicine at Tribhuvan University in Nepal and the University of Calgary with support from the Canadian government [7]. This program is based on a curriculum that trains qualified physicians to be competent generalists with skills suited to rural and District Hospital practice. The curriculum and model have been adopted by a number of countries including India [8]. However, this program has remained under-recognized due to a lack of career development opportunities within the national health system and produces only few graduates a year.

As in most countries, health professions education in Nepal is predominantly urban centered and generally focusing in the cure of individuals whose problem represents only the tip of the iceberg of the prevailing community health problems [9, 10]. As a result, health professions education programs have not been very successful in helping graduates understand the relevance of community and societal needs or in preparing them adequately to meet such needs [10]. Furthermore, the majority of medical schools in Nepal have not embraced the social accountability principle that directs medical schools to partner and collaborate with communities, governments, healthcare organizations, and health professionals for improved health outcomes in the communities they serve [11, 12].

It is in this context, Patan Academy of Health Sciences (PAHS) was established in 2008 with a considerably different mission, which is directed by the social accountability principle [13] to help reduce existing rural-urban health inequity in Nepal.

*“PAHS is dedicated to sustained improvement of the health of the people in Nepal, especially those who are poor and living in rural areas, through innovation, equity, excellence and love in education, service and research.”*

In order to achieve its stated mission of improving rural health in Nepal by training medical students and other health workers to have real life experience of rural areas and develop an attitude of working in rural areas among its graduates, PAHS has adopted a model of community based education termed “community-based education and learning (CBLE)” as one of the principal strategies and pedagogic methods. This is one of the several measures taken for ruralizing the academy, thereby helping to meet the challenge of producing physicians who are able to work in underserved areas in future [14-16].

First launched as a program in June 2010, the PAHS undergraduate medical education curriculum emphasizes the importance of population health issues, a sound understanding of real life context of rural communities and the national health system. The community health sciences (CHS) course was recognized as a major component of the curriculum allocating 25% of total curricular time [8]. PAHS’s CBLE program employs a setting based approach [9] exposing students for varying durations to diverse contexts that include urban slums, rural communities and different levels of rural health care institutions [17] within the national health system (NHS). Such experiential learning opportunities are expected to help graduates to have a firm grasp of concepts and principles of preventive health and social determinants of health while developing the necessary skills in management, epidemiology and research. Students get firsthand opportunities to hear from the community about their needs and also learn about community strengths for undertaking the actions required for health improvement.

The PAHS approach of ruralizing the academy aligns with the concept of community engagement [18] in health professional education by embracing the opportunity for

education to be embedded in rural community settings, encouraging the learning context to be rural, fostering the opportunities for the community and peripheral health workers participate in teaching-learning as well as evaluation of medical students, and involving community people in curriculum design and implementation. The CBLE strategy adopted by PAHS continues to engage students, faculty and the academy itself with rural communities, local government bodies, community based organizations (CBOs) as well as the national health system (NHS). Figure 1 depicts various approaches PAHS has initiated for ruralizing the academy.

