

**PEDAGOGY OF THE DISPOSSESSED: EXPLORING THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
OF TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION**

SAVITREE SANDRA SUKHAN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
YORK UNIVERSITY, TORONTO, ONTARIO

April, 2012

© Sandra Sukhan, 2012



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-92782-3

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-92782-3

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada



Library and Archives
Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-92782-3

Our file Notre référence

ISBN: 978-0-494-92782-3

NOTICE:

The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protègent cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

ABSTRACT

My doctoral work investigates whether there is a space for critical pedagogy in technical/vocational teacher education that has predominantly applied behaviourist methodologies such as Competency-Based and Outcomes-Based Education models as classroom practice. There is a monumental amount of research in the area of technical and vocational education, yet within this body of work, there are relatively few studies in the area of education for critical consciousness. My particular interest is in examining the social environment of technical and vocational teachers at Red River College in Winnipeg, Canada, to see how they contend with the tensions and contradictions of training for work and engaging students in issues of social justice, specifically, their responses to administrative, political, social, and corporate influences.

The central questions that this qualitative study intends to explore are:

1. Given that education in Canada is a provincial mandate, how have federal legislations and the provincial responses in terms of policy frameworks impacted Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) in Canada and specifically in Manitoba; in other words, what are the macro-politics of TVE?
2. What are the implications of the Manitoba government adopting an Outcomes-Based Education model - one that is closely linked to a business model of Total Quality Management - to the delivery of TVE in educational institutions; in other words, what are the meso-politics of TVE?
3. How might adopting critical pedagogy, traditionally absent in TVE classrooms, enhance TVE teaching practices; in other words, what are the micro-politics of TVE?

4. How do teachers deal with the inherent tensions and frustrations of providing a learning atmosphere that develops critical thinkers while at the same time dealing with the cultural, social and individual issues that make teaching challenging?
5. What kinds of supports or resources would teachers find useful in enhancing their teaching practices?

Based on the results of this study, as well as my autoethnographic experiences as a tradesperson, teacher and educator which span nearly four decades, a series of recommendations are made for a pedagogy specific to TVE, recognizing that it has its own subculture within education.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to the most important people in my life – Robin, Dad, Mom, Sharmila, Sunita, Subhadra, Trent, Mike, Izabel, Sahana, Sabreena and Ronin. You stood beside me all the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Academically, I would like to thank my doctoral committee of Dr. Celia Haig-Brown, Dr. Ray Rogers and Dr. Susan Hornshaw for recognizing and seeing the value of my work and for helping me organize my research in a way that makes sense.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues at Red River College – Gene Semchych, Robert Richard, Craig Edwards, and Mike Stuhldreier – who are the best group of people to work with and who lent an ear whenever I needed to talk or work things through.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to the vocational instructors who participated in this study. Although I do not know your names, I believe that your contributions will indeed lead to greater understanding of the challenges that teachers face in teaching and learning in TVE and will thus become a useful resource for enhancing classroom practice.

A very special thank you goes to my special friend Atmaram Chowbay who made sure that I had all the help I needed while I was studying at York, whether it was food, books and friendship.

To my dear friend John Armogan who helped me navigate York University library for years but regretfully, is no longer here to see the completion of my work.

Thank you to my Dad, Dood Bayney who believed in my ability to complete my studies in the face of adversity. He listened and read my work, even when he was in the final stages of his cancer. He would be proud. To my Mom Sharie Bayney who continues to provide sustenance and care when I am overwhelmed with work and study.

My husband Robin Sukhan deserves the most gratitude and appreciation for: listening to me over several decades when I ranted about the inequalities in the world, supporting me when I decided to quit my job and go back to school, putting up with me while I tried to manage, school, work and life's obstacles, and mostly for always being willing to read and edit my work, sometimes with incredibly short timelines added to the challenge that this is not his area of expertise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<p style="text-align: center;">APPENDICES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BIBLIOGRAPHY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 5: RED RIVER COLLEGE AS A CASE STUDY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 4: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AS A CHALLENGE TO THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE OF TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 3: CREATING A SPACE FOR CRITICAL PEDAGOGY WITHIN THE TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM (THE MICRO POLITICS OF TVE)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ABSTRACT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DEDICATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TABLE OF CONTENTS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LIST OF TABLES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ABBREVIATIONS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 1: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CANADIAN FEDERAL LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND THE IMPACT ON MANITOBA (THE MACRO-POLITICS OF TVE IN CANADA)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 2: A CRITICAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (THE MESO-POLITICS OF TVE IN CANADA)</p>
--	---



ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTER 1: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CANADIAN FEDERAL LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (TVE) AND THE IMPACT ON TVE IN MANITOBA (THE MACRO-POLITICS OF TVE IN CANADA)	1
Introduction	2

Defining Technical/Vocational Education	4
Historical context of TVE in Canada and Manitoba	8
Legislation from 1913-1939.....	9
Legislation from 1939-1959.....	14
Legislation from 1960-1985.....	21
Recent legislation impacting TVE	30
Technical/Vocational teacher certification in Manitoba.....	34
Unholy partnerships	46
The future of TVE.....	53
Conclusion	56
CHAPTER 2: A CRITICAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES- BASED EDUCATION AND TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (THE MESO-POLITICS OF TVE IN CANADA)	57
Introduction	58
Outcomes-Based Education.....	61
Defining Outcomes-Based Education.....	61
Guiding Principles.....	64
Types of OBE.....	66

Outcomes-Based Education: Paradigm shift or semantics?	70
The Canadian Context of Outcomes-Based Education	73
New directions for Outcomes-Based Education in Manitoba	76
Total Quality Management	79
Defining Total Quality Management	80
TQM's guiding beliefs and principles.....	81
Critiques of TQM in Higher Education	83
Analyzing TQM and OBE	85
Implications for Technical/Vocational Education in Manitoba	88
Where to go from here?.....	94
Looking forward by looking back.....	99
Conclusion	100
 CHAPTER 3: CREATING A SPACE FOR CRITICAL PEDAGOGY WITHIN THE TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM (THE MICRO POLITICS OF TVE).....	
Introduction	102
Defining Critical Pedagogy	107
Education's philosophical foundations	115
Political maturation of pedagogy	123

Conflicting pedagogies.....	127
Official knowledge versus opaque knowledge	131
Culture as capital.....	135
Critical pedagogy as classroom practice	138
Esoteric versus mundane knowledge	140
Human and social consciousness.....	142
Some issues with critical education	144
Manoeuvring the cracks	146
Contextualized learning	149
Self-reflexivity in teaching	151
Transgressing research practices	154
Teacher-as-researcher.....	155
Action as research; research as action.....	157
Conclusion	158
 CHAPTER 4: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AS A CHALLENGE TO THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE OF TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	 160
Introduction	161
Dear Diary... ..	166
 CHAPTER 5: RED RIVER COLLEGE AS A CASE STUDY	 282

Introduction	283
Context of Research	285
Research Design	288
Summary of data	302
Introductory questions	302
Definitions	303
Classroom-based questions (Micro-politics)	309
Satisfaction with being a vocational teacher	309
Challenges with teaching (non-technical)	315
Factors that contribute to challenges	323
Institution-Based Questions (Meso-politics)	335
Support for teaching	335
Supports for students	338
Support from immediate supervisors	339
Support from college administrators	340
Government Involvement in TVE (Macro-politics)	344
Funding	345
Certification	345
Job creation	347

Education awareness	348
Political interests	349
Conclusion	350
CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	351
Introduction	352
Analyzing the micro-politics of TVE	353
Analyzing the meso-politics of TVE.....	374
Analysing the macro-politics of TVE.....	385
Recommendations	395
BIBLIOGRAPHY	406
APPENDICES	426
APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTOR LETTER OF INVITATION	427
APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS	429

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	39
Table 2	302
Table 3	303

ABBREVIATIONS

CAE – Certificate in Adult Education

CBE – Competency-Based Education

COPSE - Council on Post-Secondary Education

OBE – Outcomes-Based Education

RRC – Red River College

RRSP – Registered Retirement Savings Plan

TQM – Total Quality Management

TVE – Technical/Vocational Education

UNESCO – United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization

SVTC – Special Vocational Teaching Certificate

SWTC – South Winnipeg Technical Centre

**CHAPTER 1: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF CANADIAN FEDERAL
LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION (TVE) AND THE IMPACT ON TVE IN MANITOBA
(THE MACRO-POLITICS OF TVE IN CANADA)**

**CHAPTER 1: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF
CANADIAN FEDERAL LEGISLATION
PERTAINING TO TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND THE IMPACT ON
MANITOBA (THE MACRO-POLITICS OF TVE
IN CANADA)**

**Introduction
Defining Technical
Vocational Education**

Legislation from 1913-1939

**Historical context of TVE
IN Canada and Manitoba**

Legislation from 1939-1959

Legislation from 1960-1985

Recent legislation impacting TVE

**Manitoba's response to
federal legislation**

**Technical/Vocational
Teacher certification in
Manitoba**

Unholy partnerships

The future of TVE

Conclusion

We are told that we must be more flexible, work harder, and develop our technological skills in order to make education contribute more to national productivity and to achieve international competitiveness.

Jill Blackmore (2000)

Introduction

With the impact of globalization and the need to prepare people for global citizenship, the Canadian context of technical/vocational education (TVE) is similar to other global contexts. TVE is grounded in philosophical, economic, political, and social foundations of education. The historical and current reality is that its philosophical foundations are more closely bound to the fluctuations of the economy than to education. If one believes in the intrinsic value of education, then the primary purpose of TVE would be "to promote full human development through exposure of the learner to activities that are intrinsically meaningful and absorbing" (Silberman, 1980:1). If, however, one believes that TVE should be grounded in economics, then "it represents a huge public investment to achieve economic goals for target groups" (Conroy, 1980:1).

In Canada, provincial governments have the mandate for education as granted in the *British North America Act* of 1867. However, with TVE, it is a different scenario. The federal government has much more direct input than they do in other areas of education. Through various legislations, regulations and funding, they are able to manage the direction of "blue/pink collar" education with little or no resistance from educational stakeholders including administrators and educators who

have to prepare students for the world of work. Some key questions to be asked are: What kind of world/work are we preparing students for? Who drives the agenda? Should governments be responsive to the needs of people or should they be responsive to the needs of business and the economy? Is this a symbiotic relationship, or is it one of parasitism with winners and losers? What kind of cultural capital is developed and who benefits?

This chapter will examine the level of federal involvement in TVE and will focus on the Manitoba government's response to that involvement. Much of that involvement has been in the form of legislation and funding to the provinces. In fact, federal legislative impact has been significant. Selman and Dampier (1991:68) state that:

The character of technical and vocational education has been transformed by a great infusion of federal funds, as well as by the decision taken in the mid-sixties by the federal authorities to move into the direct provision of vocational and technical training, rather than leaving it to the initiative of the provinces.

The chapter is organized into six sections. The first section is a brief history of federal involvement in technical/vocational education in Canada through various legislations from 1913 to 1985, as well as an analysis of the impact of the legislations. The second section is an examination of more recent federal legislation from the last two decades as this was another watershed period in federal involvement. The third section outlines the response from the Manitoba provincial government to the legislations through its own provincial legislation and educational

policy frameworks. The fourth section focuses on a discussion of the ways that the provincial policy frameworks are represented in post-secondary institutional policies, vocational teacher preparation, and school curricula. The fifth section provides an analysis of various government and business partnerships that have impacted TVE. The final section is an exploration of the future of TVE in Manitoba. The chapter will be interspersed with my personal experiences and understanding of these issues and challenges from the perspective of a practicing tradesperson and teacher-educator.

Although the history of Canadian education can be traced back to the first settlers and multiple stakeholders, there are some limitations that I wish to address. Of the many pieces of legislation and regulations that involved TVE, this chapter will examine some key pieces which were important junctures in federal/provincial relations, with particular emphasis on the Manitoba context starting from the *British North America Act* of 1867 (later replaced by the *Constitution Act* of 1982). This Act laid the legal foundation for federal/provincial relations regarding the mandate and responsibility for education in Canada. Unions and Aboriginal groups were also key stakeholders in the development of TVE but this chapter will not be addressing their involvement unless they are clearly tied to particular pieces of legislation.

Defining Technical/Vocational Education

It is hard to agree on a single comprehensive definition of technical/vocational education. It is considered broad at best, trying to encompass vocational training, apprenticeship education, occupational education, career education, workforce education and technical and vocational education and training. Depending on the country and context, it could be all or any of a combination of those labels. This, of

course, makes it problematic to provide a single definition that will satisfy everyone. The lack of consensus about the meaning of TVE means that depending on the context – regionalization, culture, time, economics, or philosophical beliefs – the success or failure of legislation, funding, policy development and education will reflect those beliefs. The definitional language becomes powerful interpretations of how TVE is represented at every level of government, in educational institutions, and eventually in classroom practices.

A more traditional definition of TVE would be “the acquisition of technical skills that is less than a university degree which prepared the individual for work and earning a living” (Young and Machinski 1973:14-15), but given the move from the Industrial Age to the Information Age, the definition has to become even broader, often leading to more confusion.

The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training is an arm of the United Nations whose mandate is to provide support for technical and vocational education to 193 member states. At the 1989 UNEVOC Convention on Technical and Vocational Education in Paris, France, the contracting states provided the following definition of technical and vocational education as:

... all forms and levels of the educational process involving, in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, know-how, attitudes and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life (1989).

They further stipulated that this definition:

... applies to all forms and levels of technical and vocational education provided in educational institutions or through co-operative programmes organized jointly by educational institutions, on the one hand, and industrial, agricultural, commercial or any other undertaking related to the world of work, on the other (ibid).

Ten years later at the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education in Seoul, Korea, the definition of TVE was revised to recognize:

... [its] evolution from 'supply driven' TVE to 'demand driven' TVE. The new global economic environment demands a further re-orientation in TVE to render it more responsive to the needs of students, workers, and employers. Besides providing training for the world of work, TVE must prepare a new generation for work in a lifelong learning process. Their training must integrate environmental considerations, including the judicious use of natural resources and the need for sustainable development (1999).

Casanova (2003:10) provides a very comprehensive definition which goes beyond economics and is more encompassing of all aspects of a person's life. The author states that vocational training:

- Is an educational activity,

- Is oriented to provide the necessary knowledge and skills for an appropriate professional and labour performance but also to fully exercise the right of citizenship by workers,
- Has both theoretical and practical components but with a greater influence of the latter compared to other types of education,
- Has a very strong technological dimension based on the need to go along with the changes in the productive processes of this field, and
- Has a clear labour aspect, not only given by its technical contents but also because it prepares people to get involved in certain labour relations.

Finally, in 2006, UNESCO-UNEVOC put forward the following definition:

Originally, the direct preparation for work was the main goal of TVET. The current focus is increasingly upon preparing knowledge workers to meet the challenges posed during the transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age, with its concomitant post-industrial human resource requirements and the changing world of work.

Although these definitions are not entirely specific to Canada, they are the definitions generally used and understood in the field of TVE. In the Canadian context, whether offered in secondary or post-secondary institutions, TVE is generally viewed as preparation for the world of work. Why so many definitions and why are these definitions important? Many, if not most, reflect the philosophical beliefs of this kind of education, and are therefore reflected in government policies

which eventually trickle down to educational curricula. Based on my lengthy experience in the field, my working definition of TVE is more closely aligned to Casanova's. For me, the primary purpose of TVE should be about education broadly defined as developing personal as well as technical competencies versus training which is narrowly focused on technical skills. Developing personal competencies enable students to question their lived realities and it prepares them to question political, economic, and social systems that are unequal; it gives them the ability to challenge those systems. Technical competencies give them the necessary practical skills (grounded in theory) for gainful employment. Technological literacy is seen as a tool to support learning and not the end product of learning.

Historical context of TVE in Canada and Manitoba

The *British North America Act* of 1867 was the defining point of the birth of a nation - Canada. In that Act, federal and provincial responsibilities were delineated. In terms of education, Section 93 of the Act clearly gives responsibility for education to each province. Section 91 of the Act gives the federal government legislative powers "to make laws for the Peace, Order, and Good Government of Canada" (*British North America Act 1867*). This means that the federal government has authority over areas such as unemployment, trade and commerce, armed forces, penitentiaries, Aboriginal education and protection of minority rights. This is significant because if TVE is about education, then it falls under provincial jurisdiction. If, on the other hand, it is about training people for employment, then the federal government could argue that they have some legislative authority based on Section 91 of the *British North America Act*. This grey area is challenging because

it often means that decisions about TVE that should be made at the provincial level, are often co- opted by the federal government in the interest of the economy.

In Manitoba specifically, technical and vocational education has its historical underpinning in correspondence and adult education mostly for rural communities. Because there was no clear delineating line between federal and provincial responsibilities, Manitoba's response was uneven and led to some confusion about the relationship of each jurisdiction. Outlined below are some significant pieces of federal legislation that have directly influenced TVE at the provincial level. Each piece of legislation will be reviewed with an analysis provided at the end of each section.

Legislation from 1913-1939

The *Agricultural Instruction Act* of 1913 was the first major piece of legislation that the federal government directed toward vocational education. In this instance, funds were directed toward "aiding and advancing the farm industry by instruction in agriculture..." (The Agricultural Gazette of Canada 1914:31-37). This was a ten-year plan that the federal government saw as a way of encouraging agricultural development across the country. Federal funding was offered in increasing sums starting from \$700,000 in the first year to \$1.1 million by 1923. Some of the funding in Manitoba addressed courses in bee-keeping, weed eradication, Boys' and Girls' Farm Clubs, instructor travel time, equipment for home economics and instructional materials. As funding was based on population density rather than need, some provinces received more funding than others.

In 1919, the *Technical Education Act* was passed whereby \$10 million was allocated by the federal government for technical education that included any form of:

... vocational, technical or industrial education or instruction as approved by agreement between the [federal] Minister [of Labour] and the [provincial] Government as being necessary or desirable in promoting industry and the mechanical trades, and to increase the earning capacity, efficiency and productive power of those employed therein (Ontario Department of Education, 1919:54- 55).

Funding was provided based on the population of each province with the expectation that each province would provide matching funds. Federal funding would not exceed the amount spent by each province.

The *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* of 1938 followed the *Vocational Education Act* of 1931 which was never proclaimed because of the 1930's Depression Era. Through this Act, the federal government again provided funding to the provinces to stimulate the economy at the end of the 1930's depression. Educational funding was mainly directed to training projects for unemployed youths (later to be extended to older people) including trainee allowances and travel expenses, supervisory staff and instructors, costs for equipment and supplies, rental of classroom facilities and recreational activities (Dominion of Canada 1938:579, 610).

Although these pieces of legislation were not the only ones related to TVE, they had a common chord:

- The federal government initiated all of them
- They were all related to the economic conditions of the country
- They all had conditions applied that each province was expected to meet to be granted funding
- The projects had to be approved by the federal government
- Each province had to provide matching funds before any money was granted.

Poorer provinces could not access the federal money because they could not match the cost at the provincial level, making for unequal distribution of resources. Poorer provinces remained poor while richer provinces became wealthier. John Porter in his influential book *The Vertical Mosaic: An analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (1965), described how Canadian society was represented by a mosaic of class, culture, ethnicity and religion and those who had access to wealth and educational opportunities were at the top of the vertical stratification represented generally by preferred groups from Britain and Northern Europe, while those at the bottom - generally women, minorities, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal persons - had far less opportunities. This distinction was clearly evident in how funding was distributed and which provinces benefitted most from federal funding. The funding did not appear to be well thought out, as very often there were no proper systems in place to monitor how or if the money was being spent appropriately. The end result

was a haphazard system of accounting. These are some examples of direct federal involvement of TVE by providing conditional funding, and only for programs that the federal government deemed to meet their economic agenda.

As the federal government was bulldozing its way through legislation that focused primarily on the economy, within this same two decade period, there were some significant moments in Canadian labour history, mostly noteworthy of which was the General Strike in Winnipeg in 1919. As noted by Black and Silver (2008:102), the context of this strike at the end of World War I was a response to the growing "economic inequalities, deep class divisions, steep wartime inflation and frequently dreadful working and living conditions" and workers wanted "the right to negotiate the conditions of their work and wages with employers." Smith (1985:35) stated that against the backdrop of bank bailouts, transportation monopolies, international corporations, and advantages given to anti-union employers which every level of government supported, the strike was organized, starting in Winnipeg with over 25,000 unionized and non-unionized workers and eventually leading to a labour revolt involving over 149,000 people in 428 strikes across the country. The strike which lasted six weeks and had one casualty and many injuries, was quashed by federal government which passed legislation to deport immigrant strikers without trial, imprisoned others, raided homes, and seized records. Although the strike was not successful economically because more than 3500 people lost their jobs or were blacklisted, Lazarus (1974:27) posited that politically, there were massive long-term gains across the country. In the 1920 Manitoba election, eleven labour party candidates were elected, five of which were still serving jail terms for leading the strikes. He noted that the gains went on for almost fifty years under the federal

Liberal or Conservative governments until the first labour party, the New Democratic Party, was elected to parliament. During the 1921 and 1925 federal election, J.S. Woodworth who was arrested for editing a strike paper and strike leader A.A. Heaps were elected to the House of Commons respectively. They fought and won the right for old age pensions, and continued to fight for unemployment insurance and civil liberties.

During this same period, other social movements were equally active in various areas, including women seeking the right to vote. Although not significant to a specific piece of legislation, notable Manitoba women such as Nellie McClung and Francis Beynon fought for the rights of women. They were successful in challenging the then conservative premier Sir Rodmand Roblin to grant women the right to vote. It was granted after he vacated office due to a scandal and the next premier was forced through the collective power petitioning to do so. Most other provinces followed suit soon after. The vote for women was significant as they were finally considered persons under the British North America Act and therefore entitled to the same rights as men. Since much of the federal funding was directed to men, being considered persons could mean that at the very least, women might be able to access education and training.

Other non-union social movements at the time addressing the needs of farmers and small rural communities who were often marginalized from accessing federal funds for education and employment opportunities, was the Co-operative Retailing System which began in 1928 with the amalgamation of many locally owned retail co-ops in Western Canada under the umbrella of the Federated Co-operatives Limited (Co-op Connection, 2012). The co-ops were built on the principles of

democratic control of assets using "one member one vote" rather than the capitalist structure where the wealth is owned by few shareholders. The co-ops served their communities based on need and net savings are shared based on the amount each member purchases. To date, 240 retail co-operatives own the Federated Co-operatives Limited which service over 500 communities in the four Western provinces with combined sales in 2011, totaling \$8.3 billion and net savings (cash back to members) of \$839 million. Having been a member of the Red River Co-op in Winnipeg for more than thirty years, I can attest that it has been a successful experience. In 2011, my co-op paid back a net savings of \$29.1 million to its members. In 2012, the net savings is expected to be \$62.4 million paid back to members.

Another significant social movement in Manitoba which has a history of over 70 years in Manitoba is the Steinbach Credit Union and the Manitoba Caisses which served the Mennonite and French communities respectively. They operate on the same principles as a co-op and considering that less than 100 years ago, Mennonites were one of the most marginalized ethnic groups in Canada, the Steinbach Credit Union is now the largest one in Manitoba and the 7th largest in Canada with over \$3 billion in assets. The intent of starting the credit union was to put people ahead of profits in a socially consciousness and democratic way. Since 2012 is the International Year of Co-operatives, it is a testament that social democracy is alive and well even within a capitalist system.

Legislation from 1939-1959

This twenty-year period included another major world war, a return of war veterans, and a time of economic boom and bust. The federal government once

again had direct involvement with TVE and again, that involvement was tied directly to the economy. As with the previous era, there were no major challenges from the provinces to the infringement on provincial jurisdiction with regard to TVE and even with labour relations in general.

With the *Youth Training Agreement* of 1939, the federal government provided funds for training in a number of programs related to forestry for unemployed youth similar to the ones funded under the 1938 *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act*, the difference being that the provinces did not have to provide matching funds. Short courses with as little as 60 hours and full-fledged programs lasting up to six months were all eligible for funds. Course offerings for women were usually in the areas of home economics while programs for men included farming, fish processing, and leadership training (Glendenning 1968:30). Because of the onset of World War II, and the need for a skilled armed force, some funds were diverted to training programs directly related to war preparation.

The *War Emergency Training* (Schedule K) of 1940 was appended to the *Youth Training Agreement*. This changed the direction of the Agreement. Rather than focusing on training in forestry and mining, training was now directed towards preparing a workforce skilled in building, operating and maintaining war machinery. Stewart (1941) stated that the federal Department of Labour was concerned with ensuring a good supply of skilled workers for the war industry; so many vocational schools offered pre-employment war emergency training so that employers had a trained work force from which to hire. This training did not extend to women in any substantial way as they were seen as filling the no/semi-skilled jobs that were left by men who went to war. It was estimated that over 70,000 persons were trained

between 1941 and 1942, including older men and war veterans. An informal system of apprenticeship was also established with employers providing training in shifts of up to twenty-four hours a day. Phillips (1951:7) states that during this period there was a tremendous shortage of qualified teachers especially in rural communities, as many of the qualified teachers were being recruited in large cities and more desirable schools. In the case of TVE, the challenge was greater, as many tradespersons were not skilled at teaching. To solve that problem, courses in teaching methodology were hurriedly offered during the summer months and admission requirements for teacher training were lowered so that more people would qualify.

The *Vocational Training Coordination Act* of 1942 was another extension of the *Youth Training Agreement* but still focused on providing training to people working in the war industry. It included "training of individuals in war industries and the armed forces, the training of war veterans, the unemployed persons..., apprentices, supervisors, and the promotion of research" (Glendenning 1968:37). This Act was significant to the development of TVE because it was the first time that a Vocational Training Advisory Council was established with input from "...employers, employees, technical education, women's organizations, agriculture, war veterans and adult education" (ibid:37). This was another seminal moment in labour relations in Canada and specifically in Manitoba. As noted by Lipton (1973:266), there was so much money being spent by the federal government toward war efforts, that unions made great strides in the early 1940's because the government had to make concessions to the working class to support the war effort. Union membership, after losing much ground from the Winnipeg Strike in 1919, doubled in a very short period of time from 1941 to 1945.

The *Apprenticeship Training Agreement* in 1944 was also established whereby federal-provincial apprenticeship legislation was enacted which translated to major funding from the federal government, including fully funded training for returning war veterans (Glendenning 1964:64). Another matter of significance was the establishment of vocational education in secondary schools. Up to this point, TVE was mainly directed at adults who were unemployed or needed retraining for specific reasons tied to the economy.

In Manitoba, the *Apprenticeship Act* was proclaimed in June 1944. This was the first official piece of legislation from the province that saw the establishment of apprenticeship programs for war veterans returning from World War II. By July of that year, an Apprenticeship Board was appointed, and by October there were thirteen designated trades and seven Provincial Trade Advisory Committees appointed (1945 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report). This was significant, as industry was now being given an official role in providing advice to the government on educational programs. Having myself in later years sat on a Provincial Trade Advisory Committee as an educator with no voting privileges, it was remarkable just how powerful the committee can be in determining the policy direction of educational programs. What was also remarkable was how little understanding there was by the members about how their recommendations would be translated into curricula. I was an observer watching as recommendations about education were being decided by non-educators, some of which would likely become educational policy and to which I as a teacher would be expected to adhere.

By 1946, many industries were converting from war to peacetime activities so there was a critical shortage of skilled workers. There were several meetings

between the Apprenticeship Department of the Manitoba government, the Canadian Vocational Training, and the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs regarding training of ex-servicemen. Women who were employed in building war machinery were suddenly displaced as returning men needed jobs. Many employers were looking for skilled workers but were not interested in helping to train employees (1947 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report).

By 1947, war veteran training ended but apprenticeship through the federal and provincial government was firmly embedded in the fabric of Manitoba's economy. In fact, the Manitoba Department of Labour defined apprenticeship as "a Joint Dominion-Provincial program that was developed under parallel legislation administered by the Dominion Department of Labour and the Provincial Departments of Education and Labour" (1948 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report). In 1957, the federal-provincial agreement on apprenticeship was renewed for another 10-year period whereby the federal government would pay for 50% of the cost of training apprentices, which also included an allowance for attending school.

With the *Vocational and Technical Training Agreement* of 1957, the federal government provided more than \$25 million for infrastructure spending and stipulated that funding would be granted for the establishment of technical programs, colleges and centres, with each province having to match federal funds. The postwar boom of the late 1950's created a shortage of skilled workers so the federal government initiated and supported programs which developed technological literacy. Although the original agreement stipulated that provinces would have autonomy over education, once again, the federal government, managed to take control, of technical and vocational education. As noted previously, federal funding

was conditional on provincial governments providing equal amounts of funding for some programs. In addition, funding was based on population; eligibility of programs depended on federal approval; and, university programs were not eligible. In spite of no funding for university studies, Phillips (1951:10) states that university enrolment increased significantly because of women studying at the undergraduate level. By the end of the war, TVE enrolment had decreased significantly while practical university training programs such as commerce, law and agriculture increased significantly through federal funding of war veterans (ibid:10-11).

By 1959, the post war boom was over and there was a looming recession. By this time, employers and unions were having more input into education and wanted tradespersons to have proper qualifications and certification. More full and part-time pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs were offered at the community-based Manitoba Technical Institute and entrance tests were implemented for anyone wanting to enrol in the pre-apprenticeship programs. MTI's mandate, which dated back to the 1930's, was, after all, about providing training (Red River College, 2009). The provincial response to the lack of available and qualified teachers for some trades was alleviated by a new classification of "Apprentice Supervisor-Teacher". More teacher training was arranged through summer course offerings in trade analysis, course construction and teaching methods. It was during this time that some provincial governments established the *Red Seal* program, which was a reciprocal agreement between those provinces to recognize trade qualifications of journeypersons. Marketing took the form of meetings with Unemployment Insurance Commission officials, school guidance counsellors and several other organizations to promote apprenticeship training. Having a *Red Seal* designation in Hairstyling for a

number of years as well as a working knowledge of provincial requirements for hairstylists, I can assert that provincial standards within the trade of hairstyling differ greatly from province to province granting a *Red Seal*. Some trades are contested terrain and negotiating what is acceptable evidence of education in each province can become contentious. Each Provincial Trade Advisory Committee exerts a great deal of influence in this process and it can take years for a program to receive a *Red Seal* designation because each province believes that its standards are the best and there are major disagreements as to one acceptable standard that would satisfy every province.

This two-decade period saw a number of other changes in the political climate and labour relations in Manitoba. Although labour relations was a provincial mandate, workers during the war became more militant, demanding a share of the wealth that employers were enjoying and eventually the federal government intervened with the "Order-in-Council PC 1003, which, for the duration of the war, required companies to negotiate with unions that had been certified by a government labour board" (Smith, 1983:98). Much of the gains made by unions during this period of time were credited to the formation in 1932 of the socialist-leaning party of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, a pre-cursor to the current New Democratic party. Unions were getting stronger but much of their gains focused on work that men did, so the work of women such as retail and teaching (predominantly female), as well as their unequally high contribution to child care and work at home were not included in union bargaining. Although Manitoba had its first provincial labour code after PC1003 lapsed, the labour minister "would preside over a decade of inactivity, rejecting calls for the 40-hour work week, longer paid vacations, and the equal pay

laws protecting women” (ibid:106). As noted by Hyman (cited by Gunderson & Taras, 2009:71), “at the core of trade unionism is a tension between two contradictory tendencies: breadth, unity, and solidarity versus parochialism, sectionalism, and exclusiveness.” The Manitoba Teachers Society – a union representing teachers, formed just weeks before the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 lost its right to strike in the 1950’s but gained binding arbitration, due process and a provincial certification board (Manitoba Teachers Society, 2012). Teachers at least, mostly women, had some representation.

Legislation from 1960-1985

By the early 1960’s, the postwar boom was over and the economy was going into a recession, which resulted in high unemployment. In this period of time, the political climate in Canada was also changing. Unions were gaining strength in some key areas. Walkouts and wildcat strikes were common from employees such as teachers, and workers in hospitals, hotels and department stores (Lazarus, 1974:73). The New Democratic Party which was founded in 1961 representing several different interest groups - the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, unions, farmers, academics and professionals – elected its first provincial government in Manitoba. The federal government again played a key role in the direction of TVE as a mechanism to stimulate the economy and retrain workers. Federal support and funding for TVE continued to be strong until the late 1960’s. Selman and Dampier (citing Thomas, 1997:222) state that the federal government continued to be influential in Manitoba’s vocational training programs for economic reasons, but also because “it was realized that an alarming proportion of those in need of vocational training did not have enough of the academic skills to enable them to participate in

the vocational training programs.” Federal government funding then included remedial programs for adult learners but this added another layer of complication because of overlap of jurisdictional boundaries.

Since the federal government through the *British North America Act* was responsible for education of prisoners, they had ever increasing involvement in providing training for this group. Apprenticeship training was considered to be “flexible and accommodating without being cheap” (1959 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report) so the federal Department of Justice and the National Parole Board worked in conjunction with the federal and provincial Departments of Labour to provide training for inmates. The federal government was also involved with providing training to Aboriginal people whose education they were also responsible for and of course, since their responsibility included the unemployed, those groups were targeted. The jurisdictional lines between the federal government and the provinces were practically erased. By this time, discussions were taking place between the Manitoba Technical Institute, the Manitoba Apprenticeship Branch, and the National Employment Service regarding the establishment or revision of courses to meet the needs of industry. Factoring in that the provincial Department of Labour indicated that they have unique hour-by-hour communication with business and industry regarding the need for skilled workers, it was difficult to determine just who was responsible for what.

During this period, the federal government became “increasingly dissatisfied with these arrangements because of lack of federal visibility, and disparities in provincial participation in the programmes” (Dupre, as cited in McBride, 1998:3). The two-part *Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act* and the

Apprenticeship Training Agreement were proclaimed in 1960 just at the start of the recession. This was another noteworthy piece of legislation pertaining to TVE. It was a comprehensive ten-section agreement between the federal and provincial governments, worth an estimated \$1.4 Billion and covered most, if not all, aspects of vocational education. It included funding for courses and programs offered at high schools (to meet the growing post-war baby-boomers who were entering high school); funding for college (but not university) programs in science, technology, engineering and business; training and retraining for unemployed persons; skills upgrades for employed persons; training of supervisors from business and industry; and armed forces training (although this was not the first time). It was also the first time that money was allocated for the training of disabled persons, and to cover capital costs of new schools, as well as vocational teacher training and program development for in-school and correspondence courses. Money was provided in the form of student aid for some university programs. It was clear that the provincial governments would have to make decisions about where schools would be located and how they would be managed. The biggest impact for Manitoba which was experiencing significant growth was the addition of two more community colleges in Brandon and The Pas to the already existing Manitoba Technical Institute in Winnipeg, (later renamed Red River Community College, and again renamed Red River College), and several additional comprehensive high schools in Winnipeg and some rural communities. In Winnipeg, schools were located in neighbourhoods that had a high number of immigrants and blue collar workers. There were no schools located in the South end of the city, which were traditional university and middle to upper-class districts. One could speculate on the class-based location of such schools.

In my own experience as a new immigrant attending Grade 11 at Vincent Massey Collegiate in South Winnipeg and expressing an interest in hairstyling as part of my high school curriculum, I was advised by my school counsellor that should I wish to do this, I would have to leave my current school and enrol at R.B. Russell Vocational High School which was the nearest school in the very core area of Winnipeg. Beyond the obvious challenge of travelling long distances with two buses to get to school each day, and the social isolation of going to school in a neighbourhood where I knew no one, the curricula at R.B. Russell was focussed on a particular clientele. Given the low socio-economic backgrounds and transience of the large number of Aboriginal and immigrant students in that school division, it was a challenge just to ensure that students attended school each day, were not hungry and would stay in school long enough to graduate let alone preparing themselves for university. For me, there would be no opportunity to build the kind of social capital I might need to create appropriate networks.

Timetabling was another huge stumbling block. When students are enrolled in vocational programs, it was nearly impossible to graduate with a dual academic/vocational diploma, as timetabling of vocational and university preparation courses had conflicting schedules. Although I had no intention of going to university, and coming from an educational system where there was only one set of courses to take, my decision not to attend R.B. Russell School was based more on geographical convenience of my school rather than academic requirements for university. As it turns out, it was a good decision, if only accidental. Upon reflection, I believe that the advice I was given by my counsellor, although well intentioned, was based on the fact that I was an immigrant woman and therefore not likely to be ambitious

enough to choose university as an option. Teachers have their own hierarchy to contend with and they gain or lose status based on the subject they teach as well as the geographic location of the school, so a school labelled as "comprehensive" or vocational" would not initially attract teachers who want to teach university preparation courses.

With the *Adult Occupational Training Act* of 1967, the federal funding structure changed dramatically. The federal government no longer provided funds directly to the provinces for training, as this did not allow them as much control over TVE. Instead, they started purchasing training seats from the provinces for various initiatives, including training for specific groups and research. The *National Training Program of 1982* was very similar. There were three components to this program: institutional training, industrial training directed at individuals, and a Skills Growth Fund for capital costs of buildings and equipment (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1983). Training seats were also purchased from private vocational schools. The result was a fast rise in the number of private vocational schools which were established to tap into those funds. Non-profit organizations could also access the funds if they agreed to provide training. Training was directed to special target groups such as women in non-traditional occupations, aboriginals, and persons with disabilities. The federal government's focus at this time was training and retraining of a highly skilled workforce, as this was another period of economic downturn.

By the early 1980's there was another recession as well as a shortage of skilled workers. The *Canada-Manitoba Training Agreement* was signed in 1982 whereby funds were provided by the federal government for modernizing training facilities and to train workers to meet the skills shortage. At this time, the Canada

Employment and Immigration Commission purchased occupational training services from the provinces, but only in programs that the federal government deemed appropriate. The Act which outlined a three-year plan for national occupational training was worth \$120 million for Manitoba. The result was that school programs were started or cut depending on the number of seats that the federal government purchased in specific programs. Immigrants were hardest hit with cuts in funding to English-as-a-Second-Language programs. Under the *Industrial Training Program*, the federal government paid over \$3 million for 5,390 training spaces and over \$1.9 million for 460 trainees under the *Critical Trade Skills Training Program*.

During that time, the idea of a technical/vocational school finally became a reality for students in the south end of Winnipeg. South Winnipeg Technical Centre (later renamed Winnipeg Technical College), an "...\$8 million project, funded by the provincial and federal governments, was designed to meet the technical training needs of secondary students and adults in need of marketable job skills" (Winnipeg Technical College, n.d.) This was a unique tri-division partnership for high school and adult students and was located in what was then the Fort Garry School Division. The location for the school and access to federal funding were not accidental. The federal minister of Employment and Immigration at the time was Lloyd Axworthy who happened to be the Member of Parliament for the Winnipeg South electoral district. The school was located in a parcel of land - literally in the middle of nowhere - in isolation from the actual neighbourhoods which it served. No academic programs were offered at the school. High school students wanting to do vocational studies were bussed to the school and spent half a day each day there. The other half of the day was spent at their home school doing academic subjects. That same model is

still currently being used. Twenty-five years later, the surrounding area is now quite developed and the school is surrounded by many businesses and small industries, but still geographically isolated from the communities it serves.

Having been a teacher at this centre for a number of years, I knew first hand that timetabling conflicts meant that students faced the same issues I faced as a high school student wanting to study hairstyling. They complained about: not having sufficient time to eat lunch, not being able to participate in or attend sport activities or events or join school clubs and other activities that happened over the lunch hour. They also suffered from the problem of cultivating friendships with students from other school divisions who they could not easily socialize with before or after school or on weekends. They felt a sense of isolation from the general school population at their home school because of the stigma of "climbing onto the idiot bus" each day. The buses by themselves had the stigma of taking the "not-so-bright" or "at risk" students to someplace where they would not be seen for at least half a day. Beside academics, socialization and a sense of belonging are important aspects of a student's education, but when educational planning and policies are put into place, there appeared on the surface, to be little consideration of the social impact of this kind of geographic and emotional isolation. These are only some of the subtle and unquestioned ways in which educational policies segregate students into workers and university graduates.

Since SWTC was the newest vocational school built since the 1960's, the model of curriculum delivery was Competency-Based Education (CBE). Although a competency-based curriculum was not provincially mandated, it was the model *du jour* for vocational programs, especially because it was closely aligned to the needs

of business and industry in preparing graduates for the workplace. All learning materials were modularized and packaged and students were expected to be self-directed, working through the materials and asking for assistance only when needed. The problem with such a model was that it assumed that for half day, each day the curriculum would follow a traditional academic model of lectures at the home school and for the other half of the day, the students would somehow be self-directed, even when schools are traditionally not organized in this manner.

Needless to say, many TVE instructors who were the products of mastery learning methodologies, now teaching in a competency-based environment, had major difficulties distinguishing between what they were doing before in a mastery learning model and the new competency-based model. As a new teacher, I never questioned the soundness or practicality of CBE; I simply assumed that students would get used to a self-directed model as I had to. It took some time for me to understand that self-directedness is a skill that also has to be learned, and some more time to reflect on how foolish it was for me to expect fifteen or sixteen-year-old students to become self-directed without giving them the educational tools to do so.

The *Canadian Job Strategy* of 1985 was a major shift in the federal government's involvement in TVE. Through a very different funding formula, the federal government added a new player to the field. They bought training seats directly from educational institutions especially colleges, and directed funds to private employers who offered or were willing to offer job training in specific areas. Employers who invested in labour market innovations or offered training to women, the unemployed and new entries into the job market, were also funded. This funding provided additional support and growth of apprenticeship training and through this,

several co-operative education programs were established between employers and educational institutions, whereby students would spend a small part of the time in school learning theory and the majority of their time with an employer learning practical skills. This differed from the apprenticeship model where initial training is completed in school provided prior to registering with an employer.

In terms of funding for provincial teacher education programs, the federal government provided less than .03% of the \$243,000,000.00 for teacher training. The provinces were expected to provide the rest of the funding which amounted to great funding disparities between the provinces. Consider what that would mean for those provinces who could not afford such costs. Vocational teacher education programs could potentially be inferior or non-existent if skilled tradespersons and technical experts could even be recruited from industry to teach at the high schools and colleges. The provinces had to think of creative ways in which to attract TVE teachers. The federal government continued its strategy of managing technical and vocational education almost entirely by financial purse strings.

In analyzing this period of federal involvement in TVE, one thing was evident. The level of federal involvement did not change but rather the ingenuity of each period of involvement changed. From providing direct funding, for which many provinces had to provide equal portions or would receive no funding to buying seats in individual programs that met the federal government's economic agenda, the federal government was deeply implicated in provincial TVE education.

Recent legislation impacting TVE

By the end of the 1990's, the federal government once again devised an entirely different strategy for funding education in general. Rather than funding particular college, university, or private training programs in response to labour market demands, they implemented the *Canadian Opportunities Strategy* in 1998. This new legislation provided direct funding to qualified students in the form of the Canadian Millennium Scholarships, the Canada Study Grants, the Canada Student Loan Program, and the Registered Education Savings Plan. It was intended to target low and middle income Canadians. For the first time, part-time students, many of whom were adult learners, could access funding for education, although the formula for qualifying was so restrictive that many students, working full-time at low paying jobs, and going to school part-time would often not qualify, even though they were not earning a living wage.

Students could withdraw funds without penalty from their Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) to use toward their education. The stipulation was that the money would eventually have to be put back into the RRSP within a given period of time or else it would become taxable. This presumptive plan was premised on the idea that one had contributed previously to an RRSP and would therefore have those resources to draw on. In all likelihood, only middle and high income wage earners would even be able to consider this option. It would exclude a large number of low-income earners. It also assumed that employment would be readily available on completion of studies and the student would then be earning a sufficient income to be able to return the funds to the RRSP within a reasonable time. Most TVE students could ill afford to fund their education, much less have a savings plan from

which they could withdraw money. The impact on TVE was that many students who could once access training through provincial or federal initiatives now found themselves not meeting the criteria for funding, except for student loans, and that was only if they qualified by restrictive funding formulas.

Parents were encouraged to save for their children's education with a Registered Education Savings Plan with the government contributing 20% of the yearly savings up to a maximum of \$400 per year. Again, this had little or no impact on TVE, as many students were not in a position to make such contributions. The wages for most graduates of vocational programs are about 10-20% above the minimum wage, which in Manitoba was less than \$10 per hour. This was hardly a subsistence amount, let alone one that allowed parents to contribute to their children's education. There was a certain class-based privilege assumed with this education plan similar to the use of RRSP's to fund one's education.

In 2006, the Government of Canada released its budget that affected apprentices and tradespersons. The federal government implemented the Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit whereby employers who hired apprentices were eligible for up to \$2,000 in tax credits. First and second year apprentices in official *Red Seal* trades were eligible for a yearly taxable grant of \$1,000 (to a maximum of \$2,000) under the Apprentices Incentive Grant (Government of Canada 2006). In 2009, the Apprentices Completion Grant (HRSDC 2009) was added which was another taxable grant of \$2,000 per apprentice upon attainment of their Red Seal. With the Tradespersons Tools Deduction credit, tradespersons were eligible for a yearly deduction of up to \$500 for tools used for their work. The *Red Seal* program established a standard of excellence for tradespersons through which any

journey person with a *Red Seal* designation was allowed to work in another province participating in the program without having to do additional individual provincial exams (Red Seal 2009).

Canada, once a country which relied heavily on immigration to fill labour market needs, found itself in a position of a critical shortage of skilled tradespersons. The federal government hoped that by providing these tax credits to employers and workers, it would encourage people to choose apprenticeship or, for those already working as skilled tradespersons, to remain in the trades. The current unfortunate reality is that the situation has not been alleviated, as there are many skilled immigrant tradespersons living in Canada who are ready and willing to work but whose credentials are not recognized either by the government or by professional accrediting and regulating bodies. So, they continue to do manual labour for low wages in less than ideal working conditions. They are some of the same people who would not qualify for student loans because they are working at several part-time jobs to feed their families while going to school. The very people who should have access to education are the ones left standing outside looking in at missed opportunities for a better life.

In the federal budget announcement on February 2008 (Government of Canada 2008), the government announced that the Millennium Scholarships would be replaced by the Canada Student Grant Program. Other provisions were made for most areas of education including graduate studies, registered education plans, research, and streamlining the Canada Student Loan Program. The significant part for TVE students was that they were now able to access the \$430 million previously allocated for undergraduate and college students. This budget was aimed at

supporting *Advantage Canada*, which according to the Department of Finance Canada website (2006) is:

... a plan that will help Canadians to build a strong economy. Government has an important role to play in creating the right conditions for Canadians—and Canadian businesses and organizations—to thrive. This plan will create new opportunities and choices for Canadians.

With a focus on the economy, the federal government was once again finding ways of supporting its economic agenda. Benavot (1983:66), citing several authors, presented three reasons for the growth of TVE globally; the same can be said for Canada, as TVE functions in a similar manner globally. The first factor is that “[d]emands for skilled workers generated by industrialization in turn promoted the growth of education that could provide training and skills for a technically proficient labor force.” This is certainly true for Canada, as evidenced by the kinds of programs and funding opportunities available at the beginning of the 20th century. The second factor is that “[v]ocational education is seen as a means of training and integrating recently-arrived immigrants as well as working class youth into the economy, while upholding basic moral commitments to equal educational opportunity”. However, Benavot’s third reason is presented from a neo-Marxist perspective, which critiques the two previous reasons. In this view, vocational schools are seen as:

... a class-based solution invented by capitalist businessmen and industrial managers to consolidate their power over the emerging corporate capitalist economies...Publicly funded vocational education [provides] a relatively

cheap, if only partial, means of turning out semi-educated workers sensitive to capitalist work values and instilled with a respect for manual labor (ibid:66).

