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Coeditor ANNIE SAVARD

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EDITORIAL

This issue of the *MJE*, like all our general issues, covers a wide variety of topics, and raises a perennial question: should the *MJE* continue to publish articles on all possible education-related concerns, or should it narrow its focus and specialize in a limited range of topics? Not many years ago, it might have been possible to keep up with most new issues and practices in the field of education. Change was constant, of course, as in all areas of human activity, but the pace was slower, and the scope of the discussion far more limited. Or at least that's how it appears to this 30-year veteran of work in education.

Today, the speed and variety of communication media, the interdisciplinarity of education, and the ever-growing literature in specialized areas make a comprehensive knowledge of the field impossible. Whereas education used to be primarily about schools, the field must now – and necessarily – consider the economic, cultural, ideological, social, and epistemological implications of human learning and development, inside and outside of schools, from infancy to old age.

To become and remain an expert in any given area of education requires familiarity with a burgeoning literature and a proliferation of new topics. For example, in my own area of specialization, which is literacy education, the number of relevant new journals and books grows annually at an intimidating rate, and the very phenomenon of literacy has exploded into literacies: wikis and blogs and social networks offer new forums for writing and reading, and we have added posting, texting, and tweeting to the list of literate activities.

Keeping up with developments in literacy education means reading extensively within a growing and relatively focussed literature. Is this sort of specialization a good thing? What does the field of education gain from it, and what does it lose? And, to return to the original question, should the *MJE* find a niche in that expanding educational universe, or should it seek to reflect its diversity?

No matter how often this question comes up, there is no easy answer, but this issue offers a strong case for keeping a wide purview. The range of topics is boggling: school funding, music and disability, learning styles, teacher-student

relationships, school organization, student teaching, bullying, nutrition, drop-out rates, and video production. Each article has much to offer the community of practice most concerned with its topic, but each one also provides a window into a new world for those unfamiliar with the topic. More importantly, that new world may quickly become familiar, as we begin to see parallels to our own work, our own situations, and our own preoccupations.

The first article, by Fallon and Paquette, is a good example. At first glance, it seems quite narrowly focussed: it examines the implications of a sub-section of a Bill passed in British Columbia in 2002 and affecting public school funding. But anyone working in a state-funded institution and feeling the combined effects of constant budget cuts and increasing privatization will appreciate Fallon and Paquette's critical policy analysis and, almost certainly, will better understand their own situation. Likewise, the article by Bolduc, Lavoie, and Fleuret will provide support for anyone's arguments in favour of an interdisciplinary curriculum, at any educational level, despite their specific attention to the relationship between music and language development in elementary schools. And Ivie's critique of the learning styles literature should make us wary of educational bandwagons wherever they may roll. On examination, it turns out that all of the articles in this issue have relevance well outside their immediate contexts.

Over-specialization can lead to a blinkered consciousness, in which we know more and more about less and less, and fail to see the links between our own work and the work of others. Exhaustive knowledge of educational issues is impossible, of course, but the educational psychologist who knows nothing of classroom realities, or the teacher who hasn't reflected on theories of learning, are both hampered in their practice and of little use to each other. This is where a journal like the *MJE* serves an important function: it grants access to others' questions, others' issues, others' worlds. I encourage readers to look beyond the articles in this issue that seem most relevant to their own areas, and to consider what other communities are struggling with. I guarantee that they will find both familiar territory and new ideas.

A. P.

ÉDITORIAL

Cette édition de la *Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill*, à l'instar de nos éditions généralistes, couvre un éventail de sujets tout en soulevant une question intemporelle : devrions-nous continuer à publier des articles explorant toutes les préoccupations reliées au domaine de l'éducation ou encore cibler davantage nos écrits, en nous limitant à quelques domaines ? Encore récemment, il était possible de se tenir à jour sur l'ensemble des questions et pratiques du domaine éducationnel. Bien entendu, les changements étaient constants, comme dans tous les domaines où les humains sont à l'œuvre, mais le rythme des changements était plus lent et la portée des discussions plus limitée. Ou du moins, c'est ainsi que la situation apparaît à un vétéran de 30 ans en éducation.

Aujourd'hui, la vitesse et la variété des modes de communication, l'interdisciplinarité des disciplines de l'éducation et l'augmentation perpétuelle de la littérature des domaines spécialisés rendent une exploration complète des questions éducationnelles impossible. Alors que jadis l'éducation impliquait principalement les écoles, le domaine doit maintenant – et absolument – prendre en considération les implications économiques, culturelles, idéologiques, sociales et épistémologiques des apprentissages et des développements humains, au sein comme à l'extérieur des écoles, de la tendre enfance au troisième âge.

Devenir et demeurer un expert dans n'importe lequel des domaines de l'éducation exige une familiarité avec une littérature foisonnante et une prolifération de nouveaux questionnements. À titre d'exemple, dans mon domaine de spécialisation, soit l'éducation à la littératie, le nombre de journaux et d'ouvrages pertinents augmente à un taux intimidant à chaque année et le phénomène de la littératie s'est multiplié en diverses littératies. En effet, wikis, blogues et réseaux sociaux offrent de nouvelles plates-formes d'écriture et de lecture. De plus, les contributions aux forums de discussion, les textos et les micro-blogues de type « Twitter », croisements entre les blogues et les textos, s'ajoutent à cette liste de modes littéraires émergents.

Se maintenir à jour avec les développements de l'éducation à la littératie requière donc une lecture poussée d'un bassin croissant d'ouvrages relativement ciblés. Or, cette spécialisation est-elle bénéfique pour le domaine de l'éducation ? Quels sont les gains et les pertes qu'elle engendre ? Ces questions nous ramènent à notre interrogation initiale : la *Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill* devrait-elle se trouver une niche au sein de cet univers éducationnel en développement ou veiller à refléter toute sa diversité ?

Quelque soit la façon dont on pose la question, il n'existe pas de réponse simple. C'est pourquoi cette édition invite à demeurer ouverts d'esprit en offrant un éventail de sujets impressionnant : le financement scolaire, la musique et les difficultés d'apprentissage, les styles d'apprentissage, les relations maîtres-élèves, l'organisation scolaire, la formation des futurs maîtres, l'intimidation, la nutrition, les taux de décrochage scolaire et la production de vidéos. Bien entendu, ces articles intéresseront la communauté visée, mais ils offriront aussi aux néophytes une fenêtre sur un monde de nouvelles idées et domaines. Des univers qui leur deviendront rapidement familiers, à mesure que les lecteurs établiront des parallèles entre ces autres domaines et leurs milieux de travail, leurs problématiques et leurs interrogations respectives.

Le premier article, écrit par Fallon et Paquette, est un bon exemple de ce phénomène. À première vue, celui-ci semble extrêmement ciblé, faisant l'examen des implications d'un règlement adopté en Colombie-Britannique en 2002 sur le financement des écoles publiques. Cependant, quiconque œuvre pour une institution publique et vit les conséquences des coupes budgétaires régulières et de la privatisation saura apprécier l'analyse de Fallon et Paquette. En effet, ils explorent de manière critique les politiques de financement, ce qui permettra à divers intervenants de mieux comprendre leur situation. De la même manière, l'article rédigé par Bolduc, Lavoie et Fleuret étoffe l'argumentaire des tenants de l'interdisciplinarité des divers programmes et ce, même si les auteurs portent une attention particulière aux relations entre la musique et le développement du langage dans les écoles élémentaires. Par ailleurs, la critique d'Ivie sur la littérature publiée sur les multiples styles d'apprentissage nous amène à se méfier des effets de vagues en éducation, quelle que soit leur provenance. Il s'avère donc que tous les articles de la présente édition ont une pertinence qui dépasse le domaine étudié.

La sur-spécialisation peut mener à une conscience « papillonnante » – un large éventail de connaissances mais à un niveau superficiel – ainsi qu'à une difficulté de saisir les liens existants entre notre travail et celui des autres. Bien entendu, une connaissance exhaustive des problématiques éducationnelles est impossible, mais les psychologues de l'éducation qui ne connaissent pas la réalité des classes, ou encore les enseignants qui n'intègrent pas les théories de l'apprentissage sont empêtrés dans leur domaine et peuvent difficilement s'entraider.

C'est précisément la raison d'être de la *Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill* : permettre un accès aux préoccupations des autres, à leurs problématiques, à leur monde. J'encourage donc les lecteurs à lire non seulement les articles qui portent sur leur domaine, mais aussi ceux qui traitent des défis rencontrés au sein des autres domaines. Je suis certain que ils y trouveront à la fois des voix familières et des idées novatrices.

A. P.

INTRODUCING A MARKET ELEMENT INTO THE FUNDING MECHANISM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: A CRITICAL POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE *SCHOOL AMENDMENT ACT, 2002*

GERALD FALLON *University of Saskatchewan*
JERALD PAQUETTE *University of Western Ontario*

ABSTRACT. This policy study explores origins of part 6.1 of *Bill 34 (School Amendment Act, 2002)* and its impacts on the institutional behaviour of two public school districts in British Columbia. Part 6.1 permits school districts to raise funds through for-profit school district business companies (SDBC). The analysis found several consequences of the policy: lack of accountability of SDBC's, increased fiscal inequity among school districts, and greater responsiveness of school districts to the needs of a globally rather than locally situated community of students.

INTRODUIRE UN ÉLÉMENT DE MARCHÉ AU SEIN DES MÉCANISMES DE FINANCEMENT DE L'ÉDUCATION PUBLIQUE EN COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE: UNE ANALYSE CRITIQUE DES POLITIQUES AU SEIN DU *SCHOOL AMENDMENT ACT DE 2002*

RÉSUMÉ. Cette étude est une analyse critique qui examine l'origine de la section 6.1 des modifications apportées à la loi scolaire en 2002 (*School Amendment Act, 2002*) et ses répercussions sur la culture organisationnelle de deux conseils scolaires en Colombie Britannique. La section 6.1 permet aux conseils scolaires de créer des organismes à but lucratif dans le but de générer une partie du financement de leurs opérations. L'analyse démontre plusieurs conséquences de cette politique : la faiblesse de l'imputabilité de ces organismes à but lucratif; la diminution de l'équité entre les conseils scolaires en matière de financement; et la propension des conseils scolaires à s'intéresser davantage aux besoins de diverses clientèles internationales au détriment des clientèles locales.

INTRODUCTION

This article presents a qualitative, multiple case policy study seeking to explicate and understand in context the emergence and perceived impacts of part 6.1 of *Bill 34 (School Amendment Act, 2002)* on the institutional behaviour of two public school districts in British Columbia (BC) since 2002. Part 6.1 of *Bill 34* is the central plank of the BC Government's efforts to bring market relations to the heart of public education as it attempts to link part of the funding mechanism and "financial flexibility" with school districts' capacity to pursue for-profit entrepreneurial activities. This part of *Bill 34* allows school districts to fund part of their operation by engaging in entrepreneurial activities through the creation of for-profit school-board business companies

(SDBC). Through part 6.1 of *Bill 34*, the government seemed to have reframed part of its responsibility regarding the resourcing of public education as an obligation *to provide suitable opportunities to school districts to generate their own non-tax revenues*.

This article consists of four major sections followed by a conclusion and discussion of future research implications. The first section describes the context and purpose of this policy study by examining the key policy features of *Bill 34*, particularly in regard to part 6.1. The second section presents the features of the multi-staged, developmental, and iterative conceptual framework for policy analysis selected for this policy study. This is followed by an explanation of why and how this policy analysis model was applied to the specific policy setting we were studying. Based on a case study model, the third section describes the methodology used for analysis of policy processes that framed the emergence and implementation of part 6.1 of *Bill 34*. The fourth section provides an account of the manner in which policy problems were posed and of the policy issues to which policy makers ultimately paid attention. This account is followed by a discussion of findings related to the implementation and perceived policy impacts of part 6.1 of *Bill 34* in two different school districts.

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In 2001 the need for policy changes to the public education system was outlined by the BC Liberals in their election platform "A New Era for British Columbia: A Vision for Hope & Prosperity for the Decade and Beyond" (BC Liberals, 2001). The document was critical of what it called the inefficiency of public education and its failure to cater to the current needs of the British Columbia economy. Central to this policy agenda for public education was the overriding objective of opening public education to market forces. The authors assumed that the establishment of a quasi-market in education would enhance learning possibilities and opportunities (for examples of such a rationale for an educational marketplace, see Lubienski, 2001a; Lubienski, 2001b; Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998). After their election in 2001, the new Liberal Government set up a task force, The Select Standing Committee on Education (SSCE), with the mandate to come up with recommendations pertaining to policy changes needed to improve the system in terms of operational principles, goals, and objectives. Their report, *A Future for Learners: A Vision for Renewal of Education in British Columbia* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002), criticized the education system for being unresponsive to learners' needs and to parents, for being over-centralized, and for lacking accurate measurement of its quality. The centerpiece of the report was the promotion of a market- and consumer-driven, decentralized education system of high accountability. The *School Amendment Act* of May 30th, 2002 (*Bill 34*)¹ was the government's response to the Select Standing Committee on Education report and it supported nearly all of its recommendations. *Bill 34* provided for and encouraged development of a quasi-market in the field of public education by introducing (a) entrepreneurial powers for school districts through an explicit statutory framework for creation of for-profit school-board business companies, (b) parental choice and school autonomy (through the creation of school-planning

councils), and (c) a considerable degree of apparent public accountability (through school-board accountability contracts). Table 1 provides an overview of the key policy features of *Bill 34*, and the rationale underpinning each feature, as they were debated during legislative process leading to proclamation.

TABLE 1. *Overview of Bill 34, School Amendment Act, 2002*

Purposes	Rights and obligations	Rationale
Enhancing the opportunity for parental involvement Part 2, Division 2, sections 8.1 to 8.5	Bill 34 requires the establishment of a school planning council in every school in British Columbia. The school planning council is responsible for drawing up an annual plan that identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses, sets goals for improvements, monitors its progress, and allocates resources within the school.	"The most important determinant of student success is parental involvement" (British Columbia Hansard Services, (2002a), 6(14), p. 3005). Schools need "to be reconnected to their community in order to encourage local responsibility and accountability" (British Columbia Hansard Services, 2002a, 6(14), p. 3005).
Enhancing the freedom and financial flexibility of school boards to make decisions according to their local needs Part 6, Divisions 1 and 2 – Part 6.1, Divisions 1 to 9	School boards may share administrative services with other school boards, municipalities, or corporate entities. School boards may dispose of surplus capital assets and share in the financial gain proportionate to their share of the purchase. School boards may create separate entities to engage in entrepreneurial activities to market their intellectual capital.	The creation of competitive arrangements between school board personnel and outside "service providers brings about a more cost efficient delivery of services" (British Columbia Hansard Services, (2002b), 7(12), p. 3398). The school boards' ability to generate revenues through other sources allows them to better meet local educational needs. "There are opportunities to bring some money home for BC kids" (British Columbia Hansard Services, (2002c), 7(7), p. 3250).
Holding school boards <i>accountable</i> for financial and academic matters Part 2, Division 2, sections 79.2 and 80	School boards must complete accountability contracts. A special advisor may be appointed to review the progress of boards where they are not meeting the goals of student achievement.	The school system tends "to focus on the means of education without sufficient attention to the outcomes. The system is driven by the interests of the system or the service provider rather than the interests of the learner and the public" (British Columbia Hansard Services, (2002a), 6(14), p. 3007 – 3009).
Providing <i>choices</i> in terms of schools and educational programs Part 6, Division 2, sections 74.1 to 75.1	Students will be able to attend schools in any catchments area in BC (subject to space availability). Schools must be more responsive to the needs of their community of learners.	"The creation of competitive arrangements between schools and school boards provides them with an incentive to improve and to be more responsive to their community of consumers" (Hansard, (2002a), 6(14), p. 3025).

The uniqueness of *Bill 34* resides in its intent to stimulate – and protect – market-sensitive behaviours among school districts – locally and internationally – in order to support and finance part of their current operations and growth. *Bill 34* brought a new institution to the public schools in BC: the School District Business Company. Each school board now has the right to create a company to carry out business activities that would not otherwise be possible for it as a public body. Part 6.1 of *Bill 34* encourages school districts to calculate and accept business risk, to make risk-based decisions, and to assume full management of, *but paradoxically not legal liability for*, risks related to their commercial activities on- and offshore. Within this policy direction, the government acts as an enabler by providing school districts with opportunities to enhance their financial flexibility, but it is up to districts to take advantage of these opportunities. With the enactment of part 6.1 of *Bill 34*, the BC public-education sector has taken a step away from full public financing and towards greater market responsiveness, and thus toward openness to alternative financing mechanisms (Kuehn, 2002). Public school districts in BC are now not only required by the government to be more efficient and effective in their use of government resources, they are also encouraged to compensate for reduced government funding by attracting funds from private sources, primarily through marketing their knowledge products within established and emerging national and international markets. This policy direction stimulates competition among school districts as they attempt to access resources in the form of financial assets and students (particularly those, such as “offshore” students, who have the greatest potential to contribute to a school district’s revenues).

Very little research is available on the phenomenon of a public school district geared towards marketing its services and programs as part of its funding mechanism. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop an understanding of how and why such a policy direction emerged in British Columbia, how it was implemented, and what impact it had on the institutional dynamics of two school districts.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In selecting a policy-analysis model, special attention was given to developing a framework that reflected a balance between the linearity of rational models (Bridgeman & Davis, 1998; Grindle & Thomas, 1991; McCool, 1995) and the multi-staged, developmental, and iterative nature of critical models (Ball, 1998; Blaikie & Soussan, 2000; Dye, 2002; Levin, 2001).

We used Levin’s (2001) and Blaikie and Soussan’s (2000) four-stages conception of the policy cycle as the foundational framework for this policy study (see Table 2) because these scholars advocate the policy-stages approach as a valuable analytical tool while recognizing that policy processes are often discontinuous, overlapping, and interactive. Their analytic model allowed us

to bring to the surface different interests, perspectives, and actors integrated into the policy processes while capturing the incremental and complex nature of policy development. It takes account of diverse roles that the full range of policy actors played in the policy process. It also reflects the multi-staged, developmental, and iterative nature of policy making and analysis.

TABLE 2. *Levin's (2001) and Blaikie & Soussan's (2000) four-stages conception of the policy cycle*

Stages of Policy Cycle	Elements of Analysis
Policy origins	<i>Key policy milestones:</i> the focus is on the <i>what</i> and the <i>why</i> from the past; the policy history, legislation, specific events and so on; the source of the policy. <i>Social and political context:</i> the focus is on the social and political framework, change trends, policy drivers, and key political actors at play as well as on the situational pragmatics and the intricacies of politics in action. <i>Interests and ideas:</i> the focus is on the core beliefs that shape the policy; the framework used to think about the key policy issues.
Policy adoption	<i>Policy development process:</i> the focus is on the interactions and responses of actors around policy formulation; the roles and power of the main actors in the policy process; their strategies to represent their position in the policy process; the main actors' impacts on the policy processes.
Policy implementation	<i>Communication and dissemination:</i> the focus is on the conceptual underpinnings and logic used by government agencies and interest groups to raise the level of awareness regarding the new policy. <i>Implementation process:</i> the focus is on developing an understanding of how the policy is interpreted and experienced by implementing agencies (such as school district personnel) as well as of each agency's implementation capabilities for the policy being introduced.
Policy impacts	<i>Impacts of policy:</i> the focus is on developing an understanding of the extent to which school district services and programs are used as generators of extra local revenue; related organizational changes with respect to school districts' missions, purposes, and functioning processes; on the ways the policy is experienced by teachers and administrators; and on perceived impacts of the policy on the working environment of those directly involved in the implementation of the policy.

Levin's (2001) and Blaikie and Soussan's (2000) conceptualization of policy analysis was used to develop four main research questions. The first question addressed how the marketing of educational services and programs for profit

by public school districts came to be a policy direction in British Columbia. The second question addressed the adoption of the policy direction. The third question was concerned with the process and the extent to which the policy direction under study was translated into policy actions at the district level. The final question dealt with changes in the market behaviour of two school districts and of individuals directly in charge of translating the policy direction into actions in those districts.

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

There are several broad purposes for conducting an analysis of policy processes. One is to determine how a public policy has fared “in action” in terms of its perceived intention and results. This form of policy analysis is referred to as policy evaluation or knowledge *in* the policy process (Pal, 1997). The other purpose is more exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive: “analyzing policy is akin to trying to figure out which maps people used by studying the paths they took on their journey” (Pal, 1997, p. 13). Pal (1997) refers to the scope of this form of policy analysis as knowledge *of* the policy process. The latter, policy *analysis* that is, was the central focus of inquiry in this study.

Given the focus of this study, an exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive multi-case study method was used for the purpose of cross-unit comparison (Jensen & Rodgers, 2001; Robson, 1993; Yin, 1993). This multi-case study research method was integrated into a multi-method approach (triangulation) in which the same phenomenon was investigated using several procedures and data sources: content analysis, archival data, policy documents, and semi-structured interviews. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2006 with government officials and other stakeholders involved in the formulation and adoption stages of the studied policy direction (7 interviews), school district officials directly in charge of the implementation of the policy (6 interviews), and staff involved in running the services and programs used as revenue generators (5 interviews).

This multi-case study was conducted in policy environments consisting of the British Columbia provincial government and two public school districts selected from sixty school districts that raised “supplementary” (beyond grants and property taxation) local revenue by marketing services and programs for profit. The selection of the two sites was based on substantial differences between the two sites in per-pupil income generated from marketing educational programs and services. Based on a table reporting the per-student revenue by district in 2002-03 (Lowry, 2004), these school districts were listed from top to bottom in terms of the revenues they generated from entrepreneurial activity in 2002-03. This list was then divided in half and one board was selected randomly from the upper half and one randomly from the lower half (in effect, random selection of one above-median entrepreneurial-revenue board and one below-median entrepreneurial-revenue board).

The first selected school district (School District A) has a student population of approximately 3,500 and employs about three hundred school administrators, teachers, and support staff. It has unique geographical characteristics and its schools are small and distributed over several small islands, which make the district expensive to operate compared to a larger urban school district. In the mid-1990s this school district experienced serious financial difficulties as it struggled with declining enrolment in addition to high operational cost due to its geographical location. Notwithstanding subsequent changes to the funding formula, the school district continued to face financial challenges that jeopardized its survival. As a result, it developed a strategy to diversify its sources of funding (Hawkins, 1999; 2000; 2001). Today, School District A generates around seven percent of its operating funds through various entrepreneurial activities, including the sale of online courses, software, educational services, and international programs for foreign students.

The second school district (School District B) has approximately 15,000 students in approximately 35 elementary schools and 10 secondary schools. The district employs 1500 teachers, school administrators, and support staff. Like other school districts in the province, School District B has experienced service and program cuts as the result of declining enrolment and changes to the funding formula. However, it has never experienced financial difficulties that threatened its financial sustainability. In 2003, however, the district was facing significant financial challenges as a substantial gap occurred between anticipated revenues and the levels of expenditure required to maintain services. This shortfall – estimated at 2.9 million in February of 2003 (Malcolmson, 2004b) – led the district to implement a series of budget cuts. One of the key elements of the strategy to minimize the impact of the budget cuts was to raise additional funds through various SDBC-based business-oriented initiatives. The district became increasingly interested in the possibility of attracting full-fee-paying international students and in running distance and continuing education programs. Today, School District B generates 1.5 percent of its operating budget from international students' fees.

Data analysis for this policy study was ongoing and iterative. Two basic models of data analysis were employed: pattern matching and explanatory building (Tellis, 1997; Yin, 1994). Data collection and analysis were concurrent in this study. Data were analyzed as they became available, and the emerging results were used to shape each successive phase of data collection and analysis (Tellis, 1997).

Analytic case summaries were developed for each of the policy-analysis phases. Using the analytic coding system developed to organize the findings (see Table 3) descriptive case accounts were developed for both school districts. The data were analyzed across the policy phases and the two school district case accounts, and within each major analytic code or category, to interpret and explain the process through which the policy direction embedded in part 6.1 of *Bill 34*

was developed, the way in which school districts responded, and finally the ways that the policy direction impacted each school district.

TABLE 3. *Analytic codes adapted from Brandon (2001) and Levin (2001)*

Stages of Policy Cycle	Analytic Codes
Policy origins	• Policy history: past policies, legislation, catalytic events, etc. • Social and political framework and trends • Key political actors at play • Policy narrative that shaped the policy • Aims and motives behind the policy direction • Processes through which the policy was developed
Policy adoption	• Responses of policy actors around policy formulation • Roles and power of main policy actors • Actors' impacts on the policy process
Policy implementation by school districts	• Model of implementation used to put the policy in place • Interpretation of part 6.1 of <i>Bill 34</i> • Policy levers or instruments to support the implementation of part 6.1 of <i>Bill 34</i> • Agents of change and of resistance • Translation of part 6.1 of <i>Bill 34</i> into action
Policy impacts	• Extent to and ways in which the school districts' services and programs were commodified as revenue generators through their internal policy choices • Transformation of the working environment of those involved in translating the policy direction into action: ○ The organizational actions and outcomes in revenue-generating activities; ○ beliefs, norms, and values; ○ school districts' functional processes in terms of organizational structures, management, resource flow within the organization, and educational programming.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Policy origin of Part 6.1 of Bill 34

Entrepreneurialism emerged in the policy narratives of several stakeholders involved in the 2003 Select Standing Committee on Education (SSCE) public hearings who viewed it as a vital asset for the organizational survival and growth of school districts and individuals schools.

Representatives of post-secondary institutions made a strong case that all public educational institutions should act in a more entrepreneurial fashion. They argued for an enabling policy framework that would allow them to do so by growing their own financial resources and having the flexibility to offer services and programs in response to revenue opportunities.

One is to consider enabling legislation for the university colleges that will allow us to do selected graduate programs in response to demand within our regions and, frankly, also in response to revenue opportunities (Skip Triplett, Kwantlen University College). (The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, October 25, 2001, p. 184)

A similar discourse was found in the narratives of some of the representatives from the K-12 public system who also advocated an enabling policy framework for entrepreneurial activities.

We believe the BC curriculum is world-class. Let it become one of BC's chief exports. We can make friends and contacts throughout the world if we are willing to share what has been developed right in our own backyard. If you let us, we can deliver choice in education, quality standards, access and flexibility, leadership and economies of scale to the rest of the province and the world. The bus has been travelling throughout BC, leaving the Ministry of Education and hundreds of students waiting. The bus wants to travel, so don't miss the bus (Brian Malchow, Nechako School district). (The Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, November 23, 2001, p. 665)

Under discussion here was a policy change encouraging school districts to engage actively in entrepreneurial activities, to market their intellectual capital as a commodity, both provincially and internationally. This policy narrative attempted to reconceptualize school districts as a new breed of public institutions acting like private enterprise in an open market for consumers. Within this context, students became objects of marketing as school districts compete with each other for domestic and international enrolment share and the funding associated with each.

However, in the SSCE Report (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002), there was no mention of entrepreneurial activities as means of enhancing financial flexibility of school districts and their capacity to increase the diversity of programs and services to their community and parents. Although some participants in the public hearings (mainly post-secondary public institutions) focused the attention of the SSCE on constituting an education industry through provisions for producing and regulating quality, sales, and marketing practices, no language about K-12 public education as an industry was employed in the Report. Given subsequent legislation (*Bill 34*), one might have expected some policy language in the Report designed explicitly to promote transforming education into an international competitive industry, but such was not the case.

However, entrepreneurialism became a policy direction embedded in part 6.1 of *Bill 34*, whose goals were to limit the liability of school districts engaged in entrepreneurial activities while enabling them to supplement their revenues from entrepreneurial activity protected from exposure to institutional risk by "fronting" such activities through a School District Business Corporation (SDBC). Through this policy initiative, the government signalled that

it would no longer remain the sole significant funder of public education. Rather, it would become an enabler, generating opportunities for financial self-improvement.

Except for some presentations made during the public hearings conducted by the SSCE, nowhere in previous policy documents of any sort were the provisions of this amendment to the *School Act* publicly discussed. As research participants representing provincial organizations have stated,

There was in general a direction of that sort, the whole choice thing. [It was] encouragement of entrepreneurialism in the schools as ways of overcoming the restriction on funding. So there were sort of two sides of the same thing that, at the very least, the restricted funding led to circumstances where districts were looking for what else they could do, you know. Whether that was intentional, whether there was intent to push the entrepreneurialism beyond that, I don't quite know. But there wasn't really any precursor to this. [There wasn't any] indication [about that] particular aspect of *Bill 34* [setting up school district business companies]. (Interview with an official of the BCTF – British Columbia Teacher Federation)

That's an issue that is hard to comment on because I made some notes prior to you coming, and one of the concerns was that these proposals that produced section 6.1 were never canvassed with this association [BCPVPA] nor do I know whether or not they were canvassed with other associations. They may have been canvassed with the Trustees Association [BCSTA] but again, I am not sure. So, the whole 6.1 entrepreneurial policy came right out of left field for most of us. (Interview with an official of the BCVPPA – British Columbia Vice-Principals and Principals Association)

So, why did the BC Ministry of Education want school districts to fund programs by engaging in entrepreneurial activities through incorporated companies? The main argument supporting this policy direction is highlighted in this statement from an official of the Ministry of Education who was closely involved in the policy making process leading to part 6.1 of *Bill 34*:

So ... when you start taking away a number of the rules which is going to give the autonomy back to the school districts to make some decisions, and to encourage them to be more entrepreneurial in their actions and also to look at ways in which they can solve their problems rather than always relying on mother Ministry if you will or always relying back to a central authority whenever there is a problem. We said make sure when you go out and you start doing things, we want you to take risk but also look after your risk. The way you look after your risk is that you establish a separate company. You establish a company that is separate from the Board. Legally, we looked at it and we said that a number of our districts, a number of schools are very much involved in terms of offshore kids and it is approximately a thirty-two to thirty-three million dollars industry in our province with kids coming in. And as such, if something happens with one of those kids, there is a suit from China or there is a suit from Malaysia or something against one of our school districts. At that point in time, all of the assets and liability within that district are subject to that suit. If there is no protection then all of this

comes back to not only that district but also back to the province. So, we're asking them to limit their liability by setting up separate companies. (Interview with an official of the Ministry of Education)

This policy direction has reconfigured and attempted to legitimize the role of school districts as competitive units engaged in for-profit entrepreneurial activities as ways to subsidize certain segments of the domestic provision of educational programs and services. In employing the language of the market, part 6.1 of *Bill 34* raises issues regarding the promotion of the BC public education as a "brand" in international markets, and the partial privatization of the funding mechanism of public education in British Columbia.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF PART 6.1 OF BILL 34: THE TALES OF TWO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Implementation characteristics and movement

The intention of policy-makers was to use part 6.1 of *Bill 34* to transfer part of the school district resource burden into school district entrepreneurialism; however, the consequences of the policy's "implementation" were markedly different in each of the two school districts studied (School District A & B). The evidence suggested that this policy initiative had the potential to influence the behaviours and policy environments of the two school districts, but insufficient persuasive force to assure the desired end of using an SDBC as the sole vehicle for carrying on entrepreneurial activities. The SDBC model was directly adopted in one case, but its implementation was problematic in the other. In School District A, success was attributed to a dramatic fiscal-crisis history, a conciliatory leadership, and a process of deliberative democracy (Mintrom, 2003). The serious financial difficulties that threatened School District A's financial sustainability provided a justification for engaging in a strategy of diversifying its sources of income through the establishment of a task force to deal with the issue of inadequate funding.

What happened, I mean this district had been in crisis since the early 90s, when they changed, they eliminated local taxation for funding. So in the 89-90 period they lost the ability to assess taxes for the school district and then they also lost 10-15 percent of the funding. So this district starting in, I think '92, ran deficit budgets. I think they ran at deficit budgets for over 7 years in a row. It was a district in crisis. Basically what happened is [that] by 97-98, we were in a position where our deficit was really increasing and 1998 was the year that the board basically challenged the provincial government about the funding. It was an extremely tense time and they basically said we were running deficit budgets and it came down to actually meeting with the Minister of Education at the time. It was a really difficult time, it was a very upfront confrontation and I think the district was really close to being in a position where the Ministry was going to take it over.

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In our district we had established in 1999 a revenue generation task force, which was operating, and we'd operated within the School district. (Interview with the Secretary Treasurer of School District A)

Even prior to the enactment of part 6.1 of *Bill 34*, District A was solidly on its way to pursuing a strategy of "ratcheting up the marketness factor" in school district work (for examples of such strategy of "ratcheting up the marketness" factor, see Robertson, 2000). School District A moved quickly into incorporating its school district business company (SDBC) under the terms of part 6.1 of *Bill 34* and used its business company as part of its entrepreneurial strategy to enhance financial flexibility by generating more funds to pay for parts of its educational program development and delivery.

In District B, a top-down approach to implementation and opposition from local stakeholders, particularly union and community-based groups, shaped the outcome. The idea of creating a SDBC in District B came mainly from senior staff in response to funding level decreases in the year 2001–2002 due mainly to enrolment decreases which exceeded the provincial average at the time (Malcolmson, 2004a). It became apparent that School District B needed to act more entrepreneurially in meeting financial challenges, finding opportunities, and succeeding with less.

Well, at that time, the district had gone through a number of years of budget reductions. You know, they had to make budget reductions to balance their budget and there was talk at the time of starting a foundation to raise extra money. There was some other talk about combining the Scholarship Society that we had with the foundation. But I think, primarily, I saw the change in the legislation as an opportunity for the school district to generate additional funding. At the time, the new funding formula had just come into effect. There was a change from funding on a space basis to a pupil basis. And I think that people didn't quite understand or didn't see how that funding formula would play out over the next number of years, especially when you are looking at things like declining enrolment and that sort of thing. So, there was a fear, I think, of the fact that the funding wouldn't be there. So, there was some interest in trying to find other sources of funding. (Interview with the Secretary Treasurer of School District B)

District senior staff and trustees decided to create a company under section 6.1 that would carry out for-profit educational programs and services. At that time, the Board of Trustees directed senior staff to prepare business plans for offering carpentry products, information-systems services, vehicle maintenance, print-shop services, and bus rentals to the community (Kuehn, 2002). Crudely put, the philosophy was "if it moves, sell it."

We started thinking about a school district corporation in late 2002. And we had some ideas of what we would like to do with it at that time. At the time that we actually got it enacted, or got the corporation formed, it was late 2003, and at the time when we did it, we basically tried to say that we would be doing this like, you know, day-care operations, and supplementing work that the school district employees were presently doing, like vehicle repairs

perhaps, furniture manufacturing and those sort of things. But, there are also other thoughts in my mind, bigger, more potential (Interview with the Secretary Treasurer of School District B)

However, the local chapter of CUPE opposed the SDBC because they saw the legislation as a tool designed specifically for privatization of services currently being performed by CUPE members and teachers in the district.

On behalf of the Local, I met with senior management to express the Local's concerns and made presentations to the Board of Trustees. Prior to doing this I attended legal seminars on the legislation, [did] a great deal of research on this topic; accessing BCTF as well as CUPE BC information and of course the Internet. The Local has discovered the most effective method at [by] which one confronts controversial issues is with sound information and rational. As President of the Local, I broadened the dialogue by approaching the media and the Chamber of Commerce as this is not just a public school issue, it is a community issue with a potential of having outreaching effects. (Interview with a local CUPE official)

The broadening of the debate to non-education partners like the local Chamber of Commerce had an impact on the extent to which part 6.1 of *Bill 34* was put into action. This array of political influences exercised by strategically placed groups who resisted the proposed SDBC activities in most cases was instrumental in determining whether the momentum for the creation of an entrepreneurial environment through the operation of the SDBC would grow or be halted. CUPE strategy was pivotal in ensuring that the SDBC would never be operational as planned by the district. Issues related to the internal culture of the district as a public institution, the level of resistance to the policy, the ways in which the policy was reinterpreted by local stakeholders, potential changes to internal procedures in offering services and programs, potential privatization of parts of the district's operations, and the issues of accountability and transparency were used effectively in shaping the policy outcomes in the case of part 6.1 of *Bill 34*.

The Company is not doing anything right now. It's pretty inactive. We did put forward some proposals to the Board. We did talk to the unions and there is a tremendous resistance on [the] part of both the teachers' union and the support staff's union in this district to not have a corporation. They see it as: their philosophy is that public education should be funded publicly. They just see a corporation as being a threat of some sort. They also believe that districts that have corporations and have income that is not public, basically, they can become "have" districts versus "have-not" districts—the same way that within a district, you can have "have" schools and "have-not" schools depending of the level of funding going into each school.

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I think they should be aware of the impact because we have presented it to our business committee, which those unions are part of, are one of the partner groups related to that. I think the problem is that they really don't want to accept what you say about something like that. They really have their own way of thinking about ...public operation versus private operation and,

I guess, it has just been ingrained in them over the years, they are not open to change. (Interview with the Secretary Treasurer of School District B)

In contrast to the way implementation occurred in School District A, the dynamics of implementation in School District B can be explained best by an advocacy-coalition model (Sabatier, 1999). This approach focuses on advocacy coalitions who share common beliefs and undertake some level of coordinated activity. The coalition led by the CUPE local used this opportunity for continuing local struggles the union movement had lost provincially at an earlier stage of the policy process leading to part 6.1 of *Bill 34*. In the case of District B, the SDBC was incorporated but never got to the consolidation and operational phases. The findings in the case of District B illustrated that effective policy implementation and change can take place only where there is a supportive coalition of key actors and interests at the political level, the level of the educational bureaucracy (where tensions between entrepreneurs and individuals who believe in full government funding), and at the wider community level (for more on the concept of coalition of key actors in the implementation process, see Howlett & Ramesh, 2003).

The evidence gathered regarding the implementation of part 6.1 of *Bill 34* in these two school districts suggested that the control of policy-makers might be considerably reduced by local contextual complexities and interactions among local stakeholders once implementation was initiated. In both cases, however, the implementation of part 6.1 of *Bill 34* involved, at the local level, a non-linear process of rethinking what should happen, when it should happen, where and how things should change, and what should count for success (Geller & Johnston, 1990).

Perceived impacts

The introduction of market logic into the funding mechanism of public-school districts moved some research participants to address the potential impacts of such a policy direction in terms of fiscal equity at the provincial level. In both school districts, some interviewees clearly indicated that greater inequity in course quality and diversity of services and programs, as a result of unequal funding, could very well be the long-term policy outcomes of part 6.1.

Well, I think, if this kind of thing continues without any kind of checks and balances, then I think that definitely there is a potential for that [inequities among districts]. I think that would be a real concern for lots of districts. Some of the outlying districts, for example, don't have the amenities to attract some of these kinds of programs, it could represent real hardship. So, I think the potential is there. (Interview with the Superintendent of School District A)

Like I said before, ... it could lead to a situation where you have rich districts and not-so-rich districts that can generate money. The other inequity I think is that, because of the size of the province and the physical location

of some of the school districts, they don't just have the same opportunity that other districts would have in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island, you know, in generating the extra money in attracting international students and whatever. It could be that the negative thing I would see would be that districts that are able to offer better programs would ultimately, over time, perhaps attract teachers and administrators from other districts who, you know, are good people but aren't supported in their districts by the right kind of programs. So, I think that could ultimately have an impact on education, and more, I say, on the rural areas. (Interview with the Secretary Treasurer of School District B)

These research participants argued that the policy direction of part 6.1 might lead toward a kind of "winner-take-all" public system, in which "the prizes" will most likely accrue more than ever to socially, economically, and culturally favoured school districts. As a result, some school districts would be able to offer more to their communities than others. Some research participants argued plausibly that part 6.1 would serve the interests of those school districts already advantaged by their geographical locations, cultural capital, and marketing savvy.

There is definitely a brand building. Our brand building is around performing arts in particular, and around very high academic results for our kids when they graduate from grade twelve; those two in particular are strong. The other aspect, which has nothing to do with curriculum and everything to do with the culture of the schools and the community, is the safety aspect of our islands. Parents who are considering sending their kids from offshore are very interested in their children being safe. (Interview with the Superintendent of School District A)

Consensus existed among interviewees in both school districts that increased uncertainties in the level of public funding, competitiveness among districts, and scarcity of financial resources have made entrepreneurial activities a vital endeavour for organizational sustainability and growth.

In our district, International Education brings in a couple of million dollars a year. Obviously, of that, we employ teachers and provide services and such to provide to those international students. So, by no means it is all profit. For certain, ... several hundred thousand dollars that one might view as profit coming out of International Education. That's equivalent to perhaps ten support staff positions, maybe equivalent to five or six teaching positions. So, you can look at any area of the district and say well: "We would have fewer librarians, or we might have fewer learning assistance teachers; you might have larger class sizes." We haven't, in this district, tagged or labeled or targeted any particular program by saying: "You know, that is the program that is funded or supported by the International Education program." We have thought about it and we may in fact do that so that there is a greater appreciation for what is being provided as the direct result of International Ed in this district. We talked about that a number of times and I personally think that we should do that so it would be clear to the community that includes parents and staff, as to what service level or to what specific areas

we are able to sustain or enhance because of programs like International Education. (Interview with the Superintendent of School District B)

There is also some evidence that marketing educational programs to international students for profit might entail program packaging and delivery modes different from those used for the local student population.

Well, what's always happened is when you have international students they require additional ESL or tutoring in certain subjects and they pay for that; that's what they are paying, when they come here, they pay their tuition that's part of the practice. So when we had a 5-day week, they were picking that up during the week, what's happened as we have gone to a 4-day week is some of those evening activities that were initially happening say in the late afternoon or evening, they have moved them to Friday. So they are not getting any more, but there are things that are being put in on Friday. (Interview with the Secretary Treasurer of School District A)

This differentiation in marketing and in program substance means that school districts might become more responsive to the needs of a globally rather than locally situated community of students and parents.

As they search for a competitive edge in the international schooling marketplace, there is evidence that school districts might try to maximize profit margins by changing their market response to attract certain types of students deemed cheaper to serve than other groups.

If you get somebody who has a high ESL requirement, they are going to really struggle in their social studies, they are going to require a lot more tutoring and areas like that. It's not that we're saying that they have to speak English, but it's just, especially going for the European students, it's profitable, yes, it is more profitable. But you have a better mix and a better integration with all the other students; it's a much better situation. (Interview with the Secretary Treasurer of School District A)

Given the stakes, the evidence is perhaps not surprising that entrepreneurialism is increasingly valued as a basis for determining teacher and administrator competency. "Successful" educators, leaders, and schools, within an entrepreneurial perspective, are those who respond creatively to market preferences so they can maintain or enhance their district's market share and status.

I think that it becomes a combination of ... a superintendent for example needs to be not only but primarily the educational leader in the district. There is also a need to think, I hate to use the term, but outside of the box, because before we relied upon the Ministry to give us the dollars. We had no other way to gain money because the legislation restricted us. We now have an opportunity to do things differently. So, my role as superintendent becomes one of supporting the Board in its interest in other ways of generating dollars and helping others in our public, not only within our district but within the province, understand why it is necessary and why it actually works. It isn't something that is going to devalue education in our district. It actually sustains our growth. (Interview with the Superintendent of School District A)

Policy impacts were thus perceived by research participants as qualitatively different in the two districts. Given District A's particular vulnerability to external market pressures, its entrepreneurial activities resulted in a mode of program delivery to its international students different from that offered to its domestic students, or at least, that is what appeared to be the case to many observers. This trend confirmed previous research findings that school districts engaged in selling programs and services to overseas students tend to tailor their policies and programs to enhance the districts' attractiveness as educational destinations, while treating their local populations differently. In District B, the perceived impact of running a successful international program translated into perceptions of increasing funding inequity among districts in the province. Inequity in the capacity of school districts to market themselves as attractive educational destinations was clearly outlined by research participants in both school districts. Running part of their operations as for-profit schooling brought into focus the uneven capacity of school districts to position themselves in the educational marketplace given, in particular, inequalities in the entry point of a school district into the market and in the level of resources and change strategies that underpinned it.

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Several aspects of the policy direction embedded in part 6.1 of *Bill 34* in British Columbia merit attention in future research. First, this policy direction has been in effect for only seven years and its impact needs to be studied over a longer timeframe. For instance, future funding-pattern trends in public education in British Columbia merit longer-term study, especially in regard to potential impacts on real education spending per capita and as a percentage of the overall budget of the BC government. In short, the question of the "narcotic effect" of such policy on government's sense of responsibility to fund public education from own-source revenues remains an open and important question inviting future study.