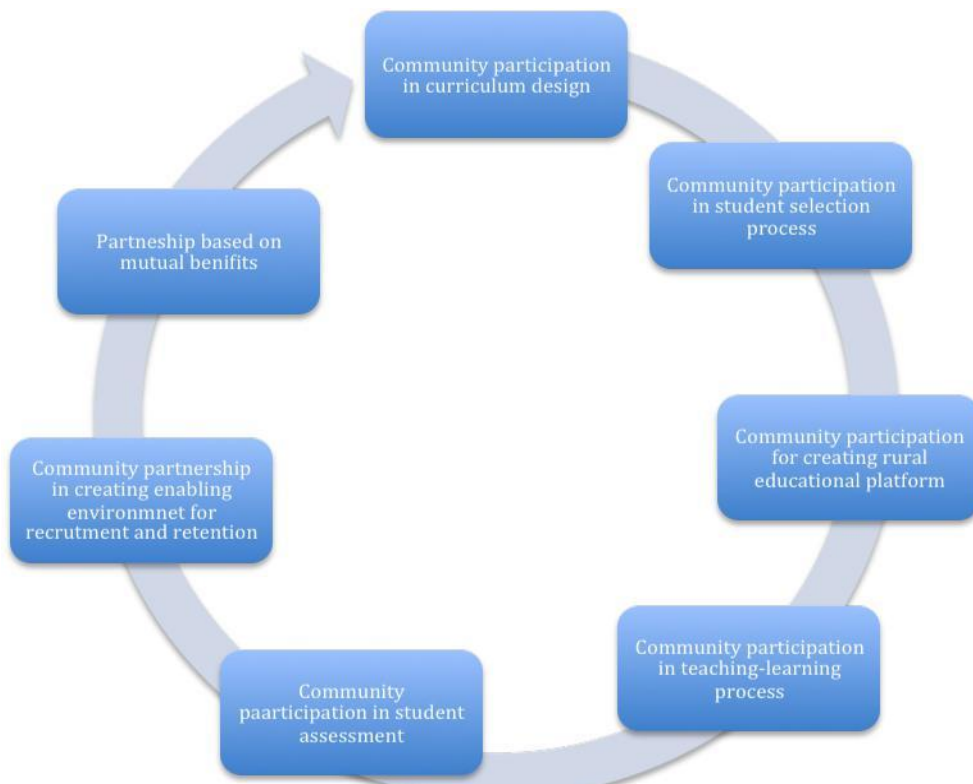


Fig 1: Community engagement for ruralizing PAHS program

### **Community participation in curriculum design:**

The PAHS undergraduate medical curriculum development process underwent a wide consultation with stakeholders including rural communities and consumer groups. The community specifically contributed in defining the mission and the graduate attributes [19] that led the further steps of curriculum development [15, 20].

### **Community participation in Student Selection Process:**

Rural engagement begins very early at PAHS starting with the student selection process that gives preferential credits to those who are from rural, remote and disadvantaged sectors of society<sup>8</sup> but having reasonably sound cognitive ability. The community is part of the student selection process especially in assessing candidates' communication skills as well as sensitivity, compassion, empathy towards the societal contexts and needs. They also participate in the orientation program of students upon their enrollment as part of the academic team and provide insights on what communities expect from the medical professionals at the outset of students' journey into this field.

### **Community Participation for Creating Rural Educational Platforms:**

PAHS has developed partnerships with women's groups, women's cooperative groups, CBOs, Red Cross, local community leaders as well as local health institutions at community level. Agreements have been made with Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) for mobilizing health sector collaboration at various levels for CBLE field postings of students. In addition, support for program implementation has been gathered through inter-sectoral collaboration with local administrative bodies of the government such as District Development Committees, Village Development Committees, Police and Security units, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the field of social mobilization and community development.

### **Community Participation in Teaching and Learning Process:**

PAHS has adopted CBLE both as the strategy and as pedagogy. It locates medical education in community context and helps infiltrate the academic process with a solid understanding of rural health needs. The community thus serves as a platform for both teaching and learning activities. Community members participate in planning and implementation of postings, and are also actively involved in the teaching-learning process by providing and demonstrating local context. They are involved in all levels of discussion. The community partnership also ensures that students have safe, adequate and appropriate lodging and meals and are supervised, guided and mentored in day-to-day activities during the posting period. Community members are also key informants and provide deeper insights into the rural life's opportunities, challenges and community assets that are important for health professionals. Finally, they provide constructive

feedback to the students on their presentation of key findings during the exit meeting held at the end of each posting.

### **Community participation in Student Assessment:**

PAHS has developed an innovative blend of both content (cognitive) and process (non-cognitive skills and behaviors) evaluation of learning with both formative and summative measures. It is in the area of skills and behaviors that the community is directly involved in assessing students' day to day activities, behavior, attitude, communication, empathy, compassion, relationship building they showed during their stay in the community. Community members including heads of households hosting students during their field stay, local community leaders and local health workers are involved in assessing students using objectively structured formats developed for this specific purpose. The assessment of students by community partners contributes to formative evaluations but is also taken into account by faculty supervisors in summative evaluations. This is a distinct feature of PAHS as an academic institution wherein the partnership with community extends to the opportunity and responsibility for lay/community members to contribute to the summative evaluation of its students.

### **Community Partnership in Creating Enabling Environment for Recruitment and Retention:**

PAHS is expanding partnerships with the government and local bodies in order to create enabling environments for the deployment and retention of graduates in rural areas through advocacy and investing in medical students' education. PAHS has set up a collaborative scholarship scheme where communities and local governments pay for students' education based on a commitment to return of service locally.

### **Partnership Based on Mutual Benefits:**

Partnerships with community are being developed on the basis of mutual benefits. While community serves as both the learning platform and resource for the academy, it also receives a range of benefits during this collaborative process. Local needs are taken into considerations while developing specific objectives and detailed activities of students' field postings. In the field, students assess the demographic and health status of an assigned catchment population by applying qualitative and quantitative methods learnt in school, analyzing primary and secondary data, and preparing reports. Such reports help in program planning for catchment communities. Students carry out health facility assessment surveys, identify low performing program areas and share their findings with service providers and program managers to organize discussion for drawing feasible suggestions or plans of action for improvement.

Community members and local health workers who are directly involved in guiding and supervising students are given status as facilitators from PAHS for each field posting. There are different levels of posting of various duration [16]; as each time the community

member might be different, multiple members have received the facilitator status. Those who are in the health system and qualify for PAHS faculty status are recognized as such based on eligibility criteria. This recognition is key to ruralizing the academy, designating teachers across a wide range of skills and attributes who come from different geographical locations.