This view of TVE is perhaps more accurate in Canada. Why? The federal government has not attempted to disguise its involvement in TVE since the birth of Canada. It should not surprise anyone that there seems to be very little resistance to this position. With the funding as the carrot at the end of the proverbial stick, provincial governments are deeply implicated in this as well. They are not apt to challenge the federal government when there is money involved, even if it means selling out some of the least advantaged people. Manitoba's response to federal legislation is likely no different from the other provinces.

Technical/Vocational teacher certification in Manitoba

The Manitoba Teachers' Society (formerly the Manitoba Teachers' Federation) has a history dating back to April 1919 - some good, some turbulent. Prior to 2003, the society was comprised of 57 local associations who bargained individually with school divisions for teachers' rights with support from the Society as a collective. After 2003, the local associations were amalgamated into 39 school divisions which continued to bargain individually with school boards. As a society, the collective efforts of the Society's members meant that vocational teachers were recognized and duly compensated for their years of work in their designated trade. By the 1960's vocational teacher education in Manitoba was greatly expanded with the building of several urban and rural comprehensive high schools. Those schools offered academic and vocational programs to high school students but the focus was on vocational

programming in such trades as hairstyling, carpentry, welding, mechanics, and culinary arts. Because of a shortage of teachers with expertise in the subject areas being taught, the Manitoba government devised a marketing strategy to attract skilled tradespersons to train as teachers in public schools. The government hired tradespersons to teach on the condition that teachers would acquire a Special Vocational Teaching Certificate (SVTC) within an appropriate amount of time. A SVTC allowed teachers to teach in Manitoba public schools, but only in the area of their trade qualification. To make the teaching wages attractive, the provincial government agreed that upon completion of a one-year teaching certificate from Red River Community College, vocational teachers would be granted a Class 4 teaching certificate (a more detailed explanation of the Teacher Classification system follows). That was equivalent to a newly graduated academic teacher with a four-year Bachelor of Education degree.

In addition to this incentive, most school divisions, as part of their collective agreements, granted to vocational teachers one year of incremental pay for each two years of trade experience up to a maximum of six years or three increments. These two incentives from the provincial government and the school divisions were attractive for many tradespersons because in addition to receiving a good salary as a teacher, many of them could gain added part-time income over the summer months when schools were closed. The teacher classification and pay scale were not an issue in the early years of vocational schools, as many vocational teachers did not pursue further studies beyond the special teaching certificate. By the mid 1980's Red River College had negotiated an articulation agreement with the University of Manitoba whereby graduates of the Vocational Teacher Education program could transfer their

credits to the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education towards earning a four year Bachelor of Education. The credit transfer equivalency was granted in this manner:

- Year 1 = Six years of trade experience
- Year 2 = Successful completion of one year of vocational teacher education at Red River College; trade expertise would be considered as a major teachable
- Years 3 and 4 = Compulsory and optional courses in education and another teachable major.

Even though many vocational teachers were hired in the 1960's and 70's, very few of them pursued further post-secondary education beyond the SVTC from RRC. By 1991 when I graduated from the RRC Vocational Teacher Education program and transferred my credits to the University of Manitoba, there were fewer than ten vocational teachers enrolled in the B. Ed program and there were even fewer who actually had an earned B.Ed. within the school system. Having a B. Ed meant that I could move to a Class 6, and with my years of teaching experience, I was earning significantly more than teachers with a four year B.Ed. with the same amount of teaching experience.

By 1996, the Manitoba Conservative government wanted to review the teacher education programs in the province, the result of which was a report prepared by Bernard Shapiro. In that report, he made several recommendations, the first of which was that if there were going to be clear consensus between stakeholders about the direction of educational policies, it would need "considerable

political will" therefore "...the provincial government and its Department of Education and Training either act – with respect to teacher education – in the light of their best judgement (s) or move the teacher education policy off the agenda" (Shapiro 1996:4). He also recommended that since there was no clear provincial policy about the missions of the universities, teacher education programs should remain as they are so as not to disadvantage certain groups. Since RRC was the only non-university offering a teacher education program, it was recommended that the TVE teacher education program should continue there. It was recommended that the program should, however, be integrated with the University of Winnipeg rather than the University of Manitoba as was previously the case. In total there were twenty-one recommendations from Shapiro, some of which were implemented, while others fell by the wayside. One of the recommendations that was implemented was the new requirement for teacher certification. In a letter dated August 14, 1998, sent by the Deputy Minister of Education John Carlyle, he advised that new certification requirements were an outgrowth of the Manitoba government's *Action 15 in Renewing Education: New Directions. The Action Plan*, which addressed teacher qualifications (Carlyle 1996:3). (The *Action Plan* will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2).

In February 1997, John Scurfield Q.C. was hired by the Minister of Education to review teacher compensation. He presented *The Teacher Compensation Process* to the Minister of Education in February 1998. He prefaced his report by saying that it was based on logic and fairness and was not an attempt to reduce the level of compensation for teachers (Scurfield 1998:8). In that document he stated that the seven-level compensation system that was in place was almost forty years old and

had "two major limitations". The first was that there were no rewards for what he termed "extraordinary duties," and second, that "there is no requirement that the formal education acquired by a teacher be related to that individual's teaching duties or to educational issues in general." He stated that the system in place "offends the notion of equity" (ibid:10-13). He outlined a three-category system that was more representative of teaching competence. The compensation model was based on a number of factors including years of experience, additional professional duties, additional professional development, leadership/mentorship ability, and significant professional responsibilities (ibid:33-40). He specifically addressed vocational teachers where he recommended that "... [a] separate salary schedule employing an identical approach should be developed in order to attract, retain, and fairly reward vocational teachers" (ibid:49). This was a clear recognition of the importance and special place of vocational teachers in Manitoba's education system. The report also recommended one bargaining unit to negotiate all provincial collective agreements. No provincial policy changes emerged from this report. It was shelved in its entirety as the teachers' unions soundly rejected it. Should the Manitoba Teachers' Society have accepted the recommendation of a single bargaining unit for all teachers instead of the fifty seven local associations that were operating at the time, they would gain back the right to strike which they previously gave up but it would also mean that the union would have to bargain with the provincial government rather than the school boards. With over 15,000 public school teachers, the union collectively was in a position of power with separate local associations rather than one bargaining unit. In giving back teachers the right to strike, the provincial government might find it easier in the future to lockout teachers or legislate them back to work.

By 2000, the policy regarding teacher certification was implemented. Manitoba's Minister of Education approved the new Five-Year B.Ed program requiring all Manitoba teachers to have an undergraduate degree in two teachable areas, as well as a Bachelor of Education. Vocational teachers had a special provision. They were required to complete an additional year at RRC (making it a two year program at RRC) to be eligible for a Special Vocational Teaching Certificate (Vocational Teachers Association, 2001). This would still allow them to teach in their area of trade qualification without having to earn a B.Ed.

Table 1 is an example of classification and increments of vocational versus academic teachers. The classification is determined by the Province of Manitoba's Professional Certification Unit, and the increments are determined by individual school divisions. In this instance, "Academic work for consideration for classification purposes means academic work done within a degree program" (Government of Manitoba, 1988).

Table 1

Classification based on years of completed university study (determined by Gov. Of Manitoba Certification Branch)	Increments based on years of teaching experience (determined by individual school divisions)									
	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Yr. 3	Yr. 4	Yr. 5	Yr. 6	Yr. 7	Yr. 8	Yr. 9	Yr. 10
Class 1										
Class 2										
Class 3										
Class 4	AT ¹			VT ²						
Class 5	AT ³			VT ⁴						
Class 6					AT ⁵					
								VT ⁶		

¹ Pre-2002: Academic Teacher with a 4 year B. Ed and *no teaching experience*

² Pre-2002: Vocational Teacher with a one year RRC Special Vocational Teaching Certificate and *no teaching experience*

³ Post 2002: Academic Teacher with a 3 year B. A/B.Sc. plus a 2 years after-degree B. Ed and *no teaching experience*

⁴ Post 2002: Vocational Teacher with a one year RRC Special Vocational Teaching Certificate and *no teaching experience*

⁵ Post 2002: Academic Teacher with a Master's degree and *five years teaching experience*

⁶ Post 2002: Vocational Teacher with a Master's degree and *five years teaching experience*

For incoming vocational teachers, the changes had a major advantage but for already qualified teachers, there was a major disadvantage. This change in certification requirements is now a point of controversy among vocational teachers, the provincial Teacher Certification Unit and Red River College. According to the information on the Red River College website, the teacher education program is now considered a One-Year Accelerated Diploma. Under the new certification requirements, the additional year (30 credit-hours) of coursework requirement is now allocated in this manner: teacher candidates entering the program are granted additional credits-hours for work experience (although no additional work experience is required for admission into the program beyond the previous requirements of six years of experience in the trade), and the entry date for the program is now extended by three weeks from the original program length. Upon graduation, a new

vocational teacher is granted a Class 5 under the province's new teacher classification system but would have to complete an additional two years of the B. Ed program to be granted a Class 6. Vocational teachers, qualified under the previous system, could not reconcile how extending the RRC program by three weeks and granting additional credits for work experience could account for an additional year of university (equivalent to approximately 30 credit-hours), nor could they make any sense of how two additional years of university would only move them up one classification, rather than the two that was previously granted.

Vocational teacher credentials are also a contentious issue between vocational teachers. Why the problem? Some new teachers who graduated with a Class 5 under the new certification requirements now have enough years of teaching experience to move them up several increments, making their wages higher than vocational teachers who qualified pre-2002 with principally the same credentials. After several iterations of the full-time vocational teacher education program, including new course titles and different credits for courses, the current course work for the RRC teacher education program is virtually the same as it was prior to 2002. To complicate matters even further, although vocational teacher education is offered at Red River College, it is a tri-college agreement between Red River College in Winnipeg, Assiniboine College in Brandon, Manitoba, and Keewatin Community College (later re-named University College of the North) in The Pas, Manitoba, which means that any policy changes regarding the Teacher Education program needs to be approved by the Boards of Governors of all three colleges.

Teachers certified prior to 2002 have successfully challenged RRC's vocational teacher education credits, as well as the province's classification requirements.

Neither RRC nor the province's Teacher Certification Unit can provide a clear explanation as to how the requirement of an additional year of coursework as mandated by the Department of Education amounted to only an added three extra weeks to the teacher education program at RRC. The chair of the Teacher Education program at the time these decisions were made is now deceased and meeting minutes from RRC for this period of time have been expunged, as they are legally allowed to be destroyed after five years, so there is no trail of evidence as to how or why those decisions were made.

It was extremely difficult for those challenging the requirements to build a case because several of the meetings between the negotiating parties, and the recommendations that were finally presented to the Minister of Education prior to a decision being made were in-camera meetings. Public records relating to this cannot be found. (Personal Communication: Andreas Schramm President of Vocational Teachers Association of Manitoba, 2008). RRC has finally agreed to offer those teachers who were certified pre-2001 to do some additional coursework which will earn them an additional classification. The problem now is that vocational teachers qualified pre-2001, who went on to earn a B.Ed. are now asking to be included in the additional RRC courses so that they can also move up an additional classification from a Class 6 to a Class 7. The province's teacher certification unit and RRC have not dealt very effectively with this issue and it continues to be contentious, so some school divisions are addressing it through their collective agreements by allowing more experienced TVE teachers to move up one increment on the pay scale (not one classification) based on additional education, though not necessarily university credits. College instructors are under a different collective agreement so they do not

have to meet provincial certification standards, as public school TVE teachers, so the issues they face are different. However, if college teachers hold an M.Ed. or PhD, they are entitled to a stipend of \$2,650 and \$5,300 respectively under the college's collective agreement, but they receive no additional compensation for earning a Bachelor's degree which is not required to teach in some college programs.

Based on the example in Table 1, the pay differential between a new academic teacher and a new vocational teacher pre-2002 was about \$9,000 depending on the school division. Some school divisions even offered higher increments to attract vocational teachers. By the time I earned my M.Ed., with five years of teaching experience, I was earning about \$12,000 more per year than an academic teacher with the same university qualifications. The classification scale became a huge political bone of contention between academic and vocational teachers. By the late 90's, there were a small number of vocational teachers with a B.Ed and they were earning about \$9,000 more than academic teachers with a B.Ed. Academic teachers were not happy with this and wanted this reversed or at least stopped. The matter was brought to a vote at the Manitoba Teacher's Society Annual General Meeting but vocational teachers rallied together and the motion was defeated. Why was this contentious issue? Most academic teachers had no idea what was required to become a vocational teacher and what they saw as the end result was them being paid less for more education.

The pay differential was also an issue for some school divisions when it came to financing. Teachers are encouraged to seek further professional development that will enable them to be better teachers but as was my case, the more academic qualifications I attained, the more costly I became as a vocational teacher. It cost

the school division where I was teaching about \$25,000 more per year to keep me as a hairstyling teacher (with a Master's degree and ten years teaching experience) versus a new vocational teacher with no university education. The result of that was that in spite of the division's message about the importance of life-long learning for its faculty, the financial cost eclipsed the message, resulting in the closing of the evening program that I was teaching in (although the day program was still being offered) for two years which was just long enough for the school division not to be required to hire me back under the conditions of my collective agreement, and then reopened with a teacher with less qualifications and less pay.

There is a sound rationale for being well prepared for teaching with all the relevant education courses but there is an equally sound argument for vocational teachers to be compensated for the knowledge and skills they bring to the classroom from their work experience. Granted that one year of teacher education does not make one an expert teacher, and figuring that academic teachers have to earn credits in at least a major and minor teachable area, their education-specific courses would likely amount to about two years. Vocational teachers on the other hand have already earned their first teachable major with their trade qualification. In fact, to meet the entrance requirement of the RRC vocational teacher education program, vocational teacher education students had to have a minimum of six years of full-time experience in their trade, which was agreed upon as equivalent to Year 1 at the university. In my experience, academic teachers placed little to no value on the trade training and experience, seeing unequal value of a trade versus university education. The value of a trade is not equal to the value of a university education and that is reflected in the status of jobs, the placement of schools in particular neighbourhoods

and the place vocational teachers take in the hierarchy of teachers. With the image of vocational education still suffering after more than one hundred years, and a critical shortage of skilled workers, it is going to be increasingly difficult to attract vocational teachers. Rewarding them for their qualifications is one way of levelling the playing field by acknowledging that learning and experience, whether in or out of an academic institution can be equally meaningful and relevant.

Prior to 1993, TVE teachers at Manitoba's three colleges were not paid in the same manner and were not bound by the same collective agreements as public school teachers, even though in some cases they were teaching the same curriculum. Colleges reported to the Department of Education and were, therefore, public employees having to deal with the bureaucracy of government. College teachers were only required to have their journeyperson's qualifications. The colleges individually, as part of their collective agreements, required teachers to acquire a Certificate in Adult Education from Red River College, but this did not mean that they would be paid more for teaching qualifications, only that they would have courses in teaching methodology. Increments were paid on years of service since this was a civil service position. In 1991, that changed with the assent of the *Colleges Act* (proclaimed in 1993). This shift meant that the colleges were governed by their own Boards of Governors, much like universities. Rather than having educational policies set by the Department of Education, one of the duties of the Board was to "determine the general policies with respect to the organization, administration, operation and programs of study of the college" (Government of Manitoba 2009:9).

Unholy partnerships

Governments criticize each other when they are not in power but when they are the ruling party, the status quo continues. Most people would think of the very popular New Democratic Party of Manitoba as governing in a socially democratic manner. However, there is dearth of critiques of some of the educational policies that they have mandated in the last ten years, and certainly no questioning of some of the policies inherited from the Conservative government of the 1990's that they have continued to implement. Take for example the Department of Education and Training; the separation of the words "education" and "training" would suggest that education and training are two separate entities. Implicit in the reassignment of the Apprenticeship Branch to the various departments is that an education in the trades is more about training and less about education (a more detailed critique is provided later in the chapter). The recent reassignment of the Apprenticeship Branch to the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade should have citizens up in arms, but in the case of TVE, it goes unquestioned as to why it should not be under the mandate of the Department of Education. Perhaps this is what Poonwassie and Poonwassie (1997:278) refer to as an "unholy partnership between academe and business." Should this have happened in university-level teacher education, medicine, nursing or other forms of academic education which are considered professional vocations, there would probably be any number of parents, teachers and other professionals challenging this. In the case of vocational education, the silence continues to be deafening.

Language also becomes critical when determining how technical and vocational education should be defined and therefore implemented. Take for example

the reporting line for the Manitoba Apprenticeship Branch. When the federal government signed the Apprenticeship Training Agreement with the provinces in the 1960s, the Apprenticeship Training Branch responsible for apprenticeship training in Manitoba fell under the jurisdiction of the provincial Department of Labour. Anyone completing trades training was granted a certificate to work in that particular trade. The licences were generally renewable every two years. The actual in-school training was under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education. These two departments exhibited the stereotypical relationship of government departments not communicating with each other. The Department of Education had jurisdiction over matters related to curricula but vocational curricula were narrowly tied to labour market requirements for certification which was managed by the Department of Labour. Vocational students were often caught in the middle because of lack of agreement between the departments.

My own experience during this period was that my educational experience was decided by the Manitoba Departments of Labour and Education who had opposing philosophical views about the value of education. What I received could best be described as training for the labour market rather than an inclusive education. My training, albeit at a private vocational school, was narrowly focused on technical skills. My work as a hairstylist should have included building relationships of comfort and trust with my clients, but little in the curriculum addressed these topics. Classroom discussions, which were few and far between, focused almost entirely on technical content. I was not once told that in this profession, I would likely be stereotyped as uneducated and simple-minded, that I might be sexually harassed by clients and employers, that my working conditions might be less than ideal, that I

had the right to refuse unsafe work, that my employer might find ways to contravene labour laws that were there to protect me as a worker, or that the mere discussion about unionizing a hair salon would mean losing my job, but these were my experiences when I worked as a hairstylist. There were many conversations between students who knew this through discussions with family and friends but it was taken for granted that working conditions of hairstylists would always be that way because historically, it always was and there did not appear to be any keen interest in making any changes to the status quo. I was often warned by my teachers and employers not to discuss the taboo subjects of religion, politics, or money. These are parts of the hidden curriculum that I had neither the sophisticated language nor education to challenge. I only knew that conversations revolving around such topics as current hairstyles, fashion, the weather, the lives of celebrities and a host of other trivia could not sustain my interest.

In my early working years, I often discussed politics, education, religion and current events with clients. It was a surprise to some of them that I was capable or interested in such topics. In later years, I would ask my peers about working conditions, about unionizing the workplace, or about reporting employers who were contravening the labour laws, but my questions and comments were more often met with resignation. I petitioned the Department of Labour to issue different hairstyling licences such as a Mobile Hairstyling Licence but my efforts were rejected over many years. That did not stop me from writing each year to request a change in legislation that would allow such licences. After many years and many challenges to hairstyling licensing regulations, the government finally changed the regulations so that a hairstylist can now acquire a Mobile Hairstyling Licence. This by itself is not a huge

issue, only that the stranglehold by the Apprenticeship Branch is now somewhat released. This was partly due to challenging the status quo when it fails to meet the changing needs of society or when it disadvantages certain groups.

By the 1980's, the Apprenticeship Branch was moved from the Department of Labour and was completely under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and Training. This helped to streamline the in-school training and the certification process. Trades qualifications were handled entirely by the Apprenticeship Branch of the Department of Education. The move did not change anything for students or qualified tradespersons. It was business as usual. Vocational curricula and tests were still tied to labour market needs. In the case of the hairstyling trade, the Trade Advisory Committee members, although expected to serve limited terms, often served many terms with vice grip-like roles.

Curricula for several trades were revised and accreditation processes were established for some trades. Articulation agreements were also established between secondary and post-secondary institutions so that high school graduates from vocational programs could have a relatively seamless transfer of credits toward the various levels for their journeyman certification. This was not as easy as it was on paper because colleges offering the same vocational programs as high schools did not want to readily accept transfer credits. They felt that their programs were superior because they were being delivered at the college level, even though the content was exactly the same. Some students received a rude awakening when they tried to transfer high school credits to post-secondary institutions and their credits were not accepted. That was eventually resolved for most programs by ensuring that colleges did not offer the same level of programming as high schools.

Another philosophical shift in education by the government took place in 1997. The jurisdiction of TVE was relocated with the establishment of the Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE). COPSE was a Branch of the newly formed Department of Advanced Education whose mandate "facilitates the coordination and integration of post-secondary services and facilities, reviews and approves university and college programming, develops policy, and promotes fiscal responsibility and accountability in the post-secondary system" (Government of Manitoba Council on Post-Secondary Education, n.d.). The Apprenticeship Branch was accountable to the Department of Education, Training and Youth (responsible for primary and secondary education) then moved to the Department of Advanced Education (responsible for post-secondary education).

What followed was a series of re-assignments of the Apprenticeship Branch to various departments whose cosmetic name changes could not hide the philosophical intent of TVE. With each name change, the word Training appears as if to signify that training is somehow separate from education. The Department of Education, Training and Youth was subsequently renamed the Department of Education, Citizen and Youth. This was about the time in 2003 that the Apprenticeship Branch was moved to the Department of Advanced Education which was then renamed Department of Advanced Education and Training. In 2007 that department was again renamed the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy after the 2006 Apprenticeship Branch re-assignment to the newly formed Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade (later renamed the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade). The re-assignment should speak for itself because the mission statement of the

Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade is "to work collaboratively with businesses, people and communities to:

- Increase their Capacity to succeed;
- Enhance the Competencies they need to prosper;
- Raise their Profiles, locally, nationally and internationally;
- Foster an Environment that supports sustainable economic growth;
- Advocate for Manitoba at the International level;
- Build the Manitoba economy by strengthening the performance and growth of industry through increased trade. (Government of Manitoba, Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade Annual Report, 2009-2010:3).

In this respect, TVE, or the labour that it eventually produces, is commoditized so that it can support the department's mandate.

In 2006, the department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade established the *Apprenticeship Futures Commission*. Its mandate was to "identify the levels of success in meeting the needs of apprentices, employers and the provincial economy, and provide recommendations that will contribute to the future, strategic direction for skilled trades in Manitoba (Government of Manitoba Competitiveness, Training and Trade 2006)." The focus was definitely on economic growth for Manitoba, and vocational and technical education programs would be supported in whatever way was necessary to provide for that growth.

The *Technical Vocational Initiative* was another tri-partner agreement between Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and Manitoba Competitiveness, Training and Trade. The vision of this partnership initiative was “[t]o offer Manitobans a comprehensive continuum of technical vocational education pathways that is universally accessible, seamless across education levels, and synchronized with labour market needs” (Technical Vocational Initiatives 2007). Although this was a partnership between education and trade, the vision statement in reality reflected an economic focus. Language became important. What was reflected in these scope statements - department names and reporting lines - was political ideology, one that was inherently class-based and not likely to be questioned by the people whose lives were affected most.

The Manitoba government offered a number of incentives for TVE in the last three years. They included the Co-operative Education and Apprenticeship Tax Credit Program, the Co-operative Graduate Hiring Incentive and the Journeypersons Hiring Incentive, all aimed to contribute financial supports to co-operative education students and employers (Government of Manitoba, n.d.). While this could be taken at face value as funding for much needed programs, there is never a question about the commoditization of TVE. The nature of TVE - whether it is pre-employment, apprenticeship or co-operative education - puts the onus of training on the employer, while the portion that takes place in schools is just enough to cover theoretical aspects of the trade. Graduates from such programs are barely prepared for entry level positions and they are ill-prepared to challenge the ideology of governments who see them as commodities.

The future of TVE

With the effects of globalization and the spread of neoliberal trade policies, the philosophy of TVE is firmly entrenched in the economic realities of Canada. Even the left leaning New Democratic government of Manitoba has strategically aligned TVE with its trade policies and has a separate branch for the marketing of education internationally. As long as governments see TVE as an economic issue, the programs may continue to get support and funding, but that will not change the image of TVE as one of lesser choice.

TVE has always suffered from the image of being a last choice, or certainly a lesser choice than a university education. Statements such as "If you are not smart enough to go to university, you can always do something with your hands" or "When you cannot succeed in school, learn a trade" are familiar comments for those students who do not always find success in schools that focus heavily on preparing students for university studies. Most academic students probably have no idea what vocational areas of their schools look like, let alone what the programs are all about.

With the many relocations of Manitoba's Apprenticeship Branch to departments of labour, education, advanced education and most recently, competitiveness and trade, it should be no surprise that secondary students buy into the stigma of vocational education as being "less than" or "blue collar work," – meaning that it is manual labour with a fancy name. The Manitoba government recognizes that this is a problem and as such, one of the six pillars of action of the *Technical Vocational Initiative* is to improve the image of technical vocational careers.

The issue of image is not entirely about academics. Comprehensive schools and colleges are challenged by how to deal with the negative stigma of TVE. Within the last decade, RRC had changed its name, taking the *Community* out of Red River Community College, and is now a degree granting institution. This by and large should not be a problem because most Canadian colleges are moving in that direction. What becomes problematic is the notion that colleges, in an effort to acquire the same degree of prestige as universities, will shift their emphasis to a university model of education, where research holds more prestige than teaching, and the focus will shift from applied programs to theory-based programs.

Some colleges have already made significant name changes, partly because of program offerings but also likely an attempt to improve their images from vocational to academic. As examples, in Manitoba, schools offering vocational training have all had name changes: Keewatin Community College has been renamed University College of the North and its mandate includes offering a combination of technical, vocational and degree programs. South Winnipeg Technical Centre was renamed Winnipeg Technical College. Pierre Radisson Collegiate was renamed Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre; Sturgeon Creek Comprehensive School was renamed Collège Sturgeon Heights Collegiate and St. James Collegiate was renamed Academy of Science and Technology. In fact, most comprehensive high schools which were built and so named in the late 1960's dropped the *comprehensive* part of their names. Most of the schools have moved away from the word "vocational" because of its negative connotation and are marketing themselves as offering superior academic programs as well as technical and vocational programs, but with far less emphasis on the vocational aspects and much more on

university preparation. It is simplistic to think that a mere change in name will change the image of TVE or the likelihood that more students will enrol. If educational policies and curricula for vocational education programs continue to reflect an economic bias, no one can really expect to see real changes.

Given the bleak economic conditions that Canada is currently experiencing, Usher & Dunn (2009) have identified several factors that could have a direct impact on vocational teacher education programs, including decreasing revenues, increasing tuition costs, increasing enrolments in undergraduate and graduate programs, decreasing enrolments in apprenticeship programs, larger class sizes, cuts in library spending, and less research funds. It is a myth to think that all educational policies in Canada are determined at the provincial level. The federal government has steered the direction of educational policies for more than one hundred years, as evidenced by multiple pieces of legislation, and as long as vocational education is seen as a means to an economic end, it will continue to serve the needs of industry rather than the needs of students.

The Manitoba provincial government through its own policy frameworks has supported the business-focused agenda. Colleges in turn, translate those policy frameworks into educational policies that shape how TVE is going to be delivered in the classroom. Implementing the province's policy of using an Outcomes-Based curriculum means that there will be winners and losers - business and students respectively. As an example, program development and program renewal for all RRC programs are based on an occupational analysis, where expert workers are asked to identify the competencies they perform on their jobs, input from the Trade Advisory Committee for that program, and incorporating the College-wide Learning Outcomes

(adapted from the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Profile) and Human Resource and Development Canada's Workplace Essential Skills).

Conclusion

Vocational teacher education programming is impacted in a huge way with federal and provincial policy frameworks. Being a pragmatist, there should be some input from industry since they are ultimately the ones who hire graduates, but there also has to be a balance in providing education that goes beyond serving the interests of employers. As noted by Jackson (1993:53), a competency measure "constructs an objectified and objectifying organization of social relations through which successive movements in the educational enterprise can be defined, measured and evaluated in the interests of employers, administrators and policy makers... the idea that employer input leads to a 'totally objective statement of needs' as the basis of program planning is becoming visible as an elaborately staged myth."

Students need the kind of educational space that will allow them to question and counter the hegemonic government policies that are not always in the students' best interests. That work has to start with preparing future teachers with the necessary skills to ensure that students are prepared to exercise their rights to citizenship. It means a new blueprint for TVE teacher education, one that requires a genuine commitment from every level of government.

**CHAPTER 2: A CRITICAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION AND TOTAL QUALITY
MANAGEMENT IN TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (THE
MESO-POLITICS OF TVE IN CANADA)**

**CHAPTER 2: A CRITICAL COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION
AND TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN
TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (THE
MESO-POLITICS OF TVE IN CANADA)**

Introduction

**Defining
Outcomes-Based
Education**

**Outcomes-Based
Education** **Guiding Principles
Types of OBE**

**Outcomes-Based
Education: Paradigm
shift or semantics?**

**The Canadian Context of
Outcomes-Based
Education**

**New directions for
Outcomes-Based
Education in Manitoba:
New directions**

**Defining Total Quality
Management**

**Total Quality
Management** **TQM's guiding beliefs
and principles
Critiques of TQM**

Analyzing OBE and TQM

**Implications for
Technical/Vocational
Education in Manitoba**

Where to go from here?

Conclusion

Business has been given a green light to restructure schooling for its own purposes, as the image of homo economicus drives educational policy and practice, and as corporations and transnational business conglomerates and their political bedfellows become the leading rationalizing forces of educational reform.

Peter McLaren 1998

Introduction

Unlike universities which offer a combination of liberal arts programs as well as applied professional programs, the history of Canadian colleges is grounded in providing skills training for the world of work. The three major public colleges in Manitoba – Red River College, Assiniboine College and University College of the North (formerly Keewatin Community College) were all created in response to market demands by industry and employers. Programming for these colleges is closely tied closely to the economic realities of Canada, which is reflected in provincial economic realities as well. This reality means that colleges are expected to function like businesses, often times without due consideration for the social values of education. They are in the tenuous position of at once having to function like educational institutions which is, after all - or should be - their purpose, by providing programs which include social responsibility to society at large, and at the same time as a business, meeting the economic demands of industry by preparing “marketable products” – that is, job-ready graduates. This kind of juggling between the world of education and the world of work is a fine balance. This balance can be skewed in favour of employers when they have the political and economic wherewithal to be heard and to influence educational decision-making. This by itself should not be

cause for concern because the state is supposed to be the watchdog to ensure that a well-rounded education is the priority in any public educational institution. However, TVE holds a unique place in the field of education because it is so closely tied to industry and as such, there should be cause for concern when the state supports business and industry to such an extent that TVE institutions are expected to accommodate the needs of industry by using curriculum models that function much like business models. This implies that provincial control over education has been co-opted by the demands of the marketplace. Taylor et al. (2007:379-396) use the development of the oil sands in Alberta as an example of how governments, educational institutions and unions are obliged to be responsive to the needs of multinational corporations in the community of Fort McMurray. Some of the struggles include control of training – who should deliver training, how and where it should be delivered, and how it should be regulated and accredited.

Because of political control of schools both at the federal and provincial levels, it appears that economic interests supersede education in Canadian community colleges, robbing students of a broad base of knowledge that will indeed prepare them for global citizenship. This kind of political control means that at the provincial level, government policies determine how education is going to be delivered in colleges. The line is blurred even further when decisions about education and training are made by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Labour and the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, as is the case in Manitoba.

While employers are the beneficiaries of job-ready graduates, an education based on a business model does not create a solid foundation for education for global

citizenship. Given that graduates are expected to be job-ready, educational institutions are adopting the business principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the general administration of such. Beyond adoption at the management level, TQM is being operationalized, where "student-as-client" and "student-as-customer" are now common phrases in education. So what are the implications of adopting such business models in the TVE classroom and the wider learning community? What is the responsibility of the state in ensuring that every student, regardless of wealth and social class, receive a comprehensive education? Is there place for business-based models of education and what role should businesses have in influencing how curricula should be delivered and what should be included in such curricula? What does applying a business-based model mean for teaching and learning?

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section will provide an overview of Outcomes-Based Education including definitions, tracing its origins in different educational philosophies, identifying its guiding principles, and its current application in educational institutions. The second section will explore whether OBE is indeed a paradigm or semantic shift from mastery and competency-based learning. The third section will provide an overview of OBE in the Canadian context with emphasis on Manitoba. The fourth section will provide an overview of Total Quality Management, including definitions, tracing its history in industry, its guiding principles and critiques, and its current application in educational institutions. The fifth section will be a comparative analysis of Outcomes-Based Education and Total Quality Management, outlining the advantages and limitations of each, as well as an analysis of the implications of using these models to support teaching and learning in technical and vocational education.

Outcomes-Based Education

In the last fifteen years, many colleges in Canada have adopted Outcomes-Based Education as mandated by provincial governments through educational policies. This has meant that there was a shift from Competency-Based Education and mastery learning models used in most colleges up to that time. But what is Outcomes-Based Education? Is this something new or is it something old with new packaging? What are the guiding principles of this movement? Where did it come from and where is it going? How does it fit into the *raison d'être* of technical and vocational education in Canada?

Defining Outcomes-Based Education

The roots of Outcomes-Based Education can be credited to American sociologist William Spady. He envisioned a kind of education with student-centred curricula, which is Outcomes-Based rather than objectives-based which is more teacher-centred. Spady (1994:1) provides the following definition of OBE:

Outcomes-Based Education means clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens.

He further states that "WHAT and WHETHER students learn successfully is more important than WHEN and HOW they learn something" (ibid:8).

This seems straightforward enough - that educational systems should be organized around essential student learning. In traditional lesson planning, learning objectives or goals of instruction are identified, that is, what is to be covered in the lesson. Then instruction and assessment are planned around the objectives. It was more focused on what the teacher would teach rather than what the learner would learn. On the other hand, OBE identifies the essential learning that students should know, do or perform; assessment criteria are established and finally, instruction is planned to teach to the stated outcomes. OBE can be thought of metaphorically as a roadmap. If teachers know what the final destination is, then they can plan the appropriate route to getting students to that destination. Ultimately everyone benefits, most especially students.

The Wisconsin Education Association Council (1995) provides another definition of OBE:

At its most basic level, Outcome Based Education (OBE) is where the school and community first determine what skills and knowledge students should possess at graduation, then work backwards from there to develop curriculum, strategies and materials to help students achieve those goals, or "exit outcomes."

The article also provides several additional definitions of OBE by school administrators, both positive and negative, at the operational levels of schools. Some of those include "community involvement, with parents and educators working together to create a new system of education," "moving away from traditional standardized multiple choice tests," "another educational fad that will move schools

away from academics, overburden teachers, and make educational progress impossible to measure,” and “giving students a more meaningful way to show how much they know about a subject by letting them write about it or demonstrate it.”

Willis and Kissane (cited in Andrich 2002:46) summarize OBE “... quite explicitly in terms of the actual learning students should exhibit as a result of planned learning experiences in school and developing accountability mechanisms which directly reflect student performance of these outcomes.” Additionally they provide three arguments in favour of OBE: 1) It enhances what is being taught; 2) Students have access; and 3) It improves accountability.

Berlach (2004:3) on the other hand, refers to OBE as a “slippery construct.” Finding it difficult to provide a concrete definition, he outlines what he refers to as a set of attributes of OBE as:

- A quasi-educational paradigm which finds its genesis in models such as rationalism, Fordism, and Taylorism
- The jargon of corporate business or corporatization applied to the marketplace
- Obsessed with hyper-accountability
- Focused not on content to be acquired but on outcomes to be achieved
- Vague outcomes which can easily be manipulated
- Not differentiating on the basis of quality (similar to competency-based agendas), and
- Lacking evidence of success

Guiding Principles

In addition to Spady's definition, he outlined his five guiding principles of OBE. Berlach and McNaught (2007:2) summarized them as follows:

- Begin with the end (outcome) in mind (designing back or designing down)
- Individual schools design a curriculum around predetermined outcomes
- Comparing student performance is educationally counter-productive
- All learning should be calibrated so as to allow for individual success
- Process is at least as important as product

They believed that Spady had a big picture view of OBE but lacked the details which then made implementation a challenge. Having used OBE as an instructor, I can agree with their observations that in general discussions, OBE seemed to make sense, but implementing it in classrooms was not an easy task. Three challenges that come to mind are: 1) Good outcome statements are difficult to write, especially if the educational background of the person writing them is limited; 2) Good outcome statements take a great deal of time to craft; and 3) It is easier to write outcome statements at lower cognitive levels where students would describe or explain a concept, but are much more difficult to write and assess for more complex tasks or concepts, or when assessing affect or feelings.

In their book *Understanding by Design* (1995), Wiggins and McTighe developed a "Backward Design" curriculum and lesson planning format that incorporated Spady's model of OBE. Using their process, curriculum designers would first develop outcomes, standards or benchmarks to be met. Secondly, assessment would be designed which would measure the students' understanding of the outcomes or

standards, and criteria would be established as to what would be considered acceptable evidence of learning. Finally, instruction would be developed which would enable students to reach the desired standard or benchmark. Based on my experience as a TVE teacher-educator, using Grant and Wiggins' process was easier said than done, because many TVE teachers are already teaching in the classroom while they are themselves learning to be teachers. Some of them may already have been teaching for two or three years before they have taken a course in Course Development. The problem with the first step was that most teachers were either writing learning objectives and calling them learning outcomes, or could not tell the difference between an objective and an outcome. It took many iterations to craft good and measureable learning outcomes using higher order thinking. When it came to designing appropriate assessment, many teachers used assessment tools that either did not correspond to the learning outcomes, or were assessing the students either well above or below the level that the learning outcomes were written. More troubling than those though, the assessment did not measure one or more of the learning outcomes. That is when students are confounded by exams that measure trivial knowledge, or exams that test way beyond what was taught in the course. The third challenge in curriculum design is that teachers do not always know how much emphasis to put on certain aspects of the course content in order to meet the desired standard or benchmark so by the end of the course important concepts may only be covered superficially.

Establishing benchmarks for cognitive and psychomotor skills such as is evidenced in TVE classrooms is less difficult than measuring personal competencies, often referred to as employability skills, and most subject matter experts-turned-

teachers find this kind of assessment difficult. Most often the reason is that when they do not know or are unsure of what to do in the classroom, they go back to the familiar, the way they were taught which, for most of them, is by mastery learning based on behavioural psychology. They express their concern with preparing students for provincial standardized exams and some will even go as far as to say that they are there to teach content and should not have to concern themselves with assessing personal competencies as that is not part of the provincial exam.

Types of OBE

In addition to providing a working definition and guiding principles, William Spady also outlined three approaches to Outcomes-Based education – traditional, transitional and transformational. Donnelly (2007:2) summarized those as:

Traditional OBE - based on a traditional approach to curriculum, one where established disciplines have priority, there is a strong focus on content and year/level organization and the world of the classroom appears divorced from the so-called real world. The OBE focus is defined in terms of measuring students' mastery of the set curriculum;

Transitional OBE - the focus moves away from teaching subjects to cultivating what Spady terms higher order competencies, such as critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills. The focus moves from the classroom to defining what students need to be successful after graduation in terms of life-long learning; and

Transformational OBE – in opposition to conventional subjects and how schools have been traditionally structured. This approach is future oriented and focuses on what Spady terms "the broad role performance capabilities of

young people and their ability to do complex tasks in real settings, in real situations, relating more directly to life. Transformational OBE is not focused on curriculum outcomes, that is, outcomes about conventional subject areas." Learning is no longer based on year levels and the belief that students must succeed in a set period of time.

As far back as 1989, a survey by Burns and Wood was conducted with teachers about their perceptions regarding the implementation of OBE. The authors concluded that although teachers viewed OBE positively, they identified four challenges that teachers face: 1) Attitudes of staff regarding student performance; 2) New techniques and responsibilities of teachers; 3) Existing school structures; and 4) Systems of power and incentives. Years later, Spady criticized schools for using only traditional and transitional OBE, saying sometimes good ideas are distilled down to their lowest level of misunderstanding so that they become "unrecognizable and unappealing," and that OBE cannot be mandated with the hope that it will be successfully implemented (Spady, as cited in Alderson & Martin (2007:3). His criticism will be addressed later in this chapter when discussing how OBE is being implemented in college classrooms in Manitoba and across Canada, and whether TVE teachers even have any understanding of the kind of transformative pedagogy that he envisioned.

As visionary as transformational OBE might be, schools as we know them would have to make a huge paradigm shift if they are serious about implementing the vision that Spady had. Logistically, schools would operate on a twelve month cycle, with students being able to progress to their next grade level when they can demonstrate competence in their current grade. Timetables would have to change.

Teaching and learning would happen in "real time," and assessment practices would have to be "real world." In theory, Spady envisioned schools aspiring to the transformational OBE which is supposed to afford transparency, clarity, accountability, standardization and authenticity in assessment but from the definitions provided, there are obviously supporters and opponents who see possibilities and limitations to Spady's ideal approach. In reality, implementation of OBE proved to be far more problematic for many school divisions across Canada and internationally.

Origin of OBE

In the nomenclature of education, the mere mention of Outcomes-Based Education can elicit strong emotions. Those opposed to OBE begin to hear such monikers as mastery learning, Competency-Based Education, behavioural objectives and skills training. Some would say that OBE emerged in the United States of America in the late 1980's and got a foothold in the early 1990's as a new model of curriculum planning and implementation in opposition, and in response to, standards-based or syllabus-based education (Donnelly 2007:2). Was OBE a new phenomenon or was it something old that was simply repackaged and called something else? Given the definition provided by Spady, OBE was new, and it was intended to address the three domains of learning, that is, cognitive (Bloom, 1956), affective (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia 1973), and psychomotor (Harrow, 1972; Simpson, 1972).

These domains are important when addressing OBE since outcomes are supposed to be represented in each domain especially in higher order thinking or

complex tasks. It is interesting to note though, that although Bloom was a respected educator, he identified the three domains of learning but only developed the cognitive domain in great detail in 1956. He and other colleagues developed the affective domain almost twenty years later and he never developed the psychomotor domain because he felt that this domain was not relevant to, and had no application in universities. Psychomotor skills were seen as only being applicable in vocational education. One would wonder where university disciplines such as drama, music and theatre would fit in. There is an underlying message that universities work with the brain while motor and physical skills are left to vocational schools. When a well-respected educational psychologist such as Bloom emphasized the cognitive domain in such detail and did nothing with the psychomotor domain, it is easy for educators to buy in to the notion that cognitive skills supersede psychomotor or affective skills. In TVE, it is impossible not to use psychomotor skills, as one cannot really demonstrate competency in skills without actually performing them, and it assumes that to be able to competently perform a skill, one has to have the underlying knowledge.

With respect to TVE, historical research indicates that mastery learning and Competency-Based Education are the most used and favoured models of curriculum delivery and both focus on the cognitive and psychomotor domains, with little or no focus on affect or attitudes. Given my own experience teaching by mastery learning as well as Competency-Based Education in TVE, I could make no distinction between the two. So what is Competency-Based Education and mastery learning and how do they differ from OBE?

Outcomes-Based Education: Paradigm shift or semantics?

Mastery learning, Competency-Based Education and Outcomes-Based education have all been part of the history of most colleges in Canada. These methodologies are all based on acquiring technical skills for the world of work by focusing on mastering content. Looking at the definition of OBE provided by Spady, the lines blur when trying to make the distinction between Outcomes-Based education, mastery learning and Competency-Based Education.

Perhaps the biggest difference may be attributed to stating that mastery learning and Competency-Based Education are content-centred, objectives-based education is teacher-centred, and Outcomes-Based education is student-centred. Spady refers to transformational OBE as a systems transformation. Classen (as cited in Malan 2002:22) posits that "OBE is a transformational perspective on the curriculum." Malan further states that:

OBE offers a dialogue between learner and the curriculum where the learner interacts with sources of knowledge, reconstructs knowledge and takes responsibility for his or her own learning outcomes... The teacher becomes a facilitator in the teaching and learning situation instead of acting as a source of information transferring content to learners (p. 22).

Malan posits that transformational OBE is much like mastery learning and Competency-Based Education.

Guskey (1994) believes that there is nothing new about OBE. He says that Ralph Tyler addressed it in his book *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* in

1949 where Tyler discussed curriculum planning and instruction and their association with behaviourism. Due to the unpopularity of behaviourism, educators adopted an objectives-based, mastery learning approach as outlined by Bloom. Not by coincidence, Bloom was a student of Tyler, and his taxonomy was seen as providing more clarity to Tyler's ideas. Guskey further believes that Outcomes-Based Education, mastery learning and Competency-Based Education are theoretically linked, but are distinct from each other. OBE is more about curriculum reform while CBE is about instructional processes, and a combination of the two would enhance student learning. As good as his explanation may be, many teachers do not make those distinctions.

In the transformational model of OBE, Spady and Marshall (as cited in Marshall and Jamison, 1993:432) see themselves as "paradigm pioneers," believing that ALL students can learn given the right conditions. This, of course, would have huge implications for marginalized and under-represented groups where OBE could be the desperately needed social change agent. Capper and Jamison (1993) see transformational OBE more closely aligned to structural functionalism, which in turn aligns closely to behaviourism by preserving traditional structures of education which maintain the status quo. They use a poststructuralist paradigm to interrogate Spady's language of transformational OBE – such words as *all students*, *succeed*, *master*, *outcomes* and *control*. In their final analysis of OBE, they say *some students* may be more marginalized, e.g. students with cognitive disabilities; *success* may be measured by "mainstream" societal values; if students fail to *master* the content, then the fault is theirs; the power elite and not the marginalized students determine what appropriate *outcomes* are; and finally *control* is removed from the classroom

teacher and is determined by administrators who decide that *all* teachers will teach and *all* students will learn in the same way. Core and extended curricula are also interrogated, showing that some students who need more time to acquire some core outcomes may miss out on valuable learning opportunities while their peers, who need less time, may be have opportunities to work on extended curricula, thereby creating issues of self-worth, access and opportunity in education.

Manno (1994:31), outlines another complication regarding governments determining what constitutes a good outcome and when it is attained. He says that:

Forcing parents to send their children to school is one thing. But for the state to declare that students cannot graduate from a government school they must attend unless they demonstrate values and attitudes the state prescribes - even when these values conflict with what those students and their families believe - has all the trappings of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. All this is to say that the "Age of Aquarius" life roles and outcomes espoused by transformational OBE betray an unjustifiably grand view of what compulsory government schools can require of the students forced to attend them.

This was most likely not the transformative OBE that Spady had envisioned. His transformative OBE could be summed up as a hybridized version of Bloom's mastery learning, Freire's transformative learning and Dewey's experiential learning.

Given all the concerns by educators, politicians, and parents with a host of issues regarding the full meaning of OBE - its educational value, how it would be

implemented, who would determine what good outcomes were, how they would be measured and by whose standards - it was adopted across-the-board in several states in the US as well as Canada. Other countries like Australia, and South Africa soon followed suit. OBE's adoption in Canada was somewhat effortless, but there seemed to be little rationale for the move in this direction and eventually it spread to other countries.