Much work remains to be done on the impact of part 6.1 of *Bill 34* on the funding levels of individual school districts in relation to their capacity to address the needs of all students through more diversified education programs. Will this policy direction create "have" and "have-not" school districts, and, if so, to what extent? How sustainable is such a financing strategy in the long term? Will such a funding strategy enable school districts to maintain an appropriate degree of local independence and autonomy from overseas consumer influences and educational preferences? Such study would further the understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurial success, levels and sources of funding, and equity within the public school system. In addition, this research would help to show whether school district entrepreneurship holds the promise of better schooling for all or for just a few.

Given the possibility that fiscal inequity will continue to grow in importance as a school-finance issue, one wonders whether any legal remedies exist for parents and students to redress financial inequities and to ensure that all students and communities in BC have access to adequate educational programs, regardless of where they live or the circumstances under which they live. Although such legal issues are not part of this policy study, they deserve future investigation. A very superficial consideration of the matter suggests that an equality rights argument based on section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* may be unavailable because any disparate treatment would be based on territoriality rather than a listed or analogous ground of discrimination under section 15. That is, whereas age, sex, or disability, for example, provides actionable grounds of discrimination, geographic residence would seem unlikely to do so. Assuming one could demonstrate that inadequacy of funding resulted in inadequate education for some students – and this is a precarious assumption based on the definitional problems associated with educational adequacy and the complex, contested, and uncertain cause and effect relationship between funding and educational achievement – actions in tort or for violation of the liberty and fundamental justice provisions of section 7 of the *Charter* are at least within the theoretical pale of the possible. The track record of such “failure to educate” lawsuits, of course, is extremely poor (MacKay & Dickinson, 1998). Nevertheless, the prospect of legal recourse relating to the fiscal equity fallout of *Bill 34* is a legitimate area of concern and, hence, of future research. In the absence of such legal remedies, the equity and adequacy outcomes of a public-school financial system partly dependent on school district entrepreneurial activities escape judicial scrutiny entirely and rest solely in the political arena.

Everything considered – including the limitations of this policy study with its specific foci – the story of part 6.1 of *Bill 34* is unique in the Canadian context of neo-liberalism and education policy. It has been the aim of this policy study to scrutinize the particularities of *Bill 34*, especially of part 6.1, through the lenses of a critical policy analysis model, to explain how the introduction of school district entrepreneurialism as a policy direction was placed on the policy agenda, then understood, interpreted, and put into action in very different ways within two local school districts. A policy that promotes less institutional dependence upon government for fiscal resources deserves ongoing scrutiny. It is our hope that, in some small measure, this policy study has contributed to an understanding of how neo-liberal ideologies can be translated into policies that redefine what it means to educate and to be educated in a public-school system. Underlying these policies is an altered view of the nature of school-based knowledge, namely, that such knowledge is a commodity to be sold on the market for maximal return, that the market value of such knowledge trumps its intrinsic value, and that its main purpose is to generate greater capacity to consume and compete.

NOTE

1. Bill 34, *School Amendment Act*, 3rd Session, 37th, Parl., British Columbia, 2002

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GERALD FALLON is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Administration at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. His research interests are in educational leadership and policy; legal studies; governance of First-Nations education; and marketization of public education.

JERALD PAQUETTE is a Professor at the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario. His main research interests are in education finance; minority education policy; First-Nations education; research theory and methods; educational policy and related issues of social purpose; equity and public funding of private education in the Canadian context.

GERALD FALLON est professeur adjoint dans le Département d'administration scolaire à la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université de la Saskatchewan. Ses intérêts de recherche concernent la notion de leadership en éducation; l'analyse critique de la formation, de la mise en œuvre et des impacts des politiques en matière d'éducation; le droit scolaire; les questions relatives à la gestion autochtone en éducation et l'impact du mercantilisme sur la nature et le fonctionnement des systèmes d'éducation publique ici et ailleurs dans le monde.

JERALD PAQUETTE est professeur titulaire à la Faculté de l'éducation de l'Université Western Ontario. Ses intérêts de recherche concernent les modes de financement de l'éducation publique, les politiques touchant l'éducation en milieu minoritaire; l'éducation autochtone; les théories et méthodes de recherche; les questions sociales et les politiques en matière d'éducation; la notion d'équité et le financement des institutions privées d'éducation au Canada.

LES EFFETS DE LA MUSIQUE AUPRÈS D'ÉLÈVES DU DÉBUT DU PRIMAIRE PRÉSENTANT DES DIFFICULTÉS D'APPRENTISSAGE EN LECTURE ET EN ÉCRITURE : RECENSION DES ÉCRITS

JONATHAN BOLDUC, NADIA LAVOIE, & CAROLE FLEURET
Université d'Ottawa

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article examine les effets de la musique auprès d'élèves du début du primaire présentant des difficultés d'apprentissage en lecture et en écriture. Cinq recherches quasi expérimentales publiées de l'année 1997 à nos jours ont été recensées. Chaque études est résumée et commentée d'après la rigueur des approches méthodologiques choisies. Dans l'ensemble, les résultats démontrent que la formation musicale pourrait être une aide complémentaire à l'appropriation du langage écrit.

THE EFFECTS OF MUSIC ON EARLY ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WITH READING AND WRITING LEARNING DIFFICULTIES: SYNOPSIS OF PAPERS

ABSTRACT. This article examines the effects of music on primary school students who have reading and writing disabilities. Five quasi-experimental studies published between 1997 and 2007 are reviewed. Each study is summarized and assessed according to the rigour of the selected methods. Globally, the results show that musical training could be an additional help to the development of written language.

Le développement des capacités de lecture et d'écriture représente un enjeu éducatif majeur dès le début du primaire, car le savoir lire-écrire est inhérent à l'apprentissage des autres matières scolaires (Lefrançois, 2000). Au cours des dix dernières années, des rapports de recherches réalisés dans plusieurs pays à forte croissance économique, dont le Canada, les États-Unis et la France, ont révélé qu'environ 30% de la population éprouvait des difficultés marquées en lecture et en écriture qui freinaient leur cheminement académique ou professionnel (Ressources humaines et développement social Canada, 2004; Observatoire national de la lecture et l'Inspection générale de France, 2005). Différentes politiques nationales ont été légiférées afin de contrer ce problème en amont, en soutenant plus efficacement les jeunes enfants dès leur entrée à l'école (Ministère de l'éducation de l'Ontario, 2003; Observatoire nationale de la lecture, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Même si l'engagement des gouvernements envers cette cause est palpable, il est encore trop tôt pour

examiner à grande échelle l'effet de telles politiques. Les enseignants doivent donc composer avec cette réalité quotidienne en jonglant avec diverses méthodes d'enseignement, tout en sachant bien qu'elles ne rejoignent pas d'emblée les élèves qui éprouvent des besoins particuliers.

Si nous nous référons aux données publiées par le *Programme international de l'OCDE pour le suivi des acquis des élèves* [PISA] depuis 1997,¹ nous constatons que plusieurs élèves à l'échelle de la planète présentent toujours des difficultés en lecture et en écriture. Pour contrer cette situation, divers programmes expérimentaux ont été conçus afin d'offrir des moyens complémentaires d'approcher l'écrit auprès de ces élèves à risques. Parmi ces programmes, ceux de musique/langue se sont montrés particulièrement efficaces. En effet, plusieurs études révèlent que l'apprentissage musical favorise le développement de trois composantes qui sont également impliquées sur le plan de l'appropriation du langage écrit au début de la scolarisation. D'abord, la *perception auditive*, car elle regroupe l'ensemble des opérations cognitives vouées à la réception et à l'analyse de stimuli sonores (Heller et Campbell, 1981). Par ailleurs, la *mémoire phonologique* joue aussi un rôle important, puisqu'elle stimule le rappel d'informations sonores utiles à la reconnaissance et à la distinction de motifs linguistiques et musicaux semblables (Ribière-Raverlat, 1997; Sloboda, 1985). Les activités interdisciplinaires musique/langue contribuent au développement des capacités d'écoute chez les enfants, car la mémoire phonologique permet, d'une part, d'analyser diverses informations sonores et de les comparer entre elles et, d'autre part, de prendre une distance face aux unités linguistiques et musicales en favorisant ainsi le développement d'*habiletés métacognitives*. Selon Fiske (1993) et Lowe (1998), ces dernières amènent notamment une prise de conscience de son propre fonctionnement intellectuel et soutiennent les processus mentaux de la langue et de la musique. De toute évidence, il apparaît qu'en centrant son attention sur des éléments différents,² mais tout aussi utiles à l'émergence et au développement de capacités sur le plan métalinguistique, l'enfant est amené à développer des stratégies d'apprentissage qui facilitent l'appropriation du langage oral et écrit.

Le but de cet article est de mettre en lumière les principales recherches interdisciplinaires musique/langue qui ont été menées auprès d'élèves du début du primaire (maternelle,³ première, deuxième et troisième années) qui présentent des difficultés d'apprentissage en lecture et en écriture. Au total, cinq recherches quasi expérimentales publiées de l'année 1997 à nos jours ont été recensées.⁴ Nous résumerons et commenterons d'abord chacune de ces études. Nous examinerons ensuite, par la rigueur des approches méthodologiques choisies, s'il est possible de considérer la formation musicale comme une aide complémentaire à l'appropriation du langage écrit auprès de cette population.

Mise en contexte du développement des recherches

En survolant la littérature scientifique, nous constatons que dès les années 1950 et 1960, plusieurs chercheurs se sont intéressés à la musique et au langage d'un point de vue pédagogique. Même si les premiers protocoles de recherche qui ont été élaborés visaient à établir des corrélations statistiques (Friedman, 1959; Maze, 1967; Wheeler et Wheeler, 1951-1952), ils ont rapidement été peaufinés afin de valider les liens de causalité entre ces deux domaines d'apprentissage (Doehring et Rabinovitch 1969 ; Hurwitz, Wolff, Bortnick et Kokas, 1975; Kokas, 1969; Movsesian, 1967; Nicholson, 1972; Wagley, 1978). Toutefois, ce n'est qu'à compter des années 1980 que les études quasi expérimentales en musique/langue ont connu leur essor. Que ce soit en contextes linguistiques majoritaire ou minoritaire, les chercheurs ont, pour le plus grand nombre, œuvré auprès de jeunes élèves qui ne présentaient pas des difficultés d'apprentissage (Bolduc, 2006; Colwell, 1994; Dominguez, 1991; de Frece, 1995; Lowe, 1995, 1998). Il n'en demeure pas moins que les populations qui étaient davantage à risques sur le plan de l'appropriation de l'écrit ont aussi étudiées (Atterbury, 1983, 1985). Ces études ont connu une légère croissance ces dix dernières années.

Recension des écrits : synthèse des recherches de 1997 à 2007

Une des études majeures consacrées à la formation musicale et aux difficultés d'appropriation du langage écrit est sans contredit celle réalisée par Standley et Hughes en 1997. Ces deux chercheuses en musicothérapie ont examiné l'effet d'un programme d'entraînement musical expérimental sur le développement des capacités d'éveil à l'écrit auprès de 24 sujets d'âge préscolaire (quatre-cinq ans) inscrits à un programme d'éducation spécialisée aux États-Unis. Les élèves ont été divisés en deux sous-groupes (N=12). À la session d'automne, le groupe 1 a participé, pendant sept semaines et demie, à un programme d'entraînement musical expérimental axé sur le développement des capacités de préécriture tandis que le groupe 2 a participé au programme régulier de l'école, offrant également un programme musical à titre de mesure de contrôle.⁵ À l'inverse, à la session d'hiver, le groupe 2 a pris part, pendant sept semaines et demie, à un programme d'entraînement musical expérimental axé sur le développement des capacités de prélecture alors que le groupe 1 a participé au programme régulier de l'école. En somme, le programme d'entraînement musical de Standley et Hughes (1997) a été offert pendant 15 semaines et comportait deux séances de musique de 30 minutes par semaine, soit un total de 30 leçons. Le programme en préécriture était axé sur le développement des capacités d'écritures inventées, de transcription de mots et de graphomotricité. Pour sa part, le programme en prélecture était centré sur le développement des capacités de conscience phonologique, de reconnaissance de mots et de littérature jeunesse. Trois épreuves ont été choisies afin d'évaluer les capacités des sujets, soit le Print awareness test of logos (Freeman & Whitesell, 1985; Thomas, Rinehart & Wampler, 1992), le Print concept checklist (Clay, 1985)

et le Developmental writing and language skills checklist (Thomas *et al.*, 1992). Chaque enfant a été évalué individuellement au début et à la fin de la session d'automne ainsi qu'à la fin de la session d'hiver. Les résultats de l'étude montrent que les sujets du groupe 1 obtiennent des résultats significativement plus élevés en préécriture comparativement aux sujets du groupe 2 lors du premier post-test à la fin de la session d'automne. Il est aussi intéressant de noter que les résultats en préécriture sont similaires pour les deux groupes lors du second post-test à la fin de la session d'hiver. Les chercheuses états-uniennes ont également constaté que les sujets du groupe 2 ont considérablement amélioré leurs résultats en prélecture au second post-test (fin de la session d'hiver). Dans la discussion de leur recherche, Standley et Hughes (1997) prétendent que leur programme d'entraînement musical expérimental améliore les capacités d'éveil à l'écrit auprès de ces sujets d'âge préscolaire. Il est aussi évident, selon elles, que les activités musicales procurent du plaisir aux enfants et qu'elles les incitent à s'initier à la lecture et à l'écriture. Toutefois, cette étude comporte une faiblesse sur le plan méthodologique, puisque deux programmes musicaux sont comparés, dont l'un a été bonifié par des activités d'éveil à l'écrit. En ce sens, nous pourrions supposer que ce sont ces activités particulières qui ont joué un rôle déterminant auprès des enfants et non les activités musicales en tant que tel.

Une réplique de l'étude de Standley et Hughes (1997) a été réalisée par Register en 2001. Cinquante enfants états-uniens d'âge préscolaire (quatre-cinq ans), dont certains présentaient des troubles liés au développement du langage écrit, y ont pris part. Deux classes ont formé le groupe expérimental (N=25) et deux autres, le groupe témoin (N=25). Sur une période de 15 semaines, chacun des groupes impliqués dans l'étude a participé à un programme d'entraînement musical offert bi hebdomadairement par une musicothérapeute. Le groupe expérimental a participé au programme d'entraînement musical élaboré par Standley et Hughes (1997) tandis que le groupe témoin a pris part à un programme régulier de musicothérapie, axé principalement sur le développement des habiletés sociales et de communication orale. Les mesures évaluatives choisies par Standley et Hughes (1997) ont également été reprises dans l'étude de Register (2001), à savoir le Print awareness test of logos (Freeman & Whitesell, 1985; Thomas *et al.*, 1992), le Print concept checklist (Clay, 1985) et le Developmental writing and language skills checklist (Thomas *et al.*, 1992). Les résultats de cette recherche révèlent que les deux programmes d'entraînement musical utilisés améliorent les capacités d'éveil à l'écrit chez l'ensemble des sujets. Cependant, le programme de Standley et Hughes (1997) semble plus efficace : les sujets du groupe expérimental obtiennent des résultats plus élevés en préécriture et en prélecture que ceux du groupe témoin. De façon claire, la recherche réalisée par Standley et Hughes (1997) et reprise par Register (2001) révèlent que des programmes interdisciplinaires musique/langue peuvent favoriser le développement global et l'émergence d'habiletés en lecture et en écriture chez des jeunes enfants présentant certaines difficultés d'apprentissage

dès le début de leur scolarisation. Mentionnons que la recherche de Standley et Hughes a été réalisée auprès d'une population limitée, ce qui n'est pas le cas de celle de Register (2001) dans laquelle l'échantillon est plus significatif sur le plan statistique (Howell, 1998). Pour pallier à la limite méthodologique relevée dans l'étude originale, l'ajout d'un groupe témoin, sans condition musicale, aurait contribué à une meilleure validité interne.

Menée auprès d'enfants états-uniens de la première à la troisième année, l'étude de cas de Colwell et Murlless (2002) porte, entre autres, sur le développement des habiletés de vocabulaire par l'entremise d'activités musicales (chanter versus réciter⁶). Pendant une période de quatre semaines, cinq sujets ont pris part à différents programmes en alternance. Au cours de la première semaine, tous les participants ont complété le programme de soutien en lecture offert par l'orthopédagogue de l'école, quatre fois par semaine à raison de 30 minutes par rencontre. Lors de la deuxième semaine, deux élèves ont participé à un programme expérimental de musicothérapie, égal en temps et durée, qui visait l'étude d'une série de mots⁷ à l'aide de chants adaptés pour l'occasion. Ces chants visaient à développer la reconnaissance à des mots connus à l'oral, mais peu maîtrisés à l'écrit (en travaillant l'accentuation tonique, notamment). Trois élèves ont pris part à un programme contrôle équivalent où les mots étaient appris par des exercices de répétition et de récitation. Durant la troisième semaine, les programmes des deux groupes précédents ont été interchangés afin d'assurer un contrôle de la validité interne de la recherche. À la quatrième semaine, tous les élèves ont participé au programme régulier en classe. Des tâches d'épellations hebdomadaires (prétest et post-test) ont été réalisées à partir des listes de mots qui étaient enseignés aux élèves chaque semaine. De plus, une autre tâche d'épellation, regroupant l'ensemble des mots appris, a été complétée deux semaines suivant la fin de la recherche. Dans l'ensemble, les résultats de Colwell et Murlless (2002) révèlent qu'à la suite de la formation musique, les élèves parviennent à identifier sans erreur le double de mots comparativement à la condition contrôle à laquelle aucune amélioration statistiquement significative n'a été observée. Les auteures sont d'avis que ce succès peut être attribué à la nature même du programme expérimental, puisque les élèves étaient amenés à y développer leurs capacités auditives (écoute active), vocales (chant) et kinesthésiques (rythmiques, mouvements), rejoignant ainsi une plus grande variété de styles d'apprentissage. Cette étude de cas est pertinente, mais elle comporte une limite méthodologique qui permet de questionner la validité des résultats. En effet, les seules tâches d'épellation choisies lors des mesures évaluatives ont été élaborées spécifiquement pour ce projet et n'ont pas, sur le plan scientifique, la même valeur que les épreuves standardisées utilisées dans les autres études recensées. Cette variable dépendante aurait dû être mieux contrôlée.

Inspirée par les travaux précédents de Standley et Hughes (1997), Register (2001) et Colwell (2002), Steele (2006) a examiné l'effet d'un programme musical

intégrant des activités de littératie (langage écrit) auprès d'enfants états-uniens de la maternelle à la deuxième année qui présentaient des difficultés d'apprentissage (N=39). Cet échantillon homogène a été choisi parmi 150 élèves qui prenaient part à un programme estival de remédiation en lecture et en écriture. Deux mesures expérimentales individuelles, soit une épreuve de décodage de mots (Slosson et Nicholson, 1990) et une épreuve de reconnaissance de mots de chansons (élaborée par l'équipe de recherche), ont été utilisées au prétest et au post-test.⁸ Pendant une période de six semaines, le groupe expérimental (N=20, divisé en quatre sous-groupes) a participé à quatre leçons hebdomadaires de musique de 30 minutes chacune où des activités comme l'écriture de mélodies, des chants, des jeux de rythmique, la reconnaissance d'accords et l'interprétation de pièces musicales à l'aide de divers instruments étaient offertes. Ces activités ont été favorisées, car elles représentent des pistes de transfert possible en littératie, notamment pour l'écriture de nouveaux mots, l'apprentissage du vocabulaire, la conscience phonologique et la lecture de textes. Le programme du groupe témoin (N=19, divisé en quatre sous-groupes) était, quant à lui, offert trois fois par semaines. Chaque leçon de 30 minutes visait le développement des habiletés sociales par l'entremise de jeux de coopération musicaux. Aucune activité du programme expérimental n'a été proposée dans le cadre du programme contrôle. A la fin de la recherche, l'analyse de variance a montré que les sujets du groupe expérimental ont amélioré significativement leurs résultats à l'épreuve de reconnaissance de mots de chanson en plus de connaître un gain, moins marqué cependant, à l'épreuve de décodage de mots. Aucune amélioration significative n'a été remarquée pour les sujets du groupe témoin à ces deux épreuves. Dans sa discussion, Steele (2006) vient à la conclusion qu'un programme musical peut avoir un effet bénéfique sur le développement des habiletés en lecture à court terme. Elle met aussi en avant-plan une limite qui, selon nous, mérite d'être considérée. Puisque plusieurs musicothérapeutes ont offert les programmes aux différents sous-groupes et que chacun suivait un plan d'intervention personnel, cela a une incidence directe sur la validité interne. Qui plus est, nous prétendons que l'effet John Henry ait pu influencer les résultats de cette recherche. En effet, sachant qu'une action particulière est entreprise dans un groupe expérimental, il se peut que le groupe témoin ait redoublé d'ardeur pour obtenir des résultats équivalents.⁹ Cette limite doit également être prise en considération.

Dernièrement, en 2007, Register, Darrow, Standley et Swedberg ont mis à l'essai un programme intensif d'entraînement musical qui visait le développement des capacités de lecture chez des élèves états-uniens de la deuxième année avec et sans difficultés d'apprentissage.¹⁰ Cette recherche fut réalisée auprès de deux classes intactes. La classe expérimentale comprenait 16 élèves (N=16), dont huit présentaient des difficultés en lecture. De son côté, la classe témoin regroupait 17 élèves (N=17) sans problème apparent. En ajout au programme de littératie (langage écrit) offert aux deux groupes, la classe expérimentale participa au programme d'entraînement musical. Celui-ci qui comportait des activités

passives et actives, telles que des tâches d'écoute, des chants, des compositions musicales et des exercices de rythmique. De plus, chacune des 12 leçons de musique, offerte sur une période de quatre semaines par une musicothérapeute, était conçue afin d'amener graduellement les élèves à améliorer leurs capacités de reconnaissance et de décodage de mots ainsi que leur compréhension en lecture. Trois sous tests de l'épreuve *Gates-MacGinitie reading test* (MacGinitie, MacGinitie, Maria, et Dreyer 2000), soit ceux de connaissance de mots, de décodage de mots et de compréhension en lecture, ont été remplis au prétest et au post-test. Les résultats indiquent que les élèves qui présentaient des difficultés en lecture ont significativement amélioré leurs résultats aux tâches de connaissance et de décodage de mots à la fin du programme intensif d'entraînement musical. Cela pourrait être dû au fait que les activités musicales étaient directement liées à des concepts en littératie. Les élèves sans problème apparent ont aussi connu de meilleurs résultats à ces deux sous-tests, mais de façon moins éloquente. Aucune amélioration notable n'a pu être observée au sous-test de compréhension en lecture pour l'ensemble des sujets. En outre, une analyse de covariance révèle que les sujets de la classe expérimentale ont connu une progression plus marquée entre le début et la fin de la recherche, et ce, aux trois composantes de l'épreuve de MacGinitie *et al.* (2000). Il est clair que Register *et al.* (2007) ont porté attention à la validité de leur recherche. Toutefois, cette équipe demeure consciente que leur échantillon et la courte durée de leur projet constituent deux limites méthodologiques importantes. Un plus grand nombre de sujets ainsi qu'un programme d'entraînement étalé sur une période de six semaines (18 leçons) serait d'une plus grande valeur sur le plan scientifique. Par ailleurs, nous tenons aussi à souligner que le recours à deux classes intactes formées en début d'année aurait pu involontairement créer un effet plafond et influencer les résultats de cette étude. D'un point de vue quasi expérimental, la répartition aléatoire des élèves dans les deux groupes aurait été préférable et devrait être envisagée par des chercheurs qui reprendraient ce protocole. De plus, il semble que Register *et al.* (2007) n'ait pas tenu compte de l'effet Hawthorne¹¹ puisque cette limite n'est pas mentionnée dans leur article. Il aurait été pertinent d'examiner l'effet psychologique que la conscience de participer à une recherche et d'être l'objet d'une attention spéciale exerce sur le groupe expérimental. Enfin, nous nous demandons quelles raisons justifient le fait qu'aucune tâche d'aptitudes musicales n'a été proposée dans cette étude. Comme plusieurs épreuves sont conçues spécialement pour des élèves de cet âge (Gordon, 1979), des corrélations statistiques auraient pu être établies entre ces deux domaines et, éventuellement, appuyer les liens entre le développement musical et langagier.

Discussion

Même si les études interdisciplinaires musique/langue sont en pleines effervescences, il demeure néanmoins que les chercheurs qui se sont intéressés aux élèves présentant des difficultés d'apprentissage en lecture et en écriture

au début du primaire (maternelle, première et deuxième et troisième années) sont peu nombreux. Les travaux menés au cours des 10 dernières années ont majoritairement été réalisés par des équipes de musicothérapeutes. De par la définition générale de sa pratique, il est clair que la musicothérapie s'arrime bien à ce type d'étude, car elle représente « un mode d'intervention naturel qui utilise les composantes de la musique (rythme, mélodie, harmonie, style, etc.) afin d'améliorer ou de maintenir le bien-être de l'individu. »¹² Cependant, nous sommes d'avis que les chercheurs en sciences de l'éducation devraient également s'intéresser à cette problématique, considérant le nombre d'élèves qui s'approprient difficilement l'écrit au sein de classes dites « régulières » (Foorman et Torgesen, 2001). Plusieurs milieux éducatifs sont en pleine mutation et les enseignants recherchent de moyens d'intervention complémentaires afin d'aider cette population. Un partage de connaissances entre les différents domaines d'expertise contribuerait certainement à améliorer cette situation dans le milieu pratique.

Les cinq recherches quasi expérimentales que nous avons recensées révèlent que divers programmes d'entraînement musicaux peuvent contribuer au développement des capacités d'éveil à l'écrit et de lecture chez des élèves avec et sans difficultés d'apprentissage. Comme nous l'avons mentionné précédemment, la plupart de ces programmes se basent sur quelques principes d'approches d'éducation musicale active, d'une part, et sur des recherches en musicothérapie, d'autre part. Il est aussi essentiel de rappeler qu'ils intègrent, par ricochet, une approche mixte de l'enseignement de la lecture et de l'écriture en mettant les élèves en contact avec des écrits significatifs et en rendant plus explicites les relations graphophonologiques. Une analyse approfondie des programmes d'entraînement musicaux employés dans chacune de ces cinq recherches confirme la rigueur avec laquelle ils ont été conçus. Par contre, au-delà de ces programmes, chaque recherche comporte des limites qui compromettent leurs validités interne et externe. La principale limite est sans contredit le nombre restreint de participants, à l'exception de la recherche réalisée par Register (2001). Rappelons qu'un petit échantillon ne permet pas de généraliser les résultats à l'ensemble de la population. Par ailleurs, d'autres limites doivent être prises en considération, telles que le rôle central joué par certains chercheurs dans leur recherche (participation aux mesures évaluatives, élaboration des programmes d'entraînement), la contrainte des mesures expérimentales (aucune tâche d'aptitudes musicales proposée, tâches développées par la équipes de recherche), la constitution des groupes d'élèves (classes homogènes/hétérogènes, effet plafond) et l'implication de plusieurs spécialistes en musicothérapie dans l'animation des programmes d'entraînement musicaux.

À la lumière de ces faits, est-il possible de démontrer si la formation musicale peut représenter une aide complémentaire aux élèves du début du primaire qui ont des difficultés d'apprentissage en lecture et en écriture ? La réponse à cette question doit être interprétée avec nuance. Conformément aux recherches

corrélatives et quasi expérimentales réalisées depuis les 30 dernières années, nous pouvons supposer que l'apprentissage musical développe des habiletés qui seraient transférables sur le plan du langage écrit. Par ailleurs, dans certains cas, la musique peut aussi être employée comme une modalité de présentation pour travailler une habileté particulière en littérature (segmentation de mots, décodage, écriture de mots, etc.). Ces deux principales influences se retrouvent dans les cinq recherches recensées dans cet article, bien qu'elles soient parfois isolées ou combinées (dans l'étude de Colwell et Murlless, 2002, notamment)). Par ailleurs, les différences inter groupe observées auprès des classes qui ont participé à des programmes d'entraînement musicaux montrent l'effet bénéfique de ces formations. Cependant, rappelons que nous devons toujours analyser ces résultats en tenant compte d'éventuels effets Hawthorne ou John Henry. Par ailleurs, chacune des recherches indique une amélioration rapide des capacités d'éveil à l'écrit et de lecture chez l'ensemble des sujets à la suite de ces programmes d'entraînement musicaux. Si cet effet à court terme est observable, qu'en est-il des effets à moyen et long termes ? À ce jour, aucune recherche post diagnostic n'a été réalisée afin d'évaluer cet aspect. Un parallèle peut être établi avec les travaux contestés sur l'« Effet Mozart » (pour une recension voir Bolduc, 2007) qui ont indiqué que l'écoute de la *Sonate pour deux pianos en ré majeur K448* de W. A. Mozart améliorerait la performance à des tâches d'habiletés cognitives générales et à une tâche de mémoire spatiale sur une période de 10 à 15 minutes sans pour autant avoir des répercussions sur un plus long laps de temps.

Pour conclure, il est essentiel de réitérer l'importance qui doit être accordée aux recherches interdisciplinaires musique/langage. Les travaux menés dans ces domaines doivent être envisagés sous plusieurs angles afin de contribuer de façon significative au développement des enfants et aux pratiques éducatives. Toutefois, un regard critique doit toujours être posé sur ces recherches. Aux dires de plusieurs psychologues de la musique, dont Sloboda (1985), la musique et la langue possèdent beaucoup de similitudes sur le plan conceptuel. En tant qu'éducateurs, nous devrions nous baser sur leurs forces respectives afin d'offrir une formation de qualité et adaptée à tous les apprenants.

NOTES

1. Consultez le lien suivant : http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,2688,fr_2649_35845621_1_1_1_1_1_1_1_00.html pour de plus amples renseignements concernant le *Programme international de l'OCDE pour le suivi des acquis des élèves* [PISA] (page consultée le 30 mars 2008).
2. Il peut s'agir, entre autres, d'activités liées à des concepts musicaux, tels que la reconnaissance de la hauteur sonore ou la composition de séquences rythmiques pour accompagner une chanson enfantine.
3. Ce terme est utilisé de façon générique pour décrire l'éducation offerte aux enfants âgés de 4 à 6 ans.

4. Cette recension des écrits a été réalisée à l'aide des bases de données *Arts and Humanities Index* (2000-2008); *CAIRSS for Music* (2000-2008); *Dissertation Abstract International* (2000-2007); *Eric* (2000-2008) et *PsychLit/PsychINFO* (2000-2008). Divers articles de synthèse ont également été consultés (Butzlaff, 2000; Hetland, 2000a, 2000b; Schellenberg, 2001). Afin de faire un survol de la littérature, six expressions ont été sélectionnées. Il s'agit des mots-clés : «difficultés de lecture» [*Reading disabilities*]; «difficultés d'écriture» [*Writing disabilities*]; «musique» [*music*]; «éducation musicale» [*Music education, musical instruction*]; « musicothérapie [*Music Therapy*]; « difficultés d'apprentissage » [*Learning disabilities*]; « école maternelle » [*Kindergarten*] et «école primaire» [*Primary school*].
5. Il faut mentionner que le programme d'entraînement musical expérimental développé dans le cadre de cette recherche était basé sur quelques principes de l'approche Orff Schulwerk, mais qu'il s'inspirait majoritairement d'autres recherches menées en musicothérapie (Merrion, 1989) et en éducation musicale (Music Educators National Conference [MENC], 1995; Palmer & Sims, 1993). Le programme musical utilisé à titre de mesure de contrôle visait quant à lui à éveiller les enfants aux différents paramètres musicaux par l'entremise d'activités ludiques (développements personnel et social).
6. Dans le titre original de leur recherche en anglais, Colwell et Murless (2002) emploient les mots « singing » vs « chanting ».
7. Huit mots étaient proposés à l'élève de première année et neuf mots pour les élèves de deuxième et de troisième année.
8. La mesure statistique Mann-Whitney a permis de confirmer l'équivalence inter groupe au début des évaluations.
9. G. de Landsheere. (1982). *Introduction à la recherche en éducation* (5e ed.). Paris: Armand Colin, p. 63.
10. Dans l'article de Register *et al.* (2007), le programme intensif d'entraînement musical est défini de la façon suivante : « an intensive short-term music curriculum designed for second-grade students and students who have been identified as having a specific learning disability (SLD) in reading ».
11. G. de Landsheere. (1982). *Op. Cit.* p. 61.
12. Association québécoise de musicothérapie (AQM). (2003). Association québécoise de musicothérapie. Dépliant promotionnel.

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JONATHAN BOLDUC détient un baccalauréat en musique et une maîtrise en didactique du français de l'Université de Montréal ainsi qu'un doctorat en éducation musicale de l'Université Laval. Ses recherches portent sur les impacts de la musique sur l'apprentissage au préscolaire et au primaire. Jonathan Bolduc est actuellement professeur adjoint et directeur de la formation à l'enseignement à la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa. Il dirige également le laboratoire de recherche *Mus-Alpha*, financé par la Fondation canadienne de l'innovation, sur les liens entre l'éducation musicale et le développement du langage.

NADIA LAVOIE détient un baccalauréat, une maîtrise ainsi qu'un doctorat en musique de l'Université de Montréal. Elle possède également un baccalauréat en éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa. Elle est actuellement professeure invitée à la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa.

CAROLE FLEURET détient un baccalauréat en orthopédagogie et une maîtrise en didactique du français et complète un doctorat en didactique du français à l'Université de Montréal. Ses recherches portent sur la littératie et sur l'appropriation de la langue écrite maternelle et seconde. Carole Fleuret est actuellement professeure adjointe à la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université d'Ottawa.

JONATHAN BOLDUC holds a bachelors degree in music and a masters degree in French Didactic from the University of Montréal, as well as a PhD in musical education from Laval University. His research focuses primarily on the impact of music on student learning during the pre-elementary and elementary years. Presently, Jonathan is an assistant professor and director of the teacher training program in the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. He is also in charge of the *Mus-Alpha* research laboratory, financed by the Foundation for Canadian Innovation, investigating the links between music education and language development.

NADIA LAVOIE holds a bachelors, masters, and D.Mus in music from the University of Montreal, as well as a bachelor of education degree from the University of Ottawa. Currently, Nadia is a visiting professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa.

CAROLE FLEURET holds a bachelors degree in student assessment and evaluation (orthopédagogie), a masters, and a PhD in French Didactic from the University of Montreal. She is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. Her research focuses on literacy and acquisition of written language in both first and second languages.

LEARNING STYLES: HUMPTY DUMPTY REVISITED

STAN D. IVIE *Texas Woman's University*

ABSTRACT. What is a learning style? No one seems to know for sure. The language used by learning style theorists is filled with ambiguities. Price (2004) maintains that "learning style is often used as a metaphor for considering the range of individual differences in learning" (p. 681). Is learning style merely a fanciful metaphor or is it the wave of the future? The research offers mixed results. "Effects on improved test scores with testing conditions matched to student style have been published, but," Curry (1990) adds, "there are also studies showing no discernible effect attributable to learning style variation" (p. 54). How many distinct learning style models are there? The Coffield (2004) team identified 71 different learning style models, which they subdivided into 13 major and 58 minor models. One of the most popular learning style models comes from Rita and Kenneth Dunn. They have developed an eclectic model featuring 21 (23) different variables that influence a person's learning style. These variables run all the way from light and temperature to whether the person is analytic or global in his or her thinking. Rita Dunn says about the movement: "I want to convert the world" (Kortland, 2007, p. 8). And well she may. The Dunns' model is used in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, and a number of other countries. Is learning style a panacea or a placebo? The jury is still out on that question.

STYLES D'APPRENTISSAGE: HUMPTY DUMPTY REVISITÉ

RÉSUMÉ. Qu'est-ce qu'un style d'apprentissage? Nul ne semble tout à fait certain de ce que cela signifie. Le vocabulaire utilisé par les théoriciens des styles d'apprentissages est truffé d'ambiguïtés. Price (2004) soutient que le terme « style d'apprentissage est fréquemment utilisé comme une métaphore pour refléter l'éventail des différences individuelles face à l'apprentissage. » (p. 681) En fait, les chercheurs présentent des résultats variés. Selon Curry (1990), « si des effets positifs sur les résultats de tests dont les conditions respectaient le style d'apprentissage de l'étudiant ont été publiés, il existe également des études démontrant qu'il n'existe pas d'effet significatif attribuable à la variation des styles d'apprentissage. » (p. 54) Combien de styles d'apprentissage distincts peut-on répertorier? L'équipe de Coffield (2004) a identifié 71 théories différentes sur les styles d'apprentissages, en admettant toutefois qu'il pourrait en exister jusqu'à 100. Un des styles d'apprentissages les plus connus est celui popularisé par Rita

et Kenneth Dunn. Ceux-ci ont développé un modèle éclectique montrant 21 (23) variables différentes qui influencent le style d'apprentissage d'un individu. Ces variables comportent autant la manière dont la lumière, la température ou encore la personnalité analytique ou globale d'un individu influence son mode de pensée. À propos de ce mouvement, Rita Dunn déclare : « Je désire convertir le monde » (Kortland, 2007, p. 8). Elle le fera peut-être. Le modèle Dunn est utilisé aux États-Unis, au Canada, en Grande-Bretagne, en Australie et dans un grand nombre d'autres pays. Le style d'apprentissage est-il une panacée ou un effet placebo? Le jury délibère encore sur la question.

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a 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 so many different things." *Through the looking-glass*

Why is learning style a Humpty Dumpty model of education? Because those who have fostered it, including Rita and Kenneth Dunn, have played fast and loose with their use of language. Familiar words have been assigned new and novel meanings. The word "style" has undergone radical surgery. It no longer comes as the result of years of painstaking practice; rather, it is something every child is either born with or acquires very early in life. Indeed, according to Dunn (1990), "three-fifths of learning style is biologically imposed" (pp. 15-16). Consequently, "those who suggest that children should learn to adapt to the teachers' styles disregard the biological nature of style" (Dunn, Beaudry, & Klavas, 1989, p. 56). Style is not only rooted in human biology, but it is divided along bipolar lines. Coffield, Moseley, Hall, and Ecclestone (2004) identified 30 such pairs. "The field of learning styles," Coffield (2005) observes, "suffers from almost fatal flaws of theoretical incoherence and conceptual confusion; for example, you can read about left-brainers versus right-brainers, pragmatists versus theorists, and globalists versus analysts" (p. 28).

Classification

The learning styles movement is an example of unfettered pluralism. Coffield et al. (2004) identified 71 different learning style models, which they subdivided into 13 major and 58 minor models. The major models were selected because of their theoretical importance, widespread use, and influence on other models. The minor models were considered to be extrapolations from the major models. The Coffield team developed a system for classifying different learning style models based on the criterion of how stable or flexible, biological or sociological, learning styles were regarded as being by their respective theorists. "Our continuum is based on the extent to which the developers of learning styles models and instruments appear to believe that learning styles are fixed" (p. 21). Based on their criterion, Coffield et al. divided the 71 theories into 5 different families, from which they culled out the 13 major models.

The descriptors for the 5 families and their 13 most significant members are as follows: (a) learning styles and preferences that are held to be largely biologically based, Dunn and Dunn, Gregorc; (b) learning styles reflecting deep-seated features of cognitive structure, Riding; (c) learning styles as a component of personality type, Apter, Jackson, Myers-Briggs; (d) learning styles as flexible learning preferences, Allinson and Hayes, Herrmann, Honey and Mumford, Kolb; and (e) learning styles as an aspect of learning approaches, strategies, orientations, and conceptions of learning, Entwistle, Sternberg, Vermunt (Coffield et al., 2004, pp. 19-22).

The Coffield (2004) team conducted an in-depth analysis of the 13 most significant models and their respective instruments. They looked at four measures of test construction: internal consistency, test-retest reliability, construct validity, and predictive validity. Given these four criteria, the Allison and Hayes' Cognitive Styles Index (CSI) received the highest rating. "Overall, the CSI has the best evidence of reliability and validity of the 13 models studied" (p. 23). The lowest ratings were given to Gregorc's Style Delineator, Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI), and Sternberg's Thinking Styles Inventory (TSI). Coffield et al. called Gregorc's instrument "theoretically and psychometrically flawed" (p. 27). Kolb's inventory did not fare much better. "Problems about reliability, validity and the learning cycle continue to dog this model" (p. 31). The Coffield team seemed almost joyful in panning Sternberg's theory. They called it "an unnecessary addition to the proliferation of learning styles models" (p. 34).

What of the Dunn and Dunn model? In relationship to the other learning style models, the Dunn and Dunn model received no better than an average grade. Coffield et al. (2004) said about it: "Despite a large and evolving research programme, forceful claims made for impact are questionable because of limitations in many of the supporting studies and the lack of independent research on the model. Concerns raised in our review need to be addressed before further use is made of the model in the UK" (p. 25).

THE DUNN AND DUNN MODEL

Definition

Rita and Kenneth Dunn have put together one of the most popular learning style packages. Their names have become synonymous with the movement in the United States. The Dunns have designed a visual representation of their model, which metaphorically resembles a patchwork quilt. [See the Appendix.] They define a learning style as the way a person "concentrates on, processes, internalizes, and remembers new and difficult academic information or skills" (Shaughnessy, 1998, p. 141). The definition, however, does not end there. It is expanded into a multifaceted model, which further describes a learning style as the way an individual reacts to 21 (23) elements in 5 basic strands:

(a) immediate environment (sound, light, temperature, and design); (b) emotionality (motivation, persistence, responsibility/conformity, and need for internal or external structure); (c) sociological (learning alone, in a pair, as part of a small group or team, with peers, or with an authoritative or collegial adult; also, in a variety of ways or in a consistent pattern); (d) physiological (auditory, visual, tactual, and/or kinesthetic perceptual preferences; food or liquid intake needs; time-of-day energy levels; mobility needs); and (e) indications of global or analytic processing inclinations (through correlation with sound, light, design, persistence, peer-orientation, and intake scores). (Shaughnessy, 1998, p. 142)

What is wrong with the Dunn and Dunn definition (model) of a learning style? In addition to being long, cumbersome, and ambiguous, the Dunns' model is rich in what Ryle (1949), *The Concept of Mind*, has called "category mistakes." Such mistakes occur when we use a term as though it belonged to some logical category of which it is not in fact a member. The Dunns' model is a patchwork of such mistakes. Behaviorist assumptions about *environmental* influences (sound, light, temperature, classroom design) are thrown together with constructivist assumptions about *psychological* processes (global vs. analytic, right-brained vs. left-brained, and impulsive vs. reflective) learners. How all of the categories and their related variables are pieced together into a single learning theory remains a source of wonderment to the Dunns' critics. Two such critics, Hyman and Rosoff (1984), call attention to an underlying flaw in the Dunn and Dunn model. "Intelligence, however defined, is not listed in Dunn's definition" (p. 36). All of the other factors influencing learning are pictured in the Dunns' schematic, but not intelligence. "It simply goes counter to commonsense and linguistic logic to exclude intelligence as an element of learning style since intelligence is related to the concepts of brain and learning" (p. 36).

Accommodation

Individuals differ in a wide variety of ways. One of these ways is how they go about learning. Everyone has his or her distinctive learning style. "Much of learning style," DeBello (1990) informs us, "is biologically imposed on humans. We can no sooner change our styles than permanently change the color of our eyes, hair, or skin" (p. 11). Identifying a student's learning style, however, is not as simple as it might seem. "Although teachers may identify certain learning style characteristics through observation, they often misinterpret many others" (p. 11). Consequently, the Dunns' (2008) Learning Style Inventory was created in order to assist teachers in identifying students' learning styles. "Three decades of research suggest that teaching strategies and resources should complement individuals' perceptual strengths when introducing new and difficult academic content" (p. 2). By building instruction around students' learning styles, schools can become truly effective.

Learning style theorists strongly favor accommodation. Schools should make students comfortable in their classrooms. Joyce and Weil (1996), however, advocate a course of action that runs in the opposite direction. They believe schools should create an environment where students are uncomfortable. Non-accommodation provides the conditions necessary for change and growth. If the environment merely accommodates students' learning styles, they may become too comfortable and complacent to change. "Significant growth requires discomfort. If the environment and the student are too much in harmony, the student is permitted to operate at a level of comfort that does not require the challenge of growth" (pp. 389-90). Teachers should strive to create a dynamic disequilibrium in the classroom. "Rather than match teaching approaches to students in such a way as to minimize discomfort, our task is to expose the students to new teaching modalities that will, for some time, be uncomfortable to them" (p. 390). Growth necessitates change. In order to facilitate growth, teachers must alter students' "comfortable ways of thinking and survive the buffeting involved in taking on unfamiliar ideas, skills, and values" (p. 397).