In addition to these, the community benefits from increased access to tertiary care through a referral mechanism worked out in partnership with local health workers and institutions. Patan Hospital, the principal teaching hospital of PAHS, is tertiary referral center. If a health worker refers a patient from a teaching and learning site, that patient will not be stay in the queue for registration but rather will see the appropriate specialist directly. Students are deeply involved in health promotion while they are in the community, and assist local health facility and staff in day-to-day service, depending on level of the posting and the skill level of the students.

During their community posting, advanced year students are directly involved in providing basic primary health care to communities while they are supervised by local health workers. Rewards include fact that students and community members keep in touch as the students are promoted in their studies. Moreover, students become involved in advocacy activities both locally and at the policy level as they come to understand and argue for programs that will benefit community. Efforts are being made to expand this partnership, to open up new avenues for collaborative projects and programs like community-based implementation research, quality improvement programs and strengthening of local systems.

### **Conclusion and way ahead:**

So far PAHS has engaged communities with many successes and no major associated problems. Although aware that it may come in the future, the school has not noted any obvious community fatigue. Rather students, faculty and the academy are receiving continued support and enthusiastic involvement from communities who feel proud to be part of program. There are positive changes in health-seeking behaviors and level and quality of care. The various approaches of ruralizing academy described in this article are in alignment with as well as suggestive of literature findings [10, 21-26] for being conducive to improving overall coverage of rural areas. Adoption of such approaches is, therefore, expected to help reduce the existing rural-urban health disparity in Nepal - the overall vision of PAHS as an institution. While it is premature to draw definitive conclusions until PAHS graduates enter the rural health workforce and the effectiveness of the program is evaluated, the positive aspects of community engagement are already a success story.



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## **Rural Medical Education in New Zealand**

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### **Introduction**

Approximately 400 domestic medical students (excludes overseas students) graduate from the two New Zealand medical schools in Auckland (Auckland University) and Dunedin (Otago University) each year [1]. Although the number of graduates is increasing each year, there remains a shortage of rural practitioners [2]. Among the perceived disadvantages of rural practice are relative isolation coupled with onerous on call duties, the lack of specialist training opportunities and poor medical education.

Exposure to rural medicine occurs throughout the undergraduate curriculum. Opportunities to experience rural practice are available at the house surgeon level; postgraduate specialist training in rural and provincial hospital practice is a recognised training pathway. For doctors working in rural practice, as well as for those learning online, both regionally-provided education and specialist emergency medicine training (including trauma) are available, in addition to local and international conference opportunities.

This article outlines these aspects of medical education for potential and current rural doctors.

### **Undergraduate Medical Education**

The undergraduate medical course is 6 years long. Final exams are taken at the end of the fifth year and the sixth year is spent consolidating clinical skills in general practice and hospital specialities. Exposure to rural medical practice begins in Year 2 or 3 while medical students are in the pre-clinical phase before they see patients. Students are either attached to a general practice in an observational capacity or spend a week in a rural town investigating health care facilities and speaking to a wide range of health providers, including general practitioners, pharmacists, Maori Health units, midwives, district nurses and many others.

More substantial time is spent in rural general practice during Years 4, 5 and 6. Students have placements for between 2 and 6 weeks, depending on which medical school they are attending. During these attachments they spend most of their time supervised and mentored by a rural general practitioner. They are given their own room and carry out consultations before they are reviewed by their supervising general practitioner. Students

experience the breadth and depth of rural practice, which includes palliative care, minor surgery, rest home visits, on call and emergencies which present at the surgery or in the community. During their time in practice, they also write up, present and discuss several cases focussing particularly on community aspects of medical care.

### **Rural Medicine Immersion Programme**

At both universities Year 5 students may apply to study on the year-long regional-rural programme. It integrates primary, secondary and tertiary medical care through real-life experiential learning. During this year students are guided and mentored by local and visiting tertiary hospital specialists, the Maori health faculty and providers, mental health teams, midwives, pharmacists, physiotherapists, rural general practitioners, rural hospital generalists and rural nurses. The curriculum is delivered remotely and use of IT (audio and video conferencing equipment) is widespread, allowing frequent access to city-based specialist services, and maintaining critical communication lines with fellow students. There is a strong emphasis on self-directed learning.

A recent Otago rural immersion programme student wrote:

“The biggest difference for the rural immersion programme (RMIP) is that it is really great for clinical training - more clinical time and more hands on, but also much more self-directed, and less dedicated specialty teaching/exposure. We got far more clinical exposure than the city-based students, eg in paediatrics, 5th year students in Wellington have a 10 week paediatric run, during which they only spend one week attached to a team in the hospital (as well as some bedside teaching and 2 weeks in the community). We had 2 half-day tutorials every week, and apart from that we were in the hospital or GP clinic working with patients and with the consultants the whole time.

What's more, there was only one of us at a time in said clinical placement, so we were always lucky enough to be one-on-one with the consultant or GP. There were no house surgeons or registrars, which meant we got teaching from very experienced healthcare providers, and also had much more of a role to play, rather than just watching over someone's shoulder and getting in the way!”