The Canadian Context of Outcomes-Based Education

The rise of OBE was based in the ideological beliefs that every child could succeed, and shifting from teacher-centred curricula to student-centred curricula meant that this could be accomplished. Teacher accountability was high on the list of added benefits. As noted before, William Spady provided a big picture of OBE but fell substantially short on the small details regarding funding and implementation. Finn (1998:13) noted that "Outcomes-Based Education quickly became synonymous with big-brotherism by the state and with squishy, affective, constructivist educationist notions," but goes on to say that when OBE became a target for parents, standards-based education and accountability suffered.

Since decisions about schooling are determined by each individual province in Canada, implementing a national framework for Outcomes-Based Education could only happen with the agreement of all the provinces. Most provinces moved toward OBE and some established common frameworks for curricula, but there is no single structure that cut across every aspect of education at the public school, college or university level for constitutional reasons.

The Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation, a regional consortium of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island developed *The Atlantic Canada Framework for Essential Graduation Learnings* which supports Outcomes-Based learning. They state that:

Curriculum outcomes statements articulate what students are expected to know and be able to do in particular subject areas. These outcomes statements also describe the expectations at a particular grade level. Through the achievement of curriculum outcomes, students demonstrate the Essential Graduation Learnings (n.d.:7).

On the other side of the country, the Ministers of Education for Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories signed a similar agreement in 1993 titled the *Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (K-12)* and later renamed the *Western and Northern Canadian Protocol* when Nunavut joined. This agreement outlined Outcomes-Based common core curricula for some subject areas.

In 1997, the Council of Ministers of Education across Canada signed the *Pan-Canadian Protocol for Collaboration on School Curriculum*. The *Common framework of science learning outcomes K to 12 (1997)* document was Outcomes-Based and outlined the learning outcomes for all science courses. By signing this agreement, Ontario accepted OBE as a curriculum model, at least for the sciences.

Quebec's education system is different from the other provinces; however, the Ministère de l'Éducation outlined what they referred to as "end-of-cycle" learning outcomes. They state that:

Compliance with the programs prescribed by the Ministère de l'Éducation is essential to ensuring the coherence of the evaluation process. The programs define the expected outcomes at the end of the instructional period and they provide references for the evaluation of learning. Their prescriptive nature ensures that all Québec students are evaluated based on common references.

Even with individual jurisdictions, every province in Canada has adopted OBE in varying forms. In the technical and vocational education sectors, many educators could not be sure if it was a change in ideology, a real paradigm shift or linguistic licensing. From my experience as a TVE teacher-educator, I spent endless amounts of time explaining the difference between Objectives and Outcomes to pre-service and classroom teachers but I was not always sure that I could make that distinction clearly, except to say that Objectives were more teacher-centred, that is, what the lesson was going to be about, and Outcomes were learner-centred, that is, what knowledge and skills the student would be able to demonstrate at the end of their learning.

For technical and vocational programs, it was almost business as usual with mastery learning/Competency-Based Education being replaced with Outcomes-Based education. In the classroom, the shift was more about language and less about substance, as many teachers including me could not really see how this changed anything about the way we understood teaching and learning in a competency-based

or mastery learning classroom. It would have been useful to have had some professional development regarding implementation of OBE, but most TVE teachers used professional development time to learn trade related skills with improvement and enhancement of learning about education theory and practice low on the list of professional development activities at the college where I taught hairstyling. All teachers had the unique opportunity negotiated as part of our collective agreement for teacher professional development, whereby teachers could go back into industry for up to six months with full teacher salary and no loss of seniority to maintain their level of expertise in their trade. This same kind of provision was not made for educational courses to enhance my teaching abilities. That absence of such opportunities says a lot about the value placed on teaching versus the value of maintaining expertise in the trade. This has implications for social mobility of TVE teachers. If the value of further education is not recognized and funded in the same way that trade specific skills are recognized and funded, TVE teachers are less likely to seek further education than is necessary to teach in a technology school. In Manitoba public schools, the requirement to teach a vocational subject is a Red Seal designation and a minimum of six years of experience in the trade with the understanding that teaching related courses would follow (a detailed explanation of this was outlined in Chapter 1).

New directions for Outcomes-Based Education in Manitoba

In the Manitoba context, Outcomes-Based Education had its genesis in the early to mid-1990's. In 1994, the then Conservative government produced three major documents that were to change the direction of education in Manitoba. Those documents – *Renewing Education: New Directions – A Blueprint for Action, Renewing*

Education: New Directions – The Action Plan, and *New Directions: A Foundation for Excellence* presented “a blueprint for the educational renewal of schools and schooling (1994:3)” and that “a Kindergarten to Senior 4 (Grade 12) education will determine each student’s ability to prosper both at the post-secondary level and in the workforce” (1994:1).

The first of the three New Directions documents - *Renewing Education: New Directions – A Blueprint for Action* was intended to provide new directions for schools and schooling in Manitoba for the twenty-first century. This document focused on student learning outcomes and outlined six priority areas (1994:4):

- Essential learning
- Educational standards and evaluation
- School Effectiveness
- Parental and community involvement
- Distance education and technology
- Teacher education

In the *Where to Now* section of the document, the government stated that school renewal in Manitoba would occur within the context of social and economic changes, that there was a six year implementation timeline and would include multiple stakeholders such as students, parents, educators, business, industry and labour. In January 1995, the government presented a follow-up document titled *Renewing*

Education: New Directions – The Action Plan which provided more details about the actual implementation. Those included time lines, policy changes and legislative amendments (1995:3-38). In the *Glossary* section, Outcomes are defined as "...concise descriptions of the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn in a course or grade level subject area" (ibid:70). Since most technical and vocational schools in Manitoba were using one form or another of mastery learning or Competency-Based Education, Outcomes-Based Education supporting the market ideals of competition was seen by most - to overuse a pun - to be "business as usual."

According to Henley and Young, "[a] striking feature of these documents is the lack of *any* explicit ideological justification for the substantial changes, curricular or otherwise, that they called for (2001:315)." They further contend that the policy proposals were "more reflective of a market democracy rather than a pluralist moral democracy (ibid:307)." So how did this kind of school restructuring impact technical and vocational education in Manitoba? The focus was even more on providing training for a market democracy, or as Kenway says (as cited by Dei and Karumanchery in Henley and Young, 2001:321) it is about incorporating market ideals of competition into schooling in lieu of collectivity and co-operation, what Kenway refers to as *disaggregation*.

This is somewhat supported by results of a 2003 qualitative research study conducted for Red River College by acumen research. In that study, the Council on Post-Secondary Education in Manitoba stated that they saw two primary motives for RRC to move to Outcomes-Based curricula. They were:

- Improved relevance for students and industry employers, and
- Improved speed and ability to keep current and to adjust to changes in the labour market.

This was based on one of the government's priority areas during a budget speech which was to make "high-quality, affordable education within reach of all Manitobans" and "having an effective economic strategy, which must in turn be supported by a strong education strategy (Provincial Priorities, Budget Speech April 22, 2002 as cited in acumen 2003:8-9)."

Some have argued that a shift to a market economy of education could be closely linked to Total Quality Management (TQM), often used in business. The Education Commission of the States (1995) asserts that:

The shift toward outcome-based education is analogous to the total quality movement in business and manufacturing. It reflects a belief that the best way for individuals and organizations to get where they're going is first to determine where they are and where they want to be-then plan backwards to determine the best way to get from here to there.

Just how closely is OBE linked to TQM, and what would be the educational implications of such a link?

Total Quality Management

Just like Competency-Based Education or Outcomes-Based Education, Total Quality Management (TQM) as philosophical business concept promoting quality

systems and customer satisfaction, was popularized in the 1980's and 1990's by statistician and management theorist W. Edwards Deming. However, its long history goes as far back as the 1920's with the work of American Walter Shewart who focused his attention on "the relationship between process quality and product quality" (Houston, 2007:5) in manufacturing. Deming who was a student of Shewart, moved to Japan after World War II, where he along with other colleagues, refined and implemented an adaptation of Shewart's principles to all productive parts of an organization which they saw as a subsystem of the organization. Although there were others such as Joseph Juran and Armand Feigenbum, Deming was perhaps the most famous. In later years, others such as Japanese Kaoru Ishikawa, Genichi Taguchi, and Shigeo Shingo and Americans Philip Crosby and Tom Peters extended TQM's concepts.

Defining Total Quality Management

There are probably as many definitions of TQM as there are practitioners. This by itself poses a problem because depending on definition and interpretation, the practice of TQM can look very different. Houston (citing Ishikawa, 2007:5) warns against mistaking tools and methods for the purpose of TQM and reducing the definition of TQM to what 'quality' organizations do. Rather than a specific definition of TQM, quality is often defined as "doing right things right" (citing Jacques, *ibid*:13). Houston further states that the key proponents of TQM thought "that issues of quality for any organisation are fundamentally issues of purpose and values (Deming, 1986, 1993) and contribution to society (Ishikawa, 1985). Houston provides his own definition of quality as "[a judgement about] an emergent property: of a particular product, a particular process, or a particular organisational type.

Additional definitions of quality include meeting or exceeding customer needs and expectations through communication and apply to products, services, people, processes and the environment (Mc Nealy 1993, Oakland 1995, Goetsch and Davis 1994, Murgatroyd and Morgan 1993). Additionally, in the context of education, "quality is therefore assessed by whether or not and how well the duties were performed" (Jager and Nieuwenhuis 2005:252). Using the analogy of a triangle, some practitioners see TQM as a management driven, top-down initiative with management at the apex of the triangle, while others see it as a customer driven inverted triangle with management at the bottom of the triangle.

TQM's guiding beliefs and principles

W. Edwards Deming established the gold standard in quality management. He envisioned a kind of transformational management style by identifying key concepts such as customer satisfaction, sound leadership, continuous improvement and overall participation and commitment of all staff. He laid out his four beliefs and fourteen guiding principles which helped establish him as the leading authority on TQM. His beliefs, as summarized by Melvin (as cited by Osborne, 1993:2-3) are that:

- All people are thoughtful well-meaning beings who have a desire to learn
- Every person has the right to be successful and the right to enjoy their work
- All organizations must be considered systems; they must be considered in their entirety
- People learn through experiences. All organizational members need to have similar experiences
- Most variations from desired and expected outcomes in any organization are due to problems within the system, not problems with the workers

Melvin (ibid:3) also outlined Deming's fourteen guiding principles in a quality management system:

- Create constancy of purpose for improvement
- Adopt a new philosophy for improvement
- Cease dependence on mass inspection
- End the practice of awarding business on short-term costs
- Constantly improve the system
- Institute training to teach workers to do the job well
- Institute leadership consisting of helping people
- Drive out fear by asking questions
- Break down barriers between staff areas
- Eliminate workforce slogans, exhortations and targets
- Eliminate numerical quotas
- Remove barriers to pride of workmanship
- Institute a vigorous program of education and retraining
- Take action to accomplish the transformation

Deming believed that each of these points have to be addressed to ensure success. Focusing on tools and activities rather than values, undermines the principles of TQM. Deming states that "It is important that an aim never be defined in terms of activity or methods. It must always relate to how life is better for everyone" (ibid:5). In the context of education, many of Deming's key concepts of Total Quality Management look remarkably like those of Transformational Outcomes-Based Education as outlined by William Spady or for that matter, Competency-Based Education.

Critiques of TQM in Higher Education

The principles of TQM as outlined by Deming appeared to be very successful in the manufacturing sector but were less successful in service industries and even less so in educational institutions. There is no easy or seamless transition and substituting tools and method is not the same as the application of systems theory. The same could be said for Spady's transformational OBE although Spady was far less clear on details of the application of OBE as was Deming of TQM. In later years Deming distanced himself from TQM because of what he considered a distortion of his work, most ostensibly around purpose, and the overuse of slogans to represent his work.

Giroux and Landry (as cited in Houston, 2007:4) provide a number of critiques of TQM, which supports Deming's position:

1. There is a lack of understanding of the 'true' nature of TQM by quality specialists responsible for implementing it.
2. The principles of TQM are not problematic; it is its application that is in question, especially in the US.
3. There is a dominance of rhetoric over substance, hence a distorted representation of quality theory in actual practice, that is, managers' success stories often imply success in the overall organization
4. The nature of TQM is prescriptive
5. There is an overselling of the universality of TQM, without due consideration to organizational environments such as schools
6. The misunderstanding that TQM is benign and universally beneficial

7. There is an incompatibility between the practices associated with quality control and the pursuit of learning
8. TQM in practice is an instrument for enacting the machine metaphor; the practice of such is often at the expense of workers dignity
9. TQM ignores philosophical, moral and political discourse
10. There is a limited interpretation of the key concepts of TQM

There is sufficient literature to support these critiques that TQM at the operational level is selectively used by educators to support their objectives or failure to address questions of learning, curriculum or whether what is being taught is worth learning (Kohn, 1993:58-60). Kohn further states that:

TQM's role in education converges on a single crucial distinction concerning how to think about what happens in schools. Various framed as 'mastery vs. ability,' 'learning vs. performance,' and 'task vs. ego,' the point is that there is an enormous difference between getting students to think about what they are doing, on the one hand, and how well they are doing it (and therefore how good they are doing it), on the other. The latter orientation does a great deal of harm.

Other concerns in education include too much focus on internal processes such as employee performance evaluations and less on customer perceptions and preferences. Another is the kind of detached sterility of application that removes the human aspect. Deming summed up his critique as the seven deadly diseases that many organizations suffer from including emphasis on short term profits, indiscriminate use of easily available data without regard for what is really needed

for continuous improvement and failure to provide adequate human and financial resources to support quality improvement.

Even the language of TQM's application to schools is troubling, with reference to some of the previously cited authors. When language such as "providing training to be competitive in the global marketplace," "shifting to a knowledge-based economy", "technological advances in education," "preparing students for the world of work," "scientific method," "knowledge and skills," "student-as-customer" and "client-centred" education, education is reduced to training and student-as-customer really means student-as-product whose labour is a commodity to be sold. This raises several questions about why a TQM/OBE model is used in technical and vocational education when it was soundly rejected in academic classrooms world-wide. Could one reason be that TVE classrooms and curricula often mimic a work environment? Given that one of the overarching goals of TQM and OBE is how life is better for everyone, that is, measuring a person's quality of life by more than economic measures, then there should be space in such curricula for critical education, one that raises the possibility that preparation for global citizenship must go beyond technical skill training.

Analyzing TQM and OBE

Many people would agree that quality, whether in education or business is of paramount importance. In a competitive global marketplace, businesses want to ensure that their processes are current, up-to-date and meet or exceed the minimum benchmarks of customer satisfaction. Ultimately this represents success. Educational institutions want to ensure excellence in the teaching/learning

experience. This requires that accountability be a key element of measuring quality. Schomoker and Wilson (1993a:389) refer to a New York state school whose students came from primarily lower middle-class parents and whose administrators implemented a school improvement program called Outcomes-Driven Developmental Model. At the core it is mirrors several of Deming's fourteen principles of TQM. The authors state that "[the] statistically minded leadership routinely asks teachers and teams of teachers not "how well" something works, but how many students are meeting quality standards on units and projects." In another article, Schomoker and Wilson (1993b:63) posit that TQM is grounded in psychology and sees TQM as an "enlightened mixture of teamwork, feedback, the selective use and analysis of data, collective intelligence, self-management," and "an arresting sense of shared purpose." This is much like the behaviourist philosophy that OBE is grounded in.

De Jaeger and Nieuwenhuis (2005:254-257) cite several authors who support applying TQM to Outcomes-Based Education. Some arguments include: a) The re-engineering of the learning system towards an Outcomes-Based approach [is] a major attempt to ensure graduates have the skills to meet the needs of industry; b) TQM and OBE reflect outcomes and how best to achieve them through continuous monitoring and managing; c) Changing the organizational culture by changing the approach to managing production processes and quality of the final product or outcome using TQM and OBE; d) Focusing TQM and OBE on quality outputs; e) Focusing on meeting external customer expectations through TQM and OBE; f) TQM and OBE are operating in a culture of interdependence rather than individual competitiveness; and, g) TQM and OBE are both learner-centred and market-driven.

Maguad (2003:414-417) sees TQM's principle of continuous improvement being applied in the classroom by establishing benchmarks of quality and having all educational stakeholders including teachers, learners and administrators be part of the process of achieving those benchmarks. The application of this principle of TQM is similar to those of OBE where continuous improvement is part of its foundation. In a later article, Maguad (2007:334-340) reiterates his point that continuous improvement has to be an important concept in education, and higher education institutions need to make a strong commitment to customer satisfaction. He identified the academic and administrative internal customers as students, faculty, non-teaching staff, administrators, programs and departments. He then identified direct and indirect external customers such as employers, other colleges and universities, suppliers, government, community, donors, alumni and accrediting agencies whose relationships also need to be sustained. Each stakeholder in this instance has a different understanding of quality as it relates to customer satisfaction. In thinking of student-as-customer, Maguad makes it clear that the same criteria do not apply as it does in business because there are other factors to consider: a) Higher institutions often have minimum entrance requirements so that not all customers (students) are accepted; b) Students-as-customers do not fully finance their education, therefore other funders would have a say in determining satisfaction; and c) Students are continuously tested to determine if they can go further (buy more education).

Schwartzman (1995:8) sees some value in the student-as-customer metaphor especially in "the areas of institutions that conduct discrete business-like transactions - e.g., student services, registration, food services [and] maintenance"

but there are limits to using the analogy because “the language of consumerism should not be grafted so enthusiastically onto the practice of education.” Student-as-customer may, in fact, be “at the mercy of forces they neither originated nor control.” Schwartzman posits that the “perception of high-quality education, therefore, may amount to a reinforcement of the very prejudices and provincialism that learning is designed to overcome” (ibid:8) because quality education as defined by mainstream ideology may be about protecting the status quo rather than “challenging students by exposing them to the lively marketplace of different ideas, constrict[ing] young minds by insulating them from intellectual novelty, avoiding different viewpoints, and stifling innovative departures from tradition and authority” (ibid:8). In much the same way, OBE can be about replicating the status quo if it follows behaviourist psychology rather than transformational learning as it was intended.

Implications for Technical/Vocational Education in Manitoba

Within the context of technical and vocational education in Manitoba, what are the necessary components for school reform and what are the implications of adopting those reforms? Section 6: Action 15 of the Department of Education’s *New Directions: Action Plan* (1994:35-38) addressed teacher education in general and summarized sixteen areas of knowledge and skills that were to be reviewed. The government believed that teachers must:

- Possess knowledge of the disciplines they teach
- Fully understand the integration of teaching methods
- Have in-depth mastery of foundational topics

- Be able to manage change
- Possess a variety of personal characteristics that will inspire students
- Have an understanding of and incorporate local and global economics into their teaching
- Assist students to develop fundamental values and ethics
- Have and foster entrepreneurial skills in students
- Be effective in developing student literacy skills
- Have the skills to function in a collaborative system
- Know how to measure student achievement in various ways
- Be able to analyze and reflect upon and apply knowledge
- Respond to student diversity
- Manage the learning environment to help students master and demonstrate skills and knowledge
- Participate in teacher in-service
- Be knowledgeable of and apply professional ethics

This section on teacher education was particularly important for TVE teachers; some areas for review would pose no problems while others proved to be more challenging.

As a teacher-educator at Red River College, I have already identified some of the challenges regarding writing and assessing learning outcomes, both at the college level and at the secondary school level. In my other role as a Curriculum Consultant responsible for Quality Assurance in programming at the college, I can clearly see the genesis of those challenges as I work directly with the Chairs of

various departments in their program renewal processes. As an example, a program renewal process has several deliverables:

- An Environmental Scan and Analysis of the key findings of similar programs across Canada
- Industry Occupational Analysis
- Graduate Skills and Abilities Chart (based on the Occupational Analysis)
- Graduate Profile (based on the Occupational Analysis)
- Program Renewal Plan
- A 5-year Program Renewal Plan
- Final Report

With the *Environmental Scan*, I am simply comparing similar programs across the country. The next step is an occupational analysis, which is based directly on feedback from “expert workers” with at least five years of experience in their particular area of expertise. They identify the skills and abilities necessary for a worker to be successful in the field and the level of competence that the worker is supposed to perform the skill. They also identify retiring and emerging trends in the field. The resulting chart forms one of the foundational documents in the program renewal process. The occupational chart is then reviewed by program faculty who also cross-reference it with RRC’s College-Wide Learning Outcomes and outline their expectations for graduates of the program for the next five years. The resulting document is the *Graduate Skills and Abilities Chart*. The faculty then create a *Graduate Profile* for the program, again based on the occupational chart. These are usually ten to fifteen broad program outcome statements (always written with action

verbs) that describe what a graduate from a particular program is able to do. Instructors then use the *Graduate Skills and Abilities Chart* and the *Graduate Profile* to plan curricula by writing course-specific learning outcomes and instructional and assessment strategies to meet those outcome statements.

The political economy of such an educational process should be cause for concern, as the dominant discourse of business significantly informs educational policy and program content to such an extent that some of the college's quality assurance standards were developed to support this. RRC's mission statement is a good example of this. Imbedded in the statement is the phrase "...creating skilled graduates to drive Manitoba's economy." It cannot be any clearer than this. This would suggest that the college is more responsive to the needs of Manitoba's economy as its primary customer, with the needs of the students being secondary.

Another example of responding to the interests of business and industry is RRC's adoption/adaption of its College-Wide Learning Outcome from the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+ profile of the skills and abilities that workers are expected to have to be successful in the world of work. Some of the members of the Conference Board of Canada include MTS Allstream Inc., PricewaterhouseCoopers, De Beers Canada Inc., The Credit Valley Hospital, IBM Canada Ltd., Merck Frosst Canada Ltd., Calyx Transportation Group Inc., ATB Financial, Xerox Canada Ltd, Microsoft Corporation, FedEx Express, and Saskatchewan Power Corporation. These are the corporations by whose standards the college establishes its College-Wide Learning Outcomes and expect all graduates to aspire to. This is the case of the privileged elites of the country making decisions

about, and predicting, the state of the economy. Colleges then respond by imbedding those standards into curricula.

As if these are not enough reasons to raise a red flag, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), an arm of the federal government, has its own list of Essential Skills which are “the skills needed for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change” (HRSDC, 2009). Those essential skills include: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, continuous learning, thinking skills and computer use. Nowhere in this list of “Essential Skills” is there a mention of a democratic education or social responsibility. Workers are expected to think critically, read text, use a computer and work as a team, but upon careful examination of the documents, the kind of critical thinking and problem solving that workers are expected to have deals with making the employer more productive and the workplace more efficient. It does not address personal competencies or life skills nor does it address anything about making sure that workers have the ability to question working conditions, wages, company policies, or company business plans which may include downsizing, outsourcing or moving to part-time employment with minimal benefits.

Teamwork and problems-solving generally means working with others to solve a company related problem often by consensus, but that kind of teamwork does not foster a sense of community and camaraderie. The very workers who may help streamline a work process may be the first ones to lose their job because of their ability to problem-solve and make the company more productive and profitable. Absent from these are critical education studies. The kind of Outcomes-Based

Education articulated by big business and supported by the state is a case of the government buying into and supporting the hegemony of the corporate agenda.

There is a great deal of emphasis on narrowly meeting technological and science-based standards established by business and industry with very little emphasis on creative thinking, broadly speaking. Critical literacy scholar Kathleen Berry (1998:22) states that:

... the world can be constructed in such a way that human values, histories, truth, knowledge, gender, class and so forth are excluded or dominated by one particular cultural construct such as male over female, European white race over other races, or ruling class and working classes. Consequently modern constructs that are dominant, privileged, powerful, and mainstream can rule out any cultural, social, constructs that do not fit within the frameworks or borders of these dominant groups.

Continuous learning also commonly referred to as lifelong learning is really a euphemism for workers having to be in a constant state of readiness and preparation to adapt to and deal with changes in the workplace, layoff notices, reassignment, job loss, downsizing, outsourcing, or any of multiple business decisions that might adversely affect them. Even as organizations move to a flatter more linear reporting structure as suggested in the TQM model, and employees are asked to be part of the decision-making process, the final decisions are made with the company in mind, not the worker.

Where to go from here?

There is a general lack of concern that students are missing a huge component of their education. There is no discussion in college classrooms of what Giroux (2006:73) refers to as the kind of pedagogy that provides "the conditions for students to invest in a critical form of agency, one that takes seriously their responsibility to others, public life and global democracy." He further states that "pedagogy becomes the cornerstone of democracy in that it provides the very foundation for students to learn not merely how to be governed but also how to be capable of governing" (ibid:73). Most teachers are struggling to find sufficient time to teach to provincial trade-related tests, and most are reluctant to engage in a pedagogy that goes beyond the acquisition of skills. We should not overlook or minimize the politics of such a class-based education. OBE in any form - be it traditional, transitional or transformational - has been interrogated, questioned and absolutely rejected in most academic classrooms, yet it thrives in TVE classrooms. There is a dearth of research on the application of transformational OBE in TVE classrooms. For all the reasons that OBE might fail in academic classrooms, the same reasons can be applied to TVE classrooms, but scholars are less apt to do research in this area unless the research is funded by big business with a particular economic focus. Social science research is minimal at best. It is easy to quantify how well or poorly a program is doing based on graduation and employment statistics or how well a new technological gadget or process will benefit business. It is less glamorous to do research on how schools are failing poor and marginalized students. Schools can ask themselves why, in spite of good graduation rates, attrition rates are still excessively high in some programs, why low status/pay programs are over-represented by women and minorities, why high status, high paying programs are

over-represented by whites and/or males, or how schools continue to support an economic agenda by partnering with big business who provide a diminutive amount of funding and research dollars in return for a steady supply of work ready graduates or research findings that help to increase their profit margins.

Science-based and quantitative research abounds about the success of OBE and TQM in classrooms and there is certainly enough support and funding should a scholar or teacher-researcher want to quantify the benefits of a technology or science-based education. However, the lack of ethnographic research on the social costs of such a class-based education as TVE has not been sufficiently interrogated. Who is to be the voice of the subaltern? The classist and sexist education that is TVE needs much more in-depth research as evidenced by the lack of published research in this area. We should be questioning the status of TVE which is tantamount to a commodity to be traded, funded and exploited for the benefit of business. There is a certain insincerity in talking about education for global citizenship when what we are really doing is ensuring that TVE complies with international industrialization programs. Taylor et al (2007:393) submit that "schools come to prioritize the needs of corporations and reproduce their values" and they ask this question: "Are they [schools] to be narrowly focused on enabling students to establish a relationship with an employer which may lead to the offer of full-time employment in the future or is there an obligation on the part of educators to teach young people about the world of work?" They further state that: "It is critical for youth to be engaged in discussion about contradictions within the labour process and the place of tar sands development within the global economy" (ibid).

TVE teachers continue to adhere to standards established by business without questioning the content or, for that matter, the context. Teachers rarely question the quality or format of an education system that benefits the employer. Curriculum and teaching methods continue to replicate the social class that it represents, that is, teachers who were once part of the very same working class, now buying into the hegemony of the dominant ideology by preparing a new working class so that their labour can be exploited.

Teachers make educational decisions to ensure that students are prepared to pass provincial exams. Success is reported by how many students gain employment, even if that employment is not in the field of work that the student graduated from. There is some dishonesty in citing student employment statistics and success rates when they do not always represent or reflect the education or training the student paid for. This is an elitist exploitation of the working class - a subaltern education. The last statement was made based on my own lived experience as a teacher in the trade of hairstyling. All apprenticeable TVE programs use a National Occupational Analysis to plan curriculum. These analyses are created using input of expert workers often times using a DACUM process (acronym for Developing A CURRICULUM). According to the Ohio State University website (1999), DACUM is:

... an occupational skill profile which can be used for instructional program planning, curriculum development, training materials development, organizational restructuring, employee recruitment, training needs assessment, meeting ISO9000 standards, career counselling, job descriptions, competency test development and other purposes.

They also identify some of the strengths of DACUM as “providing a solid foundation for program development and revision” and identifying “the critical tasks and related general knowledge, tools, and worker behaviors (ibid).” Having myself co-facilitated DACUM sessions, I can attest that the main outcome of the sessions is the creation of an occupational chart that identifies the skills, knowledge and abilities that are required for workers in a particular occupation, identified by action verbs which can be measured. Usually participants of the DACUM process are asked to complete the statement “At the end of training, the graduate will be able to...” An action verb must be used to complete the statement. The affective domain although represented, is hard to concretize, let alone teach and measure.

Curriculum guides such as the Instructor’s Hairstyling Guide for Manitoba hairstylist training are based on the National Occupational Analysis for Hairstylists. The Manitoba guide was revised in 2005 and focus on learning outcomes as mandated by the Department of Education, but it only addresses technical skills. Notably absent are representations from the Affective domain – a place where values and judgements can be interrogated, critiqued and questioned. Teachers are expected to follow such a curriculum as outlined by the province, preparing students for provincial theory tests consisting of 100 multiple-choice questions. Most teachers know that multiple-choice tests often do not test high order critical thinking skills. The student then has to pass a practical exam demonstrating various aspects of the hairstyling trade. Again most teachers familiar with Bloom’s taxonomy know that this test is still only at the application level where the students are not required to do analyses, or make judgements about anything complicated. At the exam, they do not have to demonstrate competence in working with chemicals which is a large part of

what hairstylists have to do in a given day. They are only asked to demonstrate lower order skills. Hairstyling teachers preparing students for a provincial test have to do very little in terms of the skills and abilities that require more critical thinking. It should be no surprise to anyone that hairstyling is a very transient occupation for many, partly because graduates find out only after finding their first job that wages and working conditions in many salons are poor or limited. My colleagues often humoured me when I wanted to bring some diversity into the classroom, albeit superficial, by purchasing two brown coloured mannequins (who by the way had the same facial features as the white faced mannequins, except that they were a brown colour). I had discussions with my students about why the main text used in the Hairstyling classroom was referred to by Milady Publishers as *Standard Textbook of Cosmetology* and the text on chemical relaxation techniques was call *Black Cosmetology*. A prescribed Outcomes-Based curriculum does not lend itself to such discussions, and if a teacher does not see fit to question the hidden curricula, reinforced by publishers, schools, governments, and other learning resources, the status quo will continue.

When the Apprenticeship Branch responsible for technical and vocational education was reassigned to various departments of government including Education and Youth, Advanced Education and most recently to the Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade, it begs the question, what are the government's beliefs about the role and purpose of TVE? Given that each government department has different priorities, these reassignments of the Apprenticeship Branch means shifting the philosophical focus of TVE from labour, to education, and back to training and trade.

Looking forward by looking back

History teaches us many lessons, if we are willing to look back and learn from them. One would wonder why there are apparently no dissenting voices when the government implements education policies that focus on economics and do not seem to favour the worker. Is this the cultural hegemony that Gramsci referred when he said that capitalists have used various institutions such as schools and churches to make the masses – without violence or coercion – consent to their own exploitation? That may be partly true, but history has also shown that within every structure of power, there is resistance even within the monolithic machine of capitalism.

Within the province of Manitoba, there is a rich and long history of resistance and activism, including fighting for worker rights and challenging unfair labour practices. Many groups attempted, sometimes successfully, sometimes not, to challenge the capitalist system of wealth accumulation on the backs or at the expense of worker rights. Some gains and losses were discussed in the previous chapter, mostly directed at men. Issues relating to women's work were harder to negotiate as much of the legislation pertaining to training and education was shaped by "a construct of workers' rights shaped by the needs of blue-collar workers and men employed in the mass-production and resource industries" (Forest, as cited by Black and Silver, 2008:112). In the last four decades as more women joined the workforce, unions had to recognize their growing contributions and collective agreements had to reflect equal pay for work of equal value. Governments in turn had to recognize and provide opportunities for women. The same can be said for aboriginal persons as well as the growing immigrant population. There is a growing need to make curriculum responsive to these groups, who historically have had

unequal access to education (as is the case of Aboriginal people) or have had to languish in low-paying and low-skill jobs because credentializing and certification bodies either refuse to or make it difficult for foreign-trained professionals and tradespersons to get their credentials recognized. With the growing labour shortage and the need for highly skilled workers, education's response can learn from history and be more thoughtful.

Conclusion

Educational reform in Manitoba's colleges is focused on "creating a skilled workforce to drive Manitoba's economy" as stated in RRC's mission statement, but this education falls way too short and cheats students of a critical education, one that empowers people. Education is touted as a tool for addressing unemployment and poverty but it also functions in, and, supports a market economy, which is the cause of such inequalities in the first place; therein lays the paradox. If working class people are to be empowered, they must have the necessary tools which would include the language and ability to question unequal power relations. This is not going to happen if TVE teacher education programs continue to focus on training teachers who prepare students with technological skills while discounting the social values of education. The proverbial buck stops at the teacher preparation programs. Such programs have to be far more inclusive, and although it will not be an easy task to challenge the status quo, teacher-educators must rise to the challenge.

**CHAPTER 3: CREATING A SPACE FOR CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
WITHIN THE TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
CLASSROOM (THE MICRO POLITICS OF TVE)**

**CHAPTER 3: CREATING A SPACE FOR
CRITICAL PEDAGOGY WITHIN THE
TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
CLASSROOM (THE MICRO POLITICS OF TVE)**

Introduction
**Defining Critical
Pedagogy**
**Education's philosophical
foundations**
Pedagogy becomes political
Conflicting pedagogies
**Official knowledge
versus opaque
knowledge**
Culture as capital
**Critical pedagogy as
classroom practice**
**Esoteric or mundane
knowledge**
**Human and social
consciousness**
**Some issues with
critical education**
Manoeuvring the cracks
Contextualized learning
**Self-reflexivity in
teaching**
**Transgressing
research practices**
Teacher-as-researcher
**Action as research;
research as action**
Conclusion

Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery.

Horace Mann (1848)

Introduction

Many people are familiar with the above quotation and often use it to rationalize the need for more education. Considerable evidence indicates that education can provide a multitude of benefits including improved literacy, access to employment opportunities, better health, increased social mobility, increased political capital, and improved standards of living in general. Education can sometimes be thought of as neutral and judgement-free especially in the natural sciences. So, is any education a good education? What if that education is deficient in some way or serves a particular ideology? What if that education results in social segregation, or worse, it is used as a form of social control? Such questions need to be explored because more education does not necessarily mean better education and not all education is good education.

One example of education gone horribly wrong is the treatment of Aboriginal and First Nations students in Canadian residential schools. That kind of education was premised on the practical application of the beliefs of colonizers that Aboriginal students should be provided an education based on Christian teachings. The language and culture of Aboriginal people were viewed from a deficit model, so every effort was made to eradicate those deficiencies by removing students from their homes and educating them in residential schools. Although some students benefitted

from such education, the majority suffered tremendously. The history of residential schools is replete with horrendous stories of physical, emotional and verbal abuse, evidenced by the continuing social costs to families whose lives were ripped apart (Truth and Reconciliation Commission Canada 2010; CBC 2008; Listen Up TV 2008; Vision Productions, 2007; Aboriginal Healing Foundation 2004).

The goals of Technical and Vocational Education (TVE) are not quite so dramatic and overt. The intent of TVE is to provide necessary training in preparation for employment. Historically, such education included mastery learning, Competency-Based Education, and most recently, Outcomes-Based Education. As was previously discussed, these modes of curriculum delivery focus on content, standards, and outcomes, stated as demonstrable behaviours, and are modeled on the requirements of business. The major emphasis of this type of formal curricula is on the acquisition of technical skills required for employment. It is considered objective, ahistorical, rational, non-social and devoid of culture. The more advanced the education becomes, the more specialized the training becomes; emphasis is placed on technical competency.

In this neoliberal view of education, employability skills such as teamwork and critical thinking are recognized as useful, but only to the extent that they are transferable for employment or deployment, but with little emphasis on preparation for general citizenship. Provincial pre-employment and apprenticeship programs in many trades are good examples of this, where students are given basic training, and as they gain industry experience, they return to school to successfully challenge the next level of certification until they are eligible for a *Red Seal* designation in those trades that are apprenticeable. Critical thinking is taught as part of developing good

employability skills but upon closer examination, this kind of critical thinking really focuses on its usefulness to the employer rather than its usefulness to students. Critical thinking from a critical pedagogy perspective is what Shapiro (cited by Kanpol 1999:167-168) calls "critical consciousness" which has to do with:

... looking at the world, questioning the world as to whether in fact, it treats people with dignity and respect; whether the world is one in which certain groups of people or individuals are limited or dominated, or whether the world we live in, in fact, lives up to its democratic and humanistic promises.

Thus, critical thinking from a TVE perspective is an intellectual activity that benefits the employer while critical thinking/critical consciousness arises from a moral vision of the world.

How then does a TVE curriculum that focuses on training for employment promote and encourage a sense of democracy? Where might TVE students learn to question the traditional curriculum if they are being taught from a Eurocentric perspective, one which is patriarchal, privileges scientific knowledge and favours technical rationality? How would students gain the necessary skills to question the hidden curricula – that which is not stated, deliberately omitted, or simply never acknowledged? Such a curriculum supports the dominant ideology. Shor (1992:12) states that "if the student's task is to memorize rules and existing knowledge, without questioning the subject matter or the learning process, their potential for critical thought and action will be restricted." He further makes the point that "a curriculum that does not challenge the standard syllabus and conditions in society informs students that knowledge and the world are fixed and are fine the way they

are, with no role for students to play in transforming them, and no need for change” (ibid:12). If education is indeed the great equalizer in terms of economic and social mobility, does technical and vocational education, which is so narrowly focused on technical skills, ultimately exacerbate social stratification? If this is the case, how should this reductive focus be addressed so that everyone has an equal opportunity for a better life? Sen (1999:18) saw such education as leading to an expansion of the “capabilities of persons to lead the kind of life they value” when he outlined his six aspects of a capabilities (not to be confused with capacity-building) approach to living. In other words, there is more to measuring a person’s well-being than by purely economic means. According to Sen, due consideration should be given to how people live, what a person can attain rather than what is available, what path a person can follow, what life can be lived, what feelings of satisfaction are attainable, and what community participatory process for decision-making and valuing and prioritizing one’s life exists. Nussbaum (2000:70) concurs and goes further to say that an abundance of one does not make up for a lack of the other.

Some of the questions that should be asked before the previous questions can be discussed more fully are: 1) Is there a place in the TVE classroom for a critical or transformative pedagogy – one that interrogates issues of race, class, gender, power and privilege?; 2) What roles and responsibilities should TVE teachers have in interrogating and including a critical curriculum in their teaching? 3) How should TVE teachers be prepared for this kind of transformative pedagogy? This chapter will explore these questions.

The chapter is organized into five sections. The first section is a review of various definitions of critical pedagogy since it can be fluid and contextual. The

second section offers a theoretical overview of the philosophical foundations of education and how a critical or radical pedagogy is located within these philosophies. The third section will address some of the politics around critical education and how it seeks to challenge a neoliberal and globalizing agenda. The fourth section will review some of the ways in which critical pedagogy is represented in a selection of classroom settings as well as some of the challenges that critical educators face when practicing theory or theorizing practice. It will also address some of the ways I have attempted to incorporate my critical pedagogical practices into my TVE classroom, sometimes with success, sometimes not. Those practices were at times problematic when I had to find what marino [sic] (1997:23) refers to as "the cracks in consent." She states that:

Everyone has a history of resistance, but we might not remember this as being about resistance because it is often coded in the language of the persuader. The resistance might have been seen, for instance, as bad behaviour, inappropriate actions, wrong attitudes, breaking the rules, or something calling for punishment.

The last section will outline how qualitative research methodologies such as participatory action research might have a place in advancing a critical pedagogy in a technical and vocational classroom.

Although technical and vocational education is taught in high schools, and some students may leave high school with the necessary entry-level qualifications for particular trades and vocations, this chapter will focus on adult college-level technical and vocational education, noting that some high school students may, in fact, fit

physiological, social, psychological or legal definitions of what it means to be an adult as outlined by Malcolm Knowles (1980:24). In the interest of ease of reading, I will use the pronouns 'she and 'her' in place of (s)he or him/her.

Defining Critical Pedagogy

Ask any practicing critical educator for a definition of critical pedagogy and there will likely be as many different answers as the number of people asked. Given the changing nature of politics, space, time and people, the definition has to have some fluidity, but one thing remains constant and that is: critical pedagogues continue to challenge the structures of power that are so ingrained in educational frameworks, policies, curricula, and eventually, classroom practices.

One cannot discuss critical pedagogy without first acknowledging its relation to Marxism and critical social theory. Critical social theory in education as explained by Leonardo (2004:11) is a "multidisciplinary framework with the implicit goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge." He further states that it is not a specific discipline but a multidisciplinary approach to critical thinking in a broad way that ultimately leads to a quality learning experience; that theory and practice are not viewed as separate but rather part of the process leading to transformative knowledge; and finally, that critical social theory has the power to "change the pedagogical process from one of knowledge transmission to knowledge transformation" (ibid: 11). In the 1930's, critical social theory emerged as a response to positivism. Kincheloe (2004:28-29) outlines the basic characteristics of positivism:

- All knowledge is scientific knowledge,
- All scientific knowledge is empirically verifiable,
- One must use the same methods to study the physical world as one uses to study the social and educational worlds,
- If knowledge exists, it exists in some definite, measurable quantity,
- Nature is uniform and whatever is studied remains consistent in its existence and behaviour,
- The factors that cause things to happen are limited and knowable, and, in empirical studies, these factors can be controlled,
- Certainty is possible, and when we produce enough research, we will understand reality well enough to forgo further research,
- Facts and values can be kept separate, and objectivity is always possible,
- There is only one true reality, and the purpose of education is to convey that reality to students, and
- Teachers become "information deliverers" not knowledge-producing professionals or empowered cultural workers.

Critical theorists question and expose this kind of knowledge as limited, with the intent of transforming the personal, political and social relations of learning.

Paulo Freire explains the outcome of critical pedagogy as *conscientização* - "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (2000:35). In the context of schooling, Freire sees critical pedagogy as a challenge to traditional models of schooling which he refers to as the "banking" model, where the teacher is the expert with all the knowledge and students are empty vessels with no history or experience, waiting to be filled with knowledge from the teacher. He considers this "narrative" relationship to be one which is "motionless, compartmentalized, and predictable... detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them..." (ibid:71) and ultimately fails the student. Such a "banking" model of education serves the dominant ideology by creating students who are "receiving, filing and storing the deposits [of information]" (ibid:71-72). He further states that when a student is exposed to the banking model of education, she does not develop critical consciousness which is the underpinning of a transformative pedagogy.

Joan Wink summarized her definition of critical pedagogy - one based on her understanding of pedagogy - as the interaction between teaching and learning. Wink (2000:30) states that critical pedagogy is:

... a prism that reflects the complexities of the interactions between teaching, and learning. It highlights some of the hidden subtleties that may have escaped our view previously; it enables us to see more widely and deeply. This prism has a tendency to focus on shades of social, cultural, political and even economic conditions, and it does all of this under the broad view of history.

She believes that critical pedagogues have to make their own meaning of critical pedagogy based on what she calls "generative definitions," which are based on one's experiences. Her concern about providing a textbook definition is that it then becomes the one everyone refers to rather than realizing that it may be different from person to person based on that individual's experience.

Joe Kincheloe (2004:2) builds on the work of Freire by reiterating that "every dimension of schooling and every form of educational practice are politically contested spaces." He sees critical pedagogy as a challenge to the traditional pedagogies of schooling where teachers and other critical pedagogues gain insights into the various social forces that shape education which then "embolden teachers and students to act in ways that make a difference and to push humans to new levels of social and cognitive achievement previously deemed impossible" (ibid:4). He positions his definition, or rather the characteristics of critical pedagogy, from his position that he says is value-laden, and is neither neutral nor objective; he therefore challenges the reader to pay special attention to his biases. He outlines a series of characteristics of critical pedagogy as:

- Grounded in social justice and equality and the relationship between social, political, economic, cultural and educational decisions that affect students,
- Attentive to inherent politics of education that privilege some and marginalize others,

- Concerned about and committed to challenging the power relations that foster poverty and discrimination, and
- Providing a learning environment that does not blame students for their failures or discount the experiences they bring into the classroom.

Kincheloe makes it clear that this is his interpretation of critical pedagogy, shaped by his experiences and values.

Ira Shor, another critical educator, also builds on the notion of education as political. He regards critical pedagogy as empowering education – where students go beyond memorizing rules and existing knowledge to questioning the learning process and subject matter. He states that “education can socialize students into critical thought or into dependence on authority, that is, into autonomous habits of mind or into passive habits of following authorities, waiting to be told what to do and what things mean” (1992:12). He defines empowering education as:

... critical–democratic pedagogy for self and social change...; The goals of this pedagogy are to relate personal growth to public life, by developing strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality and change... empowering education invites students to become skilled workers and thinking citizens who are also change agents and social critics (ibid:15).

He further states that:

... critical pedagogy is activist in its questioning of the status quo, in its participatory methods, and its insistence that knowledge is not fixed but is constantly changing. More than just dynamic and filled with contending perspectives, critical knowledge offers a chance to rethink experience and society (ibid:189).

Peter McLaren (1995:232) provides a very complicated definition of critical pedagogy – one that is a perfect representation of just how scholarly writing can alienate the very people it claims to represent. He states that:

[c]ritical pedagogy reveals how omnipotent mainstream approaches to meaning in school settings instantiate the formalistic and formulaic repetition of sameness and essay a world that ontologizes its own representation, valorizing its iteration as natural and commonsensical.

This kind of flowery and complicated language only serves to widen the chasm of theorizing practice for most critical educators. Much of McLaren's work is grounded in Freire's critical pedagogical practices in the *favelas* of Brazil where he (Freire) used the language of the people to develop generative themes, which would assist in teaching and learning. One cannot help but see the irony of McLaren's definition, which by itself serves to alienate because of its incomprehensible language. It is difficult to understand how such language can be translated into practice when it is difficult enough to interpret into plain English. McLaren (2003:73) does, however, provide a more readable definition of critical pedagogy where he states that:

... critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed, the way it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimized and celebrated by the dominant culture while others are clearly not. Critical pedagogy asks how our everyday commonsense understandings-our social constructions of 'subjectivities'-get produced and lived out. In other words, what are the social functions of knowledge?

Henry Giroux, who self-identifies as having a working class background, is another critical educator whose work has greatly influenced the practice of critical pedagogy over the last three decades. He refers to critical pedagogy as a form of engaged practice. His definition emerges from cultural studies, post modernism, and what he refers to as a culture of resistance - one that "enables teachers and others to view education as a political, social, and cultural enterprise" (2006:50). He further states that critical pedagogy:

... calls into question forms of subordination that create inequalities among different groups as they live out their lives. Likewise, it rejects classroom relations that relegate difference as an object of condemnation and oppression, and it refuses to subordinate the purpose of schooling to narrowly defined economic and instrumental considerations. This is a notion of critical pedagogy that equates learning with the creation of critical rather than merely good citizens. This is a pedagogy that links schooling to the imperatives of democracy, views teachers as engaged and transformative intellectuals and makes the notion of democratic difference central to the organization of curriculum and the development of classroom practice" (ibid:50).

My own understanding of critical pedagogy can best be described as a synthesis of my experiences as a tradesperson, educator and social activist, combined with my scholarly work. I see critical pedagogy in the context of TVE as a "Pedagogy for the Dispossessed" – one in which I, as a teacher, help facilitate a learning environment that enables my students to create meaning from the world they live in, one in which I am concerned with every aspect of the student's life including that which is messy and difficult, that which is troublesome and that which does not have an easy answer. I come by this understanding based on my life experiences, slowly moving along socially constructed borders, from factory worker, to grocery store clerk, to hairstylist, to salon owner, to hairstyling teacher and currently as a hairstylist, TVE teacher-educator, educational consultant and scholar. This means continuously criss-crossing blue collar/white collar social, economic, and cultural boundaries which have their own privileges and challenges, including social mobility and social exclusion.