Tactual

Rita Dunn (1995), like Froebel, Montessori, and Piaget, believes in hands-on learning. A few children who are auditory or visual learners can acquire information easily from hearing and seeing. "Most young children," however, "learn tactually (through manipulatives, with their hands) or kinesthetically (by experiencing or being engaged in whole-body activities)" (p. 13). This is equally true, Dunn insists, of gifted students, who "prefer kinesthetic (experiential/active) and tactual (hands-on) instruction" (Shaughnessy, 1998, p. 144). Low-achieving students can only master difficult information through kinesthetic or tactual learning. "Low achievers have only one perceptual strength, or none, in contrast to the multiperceptual strengths of the gifted" (Shaughnessy, 1998, p. 144). Male students, according to Dunn, Thies, & Honigsfeld (2001), tend to be kinesthetic or tactual learners. They require mobility and informal design when concentrating and "if they have a third modality strength, it often is visual. As a group, many males tend to be relatively low auditory and more nonconforming and peer-motivated than females" (p. 7). Females, on the other hand, "tend to be auditory, conforming, authority-orientated, and better able to sit passively in conventional classroom desks and chairs" (p. 7).

The human hand is a marvelous tool. Of that there is no doubt. But is it the key to cognitive development? DeLoache (2005) presents an opposing point of view. "What most distinguishes humans from other creatures is our ability to create and manipulate a wide variety of symbolic representations" (p. 73). No aspect is more important for human development. Symbolization holds great meaning for the practice of education. Teachers in elementary classrooms use manipulatives to teach mathematical concepts. Concrete objects, or so it is commonly believed, assist students in learning abstract numerical concepts.

However, “if children do not understand the relation between the objects and what they represent, the use of manipulatives could be counterproductive” (p. 77). DeLoache conducted an experiment teaching mathematics to two groups of six and seven-year-old children. One group used manipulatives and the other group used paper and pencils. “Both groups learned to solve problems equally well – but the group using the blocks took three times as long to do so” (p. 77). A little girl, who had used the blocks during the experiment, asked DeLoache a pointed question: “‘Have you ever thought of teaching kids to do these with paper and pencil?’” (p. 77).

Dualisms

Freud once remarked there was room inside the human head for everything. He might have said the same about the Dunn and Dunn model. The whole model is an elaborate web of disjointed ideas. Nothing, however, is more confusing than the treatment of analytic and global learners. Rita Dunn (1995) informs us that “some students learn more easily when information is presented step-by-step in a sequential pattern that builds toward a conceptual understanding” (p. 18). These are analytic learners, and they prefer inductive logic. “Others learn more easily . . . when they understand the concept first and then concentrate on the details” (pp. 18-19). These are global learners, and they favor deductive logic. The difference between analytic and global learners does not end with logic. Analytics are left-brained people. Global learners, on the other hand, are right-brained. Analytic learners are reflective; global learners are impulsive. “Reflective thinkers require more time than impulsive thinkers because they process the questions sequentially, evaluatively, and comparatively. Impulsives, on the other hand, process intuitively and quickly” (p. 20).

The Dunn and Dunn model represents a clear illustration of what Dewey called “either-or” thinking. “Mankind,” Dewey (1938/1959) writes in *Experience and Education*, “is given to formulating its beliefs in terms of *Either-Ors*, between which it recognizes no intermediate possibilities” (p. 1). Dewey rejected all forms of dualism. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916/1960) argued that dualistic thinking creates a world filled with false dichotomies. These dichotomies, in turn, create habits of mind that trip up our thinking and trick us into believing that sharp distinction exist where in reality there is merely a continuum of experience.

The notion that learners are either left-brained or right-brained is a false dichotomy. The two hemispheres work in tandem with one another. If they did not, classroom instruction would be impossible. “The harder the task,” says Gazzaniga (1998), “the more one half of the brain must call on the subcortex or the other hemisphere for help” (p. 52). Bruer (1999) makes a similar point: “What modern brain science is telling us . . . is that it makes no scientific sense to map gross, unanalyzed behaviors and skills – reading, arithmetic, spatial reasoning – onto one brain hemisphere or another” (p. 653). Much of the

literature claiming to promote “brain-based” education is simply ill-informed. How can educators capitalize on the discoveries coming from neuroscience? Brandt (1999) proposes fusing brain research with the findings of cognitive psychology. Such a fusion, he believes, can help educators to develop a working theory of instruction. Brandt offers the following instructional insight coming from Stanislaus Dehaene, a French mathematician and neuroscientist, as an example: “A good teacher is an alchemist who gives a fundamentally modular human brain the semblance of an interactive network” (p. 238).

Labeling

Rita Dunn has provided us with a glimpse into how the learning styles system works with children. First, a storybook is read to the children, explaining that everyone has a distinctive learning style. Second, the children fill out the Dunn and Dunn Learning Style Inventory (LSI). Third, teachers explain the results of the LSI and assist “each student in recording his or her LS preferences” (Braio et al., 1997, p. 20). Fourth, a large learning styles chart is placed in the classroom. “This chart [is] displayed in each classroom to remind students of their LS strengths” (Braio et al., 1977, p. 6). Students are cautioned to remember that: “Your test grades must be better than ever before – or this experiment is not working and there is no reason to continue” (Dunn, 1995, p. 13).

Do students accept such labels? Braio et al. (1997) report one student telling another: “Don’t forget you’re auditory” (p. 23). A third student said about himself: “My best style is kinesthetic” (p. 9).

Coffield (2005) advises teachers to guard against the practice of pigeonholing students into narrowly defined categories. “Our research suggests labeling a pupil as, say, a ‘visual’ learner may do more harm than good” (p. 28). Also, because the instruments used to place pupils into different categories “are so unreliable, most such labels seem to be of dubious value” (p. 28). There is an inherent danger in coming to view a student as a certain type of learner who is incapable of learning in other ways, not only will the teachers limit the instruction but the student may come to accept the same mistaken assumptions about his or her own abilities. “All learners need a wide repertoire of learning strategies and need to know when to use each” (p. 28).

Modalities

The Duns actively support modality-based instruction. All children learn better when instruction is matched to their favored modality. Dunn et al. (2001) tell us that, “less than 12 percent of elementary-school children are auditory learners” (p. 8). In addition, “less than 40 percent of the student body is comprised of visual learners” (p. 8). As children mature, they tend to become increasingly auditory and visual. “However, many adult males are neither auditory nor visual learners; some remain essentially tactual and kinesthetic all their lives” (p. 8). If educators are to address the learning problems of students who are neither

auditory nor verbal, they must utilize the tactual and kinesthetic instructional techniques. Research has shown, according to Dunn et al. (1989), that students who were “taught with instructional resources that both matched and mismatched their preferred modalities achieved statistically higher test scores in modality-matched, rather than mismatched, treatments” (p. 52).

Why is the idea of modality-based instruction so widely accepted by classroom teachers? “Modality,” says Willingham (2005), “gives us an easily understood way of thinking about the differences among children” (p. 5). Though children differ in their visual and auditory memories, such memories make little difference in the classroom. “Most of what we want children to learn is based on meaning, so their superior memory in a specific modality doesn’t give them an advantage just because material is presented in their preferred modality” (p. 3). Most educational content is stored in terms of meaning, which does not rely on visual, auditory, or kinesthetic memory. The different senses cannot be used as “stand-ins” for one another. Information should be presented in the modality that best conveys the subject matter. “The teacher’s goal should be to find the content’s best modality, not to search (in vain) for the student’s best modality” (p. 4).

Educators err when they label students as visual, auditory, tactual, and kinesthetic learners. “Our different senses,” Kayser (2007) informs us, “do not function as discretely as was previously thought” (pp. 24-29). Information coming from different sensory organs is integrated into “an overall unitary image of our surroundings” (pp. 24-29). This integration takes place early in the process of neuronal stimuli. “Even brain centers that specialize in a given sense use information from other sensory channels” (pp. 24-29). The five senses team up in the brain and “actually seem to fuse with one another” (pp. 24-29). The brain is constantly combining information from the senses in order to produce an integrated image of the world. This image, in turn, becomes the basis for our actions.

Instruments

Identifying a student’s learning style is not as simple as it may at first appear. A person’s learning style can only be properly identified by the use of an appropriate instrument. “Only a reliable and valid instrument,” Dunn cautions, “can provide reliable and valid information, and only a comprehensive instrument can diagnose the many learning-style traits that influence individuals” (Shaughnessy, 1998, p. 142). The Learning Style Inventory (LSI), DeBello (1990) asserts, is “critical to the Dunns’ approach” (p. 3). The LSI is comprised of 100 items, and it requires approximately 30 minutes for a student to take. Is the LSI a reliable and valid instrument? The Learning Style Inventory, according to DeBello (1990), is the product of award-winning research conducted by more than 50 universities. It has received “one of the highest reliability and validity ratings” (p. 3).

The Dunns claim the Learning Style Inventory conforms to the highest psychometric standards. Many critics, however, do not accept the Dunns' appraisal of their instrument. Hughes (1992), writing a review for *The Eleventh Mental Measurement Yearbook*, contends that "the LSI has no redeeming values" (pp. 460-461). Knapp (1998), writing a similar review for *The Thirteenth Mental Measurement Yearbook*, agrees with Hughes and does her one better, saying that "this instrument is a psychometric disaster" (p. 2). Why such harsh words from the LSI's critics? The critics believe the instrument is hopelessly flawed. Indeed, according to Hughes (1992), "the lack of test-retest data is appalling" (pp. 460-461). Shwery (1998), who published a review in the same yearbook as Knapp, points out that "the LSI possesses a number of psychometric limitations that may derive from the lack of a clear and concise theoretical paradigm" (p. 4).

The Learning Style Inventory appears to be a test that was assembled in a catch-as-catch-can fashion. It fails, says Hughes (1992), to provide sufficient "information on the normative group on which the standard scores are derived, other than to state that the norms are based on 'more than 500,000 students'" (pp. 460-461). Simply stating that the test was based on "more than 500,000 students" does not automatically make it a standardized instrument. "In light of the paucity of information," Hughes (1992) continues, "the provided norms are meaningless" (pp. 460-461).

The Dunns argue that the Learning Style Inventory has good validity. Hughes (1992), Knapp (1998), and Shwery (1998) all beg to differ. The validity of the LSI was established by content and factor analysis. Hughes (1992) contends that the Dunns have misused this statistic. "The factor analysis represents a confused use of a sophisticated statistical tool, and the reported results obfuscate rather than clarify the constructs underlying the LSI" (pp. 460-461). Not only have the Dunns misapplied factor analysis, but "an inspection of the factor loadings provides no support for the authors' conceptualization of learning styles" (pp. 460-461). Though the LSI has undergone several revisions, very little of substance has changed. "The instrument," Shwery (1998) asserts, "is still plagued by issues related to its construct validity and the lack of an a priori theoretical paradigm for its development" (p. 3).

Research conducted by the Dunns in 1988 showed that the LSI possessed an internal consistency estimate of .60 or greater for students in grades 5 through 12. "The actual range," according to Shwery (1998), "is .55 to .88. Internal consistency across areas in the third to fourth grade group ranged from .42 to .91" (p. 3). The internal consistency on a number of areas of the LSI was low for third and fourth grade students. Consequently, "the link between the areas and justifiable making decisions about instruction in these areas is questionable" (p. 3).

Finally, the manual accompanying the LSI, Hughes (1992) maintains, was "written to sell rather than to inform. The heavy use of statistical jargon and

the exaggerated claims of the test's construct and predictive validity will impress the psychometrically naïve reader" (pp. 460-461). Such claims, however, do not carry much weight with persons familiar with psychometrics. Knapp (1998) also finds fault with the manual. It contains what he calls an "incredible sentence" written by the Dunns: "Some of the questions are repeated to help make the inventory results more reliable." Why repeat the questions? "If," says Knapp (1998), "that is the only way the authors could think of to improve the reliability of the inventory they are in real trouble!" (p. 2).

Reading

The Dunns and their associates have actively promoted diagnostic and prescriptive reading. "Before we begin to teach a student to read," says Price, Dunn, and Sanders (1981), "we should diagnose his/her academic achievement and learning style, and then prescribe on the basis of those two essentials" (p. 226). Good readers and poor readers exhibit distinctly different learning styles. Good readers prefer dimly lit rooms and formal environments. They are self-motivating and require little adult supervision. Good readers are persistent, responsible, and do not require food while learning. It is not necessary to teach them by using their tactile and kinesthetic senses. Poor readers, on the other hand, prefer a brightly lit room, an informal setting, food while learning, and close adult supervision. They prefer "learning through their tactile and kinesthetic senses" (p. 224).

The classic debate between advocates of phonics and sight based reading has been joined by those favoring learning styles. "The key to literacy," Carbo (1997) asserts, "lies in reading styles. That key can unlock the strengths, interests, and abilities of each student" (p. 42). Reading methods and materials must be matched to a student's learning style. "If, however, there is a mismatch between the student and the approach," says Carbo (1996), "the instruction itself will hinder that youngster's learning to read" (p. 9). Learning styles researchers report phenomenal gains for students who have received their instruction using learning styles. For example, Horace Mann Middle School in Amarillo, Texas, was on the brink of being taken over by the state because of low test scores before becoming involved with Carbo's (1997) reading program. After participating in the learning styles reading program, reading scores "climbed an average of 33 percentage points" (p. 39). How is such progress possible? "Students learn to read more easily and enjoy it more when instructional techniques match their learning styles" (p. 38).

Stahl (2004) has raised serious questions about the test results reported by the Dunns and Carbo's reading research. "The reason researchers roll their eyes at learning styles is the utter failure to find that assessing children's learning styles and matching to instructional methods has any effect on their learning" (p. 99). Though the names given to the various styles have changed over the past 30 years - from "visual" to "global" and from "auditory" to "analytic" - the test

results have remained the same. Most of the supporting research cited by the Dunns comes from their own in-house studies or from faculty who finished their doctoral work at St. John's University. Few of these studies meet the standard of having been published in peer-reviewed journals. No amount of statistical analysis is any better than the quality of the data fed into the computer. "If the test is not reliable," Stahl (2004) asserts, "then the information it gives is not trustworthy" (p. 105). The reliabilities cited for the Dunn and Dunn Learning Styles Inventories are only moderate, .60s to .70s. Such reliabilities are lower than those desired for diagnostic instruments. There is, however, a bigger fly in the ointment. Many of the items on the inventory contain only one reasonable answer, thus boosting the test's reliability.

First meta-analysis

What evidence does Rita Dunn offer to support her claim that learning styles improve students' achievement and attitude scores? Dunn, Griggs, Gorman, Olson, and Beasley (1995) conducted a meta-analysis on 36 experimental studies involving 3,181 students who used the Dunn and Dunn model and method of instruction. The statistics revealed that students whose learning styles were accommodated achieved "75 percent of a standard deviation higher than students who have not had their learning styles accommodated" (p. 353). Given the data generated by the meta-analysis, Dunn et al. arrived at a number of interesting conclusions: (a) students with clear learning preferences showed greater gains than students who had mixed preferences; (b) college learners showed greater gains than elementary and secondary school learners; (c) middle-class students were more responsive than lower-class students; (d) average students were more responsive than low or high achieving students; (e) "the content area most responsive to learning-style accommodation was mathematics" (p. 358). In sum, learning styles appealed to a selective population of adult learners who were middle-class, had average academic ability, and who were studying mathematics.

The results of Dunn et al.'s (1995) meta-analysis have not been universally endorsed. Kavale, Hirshoren, and Forness (1998) have raised serious questions about its validity. In addition to having weak rationale, curious procedures, significant omissions, and circumscribed interpretations, "the Dunn et al. (1995) meta-analysis has all the hallmarks of a desperate attempt to rescue a failed model of learning" (p. 79). Other interventions such as reinforcement (1.57), direct instruction (0.84), and the use of mnemonic strategies (1.62) have produced greater effect sizes. Yet, despite the lack of empirical evidence to support their theory, the Dunns have pushed forward in promoting their model of learning styles. Passion, however, is not a substitute for reality. "The Dunn et al. (1995) meta-analysis does not offer that reality and should not be regarded as the final word with respect to validation of the Dunn and Dunn model" (p. 79).

Second meta-analysis

Lovelace (2005) conducted a meta-analysis of 76 original research studies (between 1980 and 2000) using the Dunn and Dunn Learning Styles Model. The meta-analysis provided evidence that accommodating students' learning styles had increased their achievement and improved their attitude scores. "The Dunn and Dunn model had a robust moderate to large effect that was practically and educationally significant" (p. 181). Lovelace concluded her meta-analysis by stating:

The mean effect-size values (r) were all approximately .40. According to Rosenthal and Rubin's (1982) Binomial Effect Size Display, that finding translates to a 40% difference in expected success rates. Therefore, students exposed to learning-style responsive instruction have an expected success rate of 70%. Students taught with traditional instructional methods have only a 30% expected success rate and, therefore, a 70% expected failure rate. That finding is true for academic achievement and attitude toward learning. (p. 181)

What to do when statistical results seem to stand at odds with common sense? The author elected to consult with Sterling Hilton (2008), who is Associate Professor of Statistics at Brigham Young University. Prior to the December 16 meeting, the author provided Professor Hilton with two articles, one containing Lovelace's (2005) meta-analysis and the second showing Rosenthal and Rubin's (1982) Binomial Effect Size Display. The meeting took place in Professor Hilton's office, where both articles were carefully reread and discussed in detail. The substance of that conversation is as follows.

No one would use a yardstick to weigh an elephant. Tools, yardsticks and scales, are designed to report very different data. To use Rosenthal and Rubin's (1982) Binomial Effect Size Display to evaluate student achievement is like trying to weigh an elephant with a yardstick. Lovelace's error, according to Hilton (2008), was one of picking the wrong tool for the job. "The meaning of any statistic is determined by its context." There is no universal yardstick that is appropriate for all cases. "Rosenthal and Rubin's display was based on the use of binomial data. It is not clear from Lovelace's meta-analysis what kind of data she was using." There are other, if somewhat lesser, problems in her article; for example, "of the 76 studies that were included in the meta-analysis, how many were published articles and how many were dissertation?" Lovelace seems to have "cherry picked" among the studies she decided to include. All of the studies she used showed positive results favoring learning styles. This is rarely the case in the vast majority of empirical studies. Also, what is meant by success? Is it passing a test or graduating from high school? "There are many ambiguities in Lovelace's meta-analysis that remain unresolved."

CONCLUSION

Remember Humpty Dumpty? He was the fellow who enunciated the principle that a word "means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor

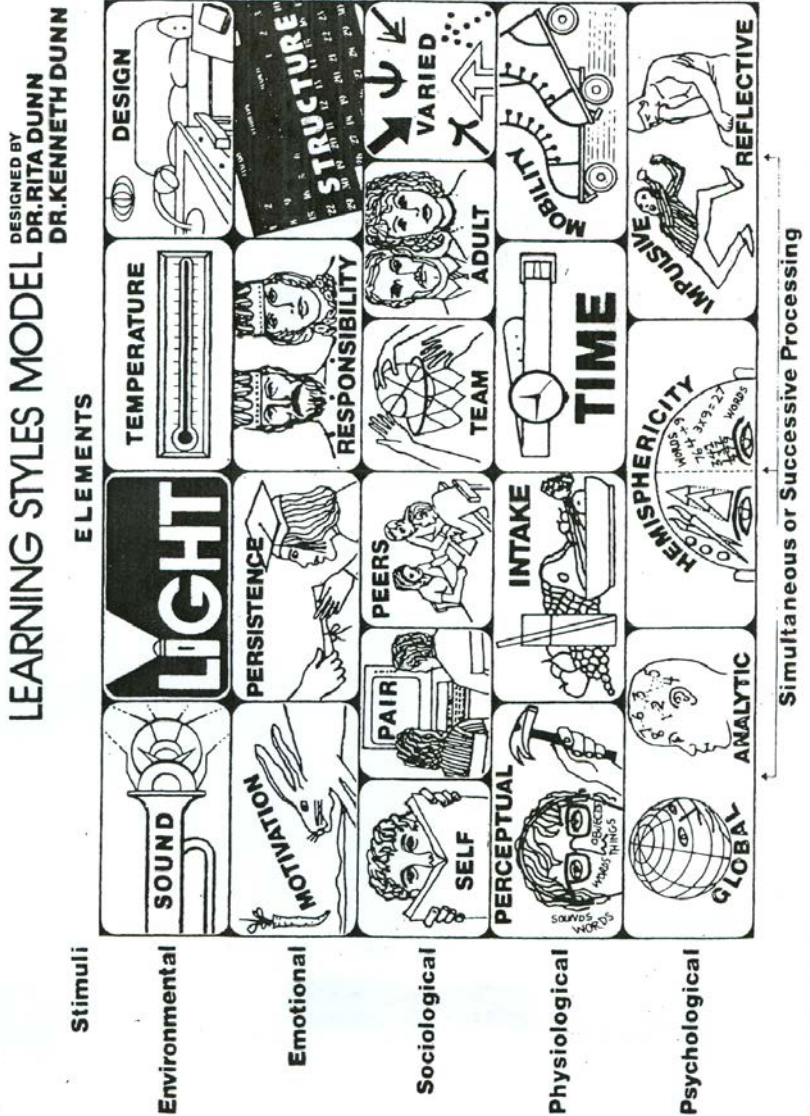
less.” The Dunns have made ready use of this principle in their voluminous writings. Consider the following quotation from the Dunn et al. (2001) *Synthesis*: “The learning-style elements of Hemisphericity and Global/analytic are parallel. Whereas the former refers to a preference for simultaneous versus sequential mental processing by the student, the latter refers to the character of the instruction, global versus analytic” (p. 33). Humpty Dumpty could not have said it better. The Dunns earlier publications always identified “global” and “analytic” with different types of learners, not instructional processes. Why such rampant confusion? The problem stems from not having a clear denotation, tangible reality, lying behind the connotation, descriptive verbiage. Though everyone can describe a unicorn, no one has ever captured one of the mythical beasts.

The Dunn and Dunn model is an elaborate tautology whose logic runs in a circle. Students, the Dunns inform us, do not natively know their own learning styles. The only way they can really know their learning styles is by taking the Dunn and Dunn Learning Style Inventory (LSI). Once the answers to the 100 questions have been evaluated, students are presented with a printout of their learning styles. They are then taught in a fashion that accommodates those styles. From beginning to end, the whole process runs in a self-confirming circle. The Dunns’ model illustrates a logical truism: Whoever formulates the definitions underlying a topic of debate gains control over the line of reasoning leading to the conclusions. This is certainly the case when it comes to the Dunn and Dunn model. If we buy into their definitions of different types of learners – analytic and global, left-brained and right-brained, sequential and simultaneous – we are at one and the same time committing ourselves to their conclusions.

Learning style theorists have made a fetish out of individual differences. Of course individuals differ. That fact is obvious to everyone. Children learn in a variety of different ways. Educators have known that since the days of Quintilian. Which factor – our individual differences or our common humanity – is more important for the purposes of education? All humans belong to a single species – one that stands erect, has an opposing thumb, possesses binocular vision, and is gifted with a big brain. The cerebral cortex makes abstract thought possible. Given human intelligence, language, culture, and civilization have all evolved. The need to preserve and transmit mankind’s cultural heritage has likewise given rise to schools. Though children may differ in how they acquire our cultural heritage, and though teachers may utilize individual differences in their teaching, schools were not created in order to artificially inflate such differences. Humanity is bound together by its common nature and its fund of cultural experiences. The principal purpose of education is what it has always been – to cultivate individual talents by building upon and enhancing humanity’s collective inheritance from the countless generations who have gone before us.

APPENDIX

Learning Styles Model



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NOTE

Some of the links in the references have closed since the article was accepted for publication.

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STANLEY D. IVIE is Professor Emeritus from Texas Woman's University. He has written extensively about the relationship between metaphor and educational thought and practice. His book, *On the Wings of Metaphor*, develops the theme that metaphor can be used as a tool for unlocking complex theoretical systems. In addition to his scholarly interests, Dr. Ivie is currently constructing a house and horse barn on his ranch in Richfield, Utah.

STANLEY D. IVIE est professeur émérite au Texas Woman's University. Il a écrit de nombreux ouvrages sur les relations existant entre les métaphores et la pensée et pratique éducationnelles. Son livre, *On the Wings of Metaphor*, développe l'idée que la métaphore peut être utilisée comme outil pour déverrouiller des systèmes théoriques complexes. Outre ses intérêts académiques, Professeur Ivie pilote présentement la construction d'une maison et d'une écurie sur son ranch de Richfield en Utah.

NUTRITION AND SCHOOLS KNOWLEDGE SUMMARY

DANIEL A. LAITSCH *Simon Fraser University*

ABSTRACT. This review examined 117 research articles using a policy framework generated in previous research. Findings include: students are experiencing both food insecurity and an “epidemic of obesity”; policymakers remain focused on achievement; provinces address nutrition in isolation; poverty is a significant contributor; restriction of food is not an effective treatment; nurses and training may strengthen health literacy; costs offer barriers to implementation and sustainability; teacher training, funding, nutritious foods, and health professionals are important; the impact of “one-off” programs is small; and there is limited implementation and evaluation of comprehensive approaches to school health.

NUTRITION ET SOMMAIRE DES CONNAISSANCE SCOLAIRES

RÉSUMÉ. Cette revue de la littérature fait l'examen de 117 articles de recherche utilisant un canevas de politiques créé lors de recherches précédentes. On retrouve parmi les découvertes que les étudiants vivent à la fois une insécurité alimentaire et une épidémie de l'obésité. On découvre aussi que les responsables d'élaborer les politiques ciblent encore les réalisations et que les provinces traitent la nutrition de manière isolée. Il est aussi révélé que la pauvreté est un facteur signifiant et que la restriction alimentaire n'est pas une solution efficace. Il ressort par ailleurs que le travail des infirmières et un enseignement peuvent améliorer les connaissances en santé de la population visée. L'article explique également que les coûts érigent une barrière à la mise sur pied et à la survie des programmes et que la formation des enseignants, le financement, l'exposition à des aliments nutritifs et à des professionnels de la santé est importante. Finalement, on y apprend que l'impact des programmes non répétés est marginal et que peu d'écoles procèdent à la mise sur pied et à l'évaluation d'approches globales en santé.

INTRODUCTION

Recent reports suggest that Canadian children – like children across North America – are experiencing an epidemic of overweight and obesity. Because children spend a large amount of their waking hours in school, and may

consume up to two meals (plus snacks) while at school, researchers and policy-makers have begun to look closely at school nutrition policy as an important foci for intervention. While the recent high-profile nature of obesity reports have brought this issue to national prominence, it is important to inform these discussions with a solid research base that covers not only nutrition but the place nutrition policy has in the broader school health context. This review of research was conducted to support an evidence-based dialogue around school nutrition status, policy, and interventions.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is organized around an expanded ten-question framework for review similar to work previously completed by the School Health Research Network (Doherty, M., & McCall, undated). The ten questions are:

1. What is the current health status of Canadians regarding nutrition, and what are the information and research needs with regard to nutrition and schools?
2. What are the connections between nutrition, health status, and learning?
3. How does the social and physical environment of the school affect nutrition?
4. What approaches to promotion, prevention, preventive services, and rehabilitation are most effective in addressing these nutritional issues?
5. What are the realistic and sustainable health and learning outputs that are achievable through school-based and school-linked interventions?
6. Which interventions are effective, cost-effective, and cost-beneficial?
7. How can multiple school-agency-home interventions be coordinated?
8. How can the capacity of professionals, local agencies, and systems be strengthened to deal with these nutritional issues in a sustainable and realistic manner?
9. What are the Canadian and other culturally relevant examples of policies, programs, and training models that might best fit the current research evidence?
10. What considerations would support changes in policies, programs, and practices that can be made based on rigorous evidence?

Once the general research framework was established, a systematic review of research articles, governmental documents, and professional publications was begun. A search of 147 on-line article databases resulted in 10,180 articles containing the key words "school" and "nutrition." The search was next refined

to focus on the five databases that returned more than 100 article references, accounting for 99% of the initially identified articles. These databases were each searched for the combined keyword “school nutrition,” resulting in 8,470 articles, which were narrowed to 3,152 articles across three databases after adding the keyword “research.” Because this review was focused on nutrition within a broad educational framework, “school health,” was added to the search, resulting in a final body of 2,256 articles. Each of these databases was then individually searched using the specified keywords but limiting articles to those submitted to peer review processes resulting in 257 articles. After eliminating duplicate articles, the final data set was 122 peer-reviewed and research-based articles.

In addition to peer-reviewed research, the web sites of governmental bodies and professional organizations were searched for resources, resulting in the addition of another 74 relevant documents. After all sources were added to the database, feedback was sought from an informal survey of Canadian education and nutrition researchers, who recommended another 58 articles and resources. After eliminating duplicate entries, the final body of research examined for this review was 213 research articles, government publications, and professional resources.

Each article or resource was then reviewed individually, and 117 articles judged to be relevant for this review were entered into a database organized around the ten-question analysis framework. When articles included findings relevant to more than one of the strands, they were entered into each strand.

FINDINGS

Current health status

There is a wide variety of research examining the link between childhood nutrition, schools, learning, and health across local, regional, national, and international contexts. Recent research has focused in particular on the relationships among nutrition policy, schools, and childhood obesity. In general, there is agreement across studies that overweight and obesity is a significant problem that may be considered an epidemic in North America and a serious health concern globally. There is also evidence that the rate of overweight and obesity has been increasing over the past decade, particularly for low SES children (Romon, Duhamel, Collinet, & Weill, 2005; O’Loughlin, Paradis, Meshefedjian, & Gray-Donald, 2000). Studies estimating the overweight prevalence identify a range of from 20% - 33% and an obesity rate between 8% and 10% (Lewis, Meyer, Lehman, Trowbridge, Bason, Yurman, & Zenong, 2006; Shields, 2005; Veugeliers, & Fitzgerald, 2005a); however, the risk of overweight varies considerably based on geographic location and economic status. Canadians in high poverty areas are at significantly greater risk of obesity

than Canadians at other SES levels (Raine, 2004; O'Loughlin, et al., 2000), even as research suggests that they may also be at risk of malnourishment and inadequate access to nutritious foods (Center on Hunger and Poverty & Food Research and Action Center, 2003; Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2003). In fact, research looking at the food habits of Canadians has found that students are likely to consume high-energy foods of low nutrient value (Phillips, Jacobs, & Gray-Donald, 2004), skip breakfast (Cohen, Evers, Manske, Bercovitz, & Edward, 2003), and generally fail to consume enough fruits, vegetables, and milk products (Fitzpatrick, 2006).

Schools are identified as an important venue for intervention, although access to current data varies considerably across contexts, and much of the available research focuses on schools in other countries with established monitoring systems. In general, students have broad access to low nutrient snack foods, energy-dense foods, and sugar-rich beverages, more so than they do fruits and vegetables (Parsad & Lewis, 2006; Kann, Grunbaum, McKenna, Wechsler, & Galuska, 2005; Sanigorski, Bell, Kremer, & Swinburn, 2005; Bell & Swinburn, 2004). This is particularly true for students in alternative schools (Kubik, Lytle, & Fulkerson, 2004). Many students do not eat breakfast regularly (O'Dea, & Abraham, 2001), which can negatively affect school success (Kleinman, Hall, Green, Korzec-Ramirez, Patton, Pagano, & Murphy, 2002). Despite a strong body of research supporting school breakfast programs – particularly for low SES students – implementation has been sporadic and seldom fully supported by provincial governments (Breakfast for Learning, 2006).

Food availability at home and in school plays a key role in eating habits. Food insecurity (uncertain access to nutritious food and beverages) in particular is an important issue in Canada, most notably for low SES populations (Broughton, Janssen, Hertzman, Innis, & Frankish, 2006; Centre on Hunger and Poverty & Food Research and Action Center, 2003). Access to energy rich but nutrient poor food combined with limited access to nutrient rich food has resulted in undernourished, but not necessarily underweight students in low SES areas (Centre on Hunger & Poverty, undated), illustrating the complexity of food and nutrition issues.

In addition to a focus on nutrition, researchers also emphasize the connections among food and beverage intake, physical activity, and mental health when examining overweight and obesity issues (Kumanyika, Jeffery, Morabia, Ritenbaugh, & Antipastis, 2002; Health Evidence Network, 2005). The shift in focus in many school systems to academic improvement has proven a distracter (Brown, Akintobi, Pitt, McDermott, Berends, Agron, & Purcell, 2004; Hyunyi & Nadow, 2004), and many systems have responded by replacing recess and physical activity opportunities with academic enrichment programs (Laitsch, 2006), despite research suggesting that students need at least 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day (Andersen, Harro, Sardinha, Froberg, Ekelund, Brage, & Anderssen, 2006).

Despite recent improvements in health data gathering and reporting (Glouberman & Millar, 2003), there are still serious gaps in Canada, particularly with regard to children and youth (Power, 2005; Raine, 2004; Taylor, Evers, & McKenna, 2005), as well as for Aboriginal and low SES populations (Willows, 2005). The lack of information related to the environmental determinants of health status and physical activity, as well as little national planning, greatly complicates policy responses, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of interventions and surveillance of basic trends.

Political and policy indicators and interventions

School health policy has had difficulty rising to the political and policy agenda because of its placement between the fields of education and public health (Laitsch, Vamos, & McCall, 2006). The result has been that school health issues, such as nutrition, are embraced as secondary issues within each professional body. Recently, however, policy attention has been focused on the issues of nutrition and physical activity because of growing public health concerns related to obesity. Although an over-emphasis on issues of overweight and obesity risks obscuring other important issues related to school health and nutrition, the estimated long-term costs associated with overweight and obesity have opened a policy window that could result in significant political intervention and resource allocation. Overweight and obesity is associated with increased risk for chronic diseases (such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, stroke and cancer), and societal costs associated with absence from work and use of health services, as well as the personal costs of psychosocial problems – including clinical depression, lowered self-esteem, discrimination, and social stigmatization. One conservative estimate of the cost of obesity to the Canadian health care system put the annual cost at \$1.8 billion in 1997 – more than 2% of all health care expenditures (Kumanyika, et al., 2002).

Within the context of overweight and obesity dialogues, many national, governmental, and international organizations have made nutrition, physical activity, and health interventions important parts of their institutional priority. In 2004, the members of World Health Organization (WHO) adopted a resolution to encourage mobilization of all concerned social and economic groups, including scientific, professional, nongovernmental, voluntary, private-sector, civil society, and industry associations, and to engage them actively and appropriately in implementing the [Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health]” (WHO, 2004). The Global Strategy has a strong emphasis on the role of schools in this effort, with a particular focus on nutrition and physical activity education, as well as media literacy training. The WHO specifically states:

[Schools] should protect [student] health by providing health information, improving health literacy, and promoting healthy diets, physical activity, and other healthy behaviours. Schools are encouraged to provide students with

daily physical education and should be equipped with appropriate facilities and equipment. Governments are encouraged to adopt policies that support healthy diets at school and limit the availability of products high in salt, sugar and fats. Schools should consider, together with parents and responsible authorities, issuing contracts for school lunches to local food growers in order to ensure a local market for healthy foods. (p. 49)

National and governmental bodies in North America have also begun to focus on schools and nutrition, physical activity, and weight policy, and both countries have regularly updated national food guides (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 1997; United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture, 2005). The American Dietetic Association (ADA), Society for Nutrition Education (SNE), and American School Food Service Association (ASFSa) have jointly released a call for comprehensive nutrition services in schools – preschool through grade 12 – supported by sequential nutrition education programs, student nutrition programs, school environments that model healthy food and beverage choices, and the building of community partnerships (ADA, SNE, ASFSa, 2003). The European Childhood Obesity Group has highlighted six areas for policy intervention (family – child, parents, siblings, etc; schools; health professionals; governments; industry; and media) and called for an emphasis on evidence-based health promotion programs (Flodmark, Lissau, Moreno, Pietrobelli & Widhalm, 2004).

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control has identified reduction in overweight and obesity as a public health priority (CDC, 2005) and published school nutrition and healthy eating policy guidelines (CDC, 1996). These guidelines focus on curricula, instruction, integration of food services and nutrition education, faculty and staff training, and family and community involvement. Australia's National Public Health Partnership has released similar guidance highlighting health gain through better nutrition and by addressing barriers to safe and healthy food; building capacity through a focus on human capacity, research, and intervention effectiveness; improving public communication and strategic management; development of nutrition policy; and monitoring of progress (National Public Health Partnership, 2001). In Canada, at least two provinces (British Columbia and Ontario) have documents providing schools with nutrition guidelines (BC Ministry of Education and Health, 2005; Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2005).

In Canada, more than 30 national organizations signed on to the recently revised Canadian Consensus Statement on Comprehensive School Health, which highlights the importance of “food and nutrition policies that promote healthy eating including access to healthy foods as well as safe and supportive eating environments” (Canadian Association for School Health, 2007). The Dietitians of Canada also works at the national level to promote school nutrition activities and Health Canada has worked with a variety of educational

organizations interested in nutrition issues. Despite these efforts, however, school nutrition policy lacks a strong national framework, particularly with regard to school meals (Breakfast for Learning, 2006). Rather, much more policy work is accomplished at the provincial levels and on an *ad hoc* basis (Henry, Allison, & Garcia, 2003).

While this may be the result of political realities within Canada, it also results in a somewhat fragmented approach to policymaking and data collection, often resulting in each province reinventing unique policy and monitoring systems. The local approach may be changing, however; in early 2007, Olivia Chow, the NDP children's advocate, put forth a proposal for the Children's Health and Nutrition Initiative (CIHI) which would establish a Federally-funded program that would ensure "a nutritious breakfast, snack or lunch to be available to any Canadian child under eighteen years of age" (Chow, 2007). The initiative is supported by Chow and three national groups: Breakfast for Learning (BFL), Foodshare, and the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Breakfast for Learning, established in 1992, has an extensive community network that helps provide breakfasts, lunches, and snacks to children across Canada. BFL is also active in nutrition research dissemination. Foodshare is a Toronto-based organization founded in 1985 that works to address hunger issues through individual and community based capacity building. The Center for Science in the Public Interest has been active in advocating for improved school nutrition programs – particularly in the United States – and works to promote nutrition reforms through public reporting, data and research dissemination, and distribution of model legislation (CSPI, 2006).

Food security – reliable access to nutritious foods – is an important policy concern in North America, and professional groups in both Canada and the United States have focused on strengthening the food safety net, particularly for at-risk populations and children. As with the broader trend in nutrition research, recommendations related to food security also emphasize a comprehensive approach to intervention (ADA, 2003; Dieticians of Canada, 2005a).

Nutrition, health status, and learning

The relationship between nutrition, health, and learning is complex, but well established. Research has found that generally poor nutrition can negatively affect cognitive ability, concentration, and activity levels in the short term (Sorhaingo & Feinstein, 2006), and has been associated with poor academic performance and behaviour issues in the longer term (Alaimo, Olson, & Frongillo, 2001). These findings hold even after controlling for poverty and other indicators associated with poor nutrition. Research into specific nutritional deficiencies has been less conclusive, finding that while dietary supplements may benefit children with iron deficiency, population-wide vitamin or mineral supplements have no impact on academic performance (Taras, 2005).

School meal programs, which are discussed in more detail later in the paper, do seem to have a consistent and positive impact on student behaviour and academic performance (Taras, 2005; Cohen, et al., 2003; Wesnes, Pincock, Richardson, Helm, & Hails, 2003; Kleinman, et. al., 2002; Wahlstrom & Begalle, 1999; and Murphy, Pagano, Nachmani, Sperling, Kane, & Kleinman, 1998). Much of the research suggests that these programs are particularly successful because the provision of food increases attendance and reduces negative behaviours in food insecure populations, which then results in concomitant academic benefits. However, one study that compared students in schools with breakfast programs to similar schools with comparable breakfast consumption rates found no difference in achievement (Bernstein, McLaughlin, Crepinsek, Daft, & Murphy, 2002).

Addressing issues of poor nutrition and food insecurity through school meal programs may have positive academic and behavioural outcomes; however, obesity may also affect academic performance. A recent review of multiple studies looking at obesity and academic performance concluded that obesity and overweight are associated with lower levels of achievement, although links to attendance (for example health related absences) are less clear (Taras & Potts-Datema, 2005).

Social and physical environments

While nutritional issues may affect learning through interactions with mal- or under-nourishment, food security, and obesity, the factors that influence student food and beverage choices, and the environments in which those choices are made, are an important component of school nutrition programs and policies. Researchers have identified four major determinants of eating behaviours: family and peers; physical environments and access; economic and marketing environments; and social status and environments (Raine, 2005).

While researchers have linked the current increase in obesity to specific food and beverage consumption, particularly as relates to soft drinks and fast foods (Ludwig, Peterson, & Gortmaker, 2001; St-Onge, Keller, & Heymsfield, 2003), researchers have also identified a trend in increasingly poor beverage intake as children age (Striegel-Moore, Thompson, Affenito, Frank, Obarzanek, Barton, et al., 2006). Policy programs and incentives designed to address the factors driving those consumption patterns frequently lack the support and authority needed to drive change (McGinnis, Gootman, & Kraak, 2006; Pateman, McKinney, Kann, Small, Warren, & Collins, 1995).

The role of family and peers in the dietary choices and health outcomes of students is significant. Research has found that while parents are concerned about diet and weight, there is a significant gap between parent perception of the weight and exercise pattern of their children, and the reality. While as many as 27% of students may be overweight, and half may get insufficient

exercise, Canadian parents believe that only 12% are overweight and 92% get enough exercise (Dieticians of Canada & Kraft Canada, 2005).

Family access to food is also important in influencing the choices their children make. Families with low incomes can find it difficult to purchase healthy foods. Where a family of four with one average income would spend about 29% of their monthly income on food, the same family on welfare would be spending 41% on food. When additional fiscal burden of housing is added to the estimate, families in poverty face significantly less flexibility accessing healthy foods (Dieticians of Canada, 2005a; 2005b). Low-income neighbourhoods are also less likely to have stores with adequate food selection, and families with access to fewer appliances, or poor cooking skills are more likely to experience food insecurity (Broughton, et al., 2006).

On the other hand, children who help prepare meals and who frequently eat meals with their families are more likely to eat healthy foods (Fulkerson, Neumark-Sztainer, & Story, 2006; Larson, Story, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2006). Some parental behaviour, however, has been linked to poor eating habits, particularly when parents use coercive feeding practices, restriction, or pressure (Birch, 2000). In families where meals are eaten in front of the TV, children are more likely to eat less nutritious foods (Con, Goldberg, Rogers, & Tucker, 2001), and children who watch television are more likely to have greater intake of high energy sweet and salty foods and beverages, and less intake of fruit and vegetables (Marquis, Filion, & Dagenais, 2005; Coon & Tucker, 2002; Coon, Goldberg, Rogers, & Tucker 2001).

When researchers asked children about their soft drink consumption patterns and preferences, they found taste preferences, the soft drink consumption habits of parents and friends, soft drink availability, and television viewing were the strongest predictors of consumption (Grimm, Harnack, & Story, 2004). Researchers suggest that eating and drinking associated with TV viewing may be due to advertising exposure and the habit of consuming foods and beverages while watching TV and have recommended shifting advertising to more healthy choices (Flodmark, et al., 2004). Researchers have also expressed concern about the recent blending of TV advertising, fast food toys, and now food related Internet games for children (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006).

Schools are an important point of intervention for supporting healthy nutritional practice, and research has found that many schools frequently support unhealthy practices related to increasing body mass, including frequent snacking, consumption of high calorie and low nutrient foods and beverages, the use of food as a reward or incentive, the use of unhealthy foods in fundraising, and provision of energy dense foods in vending machines (Kann, et al., 2005; Kubik, Lytle, & Story, 2005; Baxter, 1998). Access to food, eating environment, and exposure to marketing are also important aspects of consumption in schools. Research has found that when students are given access

to unhealthy food choices they will frequently choose those foods (Cullen & Zakeri, 2004). Students also tend to choose foods and beverages based on taste (Grimm, Harnack, & Story, 2004; Shannon, Story, Fulkerson, & French, 2002); however, such choice can be mitigated based on comparable price and nutritional labelling (French, 2005; Shannon, et al.). Some data suggests that the cafeteria environment can have an important impact on student choice to consume meals at school verses meals at nearby fast food providers (Dieticians of Canada, 2006). Many students are also subjected to extensive advertising and media messages in schools, particularly for soft drinks and foods of minimal nutritional value (Molnar, Garcia, Boninger, & Merill, 2006). While schools frequently sign agreements that result in income from vending sales, recent research suggests that soft drink contracts are less beneficial to schools than they initially appear and that more money leaves the community through such contracts than schools actually receive (Pinson, 2006). Largely due to increased public pressure, three major soft drink companies (Cadbury Schweppes PLC, Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo Inc.) and the American Beverage Association recently signed an agreement to limit the amount of soda and other sugary beverages, such as fruit drinks, in school vending machines, although diet soft drinks may continue to be sold in high schools (Mayer, 2006). In Canada, some provinces have attempted to address concerns related to vending machine foods and beverages (BC Ministry of Education, 2005; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004).