“There is always the worry with RMIP about getting enough specialty exposure as most of the centres are generalist, and about learning the right things for exams. However I found that this was not the problem we thought it might be, as during the year you do end up seeing lots of the common presentations of each specialty, and can follow their notes or even send them to the tertiary hospital if referred. There's also a lot of content that we are not directly taught of course, but this can be covered in textbooks such as the Canadian "Toronto Notes" that are very popular here, and Oxford Clinical Handbooks which is what I used.”

“To be honest, I chose RMIP because I wanted to spend the year mountainbiking and skiing in Queenstown, but I would definitely choose to do it again, not only to spend time

in a new place, but also for the wonderful one-on-one teaching opportunities, the much friendlier environment, the huge amount of clinical experience we get compared to the city-based students, and the fact that we had a role and were able to be part of the team and be useful, hardly ever just observing. I think it was really really beneficial to me, and I was lucky to do it.”

## **Postgraduate Medical Education**

### **House Surgeon General Practice**

The postgraduate rural general practice training programme was set up in 2002 and offers a three month run in a rural practice for Year 2+ postgraduate hospital doctors. The programme is run by the Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP). It aims to expose junior doctors to rural general practice, rural medicine and training outside the hospital setting, with the hope of influencing their future career plans towards work in rural general practice. During the attachment they see their own patients, with a supervising GP on hand for advice and help when needed. Trainees are expected to see a diverse range of patients with a greater level of personal autonomy and responsibility for patients than in hospital settings. These experiences are designed to improve their understanding of primary care, and the importance of an effective GP-hospital interface. The attachment includes 2 hours protected teaching from an accredited teacher each week, which is funded by the RNZCGP, as well as protected time for study and learning.

### **General Practice Registrar**

Doctors entering the General Practice Training Programme (GPEP) can choose to work in a rural practice, to undertake primarily practice-based learning, guided day-to-day by a GP teacher. In addition to all the usual clinical work, review of cases and consultations, one-on-one teaching and informal discussions, rural trainees take part in PRIME (Primary Response In Medical Emergencies) training (see below).

### **PRIME Training**

The PRIME programme is a jointly commissioned project funded by the Ministry of Health and ACC (Accident Compensation Corporation – a government funded insurance company covering all accidents). It is administered by St John’s, New Zealand’s ambulance service. It has been developed to provide both the coordinated response and appropriate management of emergencies in rural locations. The PRIME programme utilises the skills of specially trained GPs and/or rural nurses in areas to support the ambulance service where the response time for assistance would otherwise be significant or where additional medical skills would assist with the patient’s condition. The key objectives of PRIME are to support the ambulance service with a rapid response to

seriously ill or injured patients, and to provide higher level medical skills than may otherwise be available from the ambulance service in rural communities.

Rural GPs and nurses are initially required to undertake a 5 day PRIME training course for trauma and medical emergencies. Then every two years they need to update their skills with a 2 day refresher course. Both courses include theory and practical sessions including managing mock vehicle accidents, and scenarios with multiple injuries.

### **Postgraduate Diploma in Rural and Provincial Hospital Practice**

This is an advanced nationally recognised qualification for medical practitioners who staff rural and provincial hospitals. These doctors require both broad based and specific skills, which may extend beyond that of rural general practice. Core papers include The Context of Rural Hospital Medicine, Communication, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgical Specialties, Medical Specialties, Cardiorespiratory Medicine and Trauma/Emergencies. A number of elective papers from a wide variety of topics, such as Maori Health, Travel Medicine, Ethics and Wilderness and Expedition Medicine can be studied. The programme usually takes 2-5 years to complete in part time study.

### **Rural Hospital Medicine Training**

The Rural Hospital Doctor training pathway provides vocational education for rural hospital doctors which prepares them to work in the community's rural hospitals. During this training rural doctors acquire a core body of generalist knowledge as well as specific skills and attitudes that are needed to practice competently in a rural environment and a rural hospital.

The training programme is divided into an academic programme, approved clinical attachments and a final assessment. The academic programme is run either by the University of Otago (Diploma in Rural Hospital Medicine) or the University of Auckland (Diploma in Community Emergency Medicine). Trainees are also required to successfully complete EMST (Early Management of Severe Trauma), ATLS (Advanced Trauma Life Support) Level 7 and APLS (Advanced Paediatric Life Support) courses. The academic component is spread over 3-4 years.

The clinical training programme comprises a minimum of four years full-time equivalent in compulsory, recommended and elective training attachments. The compulsory runs include one year in rural hospital medicine and 3 or 6 month runs in general medicine, emergency medicine, paediatrics, anaesthetics/ICU and rural general practice.

The Division of Rural Hospital Medicine New Zealand (part of the RNZCGP) accredits the clinical attachments, facilitates education, and provides processes to ensure clinical skills have been acquired. It also administers the final assessment for Fellowship (Vocational recognition).

Before entering into rural hospital medicine training, doctors have to have completed at least two full-time equivalent years of appropriate medical experience after graduating.