Social mobility and inclusion/exclusion continues to be part of my daily experience in teaching. Upon becoming a TVE teacher, I faced similar experiences in the hierarchy of the teaching profession based on the subject matter I taught – hairstyling – which had low/no educational status. Although my salary was higher than many academic teachers with university degrees (I had a vocational teaching certificate with no university education), I had less social capital than they did. The hierarchy of teachable subjects in descending order is much like this, even today - Math/Science, Business, Social Studies, Human Ecology, male dominated Vocational (e.g. heavy duty mechanics, motor vehicle repair, welding) and finally, female-dominated vocational programs (e.g. culinary arts, hairstyling). Acquiring more

education then moved me up the social ladder, but in some ways I was also dispossessed and underestimated as a practicing hairstylist, making me perhaps an anomaly, but allowing me to cross social and cultural borders, and giving me the complex sets of experiences from which I write. My understanding of critical pedagogy also comes from crossing those invisible divides, made visible only in relation to my interactions with others. Some of those visible signs are the language/vocabulary people choose to use with me depending on the job they think I do, the social events that I am invited to participate in, the neighbourhood I choose to live in, the deference I am granted or not, and the sometimes unearned privileges I enjoy based on other people's perceptions about me. For me, one aspect of taking critical pedagogy seriously means acknowledging those borders of privileges and margins that I cross on a daily basis, to name those spaces so that I can provide a teaching and learning environment that enables me and my students to challenge and dismantle those borders.

Education's philosophical foundations

Metaphors abound for the vision and purpose of education, and depending on one's philosophical beliefs, an appropriate metaphor can be found. The Greek philosopher Socrates stated that education is not the filling of a vessel but the lighting of a flame. Three thousand years later, we are still grappling with the meaning of that statement and the challenges it poses to ensure that educational institutions "light the flame" of learning rather than "fill the empty vessels" that are students.

The concepts of the Liberal philosophy of education, considered rational and intellectual, date back to the time of Plato and focus on traditional knowledge and theoretical thinking which is neither old nor outdated. Its purpose is to develop intellectual powers of the mind in its broadest sense: intellectually, morally, spiritually, and aesthetically. Learning for its own sake, philosophy, religion and the humanities are valued over science; a scientific education should be broader than pure science and should be located within philosophical thinking. Liberal education is "oriented toward conceptual and theoretical understanding rather than mere transmission and absorption of factual knowledge or development of technical skill" (Elias and Merriam 1995:29). Teaching methods include dialectics, lectures, study groups, contemplation, and critical reading. The curricula is teacher-centred; the teacher uses the Socratic method of questioning and is a subject matter expert through his/her own learning; the teacher asks "stimulating and challenging questions that caused the student to think critically, deeply and reflectively" (Gutek 2005:35). Learners are encouraged to unlearn as much as they are encouraged to learn and they spend time in reflection, reading and discussion of classical books; elementary education is for teaching basic skills and "higher education's primary obligation lies in the development of the intellect" (Dupuis & Gordon 2010:40); technical skills, projects and discovery learning are not emphasized (ibid:41); the focus is on theoretical knowledge and lessons in civics which builds an understanding of government and one's place within the social class structure. Standardized testing is in keeping with the liberal philosophy as is memorizing and recitation.

The progressive philosophy of education, also referred to as problem-solving or experiential learning was a challenge to the liberal philosophy and is student-

rather than teacher-centred. This philosophy promotes active inquiry, social responsibility and science education. John Dewey was perhaps the most famous proponent of progressive education. He believed that education was the catalyst for social change and the teacher was no longer the authority but rather, a guide and a participant in the learning process, one who guides the learner through educational experiences. The learners with their personal interests, experiences, desires, and needs are placed at the center of the education. Curriculum methodology emphasized both theory and practice including projects, problem-solving, group work and portfolios. Vocational education was introduced in a limited way. Dewey (1997:273) saw progressive education as "a philosophy of experience and knowledge, a philosophy which no longer puts experience in opposition to rational knowledge and explanation." Dewey (1997:29) clarified that "Just because traditional education was a matter of routine in which the plans and programs were handed down from the past, it does not follow that progressive education is a matter of painless improvisation."

Behaviourism, traditionally associated with operant conditioning and behaviour modification in the field of Psychology, is an educational philosophy first promoted by John Watson and B.F. Skinner among others. Watson (1998:11) notes that: "It is the business of behavioristic psychology to be able to predict and to control human activity" by providing either an external or internal stimulus and noting the response. After observing a response that is not desired, the stimulus is altered so as to produce a desired response. With respect to teaching, this philosophy places the content to be learned, rather than the student or the teacher, at the centre of the curriculum. The central focus of this philosophy is on competency

development and mastering skills for work that are observable and measurable. Skinner believed that curing the social ills of society and ensuring the survival of humans were contingent on changing the behaviour of people. Skinner posited that the task of parents, educators and society at large, is to define the kinds of appropriate societal behaviours and then to produce people who will behave in those ways (Kolesnik, as cited in Elias and Merriam, 1995:86). According to Skinner (1953:402), "Education emphasizes the acquisition of behavior rather than its maintenance. ... Eventually, noneducational consequences determine whether the individual will continue to behave in the same fashion." He sees schools as using or withdrawing positive re-enforcers such as good grades or privileges in order to change the behaviour of a student. Educational models using a behavioural philosophy include mastery learning, Competency-Based Education and Outcomes-Based education all of which were, and still are, being used in technical and vocational education. The emphasis is establishing objectives/outcomes based on labour market needs, determining evidence-based criteria for assessment, teaching the skills that are to be mastered and then using certification examinations to demonstrate mastery. These models are considered objective and transparent to all stakeholders and are often used to assess training gaps, for job promotion, military training, religious indoctrination, and to determine job descriptions.

The central concepts of a humanistic philosophy of education are that it is student-centred, collaborative, project-based, and self-directed, eventually leading to self-actualization. Carl Rogers, Malcolm Knowles and Abraham Maslow were proponents of the humanistic philosophy. Rogers was influential in the area of experiential learning and believed that self-actualization could be achieved through

experiential learning experiences. Knowles was very influential in the field of adult education and was credited with the development of the andragogical learning theory and the whole notion of self-directedness of adult learners. Abraham Maslow developed the hierarchy of human needs from basic physiological needs at the base to self-actualization at the pinnacle. The teacher/student relationship in the humanistic philosophy is one of mutual teaching and learning, and students are encouraged through discovery learning. Students' self-evaluation is encouraged and curriculum is used only as a tool toward self-actualization. The humanistic philosophy gained a great deal of popularity because it promoted democratic political values which, in theory, should translate into a better life for everyone.

The radical philosophy of education was developed in reaction to the other philosophies which mainly focused on the teacher or curricular content. The late 1960's was not the first time that a radical philosophy of education was put forth which challenged a more orthodox philosophy, but it was perhaps the first time that an educational philosophy was tied so closely to "a radical theory of conscientization or political consciousness-raising and action" (Elias & Merriam 1995:139). The main premise was that education was inescapably tied to politics. The basic concepts of the radical philosophy of education are to bring about worldwide social, economic and political change through education. Rather than teacher, content, or even student-centred curriculum, it emphasizes a transformative pedagogy which ultimately leads to social justice for all. Much of the credit for this philosophy goes to Paulo Freire who was perhaps its most famous proponent, and some might even say its creator, although its history preceded Freire.

Freire in his influential book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), outlined how he developed his philosophy based on his extensive literacy work with illiterate people in Brazil. Freire posited that social change can take place through *praxis* – a cycle of action and reflection. He believed in the goodness of people and the use of education as a means of bringing about social, political, economic and cultural changes. He believed that the purpose of education was to raise awareness of issues of social justice through critical thinking, problem-posing (beyond problem-solving), and dialogue between teacher and student. Such an education is not domesticating but emancipatory and liberating and would empower individuals to take action which would lead to social change and the betterment of society as a whole. The teacher/learner relationship is one of personal autonomy and equality and the teacher's role is that of facilitator rather than a jug pouring information into the cups that are students' heads. He referred to traditional education as "banking" education where information from the teacher is deposited much like a banking system and the learner receives, files, and stores that knowledge.

As an experienced educator examining the philosophies presented, I know that lectures are still being widely used in many liberal arts colleges and universities. This was my experience in most of my undergraduate studies. At the graduate level, many professors are still more comfortable lecturing than facilitating intellectual discussions, and grades were almost entirely based on writing numerous essays and research papers. The learner-centered humanistic and progressive philosophies are also being widely used from Kindergarten to Grade 12, as has been my experience as a parent with three children who graduated from public schools. Without a doubt, most technical and vocational programs use the behaviourist philosophy of mastery,

Competency-Based and Outcomes-Based education. This was my experience in trades training more than thirty -five years ago and continues to be my experience as a teacher-educator. The radical philosophy is far removed from a behaviourist or competency-based philosophy and is considered as existing on the fringe, or marginal at best.

I recall as a pre-service teacher, being introduced to these philosophies in Elias and Merriam's *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education* (1980). I could quickly and easily identify with Paulo Freire's radical philosophy, but was embarrassed to admit that much of my education to that point was what Freire referred to as a colonizing "banking, education." My embarrassment was further heightened by the irony of the form my instructor's explanation of the radical philosophy took. I could not discern his philosophical bias at the time because of my lack of knowledge about educational philosophy and my reliance on the teacher as the expert, as the one who possessed the knowledge about what was worth knowing and what was to be discarded as "on the fringe." I sat silently listening to the instructor say that this radical philosophy was more about educating the illiterate and was a methodology more suited to "third world" (the vernacular of the day) countries. The instructor emphasized that this methodology was not embraced by developed countries because such countries did not face the same kinds of issues of poverty, racism, discrimination and privilege as that of developing countries, thus it was irrelevant, or at best, marginal. I did not know what to think. After all, I was born and raised in Guyana (formerly British Guiana), a "third world" country, and yet my formal education was far removed from anything Freire wrote about radical education. In fact, it was much like the "banking" education offered in developed

countries, with the exception that I was being indoctrinated through the pedagogy of the colonizer – a hegemonic culture of silence – where the colonizer, without physical coercion, determines through its societal structures, institutions and policies, what is acceptable and what is not. I was a product of that hegemonic indoctrination.

Gramsci's concept of hegemony (as summarized by Simon, 1993:22-23) is "a relation between classes and other social forces. A hegemonic class is one which gains the consent of other classes and social forces through creating and maintaining a system of alliances by means of political and ideological struggle." My silence in the classroom was, at the core, my participation in maintaining the status quo. At that time, the politics of such an education was beyond my understanding. As noted by Shor (1993:13), "education can socialize students into critical thought or into dependence on authority, that is, into autonomous habits of mind or into passive habits of following authorities, waiting to be told what to do and what things mean." This kind of education, in fact, any education, is neither neutral nor impartial, but very politically charged and Freire's philosophy was no different.

Understanding the politics of education allows one to realize that such a critical pedagogy is as necessary in developed countries as it is in developing countries. With the expanding reach of globalization, there is a blurring of the North/South divide and the chasm between the rich and poor in every society is growing ever wider. Hoogvelt (cited in McGrew 2000:351) put forth a contemporary model of globalization as "a nested arrangement of four concentric circles – each cutting across all regions and societies- and constituted by the world's elites, the affluent middle class, the marginalized and the dispossessed respectively." There is

great significance and relevance for critical pedagogy in this contemporary globalized world.

Political maturation of pedagogy

The 1960's was a growing time of global change. It was the time of space exploration, television as the source of news, the rise of the Civil Rights and Feminist Movements in the United States, the Cold War between the United States and the USSR and, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean; it was a time of political, economic and social unrest. That was the time of Che Guevara, the Cuban missile crisis and the fight for independence by many colonized islands in the Caribbean. It was in this historical period that Paulo Freire's radical philosophy of education had its genesis.

Freire's radical pedagogy resonated with, and intrigued me when I was introduced to it, because during my formative childhood and adolescence as a student in Guyana, much of the banking education that Freire criticized was my lived experience. Rote learning and cramming for exams were the norm. The teacher was the authority and the fountain of knowledge, and students were the empty vessels which knowledge was poured into. Questioning was almost never allowed and discipline was plentiful and brutal in some cases. Authority was never questioned, either at school or at home.

I emigrated to Canada and completed my high school education which was similar in many ways to my education in Guyana, minus the severe forms of discipline. Years later I graduated from Red River College's vocational teacher

education program and transferred my credits through an articulation agreement to the Bachelor of Education program at the University of Manitoba. My first day of class was another defining moment in my learning. I recall my professor introducing me to Paulo Freire's liberatory education. Originally from Argentina, Dr. Rosa Bruno-Jofré held a completely different perspective about Freire's radical philosophy than my instructor at RRC. She was very familiar with the politics of Latin America and the Caribbean during the time that Freire was crafting his radical philosophy and conducting his literacy campaigns so she had a context in which to place this philosophy. She introduced an entirely new vocabulary of words such as *praxis*, liberation, problem-posing, *conscientização*, emancipation, and transformational learning, all in the context of social justice and transformative learning. A great deal of time was spent discussing the implications of Freire's radical philosophy to the many marginalized people in North America. She introduced more Freire, Giroux and other authors whose works were grounded in social justice, and I was excited about the growing importance of such pedagogy. For the first time in all my years of education, I did not feel ashamed of my history and I felt safe enough to agree or disagree with something the teacher was saying without fear of reprisal or worry about how it would affect my grades. She was putting forward what McLaren and Jaramillo (2008) refer to as a revolutionary critical pedagogy, one which they say:

... operates from an understanding that the basis of education is political and that spaces need to be created where students can be given the opportunity, the skills, the vocabulary, and the resources to imagine a different world outside of capitalism's law of value (i.e. social form of labor), where alternatives to capitalism and capitalist institutions can be discussed and

debated and, most importantly, struggled for. It is really about developing an anti-racist, gender-balanced, anti-imperialist and anti-patriarchal approach to reading the word and the world, one that is pro-socialist, that focuses on decolonizing pedagogies.

Upon my first reading of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, I felt that Freire was writing my history – that of the colonized and oppressed. Members of my family, both close and extended, were fighting for the same freedoms and emancipatory politics and education that Freire wrote about - challenging the oppressors to free us from the chains of colonialism, sometimes facing the barrel of the colonizing soldiers' guns, other times facing violence, imprisonment, intimidation, starvation and sexual assault. I recall listening to stories my parents told me of how schools were run by Christian missionaries and they (my parents) were not allowed to learn the heritage language of their parents, so they had to learn it in secrecy, if at all. They told stories of how their parents were encouraged by the British government not to provide an education for them. In fact, in the 1930's, Britain contravened its own Compulsory Elementary Education Ordinance of 1876 of mandatory education of children, by allowing Guyanese Hindu and Muslim parents to choose not to educate their children, especially girls, based on the religious beliefs of the parents; the underlying motive was that such a policy would ensure cheap child labour for the British in the cane fields. My parents were the products of such a system, so to them, education became the great liberator and they spent whatever money they could on making sure that I had the books and extra lessons I needed to succeed in school. Although some of Freire's language was beyond my understanding, what I

did understand made complete sense to me, with the help of other critical pedagogues such as Giroux and Shor.

Years later, upon closer analysis of the Elias and Merriam text that I studied from at RRC, and through my preparation for teaching the same foundations courses, I read the text in a way I had not done as a new teacher, seeing what was not so obvious upon my first naive reading many years before. The authors provided a very detailed explanation and analysis of the philosophies, but what was less evident was their Eurocentric position. The common theme running through the first four of the five philosophies is that they originated in Europe or the United States, which in many ways privilege Western knowledge as the norm. The authors spent a great deal of time on the critique of Freire, some of which included:

Freire rarely gets beyond generalities or pieties...; he produces only abstractions... the dark side of man is not found in this vision...; it is unfortunate that he does not give a more adequate treatment of [oppression]...; Freire's view of social reality is definitely Marxist...; ..has valiantly attempted to avoid the idealist position...; casting social reality in black and white terms is more the characteristic of the simplistic religious preacher than the critical philosopher of knowledge and education...; he advocates the overthrow of capitalist regimes but does not give clear details of the type of social structures that he would advocate, beyond some sort of vague socialism (1995:148-154).

The same degree of critique was not offered for the other philosophies. The behaviourist philosophy which is how curriculum is organized for learning and

teaching in technical and vocational classrooms certainly warrants at least some critique. A methodology that privileges the subject matter with little regard for the student has major limitations as addressed in the previous chapter on Outcomes-Based Education. No in-depth critique is offered for the liberal philosophy which is elitist in many ways – considered by Plato as education for the ruling class and by which most universities are modeled. These are some of the ways in which I as a student accepted the words of my teachers in silence. Even as an adult, I would not challenge the wisdom of the teacher until years later when I came to my own understanding of the teacher/learner relationship as different from what I was socialized to believe as a young person.

Conflicting pedagogies

In many ways, the kind of education that I received while learning a trade and later as a vocational teacher was a classic class-based education. Mastery learning, Competency-Based Education, and Outcomes-Based Education serve to provide a ready workforce and are based on the needs of the employers, and not necessarily on the needs of the student. This is the kind of education that prepares graduates for the world of work but critical thinking is most likely to be about solving a workplace problem that would increase production and ultimately, profit; lifelong learning generally means learning related to the job or what are often referred to as transferable skills - skills that will enable you to get a job or move to another job if your position is no longer needed. As Giroux notes, “many educators if not the public itself, seem to have lost the language for linking schooling to democracy, convinced that education is now about job training and competitive market advantage” (2006:65). This is not surprising. In the last two decades, the world has changed

drastically. The end of the Cold War in the early 1990's resulted in the almost complete demise of socialism and as Antrobus (2004:140) states, "the Soviet economic system removed the socialist alternative to capitalism and strengthened the spread of the neoliberal macro-economic policy framework." The corporatization of education was well under way, with large corporations influencing educational policies. The main focus of this type of neoliberal globalization is on economic growth. Bodley (1999:6) states that:

... economic considerations must often transcend human considerations. In the global culture, the economy assumes an independent existence and economic growth is universally recognized as the highest priority for government policy even when what is good for the economy conflicts with the interests of particular human groups.

He also cites trend forecasters Naisbitt and Aburdene, who note that "economic considerations almost always transcend political considerations". Bodley goes on to say that economic power is concentrated with multinational corporations whose organizations often are not concerned with the individual, but rather on the commoditization of resources and labour.

As discussed in Chapter 1, at the federal and provincial levels of government in Canada, the response to such corporate influence, especially regarding technical and vocational education, was to implement legislation and educational policies that support business agendas. This was not new for TVE; what was new was that corporations such as those that make up the Conference Board of Canada were identifying "transferable skills" that are required for workers to be successful. After

several iterations, those transferable skills were later incorporated as "Essential Skills" needed by every worker. Essential Skills are defined as "skills that help you to perform the tasks required by your trade and other activities of daily life. They provide the foundation for learning other skills, and make it easier for you to adapt to workplace change (Government of Manitoba, Competitiveness Training and Trade, n.d.)." Those skills include: reading text, document use, writing, numeracy, oral communication, thinking, working with others, computer use and continuous learning. There is no mention of citizenship education, service learning or public-service education. The focus is almost entirely on skills needed to perform a job or task, but not for challenging the politics of the workplace or beyond. It is the kind of education that answers the "How" not the "Why" questions about learning and life. As noted by Giroux (cited by Nagda et al, 2003:165), the role of education for citizenship has various meanings in different institutions:

On one hand, the economic and instrumental needs of society drive toward technically oriented citizens who will fill necessary workforce roles. Universities and colleges serve as a pipeline, socializing and training prospective workers to fulfill economic interests. On the other hand, higher education institutions are also an arena for preparing citizens for a public democracy, for civic leadership and public service.

In the case of Essential Skills, one would have to infer the meaning of a critical education in preparing citizens for public democracy, civic leadership or public service, and given that technical and vocational curricula are predetermined by departments of education and are outcomes-based, one would be hard pressed to

find those essential skills (sometimes referred to as personal competencies) in course syllabi.

In programs that are market-driven and focus on skills for employment, there is little, if any, discussion of such social issues as:

- The kinds of cultural capital that one may or may not have,
- The ability to increase one's social mobility,
- The social inclusion/exclusion that could result from the type of work one does, or the workplace that one works,
- The lack of fair wages or working conditions in non-unionized workplaces,
- The decreasing availability of full-time employment,
- The growing numbers of part-time and casual jobs offering little security or benefits,
- The lack of leisure time because of multiple low paying part-time jobs,
- The impact of certain jobs on the environment, and,
- The ability to exercise one's political agency by acquiring political capital.

The focus of many TVE programs is on employment, even if it is not much beyond a minimum wage. Why then, would TVE teachers discuss any of these topics when the prescriptive nature of curriculum guides determine what should be taught,

how it should be taught and how it should be assessed, all in preparation for the trade certification exam? Of course, there is little or no discussion as to why some trades are so transient – why people do not stay more than two or three years before moving on to something more economically viable or socially more prestigious, as is the case of many hairstylists.

Official knowledge versus opaque knowledge

Michael Apple (1999:11-13) identifies a number of ways that pedagogy-as-politics will give cogency to the examples above: 1) Only some knowledge gets to be considered official knowledge and therefore becomes legitimized in the curriculum; 2) The manner in which curriculum content is organized and evaluated is really an argument by those who have power; 3) The relationship between schooling as a set of institutions and the essentializing social, sexual and racial divisions of paid and unpaid work are political and the education system works to benefit those who already have social, economic and cultural capital and are able to convert one to the other; 4) Schools exist as part of a racialized, racializing, gendered and classed state; and 5) White women and men see teaching as a path to class mobility while at the same time excluding many teachers of colour from teaching jobs or placing them in schools in poor neighbourhoods.

While writing this chapter, an incident occurred that provides another more personal example of how the power and politics of pedagogy is often opaque or hidden, and used subtly to silence those that might challenge its authority. I used a link on the RRC library website that asks anyone to suggest a book that could be added to the library collection by providing the name of the book, the author, the

publisher and the publication year. I suggested four books. I was later emailed by the coordinator to say that one of the books could not be ordered because the publication date of 2002 was too old. In a separate email she said that the other three books would not be added to the library collection because they did not fit the library's collection mandate and did not support curriculum. I suggested via email that perhaps the library could put that information on the *Suggestion* page, with a note asking the requester to provide a rationale for the recommended books. I then provided a rationale for why I thought the books could be included. Here is my email (unedited) dated May 13, 2010 at 2:04pm:

I teach 9 of 10 courses in the Certificate of Adult Education program (part of the Teacher Education program). Two of those courses are Foundations of College Education and Diversity and Inclusiveness in College Education. Some of the topics we cover include the political, social, economic and cultural foundations of technical and vocational education as well as education for critical consciousness in the age of a neoliberal empire.

Those topics as well as others may lead us to examine how we are influenced and impacted by American politics and policies – both domestic and foreign. I would hazard a guess that other program areas may find the books useful too. Although they may not necessarily be required reading, it would be good to have them as part of a library collection that focuses on the social and political dimensions of learning in addition to technical skills training.

I was not expecting her to change her mind, but rather, wanted to make clear that I had put some thought into suggesting the books and could have provided a rationale

at the beginning, had I been asked to do so. She said that she would forward the email to her supervisor who responded to me directly. This was her response (unedited), dated May 13, 2010 at 5:01pm:

Hi Sandra:

Thank you for your suggestions. As you indicate, however, the titles you request are supplemental to the courses you teach. In one way or another, every topic in the world may at some point be supplemental to a course or two at RRC and we cannot possibly even begin to provide resources under that mandate. I would dearly love to be able to develop a more comprehensive library collection but the budget dictates otherwise. Current biographical and politically topical books will almost certainly be obtainable through the public library system and I will always prefer to collect those items that might not be available readily elsewhere. We do not even purchase similar items that are Canadian. If there was a book directly related to the impact of US politics and policies on education and learning, however broadly defined, then I might make a different decision. As it stands, then. I have to say no to these titles.

Our formal Collection Development policy is being updated – mostly to reflect electronic resources – but also to capture our current mandate and practices regarding both selection and retention. It is in the final stages and will be posted to our web site once completed.

If you wish to discuss anything further, you know where to find me!

Three questions immediately come to mind: 1) Where is the transparency regarding the policy and mandate of the library that the supervisor was referring to regarding adding books to the library collection? There are policies on the library's webpage regarding such issues as borrowing, interlibrary loans, media bookings, and guest use but nothing about the collection mandate; 2) Why would the staff member, who has a committee responsible for selecting books for a particular theme or subject area, need to seek the approval of a senior library staff to order one particular book? One might speculate that the decision-making authority of the group is only superficial, or simply a case of micro-management; 3) How does a single person by virtue of her professional position and authority, in a library no less, get to determine what is considered official and legitimized knowledge by using the language of power, that is, referencing policy and mandate that is neither transparent nor easily available? This incident is just one example of how the daily lives of teachers and students are a minefield of gatekeepers who determine what official knowledge is, and set about protecting it in whatever ways are at their disposal. The next day I went to the library to donate a book I co-authored titled *Standardization in TVET Teacher Education*, as well as my major research paper for my Magisteriate in Environmental Studies from York University titled *Capacity-Building in Technical/Vocational Education: A Popular Education Approach to Sustainability*. The books met all the criteria as mentioned in the emails from the two library staff. The book was published in December 2008 and the major research paper was also available in April 2007. They both related directly to the Certificate of Adult Education and the Technical and Vocational Teacher Education programs and could be valuable teaching resources on social sustainability education, capacity-building, self-reflexivity, or transformative pedagogy in the context of TVE. The third

criterion was that there was no cost the college. I was told that they would be reviewed (no mention by whom) and a decision would be made as to their relevance. I was not hopeful, but the texts were later added to the library's collection. I did note that the library has the entire collection of Harry Potter books, although I cannot speculate on their relevance to courses or programs of study. Tierney (2008) noted that culture – both symbolic and instrumental – such as decisions, actions and communication, is reflected in what and how things are done and who is doing it. I would further add that power represents itself in multiple ways.

Culture as capital

As a hairstyling student, I did not fully grasp the politics of the kind of education I chose, the impact of social class nor the forms of social capital that I either had or lacked, that would later define my social status. The cultural capital that I entered the hairstyling program with may have presented opportunities for moving across economic, social and cultural borders, even as those might have their own set of challenges but I do not know if the same could be said for many of my colleagues. Some were immigrants who were hard-pressed to meet minimum entrance language requirements for public schools; many had not completed high school although this was not a requirement for admission into the program, and many of those who did, were graduates from inner city schools. Some were single parents, mostly female, raising young children with few or no economic resources and living in less than adequate housing and with few social networks of family or friends to support them; some were surviving on shoe-string finances, working at low paying part-time jobs well into the evening and night. Few of them had free time to socialize between school and work and some travelled long distances to see their

families on weekends. There was generally no discussion of politics or working conditions, only that everyone hoped that upon graduation, they would find employment, even if it meant part-time work for minimum wages.

I used to talk about eventually owning my own business and several of my colleagues admitted that they did not think I would make it through the first week of school, let alone graduate. Their reasons had to do with their perceptions that I had the kind of life (cultural and social capital) that would make me a better university student than a hairstylist. There is something to be said for what Bourdieu. (cited by Langhout et al. 2007:146) refers to as various forms of "capital" – economic, social, cultural and political capital - that allows a person to move up or between social classes. The Langhout et al. state that:

Economic capital is simply the money a person has available to him or her. Social capital includes the social networks available to a person, which can provide access to economic and/or cultural capital. Cultural capital, on the other hand, is knowledge of and familiarity with the cultural practices of the dominant culture. Knowledge and familiarity can take the form of owning items (e.g., a large home in a wealthy neighbourhood, a sports utility vehicle, etc.) or other symbolic markers... considered important to the dominant class. Overall, social class is partly about money and partly performative in that the person must be able to function in the dominant class" (ibid: 146).

Although we never called it "social class", my colleagues were intuitive enough to realize that even with some barriers that I faced as a five year immigrant, I still had the kind of capital that would most likely enable me to succeed in ways that they

might not be able to. I had crossed an invisible border of social class, totally oblivious to the realities that other people faced, and in retrospect, I can now say that it was partly due to the privileges I enjoyed and had taken for granted. I, unlike many of my colleagues, owned my home in a safe, middle-class, suburban, university-district neighbourhood. I did not have to worry about finances and had a social network of family that I could rely on for support, even though they did not approve of my choice of career and thought it was demeaning. I also had a university entrance high school diploma and had purposefully chosen to withdraw from a computer programming course to become a hairstylist rather than doing it because I had no other options. For me, this was not a dead end program leading to nowhere, or something I would do until something better came along. It was a career choice which I intended to succeed at. Most of my colleagues on the other hand, had a good understanding of the long hours, the poor pay and the stereotypes about hairstylists because some of the people in their social or familial network were hairstylists. These were the politics of education that I was totally oblivious to – the stereotypes and put-downs that I later faced when I was employed as a hairstylist. I eventually experienced firsthand what they were referring to.

As a working hairstylist, I was labelled repeatedly, sometimes covertly and sometimes openly, by all the stereotypes that my colleagues cautioned me about. None of my schooling up to that time had prepared me for that reality. Granted, I attended a private vocational school, but the school was following the Manitoba provincial curriculum guide, much like public schools were doing. In later years as a hairstyling teacher, I was teaching from the same curriculum guide with its inherent limitations. To concur with what Apple previously stated, for me teaching provided a

further opportunity for social mobility that hairstyling did not, that is, it allowed me to move up the social and economic ladder - in a way, trading up to a perceived middle-class career - one which came with respectability and higher social status. Moving up the new social and economic ladder had a new set of challenges because within the hierarchy of teaching, the subject matter I was teaching - hairstyling - put me at the bottom of my new middle class ladder. Pedagogy was indeed political as I was to find out.

Critical pedagogy as classroom practice

No education is neutral. Whether acknowledged or not, every teacher brings her values and beliefs into the classroom. Each day teachers have to negotiate the contested terrain of education with its inherent politics, sometimes with awareness, other times without realizing the influence of the multiple stakeholders and the unequal power or influence they have in shaping program planning, course offerings, curriculum content, teaching methodology, and evaluation practices. In the case of TVE, the pedagogical practices at the classroom level are heavily determined by federal government legislation, by provincial education policies, which are often a response to the federal legislation, and by employers. Teachers, of course, bring their own judgements, values, beliefs, philosophies and ideologies to the classroom, and at times those might be in conflict with institutional pedagogical policies and practices. Does that mean that teachers should concern themselves with creating a safe, learning environment that promotes and encourages a sense of democracy rather than passively complying when their mandate is to provide appropriate skills training for employment? If they have been taught by a behaviourist educational system that is Eurocentric, should they care to change the status quo when that

requires work and effort, or should they continue to maintain that status quo when it appears to be working well, at least for some? What about the hidden curricula – that which is not stated, deliberately omitted or simply never acknowledged - should that matter when some believe that the *raison d'être* of many colleges is skills training?

Most TVE college instructors in Manitoba are hired because they are subject matter experts holding a journeyperson's designation with at least six years of experience in their particular trade. Many of them have no teaching experience and what little they do have, might be minimal at best. In some advertising for college teaching positions, teaching experience is secondary to subject matter expertise and in some cases, not even a requirement. Those "teachers" are placed in classrooms with no teaching experience and expected to learn to teach as they are teaching. This is part of the hidden curricula that is never acknowledged. Students are not made aware that the teacher has no formal courses in teaching, no teaching experience, no experience in assessment and evaluation, and has never prepared curricula. The unstated message here is that expertise in teaching is less important than expertise in the subject matter. No one would expect that an experienced truck driver would intuitively know how to fix faulty airbrakes because she drives a truck using air brakes, or that someone would know how to pilot a plane because she spent many hours travelling in an aircraft. Why then, should college instructors with no prior teacher training or experience, be expected to walk into a classroom and "know" how to teach, prepare curriculum, assess students or deal with the multiple non-teaching related issues? Some new teachers only realize that teaching experience and expertise matters when students challenge a grade and the teacher

cannot justify the grade. Others come to that realization as they complete teacher education courses and attend workshops related to pedagogy. In the meantime, many teachers when unsure of what they should be doing, rely on teaching methods most familiar to them, that is, the methodology that they were taught by when they were students, even when they disliked the ways they were taught. They spend the first few years of their teaching career concentrating on how to prepare their students for provincial certification exams. Much of the emphasis of the programs is on teaching theory and practical skills. Courses that address social aspects of education are viewed as trivial and teachers feel that they draw attention away from the really important learning of technical skills. This observation is based on my experience as a teacher-educator teaching the courses that relate to social aspects of education. Many teachers are reluctant to engage in classroom conversations about these topics, preferring to think that it is someone else's responsibility to deal with non-technical related issues that students face. It is not surprising that classroom teachers should be concentrating on technical content when that is the reason they were all hired in the first place – not as teachers, but as subject matter experts.

Esoteric versus mundane knowledge

Because much of TVE curricula has traditionally used mastery and Competency-Based methodology and most recently, Outcomes-Based Education, there is a great reliance on applying behaviourist methodology which is content-centred so there is little room for introducing engaging pedagogies, let alone making them common practice. Such models of education are closely aligned to a market-based economy and are more responsive to the dictates of business and industry than to education. Wheelahan provides a Bernsteinian analysis of Competency-Based

Education, in effect saying that it provides a kind of mundane knowledge – defined as everyday knowledge which is context specific and not easily transferable to other contexts (interpreted as knowledge for the workplace), while there is a lack of democratic access to esoteric knowledge – defined as powerful knowledge of the “unthinkable” and “yet-to-be-thought (2007:639)”. Wheelahan goes on to say that:

Esoteric knowledge has the potential to challenge the social distribution of power, because of its (not always realized) capacity to transform knowledge and how that knowledge is used.... Students need to acquire the capacity to integrate knowledge (and its underpinning principles) through systems of meaning bounded by the discipline in ways that transcend the particular application of specific ‘products’ of disciplinary knowledge in specific contexts. Rather than learning the isolated and unconnected contents of disciplinary knowledge, students need to learn the systems of meanings.

Given that Outcomes-Based Education has such striking similarities to Competency-Based Education, there is hardly room in such curricula to think the unthinkable, firstly because esoteric knowledge is difficult to measure, and secondly, it would not serve a neoliberal ideology. Esoteric knowledge is the kind of knowledge that Paulo Freire refers to as education for critical consciousness - “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (1970:35), in other words, asking the “why” questions. Mundane knowledge can be compared to procedural knowledge which is very task oriented and context specific, asking the “how” questions.

Human and social consciousness

Freire's four states of human and social consciousness may explain why some teachers do not question why such schooling insidiously supports what Kapur et al. (2005:2-3) refer to as a plutonomy, whose characteristics include: two classes of people, the very rich who share a large portion of a country's wealth and everyone else, and by economic growth that is powered by and largely consumed by the wealthy few, leading to higher consumer debt, income inequality supported by "capitalist-friendly cooperative governments, more technology-driven productivity and globalization." They identify Canada as a plutonomy, and given the vast array of federal and provincial legislation and policies regarding technical and vocational education that focus on economic growth, it is hard to dispute their findings.

Freire believed that societal liberation could only happen if there is individual liberation. But how do you become liberated if you are not even aware that you are oppressed, living in a hegemonic culture? Freire's four states of human and social consciousness (1973:151-152) provide some explanation. The lowest level of human consciousness is what he refers to as intransitive consciousness, concerned about the basic physical need for survival. On a more cerebral level, Freire refers to this as the "culture of silence" where people cannot grasp the ideological, political and social influences that impact them and will blame themselves (e.g. this is the way my life is and I cannot change it). The second level is the semi-intransitive state or magical consciousness whereby people do not question the dominant structures that keep them oppressed and will buy into the labels placed on them by those in power (e.g. poor people are lazy). As Galli (2004) says: "they are unable to critically analyse their existence... They don't look to change their perceptions of reality, but simply to

deal with their perceived inabilities of the superior power.” As critical consciousness starts to develop, individuals will move into the third level of naive-intransitivity where they may start to see and question the injustices perpetrated by the powerful elites though they can still be bound by a culture of silence. Schools can become sites of struggles in these instances and there are multiple examples of student uprisings, sit-ins, rallies and demonstrations. The dominant groups may allow minor changes to laws, rules, regulations and policies as in the example of employment equity, but many of those changes are superficial and just sufficient enough to satisfy those asking for changes while managing to keep power in the hands of those who already have it. The fourth level of consciousness is critical consciousness, or *conscientização* where, through a process of dialogue and problem-posing education, societal structures are transformed and lead to liberation for all. This is achieved through *praxis* - the cycle of action and reflection – which is at the heart of Freire’s critical pedagogy.

Freire’s four stages of human and social consciousness can be used to analyze the critical consciousness of most TVE teachers. Because of the way TVE curriculum is organized, most teachers are victims of educational systems that support a neoliberal ideology, thus pedagogically speaking, they are functioning at the second semi-intransitive level. Pedagogy in this case, is consistent with McLaren’s view when he says that curriculum content, design and practices are organized in ways that enable or constrain a teacher’s view of knowledge which will either help or restrict students’ access to understanding the world in which they live.

TVE teachers have been socialized into an education system that historically provides education for domestication rather than a liberatory education, one that

tends to restrict access and understanding of their social world. Mastery learning, Competency-Based Education and Outcomes-Based Education do not lend themselves to dialogic education; the teacher is the expert and therefore the fountain of knowledge who will pour information into students so that they can pass certification exams. The curriculum is content-centred rather than student-centred and is more about problem-solving rather than problem-posing or what Schön (1983:40) refers to as problem setting. Curriculum is prescribed so students have little or no opportunities to co-create content, and educational philosophy is almost pre-determined by institutional policies. A teacher who does not hold those institutional views about teaching and learning will find those institutional policies stifling both to her teaching and student learning.

Some issues with critical education

There are some issues and criticisms of critical pedagogy. Some teachers and students may not care about or want to move toward critical consciousness. They do not see the relevance, and for some, such pedagogy challenges their world view and everything that they hold as important. TVE students in particular are almost acculturated into believing that vocational education is about gaining skills for employment, so they want to be trained as quickly as possible. They only find out when they are in the workplace that they need personal competencies to be successful citizens, the same personal competencies that they felt were unimportant while they were attending school. I am reminded of a time when my students and I were viewing and discussing a documentary titled *Mickey Mouse Monopoly: Disney, Childhood & Corporate Power* featuring critical pedagogue Henry Giroux. He explained how the power of Disney's monolithic marketing and its media

representation of different groups and cultures have corporatized every aspect of our lives from television to the clothes we wear. One of my students worked as a part-time sales person at a Disney store and she was extremely upset that the documentary, or anyone for that matter, would portray Disney in a negative way when Disney was simply providing harmless entertainment. She said that lots of parents were happy to take their kids into the store to buy Disney items, and the kids loved to show off their Disney lunch kits and backpacks at school. When I asked why kids would think they needed to have a Disney lunch kit in particular, another student said "challenging Disney is like challenging my childhood beliefs, my very existence." That was a powerful message for me as a critical educator; my way of looking at the world is not someone else's and I was not unearthing some truth that the student wanted to hear. I was challenging her to the core of her beliefs and values and that felt too uncomfortable. I felt a momentary sense of guilt as if I was challenging her faith or questioning the existence of God.

Kanpol (1999:159-160) also addresses a number of issues that critical practitioners face. The use and accessibility of language in critical pedagogy is a huge hurdle. He states that critical educational theorists use such "opaque", "obscure" and "radical" language that practitioners and students find it difficult to grasp its meaning. I can concur as this was, and sometimes still is, my experience. An example of this would be McLaren's definition of critical pedagogy provided at the beginning of this chapter. Another issue is that critical pedagogy practitioners are restricted in how much they can affect change or educational reform within a hegemonic system because what they are advocating is so different from the status quo. Again, I can concur with those sentiments because it is a highly risky

endeavour, both personally and professionally. The following are some examples of my own experiences: loss of employment for challenging institutional structures; policies or vision that seemed inequitable; colleagues distancing themselves from me because of issues I raise such as teacher subjectivity in grading or the lack of teacher accountability to students and other stakeholders; students who are uncomfortable with my teaching style, the subject matter, or my methodology (depending on the course or content, I do not always give clear and precise answers to some questions but rather, will ask students to engage in discussions of some topics for which they want the 'one' right answer) and will make personal attacks on me in their course journals or through student satisfaction surveys; difficulty in getting funding for qualitative research projects that have a social dimension; and, limited opportunities to get research published in some academic journals because the topic is controversial, the research methodology is not acceptable practice in the field, or do not meet established scientific standards.

Manoeuvring the cracks

I work hard at finding the cracks in consent that marino [sic] referred to. This is an attempt on my part to create the kind of environment where my students and I can become co-creators in a shared, sometimes politicized curriculum that challenges the status quo. In my years as a hairstyling teacher, there were many instances where I attempted to politicize my curriculum, sometimes with small successes, sometimes with abysmal failures. In one instance, I looked around my classroom and saw that every mannequin face (about fifty) in the classroom staring back at me from the shelves looked Caucasian – oval face, peach-coloured skin, pink lips, straight nose, straight hair in various shades of brown, and blue or brown eyes.

I wondered if there were mannequins that looked like me or some of my students so I looked through a manufacturer's catalogue and found a black mannequin (listed as such in the catalogue). I ordered two of them. It was my small and somewhat feeble attempt to make the classroom somewhat representative. Upon delivery, I removed the mannequin from the box, excited to finally have at least two of the dozens that might look like me. Upon wetting the hair, it turned straight just like all the others. The curls were superficial and temporary, placed in the hair as a marketing strategy. There can, of course, be lengthy discussions about what it means to be black, but in the interest of time and space, suffice to say, the only difference between that "black" mannequin and the others in the classroom was the chocolate brown colour. Every other aspect of the mannequin was exactly the same as the others in the classroom. Essentially, it was a Caucasian looking mannequin coloured brown. Frustrated and insulted at the way race and culture can be normalized and marketed in textbooks and tools, I used that occasion as an opportunity to discuss what it means to be "black" and how representations of blackness can be reduced to brown paint and a few superficial curls on a mannequin. It tied in flawlessly to the course content on chemical hair relaxing and communication skills. The chemical relaxing might be obvious connection but the communication skills presented a valued opportunity to discuss with my students why when a black client came into the salon for a chemical service or a haircut, the students were terrified of working on "black" hair and how they communicated those feelings to the potential clients. We discussed the course texts, one of which was called the *Milady's Standard Textbook of Cosmetology* and the other *Milady's Black Cosmetology* and how such texts can normalize white as the standard and black as the other. These texts are still currently being used as program texts and they continue to receive little critique.

We had discussions about Peggy McIntosh's article titled *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* and used her checklist of privileges as a class activity. That article led to discussions about other kinds of privileges and later to discussions about the gendered nature of the hairstyling profession, why the wages were so low, why the working conditions were not always optimal, why sexual harassment was rampant and why most hairstyling salons were not unionized workplaces. We had discussions about employment equity, why work traditionally done by women (e.g. hairstyling, early childhood education, culinary arts, call centre operators, retail and grocery store clerks) is often low paying, part-time, low status and comes with limited employer benefits. We had discussions about what it meant to be part of a community at a strictly technical/vocational school, why there were full cafeteria and bus services for day students, but limited to none of the same services for full-time, fee-paying evening students and how the school day is organized not for the benefit of the student but for the benefit of the system in which it operates. We discussed the social value of a service learning project that I initiated with a local hospital (ironically, a Conference Board of Canada award winner for business education partnership because of its social value to all stakeholders), where my students and I would spend every second Friday at the hospital providing hair and nail services to geriatric patients who could not otherwise afford them. None of these discussions ever took place when I was a hairstyling student. For every year that I taught in the hairstyling program, I baked a cake for every one of my students on their birthday. It was a small gesture on my part to say that I valued each of them as a person and their presence in my classroom was welcome, but it went a long way in telling the student that no matter what kind of student they were academically, they each deserved recognition on their a special day. I equate this to

what hooks (1994:191-199) refers to as *eros*, the kind of passion and love for my work and students that goes beyond the content to be mastered.

Contextualized learning

None of the issues identified above are exclusive to hairstyling. Any of them could be applied to any trade or for that matter, any classroom, vocational or otherwise. The difference is that in a prescribed TVE curriculum, there is little room for such discussions to take place. Combine that with the reality that many new TVE teachers may never have been exposed to such critical education, in terms of their cultural competence, that they may not be aware of what they do not know. I can draw from my experiences as a teacher-educator to say that most of the new instructors already teaching in the classroom have very little background in education for critical consciousness. When I teach a course in Diversity and Inclusiveness, I do not refer to critical education as such, because my experience has taught me that those words are dichotomous to the philosophy of mastery learning, Competency-Based Education and Outcomes-Based Education, and the language of critical education is unfamiliar to them. Being pragmatic, most of teachers want to cut to the bottom line - how will this course actually help them to teach? That is usually one of the first questions I have to answer at the beginning of the course when teachers do not see its relevance. I then pose a few questions about some of the issues they are facing in the classroom including:

1. What are some reasons that you think students entering your program chose your program?

- 2.** Are there issues with student academic preparedness for your program e.g. lack of Math or English skills?
- 3.** Do you have issues with student attendance, failure, retention, motivation?
- 4.** What are some factors that lead to students dropping out before completing your program?
- 5.** Do you believe that your students represent the best and brightest students? On what basis do you come to that conclusion?
- 6.** Is your classroom gendered i.e. is there difficulty attracting women or men into non-traditional occupations? What might some of the challenges be and how do you address those challenges?
- 7.** What are some of the reasons that some graduates leave the profession after a short time in the trade?
- 8.** Do all your students find employment upon graduation and if so, is it related to the training they received?
- 9.** Do you have difficulty finding practicum sites for your students?
- 10.** Do you have sufficient resources to teach in a way that benefits your students e.g. lab time, space, consumables, up-to-date equipment?

11.Do your students have issues juggling employment, study and family responsibilities? Do you consider this when planning course assignments or negotiating assignment deadlines?

12.Do your students complain about lack of money for housing, food and transportation and how might that be related to success/failure in your program? Should you as an educator be concerned with these issues?

13.Are wages in your profession fair and equitable for the level of skill and responsibility of the job? Are most environments unionized?

There is general agreement that many instructors are dealing with non-content related matters. The discussion follows about why such a course allows them to think of ways in which social, economic, political and cultural ideology of hegemony has systematically contributed to such issues. Then the course really begins. The teachers can now associate a context from which to participate because they have helped to name their world.