Promotion, prevention, preventative services, and rehabilitation

School-based programs provide a critical entry point for intervention to improve child and youth nutritional standards and health (WHO, 1998); however, because nutritional habits are largely established prior to entry into school, and closely related to parent and family characteristics, school-based interventions should be viewed within the broader family and community context. While research has found that programs frequently result in short term behavioural change or health improvements (see, *Policies, programs, and training models* below), there is currently not enough research available to determine the extent to which programs result in the longer-term prevention or reduction of overweight (CDC, 2005). Schools can engage in the delivery of nutrition services in a variety of ways, including educative services and curriculum delivery, delivery of preventative services, identification of students at risk for overweight and/or obesity, and through referral for further treatment.

Because students spend much of their time outside of school, school-based nutrition programs often focus on changing behaviour patterns so that children and youth can make healthy lifestyle choices related to food and beverage consumption and physical activity. Students with high dietary self-efficacy tend to make healthier food and beverage choices (Parcel & Edmundson, 1995) and research suggests that dietary self-efficacy can be strengthened through school-

based interventions (Auld, Romaniello, Heimendinger, Hambidge & Hambidge, 1999). Successful school-based programs have also focused on combining nutrition and physical activity, increasing physical activity and non-competitive sports, and helping students decrease sedentary behaviour, such as watching TV (CDC, 2005; Doak, Visscher, Renders & Seidell, 2006).

As highlighted previously, the school environment is an important component of nutrition programs and preventative services. School environmental characteristics that support students in making healthy choices include provision of healthy nutritional options, access to nutritional data through labelling, opportunities to choose and engage in physical activity, and pleasant eating environments. Collaborative agreements and activities with food and beverage companies, community leaders, nutrition educators, parents, and students can affect social change target toward healthy student outcomes (Marr, 2004).

Because policymakers have increasingly accepted the threat of obesity as a public health issue, schools have also been used as an intervention point for identification of children who are overweight or obese. In the United States, parents of children in Arkansas receive a regular report on the body mass index of their child. The report gives parents their child's body mass index – which is calculated based on a child's height, weight, age, and gender – and interprets the BMI to suggest whether the child is underweight, a healthy weight, at risk for overweight, or overweight. While offering basic suggestions related to healthy diet and nutrition, the report also refers parents to their family doctor for advice if the child may be overweight. In 2005, 15 other states considered legislation requiring measurement of student body mass index, although only Tennessee enacted legislation requiring that reports be sent home to parents. As of 2005, five states had adopted BMI-related laws (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005). Such programs are not without controversy, both because of concerns that the use of such data could stigmatize students and because there is debate as to how accurate such calculations are for children. Politically, BMI programs are difficult to enact and sustain – the law in Arkansas has been regularly challenged legislatively and Governor Beebe recently expressed support for legislation amending or repealing the law (Moritz, 2007a).

While Canadian provinces have not embraced the use of BMI report cards, the Calgary Health Region recently announced a pilot project to work with Calgary school boards to measure and track the BMI of some grade 5 students beginning in the Fall of 2006 (Lang, 2006). Dietitians of Canada, Canadian Pediatric Society, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, and Community Health Nurses Association of Canada have approved the use of the CDC BMI chart as appropriate for Canadian children and defined overweight and obesity standards (DC, CPS, CFPC, & CHNAC, 2004).

Health and learning outcomes

Because of the complex nature of childhood nutrition and health, the extent to which specific changes in health-related outcomes can be attributed to school-based interventions is limited, particularly over the long term. Measurable change in school programs, staffing, curriculum, and student knowledge is possible, and basic student characteristics can be monitored and reported, but separate research and policymaking streams at the federal and provincial levels, as well as the separation between the fields of public health and education, has made systematic collection and analysis of national data difficult (Picard & Alphonso, 2007). Improved data collection processes could help define and measure current nutrition and other health outcomes.

Because there has been little investment in building the capacity of schools to engage in nutrition activities (and in some cases resources have been cut or reallocated to academic activities), strengthened monitoring and data collection related to current school-centered activities is important. In 2004, the Public Health Agency of Canada released the results of research looking at the effects of school experiences on the health outcomes of children, and made a variety of school centered and public policy recommendations that could be measured as outcome variables for efforts to address school nutrition and health-related issues. The Agency's findings and recommendations include:

- Targeting female students to ... increase the amount of physical activities, have breakfast regularly, reduce feelings of helplessness, alleviate worries about body image, develop positive self-esteem and improve physical and mental health.
- Influencing peer groups and creating positive peer environments since peer groups can significantly influence watching display screens (TVs, computers, etc.), physical activity, food intake and worrying about body image.
- Work with school nurses and nutrition experts to develop healthy menus in school (including snacks).
- Restore school health education curriculum to develop adequate health literacy among students.
- Provide adequate training for school staff on health promotion and intervention.
- Create (at least) mobile school nurses positions to provide guidance and assistance to school health promotion and intervention.
- A school health strategy (with strong commitment of school staff) is needed to utilize school experiences (e.g. circles of friends, sense of belonging to school, extracurricular activities, and academic press) to influence health outcomes and behaviours.
- Provide professional resources to assist parents and schools in their use of family and school experiences to influence health outcomes and behaviours of students. (Xin & Yanhong, 2004)

Program costs

While researchers and policymakers have identified significant long-term societal and health care costs associated with poor nutritional habits (Kumanyika, et al., 2002), little research has been done looking at the costs of systematic changes in or implementations of school-based nutrition programs. A recent review of thirty-two school-health promotion studies found that only 14.8% looked at issues of program adoption while only 37% looked at implementation. The focus instead has been on intervention efficacy and reach (Estabrooks, Dziewaltowski, Glasgow, & Klesges, 2003). Although some research suggests that seed funding can initially get programs started, outcome sustainability is difficult without broader outreach and community and family engagement (Hyunyi & Nadow, 2004).

Because many nutritional interventions involve new personnel and increasing existing professional development structures and opportunities, cost has been identified as a significant barrier to program implementation (Xin & Yanhong, 2004; Auld, et al., 1999). Canadian policymakers face the additional problem of limited infrastructure. As one of only a few industrialized nations not to have a nationally supported nutrition program for children, the country has relied on local and provincial programs, which are themselves generally based on grants and uncertain funding streams (Henry, Allison, & Garcia, 2003). The recently proposed Child Health and Nutrition Initiative proposed in 2007 would have provide more than \$250 million annually, which would only cover about 30% of meal costs, and still rely on significant contribution from volunteers, fund raising, charitable contributions and cafeteria facilities (Chow, 2007).

Coordinated nutrition programs

Rather than focusing on controlling the school environment, research and policy statements have focused on changing eating and physical activity behaviours, so that children and youth will make healthy choices in the school, at home, and in the broader community. To get such integrated outcomes, coordination across programs and communities is needed. Consequently, national, international, and global research and policy statements consistently envision school nutrition programs as just one part of a broader coordinated effort to improve the health and welfare of children (CASH, 2006; CDC, 2005; World Health Organization, 1998, 2004).

Frequently these programs are envisioned within the framework of a coordinated or comprehensive school health program (CSHP). While a thorough review of CSHP programs is beyond the scope of this paper, CSHPs generally include a focus on four components: teaching and learning, health and other support services, supportive social environment and a healthy physical environment (CASH, 2006). The CDC in the U.S. separates these four general

components into eight more specific interventions: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling and psychological services, healthy school environment, health promotion for staff, family/community involvement (CDC, undated). Comprehensive programs that address mental health, healthy eating, and physical activity, and that are long-term, whole school, and high intensity, have been found to be effective in promoting change (Health Evidence Network, 2005; Veugelers & Fitzgerald, 2005b; Keirle & Thomas, 2000).

Within a specific focus on nutrition, recommendations include a focus on changes in education, environment, community, and industry, although as with much of the research, these recommendations fall within the context of addressing overweight and obesity (Koplan, Liverman, & Kraak, 2005; Kumanyika, et al., 2002; Coleman, Tiller, Sanchez, Heath, Sy, Milliken, & Dziewaltowski, 2005). Specifically, the Institute of Medicine within the U.S. National Academies has put forth ten recommendations:

1. Government at all levels should provide coordinated leadership for the prevention of obesity in children and youth.
2. Industry should make obesity prevention in children and youth a priority by developing and promoting products, opportunities, and information that will encourage healthful eating behaviors and regular physical activity.
3. Nutrition labeling should be clear and useful so that parents and youth can make informed product comparisons and decisions to achieve and maintain energy balance at a healthy weight.
4. Industry should develop and strictly adhere to marketing and advertising guidelines that minimize the risk of obesity in children and youth.
5. [Appropriate government agencies] should develop and evaluate a long-term national multi-media and public relations campaign focused on obesity prevention in children and youth.
6. Local governments, public health agencies, schools, and community organizations should collaboratively develop and promote programs that encourage healthful eating behaviors and regular physical activity, particularly for populations at high risk of childhood obesity. Community coalitions should be formed to facilitate and promote cross-cutting programs and community-wide efforts.
7. Local governments, private developers, and community groups should expand opportunities for physical activity including recreational facilities, parks, playgrounds, sidewalks, bike paths, routes for walking or biking to school, and safe streets and neighborhoods, especially for populations at high risk of childhood obesity.
8. Pediatricians, family physicians, nurses, and other clinicians should engage in the prevention of childhood obesity. Health-care profes-

sional organizations, insurers, and accrediting groups should support individual and population-based obesity prevention efforts.

9. Schools should provide a consistent environment that is conducive to healthful eating behaviors and regular physical activity.
10. Parents should promote healthful eating behaviors and regular physical activity for their children. (Koplan, et al., 2005)

Despite such calls for coordination, change has been difficult because implementation is typically left to provincial governments and localities. In Canada there is no coordinated national plan to address a variety of population health issues, including poverty, obesity, early childhood development, and aboriginal health (Glouberman & Millar, 2003).

Capacity and sustainability

As highlighted earlier, cost issues create a serious capacity and sustainability problem in the current context. Over the past 15 years, the policy dialogue in Canada has largely focused on cost control and efficient delivery of services, rather than building government capacity or investment in infrastructure (Glouberman & Millar, 2003; Inwood, 2004). Gaps exist in curriculum, staffing and staff development (CDC, 2006; Xin & Yanhong, 2004), teacher preparation (O'Dea & Abraham, 2001), and meal programs and facilities (Henry, Allison, & Garcia, 2003). A recent survey in the U.S. found that curriculum coverage is frequently incomplete and that less than half of the health education teachers surveyed had received recent professional development in nutrition and physical activity (CDC, 2006). A survey of teachers in training (in home economics and physical education) found that the future teachers had a simplistic and inaccurate views of nutrition and health needs and issues, and themselves exhibited poor eating behaviours (O'Dea & Abraham, 2001). A comparison between nutrition programs in Canada and the U.S. found that many Canadian programs lack the stable funding sources found in the U.S. (Henry, Allison, & Garcia, 2003).

Policies, programs, and training models

Despite the siloed nature of nutrition policy, data collection, and programming in Canada, researchers have found that school-based efforts to respond to nutrition issues can be successful (Doak, et. al., 2006; Canadian Population Health Initiative, 2006), although as with previous sections, much of the research base is focused on addressing issues of obesity and includes programs in both Canada and the United States. Research looking at school-based programmatic interventions falls into four general change foci: administrative (which involves coordination, assessment, planning, and environmental interventions); curricular (focusing on instructional activities); policy (which looks at setting policies beyond schools); and institutional (changing the structure and function of the institution, as in the addition of meal programs).

There are a large number of administrative interventions that have resulted in improvement in student and system indicators. When compared to a control group, students who took part in Give Me 5 – a programmatic intervention focused on a school-based media campaign, classroom workshops, meal modifications, and parental engagement – were found to have increased consumption of fruits and vegetables as well as improved their general nutritional knowledge and awareness on nutritional issues (Nicklas, Johnson, Myers, Farris, & Cunningham, 1998). The CATCH program (Coordinated Approach to Child Health), which focuses on promotion of physical activity and healthy food choices, has also proven effective at slowing the increase in overweight and obesity in both boys and girls. Overweight and obesity rates in all schools examined in the study increased; however, the increase was much smaller for students in CATCH schools (Coleman, et. al., 2005). Together 4 Health, is a similar program that involves a tool kit containing information to help schools evaluate the school environment and target changes to promote physical activity and healthy eating (Begley, 2006). A program that included curriculum delivery by trained special resource teachers was also found to be effective in changing student knowledge, self-efficacy, and eating behaviours (Auld, et al., 1999).

When nutrition information was posted at the point of selection, students were found to be more satisfied with food quality and with nutrition services and staff (Cranage, Conklin, & Lambert, 2006). Cost subsidies resulting in lower prices for healthy foods have also been found to increase sales of healthy foods (French, 2005). Programs focused at reducing consumption of carbonated beverages have also shown both reduced consumption and a decrease in the percentage of overweight and obese students (James, Thomas, Cavan, & Kerr, 2004). The use of trained peer leaders has been found to increase healthy eating as well (Story, Lytle, Birnbaum, & Perry, 2002).

A wide variety of curricular interventions were found to improve the knowledge base and behaviour of students (Casazza & Ciccazzo, 2006; Powers, Struempfer, Guarino, & Parmer, 2005; Raby, Struempfer, Guarino, & Parmer, 2005; Auld et al., 1999; Ellis, 2007); however, few of the curricular interventions included longitudinal evaluations and in many cases, improvement in eating habits and reductions in overweight were found to be short term. One study in particular highlighted the importance of careful implementation, as positive feelings decreased for unhealthy foods and for healthy foods as well (Ellis).

Districts have undertaken a variety of policy efforts to improve child health, including the renegotiation of food and beverage contracts to emphasize healthier options; however, one of the more innovative efforts to improve the availability and consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables is the Michigan farm-to-school program. The program is designed to support the local economy by building a supply chain that brings local farm produce to schools. Food

service directors expressed strong interest in the program, although there were serious implementation barriers that included cost, procurement regulations, reliable supply and seasonal availability, and food safety concerns (Izumi, Rostant, Moss, & Hamm, 2006).

Interventions designed to change institutional practices and structures have also been shown to be effective. Although controversial, evaluations of the Arkansas BMI Report Cards have found the program to be an effective intervention that has changed school practices (improving cafeteria offerings, reducing the use of food as a reward, reducing the use of vending machines) and parental practices (awareness, meals together, healthier meals, and identification of child risk status), while not exacerbating teasing or anti-social behaviour related to overweight or obese identification (Moritz, 2007b; Raczyński & Phillips, 2005). As highlighted earlier, school breakfast programs have also been proven effective at increasing academic achievement, attendance and student behaviour (Bernstein et al. 2002; Kleinman, et al. 2002; Terry & Kerry, 2000; Wahlstrom & Begalle, 1999; Minnesota Department of Children, Families, & Learning, 1998; Murphy, et al., 1998) although some research found an increase in overweight after introduction of a school lunch program (Canadian Population Health Initiative, 2006).

Considerations for supporting changes to policies, programs, and practices

While researchers are constantly working to expand the amount of knowledge related to school health and nutrition, as well as honing the nuance of such research, a number of important trends can be identified and findings advanced that may significantly support the nutritional welfare of students within the current system. It is important to recognize, however, that such recommendations cannot (and should not) be implemented without careful consideration of the local context in which policymakers, practitioners, families and communities, are operating.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. While the recent emphasis on obesity has opened an important window for change, adequate nutrition for all children and youth, as well as addressing issues of food insecurity, are critical components of comprehensive nutrition policies.
2. Researchers and policymakers may want to adopt the language of malnutrition, which is defined to include issues associated with obesity and overweight as well as nutritional deficiencies or under-nutrition that impair health, activity, or well-being.
3. Nutrition programs and interventions should be included as one important component of a comprehensive school health program

focusing on the mental, physical, intellectual, and social health of Canadian students. The placement of nutrition within the revised Canadian Consensus Statement on Comprehensive School Health should be strengthened.

4. Policymakers must invest in building the system-wide capacity to address school health needs (with a particular focus on nutrition services, programs, and activities, as well as physical education), if implementation of change efforts is to be sustained. The Children's Health and Nutrition Initiative may be one way to build such capacity.
5. Appropriate measures for overweight status and obesity should be determined. In particular, stakeholders should determine the accuracy, relevance, and appropriate use of BMI for measuring youth and adolescent overweight and obesity.
6. Future research should look at both program outcomes as well as the general costs for implementation, evaluation, and maintenance. Research into obesity and school-based interventions should also collect data on underweight prevalence, to identify possible unintended consequences that could prove harmful to participants.
7. While this article presented an overview of the current state of nutrition research, additional work should follow that presents a detailed examination of the issues highlighted here.
8. Much of the available data on nutrition and schools are generated in the United States and so lack contextual variables important for Canadians. Strengthened monitoring and data gathering systems should be established and supported so that policymakers can access timely and accurate data to strengthen policymaking decisions.

Adequate nutrition plays a key role in student health and development; however, despite the strong findings focusing on nutrition broadly, much of the recent research and policy development has focused on childhood overweight, significantly narrowing the public policy dialogue around nutrition programs and interventions. These policy dialogues must be refocused to emphasize the important role of appropriate nutrition (adequate provision and accessibility of nutritional foods) in child development, rather than emphasizing the nutritional aspects of overweight. Generally stated, nutritional programs and interventions should be included as one important component of a comprehensive school health program focusing on the mental, physical, intellectual, and social health of Canadian students.

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DAN LAITSCH is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. He is also Director of the Centre for the Study of Educational Leadership and Policy and co-editor of an open access online journal, the *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*. His research interests focus on the use and communication of research to improve policy and practice in education.

DAN LAITSCH est professeur adjoint à la faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université Simon Fraser. Il est aussi le directeur du centre d'études en leadership et politique éducationnels et co-éditeur d'un journal en ligne libre accès, le *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*. Ses intérêts de recherche portent sur l'utilisation et la dissémination de la recherche en vue d'améliorer les politiques et les pratiques en éducation.

CONTRASTING CROSS-SECTIONAL AND LONGITUDINAL EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER RATES IN CANADA

VIANNE TIMMONS *University of Regina*

RANDY OSTRIDGE *InternetWorks, Prince Edward Island*

ABSTRACT. Data analysis is critical to educational planning. Determining the number of school leavers is crucial for a school board when planning for interventions and supports. In researching the number of early school leavers in the province of Prince Edward Island, the method in which the data were reported affected the rates. Two critical considerations should be looked at when reporting or analyzing school leaver rates: the definition of a school leaver, and whether the data collected are cross-sectional or longitudinal. This paper explores these two elements.

CONTRASTES ENTRE LES TAUX DE DÉCROCHAGE DES ÉLÈVES CANADIENS DES ÉTUDES TRANSVERSALES ET LONGITUDINALES

RÉSUMÉ. L'analyse des données est essentielle à la planification des services éducationnels. En ce sens, déterminer le nombre de décrocheurs est un processus crucial pour planifier les interventions et les initiatives de support au sein des commissions scolaires. Dans le cadre de recherches sur le nombre de décrocheurs précoces à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard, il s'est avéré que la méthode de présentation des données influence les taux de décrochage rapportés. En fait, deux considérations importantes doivent être considérées lors du compte-rendu ou de l'analyse des taux de décrochage : la définition d'un décrocheur et la manière dont les données ont été recueillies (transversale ou longitudinale). Cet article explore ces deux dimensions.

Early school leaver rates are an important indicator of the degree to which schools are achieving their goals. By monitoring early school leaver rates, the educational system can respond by implementing programs and interventions that work towards increasing the success of all students. Two elements affect the rate that is reported: the definition of an early leaver, and the methodology of data collection. Depending on data availability and research goals, various definitions of an early school leaver have been used. In addition, a cross-sectional or a longitudinal methodology may be used to collect data and

to determine the rate, resulting in two different perspectives. Considerations involving these two aspects of early school leaver rates, as well as the merits of both cross-sectional and longitudinal rates, are discussed. This article proposes the use of both cross-sectional and longitudinal rates to provide comprehensive results and understanding of the early leave rate and the process of early exit from the school system.

INTRODUCTION

The reporting of early school leaver rates has been considered essential to educational policy development within Canada in recent decades. Lowering the early school leaver rate is an issue of great importance for educators, students, parents, and for Canada as a whole. There are difficulties and variances in statistics regarding this issue, as will be discussed further below, but the overall rate of students not completing secondary school has been estimated at 12%. This leaves many individuals ill-equipped to find employment within Canada's growing higher skilled labour force, and overall this lack of education limits Canada's human capital and economic competitiveness on the international scale. These serious implications for both Canada and the early school leavers themselves requires improved data analysis of this issue.

In general, an early school leaver is a student who leaves or "drops out" of the secondary school system, resulting in them not achieving a high school diploma. An accurate understanding of the early leaver rate is necessary for judging how well the school system is serving those students who are in danger of exiting the system. Unfortunately, different early leaver data are reported by various research bodies, making it difficult to determine which information draws the most accurate picture of the educational system. To compound the problem, different organizations often use dissimilar definitions for an early school leaver, which makes direct comparisons not only problematic, but potentially meaningless. In order to compare, contrast, and validate reported early school leaver rates, it becomes increasingly important to understand the major constituents of the early school leaver definition.

Audas and Willms (2001) provide an excellent summary of the ongoing debate in educational literature with regard to the early school leaver problem. Their critique focuses on various methodologies that have been used to collect information about early school leavers. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to address all the possible variables used to define the early school leaver, so our focus will be on two specific components of current definitions. These components are the conditional definition of an early leaver and the nature of data collection. By understanding early school leaver rate definitions, comparisons between rates reported by different studies become more meaningful.

This issue transcends borders, but our focus here is on Canada and the United States, where recent studies have identified early school leaver rates as an area

of concern for Canadian and American education. American educators have been struggling with the early school leaver rate issue over the last decade as states attempt to quantify their early school leaver population (Clements, Ligon, & Paredes, 2000; House Research Organization, 1999; Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2000). In Canada, the early school leaver issue has also been pertinent for a number of years. Attention to this issue has increased recently due to the implementation of systems of accountability for educators, as well as broader systems of educational comparisons between Canada and the international community (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2003; Statistics Canada, 2003a). Recently, results from the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Statistics Canada Youth in Transition Survey caused many educational organizations to focus on early school leavers. As the cost of students dropping out of school becomes more clearly documented by research, the desire of both provincial and national groups to reduce the early leaver rates increases (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [HRSDC], 1998, 1999, 2001a, 2000b; Lafleur, 1992). Early leaver rates in Canada have been reduced over the last decade (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002), but it is widely accepted that more could be done for students who are at risk of leaving (Black, 2003; Epp & Epp, 2001; Fallis & Opatow, 2003; MetLife Foundation, 2002; McNeal, 1997; National Dropout Prevention Center, 2002).

From a statistical perspective, the early school leaver rate is challenging to describe (Audas & Willms, 2001; Clements, et al., 2000). Examining the existing research, one can find considerable variance within early school leaver rates reported across Canada. For example, the New Brunswick Department of Education (2004) reports New Brunswick's 1999 annual early school leaver rate to be 5.0%, whereas HRSDC and Statistics Canada reports the province's early leaver rate to be 7.6% (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002). If both of these statistics have equally high confidence levels, the natural question is: how can different leaver rates be expressed for the same province?

This question can be answered by investigating the components that define an early school leaver rate. Perhaps the most significant component impacting the magnitude of early leaver rates is the manner in which an early school leaver is defined. In order to categorize each potential leaver, the criteria of categorization must be clearly outlined and expressed. A set of consistent conditions must be laid out which will clearly describe a person either as an early school leaver or not, as this would allow for accurate accounting. The second major influence in understanding early school leaver rates lies in the contrast between a cross-sectional leaver rate and a longitudinal leaver rate. Cross-sectional rates provide an indicator of how many individuals are leaving school at a specific point in time, whereas longitudinal rates express how many individuals in a particular time-dependent cohort are exiting. As studies continue to use a mix of definitions and methods, it becomes increasingly important for educational researchers to distinguish how those components affect the data towards early

school leaver rates (Featherman, Lerner, & Perlmutter, 1994; Magnusson, Bergman, Rudinger, & Torestad, 1991).

Definition of an early school leaver

The definition of an early school leaver varies depending upon the outcomes of a particular body of research, which can cause frustration when attempting to make comparisons between studies. The definition becomes very important for quantitative research when an accurate count of early leavers is necessary, but has a lesser impact in qualitative research where sociological models are being developed. For comparison between studies, it is important that the same early school leaver definition be used, or at the very least, differences between definitions are understood and clearly expressed.

A common early school leaver definition used by both Canadian and American institutions and researchers is based upon the timing and circumstances under which the student leaves school (e.g., New Brunswick Department of Education, 2004; Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2003; Kaufman, et al., 2001; HRSDC, 1996). If a student becomes absent without an approved reason at any time during a given academic year, and does not return by the end of the enrollment period of the next academic year, he or she is considered an early school leaver. The enrollment period can vary among school authorities, but it is often within the first 30 days of the new academic year. This definition excludes students who have graduated or received a graduate certificate, transferred between schools or grades (domestic or foreign), left for medical reasons, or have died. The definition includes students who have left for work-related reasons, personal reasons (such as pregnancy or caring for children), and those who were expelled. Students are normally only counted as leaving once within a particular year, regardless of how many times or under what circumstances they exit and return. This particular definition is suitable when determining the cross-sectional early school leaver rate, but not always appropriate when calculating the longitudinal early leaver rate.

When discussing a longitudinal early leaver rate, the complication arises when students exit and return to school several times. Since members of the target population could become school leavers by the cross-sectional definition, but then return two or three years later, they might not be considered early leavers within the context of a longitudinal study. In a temporal perspective, a person would be considered an early school leaver only if she/he exited the system and did not return within the life of the cohort (or the duration of study for the cohort). In that regard, longitudinal rates can be seen as somewhat self-adjusting. Aside from that difference, the cohort-based definition will normally include the same inclusions and exclusions of individuals found in a cross-sectional (or annual) leaver rate. In practice, however, many survey-based longitudinal studies have persons self-identify their educational status, which potentially lessens the precision of the early leaver definition. Strict adherence to an early

leaver definition is of greater importance for educational organizations that generate leaver rates based upon existing student records, for which careful validation is possible.

Even with a clear early school leaver definition, the actual categorization of each member of a population can be difficult. Data validation becomes extremely important depending upon the system used, and it can be complicated by the day-to-day movement of students (House Research Organization, 1999). Though most institutions now use computer databases to keep track of student records, these databases are often decentralized, making it possible for local anomalies to appear within record sets. For example, while working with the student information database system used in Prince Edward Island, we encountered such an irregularity (Timmons, 2005). A student was having difficulties within a particular school that caused him or her to leave for one month. That student was recorded as an early leaver within the school's localized database system. At the end of the month, the student decided to return to finish his or her education, but enrolled in a different school. This new school recorded the student as an incoming transfer student. The originating school was never informed of the transfer, meaning the student would remain listed as an early leaver in one location, and as a transfer student in another location. If this type of situation is not corrected when the record sets are reconstituted at the departmental level, it is possible to have an inaccuracy within reported statistics. Improved communication within institutions is necessary in order to help avoid these situations, but to ultimately address this issue, a clear and comprehensive early school leaver definition is required.

Some organizations prefer to report the high school graduation or completion rates instead of the early leaver rate (e.g., British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2000; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000; Statistics Canada, 2003b). A graduation rate represents how many students in a specific age group have earned their high school graduate certificate or equivalent, including a GED. These rates are parallel to the early leaver rate, indicating how many students successfully complete high school. Although a graduation rate provides a picture of how many students are graduating, it provides no information about the students who are not completers. One cannot assume any information about the early leaver population from the graduation rate because not all non-completers are early leavers (for example, some may have moved out of province, become ill or deceased). Graduation rates are attractive because it can be easier to count graduates than it can be to account for non-graduates. Focusing on graduation rates also tends to shift perspective from a deficit-based model to a success-based model, where organizations can report the number of students who have successfully negotiated the educational system. However, both graduation rates and leaver rates have value to educators, as they are not explicit opposites of each other.

Once an early school leaver definition has been established, it can be used to count the number of early leavers within a particular research paradigm. This total can be used in conjunction with enrollment or cohort numbers to calculate an early school leaver rate. The actual value of the rate will depend to a great degree upon how early leaver information is collected. The following discussion will look at how the two different data collection methodologies affect the early school leaver rates, focusing on how they contrast with each other. As mentioned, the two types of early school leaver rates are cross-sectional and longitudinal.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CROSS-SECTIONAL EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER RATE

According to the common definition of an early school leaver, a cross-sectional (or annual) leaver rate represents the number of students who exited school within a specific academic year. Cross-sectional rates provide a snapshot of the target population within any given year, usually reporting based upon age or grade level.

A cross-sectional leaver rate is convenient because it inherits the classical features of cross-sectional analysis. The key quality of cross-sectional research is that it measures characteristics of a target population at a single point in time or over a very short period of time (Diggle, Liang, & Zeger, 1994). Cross-sectional studies are good at describing information that has few independent variables, with the general understanding that many assumptions about dependent variables are needed to correlate different characteristics within a population. Although a small number of independent variables can be somewhat limiting, one positive aspect is that uncertainty within results can be better quantified and controlled. It is very difficult to address temporal effects in cross-sectional analysis, as there are typically not multiple time-dependent variables to consider for comparison. For example, early leaver data taken cross-sectionally will provide no information about how many members of that population will ultimately return to the educational system in successive years. The scope of the data collection is simply too narrow. Cross-sectional data can be collected prospectively (from the present and following individuals forward over time) and retrospectively (from historical or pre-existing sources). In either case, the information collection is completed for a single time frame within the life of the sample.

A cross-sectional early school leaver rate is typically calculated for a single academic year. The mechanics of the calculation will vary based upon the manner in which the data have been collected, but normally only the total enrollment numbers and the total leaver numbers are required. Cross-sectional annual rates provide organizations with descriptive baseline data from year to year. As long as consistent data collection and analysis procedures are used, these values can be a convenient method for comparison of leaver rates over time. Given

the cumulative nature of longitudinal rates, cross-sectional rates tend to be the smaller. This often makes them more attractive to self-reporting educational institutions, such as school boards or departments of education.

The ability to inspect school records retrospectively by year is another reason why educational institutions find cross-sectional rates attractive. Logistically, annual studies are typically the most manageable method of data collection for research purposes. This quality remains true when calculating leaver rates. Cross-sectional data collection also tends to be less expensive than a longitudinal study because the information and personnel management issues are reduced, and participant attrition is a much lower concern. The major limitation of a cross-sectional annual leaver rate is that it only captures those students who have left school within a given academic year; it does not capture information about those who have left in any other year nor those who will later return to complete their education.

In Canada, cross-sectional early school leaver rates will most commonly be reported by provincial ministries and departments of education (e.g., New Brunswick Department of Education, 2004; Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2003). Enrollment information must be processed as part of educational accountability for these organizations, so the leaver rates are calculated as an extension of this mandate. Cross-sectional rates presented by the provinces normally have low uncertainty because they are generated based upon accounting for each student in the province, not by a random or stratified sampling methodology.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A LONGITUDINAL EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER RATE

A longitudinal early school leaver rate measures the number of students who have exited school over the lifetime of a given population. Typically, the population will be defined by age, since cohorts created by grade level can have internal fluctuations because of how students are promoted or repeated. A longitudinal leaver rate provides not only useful statistical information for a single year, but can provide a picture of what is happening within the population from year to year. This sets the longitudinal approach apart from cross-sectional approach, adding new layers of depth to the information collected and the analysis options available.

The defining quality of longitudinal research is that individuals are measured repeatedly throughout time. This contrasts with cross-sectional studies, where the data collection occurs at a single point in time. As described in Diggle, et al., (1994), longitudinal studies are very good for describing cohort and age effects, which are more difficult to assess with a cross-sectional approach. The cohort effect considers differences within baseline information about a population. The age effect considers changes within a population over time. For example, within a population of early school leavers, a cohort effect would

include how many males and females exist within the population. An age effect for the same population might consider the change in income rates for early school leavers over time. When working with longitudinal information, it is very important that the research design is precise and appropriate for the analysis being conducted, accounting for both the age and cohort effect. A flaw in methodology is very difficult to correct from one stage to the next without potential contamination of the results.

Most longitudinal studies collect information prospectively, since historically collected data may be of lower quality. Prospective collection also provides researchers with a built-in opportunity to manage variability factors over the life of data collection. Logistically, longitudinal studies are often the most difficult type of study to manage. Continued observation of the target population requires a large investment in resources, and careful monitoring of the data collection process is also necessary. In the case of at-risk groups like early school leavers, participant attrition becomes an issue over longer studies, affecting the quality and consistency of collected data.

The longitudinal early school leaver rate is calculated for a specific age cohort by counting all members of the population that have exited school up to that point in the lifetime of the cohort. The total number of leavers is then used in conjunction with the total population of the cohort to calculate an exit rate. On the surface, the longitudinal rate would appear to be a cumulative total of each year's cross-sectional leaver rate, but this is not the case. As mentioned when discussing the cross-sectional leaver rate, a student may be counted as a leaver within a given academic year, but then return some time later. This type of re-entry causes the longitudinal rate to be slightly less than the sum of a cross-sectional rate. Some jurisdictions in the United States use a formula to convert the sum of cross-sectional rates into a longitudinal rate. A scaling factor would be applied to reflect a re-entry rate of a jurisdiction, thereby approximating the longitudinal rate. These rates are not true longitudinal rates, however, and that distinction is sometimes not clear.

In North America, there have been several large longitudinal projects focusing on education. In Canada, two large-scale national longitudinal surveys include the Statistics Canada-administered National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) and Youth in Transition Survey (YITS). In the United States, the U.S. Department of Education National Educational Longitudinal Study and the U.S. Department of Labor National Longitudinal Survey of Youth are two important longitudinal studies investigating school-aged youth. Studies of this nature have done a great deal to collect information relating to the overall school experience, including components specifically connected to early school leavers.

CONTRASTING CROSS-SECTIONAL AND LONGITUDINAL EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER RATES

The purpose of identifying early school leaver rates is to provide a snapshot of what is occurring within the educational system, in order to better evaluate current practices and help formulate more effective educational services. Early school leaver rates provide important data for this analysis; however, both the cross-sectional and the longitudinal rates provide slightly different views of the leaver situation. While it is not possible to directly compare cross-sectional and longitudinal leaver rates, there are some situations in which it may be desirable to contrast the two types of calculations. As discussed when defining a cross-sectional leaver rate, this type of rate is used most often by educational institutions who are required to report leaver rates on an annual basis. Longitudinal rates are more often used by large national studies or academic research groups. The clearest picture of the early leaver situation can be found using the cross-sectional and longitudinal approaches to validate each other. Since direct comparison of cross-sectional and longitudinal rates is not possible, indirect comparisons must be made.

As noted, early school leaver rates reported by educational institutions are often cross-sectional, presenting a picture of the leaver population year by year. Many departments and ministries of education in Canada fall into this category, and their annual reports will include cross-sectional leaver rates. Nationally, the Government of Canada has sponsored several studies that have focused on building a profile of the educational system in Canada. These national studies are generally completed on a larger scale, capturing longitudinal information that produces longitudinal leaver rates. As these national studies are conducted less frequently than the annual reporting provided by provincial agencies, the two types of studies cannot be compared on a year-by-year basis. Also, because of the differences in both early school leaver definitions and data collection methodologies, there are some challenges in attempting to contrast the rates against each other when they do coincide for a given year. It should also be noted that most of the national longitudinal surveys use a random or stratified sampling methodology to collect their information, which results in large uncertainties in provinces with smaller populations.

Let us return to the example provided in the introduction of this discussion. The New Brunswick Department of Education (2004) reports the 1999 annual early school leaver rate to be 5.0%. The YITS results report that the early school leaver rate for New Brunswick in 1999 is 7.6% (Bowlby & McMullen, 2002). Which provides the most accurate picture of what is happening in the school system during that particular year? The New Brunswick Department of Education rate is cross-sectional, and is drawn from enrollment numbers for students that are in grades 10 to 12 during 1999. Therefore, the New Brunswick Department of Education rate is providing information on students who were enrolled in high school and did not return for the 2000 school year. The

YITS rate is a longitudinal rate based upon a stratified sample of 20-year-olds who self-identified their school status. Therefore, the YITS rate infers the total number of 20-year-olds that do not have a high school diploma or equivalent certification. The two rates are both called early leaver and dropout rates, but they are clearly not expressing the same information. Both rates do have value to policy makers, however, and one rate cannot be viewed as necessarily superior to the other. Under what circumstances would an organization choose a cross-sectional rate as opposed to a longitudinal rate, or conversely, does this division even have to exist?

The most accurate picture of early school leavers across Canada can ultimately be gained by utilizing the cross-sectional information generated by provincial organizations in concert with the longitudinal data produced by national surveys. By the nature of its definition, a longitudinal study is capable of expressing all of the same information that a cross-sectional study can collect, but continuous longitudinal study of youth nationwide is not a realistic goal. To date, instances of large Canadian longitudinal studies on youth have been separated by five to ten years. It would be beneficial to policy makers to have more frequent information on early leaver rates, which is where a cross-sectional approach can assist in completing the picture. The cross-sectional leaver rate can provide information from year to year, highlighting possible immediate effects of policy changes. If all provinces in Canada were to report cross-sectional leaver rates with a similar baseline definition, then a summative national rate could be produced within any given year. All limitations of the cross-sectional methodology would apply, but this information could be used to guide policy between national surveys. Since the longitudinal approach typically represents a sampled rate, a cross-sectional rate based upon school records could reduce the uncertainty for jurisdictions that have smaller populations.

CONCLUSION

Various indicators of early school leaving are reported by different organizations and researchers. An understanding of these indicators requires that both the definition of an early school leaver and the specific methodology be considered. The nature of the reported rates varies by the methodology used – be it cross-sectional or longitudinal. Both methodologies result in meaningful measures. However, using cross-sectional data to determine annual early leaver rates provides year-to-year measures that may be more reliable than longitudinal data from samples, whereas a richer understanding of educational status over time, as well as factors related to school success, can be gained from longitudinal data. By using data from both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, more complete knowledge about early school leavers can be gained. Given the costs of early school leaving, both to society and the individual, taking advantage of both cross-sectional and longitudinal data is recommended.

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VIANNETIMMONS is President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Regina. Her research interests include student retention, family literacy, and the relationship between inclusion and health.

RANDY OSTRIDGE has worked with technology in an educational capacity for nearly a decade. Starting in analysis and interpretation, he has since moved on to educational software development, focusing on best practices in multimedia integration and usability design.

VIANNETIMMONS est présidente et vice-rectrice à l'Université de Regina. Ses intérêts de recherche portent sur la rétention des élèves, la littératie au sein des familles ainsi que les relations existant entre l'inclusion et la santé.

RANDY OSTRIDGE a travaillé pendant presque une décennie dans un contexte technologique. Débutant sa carrière en analyse et en interprétation, il a depuis développé une expertise en développement de logiciels éducatifs, privilégiant des pratiques éprouvées en intégration multimédia et en utilisabilité du design.

FORUM DE DISCUSSION ASYNCHRONE ET HARMONISATION DES INTERVENTIONS DE FORMATEURS DE STAGIAIRES EN ENSEIGNEMENT

FRANCE LACOURSE & GENEVIÈVE NAULT *Université de Sherbrooke*

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article présente l'expérimentation d'un forum de discussion asynchrone avec des formateurs de stagiaires. Des enseignants associés et des superviseurs, dans le contexte de la réforme de la formation initiale à l'enseignement au secondaire, ont échangé sur l'accompagnement pendant la durée d'un stage en vue de contribuer à l'harmonisation de leurs interventions. Le discours des participants fait ressortir une expérience positive au regard de la construction de connaissances, en particulier, pour les nouveaux enseignants associés.

DISCUSSION FORUM: SYNCHRONISING MENTORSHIP WITH TEACHERS IN TRAINING

ABSTRACT. This article describes an experiment using online asynchronous discussion among student-teacher educators. In the context of Quebec's reform of teacher education at the secondary level, cooperating teachers and university-based supervisors used online communication to provide consistent feedback. The results offer evidence of a positive learning experience, especially for new cooperating teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Il est simple de dire que les forums de discussion asynchrones sont des outils qui favorisent les échanges, la réflexion et la construction de savoirs, mais comment est-il possible de les susciter? À la différence d'une page statique d'un guide de stage et d'un plan de cours, un forum de discussion favorise des interactions multiples entre des formateurs et l'émergence de points de vue diversifiés qui enrichissent l'intercompréhension d'une situation, d'un incident et d'une tâche d'accompagnement à mettre en oeuvre. Par ailleurs, des recherches tendent à convenir que les discussions asynchrones offrent plusieurs bénéfices pédagogiques. En effet, le délai de réponse incite à une réponse plus étayée et argumentée. Cette réponse peut même dépasser la qualité de celle qui serait donnée en présentiel (Kassop, 2003). Partant de Salmon (2000) et Wenger (1998), nous pouvons dire que les concepts de communauté d'apprentissage et de communauté de pratique ont guidé l'activité de mise en réseau des formateurs de stagiaires dans cette recherche.

Contexte de réforme

En 2003, de nouveaux programmes de formation à l'enseignement ont été implantés; ils sont ancrés dans un référentiel de formation¹ par compétences composé de douze compétences réparties en quatre domaines : les fondements, l'acte d'enseigner, le contexte scolaire et social et l'identité professionnelle. Toutefois, comment un enseignant du milieu scolaire associé à cette formation peut-il intégrer les orientations du nouveau programme de formation à l'enseignement? Ces orientations générales visent notamment à former un praticien réflexif et compétent, et ce, dans une visée de professionnalisation (Gouvernement du Québec, 2001). En tant que formatrices universitaires, nous nous devons d'harmoniser les interventions d'accompagnement, d'une part et d'autre part, de favoriser l'intercompréhension des enjeux de la formation à l'enseignement. C'est pour mettre en oeuvre ces deux intentions que nous avons expérimenté un forum de discussion asynchrone regroupant l'équipe de formation, des superviseurs de stage et des enseignants associés.

• La difficile concertation entre les formateurs

Comme le relève Boutin (2002), il est difficile de rejoindre les enseignants associés à la formation initiale en enseignement. Ils exercent généralement leur fonction à temps plein. Il est complexe de les rencontrer tous au même moment à cause des besoins de suppléance. Les stagiaires se retrouvent parfois en stage dans des écoles éloignées de l'université, ce qui accroît les difficultés de déplacement. De plus, les ententes locales entre le syndicat et les commissions scolaires rendent parfois difficile la concertation en présentiel des enseignants associés. Actuellement, seulement deux rencontres annuelles de concertation et de perfectionnement ont lieu entre les partenaires (disciplinaires, pédagogues, didacticiens, superviseurs et enseignants associés). Toutefois, cela est insuffisant pour comprendre le programme, ses orientations, le contenu du stage, leur rôle d'accompagnateur, etc.

Pourtant, les enseignants associés accueillent les stagiaires et contribuent fortement à leur formation pratique. Leurs interventions d'accompagnement produisent un effet important sur la formation (Gervais et Portelance, 2005; Gervais et Desrosiers, 2005). Ceux-ci assument au moins trois rôles : 1) accompagnateur en offrant de l'aide régulière à la personne stagiaire, sur les situations d'enseignement-apprentissage et la gestion de classe; 2) médiateur entre les outils, les savoirs, savoir-faire et savoir-être; 3) ressource pour des partenaires. Dans ce contexte, une réunion annuelle est insuffisante pour répondre aux besoins d'information, de perfectionnement et de réflexion des enseignants associés à la formation initiale. Il ne faut pas oublier les enseignants absents.