This can include rural hospital and rural general practice runs. On entering the programme the registrar is assigned an Educational Facilitator (a vocationally registered rural hospital doctor). The registrar and educational facilitator produce a professional report and training plan. The report identifies areas of prior learning and learning needs. The training plan will include intended clinical attachments, academic qualifications needed to meet the registrar's identified learning needs, and requirements for fellowship. There is considerable flexibility both at entry and exit from rural hospital training and practice. Accreditors make it possible to train concurrently in, for example, rural hospital medicine and another generalist scope of practice such as general practice or emergency medicine.

## **Summary**

Exposure to rural medical education starts in the undergraduate medical course with students spending time in rural general practice. Some students have the opportunity to study for one year on the Rural Medicine Immersion Programme as part of their undergraduate studies. Experience in rural medicine can be acquired as a junior doctor and at registrar level in general practice training. There is a postgraduate diploma in rural and provincial hospital practice and vocational training in rural hospital medicine for rural hospital doctors.

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## Teaching Near and Far – Broome, Western Australia

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Broome is a coastal town in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia. It has a population of around 15,000, making it the largest town in the region. About a quarter of the population is Aboriginal [1]. Broome was developed around the pearling industry, and more recently tourism and outlying mining industries have been important for the town. It is a beautiful and interesting, if sometimes challenging, place to live and work.

I work at the Aboriginal Medical Service in Broome. I have the privilege of teaching General Practice (GP) registrars under the Australian General Practice Training program (AGPT), resident medical officers and medical students in this practice. I also work as a supervisor for the Remote Vocational Training Scheme (RVTS). RVTS is an Australia-wide organization that provides General Practice (GP) training for doctors in rural and remote areas, allowing them to stay in one community for the duration of their training. Other training programs, including AGPT, require that registrars change locations/practices at least once during their training. RVTS has recently expanded to include a stream for registrars in Aboriginal Medical Services.

These 2 supervisor roles are quite different. The AGPT registrars in my workplace come for 6 or 12 month placements. They are employed as part of a regional Aboriginal Health Training program administered by the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services organization (KAMS) in partnership with the Western Australian General Practice and Training organization (WAGPET). More information about this program can be found in a recent review document [2].

Most registrars in our workplace are Australian-trained doctors. The GP registrars have on site supervision by myself or the other senior doctors, several of whom are also accredited supervisors. The registrars receive a considerable amount of face to face teaching, both formal/ semi formal tutorials and “corridor teaching”. I am currently developing a series of tutorial topics to make our teaching more consistent, and to ensure that common/ important topics for our area and our patients, as well as for General Practice more widely, are adequately covered. Both of the General Practice colleges in Australia, the Royal Australian College of General Practice (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) have curricula that cover hundreds of pages; it is impossible to cover all areas of the curriculum during a registrar’s placement.

My role with RVTS is quite different. Most registrars in this program are international medical graduates (IMGs). They have widely differing previous experience, and differing learning needs. RVTS provides weekly online tutorials, twice yearly intensive face-to-face workshops, and medical educators who oversee training. I have been a supervisor for

trainees in Derby (220km distant from Broome), Halls Creek (700km away), and currently Kalgoorlie (2000km away). Clearly on site supervision is not possible, though clinical teaching visits are arranged. There are arrangements for local support from senior doctors. I talk to my registrar via phone or Skype, initially once a week, then less often as their training progresses. These discussions may be about cases, specific topics, or general pastoral care. I see this as more of a mentor role, in contrast to the on-site daily supervision of AGPT registrars in my workplace. More about RVTS training programs can be found at [www.rvts.org.au](http://www.rvts.org.au) [3].

Technology has made this form of remote supervision and program delivery possible, and has also made on site teaching in General Practice quite different to when I did my GP training. The use of online resources, online meeting/ tutorial platforms, Skype, and even email communication, have revolutionized training methods for registrars, and also provide increased training opportunities for supervisors. Teleconferences, webinars and face-to-face teaching are used for supervisor training by both WAGPET and RVTS.

Increased knowledge and research about clinical teaching and learning – the whole field of medical education - is the other area that has changed a great deal since I was a trainee, and since I started teaching. There are many postgraduate courses on clinical education – I have completed a Diploma in Clinical Education at Flinders University in Adelaide, mostly through online learning, with some face-to-face intensive workshops. This is another example of relatively recent technology making training opportunities possible for those of us in rural and remote areas. Ever-increasing knowledge about how adults learn, differences in preferred learning styles, how doctors and other health professionals develop clinical reasoning skills, as well as research into curricula and assessments (“assessment guides learning”) have informed our efforts to improve on site teaching and remote supervision.

*Please note that the views and descriptions in this article are my personal views, and not those of any of the organisations mentioned here.*

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## **Exceptional Students, Exceptional Technology**

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If you graduated more than 10 years ago you could recall how special education practices were conducted. Students were often isolated and restricted from the academically capable students. For these learners their diagnosed ‘special needs’ often confined them to a single classroom with designated teachers. Students were classified as those with disabilities and therefore removed from the learning environment of others. Oh how times have changed. Students with exceptionalities experience entirely different learning opportunities. Unlike the past, students with exceptionalities are educated within the least restricted environment, among their peers.