Self-reflexivity in teaching

Becoming a critical pedagogue requires that the teacher is at least a reflective practitioner and should move beyond to become self-reflexive but before one can act upon something and then reflect, one has to be able to name that something. Freire (2000:98) posits that reflectivity is a process which starts with naming the world. He believes that naming the world is the right of each individual, and action and reflection cannot happen if issues are not first identified. Issues are identified through authentic dialogue, which is a pre-condition for "true humanization"

(ibid:137). Freire further states that "technical and scientific training need not be inimical to humanistic education as long as science and technology in the revolutionary society are at the service of permanent liberation, of humanization" (ibid:159). In her book *Naming the Moment* (1989), Deborah Barndt, using her experiences in Latin America in issues of social justice and participatory education, identifies four phases of naming: 1) Critical pedagogues and community activists name themselves and their own interests; 2) They name the issues they are dealing with, some of which may support or promote hegemony; 3) Identify the resources and challenges that will affect the issues; and 4) Plan for action. That is mainly what we do in the Diversity Course. But that is not enough. The teacher must be prepared to go beyond that self-reflexivity, to what Wexler (1996:115) refers to as re-subjectification: "an understanding that our subjectivities are shaped by our personal intersections of race, class and gender and those subjectivities must be questioned and reconstructed so that the teacher and the learner can together through a cycle of *praxis*, transform their world." For some teachers, this is a struggle as they are still in a state of denial. Some are willing to listen to alternative narratives but not necessarily willing to act on them. Others still, will make a giant leap and embrace that reflexivity.

Getting teacher buy-in and collaboration about the importance of a critical education is complicated by the fact that there is a dearth of research and little evidence or substantive documentation in the context of TVE. It is somewhat like professional suicide for teachers to question why there is a lack of critical research regarding TVET policies and how an absence of critical pedagogy in curriculum affects one's social and cultural capital. This is a "David versus many Goliaths" story

that is practically the same as challenging ideology at every level - the state, corporations, educational institutions and societal values. Empirical evidence abounds about critical education's best practices in the academic classroom, but finding those best practices in TVE classrooms is as improbable as finding the proverbial needle in a haystack. That is not to say that there are no critical pedagogues in TVE classrooms or teacher education programs but there is such limited research in this area that one would be hard pressed to make a case for its importance. The question could easily be asked: "If it is so important, how come there is very little research?" There are endless academic journal articles on the benefits of Outcomes-Based education in TVE, but they are generally written from the perspective of a TVE educator/researcher and focus on clearly stated learning outcomes, assessing those learning outcomes and the ease of accountability for what is measured. The negatives about OBE are generally written by academics in traditional liberal arts classrooms that see OBE as prescriptive, focusing on mundane knowledge and robbing students of esoteric knowledge, that which has not been thought of yet, ultimately viewing learning as an end product rather than a continual process. In such a scientific research paradigm as TVE, how can critical pedagogy practitioners move beyond extrapolating critical education practice from academic to TVE classrooms and write their own narrative that challenges the null curricula? One of the ways to do that is to use research methodologies that support critical education, if one can find ways to get past the gatekeepers of what represents legitimate research methodology (e.g. scientific, quantitative research paradigm of empiricism, validity and reliability) and the editors and reviewers of academic journals that support a scientific ideology. Research is useless and irrelevant unless it is accessible, shared, applied and critiqued.

Transgressing research practices

There is a monumental amount of research in the area of technical and vocational education under a multitude of names - competency-based learning, master learning, workplace learning, apprenticeship, competency frameworks, gap training, career education, skills training - to name a few. In spite of the volume, there is a dearth of research in the area of education for critical consciousness with respect to TVE. This could lead one to wonder whether there is anything to research. Many critical education authors have written expansively in this area, and some previously referenced (e.g. Apple, Giroux, Kanpol, Link, McLaren, Shor) have conducted research in college-level education. Although I wholly support much of what they write, there are some gaps in the research that do not immediately address the challenges faced by many TVE teachers. The authors have not taught subject matter that would be considered technical or vocational (or at least they have not published literature pertaining to their teaching trades related courses), so they are writing from a liberal arts perspective and extrapolating those contexts into TVE curricula and classrooms. Having straddled the world of TVE and academe as a tradesperson, curriculum designer and teacher-educator, my experiences tell me that what works in theory in a liberal arts classroom cannot simply be rearranged for a TVE classroom. Two glaring limitations are: 1) Most TVE teachers are not academically prepared for the kind of *praxis* that is required for critical education, and 2) The organization of prescriptive TVE curricula (e.g. mastery learning, Competency-Based Education and Outcomes-Based education) does not provide the educational environment to explore such topics. If there is research that represents alternative pedagogies such as Aboriginal, anti-racist, feminist or others that question heteronormativity that could come under the umbrella of critical pedagogy

in the domain of TVE, it is nearly impossible to find, although there may be publications written in other languages that I am not familiar with (but that in itself is another discussion about what knowledge is worth translating). So this begs the question, is research in this domain relevant? Do TVE students and educators deal with the everyday challenges of others, and if so, why is there such little research, documentation or best practices? How can a teacher become what Schön (1983:49-69) refers to as a "reflective practitioner" with the ability to develop a critical consciousness, if they function in an educational model of technical rationality that privileges scientific knowledge and research methodologies? How can they search for or discover new educational models that allow for mundane and esoteric knowledge? Schön claims that reflection-in-action is critically important, and lending agreement to him, many TVE practitioners "view themselves as technical experts, finding nothing in the world of practice to occasion reflection," so they find skilful ways to "preserve the constancy of their knowledge-in-practice" (ibid:69). Reflective practitioners on the other hand, may not always be able to validate what they know, or, explain how they know what they know.

Teacher-as-researcher

One way to foster self-reflexivity in creative practice is through teacher-as-researcher, grounded in interdisciplinary, transgressive, and participatory research methodologies that provide an oppositional discourse to positivist discourses of privileging science and technology. The decision to consider "alternative" methodologies should provide spaces for researchers to question their complicity in validating dominant discourses even when the language they use to define those methodologies as "alternative," is often read as not legitimate, valid or sanctioned by

the scientific community. Nightingale and Cromby (1999:228) provide one perspective about self-reflexivity in research:

Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us "to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research."

Strega (2005:229) provides another perspective and posits that there is the level of self-reflexivity of the researcher that:

...highlights rather than obscures the participation of the researcher in the research process. It makes clear that interpretation is taking place, and by implication calls into question the alleged neutrality and objectivity of other research/researchers, thus offering an important and political methodological challenge to standard research practices. By implication, it also calls into question whether standard means of assessing rigor and validity are the "proper or best means by which to assess research. The measurement of reflexivity lies in the extent to which we consider our assumptions, lay out our processes of inquiry, and consider our "effect" on the research.

She cautions however, that although self-reflexivity must be a consideration in such research practices, it is the research rather than the researcher that must be at the centre.

Action as research; research as action

A participatory research methodology such as participatory action research could well be used as a good model for interrogating the spaces in TVE where education for critical consciousness is virtually absent. Dick (2006:course notes) defines action research as "action and research," regarding it as a family of processes that include research that can lead to action, leading to critical reflection and again to further research. In such a model, the researcher or the reflective practitioner shares the power and control over the research process, and validity hinges not on the researcher's ability to prove some "truth" but borrowing from a poststructuralist perspective, to show evidence of a "contextualized truth."

In the case of my proposed research at RRC on teacher understandings of, and application of the principles of education for critical consciousness, there is a sound rationale for applying PAR methodology. The use of focus groups to collect and analyze data means that teachers would have an opportunity to explore how/if their classroom practices provide spaces for critical education. If it does, that information can be shared through publishing so that other practitioners can build a resource bank. If it does not, then teachers may be able to explore ways in which spaces can be created for these practices, even or especially within a restrictive curriculum. Why is this important? Teachers are tasked with teaching technical as well as personal competencies but they are ill prepared for the latter. It is not always easy to extrapolate findings from focus group research and generalize those findings to larger populations, but in the case of TVE, the usefulness of such research can be at least three-fold:

- *In the classroom:* Since classroom practices follow similar models of Outcomes-Based or Competency-Based Education, PAR could certainly be useful to a large number of TVE educators.
- *Publication in academic journals:* Because there is such a scarcity of research in critical education specific to TVE, such research could be published in disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals so that it is available to a wider audience.
- *Pre-service teacher preparation:* The research findings can provide opportunities for faculties of education to revisit the way they offer teacher training to technical and vocational teachers.

This is particularly important because if the changes to programming are not done at the teacher preparation level, many critical educators will continue to try to make small changes within a system that operates in opposition to education for global citizenship.

Conclusion

A case can be made that education for critical consciousness is not a privilege but a right of every student and TVE students are no less deserving than academic students. Having said that, the challenges facing TVE teachers and their classroom practices – why and how they teach what they teach - have to be understood within the larger philosophical foundations of education. Within curriculum that is rooted in its historicity of business, technical skill acquisition takes precedence over critical education. The lack of social content should not be surprising because it challenges

the neoliberal ideology of bottom-line profit margins and wealth accumulation for the rich. Classroom practices often reflect legislation and educational policies that are determined by state supported business, made obscure by assimilating them in curricula. In this kind of hegemonic education, pedagogy serves a political purpose – one where the schism between rich and poor grows ever greater. Research practices such as participatory action research can provide at least one way in which teachers could find occasion to interrogate such practices. Such research can ameliorate a learning environment that is limited to the acquisition of mundane knowledge and perhaps create a space for a truly liberatory education.

**CHAPTER 4: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AS A CHALLENGE TO THE
DOMINANT DISCOURSE OF TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION**

**CHAPTER 4: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY AS A
CHALLENGE TO THE DOMINANT DISCOURSE
OF TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

**Introduction
Dear Diary**

Introduction

This chapter is an autoethnographic account of my life experiences where through a first person reflexive narrative, I will address my own growing awareness of some of the issues that affected my life – issues such as racism, gender, democracy, freedom, class struggles, hegemony, social class, privileges, unequal power relations, resistance to colonial politics, and ultimately my own complicity in, and efforts to challenge the normative discourse of the dominant ideology through engagement with a transformative pedagogy. Autoethnography in this context is my attempt to locate myself via a post-colonial approach, within the capitalist culture that is TVE and see those experiences through the lenses of a woman of colour working in a traditionally male dominated area of education which has conventionally focused on training the less privileged working classes for employment. Since research is not value-free, I am using reflexive autoethnography as a way of claiming my own personal agency, documenting my experiences, and laying bare my own biases and subjectivities.

Reed-Danahay (1997:4-9) provides a definition of autoethnography as “a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context.” She further summarizes a definition by Denzin as “entail[ing] the incorporation of elements of one’s own life experience when writing about others ...” (ibid:7) and another definition by Deck as “the indigenous ethnographer, the native expert, whose authentic firsthand knowledge of the culture is sufficient to lend authority to the text” (ibid:7). Ellis and Bochner (2000:733) state that autoethnography is “an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural.” Spry (2001:713) points out

that "Good autoethnography is not simply a confessional tale of self-renewal; it is a provocative weave of story and theory."

I would like to note that as I will be using autoethnography as a research method that complements critical pedagogy, some of the critiques of other forms of ethnography deserve comment. Wexler (as cited by Livingstone et al., 1987:232) points out that:

The irony of so-called Marxist ethnography and qualitative researches is that they abandon this traditional methodological organicism in favor of an imitative display of unquantified positivist variable analysis. While the language of the analysis is vaguely anthropological, its logic is that of the ordinary quantitative correlational study...

Wexler et al. (1983:232) further note that:

This kind of "ethnography" fragments the experiences and knowledge of the participants, making them into "Examples" of the theoretical categories which are used to inform procedures of critical pedagogy. What it really does is convert research from a potential occasion of mutually enlightening dialogue into a practice for the classification of subjects (Foucault, 1979). By insisting on conformity to theoretical categories, this research denigrates rather than honours the subject's capacity for speech. What has been lost is the awareness of historicity itself, the movement of language and pleasure, and the contextual use of political intelligence... Life history is both historical research and educational practice.

Epistemologically, my autoethnographic accounts diverge from the positivist representations of what are considered data. Kincheloe (2002:96) suggests that because humans are complex, research neatness that is desired by positivists is not always possible because of many variables that social researchers are forced to contend with such as ambiguity and disagreement: "To the positivist the untidiness of social knowledge is a fatal flaw ... Here rests the foundations of scientific reductionism. A critically reflective epistemology attempts to move beyond such simplification and its resulting distortion."

Although some of the experiences are troubling and painful, I make myself vulnerable to critique or criticism that this may be self-serving. As previously stated, drawing upon my personal details such as social background, age, gender, ethnicity, education, qualifications, work experience, and skills allow me be self-reflexive about the role of "self" in this research project, that is: my personal beliefs; my personal interests in the area of investigation; my experiences linked to the topic of the research; and my expertise in relation to the topic. These experiences can serve to "illuminate the culture under study" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000:740). Since my life and educational experiences from student to tradesperson to scholar have not followed the normal chronological trajectories of life events, it is important for me to map the landscape to my dissertation so that the reader has a sense of the ways my personal experiences have influenced the directions of my research.

The chapter is organized into four sections and serves as a reflective diary, starting from my life as a seven year old child in 1961 (the first period of my life which I can recall) to my present location. The events documented and impacted my personal and professional life in terms of my educational choices, my work as a

scholar and my social activism. In writing about the 1960's, I can see that I had little understanding that I was living through a defining chapter of British Guiana's (now Guyana) colonial history. The events of that period helped to shape the lives of all British Guianese people, including me. Svensson (1997:93) posits that "[m]emory is decisive for recognition and acknowledgement in identity formation. It relates history to identity and vice versa. This means that questions of how and what we remember are important."

The events are based on my memories of particular periods, thus the diary is based on my understandings and interpretations of those events. As Heider (1988:74-78) states when explaining the Rashomon effect, there are several reasons why ethnographers may have different versions of the same story including the personal attributes of the ethnographer such as gender, age, race, family status, personal health as well as height, the culture and value system of the ethnographer, the time period, and the theoretical orientation of the ethnographer. He posits that "even 'mistakes' may be made to reveal some-thing of importance about the culture concerned as well as about the background of the ethnographer." Although I keep personal diaries, I do not write in an autoethnographic manner (at least not in a manner that would reflect the autoethnography of TVE), therefore, none of this chapter's contents are excerpted from my actual diaries, but from my memory of my life's events as they unfolded and my eventual understanding of how those events shaped my life's choices. At times, the entries may seem to end abruptly; that is deliberate. It ensures a degree of authenticity similar to my personal diary entries where I do not always write in a manner that is tidy. Some entries are messy and

have no resolution at the moment. The answers to some questions may happen years later in a different entry or not at all.

To ensure some degree of authenticity of my experiences, I use language and make references to words, phrases or ideas that may not always be clear to a non-Guyanese. I ask the reader's indulgence in this. Further, the chapter will not follow the normal conventions for citations and referencing an academic paper. As the diary unfolds, I will be expressing my own *praxis* – the cycle of action and reflection, using the readings of various authors whose work informs my writing. *Praxis* does not happen in a linear manner as my experiences in this diary indicate.

The first section of the chapter is based on my experiences in my formative years (child to young adulthood in Guyana) focused specifically on issues of privilege, power, politics, racism, and gender relations. During this period, my awareness quotient of such issues was nascent. The second section focuses on my arrival in Canada as a teenager for an arranged marriage and continuing high school education (young adulthood). It was a period of many changes in my life as a new immigrant, finding myself trying to contend for the first time in a subaltern position with such labels as "coloured" "minority," "exotic," "uncultured," and "stupid." It was also a period of my own growing awareness of inequities which I had either never experienced or was not aware of. My growing understanding, at some intuitive level, of my choice to become a hairstylist figured prominently, as I had not realized the implications of choosing such a class-based profession. The third section addresses my years as a university student in my late 30's (an older but new scholar), apparently crossing some class line that I was yet again not aware of, and simultaneously gaining some knowledge and language to start critiquing inequalities

at an academic level. This was also a time of realization: being engaged in coursework, discussion and teaching about issues of social justice opened doors in ways that I had not previously thought of, but ones that created other challenges regarding my hybrid and multiple positionalities as a scholar, an immigrant, and a woman of colour. The fourth section addresses some of the successes and challenges I continue to face as a teacher-educator (academic, scholar, tradesperson). It is a time in my life when I find that I have to over-credentialize myself to be taken seriously as a scholar by those who represent the dominant ideology, while at the same time, I have to minimize my academic credentials to continue my work as a professional hairstylist. It is also my attempt through autoethnography to resist the dominant discourse by providing a counter-narrative, or as Pratt (cited by Reed-Danahay 1997:7) states, writing a text "in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have of them..."

Dear Diary...

1961

Dear diary,

Today me and Bena and Karran played in the backyard and I climbed the tall coconut tree next to the genip tree. You know the one i am talking about. It looked tall when I started but by the time I got to the top it was taller when I looked down. Maybe its 40 feet from the ground or taller even. I shonta climbed that coconut tree because I cut the side of my big toe on the zinc sheet and I know dad will be angry because he told me before he left for the milk plant today that I should be good. If I

hide it from mom maybe she won't tell dad but how will I wear my shoes to go to school tomorrow? I think mom wishes I was a boy because I only want to do boy things like climb the trees and play marbles and cricket. And I'm very strong and I don't like to dress up and comb my hair. Does that make me like a boy? Girls just don't do any fun things. I am supposed to learn how to cook and clean. That's no fun. Just because Karran is a boy he gets to go out with the other boys in the neighbourhood and play cricket and marbles all day and I have to do stupid girl things.

Dear diary,

Mr. Jury drives a nice car to work everyday. Sometimes when I pass his gate, he waits inside his yard in his car and Tar Baby goes and opens the gate for him and he give Tar Baby a cent or a penny. Tar Baby waits to open the gate for Mr. Jury then he runs to school with the money and buys sugar cakes from Salim. Some of the bigger children said we shouldn't open the gate for Mr. Jury. We should show him that coolie people have rights too and white people can't boss us around. But Mr. Jury is nice and he smiles at me every time. Sometimes I want to tell him my name is Savitree but I'm shy. He is rich and his house is nice and he has lots of servants, one for in his house and one for the garden and one for his children. The maid said that he has a toilet that flushes in his house and she is even allowed to use it even though she is a servant. He doesn't have a latrine like us because white people have flush toilets. But not all white people. Auntie Rita and Uncle Gun have a flush toilet too. Mommy says she's not really white but she likes to pretend that she is white because she lived in England with white people and she could pass for white. Mommy said she is really a fair skinned Portuguese and besides she is mixed with some black

that's why her hair is so curly but not like daddy's and mine because we are pure indians and our curly hair is indian curly hair not black curly hair. I don't know what that means. Why does she want to pass for white? Mommy is almost white and we don't have a flush toilet. People say mommy is like a "Putaghee" and I think she likes it. I asked her what Putaghee means and she said that she is really fair and could pass for Portuguese. I ask mommy to spell lots of words because some of them are hard to spell.

Dear diary,

Yesterday when I was sitting with Salim helping him sell his sugar cakes at school, I asked him how he got blind. He said he was a baby and he doesn't remember but his mom said they were poor and couldn't afford to go to the hospital so he got sick at home and one day when he woke up from his sickness, he couldn't see. He calls me his angel but I don't mind because he is blind but if he could see I would tell him not to call me a girl name. He likes when I help him sell at recess because sometimes the children bring pretend money and give him and that makes me sad. I can see if they give him pretend money and he said that for a girl I'm smart in arithmetic and can make change quickly. I was excited to go home and tell mommy and daddy that Salim says I am smart because sometimes daddy gets upset if I don't bring first in class in all my subjects.

Dear diary,

Salim doesn't have any kids but he helps take care of his sister's children because they are poor. I didn't tell him that sometimes when I'm helping him sell his

sugar cakes, I put my penny into his cup but I don't take two sugar cakes. Sometimes I only put a cent but sometimes if I get more money from daddy, I put a penny. I don't think Salim would like it if I would just give him my allowance so I don't tell. I am sad that he was blind but I am glad he doesn't see me because he would see that I was giving him money. Is that like cheating if I don't tell him that I'm giving him money? His house is old and when the rain fall, the zinc sheets blow off the roof and his bed gets wet. Last year his mad sister had to come to the backyard to pick up one that blow off. I don't think that happens to Mr. Jury. I never saw Mr. Jury's house inside, only the yard and it looks pretty with all the different colours of flowers. I never went to Salim's house either even though he lives close to our back yard. His mad sister runs off her head and she screams a lot so we are not allowed to go there. They said she should go to the mad house but she doesn't have any money even to go to the mad house. Mad houses are for poor people so i don't know why she has to pay to go there.

1962

Dear diary,

Today is my birthday and I got a going out dress. Now I can take one of my older going out dresses and use it for my afternoon dress. I don't know which one to use for my afternoon dress. And now I have to decide which afternoon dress I will use as a morning dress. Why do we have to have morning clothes and afternoon clothes and going out clothes and school clothes? At least I don't have to use my school uniform at home like Nandani. Daddy's birthday is tomorrow and mommy made a cake for him and me. I wish I could get my own cake. Bena got a dress like

mine too. I know she is my sister and I should be nice but why does she always get a present on my birthday? Every time I get something for my birthday she has to get the same thing too. It's not even her birthday till July 29th. Daddy buys me a present on her birthday too but I don't mind then. It's like having two birthdays every year, one in February and one in July. Sometimes people think we are twins because we dress alike but I'm taller than her and besides I'm one year older. Nandani has to wear her older sister's clothes but Bena doesn't have to wear mine because daddy always buys two – one for her and one for me. Oh diary, guess what, when I went upstairs to get ready for bed, Uncle Boysee was downstairs talking to daddy and he was saying that things could get bad. I was scared because they were almost whispering like he is telling daddy a secret.

Dear diary,

Sharda stays in her school clothes all day and all afternoon even when she is at home. She comes to Auntie Betty's shop after school with her school clothes. She never wears any shoes to school. She's lucky. When it rains she gets to walk barefoot in all the puddles and trenches and me, I have to wear long boots and a rain coat. I'm not allowed to go into the trenches and catch tadpoles after the rain but sometimes I take off my boots and let her wear it and I stick my uniform into my panty legs and go into the trench in front of Uncle Boysee house. I got a long string of tadpoles one day but good thing he doesn't see me or I know he will tell me to get out of the trench and he will tell daddy that I'm walking in the trench and getting my uniform muddy. Sharda says I'm lucky because I get to wear short rubber boots if it's only muddy and long rubber boots if there is a lot of rain. I think she is lucky because she doesn't even have to put on shoes and socks when she goes to school

every day. She likes when I let her wear my boots because she can pretend they belong to her. She looks sad when she has to give them back.

Dear diary,

We talked about the day in Big ABC when we had the big flood and Belair school had lots of water in the yard. Sharda was popular that day because her head was wet when she got to school and all the other children were patting her head to get some water to clean their slates. I was jealous because nobody wanted to use my hair to clean their slate because my head was dry. Sharda was crying and she told the teacher that she was cold because her uniform was wet. The teacher said that she should go home and change into a dry uniform but she only had one uniform and her mom washed it the day before and because it was raining for a lot of days, her uniform didn't dry in time for school even when her mom pressed it in the morning to dry it, so she had to go to school with the wet uniform.

I think it was a good thing that it was raining so that way no one would know if it was wet when she left home but she said that when she put it on, she got cold all day and all night too. I still remember that day even now that I'm 8. Sharda is lucky. She gets biscuits and powder milk that the school is giving away but i don't get any. I lined up to get some but Miss Jarvis said I can't have any because my parents can buy them at the store for me because they have money. I think i should get some biscuits too. I never get to do what the other children get to do.

Dear dairy,

Things are not good. Daddy said that there is a strike all over the country and the civil servants and workers are not going to work. I don't know what a civil servant is, i think it is some kind of servant that is not rude. Daddy made me look up civil in the dictionary so I think that is a civil servant. We went to school today and the teachers said that they are not striking. I don't know what strike means. I know that when you strike someone you hit them but I don't know what any of this means. They are using words but when I try to put the meaning together, it is not making sense. Mr. Persaud's face looked serious so I know it must be bad. Mr. Persaud always smiles and pats my shoulder so if he doesn't smile I know that he's sad about something.

Dear diary,

Today was a bad day. I was really scared because everyone at school said that the black people have to move out from Belair because they are going to kill us. The teachers let us go home early and they said not to stop and talk to any black people and if a black man tries to catch us we should scream and run home. I ran all the way home and was crying quietly in the bedroom because I didn't want anyone to know. Sometimes I cry when I am sad or afraid but I don't think that is a good thing. When I came out of the bedroom, my face was red and Neighbour asked me what was wrong. I wish my face wouldn't get red like that when I'm scared or happy. Sister Khemo says that because I'm fair skinned, it shows more and I should not be upset. She thinks it looks nice but I hate it.

I told Neighbour that Miss Jarvis sent us home early because some black people want to kill us. I was even more scared because Miss Jarvis is black and if we

didn't leave school right away, I think she would kill us. But she plays the piano so nicely when i go to Redeemer church and she sings good too. I don't think piano players are killers but I don't know. Last week at Sunday school they told us to love thy neighbour as thyself. I asked Neighbour why the black people wanted to kill us at school. Didn't they like children? She said that some black people don't like Indian people. But why? I am nice to all my friends. I told Neighbour it's a good thing she is not black. She asked me what black meant. I said I didn't know but it must mean "bad". Neighbour said that black meant "skin colour" not "bad" and she was black. I said that it was okay because I have lots of relatives that are black skinned and she said it wasn't the same thing. Black people have black skin and curly hair like steel wool. I said that Uncle Boysee had black skin and curly hair like steel wool. She said it wasn't the same thing. It was race. What does race mean? We have races at school during recess and most of the time I win because I can run fast. So does that make you bad if you're black skinned and have curly hair like steel wool and you don't bring first in the race? She said no it was about a different kind of race. I don't think I want to hear anymore. I am getting confused when big people talk about hard things. I will just go outside and play some cricket. Neighbour said I have to have a shower first and change out of my uniform and into my afternoon clothes and not to get my afternoon clothes ripped because they will have to become my morning clothes. She said that sometimes I am proper careless with my clothes and soon I will have more morning clothes than afternoon clothes and I will look like Dalla the beggarman. I had to wear my slippers to go outside because mommy will be angry that my foot bottoms get dirty but I like to walk barefoot even when it hurts sometimes on the hot concrete or bricks or the shells that we brought from the

beach to throw in the yard. It makes me feel like the other children. They get to walk barefoot and we have to wear shoes and slippers.

Dear diary,

Things are getting worse and we are really scared. There are lots of people going to Uncle Boysee's house every day. I can see them from my window at school because Miss Jarvis put me to sit there. I think she likes me because she only puts children she likes in the seats close to the windows so we could get lots of breeze when the school gets hot from the midday sun. Tar Baby says it is because I talk too much. I don't think she likes Tar Baby. He has to sit near to her desk and when he doesn't get his sums right, she hits his knuckles with her ruler and sometimes with her wild cane. I feel sorry for him because boys are supposed to be smart at arithmetic but he is not. I am smarter than him and Miss Jarvis says that I will pass my Common Entrance exam when I am ten and go to a good school and then she calls him dunce and says that he will fail and have to stay at Belair school and turn into a "knock-about."

Dear diary,

I was walking to school today with Devika and I saw some men in a van go to Uncle Boysee's yard again. I walked faster because I wanted to hear what they were saying. I'm like that diary. I like to know what is going on even if it is none of my business. Sometimes I stand behind my bedroom door and listen to daddy talking to people in the gallery or on the front step. Sometimes I try to say something too but Daddy says that children are to be seen and not heard. I asked him why God gave

me a mouth and he said if I gave him any back talk, he would box my mouth. Sometimes dairy, it is hard to be a girl child. One day when I grow up I'll get to talk as much as I want and nobody will stop me. Oh yes dairy, I was telling you how I walked fast to get to Uncle Boysee's house. But the men didn't go to Uncle Boysee's house. They went to Uncle Muldeo's house and Uncle Boysee's wife was peeping through her window to see what the men were doing. They looked ugly and one of them had some blood on his face and his shirt was ripped. He sat on Uncle Muldeo's step and he started to hold his head and cry. I didn't think men were allowed to cry. I thought just girls cried. I was silent in school all day thinking about that. Imagine me being silent diary.

Dear diary,

There are lots of men around the road every night and they walk with akya sticks. I hear people calling them vigilanty men. They walk around at night to protect the people in Belair from black people. I asked Daddy how come Mr. Powley is black and he is in the vigilanty group. Daddy said that he lived in Belair long enough so he is like an Indian. At night time the men walk around with sticks and sometimes they have cutlasses and they keep watch to make sure that black people don't come to kill us when we sleep. Sometimes I am scared to go to sleep at night so I lay awake and think about what I would do if a thief comes into the house or if a black man comes to kill me. Mommy said that we are safe but I don't feel safe. I am scared all the time but I try not to look like that and mostly I try not to cry. I asked about the vigilanty men and Buddy said that in Buxton there are vigilanty men but they are black and they will chop up Indian men if they catch the Indian men in Buxton. Most people are scared to drive through Buxton because the black people

are dangerous. I think Buddy is trying to make me scared but he said in Bachelors Adventure and Enmore, the vigilante men are Indian and black people are scared to go there. Diary, I really don't understand all this black people and Indian people talk especially when Mr. Powley is a black man in a vigilante group with Indian men in Belair. I wonder if he would chop up a black man if he comes into Belair to kill us. Sometimes me and Devika walk to school slowly and run home after school because we are scared.

1963

Dear diary,

Last night was a terrible night. The sky was red and there was lots of smoke. They said Georgetown is burning. We stood on the back step till late and watched the orange flames in the sky. I was scared to go to bed but I had to but I didn't sleep all night, I was trembling. I was thinking that I would fall asleep and the flames would reach our house and burn it. I cloaked up to Bena all night and tried to breathe quietly so that she would not know that I was still awake. The bedroom looked bright all night like it was a full moon and I was glad when it was day break and I could get up. Daytime does not make me as scared. I thought I would stop being scared when I turned 8 but it is now two weeks after my birthday and I'm still scared of some things. I am only telling you this. No one else knows and when I smile a lot people think that I am brave. I am brave most of the time. When will I grow out of being scared? I hope so diary.

Dear diary,

The sky is worse than last night. It was red and orange and grey and black and soot and ashes are everywhere. It looks worse than when cane is burning. The smoke looks like God is angry and painted the sky in ugly colours. I looked at the Chronicle newspaper and they said yesterday was black Friday because Georgetown was burning. Is that the same as Good Friday? I don't understand what is so good about Good Friday. Palm Sunday seems nicer because we get to cut branches from the coconut trees and decorate the church. Then good Friday everyone is quiet when they go to church and the hymns are sad. If they killed Jesus why is that good? There is nothing good about good Friday.

There was a picture of Uncle Muldeo on the front page of the Chronicle with a loud speaker in his hand and beside him was the man who was in his yard crying. They said Uncle Muldeo started the fire with his words. I asked daddy what that means because I have to use a match. Diary, remember that time when I went to the fowl pen with Bena and Karran and I was trying to smoke the squash vine? I nearly burned off my eyebrows. Good thing I didn't burn my hair. I stole one of the matches that mommy lights the kerosene stove with and hide it all day. Remember? Daddy said smoking is not good but he smokes and I wanted to try too but I had to do it in secret. Well not a secret exactly if I shared the dry squash vine with Bena and Karran. I was smiling to myself while I was reading the newspaper but it was a good thing daddy didn't see me because he would ask why I was smiling when I was reading something serious.

I have to read the newspaper to him every day so that I can learn to spell big words better and I can do good at dictation in school. Only thing is that I want to stop and ask questions when I don't understand something and then by the time

daddy explains it to me I have to start over because I forget what I was reading about. Daddy said that words are dangerous things and people should be careful when they use them. I asked why the newspaper was blaming Uncle Muldeo for the fire and daddy said that Uncle Muldeo used the loud speaker to instigate the crowd. That was one of the big words in the paper so I copied it in here even though I don't know what it means. I wanted to know more about Uncle Muldeo so I didn't ask daddy to explain what instigate means. Besides I know what he would do. He would make me go to the dictionary and find the word and write the meaning on a piece of paper and then I would have to make a sentence with it tomorrow. So I pretended that I already know the word and he didn't figure out that I don't know it. Well he explained that Uncle Muldeo stood in front of the electricity corporation with his loud speaker and was shouting "attack, attack" and a lot of men ran into the compound and set the building on fire and the wind was blowing really hard and the fire went to other buildings and the fire trucks couldn't stop all the fires. He said it was raging. I didn't ask about raging either because I wanted to hear what happened. Daddy said that Uncle Muldeo was working at D'Aguar and that's why he joined the Peter D'aguar party that the newspaper called the United Force. The newspaper said that the United Force is trying to disrupt the government. I don't even know what that means.

Dear diary,

Auntie Muldeo came to our house and she was crying. Daddy told me to go upstairs and I stood at the top of the stairs where he couldn't see me and I listened. She said that Uncle Muldeo was going to the airport and he had a gun in the trunk of his car and the police stopped him and arrested him. Auntie Muldeo wanted daddy to

go to the jail and get uncle Muldeo out but daddy said uncle Muldeo was at Brickdam police station and it was too dangerous to go there right now. We just call her Auntie because I don't know her name and when I talk about her to Bena I call her Auntie Muldeo. Everyone has a name when they are born so how come we call her Auntie Muldeo? I should ask about that but I ask too many questions and sometimes mommy gets fed up with answering them. I think that the men who went to his house were planning the fire and maybe the man who was crying didn't want to set the fire. Maybe he had children and didn't want to cause trouble for anyone. I made that up because I don't know why they were at the house so I just pretend that I do. Neighbour says I should tell stories because I have a good imagination.

Dear diary,

Uncle Muldeo came out of jail and I think he is hiding at his house for a few days because he didn't come over to our house like he does every day to talk to daddy. Now I have two uncles who went to jail and they both live in the same yard. Uncle Boysee went to jail but it was before I had any sense to remember. No one talks about that time and I know I'm not allowed to ask because children are not supposed to know some things. Uncle Muldeo didn't spend a long time in jail - maybe a day but his daughter Chandra was crying at school when the other children said she was a jailbird's daughter. I want to ask why Uncle Boysee went to jail but diary, sometimes you just know that you cannot ask some things. Sometimes when Cousin Ralph is walking on the road, some of the Belair family shout out jailbird even though it was uncle Boysee who went to jail.

I wonder if uncle muldeo and his family will still go to the drive-in with us on Tuesday nights. I like Chandra and Shanta but sometimes I don't want them to go with us because the morris minor is small and can hardly fit ten of us. I always have to have one of the children sitting on my lap and when we get to the drive-in, we all have to sit outside because we can't all fit in the car. Daddy said that it is carload night and since uncle muldeo doesn't have a car, we should let he and his children come with us. I like when we go to Brown Betty after the movies and daddy buys ice cream. Uncle muldeo doesn't buy any, even for his children so daddy buys for them too. Maybe he doesn't have enough money to do that or maybe he is stingy.

Dear diary,

Uncle Muldeo came over to our house today and he and daddy were talking. He said those limees suspended the constitution and people's civil liberties were taken away. These days I don't know many of the words that they are saying. It was the same kind of conversation that daddy had with Dr. Jagan when we went to him yesterday to get our teeth checked for cavities. I like Dr Jagan but I don't like the smell of his office. He gives me those glass tubes that the teeth freezing liquid come in and I pull out the plugs and play with them. Daddy says that Dr. Jagan is a good man and he tries to do good things for people but the British government doesn't like him because he is a trouble maker and they think he is a commie. I think he's nice. Uncle Boysee spends a lot of time with him at Freedom House. I would like to go there and see what it looks like inside but children are not allowed.

Dr. Jagan's wife is a white lady and she talks kind of different than the other white people. People say its because she is from America. People call her Mrs. Jagan

but I know her first name is Janet because sometimes when I go to Uncle Boysee she is visiting and he calls her Janet. Some people in Belair said that her country was glad to see her leave because she is a commie. Diary, so many words are different these days. I feel like a proper dunce because I try to pay attention when the people are talking with the loud speakers at the rallies by our house but most times I don't know what they are saying. Sometimes they say things like "free BG" and they chant and shout and raise their hands in the air. But when they hear the police coming, everybody runs away. Sometimes they come and hide upstairs at our house. Uncle Boysee said that if the police catch them, they will have to go to jail. They don't do anything bad. They just shout a lot when the van with the loud speaker comes around and hand out flyers.

I heard Uncle Boysee saying that we have to get freedom from the British but we are not in jail so I don't know if he means that he doesn't want to go back to jail. Uncle Boysee doesn't look like a bad man so I don't know why he went to jail.

Dear Diary,

I didn't write for a long time because so many things happened and I was too scared and forgetful to write. The soldiers were all over the place and they had guns and their faces were red. They would come in the land rovers and sometimes they would stop at our house and mommy would give them water. I even know some of them but I don't talk to them. I just give them the jug of water. They spend a lot of time patrolling in Belair now that Cheddi is living here. I'm supposed to call him Dr Jagan but I'm only writing it in here. He came over to our house last week and asked Daddy if Bena and I could go over and play with his daughter Nadira because she

doesn't know too many people in Belair but I don't know what to say to her. Most of my friends I had since I was born and not too many new people come to live in Belair. I went to his house but Nadira was shy and so was I. I didn't talk to her too much. I should go back tomorrow or next week but I don't know what to say. We could play in the bottom house with the empty sardine cans and or I could take her on the train line and we could set some nails on the train line to flatten them and we could make pen knives. I'm not supposed to do that but I don't like that the boys can do that and I can't so I make Bayney take the nail to the track when the train is coming and he has to flatten it for me or I make sure he doesn't get to climb the guava tree. Diary sometimes I can be mean but if I don't get mean, the boys don't include me..

Dear diary,

You have to hear this. You know that Kasim boy who comes though the yard with Muni and Bayney? Well last week they were passing through with their pellet guns and they sat on the front step and put down the gun. I picked it up diary and I shouldn't have done that. When I picked up the gun I was trembling because guns make me scared. I think it's because I see the soldiers with them. I asked Muni if the gun had any pellets and he said they never leave any in the gun. I aimed the gun at the steel gate and pretended that I was shooting the gate and I pulled the trigger. I heard a loud explosion and then Kasim fell right next to me. I didn't know what happened but later Buddy said that the pellet hit the gate and rick-o-shayed into Kasim's chest. I nearly killed him and I got even more scared and started to cry. People were screaming and I didn't know what to do. There was blood on his chest and they took him to the hospital. My tummy was hurting very bad and I thought

that i am going to get some serious licks but daddy and mommy told me it was an accident. I couldn't sleep because I thought the police would come for me but they didn't come. I know they're going to come this week and lock me up like Uncle Muldeo and Uncle Boysee.

I keep praying every night and I hope God is listening to me. If I had a telephone then I could ask him if he could save me from jail. I told mommy that I didn't want to go to jail and I didn't mean to shoot Kasim. She said that not everyone who goes to jail is bad. I asked her if she knows any good people who went to jail and maybe I could talk to them. She said Uncle Boysee went to jail but he was trying to do a good thing for us and the British people didn't like that so they put him and Cheddi in jail. She said he was a political prisoner. Maybe I could be a political prisoner because I'm not a bad person.

Dairy these days too many things are happening that I don't understand. I see all kinds of signs that I don't know. Did I tell you about the one in Bobby's yard? It say red China go home. Bobby is Chinese and he doesn't even come from China. He was born in Belair so why do they want him to go back to China? This is his home. And at the seawall I saw lots of signs saying Vote PPP and another one saying PYO and a big one that says Long Live Che. Right next door to Uncle George they found a dead man in a barrel of water. Somebody drowned him but they didn't see who it is. Uncle George said it is a PYO house. Dairy I just want to be in Big ABC again and be five. Nine is not so much fun.

1964

Dear Diary,

Daddy and Mommy built this big chicken pen in the yard and we have lots of laying hens. We have to pick up eggs everyday and I don't like doing that but we have to do it or the hens will start picking and eating the eggs and when they do that, they spoil all the eggs. Every week we have people coming to see how daddy and mommy set up the chicken coops. We have to put saw dust on the ground and the chicken get water from these long troughs that fill up when the water and food gets too low. It works by itself. The chickens can drink and eat anytime they are thirsty or hungry so we don't have to go and feed them like some people do but we have to go every day and check to make sure that the feeders and water troughs are working. Sometimes the feeders get stuck so I have to shake it to make the feed come down. Sometimes the chickens pick at the auto thing and the water doesn't shut off and then there is a terrible mess because the sawdust gets wet and it smells really bad. Then we have to go and shovel it out in the wheel barrow and dump it in the pit in the backyard.

I really don't like doing all that work but I have to do it. One time, the chickens got sick and every day we get lot of dead ones so we had to kill all of them and burn them in the pit at the back. It smelled like burnt feathers. It was bad. We had to disinfect the coops over and over with some liquid before we could get more chickens.

Daddy and Mommy said that they would not get anymore laying hens because now everybody is doing that. So now we have broilers. They buy one day old chicks and we have to keep them warm with some heating lights for a week or

two. They are eight week broilers so we sell them after that time. People are always coming to our house to buy chickens. They always ask us when the chickens will be ready. Karran and I are getting good at looking at a chicken to tell how much it weighs. We are selling so much that we must be rich by now. I don't have much time to play with my friends. They think I am lucky to get to eat chickens whenever I want but I hate chickens now. I don't like when I have to put the chickens in the cones and cut off their heads and I don't like the smell of the wet feathers when we have to put the dead chickens in hot water to pluck them so I don't eat any of it.

Dear Diary,

Today we got thousands of baby chicks. I want to keep one or two for pets but mommy says that people don't have chickens for pets. We had to disinfect the chicken coops before the chickens came. We have to spend a lot of time to clean them every day and make sure that the water troughs are not wetting the saw dust. Kwang Hing supermarket is buying lots of chickens from daddy so he had to buy a plucking machine. Mommy has to wear pants to use the machine because one day when she was wearing a dress, it got tangled in the machine and she nearly had a terrible accident. Good thing she reached the switch quickly and shut it off or the machine would have sucked her in. Grandfather Khartoon told daddy that women don't wear pants, that mommy was trying to be a man, especially now that she has a boycut hairstyle. Mommy said that he can come and pluck the chickens if he doesn't like her wearing pants. Those old people are always telling us how to act but I am glad that sometimes mommy doesn't listen. Mostly she listens to him though but not this time. She said that she owes him a lot. She told me that when she and daddy got married in 1952 and she moved to Belair, none of daddy's relatives talked to her

because she was muslim and daddy is hindu. They said that Dood should not marry a muslim. It is against his religion and it is not right. And his wife thinks that she is a white woman wearing shoes all day like white people. She thinks she is too good to go barefoot like us. So mommy and daddy never got invited at anybody's house. Mommy said that it was hard to be living in Belair and not be invited to anybody's house. After a year, Grandfather Khartoon told the other relatives that mommy was a nice person and they should welcome her into the family. Then people started being nice to her. That was long before I was born but I am glad that the relatives talk to us even if grandfather Khartoon is a watchman on his veranda. It would be sad to think that I if I said good morning to all those relatives each day that they would not talk to me.

Kwang Hing only wants the best chickens so we have to pluck the feathers clean and make sure the skins don't tear and then we put them in the right size plastic bags and tie them up nicely. It's a lot of work for us but mommy can do it very good and she is teaching us. We sell the neck and liver and gizzard and head and foot in a different package but not to the supermarket. They only want the best ones because only white people and rich people go and shop there and they don't eat liver and gizzards and necks. Some come to buy the live chicken but a lot of people from Sophia and Gutter Dam and Liliandaal come to buy the head and foot or the liver and gizzard or the necks. Some just get the liver and gizzard because that is cheaper than the live chicken but some people buy only the head and foot because that is more cheap. The people who buy head and foot wear old clothes to come to our house and the people who buy the whole chicken come with nice clothes and slippers. I wouldn't buy any of it. I just like to eat fish these days but some of my

friends think that I am spoiled because I have all the chicken I want and I don't want to eat any of it. My stomach feels bad when I smell the chicken.

Dear diary,

I was thinking about mommy for a while. She is different from a lot of the women in Belair. Most of them have long hair and her hair is very short. The ladies stay home and mommy goes out to work and neighbour takes care of us. Mommy wears very nice clothes. She has alligator skin shoes and she has some high heel slippers with diamonds at the front. Sometimes when she is not at home, I wear her shoes but she knows it because they don't fit me and I twist them. She drives daddy's car and I can see the other ladies looking at her as if they can't understand how daddy is letting her do that. One day when she was learning to drive, she crashed the car into a donkey cart and daddy was upset but he did the same thing when he went to fill up the car at a petrol station. He reversed into a post and the car got a dent.

I like to tease mommy's hair and put rollers and make fancy hairstyles. I cut Bena's hair too but one day she was really mad at me. She had to go to school with scotch tape on her forehead because I cut her linzee too short. I think when I grow up I will be a hairdresser but daddy said I can't be a hairdresser. I have to do something better than that. I love the feel of hair and I am happy when I can do things with it. I can't draw or paint but when I plait or tease hair, it makes me feel really good. Do you remember that time when mommy was in the hospital to get her appendix out? Auntie Betty took me to see her at St Josephs. I wanted to look special for her so I teased my hair and made a very tall beehive on my head. There

was so much hair to tease. That was not a good idea to tease hair that was all the way to my bottom into a beehive. It made me look like a Mother Sally on stilts. I was so proud of myself though, I did it all by myself even though I had a million clips in my hair. Auntie Betty looked at me before we went but she didn't say anything. I think she wanted to laugh. I was so excited to go to the hospital to see mommy because I didn't see her for a few days and she could see how I made my own beehive. She took one look at me and started to laugh and told Auntie Betty to take me out of the room before her stitches break. Auntie Betty said that I did a good job and mommy was happy to see me but I wish mommy would have said that. I don't know how many hours I spent combing out the knots from my hair that night. I wanted to take the scissors and cut it off but I would get into trouble. I didn't talk to you that night or many nights after that because my hands were tired from all that combing and pulling. I think I only have half of my hair on my head now.

Dear diary,

Diary the riots last year were bad. Lots of East Indian women got killed and raped. When I asked mommy what rape means, she said that I am too young to know. I looked it up in the dictionary but I didn't ask any more questions because mommy didn't want to talk. I know it's bad but I don't know how bad. Diary, life is so serious these days. When I was little I wanted to grow up and then I would be able to talk all I want but now I think growing up is not so easy. Soon I'll have to go to a new school and leave my friends at Belair school. I don't want life to change anymore but I don't know how to stop it. Daddy doesn't let us go out after dark because he thinks bad things will happen to us. He says a girl child has to be careful. So he takes us everywhere with him and mommy has to drive us where ever we go.

He even thinks I have to dress different and not be such a tomboy because I'm getting tall and I have to take an interest in myself. After all, people judge girls different from boys. Sometimes I wonder if boys have it easier but then I think boys are not allowed to do lots of things that girls have to do but then again, boys get to do lots of things that girls will never get to do. Maybe when I grow up life will be different. Maybe girls will take care of boys and boys will take care of girls and everybody will be happy.

Dear Diary,

Now that I am ten I spend so much time studying for my Common Entrance examination and plucking chickens that I hardly have time to write to you. If I don't pass, I have to stay at Belair school with the other children. I really don't mind though because I'm already in Form 1 and I should really only be in Standard 4 for my age. If I pass common entrance, I have to go to another school but they won't put me in Form 2 because all the children have to start in Form 1 when they pass the examination. So that means that I have to do form 1 over again like a proper dunce. That makes me feel shame but mommy said that I'm only supposed to be in Standard 4 but because I started school early, I am in one class advanced. It still makes me ashamed but Devika and Nandani and Janet will all have to start at Form 1 like me and they are bright so I shouldn't feel like a dunce.