• Visées et objectifs de la recherche

Cette problématique, conjuguée au potentiel des TIC pour réduire les distances et mettre en réseau, nous a conduites vers la mise en place d'un forum

de discussion pour regrouper les formateurs entre eux. Nous voulions créer un espace de dialogue réfléchi et asynchrone entre les formateurs de cultures différentes pour atteindre trois objectifs : 1) discuter des questions par rapport aux visées de formation et aux outils d'accompagnement; 2) harmoniser les pratiques d'accompagnement; 3) briser l'isolement. Le dispositif s'inscrit dans la continuité de l'utilisation des forums de discussion en contexte de stage entre la personne superviseure et ses stagiaires (Nault, 2000; Nault et Nault, 2001) et il constitue un pas de plus dans la consolidation de notre approche d'accompagnement des stagiaires en enseignement.

Cadre de référence

Outre l'espace commun de discussion entre formateurs, certaines conditions doivent être remplies pour que le dispositif de soutien envisagé favorise un dialogue dynamique et une réflexion étendue en vue de l'harmonisation des interventions d'accompagnement. Les conditions retenues reposent sur le cadre de référence de Salmon (2000) relatif au continuum d'intensité d'intervention de l'animateur du forum de discussion. Cette intensité influence une communication qui conduira vers le développement professionnel des participants. Salmon propose un modèle en cinq étapes pour qualifier la nature des échanges qui ont lieu dans un forum de discussion. La première étape concerne l'accessibilité et la motivation d'engagement à communiquer sur le forum. La deuxième étape se rapporte à la socialisation en ligne pour se présenter ou préciser des éléments de son contexte situé. La troisième étape est dévolue à l'échange d'informations sur des documents, des procédures ou autre. La quatrième étape concerne la construction de connaissances individuelles et collectives en développant son point de vue de façon claire et argumentée, en mobilisant son attention sur une discussion et en faisant des liens entre la théorie et la pratique. La cinquième et dernière étape touche le développement professionnel, c'est-à-dire la capacité de visualiser son cheminement, en faire un bilan et une régulation en vue de la formation continue. Ce cadre d'analyse fournit un référentiel pour animer les discussions et pour analyser les données recueillies concernant les échanges sur un forum de discussion. Le modèle de Salmon (2000) nous permet d'analyser d'une part le rôle de l'animateur du forum de discussion et d'autre part le contenu des messages des enseignants associés en le comparant au niveau des étapes de développement. Nous présenterons maintenant la définition du forum de discussion et le rôle de l'animateur en relation avec le modèle de Salmon (2000).

• Définition du forum de discussion

Le monde de l'éducation reconnaît de plus en plus le potentiel du forum de discussion et sa contribution en formation (Larose et Karsenti, 2002). Cette ouverture s'explique par l'apport des théories constructivistes sur les processus d'apprentissage. Le forum de discussion est un espace en ligne où les participants sont encouragés à établir des liens entre les multiples informations

auxquelles ils sont exposés en vue de forger leur propre compréhension. Les messages de chacun sont accessibles à tous les participants. Il est donc essentiel de créer des conditions de dialogue qui favoriseront la confiance, le respect des idées émises et l'encouragement à prendre le risque de communiquer publiquement ses savoirs, ses croyances, ses valeurs, son questionnement et ses doutes (Campos, 2004).

Ainsi, il est possible d'avancer que les savoirs de chacun sont mis à contribution pour être bonifiés, complexifiés et parfois déconstruits lors des échanges. Les activités les plus susceptibles de soutenir cette construction sont les situations de partage d'idées, de résolution de problèmes, de questionnement sur sa pratique et des études de cas, etc. Dans ce cadre de communication, le participant au forum joue un rôle actif dans son apprentissage d'accompagnement et peut se sentir confirmé dans ses croyances ou déstabilisé, ce qui le conduira à prendre conscience des limites de son savoir ou de ses perspectives ou de son milieu. Il pourra amorcer, si le vouloir agir est présent, le processus de mise en œuvre de pratiques partagées ou encore rechercher comment agir autrement pour réussir son intervention d'accompagnement.

• *Obstacles à la participation aux discussions asynchrones*

Bien que plusieurs avantages favorisent la participation des participants au forum de discussion, il existe aussi des obstacles. Des recherches comme celles de Teo et Webster (2008) et Guzdial et Turns (2000) en identifient:

- a. *Décider de participer.* Si l'individu se découvre d'autres priorités, il peut ne pas participer ou il lira seulement les messages postés. Il peut aussi se sentir débordé par le nombre de messages à lire.
- b. *Démotiver par les sujets de discussion.* Des individus peuvent ne pas être intéressés par le thème de la discussion.
- c. *Méconnaître les sujets discutés.* Les débutants ayant moins d'expérience que les experts voient difficilement tous les angles d'une situation ou tous les facteurs d'influence à considérer.
- d. *Ignorer comment discuter.* Des débutants ont besoin d'être informés des procédures ou des étapes de la discussion pour une communication professionnelle éthique.

Comme nous l'abordons dans la suite de cette partie, le rôle de l'animateur est primordial pour soutenir la participation de chacun, et ce, de manière dynamique.

• *Rôle de l'animateur de forum*

La plupart des experts s'entendent pour dire que l'animation constitue un des éléments les plus importants de son succès. Son rôle peut être considéré par rapport à un continuum d'intensité de l'intervention selon Salmon (2000). À

la première extrémité du continuum, l'animateur se situe dans la marge (*on the side*), il est peu présent sinon pour encourager et relancer. À l'autre extrémité, il occupe la tribune (*on the stage*), sa contribution permet de synthétiser, de questionner des affirmations, de déstabiliser ou fournir des informations. La figure 1 présente ce continuum.

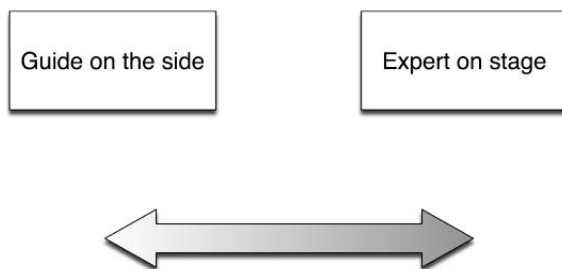


FIGURE 1. Le rôle de l'animateur de forum

La figure 1 illustre l'animateur qui se déplace sur le continuum jusqu'à occuper le statut d'expert. Dans le contexte de notre recherche, le rôle de guide nous est apparu le plus approprié pour amorcer des échanges démocratiques au sens de Campos (2004), c'est-à-dire basés sur la participation de tous, au même niveau d'intervention. L'animateur devait éviter de jouer un rôle d'éteignoir. Dans le rôle de guide, l'animateur présente le forum, les objectifs, il encourage, suscite des échanges, fait des demandes de précisions, etc. dans le but de soutenir une réflexion tendue vers la construction de connaissances. Il nous semble important de souligner le rôle de l'animateur du forum de discussion, toutefois dans cet article, nous concentrons la présentation des résultats sur le contenu des messages des enseignants associés. Si ce contenu existe, c'est bien grâce au rôle que les animateurs ont joué dans les échanges.

Le dispositif d'accompagnement

Pour atteindre les objectifs poursuivis dans cette recherche, nous avons ciblé le stage II- *Enseignement en responsabilité limitée* (3 crédits) offert au baccalauréat en enseignement au secondaire. Le terme «limité» signifie que l'enseignant demeure toujours dans la classe lors de l'enseignement du stagiaire. Il nous est apparu important de cibler ce stage, car il s'agit de la première prise en charge d'un groupe d'élèves par le stagiaire. Il faut noter que chaque enseignant associé accueille une paire de stagiaires de deuxième année, dans le but de développer la coopération, la pratique réflexive et le développement du matériel didactique. Au plan administratif, ce dispositif facilite le placement de tous les stagiaires en réduisant le nombre de places recherchées. Des exceptions existent, dans le cas d'un nombre impair de stagiaires dans un profil de formation ou d'une tâche incomplète chez un enseignant associé.

Le forum de discussion créé a été accessible aux membres de l'équipe de recherche (la responsable du développement de la formation pratique, le conseiller pédagogique aux stages), à deux personnes superviseuses ainsi que sept enseignants associés. Les personnes superviseuses ont été approchées individuellement par l'équipe de recherche pour participer sur une base volontaire au forum de discussion asynchrone. Par la suite, les deux superviseurs ont sollicité sur une base volontaire des enseignants associés parmi ceux qui accompagnaient leur sous-groupe de stagiaires, soit un échantillon par choix raisonnés. Notons que les superviseurs et les enseignants associés ont reçu une légère reconnaissance monétaire pour leur contribution à cette recherche.

Les enseignants associés participants ont reçu, en janvier 2006, une explication sur le fonctionnement du forum de discussion et des modalités du projet par le conseiller pédagogique aux stages. Il leur a été suggéré de recourir à leurs propres stagiaires pour des explications techniques complémentaires au besoin. Les stagiaires possédaient une bonne maîtrise de l'outil. L'équipe de recherche a demandé aux sept enseignants associés et deux superviseurs d'intervenir au moins une fois par semaine sur le forum au moment du stage intensif des 14 jours consécutifs. Les journées antérieures, à partir du début février, ont permis à chaque participant de se familiariser avec le fonctionnement du forum de discussion et de lancer des réflexions. La durée de l'expérience a été du 3 février au 31 mai 2006.

Partant de Hill et Hannafin (2001) et Salmon (2000), l'équipe de recherche a déterminé que le conseiller pédagogique aux stages informerait les participants par courriel de l'ouverture du forum de discussion en février et les encouragerait à communiquer un premier message. Il transmettrait un message de félicitations pour la première communication réussie. Une fois tous les participants actifs, il lancerait une première question portant sur le degré de satisfaction des participants à la rencontre de concertation ayant eu lieu à l'université. Ensuite, les deux superviseurs animaient le forum au regard :

- des réponses à transmettre,
- des ressources à consulter,
- de l'échafaudage métacognitif : en posant des questions, en revisitant ce qui était connu et en suggérant comment réfléchir sur le sujet ou aux facteurs concernés,
- de l'échafaudage stratégique : en offrant des solutions de résolution de problème.

Les membres de l'équipe de recherche pouvaient aussi intervenir au besoin.

La collecte de données

Pour la collecte des données, nous avons eu recours à deux sources : l'ensemble des messages envoyés dans le forum de discussion et un questionnaire électronique sur le degré de satisfaction des participants. Un rapport de participation

avec le contenu des discussions a été produit pour chacun des participants à partir des archives de la plateforme. Ainsi, les discussions ont pu être divisées en unités d'idées et ce corpus a par la suite été analysé en deux temps : l'analyse de la participation et l'analyse du discours.

Le questionnaire en ligne sur le degré d'appréciation du forum de discussion cernait quatre dimensions : a) les éléments motivant la participation; b) la compréhension du rôle d'accompagnement et des outils; c) la pertinence des réflexions pour développer son accompagnement; d) le potentiel du dispositif dans l'avenir.

L'analyse du corpus de données et résultats

L'analyse du corpus de données s'est déroulée en trois temps. D'abord, le traitement des messages postés dans le forum de discussion qui a été réalisé à partir de la compilation de l'ensemble des messages, puis l'analyse du discours de ces mêmes messages. Enfin, la troisième étape concerne l'analyse des réponses de trois enseignants associés au questionnaire d'appréciation du forum de discussion en vue de dégager les idées émises.

• *Portrait de la participation*

Si nous analysons la compilation des messages, il est possible de préciser le nombre de messages pour chaque type de participants au forum (enseignants associés, superviseurs et l'équipe de gestion), le nombre de messages transmis par chacun, la moyenne des messages et le temps de délai de réponses en jour. Au terme du projet, nous pouvons dire qu'au cours de la période du 3 février au 31 mai 2006, 99 messages ont été postés : 49 par les enseignants associés, 21 par les deux personnes superviseuses et 29 par l'équipe de formation. En ce qui concerne les délais de communication pour les enseignants associés, cela varie en moyenne de deux à huit jours; pour le superviseur qui a le plus participé, le délai est d'un jour et pour l'autre superviseur, moins présent, quatorze jours. Quant aux membres de l'équipe de recherche, pour la personne qui a le plus participé, la moyenne de délai est de cinq jours et pour l'autre deux jours. La période d'échanges la plus intense a été celle des quatorze jours du stage intensif du 20 mars au 7 avril 2006.

• *Analyse du discours*

La deuxième étape a conduit à l'analyse approfondie des messages et des réponses de l'ensemble des participants. Le logiciel Excel a été retenu pour organiser en tableau le corpus de données et dégager les thèmes à partir d'une démarche compréhensive. Pour y arriver, chaque chaîne de communication (un message initial suivi d'un certain nombre de réponses) a été codifiée quant à son contenu principal. Puis, une catégorisation a été faite pour regrouper les chaînes de communication dans un thème global. La codification des thèmes a été réalisée par une assistante de recherche formée sur la manière de procéder

pour identifier les thèmes. De façon générale, le titre du premier message de la chaîne de communication donnait un bon indice du thème retenu. Dans le but d'assurer la fiabilité, un chercheur de l'équipe a vérifié la codification et les catégorisations. Les huit thèmes identifiés apparaissent dans le tableau 1. Ils ont permis d'établir des liens avec deux des objectifs de la recherche, ainsi qu'avec les étapes de développement de Salmon (2000).

TABEAU 1. *Liste des thèmes du forum de discussion et des étapes de réflexion*

Thèmes	Étapes de Salmon (2000)
1. La journée de concertation et de formation	Échange d'informations
2. La préparation des stagiaires avant le début du stage	Construction de connaissances
3. La mise en place de la réforme au secondaire	Construction de connaissances
4. L'intérêt du stagiaire au regard de l'enseignement	Échange d'informations
5. La réalité de l'enseignement	Construction de connaissances
6. L'évaluation des stagiaires	Construction de connaissances
7. La quantité de travail demandée aux stagiaires	Échange d'informations
8. Le calendrier du stage II	Échange d'informations

D'une part, les thèmes 1, 4, 7, et 8 concernent l'objectif sur la compréhension des visées de formation du programme à l'enseignement au secondaire et les outils d'accompagnement des stagiaires. D'autre part, les thèmes 2, 3, 5, et 6 recourent l'objectif d'harmonisation des interventions d'accompagnement. Le dernier objectif au regard de l'isolement des enseignants associés sera abordé avec le questionnaire en ligne.

En examinant les étapes de réflexion identifiées dans le tableau 1, deux ressortent en particulier : l'échange d'informations et la construction des connaissances. Ce sont les étapes 3 et 4 de l'échelle de Salmon à cinq niveaux. Ce résultat permet d'avancer que les échanges dans le groupe ont conduit les participants vers d'autres compréhensions des outils de formation et des visées du programme de formation. Pour mieux comprendre la nature des discussions, nous reprenons chacun des huit thèmes.

La journée de concertation et de formation. Le lancement des activités du stage II, depuis janvier 2004, débute avec une journée de concertation entre les divers formateurs : des professeurs de deuxième année de l'équipe programme en vue de présenter les contenus et des travaux spécifiques de cours en établissant des

liens au regard des attentes par rapport au milieu de stage tout en répondant aux questions des enseignants associés et des superviseurs. Un atelier relatif à la didactique de chacun des profils de formation contribue à familiariser les enseignants associés et les superviseurs à divers procédés didactiques. La documentation relative aux stages est présentée et la concertation perfectionnement se termine avec la rencontre des stagiaires du groupe spécifique du superviseur, et ce, dans le but de connaître des stagiaires en même temps que les siens, de partager plusieurs points de vue sur la formation et les attentes de chacun. La première question sur le forum de discussion asynchrone.

Les points de vue des participants sont partagés. Trois sur sept déclarent cette rencontre de concertation nécessaire. Selon eux, elle permet de soutenir leur engagement dans la démarche d'accompagnement des stagiaires. Il faut noter que ces participants sont à leur première expérience d'accompagnement, ils le mentionnent à leur façon. À titre d'exemple :

Juste un petit mot pour vous communiquer mon appréciation de la rencontre du mois de janvier. Elle m'a remis les pendules à l'heure (c'est la première fois que j'ai un stagiaire). Vous avez répondu à la plupart de mes interrogations et je vous en remercie. (PEA6)

Pour les quatre enseignants associés qui n'ont pas participé à la rencontre, ils rapportent le manque de temps, la charge de correction énorme compte tenu de l'arrivée de la fin de l'étape scolaire ou la rencontre déjà réalisée en milieu scolaire avec ses propres stagiaires. Toutefois, les quatre mentionnent avoir déjà reçu des stagiaires et un participant précise que la présence d'autres enseignants associés dans son école rend la rencontre moins utile pour lui. Cet échange se veut un échange d'informations, soit l'étape 3 au sens de Salmon (2002); chacun présente sa vision de cette rencontre.

La préparation des stagiaires avant le début du stage. Le développement de l'enseignement passe par la maîtrise de savoirs multiréférenciés et sur ce point six enseignants associés sur sept croient que leurs stagiaires disposent des préalables nécessaires à leur intervention en stage. Toutefois, ils reconnaissent que la mise en œuvre dépend de la personnalité de chaque stagiaire et de la matière à enseigner. Sous ce thème de la préparation des stagiaires, en plus de l'appréciation de la qualité de leur préparation, sont aussi traités les sous thèmes des compétences professionnelles et des lacunes présentent chez certains. Par exemple, voici quelques commentaires issus des forums:

Cette expérience s'annonce très bien à ce jour, je suis satisfaite de leur implication. Je juge mes stagiaires excellentes, elles sont très bien organisées, ne comptent pas leur temps, s'impliquent à fond, tentent de s'améliorer... bref, c'est très agréable de travailler avec elles. (PEA4)

Pour répondre à votre question sur la maîtrise du contenu, moi pour ma part (univers social) les stagiaires semblent bien préparés. Ils en connaissent beaucoup sur les différents dossiers. Le problème, c'est qu'ils doivent adapter leurs connaissances au niveau des élèves. (PEA6)

Le discours des participants au forum montre qu'ils sont à l'étape 4 de la construction de connaissances selon le modèle de Salmon (2000). Le participant PEA2 lance une question et le PEA6 étaye sa réponse. Selon les points de vue des participants, les stagiaires possèdent des compétences pour intervenir. Toutefois, il devrait recourir à la transposition didactique en vue d'adapter leurs connaissances au niveau des élèves et les enseignants associés doivent les soutenir.

La mise en place de la réforme au secondaire. Les stagiaires doivent désormais composer avec la réalité de la réforme et prendre en considération ce temps de transition. Dans cette section, deux enseignants associés ont échangé sur quelques ajustements au niveau de la planification de l'enseignement au plan de la réforme.

Je voulais juste signaler que les stagiaires qui sont en première secondaire pour leur stage sont présentement en plein cœur de la réforme et que c'est difficile de faire une leçon complète à donner de la théorie ou même juste une petite partie de leçon, car depuis le début de l'année, ils sont rapidement en action. [...]. Il me semble que de faire son stage en secondaire 1, ça peut être une expérience très enrichissante. (PEA6)

On constate que la plupart d'entre eux sont à l'étape 4 de la construction des connaissances quand on analyse ce message ainsi que les autres envoyés en guise de réponse par rapport aux nouvelles approches d'enseignement et d'évaluation valorisées par la réforme de l'école québécoise. Pour eux, cela entraîne la transformation de la pratique, un élément à considérer dans la formation des stagiaires.

L'intérêt des stagiaires au regard de l'enseignement. Un des enseignants associés a échangé sur la motivation des générations futures à enseigner. Cinq ont répondu à cette préoccupation en mentionnant la nécessité de valoriser la profession et voici une des réflexions.

Je suis, moi aussi, convaincue qu'il faudra valoriser notre profession afin de nous assurer d'une relève. J'ai souvent l'impression que les gens me trouvent bien courageuse d'avoir choisi cette profession. D'ailleurs, mes élèves eux-mêmes ne comprennent pas mon choix de carrière. Ils me posent régulièrement cette question: «Pourquoi as-tu décidé d'être prof?» C'est une profession qui ne les intéresse absolument pas. (Enfin, pour le moment!) (PEA5)

Ici, nous observons que les participants se situent à l'étape 3, soit celles de l'échange d'informations selon Salmon (2000). La participante montre sa prise de conscience sur le besoin de préparer la relève et d'autres enseignants échangent avec elle sur ce thème. Toutefois, à la différence d'autres discussions, il n'y a pas ici une construction de nouvelles connaissances par rapport au groupe.

La réalité de l'enseignement. Il est question, des points de vue de quatre participants sur la façon de donner une image honnête de la profession enseignante

aux stagiaires dès leur première implication dans le métier. Les propos des participants tournent autour de la gestion de classe en l'absence de leur présence en classe, car en deuxième année de formation les enseignants associés doivent rester en classe pour soutenir la prise en charge progressive de l'enseignement. Ces participants partagent l'idée de donner l'occasion aux stagiaires d'affronter seuls la réalité de la classe de temps en temps. Toutefois, un participant souligne qu'au début du stage, la présence de l'enseignant associé apporte au stagiaire sécurité et rétroaction. Il propose de tenir compte du niveau de maîtrise atteint par le stagiaire avant de décider de le laisser seul dans la classe avec les élèves.

Je vais en partie dans le même sens que vous sur le fait que nos stagiaires doivent se trouver en situation réelle (seul) le plus tôt possible, mais en même temps je pense que lors de leur stage de deuxième année, il y a beaucoup de choses sur lesquelles ils doivent travailler (qui auraient un impact sur le comportement des élèves avant de gérer la classe). C'est pourquoi je ne serais pas prête à les «lâcher lousse» seul en classe. (PEA2)

Un autre enseignant associé a maintenu sa présence dans la classe compte tenu des difficultés de maîtrise de la langue anglaise des stagiaires. Le message véhiculé dans les échanges sur la façon de montrer le vrai visage de l'enseignement aux stagiaires semble tenir compte du niveau de développement atteint par chaque stagiaire et de lui donner l'occasion de vérifier l'efficacité de ses compétences avec le groupe classe. Nous remarquons un débat d'idées et de prise en compte du développement du stagiaire, nous pouvons dire que les participants élaborent entre eux une représentation collective du rôle de l'enseignant associé, ce qui correspond à l'étape 4 de Salmon (2000). Les parties du discours qui proposent de laisser le stagiaire seul dans la classe concordent avec les conclusions de l'étude de Gosselin (2001). Elle relève que les enseignants associés croient que les stagiaires doivent rencontrer le feu de l'action et le choc de la réalité rapidement bien que les orientations des programmes visent une prise en charge progressive avec filet de sécurité.

L'évaluation des stagiaires. L'évaluation est toujours une tâche exigeante qui demande de porter un jugement professionnel appréciatif et régulateur sur la qualité du développement des compétences du stagiaire. Des questions sur ce sujet ont été soulevées par deux enseignants associés et les membres de l'équipe programme, voici deux extraits :

Je me pose la question suivante: pour un stagiaire de deuxième année est-ce que je dois évaluer les 12 compétences ou seulement celles inscrites pour le stage II? (PEA6)

J'aimerais savoir si on doit montrer le document d'évaluation aux stagiaires. Devons-nous en discuter avec eux? (PEA5)

Les enseignants associés se posent des questions sur ce qu'il faut évaluer et la manière de communiquer l'information aux stagiaires pour qu'ils puissent

bénéficier d'une évaluation formative utile, régulatrice et juste. Dans cette situation, les réponses des personnes superviseuses et des membres du programme ont contribué à soutenir cette démarche et à clarifier des manières de faire en vue de l'harmonisation des interventions. Cette discussion s'inscrit bien dans la visée de la construction de connaissances de Salmon (2000).

La quantité de travail demandée aux stagiaires. L'enseignement demande du temps non seulement de préparation, mais aussi de réflexion sur les interventions réalisées. Quatre participants au forum constatent qu'il est difficile pour les stagiaires de trouver ce temps vu qu'ils poursuivent la production de travaux académiques en même temps que le stage. Par exemple la rédaction du portfolio de compétences professionnelles, une analyse de matériel didactique ou une analyse des routines professionnelles, etc. Voici deux réflexions sur le sujet.

Elles (stagiaires) m'ont appris qu'elles devaient suivre 7 cours à l'université et fournir le travail relié à ces cours d'ici la fin avril... N'est-ce pas beaucoup ? La tâche enseignante est déjà énorme pour des nouveaux dans le métier, sans compter que certains stagiaires ont deux préparations de cours. Dans de telles circonstances, ne pourrait-on pas les dégager un peu ? (PEA4)

J'emphatise avec elles, mais je suis partagée entre mon réflexe qui leur dit : «welcome to the real world.» Le milieu de stage est beaucoup plus exigeant que d'être sur les bancs de l'université, c'est sûr. Mais c'est ça enseigner surtout dans les premières années de carrière. Donc, le stage reflète bien la réalité d'être enseignant. Encourageons la relève et créons un climat propice à l'apprentissage avec un niveau de stress raisonnable. (PEA1)

Au moins trois enseignants associés ont relevé la lourdeur de la tâche de leurs stagiaires et les informations transmises par les membres des programmes ont nuancé l'information. Par exemple, ce sont des cours de deux crédits et au moins deux cours sont répartis sur l'année. Comme le mentionne l'enseignant associé PAE1, la réalité du métier existe. Cet échange s'inscrit dans une logique de partages d'informations pour mieux comprendre une situation, ce qui correspond à l'étape 3 de Salmon (2000).

Le calendrier du stage II. Au moins deux enseignants associés commentent le moment de la réalisation du stage II dans le calendrier scolaire. Pour une personne, une partie du stage s'étale au moment d'une fin d'étape scolaire, ce qui n'est pas propice. Par contre, pour une autre personne, selon son calendrier scolaire, le moment du stage II convient. Nous pouvons préciser que le calendrier de stage se détermine pour rencontrer le calendrier scolaire de la majorité des commissions scolaires où sont placés les stagiaires et que cette décision peut ne pas convenir dans certains milieux. Nous situons cette conversation à l'étape 3 du modèle de réflexion de Salmon, puisqu'il s'agit d'un partage d'informations.

• *Résultats de l'analyse du questionnaire sur l'appréciation du forum de discussion*

Trois enseignants associés sur sept ont répondu au questionnaire d'appréciation du forum. Le nombre limité de réponses peut être dû au moment occupé de la fin de l'année scolaire, pas toujours propice à la rétroaction écrite. Un enseignant a communiqué que le forum lui permet d'économiser du temps pour communiquer et un autre regrette de ne pas avoir eu plus de temps pour échanger. Voici trois commentaires transmis qui révèlent la représentation des participants par rapport au temps disponible pour la communication sur le forum de discussion et des éléments en lien avec le troisième objectif de la recherche. Il concerne la diminution du sentiment d'isolement.

Le forum me permet de clarifier plusieurs situations et me sécurise quant à la première expérience en tant qu'enseignant associé. Il me permet également d'approfondir mes réflexions au sujet de ma profession. Je suis très satisfaite de mon expérience. (PEA3)

Je crois que la participation à ce forum devrait faire partie de notre engagement d'EA. C'est essentiel de partager sur notre vécu. Il y a des répercussions positives pour nos stagiaires. Surtout que la formule de participation est très souple et pas énergivore du tout considérant ce qu'elle apporte aux participants. (PEA1)

En y réfléchissant aussi, je dirai qu'étant dans une école secondaire où se trouvent plusieurs autres enseignants associés, ça rend le forum moins pertinent puisque je peux avoir ces conversations à mon école avec mes collègues. (PEA2)

Parmi ces réflexions, nous dégageons la volonté d'harmoniser les interventions, de comprendre les visées de la formation et les outils, de même que le besoin d'appartenir à une communauté de pratique surtout si on débute dans l'accompagnement de stagiaires.

En conclusion partielle de cette partie sur les résultats, mentionnons que les thèmes un à cinq ont suscité plus d'échanges entre les participants que les autres thèmes, toujours au moins quatre enseignants associés ont participé à la discussion. Quelles relations pouvons-nous établir avec des éléments de deux objectifs du projet? D'abord, nous observons que le forum de discussion rejoint l'objectif de créer un espace de régulation de la compréhension des orientations de formation et des outils d'accompagnement en favorisant des réflexions et des regards réflexifs croisés. Les échanges sur le forum témoignent de la volonté des enseignants associés de vouloir agir en rencontrant les orientations des programmes de formation initiale, ils ont un but commun. Ces mêmes échanges permettent d'avancer que parfois l'accompagnement se joue dans une approche collaborative, parfois plus directive, mais rarement une approche non directive. Ils démontrent également la valorisation de la profession. Ils se préoccupent du processus de professionnalisation des stagiaires et des conditions de réussite des apprentissages. Le forum a également permis aux formateurs universitaires de prendre conscience des préoccupations

des enseignants associés telles que le calendrier de stage, la charge de travail des stagiaires et l'évaluation à discuter ou non avec les stagiaires. De plus, les enseignants associés partagent des informations (3 thèmes) et vont même jusqu'à construire, avec les autres participants, de nouvelles connaissances qui peuvent prendre la forme d'une nouvelle compréhension de leur rôle (5 thèmes). Enfin, l'objectif d'harmonisation des interventions d'accompagnement émerge de manière régulière dans les messages.

CONCLUSION ET DISCUSSION

Bien que la portée de notre étude soit modeste avec son échantillon restreint, nous voyons un potentiel intéressant pour ce dispositif. Puisque l'université est partenaire de la formation des formateurs de stagiaires, le dispositif pourrait être déployé dans un contexte plus large à la condition d'assurer une animation adéquate. Parce que des significations diverses de l'accompagnement sont dégagées à partir de l'environnement de chacun, cela permet de distinguer le capital des milieux de formation au plan de la construction des connaissances par rapport aux visées de formation. De plus, des implicites de la représentation de l'accompagnement peuvent être nuancés, tels que mettre le stagiaire en pleine responsabilité le plus rapidement possible. Pour accéder à ce processus, nous constatons qu'un climat de confiance a besoin d'être créé par les superviseurs animateurs et les membres de l'équipe de recherche, en vue d'accéder aux expériences singulières des participants. Les échanges doivent être réalisés sous le signe du dialogue démocratique en soutenant la liberté de pensée de chacun. Les participants peuvent ainsi profiter des savoirs de chacun sur l'accompagnement compte tenu du partage des idées. De plus, il est possible de se questionner sur quoi les stagiaires ont à se débattre pour agir et obtenir des résultats? Comment et dans quelles conditions d'accompagnement les stagiaires deviennent des professionnels compétents?

En bref, l'expérience démontre un intérêt des enseignants associés pour le forum de discussion, en particulier chez les nouveaux formateurs. Le partage des pratiques d'accompagnement, des visées de la formation et la compréhension des outils d'accompagnement a contribué au développement professionnel de chaque participant puisque des échanges d'informations et la construction de connaissances dans le groupe ont été identifiés. L'animation du forum constitue le creuset de son succès et nous constatons que lors de l'intensité du stage, le délai de réponse doit être rapide pour induire un sentiment de présence en réseau. Dans le but d'harmoniser les interventions d'accompagnement, de favoriser une identité de formateurs de stagiaires, de soutenir le partenariat, la mise en place de forums de discussion doit se poursuivre. Des ressources pour l'animation des forums doivent être présentes, car le rôle de guide et d'expert de l'animateur de forum est essentiel à l'engagement actif des participants.

NOTE

1. Le document d'orientation s'intitule : «*La formation à l'enseignement. Les orientations. Les compétences professionnelles*». Il est téléaccessible à l'adresse URL : <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/dftps/interieur/PDF/formation_ens.pdf>

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FRANCE LACOURSE est professeure au Département de pédagogie de la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Elle est responsable des activités en formation à la pratique enseignante. Ses recherches portent entre autres sur les pratiques d'enseignement, les pratiques d'accompagnement en ligne, les forums de discussion et le cyberfolio de compétences professionnelles. Elle est chercheure associée au CRCIE, au CRIE-CRIFPE et à l'IRPÉ.

GENEVIÈVE NAULT est professeure au Département de Pédagogie de la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université de Sherbrooke. Elle est responsable des programmes du Secteur PERFORMA. Ses activités de recherche portent sur l'insertion professionnelle en enseignement, les forums de discussion ainsi que les modalités de formation en ligne. Elle est enfin chercheure au Centre d'études et de recherche en enseignement supérieur (CERES).

FRANCE LACOURSE is a professor in the Department of pedagogy, Faculty of Education, University of Sherbrooke. She is responsible for professional development activities. Her research focuses on teaching practices, online support practices, and "cyberfolio" discussion forums for professional competencies. She is also an associated research worker for CRCIE, at CRIE-CRIFPE and IRPÉ.

GENEVIÈVE NAULT is a professor in the Department of Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, University of Sherbrooke. She is in charge of the PERFORMA section programs. Her research focuses on teaching professionally, discussion forums, as well as methods for online training. She is a researcher at the Centre for Research in Higher Education (CRHE).

LA RELATION DE CONFIANCE MAÎTRE-ÉLÈVE : PERCEPTION D'ÉLÈVES AYANT DES DIFFICULTÉS SCOLAIRES

NADIA ROUSSEAU, ROLLANDE DESLANDES, HÉLÈNE FOURNIER
Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

RÉSUMÉ. La qualité de la relation maître-élève est de plus en plus souvent nommée comme facteur contribuant à la persévérance scolaire. Dans le cadre d'une étude, nous avons choisi de porter un regard particulier sur les relations maître-élève du point de vue des élèves ayant des difficultés scolaires importantes, exclus des cheminements scolaires ordinaires. Comment se construit la relation de confiance entre un enseignant et un élève vivant des difficultés scolaires importantes? Comment ces jeunes définissent-ils la confiance? Cet article présente les résultats d'une étude qualitative portant sur les perceptions des jeunes exclus des classes ordinaires relativement à la construction du lien de confiance maître-élève. Les résultats s'articulent autour de quatre grandes thématiques : la définition de la confiance; la création du lien de confiance; l'importance de la confiance; le portrait d'un enseignant de confiance.

Les résultats révèlent des attentes de respect, de réciprocité et de méritocratie chez les élèves. De plus, l'étude met en évidence l'importance de la confiance en soi avant d'être en mesure de faire confiance à l'autre.

THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP OF TRUST: STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES AND THEIR PERCEPTIONS

ABSTRACT. The quality of the relationship between students and teachers is increasingly identified as having a positive impact on academic perseverance. In this study, we chose to focus specifically on student-teacher relationships as perceived by students with considerable academic difficulties, students excluded from regular school pathways. How is the relationship of trust between a teacher and a student with considerable academic difficulties created? How do these youths define trust? This article presents the results of a qualitative study of the perceptions of students excluded from regular classrooms regarding the creation of a relationship of trust between students and teachers. The results are structured around four main themes: the definition of trust, the creation of a relationship of trust, the importance of trust, the description of a trustworthy teacher.

The results show that students expect respect, reciprocity, and meritocracy. Also, the study underlines the importance of having self-confidence before being able to trust another person.

INTRODUCTION

La qualité de la relation maître-élève est de plus en plus souvent nommée comme facteur contribuant à la persévérance scolaire. Dans le cadre d'une étude, nous avons choisi de porter un regard particulier sur les relations maître-élève du point de vue des élèves exclus des cheminements scolaires ordinaires et ayant des difficultés scolaires importantes.

Au cours des dernières années, des chercheurs se sont en effet penchés sur la relation maître-élève. Déjà, en 1985, Potvin menait une étude exploratoire qui révélait que le succès de l'intégration des élèves en difficulté était directement lié aux attitudes positives des intervenants scolaires et que d'ordre général, les attitudes des enseignants envers les élèves en difficulté étaient plutôt négatives. Une étude longitudinale menée par Potvin et Rousseau (1992) précisait que les attitudes des enseignants étaient plus positives envers les élèves ordinaires qu'envers les élèves en difficulté. Une fois de plus, Potvin et Paradis (2000) arrivent à des résultats similaires alors que dès la maternelle, les enseignants manifestent des attitudes plus positives envers les élèves ordinaires qu'envers les élèves en difficulté. Plusieurs autres chercheurs canadiens et américains arrivent au même constat : la relation maître-élève positive est plus rare lorsqu'il s'agit d'élèves en difficulté (Bender, 2001; Wong, 1996), position reprise par le ministère de l'Éducation du Québec.

Dans le même ordre d'idées, Boutin et Daneau (2004) mettent en lumière la différence de traitements auxquels sont soumis certains élèves moins performants ou moins attachants. Merle (2005) parle même du sentiment d'humiliation chez plusieurs élèves en difficulté et de pratique douteuse dans le milieu scolaire telle que diminuer la note d'un élève en raison d'un comportement dérangeant ou de l'oubli de matériel. Pour Merle, le sentiment d'humiliation d'un élève peut exister même en l'absence de propos blessants; il préfère alors parler de « malentendus » maître-élève. Savoie-Zajc (1999) décrit bien les propos de jeunes qui sentent que les enseignants ont tendance à faire une sorte de centration sur leurs points négatifs et que leur réputation les a précédés avant même qu'ils n'arrivent en classe. Rousseau (2005) constate aussi l'expérience scolaire difficile chez une majorité de jeunes en difficulté qui se sentent souvent incompris par les enseignants. Ce phénomène est présent très tôt dans la scolarité de l'enfant, soit dès la maternelle (Potvin et Paradis, 2000). Dans une étude menée, entre autres, auprès de 225 enfants de la maternelle, Deslandes et Jacques (2003) ont constaté que plus la relation élève-enseignant est positive aux yeux de l'enfant, plus il dit aimer l'école et moins il l'évite. L'ensemble de ces constats a d'ailleurs incité le Conseil permanent de la jeunesse (2002) à demander aux écoles de centrer leurs actions sur les rapports humains. En effet, l'enfant en difficulté qui se sent compris ou en confiance avec son enseignant vit beaucoup mieux l'école (Espinosa, 2003; Rousseau, 2005). Qui plus est, plus l'enseignant est perçu comme bienveillant par les élèves, moins le risque de décrochage est élevé (Doré-Côté, 2006). Mais comment se construit la relation

de confiance entre un enseignant et un élève vivant des difficultés scolaires importantes? Par ailleurs, comment ces jeunes définissent-ils la confiance? Cet article présente les perceptions des jeunes exclus des classes ordinaires relativement à la construction du lien de confiance maître-élève.

LIEN DE CONFIANCE

Breton (1987) identifie le psychologue Erikson comme l'un des premiers théoriciens à proposer un regard sur l'ensemble du développement de l'être humain tout au long de sa vie. Selon lui, le premier défi auquel doit faire face un individu est d'acquérir un sentiment de confiance fondamentale (*basic trust*), faute de quoi l'échec en matière de confiance peut se transformer en un sentiment de méfiance. D'un point de vue plus philosophique, Govier (1994) perçoit la confiance comme une attitude basée sur des croyances et des valeurs qui interpellent les sentiments et les comportements d'un individu. Quant à la perspective sociologique, Riker (1974) définit la confiance comme une ligne de conduite menant à une action ou un geste qui relève de la cognition et de l'affectivité. La confiance est donc associée à un acte de foi à l'égard d'un étranger et elle présuppose un certain abandon aux décisions et aux actes d'autrui. La confiance implique donc une situation de risque et elle requiert un engagement (Jalava, 2003). Toujours selon l'auteur, le développement de la confiance exige trois principes¹ :

1. La confiance demande un engagement mutuel de deux participants et elle ne peut se développer sans l'engagement réciproque de deux individus, soit la personne qui fait confiance (*truster*) et la personne de confiance (*trustee*);
2. Les participants doivent connaître la situation exacte et ils doivent se connaître mutuellement;
3. Il est impossible de demander la confiance des autres; la confiance peut seulement s'offrir et se mériter.

De plus, selon Bhattacharya, Devinney et Pillutla (1998), il peut y avoir différents degrés de confiance. Qui plus est, la confiance envers l'autre peut être perdue suite à une déception, une tromperie ou une trahison. La confiance se construit donc dans le temps, faisant surgir des sentiments et des comportements à l'intérieur d'un exercice d'engagement réciproque. Aussi, la confiance comporte un certain facteur de risque, c'est-à-dire que si une entente implicite engage certaines personnes à se faire confiance, tout manquement aux critères de la confiance entraîne la rupture de ce lien privilégié.

LES DÉTERMINANTS ET LES COMPOSANTES DE LA CONFIANCE

Gabarro et Althos (1978), des chercheurs reconnus comme les pionniers de l'étude de la confiance mutuelle entre deux personnes, identifient trois déterminants de la confiance : le caractère de la confiance (l'intégrité, le motif

du lien, le comportement, l'ouverture et la discrétion); la compétence (les habiletés professionnelles, sociales et interpersonnelles); et le jugement (la capacité d'évaluer les compétences et le caractère de la personne à qui on fait confiance).

Quant à Butler (1991), il présente une série de conditions inhérentes à la confiance. Ces dix conditions s'appuient sur des éléments rationnels et émotionnels impliqués dans le développement et l'entretien du lien de confiance. Ces conditions sont :

1. la disponibilité (*availability*), qui consiste à être présent lorsqu'une personne qui fait confiance à quelqu'un en manifeste le besoin;
2. la compétence (*competency*), qui concerne l'expérience reconnue dans un domaine;
3. la constance (*consistency*), qui désigne le sérieux, la prédictibilité et le jugement dans les actions;
4. la discrétion (*discreteness*), qui caractérise la personne qui reçoit les confidences;
5. l'équité (*fairness*), qui touche l'impartialité et la prise de position équitable dans les décisions;
6. l'intégrité (*integrity*), qui se définit comme l'honnêteté et la fidélité envers une autre personne;
7. la loyauté (*loyalty*), qui se caractérise par l'honnêteté et la fidélité à tenir ses engagements;
8. l'ouverture (*openness*), qui consiste à fournir des idées et des informations dans l'intérêt d'une autre personne qui détient notre confiance;
9. la promesse tenue (*fulfillment*), qui a trait à la croyance de la parole donnée, c'est-à-dire à l'engagement d'une personne conformément à ce qu'il est dit;
10. la réceptivité (*receptivity*), qui touche l'ouverture d'esprit et l'aptitude à donner et à recevoir des idées.

Les déterminants et les conditions inhérentes à la confiance permettent de mieux comprendre le caractère multidimensionnel de la confiance. Cependant, aucune étude recensée ne permet de comprendre comment se développe le lien de confiance entre l'élève en difficulté et l'enseignant. Cette compréhension nous apparaît importante compte tenu de l'impact du lien maître-élève dans la qualité de l'expérience et la persévérance scolaire des jeunes en difficulté. Ainsi, ce projet de recherche vise à documenter la perception des jeunes relativement à la construction de la relation de confiance entre un enseignant et un élève exclu des classes ordinaires vivant des difficultés scolaires importantes.

MÉTHODOLOGIE

La démarche de recherche vise à répondre aux questions suivantes :

Alors que la littérature tend à démontrer que les enseignants ont des attitudes plutôt défavorables à l'égard des élèves en difficulté et que la qualité de la relation maître-élève peut avoir une incidence sur la qualité de l'expérience et la persévérance scolaire des jeunes en difficulté, comment se construit le lien de confiance entre l'enseignant et l'élève en difficulté exclu des classes ordinaires? Comment les élèves exclus des classes ordinaires définissent-ils la confiance?

Pour répondre à ces questions, un devis de recherche exploratoire de nature descriptive a été utilisé. Cette recherche vise à comprendre la perception qu'ont les jeunes en difficulté exclus des classes ordinaires de la confiance, afin d'en dégager un premier portrait global. Ce premier portrait permettra ensuite la mise en place de recherches de nature qualitative ou quantitative à plus grande échelle, et ce, auprès d'une variété d'élèves en difficulté, tant en classe ordinaire qu'en classe d'adaptation scolaire. Qui plus est, des résultats de recherche portant sur la création du lien de confiance entre les jeunes en difficulté et leurs enseignants pourraient contribuer à la sensibilisation des intervenants scolaires, dont les enseignants, relativement aux gestes porteurs de confiance plutôt qu'aux attitudes porteuses de méfiance. La sensibilisation « positive » axée sur les pratiques pédagogiques prometteuses nous apparaît être un moteur de changement plus efficace que la sensibilisation « négative » axée sur les pratiques à éviter.

Cette recherche exploratoire comprend la participation de quatre centres de formation en entreprise et récupération (CFER) provenant de quatre régions administratives distinctes. Le choix de mener cette recherche en contexte CFER est motivé par la spécificité de leur clientèle, soit des jeunes de 16 à 18 ans, et de façon exceptionnelle de 15 ans, ayant fait la majeure partie de leur cheminement scolaire en classe d'adaptation scolaire et n'ayant pas réussi à compléter les acquis de la première secondaire. Ce choix est aussi motivé par les commentaires positifs de certains élèves à l'égard du personnel scolaire CFER, soit le « sentiment d'être compris et pris au sérieux », commentaires recueillis dans une étude antérieure (Rousseau, 2003, p. 93). Rappelons-le, l'étude présentée ici vise à documenter l'élaboration du lien de confiance entre les élèves en difficulté exclus des classes ordinaires et leurs enseignants.