Students with exceptional needs often require an increase amount of teacher attention in order to optimize their learning experiences. Naturally, teachers have become overwhelmed with providing assistance for all students with various learning challenges. There is a solution, technology. The incorporation of technology within the learning environment has the ability to ensure all students learn.

Innovative advances have made it possible for individuals with exceptionalities to participate in learning activities with their peers. These tools allow all students, despite their learning challenges, to partake in classroom activities which in the past were unimaginable. The incorporation of innovations to deplete learning challenges is referred to as assistive technology and it has changed special education.

The Technology Educators Special Interest Council recognizes the need to inform and promote the incorporation of assistive technology. At their first Summer Institute of Technology Integration conference, educators were given the opportunity to explore the potential of assistive technology. Sessions were conducted to exhibit the possibilities of handheld devices such as mobile phones and tablets as inclusive learning tools. The session “Exceptional Students, Exceptional Technology” provided an overview of handheld devices as assistive technology tools.

Even though software features within these devices can provide assistance to many learners, teachers are often unaware of their potential. An overview of the available features and the corresponding potential of handhelds as assistive technology tools was the first area of focus. Among the iOS software a number of options are available on Apple’s handheld devices. The iOS software classifies these features in their settings under the accessibility tab. The accessibility features include a number of categories such as vision, hearing, learning and physical and motor.

Participants were presented with the potential of various features, particularly, the options of speech to text and text to speech. The speech to text feature integrates the use of SIRI,

the voice activation component, as a speech to text converter. The integration of SIRI can diminish learning struggles with written output challenges. Additionally, the text to speech component, also known as speech selection, was highlighted during the session. The activation of speech selection enables text in various applications to be read. Students with reading challenges can avail of this option as a means to overcoming their struggles during reading activities. These two features have the potential to greatly impact student learning for a number of exceptionalities.

Participants were also introduced to various applications. A particular realm included applications specifically focused on assessment and evaluation, such as iBooks and Pages. iBooks provides students the ability to have a text read, a term defined, or even further explained by conducting a web search. Pages was also introduced as an assistive technology tool. Pages is a word processing application which provides many great opportunities for students with exceptional needs. During the session participants were introduced to the features of Pages. These include the incorporation of speech to text as well as text to speech within a document and the various sharing features like AirDrop. The highlighted features of AirDrop include the ability to send documents by integrating the Bluetooth features of each iOS device.

The possibilities of technology in education are endless. All teachers must unlock the potential of assistive technology, as the integration of these tools will greatly enhance learning for all students. The integration of technology in the classroom can ensure all students learn together. Technology is exceptional and our exceptional students must avail of its potential.

## **Cultural Connection Through PBL**

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For many teachers, assigning projects has been common practice for many years. Tasks have been given to extend classroom teaching with the expectation that the assignment would reinforce curriculum that has already been taught. In keeping with this traditional project model, learning remains teacher driven and, for students, stagnant. Further down the spectrum, Project-based Learning (PBL) shifts the pedagogical paradigm towards active learning, an instructional model where student learning goes beyond passive listening.

### **The Dynamics of Teaching**

The classroom is ever changing. As a result, factors that stimulate student achievement are constantly changing. One could even argue that teachers are unsure of what stimulates some students from the start. Lessons can incorporate the latest trends, whether it is by integrating technology or attempting to link curriculum to current events, yet attempts to make a connection with students are generally “hit-or-miss”. What works one year might not work the next, what works for one slot may not work for another on the same day. If students are the experts on what motivates them in the classroom, how can teaching foster learning when students have a passive role in mainstream pedagogy? A dynamic classroom requires dynamic teacher-student roles. Ergo, the roles assigned to teachers and students cannot be universally defined when the frame of reference is not constant. Shifting from teacher -drive to student-centered learning, a pedagogical framework whereby the student is empowered in their own learning, gives a voice to students who would otherwise continue to be unmotivated. Project-based learning can offer a blended solution to student motivation provided an appropriate framework has been established.

### **A Framework for PBL**

Perhaps the most important aspect of successful PBL is ensuring students feel the project is meaningful. Too often projects are assigned as “busy work” or a medium to regurgitate chalk-and-talk notes. By balancing teacher expectations and curriculum outcomes with student choice and interest, students tend to be more receptive of the assigned task and see value in its meaning. The aim of PBL is still to teach the required outcomes but through a task. Students “learn by doing” while still being guided by the teacher who is mindful of timelines, project benchmarks and students on task. PBL assigns the student as captain and the teacher as the knowledgeable first mate. Students are given choice of



approach and output while working towards their learning of both course outcomes and added skills that may prove beneficial.