The riots stopped now but everybody is scared. People don't want to go to Georgetown because of all the choke and rob men. Daddy is still working at the milk plant so he has to go to town and mommy is running the chicken business so she

doesn't have to go to town. She stopped working at Kawall when she started minding chickens so Neighbour doesn't have to take care of us too much.

Dear diary,

Today was not a good day for me. Daddy scolded me when I got home. He said that I was rude to Grandfather Kartoon because I didn't say good morning to him on my way to school. I don't even remember that. I had to go to his house and say that I am sorry and it will never happen again. I didn't do it on purpose. Every morning when I go to school, I have to say good morning to all the relatives so I start with Good Morning Auntie Betty or Uncle Ramdat. They live next door. Then as soon as I turn the corner, I have to say Good Morning Grandfather Charlie, Good Morning Grandfather Doobraj, Good Morning Grandfather Subraj, Good Morning Grandfather Walter. They live on the left hand side of the road next to each other. Then I have to turn my head to the right and say Good morning Grandfather Kartoon, Good morning Grandfather Indar. They live on the right hand side next to each other. Then I have to turn my head quickly to the left again and say Good Morning Grandfather John, Good morning Grandfather Prem, Good Morning Grandfather Gunu. They live next to each other. Then quickly to the right again and if Grandfather Sensee is standing by the dam, I have to say good morning to him too. Then quickly to the left again and say good morning grandfather Toi, Then I walk for a few houses and say good morning Grandmother Bhan and one last turn to the right to say good morning Grandfather Bap and finally I am in the school yard. That's a lot of grandfathers each day and I have to do it again when I go home from school at lunch. Then I have to do it when I go back to school at lunch. Only this time I have to say good afternoon. Then I have to do it when I go home from school

in the afternoon. That's four times every day diary so you can see how I might miss somebody. That's not even counting the uncles and aunties if they are in their yard sweeping or looking over their fences. And sometimes I have to shout because if I pretend I don't see them, they will call out my name and say that they are going to tell my parents that I am being rude. By the time I get to school I have to do the same thing with my teachers and the headmaster. No wonder I can't remember how to do my sums sometimes.

What I don't understand diary is how come I have so many grandfathers when most people only have two. After I said sorry to Grandfather Kartoon, I came home and asked Daddy. He said that they not actually my grandfathers but they are family so I have to call them grandfather. I said I only have one real grandfather and Nana is the one. Daddy said that it is a sign of respect and Indian people do that. I mean diary, how was I supposed to know that? Grandfather Kartoon should not have told Daddy. I always wonder how come they don't have anything to do but sit on their veranda all day and wait for the children to do something bad like not say good morning and they rush out to complain so we can get into trouble. Maybe that's their job to make children get into trouble. Nana is not like that though. He waits for me to come to his house and he smiles and is happy to see me each week. I love him a lot. I like the other grandfathers but mostly I am scared that they will get me in trouble so I say good morning or good afternoon. One day I should pretend that I am blind like Salim and then they will have to say good morning to me only thing is that I will have to do it for a long time. Maybe I shouldn't do that because I might get blind.

1965

Dear dairy,

Today we had a jandi and I always like it because I get to see lots of relatives especially the ones who live at Dekendren. The only thing I don't like is how long it takes. The pandit talks in Hindi so I get bored because I don't understand. The other children say some of the prayers but I don't think they know what the prayers mean. I asked the pandit after and he said that my daddy should send me to hindi lessons. I don't think he knows what the prayers mean either. He was just telling me that so I would stop asking. Some pandits are not nice. They act like they are smarter than us but I think they are just pretending. I don't like to touch their feet so I make sure that I stand far from them when I go to a jandi. Something inside of me makes me not want to do that but I don't know what that is. Only some people can be pandits and no girls can ever be a pandit. I asked daddy why we have to touch the pandit's foot and he said that they are like god. They are not like god. God has clean feet and nice toe nails not ugly ones like some of the pandits. They should cut their toenails and scrub their foot so it's clean and soft like mommy's foot. Mommy said that Muslims don't have to touch the maijee's feet. I think I will just be a muslim and a christian and stop being a hindu. I don't know if I can do that. Since daddy is a hindu, then I will have a stay a hindu. Since mommy is a muslim, then I will have to be a muslim too. And since my and Bena and Karran are baptized at the Lutheran church, I will still have to be a Christian too. Maybe that is a good thing. Maybe I can pick and choose. I don't like to touch the pandit's feet so I won't do that. And I really don't like when I have to go to Nani's house for Koranshareef and they do circumcisions for the boys at the orphanage. The boys scream sometimes when they

are doing it and I want to run away but I have to stay. This is one very good time dairy that I am very glad to be a girl.

Diary, I am glad that I don't have to spell perfect for you. I am sure some of these words are spelled wrong. When I grow up and I do Koranshareefs, I won't include circumcsions for boys. So far I like being a christian but I don't like when the pastor at Redeemer church say that we are all sinners. I try to be a good person but he says we are all born from sin. I thought we were born from love. I asked mommy why he would say that but she says that it is in the bible. Sometimes when he is at the front, he shouts and I get scared that he is angry with me but it's the way he talks. It's like those people in the big tents at the revival meetings. Lots of negroes are in the tents and they clap and sing very loud. I never went but I hear them sometimes and neighbour says that they perform miracles and make cripple people walk again.

Dear diary,

A good thing happened today. It is almost the end of August and I thought I had to go to back to Belair school because I didn't pass the common entrance exam. Grandfather Baba promised that he would buy me a bicycle if I passed. He said that I would get the bicycle because I am smart but my name was not in the newspaper so that means that I did not pass. All my friends are going to secondary school because they passed. Daddy was angry and said I skylark too much and I should have studied harder but I studied as hard as I could. Grandfather Baba told daddy to check to see if the newspaper made a mistake but daddy said no the paper does not make mistakes so I must have failed. He said he wasted a lot of money on extra

lessons and I still failed. Grandfather said to go down to the ministry of education and check the results because he knows that I am smart enough to pass. You know what diary? The newspaper made a mistake. I passed and I got placed at Cummings Lodge secondary school. Mommy had to hurry to go to Fogarty's to get the orange uniform cloth and a tie for that school and daddy got the booklist to buy my books. Good thing Grandfather made daddy go or I would have missed my scholarship and still be at Belair school or daddy would have to send me to another school and pay lots of school fees. Sometimes newspapers make mistakes but this one could have changed my life because I would not have got my bicycle and daddy would punish me and make me work harder at school.

Dear Diary,

I love it at Cumming's Lodge school. I have lots of friends and I like to play cricket and volleyball with the boys. Lots of the girls want to keep the pleats in their uniforms nice and creased but I don't care. My pleats are not very nice. I mean diary that I start out each day with clean socks and shoes and my uniform looks nice but I cannot keep it that way if I play sports. I play rounders and can hit the ball very far so the older girls let me bat a lot and I can catch good too. I ride my bike every day and park it next to the front steps where the prefects use. We are not allowed to use those steps. Only the prefects and teachers can use it. We have to walk all the way around the school even though my class is right next to the steps. Sometimes when no one is looking, I walk there anyway. I don't know why we cannot use the steps. It is a stupid rule. If they catch me, I will get detention. I am in Form 1A. That's for the smart students. Then Form 1B is for the next smartest. Then 1C is for the not so smart students. We were all smart enough to pass Common Entrance to get into the

school so why should we be divided into smart and dunce? I am just glad that I am in 1A. Some teachers are not nice at all. They treat the students in 1C as if they are stupid and call them names. I like that Nandani and Janet and June Grannum came from Belair school to Cumming's Lodge so at least I had some friends who I know but it didn't take me long to make lots of new friends.

Dear diary,

Something funny happened at school last week but I didn't have time to tell you. Amna and I sit in the same bench I was talking to her and not listening to the teacher so I had to move and sit beside Manikchand Sookram. The teacher put me to sit beside him so I won't talk but I just kept talking to him. He is so quiet that he doesn't say anything at all. I make him talk to me because I just keep asking him till he answers. He is so shy that he won't take his lunch container out of his school bag. He sticks his head in the bag and puts the food in his mouth then lifts up his head and chews. Today I reached into his school bag and took out his lunch kit and put it on the desk because I wanted to see what he was eating. I told him that when he doesn't want to eat his lunch and wants to go instead to Auntie Eunice's shop to buy his lunch, I will take it and share it with the other girls so he doesn't throw it out or take it home and get into trouble with his mom for not eating. We save some of our food for after school when we are waiting for the train. That's a good plan but sometimes the food spoils before we can eat it because it is cooked early in the morning and the heat all day makes it spoil. We should have a fridge in the school but then again, not too many people have a fridge. My friends say that I am rich because we have a fridge. They always say that but I don't think that I am rich. I just have some things that they don't have.

Dear dairy,

Today Jerome Khan got into trouble from Mr. Kunar. He is s a very strict head master. He was standing at the upstairs corridor today and he was peeping into our classroom. He does that a lot. He sneaks up on us as if he is always looking for us to do something bad. Jerome sits behind me and he was untying my ribbon from the end of my plait and tying it to the back of the bench so that when I get up, the bench will pull my hair. Because my hair is very long, he could do that without me knowing. Mr. Kunar saw him doing it and came downstairs and caned him in front of the whole class. I felt bad because Jerome was only playing. I know my hair would have hurt but I didn't want him to be caned for a silly thing like that. At least Jerome didn't have to get a caning in front of the whole school.

Mr. Kunar uses the wild cane a lot during school assembly when he flogs the boys and girls who misbehave. The boys have to bend over a table and they get four lashes across their bottom. The girls have to stretch out their hands and get four lashes. Some of the girls have soft hands and they bleed from the hitting. It's horrible diary, just horrible. Because I am in Form 1A and my last name starts with B, I have to stand in the front row right next to the stage where Mr. Kunar is standing at the pulpit. That's not the right name but I am so upset that I can't think of the right name. When he goes over to the table where he is doing the caning, I can see how hard he is doing it and it looks very awful. I can see a look in his eyes as if he likes to do it, as if he wants to make them cry. Sometimes I can see that the boys want to cry because it hurts so much but they have to act brave. It is so stupid to beat your students. If I ever become a teacher, I will never do that to my students.

1966

Dear diary,

I am really upset. Daddy gave my bicycle to Bena to go to school because she can't get to her school by train. That's my bike that I got from Grandfather Baba as a gift. Daddy should buy her one of her own. I am not happy about that. I have to take the train to school now but I don't mind. Paul saves a seat for me every day. I hail off the train like he does so I don't have as far to walk. It is not safe because sometimes the train is moving fast. None of the girls do it, only boys. Last week the five of us were waiting for the train after school – me, Orleen, Beatrice, Nandani and Gail. We were sharing our leftover food from lunch and Orleen had some good dumplings so I asked if I could have one. The other girls looked at me and I know they were thinking that I shouldn't eat from her because she is black but her dumplings looked good so I ate one. They told me after that black people can eat from Indians but it was a bad thing for Indians to eat from negroes because they are not clean. I went home and told mommy and she said that I eat from Neighbour so I can eat from other black people. My friends said that Neighbour is my servant so she can cook food for me at my house but I am not supposed to go to her house and eat food. That is really stupid. Neighbour lives downstairs of us so our house is her house and besides when mommy goes to work and we don't like what she cooks, we go to Neighbour and eat her food. She makes smoke herrings with pepper. Mommy doesn't let her cook that upstairs because she doesn't like the smell or taste so we just go to neighbour's house and eat it but we don't tell mommy. I think Orleen was happy that I ate her dumpling because she offers me food each day now. The other

girls have started eating her food too and we don't even care about negro and indian anymore.

Dear diary,

British Guiana got independence so we are now Guyana. I will have to get used to saying Guyana not BG. Uncle Boysee is very happy that the British is not in charge anymore. He said that the CIA helped Forbes Burnham to win the election and they even paid for the riots and looting. I don't know who the CIA is but I didn't ask anything about that. At least the riots are done and it is safe now. Cheddi is not happy but at least he is not in jail. Every year we will celebrate May 26th as our independence. I think some of the islands are getting their independence too but I don't know which one. We don't have to worry about soldiers and guns but Daddy said we have to worry now about how we are going to live. I hope he can get a job closer to home. When he has to go to Mc Kenzie, we are all alone in the house and I think that thieves will come and thief or hurt us. They are plentiful these days and daddy said that they are desperate. They mostly steal fowls and ducks but I am afraid that they will break into the house. I wish the house at Chateau Margot was here in Belair instead of so far away. Mommy said that Flossie is the best guard dog in the world but thieves are poisoning dogs so they may poison Flossie too. She is a good protector and doesn't eat from anyone except us so maybe she'll be safe.

Last week at night daddy was home and we heard some sounds in the back yard like coconuts falling from the tree. When he went out to check, he saw a whole thrush of coconuts so he knew someone was in the tree but when he called out, no one answered. Daddy can get a bit crazy sometimes. He called a few times and still

no one answered. He called Karran to bring a cutlass and said he would chop down the coconut tree. It was at least forty or fifty feet tall so whoever was in the tree would either have to come down or fall down when the tree was chopped down. Daddy made two chops at the bottom and I couldn't believe my eyes diary. Somebody started sliding down slowly and then stopped. Daddy chopped one more time and the person came all the way down. It was Nandani's brother Boyee from the backyard. Daddy usually pays him to climb the very tall coconut trees to get the young coconut. He is a good climber. He ties a cloth or rope around his ankle and quick time he is up the tree. I tried to do that but I can't hold on so after a few feet, I have to come down. I didn't think he would steal from us though. The other children say that he is a thief and he uses the money to buy cigarettes but I never saw him thieving anything. Mother Bear is going to be sad that her son is thieving the neighbour's coconut. Daddy went up to him with the cutlass and put it on his neck while he was shining the torchlight in his face and said If you ever put foot in this yard again, I will use this cutlass. You hear me boy? Boyee walked home and we saw someone else run out of some bushes and run away but because it was dark, we couldn't see who it was. There was more than one of them. Maybe Boyee thought daddy went back to McKenzie so he wanted to thief. That's why I want daddy to come home.

1967

Dear diary,

Daddy is working at McKenzie now and we don't see him that much. That's not a bad thing though. We can play a bit more and do more skylarking in the

afternoons. I miss Devika because we are going to different schools but I talk to her almost every afternoon. She got to go to Bishops High where the really smart students go but I like Cumming's Lodge. I don't like the orange colour of my uniforms. She gets to wear a nice green one. People know from the colour of our uniforms and ties which school we go to and I can see that some of the students think they are better than us because they wear a uniform from a different school. Cumming's Lodge is not for the students with the highest marks. It's midway. The schools in town have students with higher marks like Saints, Bishops, Queens and Tutorial High.

Daddy comes home only on the weekends because McKenzie is far away and he can only get there by a speed boat. The government is building a highway to connect Georgetown to McKenzie so maybe he will come home more. It is quiet around the house at night and sometimes I don't feel safe but the riots are over and it is mostly peaceful.

Daddy and Mommy bought a house lot in Chateau Margot where the old dutch chimney is. They are going to build a concrete house there. Daddy showed us the floor plan and it will have an inside toilet and bathroom and a nice big kitchen and there will be louver windows all around. Bena and I will still have our own room but it will have only one door which can close and people don't have to walk through to go to the living room like we have now. I think it's going to be so nice to live in a fancy house. We can finally leave the old house in Belair but I don't know if I want to live so far away from my family. We will have no family there but mommy said that we can drive to Belair whenever we want to visit. Right now I can sit on the front steps

and see everyone who is passing by but if we go to Chateau, we won't be able to see anyone.

Diary do you remember the time we went to Chateau with the school to visit the chimney? I forgot to tell you about that. We learned about how the dutch lived in Guyana and how they gave the whole country to the British a long time ago. They must be really rich to do that. They gave the land and all the people but I didn't think you could give away people. We learned about how British Guiana had a lot of slaves and how the British used to buy and sell people and how the slaves used to be treated badly. That's terrible. I don't know if the dutch used to own slaves. I used to find some pieces of broken blue and white plates and clay jugs and blue in the backyard when we used to dig up the backyard to bury the feathers and sawdust from the chicken coops. Maybe the dutch lived in our yard before I lived here.

Dear diary,

The house at Chateau is starting to look nice. Mommy goes there every day to see how the workmen are doing and she is not happy sometimes. She said that they are thieving some of the lumber so she has to go and spend almost all day there. She had to hire a watchman at night so that people don't come and thief the lumber and concrete mix. Diary, I like the new green Toyota Carona that mommy is driving. We have two cars now. Daddy did some work for Mr. Millington at McKenzie and he could not pay daddy so he gave daddy the car instead. Mommy picks me up from school every afternoon when she is going home from Chateau. I bring Janet and June with me to the public road and give them a drop to Liliandaal because mommy has to pass there before we get home. I ask Nandani but she wants to take

the train with the other girls so she doesn't come. Sometimes mommy comes right to the school and my friends think that my parents have a lot of money because we are building a new house and we have two cars. I don't really think about it but I am glad that I can go home early sometimes. I miss being at the train station with my friends though.

I wish I was doing better in school. I feel stupid sometimes because I don't always understand the Math and Physics classes. More and more I can see that the teachers only favour the students who are good at Math and Physics especially Bans Persaud. Everyone says that he is very smart but when I go to his class, I don't understand most of it. I really like Mr. Johnson's English and literature classes. I read a lot and I like the books he tells us to read. I think he is really smart and I am doing good in his classes. I am in 3A now but I think if I don't do better this year, I'll be in 4B next year. I like to play rounders and cricket but if I play cricket, I have to play with the boys because we don't have a girls team. I am good at volleyball too. I am in B House and the teachers want me to do sprinting in track and field but I don't like to run and I am not very good at it. I am very good at long jump, high jump, discus and javelin but no good at running. I think because I am tall, the teachers think I should be good at that but I really hate it. June Grannum is in E House and she is fast at running. No one can beat her and even if I come in second, she is way ahead of me. Everyone says that negroes can run very fast so Indians should use their brains because they can't run as fast. Well June is negro and she can run fast but there are some Indian boys that can run very fast too. Our school doesn't have a lot of black students so maybe that's why the Indians have a chance.

At least nowadays we don't talk so much about Indians and negroes but we just know that we are not like them. No one talks about it but we all know. Errol Benn and June and Orleen are black but I don't see how they are different. We still share our lunches with each other – well Errol goes home for lunch. Some of the students say that I am a town girl so that's why I don't think like country people. Country people have more bad experiences with black people than town people. I explain that I am not a town person, that I live in Belair which is not really Georgetown but they say that Belair is for rich people so black people can't afford to live there. I tell them that Mr. Powley, Mr. Haynes and Mr. Commerbadge, Mrs. Kanes and Jennifer Jones and her family live in Belair live but they say that if I can count all the black people who live there, then I am proving them right. I know I was trying to outsmart them by calling out all the black families but Mr. Cummerbadge lives in Gutter Dam with lots of other black people and Mrs. Kanes lives in Blygiezeit. Those places are not really part of Belair but Mr. Cummbadge comes next door to shop at Auntie Betty's shop and Mrs. Kanes is a servant for Devika so I count them. I should really count Lucille too because she is our servant but she is a fair skin black. They say that her father is white but he doesn't want her and her mother because her mother was his servant and she got a baby for him. Pecky is like that too. He is fair skinned and has brassy coloured hair but he lives in Gutter Dam too so I really can't count him. Sometimes I used to feel sorry for him when he got licks from the teachers at Belair school but he really is dunce. The teachers call him worthless so he says that he is not going to try at school. One day he was teasing me at the front yard and daddy heard him and yelled at him so since that time, he walks by the yard but doesn't look in if he sees daddy.

There are a lot of black people who are servants in Belair but they don't live in Belair. We don't really know where they live. They just come to people's yard and ask for work and people hire them. Auntie Betty hired Roddy to work for her and he is very strong. He lifts a 200 pound bag of copra as if it is so easy. He lives at their house in the downstairs part. People say that black people are dirty but Roddy bathes every morning and afternoon and he powders up himself so much that sometimes he looks white. He always smells like baby powder and he takes care of us if he sees anybody trying to bother us. He works from Monday to Saturday from early morning to late at night and he goes home on Sunday to Bachelor's Adventure to visit his family. I asked him if he has any children but he just smiles and says yes but they never come to visit him at Belair. I wonder if he misses them. I miss daddy when he is away at McKenzie. We went there one time in the Toyota Carona to visit him because the new highway is opened. The Millingtons live in a huge house and they cooked lots of food. McKenzie is very red and dusty and I've never seen a place like that. It's the bauxite that they mine there. I am not sure what kind of work daddy does there. I wouldn't want to live there because it is very far away from Georgetown and there are a lot of black people living nearby in Wismar so I am kind of scared. When the riots were taking place a few years ago, a lot of Indian women were raped and one woman had a broken bottle inserted into her private parts. The newspaper said that she died from bleeding. Those were terrible years but now that we have our independence, things are quieter but Indians still don't go to Wismar and only a few of them live in McKenzie. Mr. Millington is partly black so he is safe but daddy is Indian. Maybe if he stays close to his workplace, he should be safe.

Dear Diary,

The house at Chateau Margot is finally finished and it is so beautiful. You should see the kitchen. I already planned to use it especially when mommy is not at home. There is a nice bathroom with tiles on the inside and a flush toilet. Now I know what my friends are saying that I am lucky. None of them have a house like this. The louver windows are sparkling. The floors are shiny greenheart wood and the walls are solid concrete. I already planned to invite my friends for parties every week but now that it is done, I have a different feeling. I like the house but I don't like that it's so far away from all my family and friends. The house has been locked up for a few weeks already because me and Bena and Karran don't want to leave Belair. I know we should move into but I like this old one right here in Belair even though the roof leaks most times when it rains. Dad said that's when duck has water to bathe and fowl is glad for some to drink. He has one for every occasion. Auntie Betty said we should not have let daddy waste all that money on a new house and then we wouldn't go and live in it. She doesn't understand. I don't want to leave all my friends and family in Belair and go all the way to Chateau Margot. Auntie Betty was just saying that because she was angry with me but she is right. I have to tell you the reason she was angry. I went next door to her shop with the shop book and I bought some tinned sausages, continental biscuits and a bottle of cider for me and Bena and Karran to have a little party while mommy was out. Daddy told her that whenever we go over there with the shop book, she has to give us whatever we want and write it down in the book and when he comes home every weekend from McKenzie, he would pay her. Sometimes she thinks that we buy things that we don't need just because daddy can pay for it so she got angry and told us about moving to Chateau. That week and the next week, we didn't buy a single thing while daddy was away and when he looked through the shop book he asked me why we didn't buy

anything for two weeks. I said we didn't need anything because we are getting too big for silly parties with just the three of us. He didn't believe me because I am not good at telling lies. My face still turns red when I try to do that so he knows that I am lying. He asked me to tell him why I didn't buy anything so I told him that Auntie Betty was angry and told us that we are ungrateful. He went over to her shop and yelled at her and told her never to tell his children that they are ungrateful. She has to give us whatever we want and he will pay for it. I really didn't buy sweets and biscuits after that because she was right. Even though that was an awful thing to say to us, we would miss her because we lived in Belair since I was a baby so this is my home even if it's an old house.

1968

Dear diary,

Daddy sold all his chickens and bought a truck to start a trucking business. He said that since he made a lot of money from his chicken business, everyone wants to do it but they keep their chicken coops dirty so the whole place smells terrible when it rains and the chicken litter gets wet. Raymond and Ali were burning dead chickens because they all got a disease. Daddy told them that they have to keep the coops clean but they didn't listen so now there are lots of dead chickens and when the feathers burn, it smells terrible. I am glad daddy isn't raising chickens anymore. One night I stayed up till very late to pluck the chickens and I was so tired that I couldn't eat dinner. Mommy said that it was too much work for children to be doing.

Daddy gets lots of orders for sand already so he is really busy. A lot of people are building concrete houses now so he goes to the sandpit by 4am and gets a load of sand. By the time my train comes at 7:30, he is coming home for breakfast. Every morning he stops to ask if I have money and sometimes I say yes and sometimes no. My friends think that I should say no every time even if I have money so I can get more. I get 50 cents a week but if I use it up I can always ask him for more. They think I am lucky that I can get as much money as I want. Some weeks I don't even have anything to buy with my money. Other weeks I run out and have to ask for more. Daddy likes me to wear a clean pair of socks every day and he stops at the train line to check. Salim passes sometimes with his basket on his head. He still calls me his angel even though I don't help him sell anymore. I feel so sorry for him. He works very hard to take care of his family but as a blind man, someone should be taking care of him. Sometimes I talk about this when I am waiting for the train but it doesn't seem to bother my friends as much as it bothers me.

Dear Diary,

School started this week and I am now in Form 4. I was so glad to see my friends. I must have grown a lot because all the girls are a lot shorter than me. We got a new mathematics teacher. His name is Mr. Ferguson and he is from Canada in a place named Winnipeg. He's very tall and has blonde hair and he sweats a lot. He looks like he's been running for a long time because his face is very red. When he started on Monday, Mr. Mohan Singh, Mr. Taharally and Mr. Bans Persaud had a lot of the older boys picketing outside of school. They had signs saying yankee go home and they said he was taking jobs from Guyanese people. I was watching from the stage and Mr. Ferguson looked a bit anxious when they walked up to him with the

pickets. They are not nice to him so I feel sorry for him. Monday was his first day and when he came in to class, we stood up and said Good Morning Sir and he looked surprised so he said good morning and sat in his chair as if he didn't know what else to do. After a couple minutes, I told him that he had to tell us to sit down because we are not allowed to sit until the teacher tells us. We have to do whatever the teachers tell us to do or Mr. Kunar will cane us. We're not supposed to ask any questions or they call us obstreperous and insipid. Mr. Johnson told me last year to learn a new word every day from the dictionary and at the end of each year, I will know 365 new words. When I heard Mr. Singh use those words to a student last year, I looked them up in the dictionary. Those are cruel words but teachers get to talk to us like that and we can't say anything because they punish us. Mr. Singh is especially rude to us and he hits too.

I remember one day when one of the boys threw a water balloon on Mr. Aregi's head from the second floor and when I wouldn't say who it was, we all got a caning. When I went home I was scared to show it to dad because I thought I would get another caning but he was angry that the teacher hit me so hard that I had blisters on my hand. So he took me back to the school the next day and grabbed the teacher by his collar and told the teacher that if he ever hit me like that again, dad would take me to the police and lay charges. I never got a caning at school again. I don't know why the teachers hit like that. And none of the parents complain so they just keep doing it. We are told that we have to show respect for our teachers but some of them don't treat us very nice so they don't deserve any respect.

Dear diary,

I like talking to Mr. Ferguson. He makes us take notes in Math classes. He is the first teacher who ever made us take notes in Math. Usually the teachers in the other classes spend most of the class writing notes on the chalkboard and we copy them but many times when we don't understand, we are not allowed to ask any questions. The mathematics teachers don't do that. They tell us the equations and we can write them in our notebooks but most of the time I write the formulae but don't know what they mean and I don't know when to use them. I feel that I am going to fail math this year. I usually do well in English and literature, but the other subjects are hard and the teachers are not helpful. They have their favourites and if you are not good in their subject, you are not a favourite. Well I am not a favourite of several teachers but I do like Mr. Ferguson and I am getting better in Mathematics because he is making it easier to understand algebra, geometry and trig and logarithms. He explains the equations and formulae not like the other teachers who make us memorize them and then I never know which one to use to solve a problem because they never make sense. I think that's why I only got 6 out of 100 on my Physics test. I'm really not good in Physics. Mr. Persaud talks into his chest and doesn't explain anything, especially to girls. We light the Bunsen burners to do some experiments but he never comes to check to see if we are doing it right. He is one of those teachers who have their favourites.

Mr. Johnson is really good though. He teaches us English and Literature and he said that I am an excellent student. I do fine in Chemistry and now I am doing better in Math but I prefer English and Literature and Spanish. That chemistry set that Uncle Merican bought for me is fun but we don't do those kinds of experiments in class. Actually, we don't do any experiments in class. I remember when he came

from England and he stayed with us. He smelled like Yardley's powder and he ate peppermint gum. He said I was very smart and he wanted to buy me a gift. He said that I could ask for anything so I asked for a chemistry set. I still remember him laughing and he looked just like daddy. He thought I would ask for a dress or shoes, not a chemistry set.

I ask Mr. Ferguson so many questions about Canada. He tells me about the different seasons, hockey and baseball and salted popcorn and root beer and putting sugar on his grapefruit instead of salt. He said there is this restaurant in Winnipeg where you can drive up in your car and order food and they will bring it out to you on a tray and you eat it in your car. I think that's how white people live in Canada. They stay in their car like Mr. Jury and people bring out the food to them.

He said winter is very cold so I had a great idea. I asked if he ever had curry and plantains and cassava and dhall puri. He said he is longing for a glass of root beer and some of the food that he is used to eating. Salt on popcorn doesn't sound as good as sugar. I went home one day when we were talking about how cold Canada is and I had a great idea. I made Karran stand outside of the big freezer that we keep plucked chickens in before Daddy takes them to the supermarket and I climbed in and made him shut the door. I only stayed in for a minute because it was very cold. I don't think I would want to live in Canada. I don't really understand how people don't die from the cold. I told Mr. Ferguson what I did and he said that Canadians wear fur coats and gloves and hats in the winter. It's like that Dr Chivago movie daddy took us to see. I didn't understand a thing about the movie but there was so much snow and the man's mouth was frozen. I am really glad I live in Guyana.

Dear diary,

I forgot to mention that Mr. Ferguson gave me lines to write because I was throwing chalk at him. It was a long sentence and I had to write it 70 times. I begged and begged and he said he would reduce it to 69 times. This is what I had to write – Hurling chalky projectiles at mathematics teachers is a malicious act and such social malignancy must be stopped before chaos rules supreme. Who ever heard of writing three or four lines 70 times? Well I learned lots of new words but I wish I didn't have to learn them that way. I still like him though but he sweats a lot and he doesn't even go out and play cricket at lunch. He just stands there at the railings and sweats. He is the first white person that I have really talked to and he is nice. I think the other teachers don't like it that I talk to him but he answers all my questions without being cross about it.

Lots of white people live in Guyana but they treat most of us like we are their servants and they don't have Indian or black friends. Lots of them live in Belair Gardens but there is a gate at the entrance and a guard sits there and guards their houses. We can't go into the compound. The only Indian or black people who go there are servants and they have to leave at the end of the day. The guard treats us like thieves even though he is Indian too. He acts like he owns one of the houses but he only gets to sit in a little hut at the gate so I don't know why he acts like that. Sometimes I want to throw a rock at the windows of some of the houses but I will get into trouble. I feel awful when I think back of the time I was at Auntie Rita's house. She lives in Belair Park where a lot of white people live because Uncle Gun came back from England and he is teaching at the Technical Institute. I did a really mean thing that day. Angela and Sharon said that white people are bad and we don't

have to be nice to them so when I was swinging really high in one of their swings, the white kids from next door came over to play and I threw plantain chips and fried channa on the ground and laughed when they ran and picked it up and ate it. Now that I talk to Mr. Ferguson, I think I think back to that day. I never did anything that terrible to people before and I don't even know why I did it.

1969

Dear diary,

Daddy is getting lots of contracts for sand from people especially from the government department of Housing. I know that because I have to type up all the invoices and I have to say I hate it. I am taking typing in school and also sewing but it's really embroidery so it isn't very useful and we type the same things over and over. I know I do not want to be a typist so I'd better do well in school or I will be typing invoices for the rest of my life. I am not a very good typist and if I make a mistake on the invoice form, I have to start over again because the carbon paper gets all messy. I hate it. I almost want to go back to plucking chickens. Well I don't hate it that bad but almost.

I type up the invoices and Mommy goes to Housing to deliver it and get payment but sometimes it takes her all day to do that because the men there are not very helpful unless you bribe them. Daddy says that he has to do a lot of bribing because when he goes to the sandpit, the people there will make you wait for a long time to get a load of sand unless you give them a small piece. Then when he goes on the East Bank road, the police will stop you for no good reason and if he doesn't give

them some money, they will pull over his truck on some trumped up charges and make him wait. Then it's the same thing on the East Coast road if he has a load to deliver that way. Then when mommy goes to Housing, she has to give a bribe there too. Sometimes the workers ask daddy to deliver a free load of sand to their house or to their family's house and he has to agree or else he doesn't get paid for a long time. So every day he loses almost one load for every five or six loads that he delivers. I am so angry that he has to do that because he works very hard but he says that people are corrupt but it is the cost of doing business. I told him to go to the boss but he said that most times it's the boss man who wants the bribe so there is no one to tell. Everyone knows that it happens but no one talks about it. They just pay the bribes and go on with their business. Sometimes the lumber yards ask him to deliver lumber but he has to make two stops – one to their home and one to the customer. He doesn't have to pay for the lumber but he has to use his time that he could be delivering another load. That is not right but no one wants to talk because their business will be affected. I thought independence would make us better but this is not better.

Dear diary,

It is now September and it is the beginning of my last year at Cumming's Lodge. Diary, I have been here for four years already and when I left in July, I was sad to leave because I would not see my friends for six weeks. This is the worst secret that I have to keep but I can tell you because you always listen. I am so afraid that if the head master finds out my secret, I will be expelled from school. Last month, this man came to Guyana from Canada and he was staying next door to us. He is Kapil's cousin Robin and he is the photographer at Kapil's wedding. He was

supposed to be looking for a wife so he spent a lot of time looking at a lot of girls but he couldn't find one that he liked. Uncle Dheer said that he should not look too far because there was a young girl just next door. It was me and when Robin said that I was too young, Uncle Dheer said that Robin can mould me into the kind of woman he wants. Uncle Dheer came and asked daddy for me to marry Robin and daddy asked me. At first I thought it was a joke because I am only 15 and he is 22 but when I said no, daddy was not happy and he told me each time that I said no that I had to go back and think about it again. I finally said yes because I was tired after three days of saying no but I do not want to get married to a stranger. I want to stay in school. Daddy said that it was a good opportunity for me to go to Canada and I would have a good life but honestly diary, my life is good right now. I get everything I want. If I go to Canada, I will have to leave all my friends and family in Guyana and I will have to live with strangers. The worse thing right now is that I am afraid that someone will find out that I am engaged to be married and then I will be expelled from school. I am so scared each night to go to sleep and every day that I wake up. I hope that no one will be spiteful and tell the headmaster. But I have good friends so they won't tell.

Dear diary,

Today was a very scary day. I received an anonymous letter in the mail from someone in Canada telling me that I should end my engagement to Robin. I want to end it but my parents will not allow me to do that. The letter was very spiteful. I really don't want to go to Canada. I have so many friends that I can hardly think of leaving all of them and of course I will miss Bena and Karran. I am trying to think of how I can get out of this but there doesn't seem to be a way. I think of running away

but I know that if I go to Auntie Bhano or Auntie Siloch, they will bring me back home. I could go to Nanee but daddy will only go there and get me. I haven't been any other places without Mommy and Daddy so I don't even know where I would go. I have to come up with a plan but nothing works so far.

Daddy's trucking business is doing very well. I am typing up all the invoices now that I am taking a typing course. I hate typing and when I make a mistake with the invoice, I have to go back and type everything over again with the carbon paper. It's a lot of work to manage the invoices and prepare them but daddy says that he has to do that or he won't get paid. He is getting so much work that he is hiring other trucks to do some deliveries. Pretty soon, other people will want to do like him just like the chicken business. Some of the truckers even want me to do their invoices but I hate typing.

1970

Dear diary,

It's been many months since I wrote to you. Well, it's almost time for me to finish school and then I leave for Canada on July 20th. So far Mr. Rambihar did not find out that I am engaged so I can write my O level exam. I am going to write five subjects but some people are writing 8. Do you remember that spiteful letter I got a few months ago? Well I got 4 more, each one more threatening than the last. The final one was last week and the person was threatening to kill me if I go to Canada. Four big words I WILL KILL YOU. They never sign their name. I really don't want to go but my parents will not listen. I just know that when I get off the plane, someone

is going to try to kill me and I will have no one to protect me. I gave up trying to run away because none of my family will help me. Many girls have arranged marriages to people from Canada or England so they wouldn't help me because they think that I am lucky to be going to Canada. Mommy and daddy got married because they loved each other and not because it was arranged so why would they do that to me? It was harder at that time especially when they were different religions. They said that Hindus and Muslims could be friends but they are not supposed get married. That's why they decided to baptize all of us in the Christian church. That way, none of the family would argue. But we all have Hindu and Christian names but not Muslim names.

Well, Mr. Ferguson is going to be there if I even get to Winnipeg. He was shocked when I went to school in September and told him that I was engaged to be married to a Guyanese man who lives in Winnipeg. You know what he said? You are just a child. How could your parents do that? I told him that it was an arranged marriage and I did not want to go but I cannot run away because my family will bring me back home. Nani and Nana think that it is a good thing but my life will be over. They were happy because I am the first grandchild to be getting married. Sister Shirley is the oldest grandchild but she is not married even though she has a baby. I will have no friends and no family and I will miss Bena and Karran. We do everything together even when I am sometimes angry at Bena for listening to Portia Faces Life on the radio instead of doing her sweeping or making the beds.

Mr. Ferguson had go back to Canada early because his mother got sick but he gave me his telephone number so when I arrive in Winnipeg, he can come to visit me. He said that it is okay with CUSO who sent him to Guyana that he should go

back to Canada early. I have never had a teacher come to my house to visit. Last year when he was talking about Winnipeg, I was trying to imagine what it was like. In a few weeks I will be living there with some strangers. He is living close to where I will be living. I am glad I asked all those questions. I think God sent him to Cumming's Lodge to look out for me. I bought dark sunglasses but that is not much of a disguise. I wonder who would hate me that much to send me letters threatening to kill me. Worse, what if they succeed? Uncle Dheer says that it is someone who is not right in their mind.

Dear diary,

Today is one month since I have been married. It's strange to have a husband and be living in a house with all strangers. I don't even know how to act. I am not sure if my mother-in-law likes me and my father-in-law hardly talks to me. Anand is only six and he likes to spend time with me so that helps me to be not so lonely. Padi is 12 but she can sometimes sound like she is 16. Robin works a lot and he'll be starting his third year of Engineering so I am going to spend a lot more time alone. Chandra and I will be going to school together but he'll be in Grade 12 and I will be in Grade 11. There are seven of us in the house and there is not much privacy. Sometimes I just want a place to go and cry.

When I was in Guyana, I knew everything but there are so many things I don't know here. I long for some mangoes and pineapple but the supermarket over here is so different. They don't have any of that. I even sound different. People say I have an accent but I think they have the accent. I wonder if this is how Mr. Ferguson felt when he went to Guyana. He said root beer tasted great but when I tasted it, it

tasted like Iodex. I don't know how to act around Robin. I have never even undressed in front of Bena but now I am expected to undress in front of him. My life is changing and I don't like it. I just want to go back home. I have written about 6 letters to my friends but the mail takes so long, I probably won't hear from them till Christmas. I wonder what they are doing and if they think of me? I am always thinking of them.

Dear diary,

I started Grade 11 at Vincent Massey Collegiate a month ago. I didn't get my GCE results from Guyana so the principal decided that I should start in Grade 11. The school is so big and I keep getting lost. There are so many students and I don't know anyone except Chandra. They had freshie week and some students wanted to freshie me but he forbid it. I don't even know what freshie week is. I don't know how to play baseball or soccer or hockey and the volleyball teams are already picked so I can't even play volleyball. Everything is so different. At least I don't have to be scared that I am married and in Grade 11. I miss my family terribly and I am always scared that the person who sent me the anonymous letters will still try to kill me. I try not to look scared but sometimes I can feel my heart beating very fast when I get frightened. I have no friends, no money, no privacy and worse than that, I have no family. I feel abandoned.

I had to get a pair of shorts for gym and it was \$6. Robin said that I could get it but we had to be careful with our money since he still has two more years of engineering at the university and he only works in the summer so the money has to last for a long time. Diary, this is the first time that I don't have enough money and

my dad isn't here to give me more. My bedroom is in the basement and it's always so cold down there. There is hardly any sunlight in the room except for about 10 minutes in the morning through the basement window. I miss my huge backyard where I learned to ride my bike. I miss my friends and my life and I just want to go home but I know that is not possible. I wouldn't even have money for the plane ticket. I wonder if I will ever see Guyana again. Daddy said that Canada was better life but its worse in every way.

I have a terrible English teacher. He hates me and tries to find every chance to embarrass me. At Massey, I have a home room and I have to go to other rooms for my classes. On the first day of class, I got lost and arrived late at class. In Guyana, we don't leave our classrooms. Mr. Hilton was standing by his desk and the only seat that was left was at the front right next to his desk. I sat down and told him that I forgot my purse in my home room. He acted like he didn't understand what I was saying. He kept looking at me as if I was retarded so after I repeated it two more times, he announced to the class: Does anyone know what she is saying? I could see the other students sitting near to me felt bad for me but no one said anything. My face turned red so I picked up the chalk and wrote purse on the chalkboard. He looked at the word and said something like: Oh, perse; I thought you said fourth. I don't know how purse could sound like fourth. He said that I should learn to speak proper English. I who come from an English speaking country should learn to speak English. I have not said another word in his class since then and you know how hard it is for me not to talk diary. I am always so nervous when I walk into his class. It is so unlike Mr. Johnson's literature class in Guyana. He was kind and caring and Mr. Hilton is nasty and mean.

Mrs. Houston is so different. She is my home room teacher and she is kind too. Sometimes I like to think of her as my mom but I don't actually say that to her. Susan Singleton sits beside me and she wears thick glasses. She doesn't have many friends but she talks to me so I am happy. We are partners in gym class but I think it's because no one wants to be her partner and the other students don't talk to me. Miss Parker the physical education teacher told us that we had to pick a song and do a modern dance to it. I have no idea what modern dance is. Susan showed me how and we had to interpret the song through dance. We did a really stupid dance. It doesn't look anything like the Indian dances we do or even the English dances we did when mommy and daddy had parties. We use to listen to Elvis and did Jailhouse Rock and the twist with Chubby Checker but I don't understand what modern dance is. It looked so silly that I wanted to laugh but everyone else was laughing at us so it just felt stupid.

Sandi Gilmour and Barb Milley are really friendly but they are not in my home room. I met them in my English class and they think that Mr. Hilton is horrible to me. They said I should tell Mr. Sotolov the principal or Mr. Trainor the vice principal but at home you only go the office if you are in trouble so it's best if I stay away from the office. Mr. Ackland the biology teacher is also very nice and so is Mr. Smallwood the Geography teacher. Well really all my teachers are nice except Mr. Hilton. I am doing well in all my courses except English and I thought that would be my best course. I am even doing very well in Miss Wilkinson's Math class.

Dear Diary,

Sandi and Barb invited me to their house for Halloween. I don't know what that is but Sandi explained that you get dressed up in costumes and go to people's house and they give you candies. That is the strangest thing I ever heard. We went over to her house and Mrs. Gilmour showed me how to make candy apples. They have a nice house and a big dog. I miss my dogs and when I see her mom and dad and her brother laughing and talking to each other, I miss my family. My in-laws don't talk to each other like that. I mean they don't laugh and talk to each other. They are always serious. When I go home after school, I help out in the kitchen but we don't really talk. Robin is busy at university so he stays late and I hardly see him. There was a dance at Vincent Massey but he didn't want to go because he said that they were all high school students and he was too old for that. When I was at Cumming's Lodge, I used to plan the school dances with the other students. The best one we had was a fashion and talent show. I wore a sari and everyone said I looked like a model. I felt so pretty that day. Now I don't think anyone even notices me and when they do, they just look at me as if there is something wrong with me.

I was in the bus last week and there was an empty seat beside me. I moved over closer to the window and told the lady that was standing that she could sit next to me. She just looked at me as if she scorned me and kept standing. I know that look. It was the same one that some of the students at Cumming's Lodge used to give to Paulette Singh when she had scabies. Her skin would get red patches and she would be itching all the time. The other students didn't want to sit near her so they avoided her. It was sad because she had other problems too even though her father was a doctor. Her clothes never fit, her hair was chopped off as if someone was sawing her hair and her shoes and socks were scruffy and dirty. I used to pick her

for my rounders team because I was the captain of the team even though I knew she couldn't hit a ball but I felt sorry that no one else picked her. She never did anything on the team but I was a good rounders player and the other team members and I could score enough runs to make up for her. She was so glad to be included that she used to wait for me every afternoon to walk out to the public road where mommy would pick me up in the Toyota. I sometimes wished she wouldn't walk with me but I didn't tell her to stop. Eventually I was only going with the train so she had no one to walk with. That look on the lady's face in the bus was the same. I never had anyone look at me like that in Guyana. Is this what poor Paulette felt like all those times? It's a horrible feeling as if you are dirty and you can't wash yourself off. I hear on the news that white people don't like the natives. Maybe the lady thought I was a native Indian.

1971

Dear dairy,

It's getting colder and the coat I am wearing is not warm. I am always cold these days. I went to the Eaton's clearance centre and bought a coat for \$5. It is green and ugly but it's all I can afford. I'm afraid that if I spend any more, Robin will be angry. Daddy sent me some money at Christmas so I bought a watch because I needed one. It's hard to tell the time when it's winter here. It's dark all the time. Daddy and Mommy called from Guyana and I told them that I am doing well even though I cry most of the time and miss them terribly. I write a lot of letters to my friends. I hope they remember me. Christmas is not the same in Canada as it is in Guyana. I miss going to the store on Christmas Eve with Karran and Bena. Robin

and his family don't really celebrate Christmas. For them it's a time to exchange presents but we used to go to church for Christmas Eve mass. My mother-in-law is Hindu so she says that she does not celebrate Christmas. I'm glad we used celebrate Christmas even though Daddy is Hindu and Mommy is Muslim – well sort of. She converted to a Christian and Karran, Bena and I were all baptized as Christians. Some of my friends think that we don't really belong anywhere but I think I am lucky that we belong everywhere. We celebrate Hindu, Muslim and Christian holidays.

Dear diary,

It's February and the winter is worse than I thought. I remember the first day in October when I saw snow and I was so excited until someone said it was snow flurries. The first snow fall was fun but it is now endless cold days and my fingers are all cracked and bleeding from walking to and from school 4 times each day. The 10 minute walk to school is now feeling like 10 hours. I don't have proper clothes but I don't want to ask for more because we have so little money. This is the first time that I need something and I can't have it.

Today is Daddy's birthday. Yesterday was my 17th birthday and for the first time in my life, I did not celebrate it with him. I used to long to have my own birthday cake but now I have none. It's the worst birthday that I ever spent. Robin bought me a sweater and I think he is trying to cheer me up, but it's not the same. I'm just lonely. I have two or three friends at Massey but we don't really spend any time together after school because they are involved with sports activities that I don't know how to play. Robin doesn't like to do things at my high school because he

is older. I went with him to a beer bash at the university but I don't drink and his friends think that I am too young anyway. I don't seem to fit in anywhere.