Des entrevues de petits groupes d'une durée moyenne de 60 minutes ont été menées auprès de tous les élèves volontaires de quatre CFER. Le type d'entrevue privilégié est l'entrevue semi-dirigée selon la typologie présentée par Grawitz (2001). Toutes les entrevues ont débuté par une question ouverte : « C'est quoi pour vous la confiance? » Nous nous sommes laissé diriger par la spontanéité des répondants sur le thème de la confiance avant d'utiliser notre protocole d'entrevue, assurant ainsi que les principales composantes du thème, telles que

les caractéristiques et les actions d'une personne en qui ils ont confiance, les raisons qui les portent à avoir confiance, la description d'un enseignant de confiance, etc., soient abordées durant l'entretien. Chacun des petits groupes était composé d'un minimum de deux élèves et d'un maximum de cinq élèves. C'est donc un total de 11 entrevues comprenant 29 élèves répartis dans quatre CFER qui ont été réalisées. Précisons que les CFER participants comptaient une moyenne de 12 élèves chacun.

Toutes les entrevues ont été enregistrées sur bandes audio et ont été retranscrites intégralement. Ce corpus de données a été transcrit en ne tenant pas compte du non verbal. Les propos ont aussi été normalisés, tel que proposé par Van der Maren (1995); organisation des phrases, suppression des « euh... euh... », des hésitations répétitives, transformation du « chu » en « je », etc. Cependant, aucun énoncé n'est modifié au point d'altérer le propos ou de changer le sens initial. Quant à l'analyse, la préoccupation première a été de laisser émerger les données, c'est-à-dire les propos des 29 participants. Plusieurs lectures des verbatim ont été effectuées afin de donner une vue d'ensemble du corpus à analyser pour ainsi pressentir les premières unités d'information. L'Écuyer (1990) définit une unité d'information par une unité de sens qui est en fait le plus petit segment de texte relatant la même idée. La subdivision du corpus en unités de sens a permis la codification dans un système catégoriel effectué avec l'assistance du logiciel N'Vivo. Comme suggéré par Scallion (2004), l'évaluation intrajuge a été effectuée grâce à une première codification de deux entrevues. Les définitions des unités de sens ont été discutées avec l'équipe de chercheurs responsable du projet. Trois jours plus tard, les deux mêmes entrevues ont fait l'objet d'une nouvelle analyse afin de s'assurer de la constance de la codification. Cette constance assurée, nous avons procédé à l'analyse de l'ensemble du contenu qualitatif.

RÉSULTATS

Les données provenant des entrevues se regroupent en quatre catégories : 1) la définition de la confiance; 2) le lien de confiance; 3) l'importance de la confiance; et 4) le portrait d'un enseignant de confiance. La première catégorie réfère à la manière dont les jeunes définissent la notion de confiance. La deuxième catégorie décrit la façon dont le lien de confiance se vit et peut s'établir entre deux individus. La troisième catégorie regroupe les propos sur l'importance de la confiance. Finalement, la quatrième catégorie réfère à l'image d'une personne de confiance.

La définition de la confiance

Précisons d'entrée de jeu que certains élèves ont trouvé le concept « confiance » difficile à définir : « La confiance, ben la confiance de quelqu'un, je ne sais pas comment la dire, ça là! (6 : AVGR1E2).² « C'est un peu là, je ne sais pas... je ne sais pas comment. Je ne sais pas comment dire ça » (7 : AVGR2E1).

Quatre éléments du discours des participants étant en mesure de proposer une définition de la confiance retiennent l'attention. En général, les élèves définissent la confiance comme étant « quelque chose qui se mérite » (250 : AVGR2E1). Voici certains propos mentionnés : « La confiance, ... il faut que ça se mérite. Oui. La confiance, c'est quelque chose qui ne se voit pas, mais qu'on peut le savoir » (191 : AVGR2E2). « Pis, c'est quelque chose qu'on sait pas au départ. Ben non! » (963 : SRG1E2).

Certains propos font ressortir la réciprocité que l'on peut retrouver dans la confiance : « C'est important que la personne ait confiance en toi, pour que toi, tu puisses avoir confiance en elle, c'est comme une roue » (129 : AVGR1E1). « On peut pas avoir confiance en quelqu'un qui n'a pas confiance en nous autres, c'est certain » (127 : AVGR1E1).

La notion de respect est soulignée par quelques élèves : « Avoir confiance en la personne, c'est respecter ce qu'elle t'a dit » (498 : HG1E3). D'autres ajoutent que : « Pour que mes amis aient confiance en moi, il faut respecter certaines limites. Ce qui est plate, c'est qu'on paie pour les méchants, pis, nous autres, on n'est pas méchant » (382 : AVGR3E3) et « le respect des autres. Une personne qui est respectueuse, ça peut faire que j'ai confiance en elle » (675 : HG2E3). « Tu acceptes quelqu'un comme il est, pas de jugement » (822 : MJG1E2) et la notion d'honnêteté est aussi relevée : « Qu'il soit honnête avec toi et que tu puisses lui faire confiance » (1051 : SRG2E2).

Certains élèves considèrent que la confiance commence par la confiance en eux : « C'est avoir confiance en moi, dans mes travaux » (8 : AVGR1E2). « Avoir confiance en quelqu'un, c'est comme une bonne estime de soi. Être sûr de soi-même. » (953 : SRG1E1) Un jeune ajoute :

Ben oui. Si tu n'as pas confiance en toi, ça veut dire que tu ne t'aimes pas. Moi, depuis que je suis *icitte*, je commence à avoir confiance en moi. Quand on a confiance en nous autres, ça nous aide à avoir confiance aux autres. Par exemple, admettons que moi, j'ai confiance en moi, ça va être plus facile à avoir confiance en ma blonde. (553 : HG1E1)

En résumé, la majorité des élèves estiment (en ordre d'importance) que la confiance :

- est méritoire;
- doit être réciproque;
- doit être respectueuse;
- commence par la confiance en soi.

Le lien de confiance

La catégorie « Le lien de confiance » regroupe tous les énoncés en lien à la manière de gagner la confiance des autres. Elle se subdivise en deux sous-catégories : le lien de confiance de manière générale et le lien de confiance avec les enseignants.

• *Le lien de confiance de manière générale*

Au dire des jeunes, la création du lien de confiance prend du temps : « En tout cas, il faut qu'on le connaisse un peu. Ben, c'est sûr! » (178 : AVGR2E1). « Ça fait longtemps que je la connais » (673 : HG2E2). « Ça apparaît pas de même. Non, c'est juste quand tu passes la journée longtemps avec lui, comme dans une classe » (31 : AVGR1E1). Cependant, d'autres jeunes ne partagent pas une vision développementale de la confiance. Certains affirment que c'est dès le premier contact qu'ils évaluent la possibilité de faire confiance à un enseignant :

Je sais pas, mais juste en les voyant, quand que je rentre dans une classe pis on voit un professeur, ça me donne une bonne idée. Ben moi je trouve qu'il y a des professeurs qui ont le tour, pis d'autres qui ont pas le tour. (332 : AVGR3E1)

Moi, je suis capable de voir quelqu'un qui va me faire **** !³ Oui, depuis en secondaire un, j'ai tout le temps, dès les premières journées que je rencontrais le prof, je savais tout de suite si y allait me faire **** et jusqu'à date, je ne me suis pas trompé. (459 : AVGR4E3)

Un moins grand nombre de jeunes mentionnent que « Je l'avais déjà pas confiance en lui, donc, j'en aurai jamais » (396 : AVGR3E3). Alors, l'aspect développemental serait absent. Certains jeunes soulèvent l'aspect de la crainte en lien avec la confiance. « Mais des fois... des fois, ... t'as trop peur de faire confiance » (401 : AVGR3E3).

Selon les jeunes qui croient au développement du lien de confiance, celui-ci se démontre par des actions concrètes. Par exemple, un jeune explique que la confiance se développe après avoir accompli une action avec cette personne :

Mon cousin, on arrive, j'ai confiance en lui parce qu'on a fait une cabane. Pis, y en avait un qui aidait. Moi j'ai fait les planchers. J'ai monté les murs, ça m'a pris même pas une journée! Pis, y avait confiance en moi. Oui. C'est d'être capable de faire quelque chose avec quelqu'un. (151 : AVGR1E2)

D'autres élèves soulignent l'importance d'un échange de services. Un adolescent explique « Ben, t'as quelqu'un qui prêtait des choses, pis qu'il les ramenait intactes [...] ou à temps [...] Des oublis, ça peut arriver, ouin, mais pas à tous les jours! » (rire) (273 : AVGR3E3). Finalement, les élèves font parfois des « tests » avant d'accorder leur confiance : « Ben oui! Tu prêtes quelque chose, quelque chose qui n'a pas de valeur, un secret, quelque chose comme ça, pis tu vas voir... s'il va aller le conter à du monde » (282 : AVGR3E3).

• *Le lien de confiance avec les enseignants*

Le lien de confiance entre les élèves en difficulté et les enseignants semble être un sujet assez mitigé. Certains élèves n'arrivent pas à faire confiance aux enseignants. Leurs propos l'illustrent bien : « Je n'ai jamais eu confiance en un enseignant » (48 : AVGR1E1), « Ben moi, je ne fais pas confiance aux

autres » (220 : AVGR2E2), « Non, je ne penserais pas! » (239 : AVGR2E2), « Moi, je dirais que je n'ai pas confiance. Genre, un prof que tu lui poses une question, pis, il te donne un billet d'infraction majeure », « Non. Je ne connais pas d'enseignant en qui avoir confiance. J'ai trop changé souvent d'enseignants » (1058 : SRG2E2). D'autres sont plus nuancés dans leur propos : « Ça dépend lesquels » (46 : AVGR1E2). « Ouin. Non! Ça dépend, ça dépend quels! C'est pas pour tous les enseignants » (197 : AVGR2E2). Toutefois, la majorité affirme avoir confiance en leurs enseignants. Les jeunes mentionnent que « Oui, la confiance existe dans une école. C'est supposé en tout cas! » (505 : HG1E1), « Oui. C'est possible qu'on ait un enseignant en qui on a confiance » (1087 : SRG4E1) et « Moi, c'est rendu que j'ai ben confiance en mes profs » (617 : HG1E1).

À l'inverse, lorsque les élèves sont interrogés sur la confiance accordée par les enseignants, les réponses semblent plus positives. D'ailleurs, la majorité des élèves considèrent que leurs enseignants leur font confiance. Un jeune explique : « Parce qu'on s'est fait voler au début de l'année à peu près, par des élèves. Pis là, les profs y ont réussi à nous faire confiance pareil » (266 : AVGR3E1). D'autres sont plus nuancés dans leur propos : « Ben ça dépend » (377 : AVGR3E3) ou « Ça dépend des élèves. Y a certains élèves en qui ils peuvent avoir confiance, d'autres moins, d'autres pas pantoute » (378 : AVGR3E2).

Parmi les éléments importants pour favoriser le lien de confiance avec les enseignants, certaines stratégies pédagogiques sont notées : « Pour que je fasse confiance en un prof, il faudrait pu de journal, pu d'examen » (51 : AVGR1E2). « Surtout pu d'examen parce que moi ça met mes nerfs à plomb. Je regarde le journal OK, et la seule affaire que j'ai ça me tente de faire, c'est de le pogner en boule... » (52 : AVGR1E1). « Oui. Ici, ils vont me donner plus de temps pour faire ce que j'ai à faire. Pis ça, ça m'aide à avoir confiance » (743 : HG2E2).

Pour d'autres, ce sont les qualités personnelles de l'enseignant qui favorisent la confiance : « Ben je sais pas moi! Il faut qu'ils soient smattes » (201 : AVGR2E2). « Quelqu'un qui écoute (222 : AVGR2E3). « Il faut qu'il soit respectueux. Y en a un qui a un ton bas, égal,... Oui, surtout plus respectueux » (717 : HG2E2). Un jeune explique l'importance de la constance et de l'implication personnelle dans le lien de confiance :

C'est vrai, mettons, un prof avec qui tu es avec chaque jour. Pis, il vient jamais te voir « Comment ça va? », pis toute. Il t'enseigne, point, le reste on s'en fout. C'est-tu le fun de savoir un peu ce qu'ils font nos profs en dehors de l'école? Oui, c'est vraiment le fun ça. (875 : MJG1E2)

Le temps passé avec un enseignant est un élément mentionné comme étant important pour accroître la confiance : « Un peu le temps qu'on passe avec eux autres parce que quand on a souvent les mêmes profs, on finit par les connaître » (232 : AVGR2E1). « J'ai une meilleure confiance avec ces profs-là,

justement parce qu'ils sont pratiquement tout le temps là » (615 : HG1E1). « Oui, cela aide d'avoir moins de profs et de les voir plus souvent » (1113 : SRG4E2).

Il est à noter qu'un élève souligne un côté mercantile à la confiance : « Il faudrait premièrement qu'il nous donne une grosse récompense. Pas juste des bonbons, quand même » (60 : AVGR1E1).

En résumé, le lien de confiance entre les élèves en difficulté et les enseignants varie d'un élève à l'autre. La majorité des participants notent que les éléments suivants favorisent le lien de confiance positif avec les enseignants :

- les stratégies pédagogiques utilisées en classe;
- les qualités personnelles de l'enseignant (juste, gentil, respectueux);
- le temps passé avec l'enseignant.

L'importance de la confiance

Cette catégorie fait ressortir l'importance accordée à la confiance par les élèves. Il semble que les jeunes s'entendent pour dire que la confiance est importante au quotidien. En effet, ils affirment que : « Si tu n'as pas confiance en personne, tu fais dur là! » (388 : AVGR3E2), « On n'a pas le choix de faire confiance en des personnes » (400 : AVGR3E1), « Moi je me connais alors c'est important la confiance en moi, la confiance en les autres aussi » (486 : AVGR4E2). De plus, les élèves considèrent que la confiance rapporte dans la vie scolaire. Un élève le précise en ces mots :

C'est pas juste les profs, c'est les élèves aussi. Comme quand on est ensemble, faut toujours qu'on se fasse confiance. C'est vrai! Il faut que tu fasses confiance. Qu'est-ce que tu fais avec quelqu'un que tu vois à tous les jours? Il faut que tu y fasses vraiment confiance, sinon ben ça ne marchera pas. [...] On est tout le temps ensemble. Il faut qu'on soit capable de se dire les vraies affaires. On passe toute notre journée ici là. (941 : MJG1E2)

Le portrait d'un enseignant de confiance

La catégorie « Le portrait d'un enseignant de confiance » regroupe tous les énoncés en lien à un enseignant en qui les jeunes disent avoir confiance ou non. Les propos relatifs à l'enseignant de confiance sont présentés, suivis de ceux relatifs à l'enseignant en qui les jeunes n'ont pas confiance.

• Un enseignant ayant la confiance des élèves

Une majorité d'élèves considèrent que le sexe de l'enseignant n'a aucune influence notable sur le lien de confiance : « C'est pas mal pareil. Ça change rien. C'est pareil que cela soit un prof qui est fille ou un prof qui est gars » (972 : SRG1E1). Toutefois, pour certains participants, il semble être plus facile de faire confiance aux personnes ayant le même sexe qu'eux : « Moi je trouve que c'est plus facile de parler à un gars, vu que je suis un gars. Ça doit être plus facile pour une fille de parler à une enseignante » (317 : AVGR3E1).

Plusieurs énoncés concernent les traits de caractère ou de la personnalité d'un enseignant de confiance, par exemple, être motivateur : « Ça prend quelqu'un qui motive. Quelque chose qui nous motive! » (56 : AVGR1E1). « C'est une personne qui motive » (471 : AVGR4E1). Un autre élève précise : « Alors, c'est bien qu'ils me poussent, mais en même temps, il faut qu'ils comprennent que je ne peux pas toujours avoir 100 % » (643 : HG1E2). D'autres caractéristiques sont souvent citées :

La gentillesse : « Elle est gentille, elle nous parle doucement » (68 : AVGR1E2).

Le sens de l'humour : « C'est quelqu'un qui ne pogne pas les nerfs après nous autres. Comme, je parle avec une amie, pis je fais une *joke*, pis là, elle rit, elle va la rire... Dès fois, il faut qu'il ait un bon sens de l'humour » (74 : AVGR1E2). « Oui, mettons quand tu vas être dans un cours, ça ne sera pas toujours sérieux là, tu vas pouvoir t'amuser, tu vas pouvoir rire avec le prof. Il va être capable de rendre ça facile, tout en s'amusant » (929 : MJG1E2). « Ben l'enseignant le plus *smat*. Il faut en faire des niaiseries pour que ce soit un peu amusant quand même. Oui. Si c'est trop sévère et que tu ne peux pas parler pantoute, ben ça c'est... c'est plate » (1039 : SRG3E1).

L'écoute : « Elle nous écoute parler » (98 : AVGR1E2). « Oui, ben souvent il nous écoute » (325 : AVGR3E1). « Un enseignant qui t'écoute, t'es portée à avoir plus confiance en lui » (440 : AVGR4E1). « C'est un bon prof. Je ne sais pas, elle est compréhensive... pis tu sais qu'elle ira pas radoter. Elle m'écoute. Pas juste ce qui a rapport avec l'école. Non. Elle peut écouter sur autre chose aussi » (1060 : SRG2E1). « On peut parler d'autre chose. Pis l'enseignant de confiance va écouter cela. Oui, y va pas aller dire cela à tout le monde » (1093 : SRG4E2).

Le respect et la discrétion : « Il respecte nos opinions, pis des affaires de même » (323 : AVGR3E1). « Il faut qu'il soit respectueux » (717 : HG2E1). « Pis, ils te disent tous bonjour en passant! » (789 : HG2E2). « Pas radoter à tout le monde qu'est-ce qu'on s'est dit » (893 : MJG1E2). « Ben, y répéteront pas tout ce qu'on dit. Ils le gardent pour eux » (1013 : SRG3E3). « Ça dit pas les secrets. On va y parler de quelque chose, elle ne le dira pas. Elle ne nous insultera pas » (1091 : SRG4E2). « T'as confiance, ... tu as besoin d'elle, pis tu sais qu'elle va être là pour t'aider. Mettons si t'as un problème, pis là tu lui dis, elle va être là, pis tu sais qu'elle va t'aider, là » (427 : AVGR4E2).

L'intérêt d'enseigner : « Peut-être quelqu'un qui aime sa job. Oui. Ça pas l'air d'être pénible de venir travailler le matin. Ben ça peut peut-être être chiant, mais ça doit pas l'écœurer » (1018 : SRG3E1). « Pense pas que cela dérange le prof en qui j'ai confiance quand je lui pose des questions » (1107 : SRG4E1).

Enfin, au-delà des caractéristiques individuelles des enseignants, les élèves soulignent aussi des comportements propres aux enseignants de confiance. Ces derniers donnent une certaine liberté aux élèves :

D'un côté, je fais plus confiance à celle qui nous laisse plus de manœuvre. Comme X, y est super fin... il est vraiment un bon professeur. Y en a d'autres, là, je suis sur les *breaks*. X va plus accepter de nous laisser aller. Il va plus accepter des affaires... Il est intelligent. Il est intelligent, mais il a des limites, mais ça ne me fait pas peur ça des professeurs qui demandent de travailler fort » (334 : AVGR3E3).

D'autres élèves notent que l'enseignant de confiance prend du temps pour ses élèves : « Il te donne ton travail, pis y va prendre le temps de te l'expliquer. Mais si quelqu'un d'autre lève la main, tsé il va y dire "Attends 30 secondes, je fais lui, pis après je vais à toi" » (759 : HG2E3).

Finalement, l'enseignant de confiance démontre de l'intérêt envers ses élèves de diverses manières. Certains élèves indiquent que l'enseignant « [...] est proche de nous autres » (879 : MJG1E1). D'autres mentionnent : « Comme elle arrive de Montréal de 2 jours, pis elle est revenue, pis elle a dit qu'elle s'était ennuyée de nous autres, qu'elle avait hâte de revenir. On voit qu'on compte pour elle » (880 : MJG1E2).

Dans son regard. Tu lui dis de quoi, pis elle ne fermera jamais les yeux, elle va te regarder et va t'écouter jusqu'au bout. Elle n'ira pas te couper ou te dire : « Ça pas rapport! » ou de quoi de même. Elle va vraiment t'écouter, pis elle va être là. Dans son regard, on va voir qu'elle est intéressée à ce qu'on dit (882 : MJG1E2).

« Ils nous parlent, qu'est-ce qu'on a fait en fin de semaine... On a été faire du 4 roues pis du *ski-doo* pis n'importe quoi. Ils s'intéressent à ce qu'on a fait » (978 : SRG1E2).

En résumé, les élèves participant à l'étude estiment qu'un enseignant de confiance aime ses élèves et son travail. Les élèves ne demandent pas la perfection de leurs enseignants, mais plutôt d'être humains, sensibles et justes, de démontrer une certaine compréhension de leurs difficultés tant scolaires que personnelles. Un dernier élève propose cette description de l'enseignant de confiance :

Un bon prof est supposé de nous encourager. Il est supposé de te dire que t'es capable d'avancer dans la vie, te sortir de là et qui te dit : « Je suis fier de toi! » ou je sais pas, y est pas obligé! On dirait qui en a qui s'en foutent carrément, on est là point, le reste on s'en fout! Mais le prof proche de ses élèves, il est avec nous autres, chaque jour. Il est censé d'être là pour faire apprendre et t'écouter, mais on dirait qui en a qui comprennent pas ça » (873 : MJG1E2).

• *Un enseignant n'ayant pas la confiance des élèves*

Les élèves identifient plusieurs caractéristiques d'un enseignant n'ayant pas leur confiance. Pour certains, l'expérience scolaire révèle que les enseignants

de non-confiance « C'est pas ça qui manque » (296 : AVGR3E2). Pour un petit nombre d'élèves, l'apparence joue un rôle : « Une enseignante qui a l'air sévère, elle a moins ma confiance (355 : AVGR3E3). « S'il a une face bête, qu'il te regarde croche pis, il te boude » (933 : MJG1E1). Plusieurs énoncés concernent les traits de caractère ou de la personnalité de l'enseignant :

L'intolérance : « Un prof en qui on n'a pas confiance, ça peut être un prof qui chiale tout le temps » (768 : HG2E2). « Un prof qui n'arrête pas de radoter, qui chiale pour rien » (836 : MJG1E1). « Il crie, il est tout le temps après tout le monde » (837 : MJG1E2).

Le manque de respect : « Y est toujours sur ton dos! Tu es assis à ton bureau, pis t'as rien fait, pis tu as fait de quoi » (585 : HG1E1). « Un prof qui nous écoëure, il rit de nous autres, il est sur notre dos » (1095 : SRG4E3). « Le prof que j'avais pas confiance y me rabaissait, il ne m'aidait pas » (769 : HG2E1). « Une prof qui va rire de toi, ça n'aide pas à la confiance (849 : MJG1E2). « Tu vas dire de quoi, il va rajouter de quoi pis il va rire. Il va dire de quoi en riant de toi, il va te reprendre, mais il va rire de toi » (851 : MJG1E2). « C'est comme un prof elle te cale... un prof qui va tout mémérer ça aux autres. Il chiale. Il mémère aux autres » (974 : SRG1E2).

L'injustice : « Un prof qui va te condamner pour quelque chose, mais qu'il le fera pas pour l'autre, qui n'agit pas de la même façon avec tout le monde » (702 : HG2E1). « Dans le fond, c'est une impression qu'il est plus sur le dos de certains que sur d'autres » (839 : MJG1E2). « Ben il n'est pas correct avec toi. Ben, je sais pas, mettons tu fais de quoi, ben il te le dit tout de suite tsé : "Fais pas ça!". Si y en a un autre qui fait la même chose, ben ça va être correct » (699 : HG2E3).

On retrouve également des énoncés portant sur les perceptions relatives aux compétences professionnelles (ou incompétences) : « Un prof qui fait tout de travers, ça ne mérite pas qu'on lui fasse confiance! » (94 : AVGR1E1). « Elle nous laisse jamais de récompense, elle nous fait travailler des affaires qu'on n'a même pas de besoin de faire, pis ça sert à rien pantoute! Pis après, elle vient dire que je fume du pot! » (96 : AVGR1E1).

En résumé, le discours des élèves fait ressortir le manque de respect comme étant un facteur déterminant dans la non-confiance. L'intolérance, l'injustice et l'apparence sont d'autres éléments associés au manque de confiance. Un élève résume ainsi le comportement d'un professeur n'ayant pas sa confiance :

Un prof qui t'écoute pas quand tu y parles, un prof qui n'est pas intéressé... Il se fout de toi dans le fond, pis il va te juger, ou il va rire de toi ou il va voir que tu as de la misère, mais il t'expliquera pas » (925 : MJG1E2).

DISCUSSION

Cette étude exploratoire révèle d'une part un lien intéressant entre la confiance en soi et la confiance en l'autre, et d'autre part, la fragilité du lien de confiance entre les jeunes ayant des difficultés et leurs enseignants. Plusieurs participants identifient la nécessité de se faire confiance avant d'être en mesure de faire confiance à l'autre. Ce constat ne peut qu'être porteur de réflexion puisqu'une majorité de jeunes ayant des difficultés scolaires, et tout particulièrement les jeunes ayant des troubles d'apprentissage, se distinguent par leur manque de confiance en soi et la perception négative qu'ils ont d'eux-mêmes (Bender, 2001; Maltais et Herry, 1997; Wong, 1996). Les jeunes en difficulté identifient d'ailleurs les relations négatives qu'ils entretiennent avec le personnel enseignant et le personnel administratif comme facteur de risque menant au décrochage scolaire (Allaire, Michaud, Boissonneault, Côté et Diallo, 2005). Il existe possiblement un lien entre ces deux éléments (manque de confiance en soi et relations négatives avec le personnel enseignant) qui mérite une investigation plus approfondie. Dans le même esprit, les travaux d'Espinosa (2003) révèlent que pour l'ensemble des jeunes, tant ceux du primaire que ceux du secondaire, la qualité de la relation pédagogique est intimement reliée à leur sentiment de réussite ou d'échec, et donc à l'appréciation qu'ils manifestent à l'égard de l'école et d'eux-mêmes. À ce titre, ils définissent la qualité de la relation pédagogique en fonction de la nature des échanges qu'ils entretiennent avec les enseignants. Les échanges constructifs relationnels caractérisés par les encouragements et l'intérêt manifestés à leur personne (qui ils sont) coïncident avec une perception positive de la relation pédagogique, une plus grande appréciation de l'école, une meilleure perception de soi et une plus grande assiduité scolaire. Les échanges majoritairement axés sur la matière caractérisée par le rendement et le temps d'exécution amènent une perception négative de la relation pédagogique, la perception d'un sentiment d'incompréhension et de jugement de la part de l'enseignant, une dépréciation de l'école, une perception négative de soi et un état général de démotivation et de frustration pouvant même mener jusqu'à certains comportements de violence (violence verbale, destruction de matériel ou de mobilier scolaire). Ainsi, une approche pédagogique centrée sur la personne favoriserait davantage la relation entre les élèves et les enseignants, comparativement à une approche uniquement didactique.

Pour faire suite aux résultats présentés ici, il est possible d'avancer que les jeunes ayant des difficultés scolaires importantes apprécient les bienfaits d'une relation pédagogique qui se caractérise par une relation maître-élève « juste » et « respectueuse » où l'enseignant fait preuve d'un « bon sens de l'humour », et qui « prend le temps », qui « va te regarder et t'écouter jusqu'au bout », qui est « capable d'encourager » et qui « motive » ses élèves. Il s'agit de caractéristiques pouvant sans doute s'appliquer à l'ensemble de la population étudiante. Cependant, il est d'autant plus important de miser sur celles-ci en présence

de jeunes ayant des difficultés scolaires compte tenu du manque de confiance en soi manifesté par ces derniers.

Pour plusieurs, la construction d'une relation de confiance entre un enseignant et un élève en difficulté se bâtit à travers le temps, alors que l'enseignant devra « faire ses preuves » en affichant clairement un intérêt pour la vie de ses élèves tant à l'école qu'à l'extérieur de l'école, en s'assurant de garder les confidences d'un élève pour lui, et en partageant ses propres tranches de vie aux élèves. L'enseignant qui offre un peu plus de liberté semble de plus grande confiance que l'enseignant plus rigide. À l'inverse, les enseignants plus axés sur la matière seraient moins dignes de confiance. L'enseignant devra ainsi être capable de bien équilibrer les efforts mis à bâtir le lien de confiance et ceux consacrés à l'apprentissage du contenu scolaire. Les attentes de l'enseignant devront être en lien avec les capacités de l'élève. Les élèves en difficulté participant à l'étude sont de prime abord méfiants vis-à-vis de leurs enseignants. C'est sans doute pourquoi ils font plus facilement confiance à l'enseignant qui semble aimer son travail, qui salue ses élèves et qui offre un visage souriant et ouvert, et ce, tout au long de sa présence à l'école.

Tant l'attitude d'ouverture de l'enseignant que son attitude encourageante sont appréciés chez les élèves en difficulté. Ces mêmes constats sont repris par Merle (2005), Espinosa (2003) et Allaire, Michaud, Boissonneault, Côté et Diallo (2005). À l'inverse, cette étude, tout comme celle de Merle (2005), révèle que lorsque l'intérêt premier de l'enseignant réside dans la matière, la construction d'un sentiment de confiance entre ce dernier et l'élève en difficulté reste difficile, voire impossible. Le renouveau pédagogique dans les écoles québécoises, qui valorise l'apprentissage plutôt que la maîtrise de contenus, peut sans doute contribuer à l'instauration d'un terrain fertile au développement de la confiance. En fin de compte, l'élève en difficulté, par sa vulnérabilité qui découle des difficultés scolaires quotidiennes auxquelles il doit faire face, et par son incapacité à donner et à faire confiance aveuglément à un enseignant moins souriant, plus rigide et dirigé par sa matière, ne serait-il pas en train de dire : REGARDEZ-MOI POUR QUI JE SUIS, ET NON UNIQUEMENT POUR LES TÂCHES SCOLAIRES QUE JE PEUX OU NON RÉALISER. Alors que sa « personne scolaire » vacille et qu'il en découle une perception négative de soi, n'est-il pas légitime, voire positif d'exiger de son enseignant qu'il reconnaisse sa personne entière? Encore heureux qu'agé entre 16 et 18 ans, le jeune en difficulté, exclu des parcours scolaires ordinaires, se dise encore capable de faire confiance!

La présente étude est de nature exploratoire, les données recueillies offrent des pistes de réflexion pour la poursuite des études relatives aux liens de confiance entre les enseignants et les élèves en difficulté. Compte tenu du nombre restreint de participants, il serait intéressant de reproduire la recherche avec un plus grand nombre d'élèves afin de valider les données déjà

obtenues. De plus, il serait pertinent d'interroger d'autres CFER ainsi que d'autres classes d'adaptation scolaire afin de vérifier si ces constats ressortent de manière uniforme en sachant que les CFER ont des pratiques pédagogiques différentes des classes de cheminement particulier. Finalement, les études futures pourraient en profiter pour investiguer la perception des enseignants face au lien de confiance avec les élèves en difficulté. La confrontation des deux perceptions pourrait offrir des pistes d'intervention intéressantes pour favoriser la persévérance scolaire.

CONCLUSION

Les résultats de cette étude sur la définition de la confiance et sur la construction du lien de confiance maître-élève du point de vue des élèves ayant des difficultés scolaires importantes, révèlent des attentes de respect, de réciprocité et de méritocratie. En même temps, l'étude met en évidence l'importance de la confiance en soi du jeune avant de faire confiance à l'autre. Comme les élèves ayant des difficultés scolaires ont généralement une plus faible estime de soi que les autres élèves, il apparaît donc crucial pour l'enseignant de prévoir des mises en situation d'apprentissage qui leur permettent de connaître du succès. Le temps passé ensemble, des stratégies pédagogiques valorisantes, des qualités personnelles chez l'enseignant empreintes de respect, de justice et de gentillesse et des agirs de la part de l'enseignant caractérisés par l'authenticité, sont autant de façons décrites par les jeunes susceptibles de contribuer au développement des liens de confiance. Les jeunes ayant des difficultés scolaires réclament des enseignants passionnés, humains, sensibles et compétents sur le plan professionnel. Ainsi, les attitudes des enseignants contribuent à la création d'un lien de confiance. Ces propos rejoignent ceux de leurs parents rapportés dans une étude précédente (Deslandes, Rousseau et Fournier, 2007). En effet, les parents avaient alors déclaré faire davantage confiance aux enseignants s'ils savent que ceux-ci sont à l'écoute de leur jeune, qu'ils le dirigent tout en lui laissant de l'autonomie, qu'ils le soutiennent dans ses efforts et qu'ils prennent à cœur sa réussite et son éducation. Ils avaient aussi identifié la communication, les compétences professionnelles et personnelles de l'enseignant comme autres moyens de favoriser la confiance.

À la lumière de ces résultats, il apparaît important de suggérer aux personnes œuvrant en formation initiale et continue de sensibiliser les acteurs de l'éducation à l'importance des savoir-faire et des savoir-être jugés cruciaux par les jeunes ayant des difficultés scolaires importantes. Bien que certains pourraient limiter cette sensibilisation aux intervenants de l'adaptation scolaire, il nous apparaît clair que l'ensemble des acteurs devraient en être conscients, compte tenu de la présence de nombreux jeunes en difficulté dans les classes ordinaires suite au réaménagement des codes EHDAA et la création des « élèves à risque » de l'an 2000 (MEQ, 2000), et ce, tant au primaire qu'au secondaire. Des études ultérieures pourraient avoir comme objet l'efficacité de pratiques

novatrices visant à accroître les liens de confiance entre les enseignants et les élèves ayant des difficultés scolaires, et ce, autant en classe ordinaire qu'en classe d'adaptation scolaire.

NOTES

1. Traduction libre.
2. Les références en provenance des données qualitatives se divisent en deux parties. La première partie, débutant par un chiffre, se réfère au numéro des paragraphes répertoriés dans N'Vivo. Ce procédé facilite le repérage des énoncés ou unités de sens. La deuxième partie, pour sa part, fait référence à la ville de l'école, au groupe et à l'élève rencontré pour la collecte de données. Par exemple, le symbole (7 : AVGR2E1) représente le septième paragraphe du verbatim. Les symboles suivants AV, GR2 et E1 indiquent le nom de la ville, le deuxième groupe et le premier participant du groupe.
3. Langage vulgaire.

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NADIA ROUSSEAU est détentricrice d'un doctorat en psychopédagogie et d'une maîtrise en éducation spécialisée de l'Université de l'Alberta. Professeure en adaptation scolaire à l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières depuis 1998, elle est titulaire de la Chaire de recherche Normand-Maurice, responsable de l'équipe de recherche QISAQ et chercheure régulière au CRIRES. Elle s'intéresse tout particulièrement à l'expérience scolaire des jeunes ayant des besoins particuliers, à leur qualification et insertion socioprofessionnelle et à la connaissance de soi des jeunes ayant des troubles d'apprentissage. Nadia.rousseau@uqtr.ca

ROLLANDE DESLANDES, Ph.D., professeure titulaire à l'UQTR, s'intéresse à l'influence du milieu familial et aux relations école-famille-communauté. Madame Deslandes a récemment dirigé la publication de trois volumes, *La collaboration de l'école, de la famille et de la communauté à l'apprentissage* (ACFAS, 2008), *International Perspectives on Student Outcomes and Homework* (Routledge, 2009) et *International Perspectives on Contexts, Communities and Evaluated Innovative Practices* (Routledge, 2009). Elle est chercheure régulière au CRIRES depuis 1996. Rollande.Deslandes@uqtr.ca

HÉLÈNE FOURNIER est détentricrice d'un doctorat en éducation de l'UQTR-l'UQAM et elle est professionnelle de recherche au CRIRES et à la Chaire de recherche Normand-Maurice du département des sciences de l'éducation de l'UQTR. Helene.fournier@uqtr.ca

NADIA ROUSSEAU holds a PhD in educational psychology and a masters in special education from the University of Alberta. She has been a professor of special education at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières since 1998, and holds the Normand-Maurice research chair. She is in charge of the QISAQ's research and is a noted researcher for CRIRES. She is interested in students with special needs and their school experience – their achievement and inclusion through their personal knowledge and experience of having learning difficulties. Nadia.rousseau@uqtr.ca

ROLLANDE DESLANDES is a full professor at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. Her research interests are the influence of family environment, and the relationships among school-family-community. Her recent publications include *La collaboration de l'école, de la famille et de la communauté à l'apprentissage* (ACFAS, 2008), *International Perspectives on Student Outcomes and Homework* (Routledge, 2009) and *International Perspectives on Contexts, Communities and Evaluated Innovative Practices* (Routledge, 2009). She has been a researcher for CRIRES since 1996. Rollande.Deslandes@uqtr.ca

HÉLÈNE FOURNIER holds a PhD in education from UQTR-UQAM and is a research associate at CRIRES and for the Normand-Maurice Chair of UQTR's Department of Education. Helene.fournier@uqtr.ca

TEACHER CANDIDATES' PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL ORGANIZATION: FUNDAMENTAL INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

LORENZO CHERUBINI *Brock University*

ABSTRACT. Preservice teacher-candidates enrolled in teacher education programs across Canada are exposed to the nuances of school organization during their practice-teaching assignments. Although the literature is full of scholarship about the concerns of new teachers, less attention has been given to school organizational factors as sources of dissonance for new teachers and preservice teacher education candidates. This study employed quantitative and qualitative methods to determine the effect of the practicum experience on prospective teachers' beliefs about school organization in Ontario. The fundamental finding of the study was that participants' experiences during their teaching-practicum assignments had a significantly negative effect upon their beliefs about school organization.

PERCEPTIONS DES CANDIDATS À L'ENSEIGNEMENT FACE À L'ORGANISATION SCOLAIRE : INCOHÉRENCES FONDAMENTALES ENTRE LES ATTENTES ET LES EXPÉRIENCES PRATIQUES

RÉSUMÉ. Les candidats à l'enseignement inscrits au sein des programmes d'éducation des maîtres à travers le Canada sont exposés à la réalité de l'organisation scolaire au cours de leurs expériences pratiques d'enseignement. Or, si la littérature soulève abondamment les inquiétudes des nouveaux enseignants, peu d'attention a été accordée aux facteurs de l'organisation scolaire comme sources de dissonance pour les nouveaux enseignants et les candidats à la profession enseignante. En ce sens, cette étude utilise des méthodes quantitatives et qualitatives pour déterminer les effets des stages sur les croyances des aspirants enseignants relativement à l'organisation scolaire en Ontario. La conclusion fondamentale de cette étude est que les expériences des aspirants enseignants durant leurs travaux pratiques ont des effets significativement négatifs sur leurs croyances concernant l'organisation scolaire.

INTRODUCTION

Creating organizational frameworks to help teachers engage students in authentic learning is a complex but necessary endeavour (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005; Cole & Knowles, 2000; Turner-Bisset, 2001). Equally significant is the need to support novice teachers, particularly in circumstances where school organization does not adequately sustain knowledge-creation and meaningful action (Darling-Hammond, 2005; Lipshitz, Friedman, & Popper, 2007). School organization consists of an educational hierarchy, structure, and bureaucracy that enable students, teachers, and administrators to function effectively (Fineman, Sims, & Gabriel, 2006). The formal procedures and practices of the school organization govern the norms that lend order to the professional relationships and day-to-day functions of schooling (Young & Levin, 1998). As socially constructed systems of activity, school organizations are goal directed. The organization represents a purposive system that codifies its common goals and school vision – often in the context of mission statements (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006). Sustainable school organizations recognize the potential for members to exert influence and exercise their meaningful involvement in student learning (Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001; Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003). The positive outcomes of sustainable school organizations are documented in the literature (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2003; Welsh, 2000). Schools organized as communities of professional practice encourage members to engage in shared meaning and knowledge-creation (Hara, 2001; Zhu & Baylen 2005). Research suggests that sustainable school organization also influences broader collective action since the work of educators extends beyond classrooms and policies (Morgan, 2006; Young, 2000).

Preservice teacher candidates are directly exposed to the factors that influence school organization and professional culture during their practice-teaching assignments (Lee, Bryk, & Smith, 1993). Organizations that foster collegial and collaborative professional relationships are more responsive to the varying needs of novice teachers (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999). Furthermore, they conceptualize school organization from a quality processes paradigm (Marshall, Pritchard, & Gunderson, 2004) rather than from a division of labour perspective that silos certain functions and organizational roles. Research attests to the fact that schools organized as collaborative professional communities with clear and achievable goals are more sustainable (Fullan, 2002; Johnson & Johnson, 1998; Lieberman, 1996). Sustainable school organization also includes the symbiotic roles of knowledge, institutional norms, and specific organizational roles apart from the technical requirements that pertain to school and schooling (Oplatka, 2004; Rowan & Miskel, 1999).

Purpose of the study

Preservice teacher-candidates enrolled in teacher education programs across Canada are exposed to the particular nuances of varying school organizations during their practice-teaching assignments. Interestingly, although the literature is full of studies into the problems and concerns of beginning teachers (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Cherubini, 2006), significantly less research has been focused on the factors of school organization as sources of dissonance among new teachers and even less research on preservice teacher education candidates (Menon & Cristou, 2002). Given that beginning teachers' experiences are "affected by perceptions and expectations formed during teacher training" (Menon & Christou, 2002, p. 98), and those individual perceptions and expectations factor into their career evolution (Bandura, 1997), it seemed prudent to compare their expectations prior to the field-teaching placements with their experiences after the practicum. As Murmane, Singer, Willet, Kemple, and Olsen (1991) suggest, the disconnect between teacher candidates' expectations and the eventual realities of their role as teachers can be very stressful and have an adverse effect upon their career development.

I employed quantitative and qualitative research methods to determine the effect of the student-teacher practicum experience on prospective teachers' beliefs about school organization in Ontario. The examination of prospective teachers' experiences as they are immersed in various school organizations clarifies "the problems teachers face and the knowledge they find of most worth. By attending to student teachers' concerns we can further understand the processes students undergo to become teachers" (Guillaume & Rudney, 1993, p. 65). The results may help education faculty and school board teacher induction providers across Canada to evaluate the disconnect between preservice teachers' and new teachers' expectations and experiences of school organization.

METHODS

The study's mixed-methods design provided the opportunity for participants to elaborate upon their quantitative responses through open-ended questions (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Elliot, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

Participants

Preservice students enrolled in a consecutive one-year post-graduate bachelor of education teacher-preparation program from a mid-sized Canadian university in Ontario were invited to participate in this study. Seventy-five students accepted the invitation (from the 145 originally enlisted), representing a 52% response rate. One percent of the responses were discarded during the preliminary vetting due to response prevarication. In self-reported measurement indicators, 63% of participants were female and 17% male; 51% were enrolled in the intermediate/senior qualification program and 41% in the primary/junior

divisional qualifications; 65% belonged to the 22 to 29 year old age bracket, 11% to the 30 to 39 year old age category, and 13% of those who responded indicated that they were 40 years of age or older. The participants completed their practicum in numerous elementary and secondary schools dispersed across a vast geographical region in Ontario.

Procedure

The results from the Likert-scale items were compared with the responses to the open-ended questions on the survey. This involved the concurrent collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data (of equal weighting) prior to the merging of the two properties of data during the interpretation process (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Hansen, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). On a basis of a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, participants indicated their expectations before their initial practicum experience at the beginning of the school year and then ranked the same items after their final teaching practicum at the conclusion of their preservice teacher education program. Each of the seven statements began with, *During my interning and practice-teaching in schools, I expect that....* The statements were scripted as follows: Teachers will be equitably provided with the resources they need to be creative and effective; School will have a functional mission statement that is effectively communicated to parents, staff, and students; Schools will have a mission statement that is representative of the staff's collective vision; Teachers will perceive school administration as consistently reinforcing the school rules; Administrators will consult teachers about decisions needed to be made within the school that influence school policy; Teachers will observe one another's teaching to facilitate professional development; School boards will offer a comprehensive mentorship program for beginning teachers.