### **Linking PBL to 21C**

While 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning does not require the integration of technology, the aim of the 21C framework is to foster the essential skills for student success inside and outside the classroom. Although the 4Cs - communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity - are often identified as the only skills associated with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, there is also an added emphasis on information, media, and technology skills. Consequently, the framework supports the potential of project-based learning.

According to the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning (p21.org), the technology skills emphasized by the framework can be further broken down into three categories:

1. *Information literacy* – access, evaluate, manage information
2. *Media literacy* – analyze and create media
3. *Information/Communications Technology (ICT) literacy* – apply technology effectively

The aforementioned skills become the added bonus of course work. Students learn curriculum and develop their hard skills through the completion of their project, hard skills that are necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace.

### **Connecting Culture w/ PBL**

Project-Based Learning emphasizing the integration of technology can place a modern twist on traditional projects. For example, by using a digital recording device (as easy as using a voice recorder on a smartphone), an interview activity can quickly become a class-based media artifact project. Remembering of course to connect the project with curriculum outcomes, students can be guided with a meaningful question and given a choice. Students can record and compile a digital database rich in culture, an archive similar to one pieced together by a real-world historian. The project becomes meaningful and task oriented. Students learn both targeted outcomes and necessary skills for success beyond the K-12 system. A simple project, similar to the one mentioned above, teaches students hard skills - data management, file conversion, recording data- and soft skills - communication, collaboration and critical thinking. Depending on the choice of final output, students work to create a combined media project where each group contributes to produce a final digital media artifact representative of the entire class.

### **PBL, Teacher Comfort, Technology**

Ultimately, PBL rollout relies on two primary factors; teacher comfort and curriculum area. First, when offering PBL emphasizing the use of technology, teachers with limited exposure to technology are reluctant to offer these choices as projects. While some base

knowledge would be beneficial, there would be no expectation for the teacher to teach their students the hard skills required for each option. For example, a teacher offering the option for students to use animation for a final output of their required project is not required to teach the skills to complete said output. Students are given the option based on their interest and experience and therefore would be encouraged to select an option based on their individual skillsets. Second, there are some limitations to where project-based learning would benefit teaching and learning. Not all curriculum areas would benefit from a PBL approach, especially those with evaluations still dependent on traditional methods of evaluation such as standardized tests and common pen-and-paper assessments.

Integrating project-based learning requires a solid knowledge of the curriculum and the vision to link meaningful projects to specific outcomes. Establishing a framework for PBL takes time and a firm timeline with set benchmarks. While project work, at times, may seem unstructured, curriculum driven PBL is built on a firm foundation with clear expectations for both students and teachers. In the end, students complete their respective projects and retain the content because the project is theirs – in design and completion.

## Kate Bride: Academic and Friend

This Special Edition of the *Morning Watch* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Kate Bride. Kate was one of the first graduates from our Education Faculty doctoral program and we believe that the papers presented here aspire to converse with her award-winning doctoral dissertation, *Learning to Love Again: Loss, Self Study, Pedagogy and Women's Studies*. When we first conceived of this project we immediately thought of her connection to it and although she was too busy to take an active role we hope that what we have produced would have made her proud. While her leaving is still so fresh we felt the dedication of this edition would allow us to honor Kate, the individual, as well as her multi-faceted contributions to our faculty.

The words of Dr. Elizabeth Yeoman express our feelings:

After Kate's funeral in Toronto one of her friends looked around at the large crowd and said "I feel as though I've just lost my best friend in the world. But I know everyone here feels the same way." Meanwhile, there was also a large crowd here in St. John's at a simultaneous memorial service, and all of us were feeling the same way too. That was Kate: so beloved by so many, all of who now feel they've lost their best friend. Kate was extraordinarily accomplished in many different ways. She was artistic and musical. She was an original and passionate scholar and writer, doing work on many topics -- from the movie *Mona Lisa Smile* to the 1914 SS *Newfoundland* sealing disaster-but always about justice and making a better world, whatever the topic. She was a dedicated, insightful, gifted and much loved teacher. She was utterly reliable, calm and competent, the kind of person you would want to be with in a crisis. She was wonderful with children and animals (most of all her faithful canine friend, Newman) and a brilliant conversationalist and companion. She was vulnerable and searingly honest. She was funny. She was kind. She will be dreadfully missed.

### **Conclusion: The work of indigenizing the Academy**

In a happy example of serendipity, we were hired by Memorial University at the same time. Both of us had been undergraduates here: Kirk in the 1970s and 80s and Maura in the 80s. Our Memorial University degrees in hand, we went on to work and study elsewhere. Our (separate) experiences took us to England, Ontario, Greece, the post conflict regions of Kosovo and Lebanon, and remote Indigenous communities in Western and Eastern Canada. Then we rejoined Memorial University just before the creation of Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation and were with Qalipu staff in Corner Brook when the longawaited news of the order-in-council establishing the band came over the phone from Ottawa. Given the history of Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador, it was a joyous day and the beginning of a heady time. The band has experienced a rocky road since then but we, like other people of Mi'kmaq descent, continue to honour and celebrate our Mi'kmaq roots and our Mi'kmaq present regardless of decisions made by officialdom in Ottawa and Gatineau.