Dear diary,

I got my first summer job in Canada. I am working at a factory making frost shields for cars. It's on Gomez Street off of Higgins. It's not hard work but it pays good money because I can do piece work and I get extra. I am glad that I am only doing it for the summer. I wouldn't want to do this for a living because it's boring and the supervisor is not nice but I don't say anything to cause any trouble. I stay at my table and work quickly attaching the wires to the plastic so Frank's mom said that I could do piece work and get paid a bit more. She and some of the older ladies come from Eastern Europe and they do this for a living but they don't work fast so they don't get the extra for piece work. They hardly speak English so this is the only kind of work that they can get. She said that people from Eastern Europe are not treated nicely but I don't think she has a bad life. I am going to work hard to save some money to go to hairdressing school. I'm not really interested in university. I asked my counsellor at Massey about hairdressing and she said that if I want to do that, I have to go to RB Russell School in downtown. It would take me more than one hour each way to school and home and Robin said that it is not a safe area of the city. He used to live on Manitoba Avenue and they moved to Fort Garry so this is not a good plan besides he wants me to go to university so I am taking university entrance courses. If I go to RB, I won't be able to do that and do hairdressing because the timetable will be different. So I'll finish high school and use my summer money to go to hairdressing school. Every day I pass the Pollock Beauty School on Graham so I might go there.

I am saving all my money. Imagine that when I was in Guyana I used to buy whatever I wanted and if I didn't have money, I would use the shop book and daddy would pay for it but now I won't even buy an ice-cream cone for ten cents. My friends at Massey think that I am rich because I always have \$5 but it's the same \$5 each week. They get an allowance every week and they spend it on canned spaghetti and cigarettes and licorice but I don't spend mine on anything so they think that because I am married I get lots of money. I am becoming a miser and I'm embarrassed to ask Robin for money. He has a worse job because he works in a fibreglass factory and he comes home very itchy every day. His friends have family and other friends who offer them summer jobs in engineering offices but he doesn't know anyone like that, so he works in the factory. Same with his cousin Susheela. She is very bright but she doesn't know anyone who can offer her a job in an office so she works at the factory with me to pay her university fees. Robin thinks that she will get the gold medal from her faculty when she graduates but she works in a factory.

1972

Dear diary,

It's been a long time since I wrote you. I graduated from Massey and even though I saved almost all my money, we don't have enough for me to go to school so I am working at a Safeway. I didn't apply to university because I really wanted to go to hairdressing school at Red River College but we don't have the tuition money so I wouldn't have been able to go anyway. I am glad to be finished school. The last year was horrible with Mr. Hilton because he always made me feel so stupid in his

class. I got him Grade 12 English and he treated me the same as he did all through Grade 11 as if I am retarded. He never talked to me and it didn't matter how hard I tried, I could not get a higher mark than between 50 and 52 on his tests. I thought I was going to fail English but I exempted all my courses and didn't have to write any final exams with good marks except for English which I passed with 52%. I'll miss some of the other teachers though. Mrs. Houston asked if I was going to university or college but I told her that I wouldn't have enough money for the fees. I had some good experiences in school though. One of the counsellors asked me to represent Massey at a Model United Nations at Red River College. I don't really belong to the school club but they thought that since I am coloured, I would be a good representative for the Republic of the Congo so I went. It was interesting but I didn't really understand a lot of it because I don't know anything about the United Nations or the Congo.

I applied to Safeway as a cashier but they had no jobs for that so I said that I would take anything so I'm working as a meat wrapper in the meat department. It's hard work lifting the heavy trays of meat but I can do it. I'm a hard worker and I am fast so although I am only casual, I'm getting almost 30-35 hours each week. I still want to do hairdressing so I am not spending any money. I bring my own lunch and save as much as I can so that I can go to school. I don't want to be a professional meat wrapper. The men are butchers and they get paid a lot but mostly women are wrappers and they don't get paid as much and they work just as hard.

I used to work at Payfair as a cashier when I graduated but it was hard to work seven days a week. I got two days off at Payfair but on one of the days off I worked at another Payfair and on Sundays I worked at Leslie's grocery store during

the day and Robin worked there in the evening. We hardly see each other. Robin graduated in May but he couldn't find work as an engineer so he worked with one of his professors doing some work at Pinawa and part-time as a gardener and part-time at Leslie's. Most of his friends got hired by their parents or family friends who have engineering companies but he isn't so lucky. He finally got a job in September at MCW but his boss expects him to work very long hours and doesn't pay any overtime. Sometimes he comes home at 1 or 2 am.

I sponsored my parents to come to Canada but life here is not as good as daddy said it would be. He said that I would have more opportunities in Canada but so far, I have a high school diploma and I am a meat wrapper in a grocery store. Bena said that Daddy's trucking business is doing well even though he has to bribe a lot of people but he is getting work. Burnham is not ruling the country very well so it's getting harder for Indians to live there. I don't know what they will do in Canada because working as a meat wrapper and gardener is not the life I thought I was going to have. Well I guess Robin is now working as a draftsman at MCW but his boss is taking advantage because he knows that Robin doesn't have other choices. I hope one day I'll have enough money to go to school.

1973

Dear diary,

I applied to college to do an operating technician course and I got in. Eighty people applied and they only pick 16 and I was one of them. I really want to be a hairdresser but Robin and his dad think that I can do better so instead of nursing

which they think I should do, I picked something else because I know I don't want to be a nurse. I was supposed to start at the beginning of September but on the last Friday in August, I found out that I am pregnant. I think God must have heard me praying for a miracle. This is my miracle because it means that I don't have to go and do that. I was vomiting so much that I wouldn't be able to go to school and stand for long hours and I won't be able to complete the program before the baby comes. I can't even go back to work at Safeway because I have to lift heavy trays and the smell of raw meat makes me even more sick. I bought a portable sewing machine and I will teach myself to sew. I took Home Ec. at Massey but I didn't really learn to sew or cook because the teacher spent a lot of time with the girls who were planning to go to university to study home Ec. I learned to cook and bake bread and pastries very well in Guyana but we made some awful things in Home Ec. I wouldn't eat that but the other girls said the food was good. I don't know what they eat but the food had no taste. I never complained because I got good marks.

1974

Dear diary,

I now have my baby girl. Her name is Sharmila and she is the most beautiful baby on this earth. I'm so glad to have her. Now I am not as lonely as I was. I bought some sewing patterns and taught myself to sew and I made some matching outfits for her and me. I'm getting better with each outfit that I make.

I enrolled at Herzing College to take a correspondence course in computer programming. Robin comes home late every night and he even works on the

weekends and Sharmi is a good baby so I have time to study when she is sleeping. The course isn't hard and I am getting good marks but it is so boring. My dream of being a hairdresser will not come true but I'm going to study hard to be a programmer. I used to dream that one day I would have my own salon and I would create beautiful hairstyles but that's not to be so this is for the best.

Mommy and Daddy are getting through with their papers to come to Canada so when they arrive, I'll ask them to babysit so I can go back to school. I have not heard anything from any of my friends at Massey. They must be in university and going on ski trips like they did in high school. I am glad that I have someone to take care of though and university doesn't interest me but I would have thought one of them would have called. I don't know any other young mothers so I spend a lot of time by myself taking care of Sharmi and studying. Sometimes I used to make some noise so she'd wake up because it's so lonely, but now that I am studying, it's not so bad. I just wish it that it wasn't so boring.

1975

Dear diary,

My parents came over in September. I was so happy to see them. I got a new sister Sophie since I left Guyana. She was born in 1972 so she is just 15 months older than Sharm. They looked for an apartment for five people but it was too expensive and the landlords don't want to rent to five people. They found one that they liked but they had to tell the landlord that there were only four of them and that Sophie is my daughter. Mr. Fultz is the landlord and he likes Sophie. I think he

knows she is not my daughter but he doesn't say anything. Daddy got a job at Creamette's. They make spaghetti and macaroni noodles. He doesn't like it and it doesn't pay good money but he needed work right away so he took the first job that he could get. When they left Guyana, Burnham's government would only allow them to take \$15 US dollars each so they had to find work right away. Mom is working in the evenings at Ringers Drug store and Bena is working at Great West Life as a secretary. Karran is at Massey and he is in the naval reserve part-time so he gets some money. This is my family that had a good life in Guyana and my dad is now working as a labourer in a macaroni factory. It's was so good though to be reunited and finally we had a Christmas like I remember in Guyana.

I got awfully sick on Old Year's night and I had to go to the hospital for surgery to have my gall stones removed. It took me two months to recover but mommy and Bena helped with Sharm. I did something last week that I am excited about but Robin and my parents are not pleased. I asked Mom and Dad if they would take care of Sharm so I could go back to school to study and they said yes. I didn't tell anyone about my plan but I went downtown to Pollock Beauty School and registered and paid my fees for the hairdressing program. I came home and told them and they were not happy. They thought I was going to sign up at Herzing and I didn't correct them.

Dear diary,

It's been several months since I started hairdressing school. I love the smell of a salon and I love doing hair. The other students don't like to do long hair so I get all the long hair clients. Mr. Pollock said that I have to cut my hair short if I expect to

be a hairdresser. My hair is down to my bum and I told him that I am not cutting it but I will specialize in long hair styles and the long hair clients can come to me. It was a good decision because my long hair attracts a lot of people because it's shiny and healthy.

Robin finally got over being upset with me for signing up for hairdressing school because he sees how well I am doing and how much I love it. Even mom and Bena come to the school for me to practice. Sometimes Robin brings Sharm to pick me up. We bought a brand new car just before my parents came to Canada. Mr. Pollock is very good to me. Every Monday and Wednesday he stays open late for the part-time evening students so I asked if I could stay and earn extra hours. I have to complete 1400 hours so he agreed and he even makes supper for the students because most of them are working in factories during the day and don't have time to eat dinner before coming to classes. I was hoping to complete my program in 8 or 9 months rather than one year but I had to take two months off in the summer because Mom had surgery and she could not take care of Sharm. I should still be done by December or January.

Diary did I say Mr. Pollock is a good man? Well he is. He yells a lot at the students but he doesn't really mean anything. One time when I first started, one of the clients didn't want me to do her hair because I was a "darkie" – that's what she called me – so she pulled out the rollers and told Mr. Pollock that I was sloppy. He came and yelled at me so I packed up my things and told him that I was not going to have him be disrespectful to me and I left. I was shaking when I said that and I cried all the way home on the bus. The next day he called and said he was sorry and I should come back because I was a good student so I went back and since then he

has been really kind. I am learning a lot from him and some of it is not even related to hair. Two months ago he asked if anyone had a driver's licence and I said that I had one so he gave me his car and asked me to go to a lady's house to do her hair because she was a shut-in. So I started going and he told me to keep the money that she paid to get her hair done. I said it was his money and his gas but he said that I deserve it. He only charges her what he charges the clients who come to the school which is almost nothing. I think it is so good for him to do that. I may do that when I graduate. There must be a lot of people who can't go to the salon because they have little kids at home or they are in wheelchairs. With the tips and the money that I get to go out to clients, I will be able to recover all my tuition.

1976

Dear dairy,

I graduated as a hairdresser in March. Now people are calling us hairstylists so I have to remember to say that. I got a job at Tony's Barber shop. He owns a salon and a barber shop but he can't hire me for the barber shop because I need a barber licence so he said that if the inspector comes in, I have to say that I am working in the salon. It's funny that if I live in Winnipeg or Brandon I must have a hairdresser or barber licence but if I live anywhere else in the province, I can work as a barber or hairdresser without any skills. That doesn't make the least bit of sense. I only stayed at Tony's for a few months because I am now expecting my second baby and I have awful morning sickness which lasts all day. The smell of anything sweet bothers me so shampoo and hairspray makes me even more sick. I don't mind staying home though. I didn't like the nursery school that Sharm is going

to so now I can stay home and take care of her while I wait for the next baby. We sold the house on Waller and bought a brand new house in Waverley Heights. I give free haircuts to the neighbours and to family so I am still doing hair but I just don't get paid.

When I finished the program at Pollock's Beauty School, Mr. Pollock's daughter Karen told me that she remembered when I came to the school last year to sign up for the program and she and Cindy and some other students made bets with each other that I would not last one month in the program, let alone graduate. I was surprised because I worked very hard and I was dedicated. She said that I didn't look like the typical hairdressing student because I was dressed very nice and I was too groomed to be hairdresser. Well hairdressers come in all shapes and sizes. They didn't think that I would be able to stand all day and she admitted that she thought I had never done any hard work. I guess diary that she doesn't know me like you do. When I want something badly enough, I can be very determined.

1978

Dear diary,

You must have really missed me. Sunita was born in August last year and I was so busy taking care of two daughters, that I had no time to write. I love taking care of them but I miss having an adult to talk to. My sewing has gotten so much better. I made some maternity clothes for me and some little outfits for Sharm and Sunita. I give them the latest kids haircuts and I am getting lots of practice doing the neighbours hair for free.

I forgot to mention that Mom and I went back to Guyana because Nanee was very sick. It was the first time in almost 8 years and things have changed a lot since I left in 1970. Everything looks old and dingy and people are complaining that the government favours black people and many Indian families are leaving to go to the US or Canada. I spent a lot of time with Nana talking about family and I wrote down all the family information he gave me so that I could start a family tree when I came back to Canada. They had 12 children so I have lots of aunts, uncles and cousins and that's not even counting dad's side of the family.

Since Robin got an engineering job at Reid Crowther, he is even busier than before so he is hardly ever at home. I am really raising the girls by myself. In January I told him that I was going to look for a job as a hairstylist for Saturdays only because I need some adult company and some mental stimulation and he would have to agree to babysit. He said he would and I went out and found a job at the first place I looked. Orion Hair Design is only about 10 minutes to walk from home. Robin thought I wouldn't find a job and he wouldn't have to babysit so he was not pleased. He said that it would cost him more in taxes if I worked than if I stayed home but I wouldn't give in so he stays home on Saturdays. It's more work for me to work one day a week because he doesn't do any house work or cooking when I am away and as soon as I come home, I have to take over looking after the kids. I don't like it but I am not going to quit because I love it and Erica and Sylvia are good to me. They told me that I should go on commission because I'll make about \$100 each Saturday rather than the \$48 that I would make on hourly wages. I'm also getting to know some people in the neighbourhood.

Diary, I forgot to tell you about this. I was reading through the newspaper a few months ago and the YWCA was advertising a program for young mothers so I went to a meeting and we have now started a group called Waverley Heights Y Neighbours. It's for young mothers and there are 12 of us. The first meeting was at my house and we plan the weekly topics that we want to discuss. We take the young kids to the community club across the street and we hired a babysitter for the two hours that we meet each week. We don't really have a lot of money so we are holding bake and garage sales to raise money to help pay for the cost. It's fun and interesting; we invite guest speakers on all kinds of topics and it's good to meet other mothers in the community who share similar interests. The only meeting I didn't like was the one about how to be the Perfect Wife by greeting my husband at the door at the end of his work day by wrapping myself in nothing more than plastic wrap and to make sure the kids stay out of his way so he can rest because he was out all day earning money for the family. That meeting was at my house too and I felt bad that I was so rude to the guest speaker. It sounded like a lot of drivel. Sydney was upset because she invited the speaker who goes to her church. I told her that if I did that, Robin would think that I went mad. The other women didn't say anything when she was speaking but after she left, they cheered and said I was a women's libber. I spend all day taking care of the kids and she said something stupid like that as if my contribution has no value. Catherine and I laughed about it for weeks after.

1979

Dear diary,

Sharm is now in French Immersion kindergarten. Last Spring I was talking to some of the women in Y Neighbours and we thought that it would be good for our children to be bilingual so we should ask Fort Garry School Division n to start a kindergarten. Me and some of the other parents asked them to start one and they said no so we spent the whole summer petitioning the government to start one. The school board said that unless we had at least 15 students, they wouldn't do it. So we talked to a lot of families. Some were quite hostile and said that French people get too much so they are not in favour. I tried to explain that I am not French. I only want my daughters to learn French because they would have more educational opportunities when they grow up but I couldn't convince them. Lucky for us that we got 15 for kindergarten and 15 for Grade 1 so the school division had to go ahead. Then they told us that they didn't have space so the little kids would have to go to a section of General Byng which is a junior high school. We agreed but only if the little kids had a different start and finish time than the junior high kids. Then they said that they would not be able to hire French teachers because there are none available. Imagine that St Boniface is the largest French speaking community outside of Quebec and the school division can't find French speaking teachers. Then they didn't want to start a French library for the kids. The final roadblock was when they said that they would not provide bussing and we would either have to drive our kids there or pay for bussing which is \$750 per year. The school division is trying everything not to provide French Immersion. I can hardly afford the \$750 but we found the money and so did the other parents.

We spent almost the whole summer doing this and it is exhausting but I am learning a lot about how superintendents and school trustees have a great deal of

power over people's lives and how if you don't stand up to them, they'll walk all over you as my dad says. It's such a fight to get a good education but I'm not giving up. Sometimes they talk to us as if we are asking for something that we don't deserve but I don't care. I will continue to fight for her right to a good education even if it's costing me a lot of time and money that I would not have to pay if she was in an English program.

I am also trying to get some programs at the community club for kids that don't play hockey or ringette. There are no other programs there except skating and hockey. I'll see if I can get some dance classes for get a pre-school started so that Sunita can go when she is old enough. I am finding out that raising kids is not easy and it's expensive especially since I also bought a small salon which I operate short days each week. I think it's a good idea but I am now juggling two kids and a business because Robin is still working long hours.

1981

Dear diary,

I have neglected you for a long time but life is even more hectic how that I have a third daughter. I had to sell the salon because one of my clients told me that the woman I hired to run the salon while I was pregnant was stealing from me. I couldn't manage all of it so I am now back to cutting hair at home for some of my clients who don't want to go anywhere else. All those neighbours who I used to give free haircuts to wouldn't pay to come to the salon but now that I am home again,

they want free haircuts. I realize now that my labour is worth something so I am not doing that any more.

With three kids to take care of, money is not so available with only Robin working so I and some other women started a babysitting co-op. We started with 8 families and we modeled it after a co-op that one of the women belonged to in Florida. We have a formal structure with bylaws and we pay each other with points. Each point has a monetary value of 50 cents but we don't pay in actual money, only points. I am the bookkeeping secretary and I get paid some points each month for keeping the books. The president also gets paid some points each month for planning and chairing meetings. It's a great system and we all know each other. New families will only be accepted on a member's recommendation so we know the kids will be safe. We now we are up to 15 families because everyone wants to join but we are sticking to our rules about recommendations. We had to refuse some families because they want babysitters but don't want to babysit in return. Some of the families use the co-op a lot so we are now discussing whether we should offer other services for points. The members know that I am a hairstylist so they would like to get haircuts if I would take points for the cuts. I'll let you know what we decide.

Diary, I am still battling with the school board. We are still paying bussing fees but we are fighting to get the fees dropped because there are different rules for bussing English and French Immersion students but they should all be entitled to free bussing. At least we now have a library and we have enough French teachers to teach all the subjects in French except English classes. We are making progress but the superintendent must be annoyed every time he sees me because he knows that we'll ask for something else. I think all I am the only parent in the group who did not

go to university or a two year college so he usually treats them with more respect than he offers to me. I can feel it when he talks to me as if I am beneath him.

The other battle that I am fighting is with the Apprenticeship office of the government of Manitoba. I have a few clients who are shut-in so I go to their home to do their hair just like I used to when I was at Pollock's but it is illegal because people's homes are not salons as defined by Apprenticeship. I went to the office and talked to the person in charge of hairstylists; she said that there are safety concerns for me. I said that plumbers come into my home and no one worries about their safety. She said that I would have to charge a lot. I said that would be up to me not her to charge whatever fee I wanted for my service just like a plumber. She said there are health concerns. I said that she could issue licences and establish health standards. She said I was argumentative and dismissed me from her office as if I was a child. None of those reasons make sense but it is another example of people in authority holding on to that authority even when they know that they are giving stupid reasons. I didn't make the least bit of headway but I'll keep trying. I don't give up that easy.

1986

Dear diary,

You are a faithful friend even when I don't talk to you for years. It's not that I don't want to. It's just that I am so busy with the kids and working part-time that I can hardly keep up with everything I want to do. Subhadra is now in kindergarten and she is in French Immersion. Look how far we have come diary. By the time

Sunita started French Immersion kindergarten in 1982, the school board relented and we paid full bussing fees for the first child and half as much for the second child. That's still more than \$1000.00 per year just to get them to school and home but it'll be worth it. The kids are doing well at school and they are learning about Manitoba's French Canadian culture. I am happy about that because they are Canadians and they should know their country's history. The only time I was not pleased about school had nothing to do with French. Sunita is a very sociable child and one day she came home and told me that her teacher hit her with a ruler on her knuckles. I went crazy because I had memories of my own childhood when the teachers used to flog us for no good reason. I went to the school and told the teacher that if she ever hit Sunita again, I would report her to the school board office. She didn't do it again. I don't want those horrors repeated on my kids. By the time Subhadra started kindergarten this year, bussing is now free. Yeah diary. That's one battle won but there are so many more to fight.

We moved into a new house in July and I do miss having the community centre across the street but this new street is now much quieter. I am proud of myself for the work I did at the club. I joined the community club executive and started some programs for girls at the club. There is now a nursery school and dance classes and we had carnivals in the summer so the kids could feel that the centre is more than hockey and skating. We held dances on New Year's Eve, Halloween and summer for the adults so it's now a real community. We even opened a canteen for the kids and parents. I am proud of the work and I know even though I am now in a new community, the other one will continue. We are the second family to move here so it will take some time to start a new community club but I now have to contend

with limited bus service and no grocery stores in the neighbourhood. Before we moved we asked about that and the builder said that the city is planning to start a bus route but so far, there is nothing. I don't have to worry yet because the kids are still being bussed but I can see them stopping Sharm's bus soon. I called someone at the transit office and he said that the city is considering limited bus service in the morning and afternoon for two hours. The taxes are one of the highest in the city and there is very little service. Hmmm, we should have spent some more time thinking about all of that before we decided to move here but the other house was getting too small for all of us. We are now considered middle class whatever that means. We have a new house, two cars and three kids so I guess that makes us middle class. I want to build a salon in the basement but I don't know where I will get clients since there are hardly people living around us. Maybe next year.

1988

Dear diary,

The years are passing too quickly and I have less and less time to write. We finally have bus service in the neighbourhood but it's only for two hours in the morning and afternoon. It's better than nothing but still bad. I still keep writing to the Apprenticeship office about getting a mobile licence. I am still going to people's homes and I know it's not legal but I feel sorry for the people. Some of them have arthritis, some have strokes, three are agoraphobic and one is in a wheelchair. The government has to recognize that people need these services and it's not a luxury but no one seems to be listening. Some days I am frustrated but not enough to want to stop. Dad keeps telling me that I can't save the world. I am only trying to save

myself not the world. I don't like people taking advantage of others especially when they are in a position to know and do better.

I joined the Whyte Ridge Residents Association and we are trying to petition the city to get better bussing and to get a community club built here but that is going to be a long battle again. We are planning some community activities so that people can get to know each other. It feels like I am doing the same thing like I did in Waverley Heights only twelve years later.

It's now two years since we are in this house and I did open my little salon in the basement. I have some clients and I still love doing hair. I wanted to build a salon in the strip mall but the landlord and I could not agree on a space. I wanted a small space to start and he agreed and then changed his mind. I was worried that I would not have enough clients to pay the bills so I decided not to take the space. I was so disappointed because I really want to open big salon. I spoke to Pam. She is a client that I had at Kenaston Hairstyling and when I started to work from home, she came here with me. She is quite smart, works at Red River College and is one of the few clients who doesn't think that all hairdressers are idiots. I really like her and we have some great conversations about all kinds of topics. I was telling her about the client who came into the salon and didn't want me to cut her hair because I was coloured. Sybil, the owner was quite angry and told her to leave. Sybil is Jewish and she said that she had enough people judge her because she is Jewish so she is not going to allow the client to do that to someone else. I felt so good that someone stood up for me like that. It's embarrassing to hear someone say that about me for no good reason. The client finally let me cut her hair but she kept telling me how she lived in Singapore for a year and she had a servant who looked just like me. She

asked about my husband and when I said he was an engineer, she asked which train he drives. I said he is a mechanical engineer and got his degree from the University of Manitoba. I could see that she didn't believe me.

Many salon owners are not fair to their employees but not her. When it's not busy, they send home the stylists without pay and if they complain, they get fired. It's awful but the stylists don't complain because they can't afford to lose their jobs. They come to work each day but sometimes go home with only two or three hours pay. Erica and Sylvia never did that to me and neither did Sybil.

Diary I was waiting till now to give you this big news. I told Pam that I am disappointed that I didn't get the salon and I didn't know what I was going to do with my life so she came up with this crazy idea that I should go to Red River College to become a vocational teacher. Isn't that crazy? She said that I should go and talk to Jim McKay at the teacher education office so I thought about it for a week and I went to see him. He talked to me about half an hour and said that I could enrol in the part-time vocational teacher education program. Well guess what? I DID!! I am nervous about it but I can't stop thinking about teaching something I love to do. I am doing the Introduction to Instruction course by correspondence and I really like it. Jim said that I can apply to the full-time program which starts next September and I will be able to get credit for the courses that I finish this year. I never imagined that I would be a teacher but I am excited. The kids are all in school full-time and I can dedicate some time to studying.

1990

Dear diary,

It's the beginning of the new year and so much has happened. You won't believe this but I got a job as a teaching assistant at South Winnipeg Technical Centre starting this month. I am more than halfway through my teacher education courses. I was accepted into the full-time vocational teacher education program in September and I transferred all my courses to the day program so my timetable was not so hectic. I went to school all last winter and summer so by last Fall, I only had three courses to do for the semester. Two teachers are very lazy but I don't really mind. Mr. Starsiak is a tough teacher but I am learning a lot from him. I did the computer course with Jim McKay and I also learned a lot from him. When I asked him questions about the software, he would fix it but I asked him not to do that because I want to learn for myself. It reminds me of all the times I would do the same thing to Mr. Pollock but I learned a lot from him too and that's why I think I am a good hairstylist. One of my classmates asked me to print my computer assignments and he turned them in as his work but I don't know how to tell him that I didn't want to do that. I know it's cheating and I should have said something but I didn't. Now I wish I had because he is teaching at the same school that I am now working at. I wonder what he tells his students about cheating.

1991

Dear diary,

It's three years since I started my vocational teacher education program and I am now a graduate with a perfect score of 4.0. I can hardly believe it. I really love

learning about teaching. Remember when I was doing computer programming all those years ago and it was so boring? Well the computer course I took with Jim was not boring at all. I am learning so much and Pam has been such a good friend. We talk about teaching and she said that she always thought I was smart. I just had to believe in myself. I don't think I am that smart but I do know that I work hard and I do love to learn even when it requires lots of work. I've been lucky to be working at South Winnipeg for such a good principal like Maxine. She got all my fees waived at Red River so the part-time teacher education courses were free. That's like a bit of a scholarship. She also pays me as a teacher rather than a teaching assistant so I am doubly lucky. She says I am a hard worker and someday soon I will be a good teacher.

I got a half time job at Sturgeon Creek Secondary School for the winter semester and I loved it. The principal said that I did such a good job that he offered me a half-time position in the Fall then the enrolment went up so he offered me full-time work. But you know what diary? I turned it down. Some of my friends thought I was crazy to turn down such an opportunity because there are not that many teaching jobs in the public schools for hairstylists but I have a bigger vision. I always seem to have a different vision for my life than everyone else thinks I should have so it's hard to convince anyone that it makes sense for me. I got a scholarship from the Manitoba Teachers Society. It's not that much - only \$1,200 but if I don't take it this year, I will lose it so I decided to go to university with a full course load and work part-time as a substitute teacher at South Winnipeg to make some extra money. I know one day it will pay off and everyone will see that it was the right decision but right now it's hard to think that way when I am giving up almost \$50,000 for a

\$1,200 scholarship. I am only saying this to you diary but secretly I am glad to be going to university because I actually never thought I would ever go through the doors as a student. Of course I don't know if I will graduate but I am going to work hard and if I do it. I could transfer all my Red River courses to the teacher education program at the University of Manitoba and I will try to finish my courses in two or three years so I can graduate with a Bachelor of Education. That's hardly believable – me in university. Robin and my parents are happy because they can see how much I still love hairdressing and how much I love being at school. I love the smell of the library and sometimes I just want to be left alone to read and study as much as I want to but that's not practical. I still have my salon business at home and the kids still need to eat and of course now that Catherine has passed away and Tiffany and Jarrod are living with us, it makes for a crazy life. How did my life get so crazy? I now have five kids in five different schools and I am barely keeping my head above water. My studies offer a good respite from the madness that is now my life. When I told Catherine that I would be the guardians of her children if anything ever happened to her, she wasn't sick and I didn't expect that my best friend would be dead at 39 and I would have to take care of her children as well as my own.

1992

Dear diary,

I have now completed my third year at university and I am doing so well. I took a course cross cultural education course with Fred Drew and it was great. He is so knowledgeable. I wish I knew as much as he does. I loved Dr Bruno-Jofre's course and I remember after the second day of class when she told me that I should go to

graduate school because I had a bright future. I was so scared just being at university that I was thinking that I would just like to get through the week, never mind graduate school. Mike Czuboka was especially complimentary. He says that he never gives students anything over a 90% even if they are very good because he thinks that every student can aspire higher so when he said that one student's work was outstanding and he gave the student 95% I looked around to see if I could tell who the student was until I got my paper and realized that it was me. It's hard to explain how much I love learning. I earned all A's in the courses I took so far except for two English courses where I got a B+ and C+. I finally got over the fear of English from the days of Mr. Hilton and now it's payback time for him. I am majoring in English and even if I don't get all A's, and he'll never know or care whether I graduated or not, it's a boost to my self-confidence.

Things are less crazy in my life these days. Tiffany and Jarrod went to live with their dad by the end of last year so it's been much less hectic at least with only three kids. Sharm started university this year so me and my daughter are going to university at the same time but not in the same faculty. Do you remember last year when I was telling you that I gave up a teaching job to go to school? Well I was subbing at South Winnipeg and we got a new director. He came into the classroom one day and asked if I had any ideas about how the school could be better. I told him about the idea that I had suggested to the administrators the year before about opening the school in the evenings something like Mr. Pollock used to do for students who couldn't come to school during the day because they were working at dead end jobs. Leonard said that he would think about it and after he did, he said that he would start three evening programs in Hairstyling, Drafting and Industrial Electronics

and I could be the hairstyling teacher if I wanted the job. I came home and talked to Robin and the kids and they thought it was great idea but I'd have to work every evening, Monday to Friday. I now have a job which allows me the flexibility to continue my studies in the daytime, work in the evening and I got to use my scholarship money. Hopefully I can manage the schedule of full-time work, full-time school, a home based business and family commitments because it'll only be for another year and a half and I can graduate.

I have been appointed as the Lead Instructor. I act as a quasi-principal and department head but it comes with no benefits. I found out that if I was called a Department Head, I would have to be paid as such so William suggested that I should talk to the union about this but when I did, they said there wasn't much they could do for me. Most day instructors think that the evening programs are more of a nuisance and they should be closed but it's such a short sighted vision. Why can't schools be opened 24 hours a day if students are willing and able to attend and the classes are full? Anyway, I thought unions were supposed to look out for the rights of their members but since there is only one of me, it doesn't seem to warrant the effort. I heard some talk that next year department heads will be reclassified as Lead Instructors. I'll wait to see if the union will do anything when the day instructors are involved.

1993

Dear diary,

I really love teaching hairstyling. I have a very large class but the students are keen to learn. I teach by Individualized Competency-Based Learning. We prepare learning activity packages that students work through on their own. Most students don't have a problem but it's not the way that they are familiar with school (neither) so some of them don't know how to use the packages. I should spend some more time teaching them how to use the packages rather than assuming that they can do it on their own but with continuous intake of new students starting every month and such a large class, it's hard to keep up with everything. The Victoria Hospital project is also huge and that takes a lot of time.

Do you remember when I used to volunteer there and I offered free haircuts to some of the patients who could not get out to a salon. Well I had this great idea for my students to offer hair and nail services to Geriatric patients at the Victoria Hospital once every second week. I thought it would benefit the patients and the students would have an opportunity to practice their skills. It took some planning on my part but I pitched the idea to Leonard and he said that I should talk to the administrators of the Victoria Hospital and if they support it and the students are agreeable, I can go ahead. Everyone agreed that it was a great idea so we now go every second week for three hours to the hospital. The students get to practice their hairstyling and communication skills and the clients benefit too by getting free haircuts or sets but more importantly, the students learn to give back to their community and in the end everyone benefits – the students, the patients, the hospital and South Winnipeg Tech. The students have to adjust their schedules to go there every second week. I don't penalize them if they can't go but most of them

make the effort to go. I am very happy about how they are contributing and how much they are learning beyond hair skills.

Besides my teaching, I joined the Staff Development committee because I think that the centre should be making more of an effort to bring a cross-cultural dimension to the programs. Since I took the cross cultural education course, I am seeing just how little we do at the centre. I have completed one year of course work at the U of M so that's also keeping me pretty busy with studying. I've learned so much in the last few years about how political education is and how little I know about that. I am still running my small business at home so Pam and I talk about education and how vocational education is seen as such a dumping ground for students who aren't doing well at academics. I am also learning that teachers don't take responsibility for students' failures. When I think back of the ways that some of my teachers taught me, I consider myself lucky to have made it in to university at all. Dr Bruno-Jofre's course was most intriguing especially when we discussed Paulo Freire and Henri Giroux and their radical philosophy of education. I have to say that although most of my education so far has been traditional, I am favouring that philosophy. When I see my students being excited about volunteering, I know that there can be a better world but how to get there is the challenge.

Remember I told you about how I didn't get compensated for the Lead Instructor responsibilities last year? Well this year, the department Head title was changed to Lead Instructor and the union said that whatever the name change, the Lead Instructors had to be compensated so I am now getting a stipend for my extra evening duties. This is a union in action – one member is not worth the effort but four are.

1994

Dear diary,

I gave myself a wonderful 40th birthday present – my graduation!!! I am very proud of me. I attended my graduation and could hardly believe that at 40, I am a university graduate. I didn't even think I would ever get through the doors let alone graduate. When I used to go there with Robin to see Indian movies and attend engineering events, I used to think that he was so smart to be going there and now I am a graduate too. I even majored in English and Vocational so after 22 years feeling the sting of Mr. Hilton's awful treatment, I have finally put that to rest and if I ever see him, I can laugh in his face.

Not only did I graduate diary, I followed Dr Bruno-Jofre's suggestion and applied and got accepted into the Masters of Education program. I am going to continue to focus on adult and cross-cultural education within vocational education because I realize that it's where my heart is. There aren't many women in vocational education at this level but that is not surprising because most of my classmates in the vocational courses were men. In several of the courses, I was the only woman but I am up for the next challenge. I am encouraging some of my female peers at South Winnipeg to complete their Bachelor's but not many are interested.

I did my first graduate course in Research Methods but it was a lot of proving and disproving hypotheses through statistics which I didn't like at all. My math is coming back to haunt me. Most of the courses are in the evenings when I work but I asked Leonard if I could adjust my teaching schedule and he agreed so I can attend

classes. Some of the teachers were not pleased that I get to do that so they actually complained to Leonard but he told them that all they needed to do was ask and they could receive the same privileges. They don't want to go to school but they don't think I should be furthering my education because it will mean that I will get paid more money. And these are my colleagues who are all vocational teachers and should be aspiring to be better teachers. Some of them only have the one year diploma from Red River and now that I have done so many other courses, I realize how much there is to learn about teaching and I think my students are the beneficiaries.

1995

Dear diary,

I am pretty excited about the Victoria hospital project winning an award from the prestigious Conference Board of Canada for business/education partnerships. My students were pretty excited about their work being recognized nationally and it was exciting to see so many educational institutions partnering to do great work in their communities. I got to go to New Brunswick to receive the award and \$1,000 which goes to South Winnipeg Tech. There was one downside to the event. I was given a lay-off notice before I went to New Brunswick. The centre is a joint program with three school divisions but my program is mainly for adults. The centre has to issue layoff notices by the beginning of May according to the collective agreements and most times adult students are still enrolling over the summer for Fall so rather than taking a risk that the programs will be full by the Fall, the centre issues layoff notices to all the evening instructors and some daytime instructors who also have adult

students. It's very stressful to have a permanent teaching contract that isn't really permanent at all and I face this same situation each year. The union is not willing to take up the issue because there are so few of us affected that it doesn't seem to be worth the effort. To think that I pay almost \$1000 per year in union dues and my union is not willing to stand behind me. That's another lesson that I had to learn.

I am making progress with my master's and I am I am learning a lot especially in the course on the Study of Teaching. I had to videotape and critique my teaching and interactions with students and that was a real eye opener. I have a student who wears a hearing aid and the tape made me see how I was doing him an injustice by not stopping to talk to him so he could read my lips rather than talking to him as I walked by. That was an eye-opener because I had never thought of that before.

Today I baked a cake for Mercy's birthday. Since I started teaching in 1992, I have made a cake for every student's birthday. They are not fancy cakes but I think it's important to let every student know that they are important. Every time a new student starts in my program, I meet with them and the first thing I do is ask their birthday. I'm not so interested in how old they are – just the day and month so that they can get a cake on their birthday. I also ask about their goals and we establish a plan of how we are going to reach that goal. It takes a lot of work to do that but I found that it helps me to know what the student wants. Some students only come for high school credits but most of them want to own a salon at some point and if they do, I can give them special projects that would reflect their interests later in the program. I find that they have been much more likely to do the required work if later they can work on projects that meet their interests. They have to keep track of their

progress on a form that we both sign and I meet with each student every second week to review their progress and to set a new set of goals for the next two weeks. It goes very quickly for the ones who are on target so if I need to, I can spend time with the ones who are falling behind or team them up with a student mentor. Diary, you won't believe how well it works because this helps build student accountability and the progress is also used for deciding my student of the month. Every student has a chance each month because I base it on how much progress the student made that month compared to how they did the month before not how they compare to other students so even if they didn't make as much progress the previous month, they have a chance the next month. It's amazing how they look out for each other much like I used to do when I was at Cumming's Lodge with my friends. They lend booster cables or give each other rides home or to the bus stop the weather is bad; they share sandwiches if someone forgets their lunch and I usually bring an extra sandwich each day because I know that some of the students run out of money for food so I tell them that I always bring extra and they can have it. It's a bit tricky because I don't want them to feel as if they are getting handouts so I have to be discreet. I am sure some of them know what I am doing but no one makes any judgements.

1998

Dear Diary,

Do you remember a long time ago when I was telling you about Cheddi and Burnham and all the politics in Guyana in the 1960's? I used to read the signs on the seawall and now that I am taking courses in international education, a lot of things

are making sense. The US just released some CIA documents that showed that they provided money to the trade unions in Guyana during the 1960's so that Cheddi's government could be defeated. The more I learn about American and British foreign policy, the more angry I get that many lives in Guyana were forever changed with what appears to be little or no regard for their value. A lot of what I am reading about Paulo Freire is making much more sense - like the way I was educated in Guyana and the freedoms we did not get to enjoy because the British and the Americans were meddling in our government. I used to believe in the value of unions but now I don't know what to think. Are they as corrupt as the people they are supposed to be protecting us from? When I was a hairstylist in a non-union environment, I used to think that if only I could work for a company that had a union, I would have better protection, but now that I am a union member, I am not so sure. I thought I was not looking at the big picture so I joined the union's negotiating committee but when I asked that there should be some input from the general membership, that went over like a lead balloon and when there's negotiating between the union and the employer, it's all so secretive that we are not allowed to share anything in writing. I don't understand why things need to be so adversarial between the two sides. I still have a lot to learn.

I went back to Guyana last year September and things have changed a great deal since I was last there in 1985. It looked terrible then and people were so desperate that the crime rates were horrendous and violent crimes were even worse, even till now. I can't believe that my beautiful country has turned to this. Many Indian families have left and people said that when Cheddi was elected in 1992, things would change, but the country has been plundered for almost 30 years and

there is not much left. I went to the Ministry of Education and offered to provide some assistance for teacher training but they basically said that I should organize it myself. It's almost 28 years since I left and most of my family is now living in Canada or the US so I don't have many contacts that would be able to organize anything for the summer. I even said that I would pay my own expenses to get there and teach but I have not had much luck. It would be nice to do some work with the teachers at the technical Institute because of my vocational background but it's going to be an uphill battle I think.

I'm finished my course work for my master's but I have 6 major essays to write before I have my oral exam. I decided to do the comprehensive exam route rather than the thesis route because I am not planning to do a PhD at some later date. It's a staggering amount of work after doing 10 courses and with opening a salon at the Riverview Health Centre, I hardly have time. The salon provides services for long term care and terminal patients. It's good work but it demands so much of my time that I am feeling like something is going to be sacrificed and I think it's those 6 papers for now.

2000

Dear diary,

I had to close the salon at Riverview last September because it was too much for me to do with working full-time, managing the salon and trying to finish my Masters. I finally finished and graduated in February of this year that's why I have not been writing to you much in the last year. I didn't go to my graduation and I

think my family was disappointed but I didn't see the need for a public acknowledgement. The Bachelors was an accomplishment for the world and my family. The master's was for me. I got an increase in my salary so I am now one of two of the highest paid teachers at the college. The pay is significant from that of a vocational teacher from Red River College so my crazy notion in 1991 to pass up a teaching job to go to university was not so crazy after all.

I have been thinking of moving on to something new – perhaps in international education because I still believe in its educational value especially since we have been a host family for many international students in the last 12 years and with all the travelling that I am doing to other countries, I've learned about how other people live and how lucky I am to be living in Canada even with some of my negative experiences. I think I have done all that I can do in a hairstyling program and it's time to look for new opportunities. Employers are waiting in line for my hairstyling graduates, the students are winning provincial and national hairstyling competitions, the program is generating some revenue for additional supplemental classroom resources, it has a good reputation in in the community for volunteer contributions and the program advisory committee is active so it's time to move on, especially now that I think there is something happening at the college that I am not liking.

I've been hearing some rumblings about closing my program. I think it has nothing to do with its popularity but almost everything to do with how much I am getting paid. My salary is about \$15,000 more than they would have to pay me if I had only a limited teaching certificate from Red River. I can see some of the signs already. Some clients who come to the school to get hair services are saying that

they are interested in enrolling in the program but they enquire only to be told that registration has been suspended pending further notice and when I ask about enrolments, I am told that the numbers are low. The two things don't compute. I also think that my program may be targeted because I am a bit of a troublemaker or at least, I ask difficult questions which administrators don't always want to answer. We had a staff survey and we were asked to be as frank as possible but the feedback would be anonymous. Well, I don't mind signing my name if they ask for feedback but in this case I did not. I wrote that Winnipeg Technical College (the name was changed from South Winnipeg Tech) should realize that they have a good niche market for international students wanting to come to Canada to do vocational studies and we are missing the opportunity by not teaming up with the Fort Garry School Division who already has a successful international student program and is one of the co-owners of Winnipeg Tech. I wrote about the far-reaching benefits to all those involved beyond the obvious financial gains for the college and how the college should have more visionary leadership to pursue those opportunities. The survey was hardly "anonymous" as it was easy to identify who those particular comments were coming from since I spoke openly about these on other occasions including staff meetings. Perhaps I should not have been so forthcoming but they asked for honest feedback and now I feel that I am being penalized for giving it. Plus I am costing them a lot of money. Haha. So much for open feedback and lifelong learning which the college promotes everywhere. It's only good if it doesn't cost them more money. My education is benefitting my students directly because if I think of what I knew just after graduating from Red River and what I now know and apply in the classroom, it's such a vast difference. It's too bad that they are so short sighted that they don't see that even vocational students deserve a good education.

2001

Dear diary,

I've had to make a huge adjustment in my schedule. I guess challenging the status quo comes at a price. The closing of the hairstyling program at Winnipeg Tech in December was no surprise and was in fact, a blessing in disguise although at the time it did not feel like that. The layoff forced me to re-evaluate my priorities and I can now take some time to relax and catch up on some interesting reading. The crazy schedule that I was living the last few years finally caught up with me. I am feeling great health wise because I finally had the necessary surgery that probably saved my life. A hysterectomy is not fun but hearing that I had some precancerous cells in my cervix made me go ahead with the surgery. It's been ten years of dealing with anaemia and feeling tired all the time. I attributed it to my hectic schedule but I neglected my health terribly because I thought I needed to be there for my family and my students. Work/life balance is not something I do well. I plunge head first into work and the life balance is about taking care of everyone ahead of me. I promised that it would change so a few days after my surgery I started walking a few feet and now I have signed up to walk a half marathon at the Manitoba marathon in June.

I spent the last two months looking for a teaching position but to no avail. I've gone for two interviews but both principals said I should go back to school and get some additional credentials. I guess a Vocational Teaching Certificate, A Certificate in Adult Education, a Bachelor and Masters of Education are not sufficient to be a teacher. I know it has more to do with how much it would cost to hire me

because I am at the top of the pay scale for teachers and that would be about \$10,000 more than they would ordinarily have to pay for a teacher with fewer qualifications. A hairstyling teacher with a Master's degree is an anomaly and even if I teach English or some other subject, the school division could hire an English teacher at a Class 4 and no teaching experience rather than my Class 7 and 10 years of teaching experience for almost \$15,000 less and frankly school divisions do not usually have vocational teachers with master's degrees because I think they don't think vocational students are that deserving and administrators would never publically admit that. Most vocational teachers only have a teaching certificate from Red River, let alone a Bachelor's and for sure a Master's degree is rare at least to have one and be a classroom teacher.

2002

Dear diary,

I have been travelling a lot in the last few months. After harping at Winnipeg Tech about the value of international education, I finally have an opportunity to start a new International Education program at the Transcona-Springfield School Division. It's been a lot of work setting it up and since it's only part-time, I am spending a lot of my own time doing it. It's a full-time job with a half-time salary but it's exciting. I went to Taiwan to do some promotions based on Holly's references and also one trip to Mexico. I can see how I'm a small fish in the huge ocean of international education because my promotional materials are not as sophisticated as some others. Some school representatives are going to many educational fairs that cost thousands of dollars in several countries. I am realizing that my altruistic vision for

international education is vastly different from what I am seeing. The fairs look more like business endeavours that have little to do with education and more to do with how much profit it makes for school divisions. Some school divisions in Winnipeg are boasting of profits in the hundreds of thousands of dollars and I know from being a host family for Holly so many years ago, that some international students pay in excess of \$30,000 per year to get an education in Canada. I now have to think like a business person rather than an educator as if the two can't operate in harmony.

With the recent announcement that Transcona-Springfield School Division will be split up and the Transcona part will be merged with River East School Division, I already feel that River East is not happy about this because the consultant in charge of international education is very competitive and may not want to share her responsibilities with me. I can already foresee the school division finding some reason to end my position. It would mean more profit to them if they don't have to pay my salary as well.

Dear dairy,

I have been reading a lot about various forms of privilege and it made me think back of the course I took with Laara Fitznor in 1995 on anti-racist education. Laara herself is Aboriginal and I think most of us identified with her – at least I did – and some of the experiences she's had. I recall when she first introduced us to Peggy McIntosh's article on White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. There were only a few white students in the course and there were no men but the discussions were heated and lasted almost the entire course. Some students felt defensive and

some felt victimized and several times we were talking past each other instead of listening.

At the time I could totally relate to the privileges I didn't have as an immigrant to Canada but now I am rethinking my perspective on privilege. I know that I felt vindicated that my experiences when I first came to Canada were real, especially when I think back of the way Mr. Hilton treated me. I now recognize that I was experiencing prejudice, discrimination and culture shock – only at the time I did not have a name for it, nor would I have known how to deal with it. In Laara's course, I felt the righteous indignation at my own victimization as an immigrant in Canada but in the last ten years, I've had a lot to think about.