In the qualitative section of the pre-survey, participants commented upon their expectation that school organization will be conducive to collaborative and collegial practice. Specifically, the two questions were stated as follows:

- i. Schools will be organized so that both new and experienced teachers have opportunities to fulfill their own vision and beliefs. Explain why you either agree or disagree with this statement.
- ii. Do you expect administrators and teachers (regardless of their years of experience in teaching) to work collaboratively to improve student learning? Explain in detail. If not, explain why.

Conversely, the post-survey invited their explanations to the following question:

- iii. Describe examples of how collaboration was embedded in the routines and practices of schools to improve student learning. Or, explain why you believe collaboration was not embedded in the routines and practices of schools to improve student learning.

Both the quantitative and qualitative components of the survey were field tested under relative circumstances with different samples of preservice student cohorts for the sake of instrument fidelity (Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, Filer, Wiedmaier, & Moore, 2007). Peer debriefing sessions followed each field test as a vehicle for external evaluation (Maxwell, 2005). A fellow researcher with extensive experience in mixed-methods design (but who had no vested interest in the study) constructively criticized the findings as they emerged (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Sample integration legitimation allowed for inferences to be made from both the quantitative and qualitative results (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; 2006).

Data analysis

The seven statement responses were quantitatively analyzed in terms of means and frequencies before being subjected to *t*-tests to factor significant differences. There were several statistically significant differences in means across the pre- and post-test responses. The quantitative responses were further subjected to multiple comparisons based on participants' self-reported age, gender, and divisional qualifications.

The open-ended qualitative responses were inputted into Ethnograph software to identify dominant patterns. Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as a qualitative analytical mode of analysis, was used to code the respective patterns into emerging themes as they were grounded in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The process of constant comparison saturated the conceptual relationships into the respective categories (Cherubini, 2007; Glaser, 1978; 1992). The qualitative data was combined and inductively analyzed using a cross-section of variables, including age, gender, and divisional qualifications.

RESULTS

The findings for each of the variables from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses are presented respectively. The fundamental finding of the study was that participants' experiences during their teaching-practicum assignments had a significantly negative effect upon their beliefs of school organization.

Quantitative results

The descriptive means for each of the seven statements were lower in the post-survey than they were in the first administration of the survey. Quite significantly, participants had higher expectations of the schools' mission statement as representing teachers' collective vision. They expected prior to their practicum that there would have been a greater degree of collaborative practice within the school's routines and practices, and school administrators would have had a greater influence on organizational matters (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. *Descriptive means for items related to school organization*

Responses	N	Pre-mean	SD	N	Post-mean	SD
Teachers being equitably provided with resources	75	3.97	.930	75	3.74	.87
School mission statement & parents, staff and students	75	4.23	.746	75	3.78	.97
School mission statement rep. staff vision	75	3.72	1.04	75	3.60	.92
School administrators reinforcement of rules	75	3.83	1.01	75	3.68	1.05
Administrators consulting teachers	75	3.78	1.07	75	3.60	.90
Teachers observing one another's teaching	75	3.01	1.02	75	2.73	1.29
School boards' capacity to offer mentoring program for new teachers	75	3.52	1.09	75	3.40	1.31

N: Number of Participants; SD: Standard Deviation

The most significant difference between mean scores was related to the clear communication of a school's mission statement to the school community and its contextual relevance to teachers' practice. Opportunities to observe other teachers' practice as an organizational norm to further professional development also resulted in a significant contrast between teacher candidates' expectations and experiences in schools. Study participants' expectations of school administrators' equitable support of curriculum-related resources in each of the primary, junior, intermediate, and senior divisions also represented a significant difference to their post-teaching observations. The remaining differences were statistically minimal in comparison.

Significant differences: 2-tailed t-tests

The data was subjected to 2-tailed t-tests at an alpha of .05. A statistically significant difference resulted in one of the seven responses, with two more t-test results approaching significance (see Table 2). The most insignificant difference was in participants' expectations and observed realities of schools and school boards' capacities to deliver a mentoring program for beginning teachers.

TABLE 2. *Paired sample test*

Items	Mean	SD	SD Error Mean	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1 equity – equity 2	.22667	1.08520	.12531	1.809	.075
Pair 2 mission – mission 2	.44000	1.00324	.11584	3.798	.000
Pair 3 vision – vision 2	.12000	1.20763	.13945	.861	.392
Pair 4 principals – principals 2	.14667	1.35261	.15619	.939	.351
Pair 5 policy – policy 2	.17568	1.22035	.14186	1.238	.220
Pair 6 observe – observe 2	.28000	1.51176	.17456	1.604	.113
Pair 7 mentor – mentor 2	.12000	1.45156	.16761	.716	.476

Std. Dev.: Standard Deviation; Sig.: Significant Difference of 2-Tailed T-Test

Student-teacher candidates believed that the communication of schools' mission statements, school administrators' equitable support, and professional development opportunities for teachers to exert their influence across organizational lines were far less prevalent than they expected. Participants' expectations and experiences of school administrators' consistent enforcement of school rules resulted in an insignificant relationship.

Independent t-test comparisons

Independent t-tests were conducted based on participants' age, gender, and divisional qualifications. Of note, the 22 to 29 and over-40-year-old cohorts reported significant differences between their expectations and experiences of teachers' perceptions of school administrators as consistently implementing the school rules as a function of organizational order. The 22 to 29 and 30 to 39-year-old cohort groups reported statistically significant differences with schools' capacities to facilitate peer observations and professional development opportunities. The 30 to 39 and 40-year-old and over cohorts reported a significant difference in the same regard. This cohort also reported a significant difference between their expectation and experience of schools capacity to offer a mentoring program that would induct new teachers into the organizational culture of the school. The significant differences between participants' ages are located in Table 3.

TABLE 3. *Multiple comparisons: Age, gender, divisional qualifications*

Age:				
Responses	Age	Age	Mean Difference	Sig.
Enforcing school rules	22-29	40+	.643	.038
Admin. visibility in school	22-29	30-39	.766	.032
Observing other teachers' practice	22-29	30-39	.946	.008
	30-39	40+	1.073	.015
Mentoring program	30-39	40+	1.009	.037
Gender:				
Enforcing school rules	Males	Undeclared	1.000	.002
	Females	Undeclared	.96296	.015
Divisional Qualifications:				
School mission statements	i/s	p/j	.438	.059
Enforcing school rules	p/j	i/s	.542	.05
	i/s	i/s (tech)	.72424	.026
Principals' visibility in school	p/j	i/s	.66667	.049
Teachers consulted on school policy	p/j	i/s	.56667	.048
Administrators' support	p/j	i/s	.57917	.014
	p/j	i/s	.83333	.001

Sig: Significant Difference; i/s: Intermediate / Senior Division

Teaching Qualifications: p/j: Primary / Junior Division Teaching Qualifications

Independent t-tests of multiple comparisons based on gender are also reported in Table 3. Two statistically significant differences are evident in the enforcement of school rules by administrators to maintain order (between males and those participants who did not declare their gender) and in this same category by females and undeclared participants.

Also in Table 3 are the data which show significant differences for a multiple comparison of t-test based on participants' divisional qualifications. Various statistically significant differences emerged. For instance, the i/s teacher qualification cohort differed significantly from the p/j preservice candidates in terms of the reported differences in the capacity of the school organization to engage its members in shared meaning. Specifically, in terms of administrators' capacities to consult with teachers regarding decisions that impacted upon school

policy. The p/j sample considered school administrative support more critical to school organization in comparison to their i/s teacher candidate peers.

Qualitative results

After the identification of dominant patterns, responses to the qualitative open-ended questions in both the pre- and post- surveys were inductively analyzed using grounded theory procedures. The same written entries were independently coded according to the following two variables: participants' age and divisional qualifications.

Question 1. Participants across both variables reported a consistent expectation that school organization facilitates opportunities for new and experienced teachers to fulfill their professional goals on condition that these are aligned to the school administrators' vision. Participants' responses that were considered key statements are cited below. Typical of the responses, one participant stated, "I would hope that we are able to work within the greater structure" (Participant 12). In a number of instances participants identified beginning teachers as the population who needed to feel particularly affirmed that their vision and goals were significant. As this participant stated, a supportive and collaborative school organization is, "especially important for beginning teachers who may not have completed their ideas for what their vision and beliefs are" (Participant 62). In the majority of responses, participants suggested that their personal vision must "comply with the school's mission statement and policies" (Participant 66). Another individual suggested that a teacher's core beliefs are vital to her professional development but cautioned, "as long as those beliefs coincide with the values of the school" (Participant 22). Representative of this category were comments that included, "usually the principal sets the tone and tries to fulfill his/her vision and beliefs" (Participant 7), and "there may be some room for personal interpretation and expression for teachers but it is within a collective vision" (Participant 36).

The 40-year-old and older participant cohort responses were cautiously optimistic. Participants expected school organization to help develop their visions, but they had reservations that this was going to be the case. Participants expected the entire school community "to benefit from the visions and beliefs of others" (Participant 4), and anticipated opportunities to exercise "the freedom to live out those visions and beliefs" (Participant 74). They openly questioned, however, "How this can be accomplished" (Participant 82), and wondered if such opportunities "will likely be few and very limited" (Participant 68).

Question 2. Participants across both variables reported in the first survey that they expected principals and new teachers to work collaboratively towards the goal of improving student learning. The expectation was that school administrators and all teachers throughout the organization would, as these individuals suggested, "help each other and share resources" (Participant 14),

“meet regularly to discuss student progress and provide information in confidence that will help student learning” (Participant 29), and “work together in an environment where communication, integrity and respect are modeled” (Participant 2). Participants further expected that “meetings would be scheduled regarding at-risk students to identify needs and possible solutions” (Participant 32) since they believed that “everyone’s opinion matters” (Participant 71) given the expectation that teachers and administrators “are all on the same team and share the same goals” (Participant 6). In a number of instances the 22-29 year-old participants expressed the belief that their inexperience as relatively young professionals would not limit their influence across the organization. One individual wrote, “Just because they [older and more experienced teachers] are experienced doesn’t mean they know everything” (Participant 9). In the bulk of responses the notion existed, as this particular individual stated, that “administrators and teachers work hard together” (Participant 19). Participants expected school administrators to establish, as part of their organizational routine, opportunities for teachers across the school organization to foster professional goals and collaborate with one another. In the overwhelming majority of responses, participants in the 40+ cohort especially placed the onus on school administrators to, as this participant suggested, “consult with the teachers in building programs that meet the needs of the students and improve their learning” (Participant 26).

The i/s responses were also noteworthy. Although they expected school organization to structure collaborative opportunities between teachers across subject departments, they questioned the commitment from experienced teachers in this regard. Indicative of the other responses, this participant wrote that “all teachers should collaborate, but the ones who have been around likely won’t given human nature” (Participant 51). The p/j cohort’s core category, unlike the majority of the other variables in these cross-section analyses, distinguished specific organizational structures within the school that address authentic student learning. They expected regularly scheduled collaborative opportunities to “discuss modifying lessons” (Participant 20), “offer counseling on one-on-one teaching tips” (Participant 3), provide “ways to better organize my classroom for certain kids” (Participant 16), and “build programs that meet the needs of the students” (Participant 8). Given these opportunities, participants expected to exercise their capacities and contribute to the common school vision of improving student learning.

Question 3. Responses to the post-survey question were also consistent across age and qualification variables and represented a significant contrast between participants’ expectations and experiences of school organization. In the post-survey responses, it was reported that collaboration was not a structured practice of school organizations and when it occurred it was described as *ad hoc* and subject to the willingness of individual teachers. Participants identified the general lack of professional collaboration amongst staffs. As this individual

wrote, "it was not embedded because there was not teamwork" (Participant 36). In the majority of cases where collaboration was observed, it consisted of "teachers working together on the music trips" (Participant 24), "sharing [supervision] duties" (Participant 32), "sharing a lot of their resources" (Participant 2), and collaboratively "preparing for the prayer services" (Participant 11). Teachers were perceived to be "too hands-off" (Participant 72) in terms of becoming involved in school initiatives to improve student learning, and as a result collaboration was often "not embedded in the school programs at all" (Participant 14). Participants were candid in describing "teachers talking about students and sharing resources, but there was no discussion of how to improve student learning" (Participant 26).

The i/s cohort responses were especially unanimous. In many circumstances participants commented that secondary school departments "acted as though they were their own country. There was no collaboration between departments or administration" (Participant 44). Others suggested that they "didn't observe any collaboration in terms of moving kids' learning forward. Everyone did their own thing" (Participant 63). This is similar to the core category that emerged from the p/j participant responses; namely, collaboration in schools as informal and haphazard. Although there was an acknowledgement that discussion between same grade and division teachers "took place to make sure they were on the same page" (Participant 16), teachers were more often perceived as "very isolated" (Participant 9), and functioned in school organizations where there "was not a lot of communication and no one was ever in the division workrooms" (Participant 29).

DISCUSSION

Given the statistically significant differences and the respective qualitative core categories, preservice teacher expectations about school organization are profoundly different before the practicum than they are afterwards. The difference between participants' expectations and experiences of school organization point to several significant implications that deserve further discussion. In the context of this discussion, it is relevant to consider that novice teachers generally have a high degree of energy and enthusiasm even though they have little professional teaching experience (Blanchard, 1990; Marshall et al, 2004). Equally significant is the fact that new teachers vary in the amount of support and guidance they need to become competent practitioners.

First, the most statistically significant incongruence (related to school mission statements) negatively reflects schools as goal-directed organizations (Rowan, 2004). Where prior to their teaching placements participants perceived school vision and goals as products of a socially inclusive and constructed process (Johnson, 2005), their experience in the various school organizational cultures undermined their understandings. Participants' qualitative responses further

underscored the disconnect that exists between school visions and goals that are informed and enacted collectively, and those that represent the principal's paradigms and are reflective of hierarchy and control. Participants consistently expressed their willingness to conform their goals to the principal's vision. Participants assumed that they would be able to develop and exercise their professional goals, but would have to do so in the context of the administrator's vision. These beliefs and assumptions warrant further attention given participants' conspicuous resignation to authority. There is an uncritical, passive, and unquestioned commitment to what they expect will be a more sophisticated value-system. As this participant attests, "in the end, we are part of a greater organizational presence and it will be our job to further those ends and not necessarily our own" (Survey 2; Participant 54). Participants' responses perpetuate the more traditional belief that school goals and vision is the product of the individual at the top of the educational hierarchy – the principal. This is certainly not reflective of the literature that suggests organizational commitment stems from the collective construction of a vision and goal that are relevant and meaningful to all staff (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2002).

A second significant finding was the disconnect between participants' expectations and experiences in regards to the professional collaboration among educators. Although the expectations existed that the school organization would facilitate professional development opportunities to further teachers' practice and allow members to exert their influence across the organization, their experiences during the practicum suggested otherwise. This lack of routine professional development and collaboration, as norms of school organization, resonated in participants' qualitative responses as well. The disconnect between the expectations and perceived realities of professional collaboration may be particularly detrimental to new teachers' socialization into organizational norms (Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, & Quinlan, 2001; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). Research attests to the fact that novice teachers want to be immersed in an organizational structure that honours their members and they aspire to make valuable contributions in collaborative contexts (Spindler & Biott, 2000). They expect during their induction period to be invited into collaborative professional networks where their input is valued, respected, and acknowledged by experienced colleagues and school administrators (Martin & Rippon, 2003).

The views, attitudes and perceptions of these groups and the interface between them will impinge upon how the probationary teacher progresses in gaining their own identity as an established teacher in the school context as well as in their own mind. [The organization] has to manage the exchanges to enhance the probationary teacher's contribution to the school and their own professional and personal development. (Rippon & Martin, 2006, p. 94)

The discrepancy between participants' expectations and experiences was accentuated by their observations that collaboration in schools seemed more

dependent upon the individual teacher's willingness to engage in sustaining collegial networks than it did on it being a structured organizational practice. Participants concluded that some teachers became directly involved in collaborative endeavours, while others were more reluctant in their commitments. Underscoring the disconnect between participants' expectations and experiences is their observation of collaboration being reduced to the sharing of resources and management responsibilities. Especially true for the p/j cohort, collaboration was perceived as informal conversation about the routine management of duties and responsibilities. Participants expected school organization to structure professional development practices that would foster collaboration and further student learning. The characteristics of sustainable school organization, such as goal-directedness and shared meaning for all its members, to name only two, were scarcely apparent (Marshall et al., 2004). School organization was perceived by participants as a series of fragmented routines and relatively isolated practices that were not readily associated to a common vision (Haydn, 2001; Osterman, 2000).

Noteworthy statistical and qualitative differences also existed between participants' responses across divisional qualifications. The i/s cohort reported significantly less expectation to be consulted by administrators about decisions that impact upon the school community. This may be attributed to the organizational infrastructure of schools. Secondary school teachers belong to subject and content area departments, a situation that generally reduces their interaction with school administrators. Conversely, elementary teachers practice in less populated organizational units and typically take direction from school administrators in terms of policy and practice. According to the literature, however, school organizations (be they elementary or secondary) that facilitate collaboration amongst colleagues and respect the collective expertise of their teachers invite their active involvement in meaningful decision-making strategies (Imants, 2002; Zhu & Baylen, 2005). These organizations are also attentive to the fairness and equity of their decisions (Johnson, 2005). In both cases, it seems that participants' expectations and observed realities were very much located in the hierarchical structure of school organization.

Participants' experiences during their teaching-practicum assignments had a significantly adverse effect upon their expectations of school organization. For preservice faculty, the disconnect between prospective teachers' expectations and experiences deserves further consideration. The practicum experience may potentially erode the constructivist and research-informed perspectives related to school organization and professional development that are espoused by the faculty of education. School board induction providers are also responsible to account for the organizational realities into which they induct their novice members. Prospective and new teachers expect school organization to complement their individual autonomy and the capacities they bring to make valuable contributions to the profession across the organization.

Limitations

Although this research design accounted for political legitimation by implementing qualitative and quantitative research techniques, replications of this study would enhance the reliability of its findings. As Onwuegbuzie and Johnson (2006) suggest, mixed-methods research designs and techniques applied to a similar context could acknowledge sequential and conversion legitimation. Second, the results of this study are not necessarily generalizable beyond the sample from one preservice teacher education program in an Ontario university. The findings of the study would be strengthened if applied using the same research procedure to other consecutive education students from the various faculties of education situated across the province.

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LORENZO CHERUBINI is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, Brock University (Canada). The focus of his SSHRC-funded research is on policy analysis and Aboriginal education.

LORENZO CHERUBINI est professeur associé à la faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université Brock (Canada). Ses recherches subventionnées par le CRSH ciblent l'analyse des politiques et l'éducation autochtone.

VIDEO PRODUCTION AND YOUTH-EDUCATOR COLLABORATION: OPENINGS AND DILEMMAS

MICHELLE STACK *University of British Columbia*

ABSTRACT. This study explores a collaborative project between high school youth and adult educators (graduate students in education) to create public service announcements. How do young people and educators talk about media, politics, power, and social change? Based on my observations of participant interaction, I argue that power is not dichotomous, with adults necessarily exerting power over youth. The very act of creating a collaborative video can provide a meaningful pedagogical tool to mobilize the individuals involved to engage in conversations about the meaning of social justice and strategies for achieving greater social justice.

LA PRODUCTION DE VIDÉOS ET LA COLLABORATION ENTRE LES JEUNES ET LEURS ÉDUCATEURS : DÉBOUCHÉS ET DILEMMES

RÉSUMÉ. Cette étude fait l'examen d'un projet collaboratif mené entre des jeunes du secondaire et leurs éducateurs adultes (étudiants à la maîtrise en éducation) pour créer des De quelle manière les jeunes et les éducateurs abordent les médias, la politique, le pouvoir et les changements sociaux? Basée sur mes observations des interactions des participants, j'affirme que le pouvoir n'est pas dichotomique, les adultes exerçant leur pouvoir sur les jeunes. L'exercice de créer un vidéo collaboratif offre des outils pédagogiques signifiants. Il permet de mobiliser les individus en les engageant dans des conversations sur le sens de la justice sociale et les stratégies possibles pour augmenter sa prévalence.

INTRODUCTION

Media are central, if not primary, teachers for both young people and adults. The word media is often used to talk about both the means of communication (radio, internet, print, television, video, and film) and the product or text (movies, television shows, and the news) (Stack & Kelly, 2006). When I speak of media I am speaking of the texts and the role of these texts in our social, political, and economic world.

Children and youth spend more time learning from media than schools (Buckingham, 2003, p. 5; Stack & Kelly, 2006). Media educators have played a central role in advocating for curricula and pedagogy which enable young people to

engage with, create, and critique the power structures that surround them. In this paper I examine the relationships between youth and educators involved in a research project in which they created videos together. Central to this analysis is an understanding of how youth and educators build collaborative relationships, an understanding that challenges powerful cultural assumptions about what is to be young and what it is to be an educator.

In a special issue of the McGill Journal of Education on youth and media production, Hoechsmann and Sefton-Green (2006) pose a crucial question:

If young people are able to communicate and make media exchanging images and argument in a public space, what role do we have as mediators of this work? (p. 190)

In this paper I extend this question to ask: How can youth and adults be each other's mediators? During collaborative class work, I have had many compelling discussions with young people and adults about society's obsession with the potential evils of simulated violence, rather than a concern for real world acts of aggression we are exposed to in daily news reports. Media education projects with youth and adults can provide an opportunity to challenge adults and youth to look at why violence in video games or the news is so ubiquitous. Media education with both youth and adults also has the potential for opening discussion about diverse audience perspectives on issues such as the meaning and experience of media violence as well as many other topics.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Complicating critical pedagogy, collaboration and dialogue

Researchers have focused on the collaborative nature of youth media production (Goodman, 2003, Goldfarb, 2002, Fleetwood, 2005), but much less on youth-adult partnerships in the media production process (Chávez & Soep, 2005). In their 2005 study, Chávez and Soep addressed this critical issue, working with youth in a radio project that attempted to "transcend the conventional relationship between adult 'teachers' and youth 'learners' to co-produce media products" (409). Transcending conventional relationships in formal schooling meant setting up media production opportunities that involved youth and adults both being accountable for collaborative media productions; framing media productions that involved both youth and adults; promoting youth-led inquiry; and seeing media production as a social justice intervention that involved both youth and adults in resolving conflict and better understanding inequality (409). By acknowledging power differentials between youth and adults, Chávez and Soep define a relationship between youth and adults in which both have a high level of emotional and social involvement. Through their interaction, young people and adults have opportunities to develop different ways of understanding themselves and each other.

Interpretations of terms such as “collaboration,” “student voice,” “dialogue,” “democracy,” and “transformation” vary wildly in the field of education. Some educators and policy makers continue to enforce traditional models wherein young people are expected to comply with adult decisions about their schooling but are given some choice in how to comply. More critical approaches promote collaboration between students and educators to create more democratic learning environments (Fielding, 2004).

The literature of most interest for this paper is the critical writing that posits that student engagement or voice should be part of a larger strategy to transform schools to actively challenge inequity and create places for young people to be involved in debate and decision making about the running of their school (Thomson, 2003; Soohoo, 1993). Such a critical approach to student engagement shares goals with critical pedagogy and critical media education, including: 1) committing to working with youth to “read their world” rather than “read the word” (Freire, 1970); 2) promoting opportunities for collaboration among youth; 3) acknowledging asymmetrical power relations and a commitment to their transformation; 4) focusing on relationships among youth, and between youth and adults; 5) understanding diverse socio-political and cultural contexts and respecting the multiple perspectives within these relationships. Finally, both critical media and critical pedagogy recognize that young people have a desire to learn and know what they need in order to learn.

It is vital to temper a desire for a classroom that challenges inequity, which is the mission of critical pedagogy, with the possibility that critical pedagogy ends up operating, as Gore (1993) argues, as a form of surveillance and regulation of students. In her work, Gore provides many examples of students saying and doing what they are expected to do whether in a “critical” or traditional classroom. Through my data analysis, I will also demonstrate instances in which this seemed to occur during my research.

Collective video production can be a way to engage and debate the difference between true dialogue and compliance. Pushing to resolve differences can lead to what Rowbotham called a “coercive consensus” (1979, p. 40) in which there is agreement based on fatigue or the power of more dominant members of a group. In the end, to create an effective video, there might be decisions to compromise, but this should be done within the framework of allowing and encouraging disagreement. This was the dynamic under investigation in the study reported here..

Youth, video production, and the horizons of radical pedagogy

Despite the lack of research that explicitly deals with youth-adult collaboration, there is a rich body of literature emerging concerning community media programs (Goldfarb, 2002; Goodman, 2005). Sefton-Green (2006), amongst others, has argued that community programs allow for more innovation in

the products, as well as the relationships, between youth and adults. School programs are sometimes limited by prescribed learning outcomes, lack of time, and school-based conceptions of what it means to be a student and what it means to be a teacher. Perhaps for this reason, much of the work in critical youth media production takes place within community settings rather than schools. This observation does not negate the work done by dedicated and often isolated critical media education teachers in schools, nor does it mean to minimize the potential for using some of the principles used in community programs in school settings, as Steve Goodman has done at the Educational Video Center in New York.

Producing a video can result in challenges to adult authority. Youth videos sometimes use humour to make fun of adult concerns about troubled or troublesome youth. Sometimes youth videos can suggest forms of resistance to schooling that might be objectionable to adults. Video production can also be seen as part of vocational education (Goldfarb, 2002) or media appreciation, or as a motivator for students to succeed in traditional school subjects. It can also be seen as a tool to increase student engagement and transform relationships between students and teachers, as Thomson and Comber (2003) suggest through their work with children and youth in six school environments. Their study set out to examine how technology could be used with “pedagogy as an apprenticeship of knowledge production” (p. 305). As Thomson and Comber relate:

[O]ur view was that schools could become sites where knowledges are brokered, produced and critically interrogated. In such reciprocal pedagogical processes, epistemological relations are fundamentally changed. (p. 308)

Can relations between teachers and students really change when institutional constraints, such as testing and disciplinary structures, have such a profound and persistent impact on youth? This question raises a need for further study of the limits and possibilities of collaborative media production within broader institutional power dynamics.

Buckingham (2003) argues that media education ought to provide students with opportunities to analyze media texts and what they find pleasurable in them, as well as to create their own media texts. In creating their own examples, students become more aware of how the media they consume is produced. Though awareness is important, it doesn't mean young or old people will necessarily change their habits; as one student said, “I know smoking is bad for me, but it doesn't mean I will stop.”

Jenkins (1997) has argued that youth production is not necessarily liberatory in a critical sense, but can reflect a reaction to the larger society. In this regard, Masterman (1985) proposes that, through investigation, students will understand the underlying values and ideology of the broader power politics of the contexts in which they operate. I argue, therefore, that video production

does not in itself alter power relations between youth and adults collaborating together. While video production can disrupt and create room for questions, one still needs to observe carefully the social contexts of the classroom.

Analyzing media education: Epistemic, cultural, and relational frames

In this paper, I look at my data through three lenses. The first lens is epistemic. This section deals with claims to knowledge made by both the youth and the adult participants; for example, youth often have more technological skills than adults and cannot be immediately constructed as the “unknowing” student. This creates competing knowledge and truth claims in a classroom that revolve around the culturally entrenched notions of the wisdom of adults and the technical know-how of youth.

The second lens is cultural. My assumption is that the process of creating a video encourages discussions in which participants prompt each other to see things in different ways and thus challenge notions of what Lewis and Finders (2002) call the “implied adolescent” and “implied teacher.” These authors show that what is often conceptualized as a generation gap, based on savvy teenagers and technologically illiterate teachers, is actually based on the “construction of identity that comes with material consequences related to access and authority” (Lewis & Finders, 2002, p. 101).

The third and final lens is based in interpersonal communication. I structured the class to create an exciting and fun environment, yet one in which participants take themselves and their audiences seriously. Making activities enjoyable for everyone creates tension between different youth cultures, and youth and adult cultures; participants are encouraged to interrogate what “fun” means to different groups and to consider whether these meanings are ever shared. Connections between diverse groups are sometimes hindered not only by age differences but also constructions of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and disability. Age, however, remains significant to an examination of what youth and adults find both funny and offensive in media. As will become clear in the analysis, it is of limited value to think of interpersonal communication as outside of cultural and epistemic issues.

In what follows, I provide background information about the participants, data sources, and methodology, and I offer an analysis of my findings.

Participants and methodology

The high school students recruited for this study were 16 - 17 years old at the time of the course. They were from a predominately middle-class school in Vancouver. Two factors influenced my choice of high school: first, the school was close to the university, and I felt proximity was important for a class that was going to take place over three full-day Saturdays; second, a teacher on staff

at the school was keen to assist me in finding students who were not necessarily considered class leaders, or strong academically, and who came from a variety of backgrounds. All of the students lived in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, with most living in the city of Vancouver. There were four young women and eight young men. Four were recent immigrants from Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. Four were racialized minorities. Many of the high school students had some experience producing videos either on their own or as part of school projects; some had taken a TV production course between grades 8 and 10. Most of the high school students used the Internet, blogged, and used online chat services on a regular basis.¹

The 11 university students ranged in age from their late 20s to their 50s. The idea of the project was to build a space outside of the usual K-12 classroom to explore collaborative video work. All the adults were registered in graduate programs in the Faculty of Education. Nine of the university students were women, and half of the class members were racialized minorities. All but three were K-12 teachers, counselors, or administrators; the remaining three were adult educators with experience working with youth. Most of the educators reported using the Internet but were not as active in blogging and online chatting as the high school students. One university student described herself as "anti-media," although she did enjoy films and some alternative media. Many of the educators had experience in the arts: three reported experience in the performing arts, one trained as a photo journalist, one as a visual artist, one previously wrote for the local newspaper, and one reported growing up with a photographer and feeling very comfortable around the darkroom. All reported some experience in either creating media or facilitating its creation. Some, however, had very little experience, and suggested they were quite nervous about the requirement to create a video during the course.

Students who registered expressed interest in media and collaboration. The educators were interested in collaborating with youth, and many had prior experience with various forms of youth-adult collaboration. Finally, both youth and adults were interested enough in the research to agree to participate in it.

Data Sources and Analysis The data sources for this study included field notes, pre- and post-interviews with participants, weekly confidential assessments of the sessions provided by participants, course evaluations, written papers completed by the graduate students, and videos taken of the class by videographer Evane Crowe. I directed filming of the class and video process and used the participants' video projects as an additional data source for this paper.

Data were analyzed within an interpretive paradigm. As Bassey (1999) states:

People perceive and construe the world in ways which are often similar but not necessarily the same. So there can be different understandings of what is real. Concepts of reality can vary from one person to another. Instead of

reality being “out there,” it is the observers who are “out there.” They are part of the world that they are observing and so, by observing, may change what they are trying to observe. (p. 43; *emphasis in the original*)

In keeping with an interpretive framework, I draw on theories of critical ethnography. Critical ethnographers who focus on schools often analyze how traditional teaching practices reproduce oppressive social structures (Fine, 2000, Kelly, 2000), how inequity is reproduced through policy and curriculum, and who is listened to and who is marginalized in schools. They do not see themselves as neutral observers but as actors with a responsibility to create a more socially just society.

In addition to interview transcripts and written papers, this project drew on work from-visual methodologies. Pink (2001) states that visual research “begins with the premise that the purpose of analysis is not to translate ‘visual evidence’ into verbal knowledge, but to explore the relationship between visual and other knowledge” (p. 96). I was provided with a great deal of assistance from two research assistants and videographers – Corin Kokotailo Browne and Patti Fraser – to produce a video of the course. In analyzing the 20 hours of film, my interpretation of the collaboration process became more nuanced. Through watching the tapes and analysis of interviews with participants, I came to see how I was both an insider as the teacher but also an outsider. The body language and interactions between participants offered important data that were very useful in understanding the non-verbal aspects of a collaborative video process as well as the effect my presence had on participants. At times, I was concerned the participants, particularly the graduate students, felt they were being surveilled rather than videotaped to learn more about the process of collaborative video with youth and educators.

On a few occasions when the educators were having a class without the high school students, and were discussing the challenges of collaboration, the participants asked for the camera to be turned off.

Another consideration in the process of videotaping collaborative discussion is the researcher’s role in directing filming. It was interesting to reflect on what I chose to have Evan film; and what shots I selected for the 30 minute video out of over 20 hours of footage. Mitchell, Kusner and Charbonneau-Gundy (2004) state:

Now we are putting forward the idea that video production can be a tool for representation and inquiry, and a way to go “thick and deep” into the study of our classrooms. As educational researchers and practitioners, we could be producing our own classics in school-based ethnographies... (p. 287)

I draw on Mitchell, Kusner, and Charbonneau-Gowdy (2004) in looking at how data can be gleaned not only from what the university researcher collects but also through the eyes and ears of participants. I did learn much from the

participants' analysis of their videos as well as from the one that documented the project, but in the end I acknowledge that I still maintain the authority to write the final interpretation of this work.

Data collection

The course I created and taught represented the first phase in a larger ethnographic research project. My research assistant at the time, Stuart Poyntz, and I interviewed each of the educators and high school students prior to the beginning of the project. This was done in the spring of 2005. In these pre-project semi-structured interviews, students were asked to talk about what they expected from the course and about their experience in media production, media education, and collaborative projects. The interviews were conducted individually with the educators, and took place at their place of work, and in groups with the high school students at their school.

Five collaborative videos were created as part of the course. My data sources include filming of the class, the participants' PSA videos, interviews (individual, paired or small group) with participants, and reflective papers from the educators. A second interview was done after the course in the fall of 2005. Jennifer Muir, an educator who was not part of the project, did most of this interviewing.² Interviews were conducted either individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Jennifer or I watched the videos with participants and asked them to comment on their own and the other videos. I used this interview as part of my data as well as the written reflections and evaluations of the course by students. The videos were approximately one minute in length and had to have something to do with the media. For example, one video consisted of two girls getting bombarded with tennis balls, while text was shown about how youth are bombarded with advertising.

The actual collaborative classroom sessions were videotaped by Evan Crowe, who worked in a community media program as a youth mentor. His footage allowed me to analyze the process. All of the video footage (approximately 20 hours) was logged and analyzed.

After the interviews, I debriefed with the research assistants and listened to each interview. The semi-structured interviews lasted from approximately 45 minutes to 90 minutes. By design, most of the educators were interviewed individually. The high school students were given the option of individual, paired, or group interviews; most elected to be interviewed with others. Most of the teachers were interviewed during the school year at their schools; they had limited time and were spread across the Lower Mainland. The high school students, on the other hand, were from one school and many of them knew each other. For the most part, they were comfortable with peers being present when being interviewed by my research assistant. More data were collected

about the educators, since their portion of the course ran 40 hours. High school students only participated for 18 of the 40 hours.

In the post-class interviews, Jennifer Muir asked students about their thoughts and feelings regarding the course, focusing specifically on the collaborative process. She also asked them to reflect on their videos and the meanings that they and other class members attributed to them.

KEY THEMES

Epistemic

A number of themes emerged in the process of coding and analyzing data from reflection papers written by educators, video of the classroom sessions, videos produced by participants, and interviews. In what follows, I discuss the central themes that emerged using the categories of epistemic claims and collaboration dilemmas, relationships and culture.

Epistemic claims and collaboration dilemmas: Equal footing but different feet?

Amy [E]³: It's [collaboration] one of those words that it is easy for people to agree with and can mean very different things.

The educators had different experiences with collaboration. Those who were performing artists talked about the culture of collaboration within the arts; a number of participants had experience teaching drama or performing in plays. Another taught visual arts to students in an alternative program, and she talked about collaboration as essential to obtaining the cooperation of the students. Others talked about "steering" projects with children and youth but "giving them latitude," as a form of collaborative teaching.

Thinking through assessment is key to developing the trust needed to collaborate. In his reflection paper, Michael [E] commented:

Further complicating matters was my desire to do well in university and to align myself with the collaborative aims of this course. Paradoxically, these aims then have the potential to generate mildly coercive behaviour as grad students attempt to ensure that we demonstrate collaboration with youth. I'm very glad that we weren't graded individually on our efforts with the production of the video as I think this helped the grad students to avoid focusing on how we appeared to collaborate and allowed more space to simply focus on the attempt to do so.

Some of the high school students reported being bored for what Sandra [HS] called the "learning day". This was a section of the course in which project team members took all of the students through the techniques of video production and also talked about strategies for constructing PSAs. Melinda [HS] and Sandra [HS] contrasted this to the brainstorming and thinking time.

Interviewer: And what part did you like the best?

Melinda [HS]: I liked brainstorming and thinking.

Sandra [HS]: Yeah, that was so much fun. It was like we went from a totally different. Like we started somewhere and then went to a totally different place.

Melinda and Sandra are stating that learning is something that takes place in a formal classroom situation in which a teacher is at the front of the room and talking to students. They contrast this with the “brainstorming” and “thinking” time in which they are full actors in the process of determining the video production process.

Knowledge of technology was a part of the collaborative relationship in a number of ways. For example, the high school students’ confidence in using and helping the educators use the technology was evident in the interviews, particularly with male high school students.

Joe [HS]: One of the main reasons that it was easy to do that is because we all were sort of able to put different things into it. Like, me and Quinn [HS] sort of had one side of it, but they had another side. We were all on equal footing but we were like, we were all on different feet. [chuckles]

Here we see that knowledge of the technology disrupts notions of the young student and older teacher. Later, Joe elaborated that they were not merely equal to the educators; in some regards, they claimed greater strength.

I mean, you’re just talking about it like oh, it’s all special to be on equal footing with teachers and I thought like, it sort of turned out to be like we knew how to use video cameras and they didn’t. [laughter]

Quinn and Joe are making a claim of superior knowledge. This and similar claims sometimes resulted in frustration in the group when the educators sometimes felt that that high school students, particularly the males ones, were dominating the technology.

The high school students talked about how they and the educators brought different things to the table. The high school students often had greater technological skills, but sometimes the adults had more experience with organization, which assisted in getting the video done. Melinda [HS], Louie [HS], and Sandra [HS] talked about how Doris, the educator they worked with (a high school principal), “kept them on track but not like in a bossy way.” They maintained, “She wasn’t our leader or anything. She was just part of the group.” After the video was completed, Doris [E] asked Melinda [HS], Louie [HS], and Sandra [HS] what they thought of the process. They talked about how they felt listened to and respected. Doris [E] responded that it was “a two-way street... because... I am just a geek when it comes to, you know, technology. And I said you guys are great and very supportive of me. So I always felt that that was reciprocated.” Kathy [E] talked about Sophie’s [HS] ability to see what she wanted to create and the ability of the educators to help her articulate this through drawing and asking questions.

Interpersonal dynamics and power

The educators who were also elementary teachers sometimes expressed some anxiety about working with youth. One connected her nervousness with the age group to her own negative experiences as a teenager. The high school students, overall, expressed excitement about the prospect of collaborating with adults. They talked about how “strange” or “weird” it would feel to work as a partner with adults, some their parents’ age, rather than working in a hierarchal relationship of student-teacher.

Educators and high school students sometimes had different interpretations of the collaborative process. The youth for the most part spoke of feeling like they were “equal” and how unique an experience this was for them within an educational context. Josif [HS] explained how unique it was to not have an adult say “okay we’re going to do it like this.” He understood this happens because it is seen as saving time; however, he went on to explain why not doing this made the class enjoyable for him:

I think we got much more out of it.... It didn’t really feel like it was school, right, when I went to the video project. It was more like all the grown-ups there and the teachers and stuff were all like equal and we were all talking to each other like we were friends like we’re. Like they’re not teachers, you know? Like there weren’t any differences between us. So everyone was kind of equal. (Josif) [HS]

A theme throughout the high school students’ remarks is the feeling of being equal and respected. Christopher [HS] talked about how much he enjoyed working with the educators and how he wanted to try harder because they “perceived me as something.” When Claire [HS] asked what he meant by “something,” he responded: “Something more recognizable than just like a student or something.” Claire [HS] agreed with this and added:

Accepted. Like everything you said actually mattered. You know? Whereas before it was like, well. “Okay. Well, we’ll keep that in mind.” But now it’s like your opinion can actually change that decision.

One high school student who is also an ESL learner spoke of the anxiety of choosing the wrong words or having incorrect grammar when speaking with people older than herself, but also about being excited by the possibility of being seen as an equal participant.

You, you think like even though I’m smaller, I’m accepted... in like older people’s group. So you just get there and say what you want. And they just accept. If it’s wrong, they just tell you it’s wrong. If not,... And they just kind of accept that you, like if it’s wrong, they give you the reason. If not, like, just say, no, my opinion is better. (Sophie) [HS]

Here Sophie [HS] still assumes that if an adult states something is wrong, it is, but she feels that her views are respected. At other times in the interview, she talked about feeling like she could assert her opinions and be treated

with respect by the educators. Sophie and a number of the other high school students talked about how powerful it was to be in a situation with adults in which they were all students and in which everyone had a collective purpose. The different skills and experiences youth and adults brought to the project was also a theme in many of the interviews.

Some of the educators talked about how nice it was to work with high school students who were participating voluntarily, rather than by requirement. Some of the high school students talked about how the money, an honorarium, was an incentive. The high school students said they ended up enjoying it far more than they had expected to. Joe [HS] maintained he did do it for the money but that he had fun and it was better than “some crappy job.”

High school students and educators were asked if they felt they had fully participated and if others in their group had as well. The high school students all said they felt they fully participated and that they felt equal to the educators in determining the nature of the video. They spoke highly of the educators. Joe [HS] talked about how, as a group, they sat down and thought through the main concept of their movie:

... it was kind of cool. One of us would like think of like a sort of broad, open idea and another person would like narrow it down and like add something to it. And we'd just keep on doing that until we got some, till we got our good idea.

Sometimes it seemed like equal meant the youth took the lead:

So yeah, they would let me to do whatever I thought, not whatever I thought, but they just, they trusted me. (Sophie [HS])

Yvette [E] and Kathy [E] worked with Sophie [HS] and expressed the sense that they let Sophie take over. Kathy asked in the graduate-student-only debrief: “Is that collaboration?” Terri [E] asked if Kathy [E] had given up too much. Terri, in asking the question, talked about how she had to tell the boys she was working with that they needed to make room for her and her needs in the project. Interestingly, Kathy also talked about how youth do well with structure and that it is important for youth and educators to know where their respective parameters are. She feels strongly that eventually consensus must be reached. The high school students and the educators have different views of the experience. Sophie [HS], for example, stated that it had been collaborative, while the educators put themselves in a more maternal or teacherly role. They felt their job was to empower Sophie [HS] rather than to enter into a dialogue in which they could disagree and challenge. Diane [E], whom I discuss below, talked about the lack of time to develop deep relationships that might have initiated a more collaborative process.

An issue that came up with educators was the difficulty of changing roles. Amy [E] spoke of how roles are so entrenched that breaking out of them is

challenging. She spoke of how *inviting* youth to collaborate and *doing* it are two different things.

...youth and kids have spent, for the most part, have spent a lifetime sort of having to do what adults tell them to, so you can't just turn that off.

Yvette [E] reported how she was struck by the focus on creating a welcoming environment – especially for most youth – by not starting too early in the day and by providing food. She said she came to realize more clearly that instead of seeing youth as lazy, one could construct them as having busy schedules and needing structures that allow them to participate. She compared this to her needs for childcare provisions for her to be able to participate fully.

But Michael [E] brought up the difference between talking about change and acting on his talk.

We spent a lot of time in the first few classes dealing with how to be respectful with youth and how to really set up equitable partnerships. And once the youth appeared, it was interesting because we had that in our heads, but at the same time, you fall back on certain teacherly things. Sometimes it's modes of voice. And it was difficult to, you know, to not be aware of the differences between the two groups particularly around food. At food time everybody would separate.

As the course progressed, high school students and educators who were in the same video group sometimes ate together, but people tended to sit next to people of similar age, especially at the beginning of the course. This is probably not just a matter of age but also related to the educators knowing each other and the high school students knowing each other prior to the first meeting.

Amy [E], was aware of how the power configuration changed when I or any other member of the teaching staff was present.

Any time any sort of a teacher or authority came by, the entire language, the entire positioning, everything was just put on for show.... yeah I think it was completely limiting.

Amy [E] points out how formal power structures always exert control, despite attempts to create a space that allows for a plurality of opinions and power by both youth and adults. Terri [E] talked about how she and the other educator she was working with were both conscious of their behaviour, rather than it being “submerged out of habit.” For this reason they were able to look at and act on what was going on. They both examined the dynamics and challenged themselves and the young men they were working with when they felt the dynamics were not serving everyone's needs. Amy contrasted this with the young men with whom she enjoyed working. She felt that they were able to say when their needs were being met but were less capable of seeing what was happening for the educators. Gender became a dominant feature in this group as the young men saw themselves as more capable with the technology and sometimes became frustrated with the female educators.