In our case, we do this largely through our work with the academy, working with Indigenous and nonIndigenous allies. Memorial University is led by a president, Dr. Gary Kachanoski, who grew up in Saskatchewan, and is committed to the Indigenization of the academy. Under President Kachanoski's leadership, Memorial has put resources and his personal support into the implementation of the recommendations of the Presidential Task Force led by the visionary Evan Simpson, our former VicePresident (Academic) as well as initiatives that build on the Task Force.

In 2011, along with representatives of about 20 other Canadian universities, we attended the Indigenizing the academy Conference at the University of the Fraser Valley in Stó:lo Territory, Chilliwack, B.C. This conference took place as universities and colleges all over the country were building dedicated Aboriginal spaces and hiring support staff at a fast pace. Yet one of the abiding concerns expressed by conference participants was that Indigenization might be a trend that would not be institutionalized. In common with many universities across Canada, Memorial is putting in place structural pieces that will support Indigenization; these include our designated seats program, new Aboriginal resource centres, scholarships for Indigenous students, and so on. But as we go about bringing in these measures, we worry that genuine Indigenization of the academy may not occur, for this process involves decolonization, which necessitates a power shift - something human beings usually resist. In the case of Indigenous peoples and the larger Canadian population and state, the power imbalance is long entrenched, institutionalized, and is a generally unacknowledged dimension of Canadian history and the Canadian identity.

Fortunately there are models that provide guidance, many involving youth whose transformative experiences may mean an altered power relationship in the future. One such model is the

Ontario-based Canadian Roots Exchange ([www.canadianroots.ca](http://www.canadianroots.ca)). This organization was founded by Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux, Lakehead University's new Vice-Provost for Indigenous Affairs, and others, and is youth-driven. And indeed the path we are on will be a model worth travelling too. In the words of participants themselves: "We are the Canadian Roots Exchange, a group of young Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians who believe that in order to bridge the gap between Canada's peoples, we need to become educated and aware of the teachings, triumphs, and daily realities of our Indigenous communities. So, together we travel to cities, towns, and traditional territories across Canada in an effort to break down stereotypes, open a dialogue, and build honest relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living on this land." The road trips that are the core of the program foster understanding and promote reconciliation. These journeys are labour-intensive and cost money and they are small-scale. Perhaps change has to happen that way. Yet we have to acknowledge that this can be frustrating: as Chief Tammy Cook-Searson of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in Saskatchewan recently told the Aboriginal PSE Summit at the University of Regina, Indigenous people are running out of patience. The emergence of Idle No More testifies to Chief Cook Searson's view.

In an ideal world, Indigenous teaching and learning methods, as well as content, would be offered to all our children starting in preschool. The danger in such a case would be cultural appropriation; a great deal of sensitivity and politicization of teachers would be required; non-Indigenous children would have to receive the message that, while of great value, these teachings are not theirs to own or manipulate. This education would continue through the primary, elementary, and secondary school systems and, of course, through students time at the academy. Bits and pieces are in place already; for instance, kindergarten students in Newfoundland and Labrador read a book written by Innu teacher Kanani Penashue Davis about contemporary life in the Innu community of Sheshatshiu, Labrador. How do we start- or continue - this process? Many of those who contributed so generously to this special issue of *The Morning Watch* point the way. Jacqueline Ottmann provides us with a big picture view of where we need to go. Jodie Lane and Amy Hudson speak from the vital perspective of Indigenous students. Ellen Oliver and her university and Nunatsiavut Government colleagues explain how partnerships can work. Rainer Baehre takes us through the steps of Indigenizing a small campus in the midst of First Nations territory at a time of major developments in that First Nation's history.

We've been taught that you won't see the results of your work in your lifetime but that you still have to do the work. In some ways, however, many of us are fortunate enough to see some results of some of our work. It is our sincere hope that this special issue of *The Morning Watch* leads to even more work and more results, all aimed at bringing out social justice for the Indigenous peoples of Canada and, as a result of this, social justice to all.

All our relations,

**Maura Hanrahan and Kirk Anderson**

**Memorial University of Newfoundland**

Nitassinan is the Innu name for the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula. "Although the Indian Act applies only to First Nations, its omission from the Terms of Union was part of Canada's and Newfoundland's failure to recognize any of the Indigenous people of the new province. "The Department of Rural Development, the Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Development Council and its member organizations, the Memorial University Extension Service, the Centre for the Development of Community Initiatives, L.I.P., L.E.A.P., O.F.Y., D.R.E.E. (all government work creation programs), Manpower, the Department of the Secretary of State. The Company of Young Canadians, Frontier College, and The Newfoundland Development Corporation. "Not all communities in Newfoundland and Labrador have running water (e.g. Black Tickle).



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