Participants were never explicitly censored in what they created, but young video mentors provided them with advice. Furthermore, during the first class we looked at Public Service Announcements that my research assistants and I considered exemplary. In this way we were directing students as to what we saw as “good.” Of course, issues of self-censorship are always present. These were schooled students. They had years of knowing what the teacher expected, even when not stated, but also years of media implicitly teaching the lessons of effective and ineffective media. In this class there were intergenerational and positional differences that required a sophisticated analysis by participants to negotiate and to communicate their vision for the video. This is an unequal process that is based partly on structural power issues, which are connected to the confidence of individuals to communicate with others who are seen as powerful. However, video production is interesting because who is seen as having more influence or power can change quickly. For example, one person might have the power of the mouse because of her editing ability and another the power to focus a group because of age.

Differences in age caused some divide in the group. However, some of the tension was between adults: between participants who understood references to current pop culture and those who did not. For example, one participant felt he was being portrayed as a “slacker guy” even though he believed that the work was being done; he and the high school participant merely had a different way of communicating and getting the work done.

Culture

On the first day that the high school students and educators were together, we brainstormed ideas for the Public Service Announcements. I was assisted by two educators (who have now completed their studies) – Stuart Poyntz and Corin Kokotailo Browne – who both have extensive backgrounds in media education. A theme that generated a great deal of conversation was representations of masculinity. A number of the young men in the group spoke of being pressured to act in hyper-masculine ways that they didn’t identify with. At lunch a discussion ensued in which Terri, a middle-aged white educator, and a number of high school students had an animated discussion about identity. A group formed that determined it would look at how hip-hop is marketed, another group formed to look at “mooks” (guys who do macho and dangerous things), two groups formed to look at advertising, and two formed to look at identity. The hip-hop and mook groups and one of the advertising groups specifically challenged stereotypical masculinity. Michael [E] spoke of connecting with Jacob [HS] on popular culture. He and Jacob both watched the show the Family Guy. Michael liked parts of the show, but he found the misogyny in the show challenging and sometimes felt like he wanted to “lecture” Jacob [HS]. But he thought about it and decided not to:

So it was hard or I could feel like there's that thing, like, I enjoy this. Don't ruin it for me. And I'm saying that you know, I think adults really don't respect young people. Like, you're right. You do enjoy this and I should respect that kind of thing.

Here, Michael is dealing with contradictory and sometimes uncomfortable ways of watching programs, such as the *Family Guy*. He likes it but simultaneously is uncomfortable with parts of it. Frequently in talking to youth about programs such as the *Family Guy*, adults focus on irony and how the *Family Guy* and other shows are making fun of misogyny rather than promoting it. In this case, the duality of Michael's own interpretation is layered with his concerns and assumptions about how Jacob might be interpreting the show and possibly developing his sense of gender and sexuality from the show.

The sense that the differences between adults and youth were eliminated is a common – albeit contested – theme throughout the data. Some of the educators maintained that when working side by side with youth, at first adults might think they have all the answers, but as youth and adults get into the collaborative work at hand, the age difference is minimized and everyone works together. Others spoke of wanting to get away from the power differences, which were described as the informal power that operated between the youth and the adults, the facilitators and the students, and between men and women.

Connected to the discovery of different skills and experiences is a process of questioning previously fixed ideas about the other. A number of the high school students, particularly the group that worked with the school principal, commented that the adults they worked with seemed not like teachers but like equal participants. Louie [HS] reported:

I mean, I didn't know she was an actual principal! And I would never have thought she was a principal at all.

The concept of what a school principal or teacher is seemed to revolve around setting rules and enforcing them, and determining what was to be learned and how. Most of the educators had critiques of the implied adolescent, but some spoke of how meeting the high school students challenged them to look at the assumptions they had made about youth and themselves. Michael's [E] implied youth was one of being hip, and, through the course, he realized he was no longer young and hip and that hanging out with the youth would not make him so.

One of the things that I thought was interesting for me is that [pauses] it wasn't so much me wanting to step, to step out of my adult role and cling to my adult role, it was part of what was happening to me was "oh, I'm no longer young."

Kathy [E], an elementary school teacher, talked about how impressed she was with the high school students and how this brought her to see youth in general in a more positive light. Other educators made assumptions based on their

experience of working with youth who were constructed within the school system as “at risk” or otherwise problematic. Terri [E] compared the youth in the class with the youth she works with at an alternative setting.

And so these youth coming in to this project. It was like, oh wow, this, this is nothing... They're not acting out. They're not poking each other. They're not stealing the equipment [laughter] ... I was pleasantly surprised because they were, they seemed so mature and so with it. Like, so with, not coming up to me and hating me before they'd even talked to me. But actually being curious and being able to just have this very respectful relationship.

The categorical nature of youth was disrupted through Terri's relationships with the students. However, these spaces were not uniform among educators and high school students. Maureen [E] explains adolescents in essentialist terms. She believed they were naturally less logical and angrier than adults, even if they did not know it:

Many of them are still stuck in the syllogisms, you know, so that you wind up with everything being black. [Laughter] If this one's black and that one's black, then my whole world is black. [Laughter]. And so, you know, we've seen that in youth culture over the years, it's a repetitive thing and that's because that's so endemic, you know, in their thinking.

The sociocultural context in which youth are angry is absent, replaced by a universalistic and biological notion of what it means to be a youth.

On the one hand, Doris [E] views youth as naively accepting the images they see in a world that has become increasingly more complicated for them; on the other hand, she views youth as sophisticated and knowledgeable because of their access to media and the Internet. Doris's statement includes epistemic claims, as well as cultural understandings of youth and her understanding of power based on the categorization of youth and adult. She wants to know more about how youth become passionate and interested in the world. Youth have differential access to technology based on economic capital, and this is entrenching a divide that rarely enters discussions about youth and technology; however, it does speak to the world of many high school students in the study and the youth in Doris's [E] school, who were engaged with technology at home and in their leisure time. It also speaks to how the youth Doris refers to, both at her school and the high school participants in the project, often see making meaning and sharing it through video and the Internet as central to their lives.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this paper was to show how educator-youth collaboration using video creates a place to explore critical media education as a strategy for more democratic pedagogy. In this study I argue that media is central to how youth and adults come to understand each other and that collaboration has the

potential to create new ways of creating stories that allow youth to be more than troubled and troublesome and educators to be more than disciplinarians. Video collaboration projects can allow youth and educators a time to consider strategies for challenging media representations (including their own) that exclude, demonize, or marginalize groups of people

Following Giroux and Aronowitz (1991), this study emphasizes the need for schools to take into account the epistemic claims that students make based on popular culture and to use this knowledge to engage in dialogue. However, lacking in much of the critical pedagogy literature is an analysis of educators' understandings of how media influences them. Adults come to learn about youth, social problems, the environment, and a host of other issues through the media. What do they learn about youth that they deem different than themselves? How does this influence the way they interact with them and their parents? I argue that media accounts of troubled and troublesome youth do play a role in the construction of youth pathology. Media education for adults or collaborative youth-adult media education provides a space for stories that allow complexity and diversity:

The goal of collaboration should not necessarily be consensus, but the willingness of participants to look at the contradictions and disagreements they have with each other but are also contained in the videos they produce. A video can be both radical and conservative at the same time. We need only look at shows like the Simpsons to see a show that is seen as both radical and conservative to understand the need to be complex in our analysis of media. Collaborating in creating and talking about media has the potential to challenge simplistic understandings of media, youth and educators. At the moment there are too few opportunities for youth and adults within the educational system to move beyond mere critique of media and to use media as a way to initiate dialogue about creating a more hopeful and equitable world.

In this study, I looked at power relationships between high school and graduate students and found there were openings, albeit partial ones, to challenge normative adult-youth relations. High school participants reported feeling a sense of "being somebody" even though this happened within asymmetrical power relations with adults. While youth reported feeling equal, the adults sometimes felt that their job was to facilitate the voice of youth rather than to have a voice themselves. Some adults tried to have a dialogue (defined differently by different students) with the youth but found that, due to lack of time and a lack of attention to issues other than age (gender, for example), they were not provided with the space to do this.

The idea is not to eliminate power but to question how it operates – and many of the educators did this. Working towards these possibilities opened up some space for dialogue and action within the class. Another area that

requires more research is to look at frequent claims that the use of technology, including video, transforms schools and flattens hierarchies. A more complex analysis would examine underlying contradictions about choice, creativity, and individualization alongside increased competition and standardization. This project took place within a specific cultural context that includes notions of schooling, what it is to be a youth, and what it means to an adult. Within this, openings did occur through which adults and youth challenged their implied notions of what it means to be a youth or adult. Some of the educators spoke of being surprised at how articulate and engaged the youth were, and the youth spoke of thinking of the educators not as teachers but as equal participants. The implied youth and educator appeared to be disrupted for some students when they worked together. However, idealized notions of equality were challenged by many of the educators who noted the power differences based not just in age but also in gender. Furthermore, it was noted when I or any other authority figure was in the room the students seemed keen to do what they felt I was looking for.

Imitation of what the authority wants is a danger that Buckingham (2003) speaks to. Students may substitute imitation of corporate media standards for imitating what the critical pedagogue is looking for. Challenging this imitation requires time but also an examination of the structure of power between the professor or researcher and the participants. There was a lack of time to more fully develop the relationships of trust that might have provided more opportunities to discuss and interrogate the structure of power and collaborative ways of thinking about and attempting to alter power dynamics. Ultimately, though, power differences can be altered but not eliminated given the history of institutional structures and relationships between youth and adults and other axes of power.

An understanding of critical media education which takes into account the specificity of epistemic claims and acknowledges multiple identities, along with respect for specific cultural contexts and power within the classroom, has the potential to provide a pedagogy that allows for a more nuanced understanding of dialogue, collaboration and action.

NOTES

1. The high school students were given an honorarium, through research funds, and some received work experience credit at school. Giving an honorarium ensured that those with jobs (many of them) could take time off and not lose money.
2. I wanted a research assistant who would not be perceived by the students as invested in seeing the course as a success. Furthermore, I was supervising some of the educators for their graduate

degrees and felt interviewing them and asking them to be critical of their experience in the course would put them in an awkward position.

3. E will be used to indicate a participant who was an educator and graduate student at the time of the project, and HS to indicate a participant who was a high school student at the time of the project. Participants selected their own pseudonyms Or asked me to do so.

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MICHELLE STACK is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. Her areas of study and teaching include educational policy, impact of Media on policy and leadership, media and pathologizing of children, participatory research and joint media education with youth, teachers and principals. Michelle.stack@ubc.ca

MICHELLE STACK est professeure associée au département des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université de la Colombie-Britannique. Ses intérêts de recherche et d'enseignement comprennent les politiques éducationnelles, l'impact des médias sur les politiques et le leadership, les médias et la pathologisation des enfants, la recherche participative ainsi que l'éducation concertée aux médias avec les jeunes, les enseignants et les directeurs. Michelle.stack@ubc.ca

A REVIEW OF LEGISLATION AND BYLAWS RELEVANT TO BULLYING

LAUREN STANTON & TANYA BERAN *University of Calgary*

ABSTRACT. In this article we review legislation and bylaws that relate to school bullying. This review focuses on the differences in how bullying is defined by researchers and legislators. It further examines how some laws identify bullying specifically, whereas others address more general acts of aggression. Some laws pertain to the school environment, while others specify the workplace environment. We also examine the role of bylaws in addressing bullying. We conclude that bullying is often absent from legislation, and when it is included its definition varies across jurisdictions and/or omits non-physical forms.

PORTRAIT DE LA LÉGISLATION ET DE LA RÉGLEMENTATION AYANT TRAIT À L'INTIMIDATION

RÉSUMÉ. Dans cet article, nous passons en revue la législation et la réglementation en lien avec l'intimidation à l'école. Ce portrait cible les différences existant entre les définitions que donnent au phénomène les chercheurs et les législateurs. Il examine également la manière dont certaines lois identifient l'intimidation où d'autres ciblent des actes d'agressions plus généraux. Enfin, certaines lois abordent la problématique au sein du contexte scolaire, alors que d'autres visent les milieux de travail. Par ailleurs, nous faisons l'examen du rôle des règlements dans le traitement de l'intimidation. Nous concluons que l'intimidation est fréquemment ignorée par les législateurs. Lorsqu'intégrée à la législation, sa définition varie considérablement selon les juridictions et/ou omet les formes non-physiques d'agressions.

A substantial body of research has shown that bullying is associated with a number of long-term negative consequences (Brunstein, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007; Fosse & Holen, 2006; Smith, Cousins, & Stewart, 2005). Targeted children are likely to be at risk for internalizing disorders, such as depression, anxiety, diminished self-esteem, social withdrawal, suicide ideation, and suicide attempts (Brunstein et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2005). With the increased interest in this field and with a more comprehensive understanding of the negative consequences associated with bullying, a number of countries have proposed amendments to legislation recognizing bullying as a criminal

offence. These laws have been introduced with the intention of preventing and better managing incidents of bullying, particularly when individuals are aware that bullying is illegal and punishable under law.

This paper reviews current legislation relevant to school bullying (separate from workplace bullying) in several countries, including Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Finland. First, current definitions of bullying and related terms used in legislation are discussed. Then, current international legislation that addresses bullying and a review of legislation in Canada are presented. In addition, this paper will review current bylaws that give police officers the authority to fine individuals who bully.

DEFINITIONS

To ensure a common understanding of legal terms, this paper begins by reviewing a number of important definitions. Legislation is defined as the process of making or enacting a positive law in written form, based on a particular formal procedure, by a branch of government constituted to perform this process (Garner, 2004). A bylaw can be defined as a rule or administrative provision adopted by an institute for its internal governance and its external dealings.

The definition of bullying is critical to understanding relevant legislation. Within the academic community, researchers studying bullying tend to operationalize bullying as an aggressive behaviour that is intended to cause distress or harm, exists in relationships where there is an imbalance of power whereby the targeted child is unable to defend him/herself, and is repeated over time (Limber & Small, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993). The perpetrator is likely to feel excited and powerful, whereas the targeted child is likely to feel hurt, embarrassed and publicly humiliated (e.g., *R. v. D.W. and K.P.D.* [2002] BCPC 96). Indeed, about 85% of bullying incidents occur before an audience of peers (Craig & Pepler, 1997). Repetition and power differential are considered core to the definition of bullying (Olweus, 2001) and differentiate bullying from other forms of aggression (Beran, 2006).

Bullying behaviours have been categorized along two main dimensions: direct behaviours that include verbal abuse (e.g., name calling, threatening and taunting) and physical actions (e.g., hitting, kicking, and shoving). Included in this dimension are sexual behaviours (e.g., unwanted kissing, touching, flirting) (Espelage & Holt, 2007; Pepler et al., 2006). These behaviours are directly experienced by a targeted child. Another group of bullying behaviours is described as indirect, or covert, whereby a child is targeted circuitously through other peers. These behaviours include threatening, gossiping, spreading rumors, and social alienation (deliberately excluding someone from the peer group). A newly emerged form of bullying is cyber-bullying (electronic or on-line bullying) that involves the use of technology such as e-mails and cell phones to send hurtful or intimidating messages to peers (Beran & Li, 2005). These

behaviours are considered indirect because the encounter is not face-to-face, but rather is through an interface.

Although bullying behaviours have been specifically and consistently defined in the research, definitions of bullying, if they even exist, vary widely across legislative Acts. In the United States, the definition varies across states. Of the 22 states that have legislation pertaining to bullying, only nine provide a definition of the scope of behaviours that constitute bullying. Some states provide a narrow definition of bullying that focuses exclusively on physical actions of students (Limber & Small, 2003), and some have a definition that is synonymous with harassment and intimidation, resulting in a broad definition of bullying. An example of a broad definition is taken from Louisiana's (2002) statute:

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying shall mean any intentional gesture or written, verbal, or physical act that: (a) a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of harming a student or damaging his property or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to his life of person or damage to his property; and (b) is so severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive educational environment for a student.

Bullying definitions used in legislation typically include the aggressive and intentional nature of an individual, yet often neglect to include less overt forms such as threatening, gossiping or spreading rumors (Limber & Small, 2003). The courts may perceive the latter behaviours as minimally harmful or violent to the individual experiencing them (Shariff, 2005). Thus, legislation that perceives bullying as solely physical or verbal undermines and underestimates the negative impact of other types of bullying (e.g., indirect) on individuals. A number of negative consequences associated with indirect forms of bullying have been empirically supported in the literature (Beran & Li, 2005; Brunstein et al., 2007; Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005; Shariff, 2005; Smith et al., 2005).

Due to inconsistencies in the definition of bullying in the statutes, there is great variation in how the law is applied to bullying (Limber & Small, 2003). This makes it challenging for individuals who are required to carry out the provisions of anti-bullying laws. We recommend that legislators develop precise and consistent definitions that conform more closely to the recognized definition of bullying used in the research community (Limber & Small, 2003).

LEGISLATION ACROSS COUNTRIES

There is considerable variability in legislation relevant to bullying across countries. For example, some countries have identified bullying as "moral harassment," or "mobbing" and typically include repeated, non-physical acts of harassment at the workplace, occurring over a significant time period that have

a humiliating effect on the victim. Others have defined bullying to exclusively include physical harm (Limber & Small, 2003; OPSEU, 2007). In addition, some countries have considered bullying in several contexts, whereas other countries have explicitly discussed bullying within the workplace. Although moral harassment is considered to be covered under the Safety and Health Framework Directive (89/391/EEC), (The European Union On-Line, 2009) current discussion about moral harassment suggests that further EU legislation, likely in the form of a new directive or an amendment to the Safety and Health Framework Directive, may be pending.

Many European and Scandinavian countries, including Germany, Italy, Sweden, The Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, and Norway have introduced laws to deal with psychological aggression (OPSEU, 2007). Belgium and France introduced legislation against moral harassment (bullying) at work covering a range of behaviours, including verbal abuse, bullying, mobbing, and sexual harassment (OPSEU, 2007). The French law includes "moral harassment" as a criminal offence. Punishments for this type of crime can be as severe as imprisonment and fines (OPSEU, 2007). In the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia, psychological violence is included under existing workplace safety legislation (OPSEU, 2007).

As mentioned previously, the differences in legislation can be, to some extent, due to the differences in legislators' understanding of bullying. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that legislators and communities that perceive bullying as having little impact on an individual's psychological, emotional, or cognitive well-being are unlikely to include bullying in criminal law. It is important to recognize that some countries discuss bullying legislation only in the context of the workplace. Therefore, one is required to interpret existing laws as applicable to the school context. Countries reviewed here include the United Kingdom, the United States, and Finland because they represent various types of legislation relevant to bullying.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom does not currently have laws pertaining to school bullying. Instead, individuals must interpret the law to make the case that it is applicable to bullying, and these can generally be drawn from workplace laws. However, there is no workplace bullying law.¹ For example, the *Protection from Harassment Act* (1997) may be of use if the bullying occurs frequently. Examples of such behaviours include making regular phone calls to an individual's home during unsocial hours or during a leave of absence. Thus, the Act is essentially used to protect individuals from stalkers; however, it has been used against bullies in the workplace. Because this Act considers bullying in the workplace to be inappropriate and criminal, it seems reasonable to interpret this law as being applicable within the school environment. Other Acts relevant to bullying within the school system include: the *Negligence Act*, the *Criminal Justice*

& Public Order Act (1994), and the *Malicious Communication Act* (1988). Each Act and its relevance to school bullying will be discussed below.

First, the *Negligence Act* provides protection against psychiatric injury arising out of the employer's failure to protect employees from bullying, harassment, and victimization. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that principals can be held accountable for negligence if they place no effort in protecting students and teachers against bullying in school or in school-related activities. Thus, principals may be held liable for negligence in cases where students are negatively impacted by bullying if they have not taken action to prevent or minimize the bullying incidents. Second, the *Criminal Justice & Public Order Act* (1994) protects against intentional harassment. This means harassing, or causing alarm or distress to, another individual by using threatening, abusive, or insulting words or behaviour. This Act can be applicable to school bullying, where students who bully other students, both on and off school property, causing distress or alarm will be held accountable for their actions. Third, the *Malicious Communication Act* (1988) protects against harassing and abusing phone calls. The *Malicious Communication Act* is an example of an Act in the UK that protects against some technological forms of bullying, and can be interpreted to include other electronic communicative devices, including the Internet, answering machines, msn, etc.

United States

The concern of school bullying has intensified since school policy makers have made the safety of U.S. schools an important issue (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007a). State legislators articulate that a safe and civil school environment is necessary for student learning and high academic achievement (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007a). About 20 states (including two political territories) in the United States currently have school bullying laws (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007b). Each state has a separate school safety enactment and the description of state legislation varies across each. However, most states include at least one or more of these components: statement prohibiting bullying, definition of bullying, state-level support, school intervention strategies, individual reporting and immunity, public school reporting, parental rights, teacher and staff training, prevention task forces and programs, and integrated curriculum instruction (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2007a). For a detailed analysis of characteristics of these anti-bullying laws, see Greene and Ross (2005).

In addition, eight states have enacted cyber bullying legislation; each state's legislation is distinct and, therefore, varies to some extent. However, each state's legislation includes electronic communication as a component of bullying (National Conference of States Legislatures, 2007c). States that have integrated cyber bullying in the legislation include Arkansas, Delaware, Minnesota, Or-

egon, Washington, South Carolina, Idaho, and Iowa (National Conference of States Legislatures, 2007c).

Finland

There are four laws relevant to bullying in Finland. First, bullies can be fined, regardless of their age. This law came into effect in 1995, after two 15-year-old individuals were charged with systematically bullying one of their peers both physically and psychologically. Each bully was fined 1,200 Euros for inducing mental pain and 120 Euros for physically abusing the victim. This case set the precedent for individuals found guilty of bullying (Bjorkqvist & Jansson, 2001). Second, in 1999, new school legislation was developed emphasizing school safety (Bjorkqvist & Jansson, 2001). Third, in addition to being fined, bullies can be presented with a restraining order by the court (Bjorkqvist & Jansson, 2001). In 2000, two 16-year-old individuals were presented with restraining orders, forbidding them to go near a peer that they had bullied. This particular case set precedent to prevent bullies from interacting with individuals they had bullied. Fourth, school authorities can be held accountable for negligence in cases involving bullying and school violence. Thus, school authorities may be fined if found guilty of neglect (Bjorkqvist & Jansson, 2001). The Finnish Code of Law concerning comprehensive schools, the Code of Law for senior secondary schools, and the Code of Law for vocational schools each state that all individuals have the right to a safe school environment (Bjorkqvist & Jansson, 2001). Thus, these laws cover physical safety as well as protection against bullying and exposure to violence in school (Bjorkqvist & Jansson, 2001). School authorities who neglect to ensure a safe and healthy school environment for students can be held culpable of neglect under Finnish law. In addition, the *Finnish Basic Education Act* (628/1998/paragraph 29) specifies a student's right to a safe study environment and freedom from violence or bullying at school or in any school activity.

CURRENT STATUTES IN CANADA DIRECTLY RELATED TO BULLYING

Only two provinces in Canada have developed statutes on school bullying: the *Public Schools Act Part III* in Manitoba and the *Education Act* in Ontario. That said, other provinces address issues of bullying under workplace Acts that, while not designed specifically around school, do have legislative governance of this issue. Each Act, as it pertains to school bullying, is discussed below.

Manitoba

There are three sections specific to anti-bullying policies found in the *Public Schools Act III*. Section 47. 1(1), *Codes of Conduct and Emergency Response Plans*, instructs the principal for each school, in collaboration with the school advisory committee, to establish a code of conduct for pupils and staff and an emergency response plan for the school that is reviewed at least annually.

Section 47.1(2) insists that the content of the Code of Conduct include five components.

1. It must include a statement that pupils and staff behave in a respectful manner and comply with the code.
2. It must include a statement illustrating that bullying, or abusing any person physically, sexually, or psychologically, orally, in writing or otherwise is unacceptable. Furthermore, discriminating unreasonably on the basis of any characteristic set out in subsection 9(2) of the *Human Rights Code*, as well as using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs at school, is unacceptable.
3. A statement regarding the intolerance of gang involvement and weapon possession must be included.
4. A statement that pupils and staff must abide by the school policies respecting appropriate use of electronic material and the Internet, including the prohibition of accessing, uploading or distributing material that the school has determined unacceptable, must be included in the Code of Conduct.
5. The Code must include the disciplinary consequences, in as much detail as is reasonably possible, of violating the code, and the process of appealing disciplinary decisions. In addition, the code must meet any other requirements prescribed by regulation under *The Education Administration Act*.

In addition, section 47.1(3), *Content of emergency response plans*, outlines the school's responsibility to respond to any threats posed by a person having a weapon on the school site, dealing with bomb threats, fires, evacuating school buildings, and carrying out practice drills. These three sections provide general expectations about the inappropriateness of bullying by requiring a code of conduct, specifying its content, and managing emergencies. Because the second section identifies bullying specifically, it acknowledges these behaviours as unacceptable.

Ontario

Part XIII of Ontario's *Education Act* also pertains to misbehaviours that presumably include bullying. Specifically,

1. *Section 306(1)* instructs mandatory suspension of an individual if the individual commits 1 of 6 infractions while at school or while participating in school-related activities. Such infractions include uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person, swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority, committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property, or engaging in another activity that, under a policy of the board, is one for which a suspension is mandatory.
2. *Section 306(2)* describes the duration mandatory for a suspension, which ranges from one day to twenty days.
3. *Section 306(3)* indicates that teachers may suspend the individual or refer the matter to the principal.

4. Section 301(2) discusses six purposes of the Code of Conduct. One purpose is to ensure that all members of a school community, especially people in positions of authority, are treated with respect and dignity. Second, it promotes responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community. Third, it maintains an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility. Fourth, it encourages the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict. Fifth, it promotes the safety of people in the schools. Last, it discourages the use of alcohol and illegal drugs (Education Act, section 301(2)).

The Ontario Ministry of Education has recently proposed changes to the *Education Act* designed to stop students from posting online attacks against other students and teachers (CBC News, 2007). Education Minister Kathleen Wayne explained that cyber-bullying has been added to the list of offences in the Act. In a press conference at Queens Park in Toronto, Wayne suggested that the amendments are intended to address a number of issues. First, it is expected that there will be strong consequences for inappropriate behaviours. It is uncertain as to whether the intent is for these to be restorative and corrective, or punitive. The former is suggested by the second announcement: there will be reconciliatory programs provided for students to help them re-integrate into the classroom. Third, with this new amendment to the Act, the zero tolerance provisions to the Act will be eliminated. The elimination of the zero tolerance disciplinary rule resulted from a complaint on behalf of the students by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, alleging that the strict school policy was having “disproportionate impact on racial-minority students and students with disability” (CBC News, 2007). Even though the government has proposed such changes to the Act, section 306(1) discussed above is still active and applicable in the court of law. Therefore, at the present time, students can still receive mandatory suspensions if they violate any part of the Code of Conduct stated in the *Education Act*.

In addition, during the same press release, the Minister of Education indicated that the government of Ontario allocates over 20 million dollars a year to provide programs for expelled or suspended students (CBC News, 2007). In addition, these funds were provided to develop training programs for both principals and vice principals to effectively discipline students in a non-punitive manner, presumably with the intention of reducing the number of expulsions (CBC News, 2007). Thus, this announcement appears to recognize that punishment, in the form of suspension and expulsion, does not deal with the source of the bullying. Moreover, resources may now be allocated to resolve bullying situations.

Quebec

Quebec Acts do not make reference to school bullying specifically. Rather, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* refers to workplace bullying. It uses the term “psychological harassment,” defined as any vexatious behaviour (can

occur within a single serious incident) in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions, or gestures that affect an employee's dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that result in a harmful work environment for the employee. This Act can be extended to bullying in schools because school is considered an occupational environment. Thus, this Act can be extended to the harm experienced by students as a result of bullying.

Saskatchewan

Similar to Quebec, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* in Saskatchewan can be extended to school jurisdictions. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* was amended in 2006-2007, based on Bill Number 66, to include section 2(1b) regarding harassment (Bill 66, 2007). Specifically, this amendment redefines harassment as a means of any inappropriate conduct, comment, display, action, or gesture by a person that either: (a) is based on race, creed, religion, colour, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability, physical size or weight, age, nationality, ancestry, or place of origin, or (b) adversely affects the worker's psychological or physical well-being and that the person knows or ought reasonably to know would cause a worker to be humiliated or intimidated, or (c) constitutes a threat to the health and safety of other workers (Bill 66, 2007).

Therefore, based on this Act, it can be interpreted that students who negatively affect the psychological or physical well-being of another student or teacher, or who intimidate or humiliate another individual, can be guilty of a criminal offense. Thus, the amended *Occupational Health and Safety Act* can be interpreted to be applicable to individuals who bully in the school system.

Other provinces specify safety and respect in their school Acts. For example, in Alberta, a board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board is provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. Other provincial Acts such as in British Columbia refer to general codes of conduct.

CURRENT BYLAWS IN CANADA ON BULLYING

To date, Regina and Edmonton are the only two large cities in Canada with bylaws that give fines for bullying (CBC News, 2006; Toronto Star, 2003). Rocky Mountain House town council has also recently passed an anti-bullying bylaw that targets youth, adults, and bystanders (Town of Rocky Mountain House Bylaw 04/05V). Also North Battleford and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, have similar bylaws. Edmonton was the first city in Canada to develop such a bylaw. It gives authority to police officers to fine perpetrators of bullying a minimum of \$250. Bylaw fines range from \$125 in North Battleford to up to \$1000 for a second offence in Rocky Mountain House. Bullying behaviour,

according to these bylaws, includes acts that are physical and acts that threaten and intimidate others (*Toronto Star*, 2003). Physical fights are also included in some of these bylaws. The intention is to prevent individuals from continuing to engage in bullying and escalating in their behaviours (e.g., assault, gang violence, and harassment) by making bullying a criminal offence. This is significant because bullying has been shown in the research to be a risk factor for these more severe behaviours (Farrington & West, 1993; Olweus, 1991). In addition, supporters of the bylaw believe that the ability to fine individuals who threaten or intimidate others will deter such individuals from such behaviour (*Toronto Star*, 2003).

The Regina *Anti-Bullying and Public Fighting Bylaw* is somewhat different from the Edmonton bylaw. The former is applicable to bullying both in the community as well as online spaces, and to physical fights. It also allows higher fines, ranging from \$100 up to \$2000, and tickets are issued to the parents rather than to the youth between the ages of 12 to 16 years (City of Regina Bylaw #2006-38). This bylaw states that bullying another person in any public place or through written or electronic devices is illegal. In addition, taking pictures or videos of individuals fighting and then posting them online is an illegal behaviour. The intention of this bylaw is to reduce the bullying behaviours and decrease tolerance for such behaviours.

These bylaws may have a significant impact. In particular, they give recognition to the emotional and psychological suffering of the victim (Langevin, 2004). In addition, they may serve as a deterrent for individuals. Making bullying a criminal offence, with ensuing consequences, draws awareness to bullying behaviours and can challenge myths about bullying being a “rite of passage” (Langevin, 2004).

Even though these bylaws appear to have a significant purpose with clearly defined consequences, there is no documented evidence of their effectiveness. Thus, we interviewed constables from the Edmonton and Regina Police Services to understand their perceptions about the impact of this bylaw. To understand its *effectiveness on outcomes* such as bullying behaviours, we needed to first examine and understand its *process of implementation*. Constables indicated that students who are listed on a bullying complaint, and their parents, are brought together for a meeting with the Student Resource Officer (SRO)², who then explains the offence and bylaw. Once this information is given to the parties involved, the SROs monitor whether the bullying continues towards both the initial victim and any other students. If bullying continued, the ticket would be issued. In addition, SROs use other interventions such as checking on-line student discussions, presenting prevention/intervention programs to schools, and providing referrals for community resources to families.

In terms of outcome effectiveness, constables have indicated that few tickets have yet been issued because once students are aware of this consequence to

bullying, they generally cease the behaviour. There are some advantages to this bylaw. First, it addresses harassing behaviours not covered under the Criminal Code, such as gossiping or other forms of bullying that cause a targeted individual to feel harassed or bothered. Thus, it is seen as augmenting the Criminal Code. Second, the threshold of evidence is minimal, allowing officers to intervene in a variety of bullying situations. Third, the behaviours are broadly defined to allow the bylaw to be applicable to all bullying behaviours. Fourth, alternate forms of bullying, such as more indirect or covert behaviours, have been monitored through interviews with secondary people and do not seem to increase as a result of meeting with the SROs. Thus, once the youth are aware that they are being monitored by the police, they tend to decrease their bullying behaviours. In Edmonton, one SRO is assigned to 1-2 schools, allowing considerable opportunity to monitor bullying incidents and student relationships as well as discuss bullying, its impact, and intervention programs. This emphasis on public education by using the bylaw seemed critical to its effectiveness in both Regina and Edmonton.

In summary, the constables interviewed described the bully bylaw as a real enforceable consequence to bullying that has served as an effective intervention in stopping further bullying. Also, once a ticket has been issued and the bullying continues, police can elevate the charge to a criminal offense. Overall, the constables indicated that this bylaw is not strictly an enforcement law where tickets are automatically issued in any case of bullying. Rather, it was described as a reconciliatory law that, following education for the perpetrator, has been effective in preventing further incidents of bullying.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we have reviewed legislation and bylaws pertaining to bullying to determine the legal authority individuals have to manage this social problem. Several key findings emerged. Of particular importance is the failure in most jurisdictions to include the term *bullying* in school Acts. Bullying is often absent from legislation, and when it is included its definition varies across jurisdictions and/or omits non-physical forms. Despite these insights gained from the review, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Many search terms and legal sources were used, but it is possible that other definitions and specifications of law exist but were not included here. Also, laws are regularly formed and amended; thus, current laws must always be checked.

Although there is no single solution to the problem of bullying, there are many legal options presented in this paper. It is apparent that there is considerable variability in how legislators from various countries have identified bullying. All have attempted to describe some or many forms, with most of them identifying physical forms. No Acts, however, have included the definition Olweus developed when first studying bullying in the 1970s and that has been widely adopted by

researchers around the world. Rather than *define* bullying, legislation specifies *forms* of bullying. Given that there is an identifiable victim often referred to in these Acts, presumably the perpetrator has power over and repeatedly attacks this victim, which is consistent with Olweus' original definition. In addition, laws are less clear on consequences to bullying in cyber space. See Shariff (2009) for an examination of issues relevant to cyber bullying.

This review also reveals that few countries have created laws addressing bullying specifically, rather focusing on harassment and aggressive behaviour more generally. Bullying is one form of aggression that is related to other forms, such as reactive aggression (aggression in response to a negative emotion such as anger or frustration), peer conflict (equal power balance), and physical fights (mutual aggression). Bullying may also be related to discrimination, racism, and other forms of covert aggression. This broad view of aggression seems to be reflected in many laws.

Also, some countries have laws particular to the school context, whereas others pertain to the work environment. Although the workplace laws can be extrapolated to schools, these laws were created in consideration of the needs of adults, rather than youth. Moreover, it can be argued that they pertain to bullying against adults in the schools (teachers and administrators) rather than to bullying against students specifically.

Considering that bullying occurs frequently, and that every child is at risk, judges may be reluctant to rule in favor of victims with concern for exponentially increasing the number of formal complaints. Also, many of the laws are reactive, with the exception of the school/education Acts that specify school responsibility for establishing a safe school environment.

Although perpetrators and victims are generally identified in these laws, some also acknowledge responsibilities of bystanders who videotape or participate in public fights. Enforcing consequences for their neglect to act in a prosocial manner in these situations may help reduce bullying, given that bullies are influenced by their peers. It may also reduce fighting in the school yard if fewer students take video footage of the fighting. It is the first author's perception, based on applied work and research-based experiences, that taking pictures of a physical attack and posting them on the internet is not commonly known to be a libelous act. In section 111 under the *Protection of Privacy of Young Persons* within the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, it states that no person shall publish the name of a child or young person, or any other information related to a child or young person, if it would identify the child/young person as having been a victim of, or as having appeared as a witness in connection with, an offence committed or alleged to have been committed by a young person. Unless the child is over age 18 years or the parents consent, no person who is a victim of or witness to an offence can be identified through publication. What this

suggests is that a person who takes a picture of someone being attacked and posts the picture on the web may be held liable.

Finally, although this paper reviews laws that pertain to teachers, the question remains as to the specific responsibilities of teachers regarding bullying. According to the British Columbia Performance Standards guidelines on Social Responsibility (2000), teachers must monitor the social development of their students. If, according to the British Columbia Ministry of Education (1997), students are expected to develop a sense of social responsibility, and a tolerance and respect for the ideas and beliefs of others, does failure to do so suggest educational malpractice? When teachers ignore incidents of bullying, can they be held liable? Rather than mandate student social responsibility, Shariff (2009) recommends mandating professional development for all teachers regarding bullying. Indeed, such initiatives appear successful at increasing pre-service teachers' knowledge and skills to deal with school bullying (Beran & Tutty, 2007). This training can be extended to school administrators as well.

Related to the question about teacher negligence for student social development, can teachers be held liable for demonstrating bullying behaviours? A Canadian judge ruling in the case of a girl who claimed she was bullied by her teacher stated that only if the conduct is "sufficiently egregious and offensive to community standards of acceptable fair play should the courts even consider entertaining any type of claim in the nature of educational malpractice" (*Gould v. Regina (East) School Division, No. 77* (1996) [1997] 3 W.W.R. 177 (Sask.), as cited in Shariff, 2009). Thus, although there may be no legal consequence to teacher bullying, Shariff (in press) points out that teachers' demonstrations of disrespect towards students may result in negative on-line communications among students that could be perceived as defamatory and identified as forms of cyber bullying perpetrated by students against teachers. In short, trust and respect between students and teachers is critical in preventing these events.

Although numerous stakeholders have the potential to make a difference when it comes to bullying, no single group can take sole responsibility. Police officers may consider schools to have more authority to deal with bullying as the school Acts tend to allocate responsibility to schools for providing a safe learning environment. However, school officials may need to turn to police to help enforce rules. They may also consider bullying to be a family problem whereby children enact the values and behaviours they learn at home. Moreover, families may see bullying as a school problem, particularly because it occurs among peers at school (although cyber bullying occurs at home and in other community locations). We need to examine responsibility of several groups: when parents actively monitor their children, and model and discuss morals, schools have prevention programs and school policy that enforces corrective consequences to bullying, and community resources are accessed to support families, then laws can reasonably support these efforts.

NOTES

1. The Dignity at Work Bill has been proposed to specifically address workplace bullying.
2. Trained police officers who work in schools

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LAUREN STANTON is a Doctoral student in the School and Applied Child Psychology program at the University of Calgary. She is participating in research studies concerning the prevalence rates, and impact of both bullying and cyber bullying amongst elementary, high school, and university students. Her dissertation research concerns the psychological, behavioural, and physical consequences associated with both bullying and cyber bullying across Canadian children in grades 5 - 12.

TANYA BERAN is a psychologist and associate professor in the Department of Community Health Sciences at the University of Calgary. She is an international presenter and researcher in areas of education, measurement, and evaluation. She has published over 50 studies on bullying, including cyber-bullying, and has over 10 years of experience working in schools.

LAUREN STANTON est doctorante au programme de psychologie appliquée à l'enfance et à l'école de l'Université de Calgary. Elle participe à des recherches étudiant les taux de prévalence et l'impact de l'intimidation et de la cyber-intimidation au sein des populations étudiantes de l'élémentaire, du secondaire, du collégial et du secteur universitaire. Sa thèse touche les conséquences psychologiques, comportementales et physiques associées à l'intimidation et à la cyber-intimidation à travers la population étudiante canadienne de la 5e année au secondaire 5.

TANYA BERAN est psychologue et professeure associée au département des sciences de la santé communautaire de l'Université de Calgary. Elle est conférencière et chercheure de niveau international dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la mesure et de l'évaluation. Elle a publié plus de 50 études sur l'intimidation, incluant la cyber-intimidation, et a plus de 10 ans d'expérience de travail au sein du milieu scolaire.



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BOOK REVIEW

ELIZABETH J. MEYER. *Gender, Bullying, and Harassment: Strategies to end sexism and homophobia in schools*. New York: Teacher's College Press (2009). 120 pp. Paper: \$24.95. (ISBN 0807749532). Cloth: \$54.00 (ISBN 0807749540).

This book is a down-to-basics examination of the problem of school harassment generally, as well as gender harassment, more specifically. Its six chapters provide an explanation of the phenomenon of harassment, children's experiences through stories, and a practical guide to creating school and community-wide change. The author reviews considerable research, which is enriched by specific examples and explanations. This is combined with practical tips to create an easy-to-read book.

The book begins with a specification of terms such as sexual orientation harassment (i.e., harassment directed at gay, lesbian, and bisexual people), gender nonconformity harassment (i.e., attacks on people's non-traditional sex role behaviours), and sexual harassment (i.e., talking about and interacting with students as if they are sexual objects). Although the first chapter addresses effects of harassment, little research is presented in support of the variety of ways victims of all forms of harassment are impacted. There is some mention of truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide as a reaction to various harassing behaviors (i.e., verbal, physical, cyber); however, there are few references to the substantial number of research articles documenting the multitude of behavioural, cognitive, and social negative consequences of bullying. In regards to the impact of gender harassment, which is more the focus of this book, the author presents some insights into victims' experiences. This is a difficult task, considering there is a paucity of such information in the empirical research.

In chapter two the author presents research on the disproportionate amount of bullying directed at gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth compared to heterosexual youth. These studies provide irrefutable evidence of the essential need to devote attention to creating safe school environments for all students.

Chapter three provides a broader perspective on the complexity of gender harassment by turning the focus towards school systems that model complicit

ity in acts of harassment perpetrated by students. These systems are described as including school policies, procedures, curriculum demands, and teacher training. Most importantly, is the recognition of social norms for teachers and administrators within these systems that serve to maintain attitudes that are tolerant to gender harassment. In essence, the author is suggesting that adults may feel disempowered in harassment situations as much as do students when colleagues and superiors do not speak out or take action for fear of negative repercussions (e.g., in the form of a less desirable teaching assignment). Just as harassment can lead to student drop-out, it can lead to teacher burn-out. The author also points to the lack of interest, motivation, and concern on the part of adults to intervene when gender harassment occurs.

In addition to students' experiences of gender harassment addressed in the book, teachers' reports of these same aggressive behaviours directed at them by their colleagues are discussed in chapter four. Much of the content of this chapter is based on the author's own interviews with 5 heterosexual and 3 gay or bisexual teachers. Due to the value these teachers placed in their role as models and leaders of citizenship for students, most of the teachers expressed concern about gender harassment. They identified several obstacles, however, to being instrumental to effecting change. As a result, intervention often fell to one-on-one attempts with students to address incidents they witnessed.

Chapters five and six transition into actions on the part of society to manage gender harassment, and they include legal implications as well as institutional change. Specific legal cases are discussed along with school staff responsibilities. Often when discussing issues of child development with school staff, teachers are unaware of how the law applies to these issues. Thus, chapter five is perhaps the most informative chapter for teachers: it provides compelling reasons to attend to the interests of students, which simultaneously reduces their own personal risk. Finally, a school systems model of intervention is presented as a guide to administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the broader community. As with most well-intentioned anti-bullying programs, though, there is no evidence presented in the book for the effectiveness for any or all recommended strategies within the model. It is the responsibility of the readers, regardless of their role in the school, to look for confirmation that the strategies are indeed working towards, rather than hindering, change.

The author raises many challenging and sensitive issues, which are all difficult to address in a single source. Here are some thoughts for future work. The author begins to draw a parallel between heterosexual and non-heterosexual experiences of harassment, such as its negative impact, legal implications, and responsibility for all members of society. This is an avenue of research that has barely been explored. Another perspective on gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth is largely absent in the book: the need for unconditional acceptance for all youth. Adolescence is typically described as a time of exploring and developing identi-

ties. This includes taking risks, trial and error, and, inevitably, lots of mistakes. Youth, regardless of their sexual orientation, need support and understanding for their thoughts and feelings. Recognizing these fundamental needs as their *rights* puts the emphasis on support for all youth and de-emphasizes the tension between imposing beliefs for or against homosexuality. It is important for everyone, regardless of their stage of life, to question, explore, and challenge their beliefs to find meaning in their lives. For decades now there has been a call for safe schools for all; now is the time.

TANYA BERAN, *University of Calgary*