The whole question of privilege is filled with contradictions. On further exploration of other kinds of privileges through articles by Robert Jensen, bell hooks, and other authors, I have to face the fact that I am also implicated in the silence around my own privilege of class and race when I was growing up in Guyana. Growing up in a privileged life in Guyana, I really had no awareness that I was privileged. I simply assumed that everyone lived the way I did and I didn't question that I had more than many others. If my friends were wanting and I had, I would simply share whatever I could and of course I expected that they would do the same for me if ever I needed it. That was the part that I didn't question – that I never seemed to need anything from them, at least nothing material. The idea of privilege was connected to class and race as well but I didn't see that either. Now it's not so easy to be judgemental without looking at myself too.

It reminds me diary of the wedding I went to two years ago for Beatrice's daughter in Toronto. I met Racey there and he was telling his wife of a story about when we first started in Form 1 at Cumming's Lodge in 1965. Apparently I asked him why he came to school barefoot and he said that his parents had no money to buy shoes so the next day I arrived at school with my brother's slippers and told him he could have them. I don't even remember doing that but he said that to him it was the best thing that had ever happened and he never forgot it. I do remember that we had a school dance when I was in Second Form and he didn't have the 10 cents to pay to attend so I gave him the money so he could pay for it. The money was nothing to me but it made him feel that he could do what the other students were doing without embarrassment. Sometimes I think back of those days and realize how very important they were to me. I still keep in touch with many of those friends and we try to have a reunion whenever we can do it but most of us are so scattered around the world that it's hard to meet in person. I use email a lot now and I hope that soon I'll be able to create an alumni website so that we can continue to raise money for books and supplies for Cumming's Lodge. It's funny that I attended Massey and spent years as a parent volunteer in all my children's schools including Massey, but I don't attend the reunions or other alumni events. However I do my utmost to attend anything for Cumming's Lodge or to keep in touch with my friends from there.

2005

Dear diary,

It's been a long time since I shared my world with you and a lot has happened. As I expected, the Transcona-Springfield School Division was split and the Transcona part amalgamated with River East to become the River East-Transcona School Division. I moved there but the next year in an effort to get rid of my position, the board asked me if I wanted to be a home-stay co-ordinator instead of a director at half the salary. I declined and left. At almost the same time that I decided to do that, I got a call from Pam asking me if I would be interested in a half-time term position in her department. She is now the manager of the Program and Curriculum Development department at Red River College. My life has come full circle – again. I was working on a Program Renewal project when I happened to see Jim McKay from Teacher Education and he asked if I would be interested in teaching in the Certificate of Adult Education program – the same one that I graduated from. When I completed my Vocational Teaching Certificate at Red River, I also received a concurrent Certificate of Adult Education. Jim and I were talking one day about access to education and he suggested that I might be interested in piloting some of the CAE courses by streaming video. So I went to talk to Dave in the etv studio and we started streaming some courses. We had to work out some bugs with the first one or two but we are now streaming to some of the regional campuses as well as Assiniboine Community College and University College of the North. That's pretty exciting that students can access courses in their communities so little by little, we are breaking down those barriers. Dave and I work really well together. I come up with my "pie in the sky" ideas about pedagogy and he is a technical wizard so we are making it happen.

Last year Spring I received a call from the Sunrise School Division wanting to hire me to start up an international education program in their school division on a half time basis. Well in fact I was hired as a .3 position for the Aboriginal Education program and .2 for the international program. That amounts to 1 day a week for international. I was supposed to start in September but I ended up starting work full-time in early July without pay and by the time September arrived, I had already done a lot without compensation. How do I get myself into these situations? I attended recruitment fairs in three cities in Brazil and three in Mexico in the Fall and I met with agents and potential host families that I spent no time doing anything in the Aboriginal program. That was unfortunate because government funding was provided specifically for that purpose but it was spent in my salary in international ed which was not funded because it was a for-profit kind of education. Politics again and you'd think I would learn how to play the game but I don't learn some things well so instead of playing that game, I got frustrated that my vision for the program was one again going off in a different direction so I resigned. By that time I had completely wrecked my back from lifting heaving suitcases for many months so I was incapacitated for several months, barely able to walk let alone travel anywhere. With a lot of therapy and going back to my walking, I am recovering.

Dear diary,

This Spring while I was teaching part-time and trying to recuperate from my back injuries, I decided that it was time to go back to school because there is a great deal I want to know about why students do or don't succeed in schools. Since I've been teaching at Red River College, I am really beginning to see how much work still needs to be done if vocational students are to get the best education that they

deserve. I think the teacher education program although it's good has some limitations and I don't think that's just at Red River but includes university teaching. My experiences at the U of M made me realize that they are not preparing vocational teachers sufficiently for classroom experiences. I am also troubled by the way that we as teacher-educators fail to prepare our teachers and that includes me as one of those teacher-educators. I feel like I don't know enough about what I don't know – kind of like the cultural awareness exercise that I do with my students where there are four levels of awareness. Level 1 is you not aware that you are not aware; Level 2 – You are aware that you are not aware; Level 3 – you are aware that you are aware; and Level 4 – you are unaware that you are aware. I think for the most part I am functioning at Level 3 but there are times that I know that I am at level 2. The courses I teach in Diversity and Inclusiveness and on the Foundations of Education the most challenging especially when I raise some issues that teachers either don't want to or can't be bothered to deal with. When I raise topics that are uncomfortable, some of them think that it isn't their responsibility to deal with them. The Diversity course is particularly difficult because some of the teachers have made personal verbal or attacks to me either in the classroom or through assignments. I had to start putting a note in my course outline saying that some of the topics being presented in the course may be controversial but the discussion should always be done respectfully. We have come a long way in Canada but we have so much farther to go.

I used a text called Seeing Ourselves written by Carl James of York University and I contacted him after one of my students said the text and the author was racist. We had a great discussion and I told him that I had actually applied to York's Faculty

of Education to do a PhD but my application was rejected. He told me that I should apply into the Faculty of Environmental Studies because I could design my own program plan because of my background in adult and vocational education. I decided to take his advice and I applied and to my surprise I got in to the Master's program. I'll start in September and Laara Fitznor my professor at the U of M told me that when I go there, I should contact Celia Haig-Brown because she'd be a good person to get to know in the Faculty of Education. My life has taken another turn as if by accident but I think it's serendipity. I've come to believe that things happen in my life for a reason and I am where I am supposed to be because it's the right time.

Dear diary,

I am now enrolled in the Masters of Environmental Studies at York University. It's been quite an adjustment leaving my home in Winnipeg to come here to study and it's going to be expensive to maintain two homes but I got a Graduate Assistantship which is not much but will help pay for some of the expenses. I am lucky to have family and some of my long-time friends from Cumming's Lodge friends living in Toronto so I'll be able to spend some time with them while I'm there.

It just occurred to me that except for hairstyling school in the 70's, none of my post-secondary education has been as a full-time student. It is a great experience. For the first time since I left Guyana at 16, I can focus on school without the obligations of children and I am so excited. My kids are all grown up and have their own lives and I can finally focus all my attention to being a student. Only thing is I left my comfortable house in Winnipeg to come to Toronto to live in student housing on campus. But I like it anyway. I only have to think about me and my

studies. The course work is heavy and we are expected to read about 500 pages each week. I can barely keep up.

I am taking this course called Development Studies and although it is interesting, I have to work really hard to follow some of the themes. Many of the students have a background of undergraduate courses so I am feeling at a distinct disadvantage. I don't think the teacher is interested in what I have to say because he seems to dismiss what I am saying with a nod of the head and then he is on to his next preferred student. Anyway, the course assignment is making me read some texts that I would not have read before so that's good. I wrote a paper on the effects of colonialism on developing countries especially its long lasting effects on Guyanese. I also wrote about the hegemony of the World Bank and the IMF and the impact of funding structural adjustment programs which have now created new generations of underclass Guyanese with a mentality of dependence. I remember as a child how proud we were to be self-sufficient and now Guyana is a place of despair. The Americans have now released secret CIA documents that clearly state that during the 1960's, they helped Burnham to get and stay in power. American foreign policies have changed the lives of so many people and in many cases, not for the better but somehow they are not held accountable. I think back to how Paulo Freire was fighting for the rights of the poor at the same time that Dr. Jagan was fighting for Guyana's right to self-government. I was proud because he was a family friend and our dentist and later became the President in Guyana and in over thirty years of near political exclusion, he never gave up fighting. I read his address to the general assembly in 1995 offering his solution for a New Global Human Order and it sounded so similar to those I heard as a child.

I think back to when Uncle Boysee was imprisoned without a trial because of his efforts to fight for the freedom, liberation and democratic rights of many poor and marginalized people. I am positive that those experiences influenced me at some level. Having listened to political speeches as a child, the messages resonated in me for years and I believe it was part of the reason that I feel compelled to give back in whatever way I can and to be passionate about fighting for the rights of those that cannot fight for themselves. Many of these life lessons make me critically aware that I need to self-interrogate. Sometimes I think that I should be doing more but when I ask myself the question "Why do/don't I get involved?" I think that there is a certain amount of discomfort in the answers. Asking and answering the question means that I have to do more than care. I have to get involved.

2006

Dear diary,

It's now the end of February and I am in total shock. I went back to Winnipeg all excited to celebrate Dad's 75th birthday and I got the shock of my life. Dad told us after his birthday pooja that he has cancer of the lacrimal sac. I had no idea what a lacrimal sac was but I found out it was the tear duct in his eyes. Who gets cancer there? It's an extremely rare form of cancer and it has already advanced to stage 4 which is the worse stage. It's also invaded his nasal bones. He may have to have his eye removed but we are trying to look for some alternative treatments. I spoke to the Graduate program Director and asked if I could finish my semester early and I will go back to Winnipeg. I am not sure if I will be able to continue my studies so for

now, I am expecting to finish the three courses that I am taking and I'll see where I go from here.

Dear diary,

Dad had his surgery at the beginning of June and he is doing well. The surgery was more than 9 hours and he lost his right eye and part of his nose. He recovered and that gave me the opportunity to continue my summer semester. I applied in the Spring to World University Services to do an internship in Botswana and decided that I would only go if dad recovered from his surgery enough for me not to worry about him. I spent two months over there and it was a great learning experience for me. I went with some preconceived ideas of what I would contribute and what I would leave behind and I intended to do my major paper for my Masters on preparing students for international/intercultural internships but my experiences at the training centre led me to do my final paper on sustainability education in the context of technical and vocational education using popular education strategies. Chris Cavanagh was one of my first teachers in the Faculty of Environmental Studies and I thought he was so brilliant and the best teacher I ever had, that I asked him to be my supervisor for my final paper. He really is totally awesome and very down-to-earth and compassionate while dad was ill.

The five semesters I spent at York were really very good. I learned a lot about popular education which I think I was already doing but didn't have a name for. I was attending a workshop for graduate students and one of the topics was about self-reflexivity. I was so intrigued by the phrase which I had never heard before. While I was listening to the speaker, I could feel in my bones that I could

finally name what I felt was and is missing from technical and vocational teacher education. I incorporated that into my major paper and Chris and the other committee members said that it was an excellent representation of self-reflexivity. As life would have it, Celia Haig-Brown was at the workshop and I introduced myself and told her that I was interested in doing a PhD but didn't know how I should go about doing that so that I don't get rejected again. She gave me some good advice and I applied to FES.

2007

Dear diary,

I applied into the PhD program at York's Faculty of Environmental Studies and decided that if I didn't get in, then I wouldn't pursue it anymore because it wasn't meant to happen. Ray Rogers was on the selection committee for FES and he said that I was one of the strongest candidates this year. So good karma is working once again. I got in and even received an entrance scholarship.

Then bad karma hit again. Maybe good comes with bad. In January after heavy bouts of radiation, dad's cancer spread to his lymph glands and he had to have surgery again. He was about to start radiation at the beginning of March just as I was finishing my major paper and getting ready for my final oral exam and his doctor told me that his cancer was terminal and he had 6-18 months. That felt like a kick in the head for me. I passed my oral exam and decided to move back to Winnipeg. If he was still okay by the Fall, I would start but if I was more needed in Winnipeg, I would defer my studies. My parents were pretty excited about my

acceptance into the PhD program. I remember when my dad used to tell me that I can't save the world. Now he is saying that he knows I can make a difference and I have to believe that I should at least try. My Dad wanted to go to Guyana so I accompanied him and my mom. It may be the last time that he can go. I went to visit Cumming's Lodge school. We raised some money through alumni events but there is still so much to do. There are several alumni who are in positions of power in the government and other organizations that can contribute or at least oversee some renovations to the school but there is this sense of apathy or don't care attitude that it frustrates me when I talked to a few of them. The computer lab that we helped build is awful. It's padlocked and dusty because there is little infrastructure to support the lab. The "new" science room had not a scrap of furniture let alone equipment. The only thing evident was a piece of paper on the floor. Even the school yard that was used as a recreation area for the students is in such a state of disrepair, that the students have no place to except for the rows of food vendors selling junk food on the actual school property. I came back disheartened but still thinking that we can do something. The students succeed in spite of the limited resources so there is so much potential for success if they had a bit more. I contacted the alumni when I returned to Canada and they committed to doing more to help.

2008

Dear diary,

I am into week two of my second term of my PhD studies. Last term was very hectic and sometimes I feel like I am drowning in work. I just finished doing some

work for the Canadian Trucking Human Resource Council and that took a lot of time for which I have little of these days. It's my way of earning some money beyond what my scholarship provides. I am trying to juggle life again as a full-time student in Toronto worrying about how dad is doing in Winnipeg. He has a very positive attitude toward his cancer and is fighting hard not to let it beat him. So far he is succeeding beyond our best expectations.

It's so stressful being a student that I wish I could just be a student having only to worry about my studies. I have no free time and I am constantly worrying that I am still in school and not contributing to our finances or that I am not in Winnipeg if my dad gets worse or that I am not there to support my mom. My PhD scholarship is paying for my studies but there is little left over to contribute to our savings account. Robin doesn't understand why I worry about this but it is more a point of principle than any pressure from him. I think as a partner in the marriage, I am obliged to contribute more than I am doing but he says that when he was young and building his career, I stayed home and took care of the children so now it's my turn. It's the guilt of being a woman of my generation I think. We are socialized to think that we are not to ask for or expect anything and we are selfish if we do anything other than what is expected. Those experiences as a child that I spent so much time resisting must have influenced me anyway.

Okay, now I can tell you about this course I am auditing called Feminist Perspectives. The readings make me think about how in many societies, gender roles are culture-bound and often defined by religious and cultural beliefs and expectations. Girls and women are generally the ones who are constrained by these. My own gender identity has been formed by many of my childhood experiences so

that's why I think that although I contribute in other ways to the household, I worry that if it's not financial, it is not worth anything. Rationally, I know that all the years spent as a stay-at-home mom with the kids in their activities and, involved in the parent teacher associations and in community volunteering were meaningful, but society doesn't measure women's work by those measures. It has to be financial. It's surprising to me sometimes that in many ways I think of myself as a feminist and yet I can feel the guilt that often comes with that "liberation." How liberated am I if I can feel guilty for things that are beyond my control or for wanting an education?

Dear diary,

I had to make a difficult decision last month. I am giving up my PhD funding and going back to Winnipeg but will try to complete my studies from there. It's been very stressful being a full-time student living 2000 miles away from my family and worrying about dad's terminal cancer. I call my parents every day but I am finding that having to deal with emotional issues from Toronto is too difficult without the support of my husband and family nearby. I need to be closer to them because I don't know how long he has left. The doctors gave him 6-18 months to live and it's more than 12 months already. In all this time, I have not once thought of giving up my studies because in many ways, it's what keeps me balanced – even when it's a lot of effort. I worked so hard for that, and I am happy being a student but I am concerned that my studies will be adversely affected. I think I'll miss the intellectual discussions and the activities on campus but emotionally I am better off in Winnipeg.

I have already committed to teaching two courses at Red River in the summer - Diversity and Inclusiveness and Testing and Evaluation and the D & I course at

Assiniboine Community College in Brandon. The D I& I one is a challenge because of the topics that we cover but I really believe that it is even more necessary given that there are larger numbers of Aboriginal and International enrolled at the college. I am excited about applying some of the learning that I did in the MES program. I want to introduce more popular education strategies but I also want to introduce it to faculty in a way that will make them appreciate that student success is contingent on teachers being committed to being the best teachers they can be. It's my perception but there may very well be published evidence of that. That particular course has taught me a lot about being a teacher but, more importantly, that students, - in this case teachers - have their biases, stereotypes and prejudices just like anyone else and they don't leave that outside the classroom. I've even had to put a note in my course outline about the controversial nature of some of the topics and that discussions should be grounded in respect for everyone's opinions which means that students can disagree with someone else's ideas but personal attacks will not be tolerated. I had to do this because my past experience with teaching this course where I had teachers making personal attacks to me either through classroom discussion, in online course chat rooms, and in their assignments and journal entries. Disturbing as that may seem, these are people that I work with. I'll see if this year is different. Brandon's population is far less diverse than is Winnipeg's but they have a large number of new immigrants who are being brought there to work in the meat processing plant. They also have a large number of migrant farm workers who are part of the community at different times of the year so that should be an interesting perspective.

2009

Dear diary,

Wow. It's been many months since I last wrote to you. I am now working as a Curriculum Consultant in the Program and Curriculum Development department at Red River College. I got the position last November and within two hours of my first day, I was asked to go to Chile to teach the Foundations course to a group of Mapuche teachers in Temuco. I was pretty excited about that because even though my Spanish is only at a conversational level, I went with an RRC instructor who can speak Spanish but does not know the content of the Foundations course. RRC has a partnership with an organization called CONADI to deliver the complete Certificate in Adult Education program to a cohort of 9 teachers. The partnership is intended to help educate Mapuche teachers so that they will then have the necessary skills to live and work in their communities. I went back in March to teach Course Implementation but this time I have a local translator who worked quite well. I also graded their portfolios which was an independent study course. So in all, I did three courses with them. It was a great experience for me and I had an opportunity to visit each community that the teachers live and work in. They are all doing such remarkable work even with limited resources as is the case for many such communities. The students liked that I was from Guyana and that I could understand and relate to their politics which was in many ways similar to the Guyanese experience. Seven of the nine teachers completed the program and graduated so that's a great success rate. The other two have only one course each to complete so I do hope that they get it done soon. Each of the graduates will get two diplomas – one from Red River College and the other from the University of Atacama in Chile. That's exciting! The college is pursuing other such opportunities in other regions of

Chile and Brazil and I hope that I might get the opportunity to work with teachers from other countries. That's the value of international education that I envisioned and even with some project glitches, I would like to think it was a success and that the effects will go beyond the 7 graduates.

The work I am doing as a curriculum consultant is very rewarding and I work with three colleagues who are very committed to quality assurance in programming at the college. My PhD studies support this role and as such my readings and writings will be directly beneficial to my work in the department. We all have our own areas of expertise so we complement each other very well. At the institutional level, I think there are some opportunities to affect change in my role as a consultant and I am still teaching in the CAE program which allows me to affect change at the classroom level. If I can just add a few more hours to each day, I can get me studies done and manage my family obligations.

Dad had to get some more radiation but he is hanging in there. It's almost two and a half years since he got his terminal diagnosis but he is still fighting hard. Last year he wanted to go to India so we went for three and a half weeks. He managed quite well even though I was worried that he would get sick. The only place left that he wants to see is the Panama Canal but I don't think he'll be strong enough to make that one. He says that his dream is to see me graduate and he can go but that's not an incentive for me to finish early. Talk about being between a rock and a hard place. I had to switch to part-time studies at the beginning of January but I have not quit so that's good. I only need to find the time to work full-time and study full-time. Haha, that should be as easy as ending world hunger. At least I passed my first comprehensive and I am just finishing revisions to the second one. I've done

most of the reading for the third so I'll organize the literature to start writing soon. I'm making some headway, albeit slow.

2010

Dear diary,

Well I've made it this far – much farther than I thought was possible. I finished my three comps and had my dissertation proposal exam at the end of June. I am satisfied with my progress so far. My committee members guided me for the last three years and I can now use the three comps as the first three chapters in my dissertation. Susan Hornshaw has been a tremendous help to me. I was introduced to her at the beginning of my PhD studies by Alison who thought that Susan might be a good resource and perhaps even serve on my committee. She has a lot of experience in both universities and colleges so she could totally relate to my research. Although I have not yet met her in person, I really value her input because she has a good grasp of what happens in colleges and we've had some good conversations about those experiences. I finally received approval from York to conduct a series of focus groups with instructors at RRC but I need to get it from RRC. I hope that comes soon and I can get on with the rest of my dissertation. The last two weeks have been incredibly stressful. My dad's condition is rapidly deteriorating and I'm being pulled in every direction right now. I may not be writing you for some time but you have always been there for me and I know that you'll continue to be there when I need you.

By the way, someone sent me a link to a BBC documentary about the events of Guyana in the 1960's. It's interesting to listen to it because through extensive research to prepare the documentary, the United States and Britain are directly implicated in the events of those days. I am sure it changed the course of many people's lives in Guyana and makes me even more aware that things shouldn't be taken at face value even or especially the education we receive. Education is political and someone needs to speak for the dispossessed.

2011

Dear diary,

I have neglected you terribly. It has been quite a busy and stressful year. Juggling family responsibilities with full-time work and almost full-time studies has almost overtaxed my planning and time management skills. A lot has happened in the last few months but at least the events have not completely derailed my studies. After having a setback with a proposed focus group facilitator, I had to find someone else to do it. RRC's condition for doing the focus groups at the college was that I was not to be directly involved in asking the questions. I scheduled two focus groups in March and April but my dad passed shortly after the second one was done. I also decided to do an online survey asking the same questions to other instructors. In the meantime, Mom moved in with us and with trying to get her settled in and dealing with funeral arrangements, disposing of their furniture, selling their house and managing their finances, I did nothing with summarizing the focus groups until early July. Then I ploughed right in and had that done in about 6 weeks. The instructors

had a lot of useful things to say about their teaching experiences which were mostly similar to mine.

I am looking forward to doing the analysis of the data but there are so many thoughts going around in my head, that I can't seem to focus on what I need to say. I think I have to write it down so that I can see it on paper. I often find myself lying in bed thinking of what the end of the dissertation might mean for me and whether the findings will make any difference. I have to believe that if it doesn't in the immediate future, it will at a later date.

Dear diary,

It is now a few days after Christmas and I have sent off my final chapter to Celia. It has been a very hectic time this month. With work and writing pretty much every day and most weekends this month, I am mentally drained. I feel that I have finally put in writing much of what I have been living in the last three decades. It feels like my life has been leading to this but I still feel there is so much more left to do. I have been asked a number of times in the last few months about my plans for the future and what I am going to do when I've completed my studies. I have not really given much thought about what I will do at the end of my studies because I've never really thought of the dissertation as the end of anything. It is indeed a milestone but I think that in spite of the challenges of working in and studying in technical/vocational education, I think that my experiences have made me who I am. I am looking forward to the next stage of my life, whatever it brings. I'll let you know how my exam goes and I want to thank you for always being a faithful and patient friend.

2012

Dear diary,

It is now two months into this year and I now have an exam date for my oral defence. It's set for April 4 and will be in Toronto. It's almost the end of this four and a half year journey of scholarship and learning and although I am looking forward to the completion of this part of my studies, I am wondering what I will do next. Family and friends keep asking what I will do next as if the dissertation was the final destination. If I look at my life that way, it would have meant that everything I have done till now was meaningless but in my lifetime, I have learned so much and still feel like I have a lot more to learn.

I do hope that the recommendations in the dissertation will have some meaning but even if no other person picks it up and does anything else with it, I will continue to do all that I can for teachers and ultimately, students. I have to believe in the goodness of humankind because that will make the work that I do have some meaning. Every person can make a difference – however small – and together we really can change the world – one person at a time.

CHAPTER 5: RED RIVER COLLEGE AS A CASE STUDY

CHAPTER 5: RED RIVER COLLEGE AS A CASE STUDY

Introduction

Context of Research

Research Design

Summary of Data

**Classroom-based questions
(Micro-politics)**

**Institution-based
questions (Meso-politics)**

**Government Involvement
(Macro-politics)**

Conclusion

**Satisfaction with being a
vocational teacher**

**Challenges with teaching
(non-technical)**

**Factors that contribute to
challenges**

Support for teaching

Supports for students

**Support from
immediate supervisors**

**Support from college
administrators**

Funding

Certification

Job creation

Education awareness

Political interests

Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide a summary of two focus groups and an online survey that was conducted with technical and vocational teachers from Red River College. Since the participants self-selected for the focus groups and online survey, any reason that I could provide for their participation would only be speculation, as I did not personally speak to the participants either before, during or after the focus groups to protect their identity as per the criteria for my Research Ethics approval. I do know, however, based on my work as a curriculum consultant and teacher educator at the college that many instructors teaching in the trades have teaching schedules that do not always permit them to take the time to participate in such activities, especially during a lunchtime session. Lunchtime is less than one hour so instructors would have to make alternate arrangements for their students if they (instructors) want to participate in lunch hour activities lasting longer than one hour. Timetabling of classes are often in six hour blocks of time, so when instructors are with their students, it is an all-day event which is different from traditional school timetabling of one to three hour blocks of classes. When I deliver workshops on any number of teaching related topics (e.g. Creating Rubrics, Creating/Re-writing Good Learning Outcomes, Making the most of your Course Outline), many instructors cannot attend because the workshops take place either over lunch or during the teaching day when instructors cannot get release time.

I considered conducting the focus groups during evening sessions, but after speaking to the respective departmental Chairs, I was advised that I would likely not get any participants because after a long six-hour day, many teachers would not want to stay for an additional ninety minutes to two hours to participate in a focus

group and then have to face heavy traffic on the way home. So it may be that the teachers who agreed to participate in the focus groups had some time in their schedule that permitted them to attend, or that they made alternate arrangements with their students ahead of time so that they could attend. I will speculate from some of the comments that were made regarding focus group questions, that some participants valued the opportunity to be heard. In my case working as a hairstylist, I had no voice because the profession was considered "soft and fluffy," requiring no particular academic skills or talents, and later as a vocational teacher, in another hierarchy, my voice was again lost within the academic community. After more than twenty years as a teacher and teacher-educator, I cannot recall a single instance when I was invited – generally or specifically - to participate in a qualitative research study where the topic was vocational teaching.

Instructors were asked about their perceptions and understandings of the macro-, meso-, and micro-politics of technical and vocational education. The chapter is organized into six sections. First is a context for the research that was conducted at Red River College, as well as a brief history of the college and reasons the research was undertaken at this institution. The second section addresses the research design including methodologies, the researcher's role, ethics approval, gaining entry into the research setting and the data collection methods. Sections three, four, five and six provide summaries of the TVE teacher's perspective about how they make sense of and operationalize federal and provincial policies and procedures in the classroom. The main topics for feedback based on the questions that participants were asked were:

1. What do teachers like most about being a TVE teacher?

2. At the micro level, what are some of the cultural, social and individual challenges for TVE teaching?
3. What are some of the factors that teachers attribute to the challenges they face?
4. What kind of supports and resources would teachers find most helpful in preparing them for the challenges they identified?
5. At the meso level, what are the teachers' understandings of the lexicon of TVE such as Competency-Based Education, mastery-learning and Outcomes-Based education? Which are educational philosophies mandated by provincial governments and how are they operationalized in the classroom?
6. At the macro level, what are teachers' understandings of the role of governments in TVE?

Context of Research

Red River College as the research site

Red River College's teacher education program holds a unique place among educational institutions in Canada. It is the only vocational teacher preparation program in Canada offered at a college (to be distinguished from in-house teacher preparation programs offered by other colleges as part of their faculty professional development), rather than a university, where the teaching credentials are recognized by appropriate credentializing bodies related to provincial teacher certification. The teaching credentials allow vocational teachers to teach in the trade for which they have expertise (for a more detailed explanation of teacher certification

in Manitoba, see Chapter 1.6). My interest in conducting research on this program is both personal and professional (For more detail, see Chapter 4).

History of RRC's Teacher Education Program

The history of Red River College spans more than seven decades. Established as the Industrial Vocational Training Centre, it provided training for unskilled and unemployed youths. Its success led to federal funding through the Department of Labour. From 1939 to 1948, the college received funding under the federal-provincial War Emergency Training Program and later, for the training of war veterans (for a detailed review of federal legislation and funding for vocational programs, see Chapter 1). By 1948, the college underwent a name change to Manitoba Technical Institute as the first post-secondary college in Manitoba, but the focus remained on vocational, business, and industrial training. The 1960's was a time of tremendous shortage of skilled workers so federal and provincial funding was available for new and expanded facilities for vocational education. In 1963, the college had new facilities and another name change to Manitoba Institute of Technology and continued to add programs in a number of areas (Red River College, 2010).

In 1968, the college had yet another name change to the Manitoba Institute of Applied Arts, and that was also the year that the Teacher Education Division was started, where teachers could be trained as business, industrial arts or vocational teachers (Manitoba Institute of Applied Arts Calendar, 1968-1969:127-130). The vocational teacher education program was a one-year program and was established to meet the provincial certification requirements for Vocational Industrial teachers, but much of the program content was focused on skill requirements for industrial

arts, although the entrance requirement was completion of a high school vocational program or junior matriculation (graduation with a Grade 11 instead of a Grade 12 diploma), a journeyman's [sic] certificate, or satisfactory trades training or experience plus three years' experience at the journeyman's level. If graduates agreed to teach in Manitoba for at least one year, the tuition fee was waived. By 1969, the college underwent another name change to Red River Community College and became part of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

In 1975, the teacher education program had a new set of entrance criteria, including high school graduation with 15 credits in an academic program, and the rest of the credits from a vocational program, or mature student status, or journeyman's [sic] certificate, three years of approved work experience after journeyman's certification, and a personal interview. This was also the first year that an articulation agreement between the University of Manitoba and Red River Community College (RRCC) allowed graduates from RRCC's program to be granted up to eight credits toward the four-year Bachelor of Education program at the University of Manitoba (Red River Community College, 1975/77:48-49).

The outcome of a tri-college agreement between Assiniboine Community College, Keewatin Community College (now University College of the North) and Red River Community College in 1977 was the start of the Certificate in Adult Education (CAE) program. The reason behind offering the CAE in the first place was that college instructors, who were civil servants and therefore expected to work twelve-months a year, made the case that in order to be better teachers, they needed time for teacher professional development: their teaching year should be the same as that of public school teachers.

The main goals of the CAE program were to provide pedagogical knowledge to teachers, to provide core and special courses to qualify teachers for the Certificate in Adult Education (CAE) or a Vocational Industrial High School Certificate and to encourage instructors to be innovative with their teaching practices (Red River College Certificate in Adult Education Handbook, n.d.) The CAE certification was tied to the provincial collective agreement regarding instructor accreditation, and non-completion was grounds for dismissal or denial of wage increases for existing teachers (Manitoba Department of Continuing Education and Manpower, 1977:1-8). In order for a college instructor who completed the CAE program to have the credits transferred to the University of Manitoba's teacher education program, additional vocational education courses had to be completed. That meant that an instructor received two credentials – a Certificate in Adult Education and A Vocational Teaching Certificate, as was my case. By 1997, based on the recommendations from the Shapiro Report, the joint college-university agreement was moved from the University of Manitoba to the University of Winnipeg (a detailed explanation was provided in Chapter 1).

Research Design

There is much literature about the advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative or quantitative research methodologies when conducting research. This dissertation will not debate the advantages or disadvantages of one over the other, and as Carl Rogers (1985:7) noted, there is clearly no one best method for all investigations: "One must choose the means or model best adapted to the particular question being asked." Given that this study is seeking instructors' perceptions

about the work they do, I, as the researcher, am trying to understand how instructors make meaning of their lived experiences, both broadly and deeply.

Although a great deal of the research conducted in TVE is quantitative, for the purpose of this research, qualitative methodology was purposefully chosen for a number of reasons, some of which are outlined by Merriam (as cited in Cresswell 1994:145):

- Qualitative researchers are **concerned primarily with process**, rather than outcomes or products.
- Qualitative researchers are **interested in meaning** - how people make sense of their lives, experiences and their structures of the world.
- The qualitative **researcher is the primary instrument** for data collection, and analysis. Data are mediated through this instrument rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines.
- Qualitative research **involves fieldwork**. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behaviour in its natural setting.
- Qualitative research **is descriptive** in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures.
- The process of qualitative research **is inductive** in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories for details.

Patton (1990:13) states that "qualitative methods permit the evaluator to study selected issues in depth and in detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth,

openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry.” Patton further states that qualitative research also “reveal[s] ‘respondents’ depth of emotions, the way they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences and their basic perceptions” (ibid:24). Hiles (2001) notes that there are challenges in doing qualitative research - one of which is convincing the wider scientific community of the seriousness of the research.

Sometimes the small number of people participating in a research study may be considered a limitation because the findings may not be generalizable or transferable over larger populations, but as Harper and Huh (2007:5) posit, “there is a presumption that if data come from only small, non-randomized segments of a population, the results cannot represent the experiences of others.” They cite an example of eight black undergraduate students’ feelings of alienation on their campus and state that even though those findings may not represent the majority of same-race peers, the perspectives of the eight students should not be dismissed.

Because of RRC’s unique teacher education program, it is less important that the findings be transferable to a larger population than it is to use the findings of this study to improve TVE teacher preparation at Red River College. In addition, a case can be made that the findings from this study, if not generalizable to larger populations at the college, can have relevance to other Canadian colleges for at least three important reasons:

1. Many TVE colleges in Canada function in a similar manner regarding hiring teachers, that is to say, the primary reason for being hired to teach in the first place is one’s expertise and currency in a particular trade; teaching

experience is secondary or desirable; and, teacher training, often in-house, happens concurrently with teaching load.

2. Program content and delivery are similar across many Canadian college programs. (This comment is based on my experience as a consultant conducting ongoing environmental scans of similar programs in many subject areas across Canada).
3. Legislatively, many applied colleges across Canada access the same federal funds that help shape TVE (a detailed explanation was of major pieces of federal legislation impacting TVE was provided in Chapter 1), and provincially at the educational policy level, many TVE programs are delivered by Outcomes-Based Education (see a review of literature pertaining to OBE in Chapter 2).

What this means is that the issues identified in the questions that were asked to focus group participants and web-based respondents are germane to many TVE teachers and institutions. Donmoyer (as cited by Harper and Kuh, 2007:7) states that there are alternative ways of conceptualizing generalizability, and the concern should be around the individual rather than the more positivist presentation of findings in aggregates which represent no person. The reasons given above are at least three ways in which transferability can be conceptualized over larger groups.

Research Methodologies

From my experience of technical and vocational education both as a tradesperson and a teacher, I believe that TVE has its own sub-culture within the culture of education, but that sub-culture has rarely been articulated or even

recognized in literature. This study is an attempt to document that culture from the voices of the practitioners, including me. Choosing the appropriate research design was an important factor when preparing to conduct the research. Mason (1996:4) states that qualitative research is grounded in a particular philosophical position which is concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced. The data generation methods should be flexible and sensitive to the social context in which the data are produced, and the analysis of such data should be holistic, based on understandings of complexity, detail and context. Patton (1990:73) notes that "qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases ... selected *purposefully*," which he defines as information-rich cases from which a great deal can be learned about the issues of central importance to the purpose of the research.

With the above points in mind, after careful consideration, I place the research design under the umbrella of heuristic inquiry. Located within the larger framework of phenomenological inquiry that considers the personal experience and insights of the researcher, one major distinction between the two is that in phenomenology, detachment from the phenomenon being investigated is encouraged, while heuristics emphasizes connectedness and relationships (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985:5). Patton (1990:71) states that there are two important elements that must be present in heuristic inquiry: 1) The researcher *must* have personal experience and intense interest in the phenomenon under study, and 2) Other researchers must share the *intensity* of experience. Moustakas and Douglas (as cited by Patton, 1990:71) affirm that "[h]euristics is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with

experience, not behaviour.” This approach allows me as the researcher to acknowledge my subjectivities with the research questions. Moustakas (1990:14) posits that “[i]n heuristic research, the investigator must have had a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated...the heuristic researcher has undergone the experience in a vital, intense, and full way.” In my case, the experiences in the field of TVE have been more than thirty-six years. Moustakas goes on to note that:

...the heuristic process is not one that can be hurried or timed... It demands the total presence, honesty, maturity, and integrity of a researcher who not only strongly desires to know and understand but is willing to commit endless hours of sustained immersion and focused concentration on one central question, to risk the opening of wounds and passionate concerns, and to undergo personal transformation that exists as a possibility in every heuristic journey (ibid:14).

Sela-Smith (2002:53-69) questions Moustakas’ six phases of heuristic research (Initial engagement, Immersion, Incubation, Illumination, Explication, Creative Synthesis) by proposing that his first two phases meet the criteria of heuristic enquiry, but after examining 28 research documents from authors claiming to use his methods, as well as re-reading his text, she concluded that Moustakas’ was really conducting phenomenological research because he relied on participants’ experiences rather than his own. Realizing that much of the research conducted in TVE is quantitative, and anticipating that the validity of this research may be questioned, I am also acknowledging that in order to satisfy quantitative researchers’ questions about rigor, I am triangulating my evidence by relying on participant input

as one source of feedback and my personal experiences as another, rather than using my experiences as the only method. Sela-Smith refers to this as *heuristic self-search inquiry*, where the researcher:

...surrenders to the feeling in an experience and does not know what will be learned at the time the inquiry is begun. There are no hypotheses or expectations regarding outcomes, no hope to confirm or refute a proposition. There is no attempt to isolate variables or observe the effects one set of variables has on other variables within the research. The purpose is to allow the formation of new awareness and connections or to see the self or the world from a different perspective and, thus, reinterpret meanings or significance. There is no controlling the process; in fact, the opposite must take place. It is in this surrender into feeling-the-feelings and experiencing-the-experience that allows the self-as-researcher to enter heuristic self-search inquiry (ibid: 83).

She refers to heuristic self-search inquiry as a "return to the internal perspective... There must be an acceptance of surrender that opens to transformation that can impact the individual, society and all of humankind (ibid:85)." Borrowing from her, if I want my outer world to change, I must search internally to discover what caused me to create the external experience, why it is important that these research questions be explored, and further, why they should or do matter to me. (for a more detailed autoethnographic account of my passion, opening of old wounds, commitment of endless hours, and continuing self-reflexivity in the field of TVE, see Chapter 4).

Researcher's role

My role as the most suitable primary instrument for data collection is three-fold. Firstly, my experience over thirty-five years as a tradesperson gives me the expertise of an expert worker, much like the focus group participants. I, like them, am a journeyman tradesperson with many years of experience in hairstyling before becoming a teacher. Secondly, my experiences as a trades teacher makes the issues under study relevant for me as these were my experiences when I was teaching in the trades, knowing that there was a great deal more to my teaching than technical skills, but not having the sophisticated language to articulate what it was. Thirdly, my current professional work as a consultant and teacher-educator of technical and vocational teachers in the college where the study is being conducted puts me in a position of being able to identify some of the issues, as well as potential study participants.

An equally important consideration along with the previous three points is my self-reflexivity when exploring the research questions. Mason (1996:165) notes that self-reflexivity in research is not new, gaining prominence in feminist research, and its importance to qualitative research is that the research process is constructed out of situated and contextual decisions and actions, and there are no research blueprints to follow as there are in quantitative research. Therefore the researcher is a practitioner, taking an active role in the research. In other words, the researcher should always be willing to ask herself the difficult questions and be willing to question why or how her decisions are made and for what purpose. That includes analysis and interpretation of data. I would like to make a clear distinction about me being a reflexive practitioner rather than a reflective practitioner in this research

process. As a reflective practitioner I act first and reflect when the experience is over. As a reflexive practitioner, what Freire referred to as *praxis* happens while I am in the experience, and I am always cognizant of my location within the research, including the ethics of my research (beyond the obvious institutional ethics review process around issues of trust, confidentiality, anonymity, and potential unequal power relationships), and what the research findings and subsequent dissertation mean to me as well as the focus group participants in terms of our contributions to academic knowledge, as well as our professional lives.

Research Ethics Approval

Prior to the start of data collection for the study, ethics approval had to be granted from York University where I am a doctoral student, as well as Red River College where the study data were to be collected. The potential focus group questions were submitted in July 2010 for approval to York University. The approval was granted without issue at the end of October, 2010. The same documentation was then submitted to Red River College in mid-November 2010. The Ethics Board of the college had some concerns regarding my role as the researcher, given my work as a consultant at the college, and my position as an adjunct faculty in the teacher education program. After a brief discussion with the Director of Research and Planning at the college, I addressed the board's concerns by adding the following conditions to the research protocol (personal communication to the Research Ethics Board (REB) at RRC, November 30, 2010):

- I will hire an experienced external professional consultant to conduct the focus group sessions which I will not be attending. This will protect the

anonymity of the participants. My research will not be compromised if the data is collected by such a consultant.

- Potential participants for the focus groups will be instructors who hold journey person certification, as well as those who teach in technical programs at the college. Those may include instructors from departments such as Civil Engineering Technology, Construction, Aerospace, Transportation, Math and Science, Electrical/Electronic Engineering Technology, Hospitality, Culinary Arts, and Mechanical, Manufacturing and Communications.
- Potential participants will be contacted by email by me requesting their participation in the focus groups. They will be asked to respond directly to the independent consultant as to whether they are able to participate.

In addition to the conditions that I offered, I also removed myself from any teaching assignments for the 2010/2011 school year. The Board agreed to the conditions that I offered, and at the beginning of December 2010, an experienced, external facilitator agreed to conduct the focus groups in early February 2011. By the beginning of March 2011, another facilitator had to be hired because of unavailability of the first one. The focus group questions and moderator's guide - previously prepared when I was intending to conduct the focus groups myself - had to be revised for use by the external facilitator.

Gaining entry into the research setting

Neuman (as cited by McLean, 2005:125-135) outlines a number of factors to be considered when doing field research, including gaining entry into the site, negotiating the roles of the researcher and participants, building rapport with the participants, disclosing personal or professional information about the researcher

while, and in my case, after collecting the data. Gaining entry into the research setting was less of a challenge, given my work at the college. I was a 1991 graduate of the teacher education program which I was researching; I am an adjunct faculty member in the same program, and my full-time position as a curriculum consultant brings me in contact with many faculty, although not in a supervisory relationship, nor one in which I need to make any judgements about the quality of their work. I had access to all staff email (which I had already sought approval to use through the REB) when contacting potential participants. One factor that I believe made a significant difference in the ease with which I could gain credibility was the fact that I was a Red Seal holder (a detailed explanation of the Red Seal was provided in Chapter 1), and as such I was seen as sharing similar experiences as the focus group participants. In my early years as a trades teacher, I knew few vocational teachers at the undergraduate level, let alone one doing doctoral studies who still remained a practitioner in the field (in my case, hairstyling).

The other important factor was that the research was focused not on student outcomes, success, graduation or employment rates, but on the experiences of the teachers themselves. The participants were told in the invitation letter that the findings of the research would provide a foundation of my doctoral dissertation and the information may lead a greater understanding of the challenges they, as TVE teachers, face and in so doing, become a useful resource for enhancing classroom practice.

Focus group facilitation

In order to address any concerns from Red River College's Research Ethics Board regarding my positions as curriculum consultant and adjunct faculty at the college, and any potential for unequal power relationships prior to, during, and after the data collection, an external focus group facilitator was hired to conduct the focus groups and administer an online survey based on the same questions. The facilitator was given some background information about the purpose of the research, and many questions were answered during a face-to-face meeting and emails. After several iterations of the focus group questions to ensure that the meanings were clear, a facilitator's guide was prepared.

Email letters of invitation were sent to approximately one hundred technical and vocational instructors inviting them to participate in one of three focus groups of 6-8 instructors. The letter explained who I was, the purpose of the research, why the instructors were selected to participate (because they are either technical or vocational teachers), the length of the focus group session, how the findings would be reported, and critical information that the potential participants were to contact the external facilitator directly and they were not to contact me directly, as this was done to protect their anonymity and avoid potential issues around unequal power relationships in the future. Ten instructors responded to the facilitator to say that they would participate in one of the focus groups. Two focus groups were conducted with a total of eight participants (five in the first group and three in the second group).

A similar letter of invitation was sent out to approximately one hundred technical and vocational instructors inviting them to participate in a web-based version of the same survey. The letter stated that the survey was anonymous, would be available for 11 days and provided a link to the survey site. The web-based survey questions were modified slightly, and the aggregate data were collected and compiled by the focus group facilitator who administered the survey on my behalf.

Data collection methods

Red River College has over 110 full-time programs such as Academic Preparation, Health and Applied Sciences, Hospitality, Business, Creative Arts, and Community Services, but since this study investigated the perspectives of a particular group of teachers, only those instructors teaching in technical and vocational programs were invited to participate in both the web-based survey and the focus groups, providing for a closed sample.

The value of personal experience is recognized as a legitimate and credible qualitative research methodology, but in order to address any potential questions from quantitative researchers who may still question the credibility of such data, I triangulated the evidence from this study by providing additional data from focus groups, and online surveys. Chapter 4 provides documentation of my personal experiences with the questions that were asked to the participants. Online and web-based surveys provide additional perspectives from a large sampling of the population on particular topics, but do not have the same depth as a focus group would have. According to Sue & Ritter (2007:13), the value of web-based surveys is the economy, speed and anonymity with which they can be conducted as well as

their ability to ask sensitive questions. The disadvantages are that researchers have to have the appropriate software to conduct the research; participants have to have access to a computer, and they may abandon the survey before completing it. In the case of Red River College, all instructors have an email address and are expected to use it as the main form of college communication. Focus groups are used depending on the purpose of the study in order to get a deeper understanding of the issues identified. Participants are generally selected because they have a certain amount of homogeneity based on common experiences – in this case, they all teach in vocational programs. Unlike people who respond to a web-based survey by answering only the questions asked without seeing other comments, focus group participants can build on each other's ideas, or disagree on perceptions of particular topics. As Krueger and Casey (2000:83) state: "the intent of focus groups is not to infer but to understand, not to generalize but to determine the range, and not to make statements about the population but to provide insights about how people in the groups perceive a situation."

Prior to the start of the focus groups, the facilitator asked each participant to use a pseudonym for the duration of the session and not to mention the specific program they were teaching in. After reading the Informed Consent letter, they all gave their verbal consent to participate in the research. The pseudonym and verbal consent were done to ensure their anonymity. They were told that the questions that they would be asked to respond to were not focused on their technical expertise but rather, on the non-technical aspects of their teaching; there were no right or wrong answers; and they should be as forthright as possible regarding their experiences, ideas and opinions.

Summary of data

Two focus groups were conducted with a total of eight participants – five in the first group and three in the second group. A total of twelve participants completed in the web-based survey. Open-ended questions were used in both the focus groups and the web-based survey. The main questions were divided into three general areas – at the micro level, focusing on classroom practices; at the meso level, focusing on the institution; and at the macro level, focusing on provincial and federal legislation and policies.

Introductory questions

Introductory questions were asked to all focus group members as well as web-based participants. Besides stating their names (using pseudonyms), participants were asked to state how long they were in their specific trade or occupation before becoming a vocational teacher, and how long they were teaching at Red River College.

Table 2

How long were you in your trade/occupation before becoming a vocational instructor?						
Responses	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years	No answer
Web-based (12)	0	4	3	0	4	1
Focus groups (8)	0	0	1	3	4	
Principal researcher (1)				1		

Table 3

How long have you been an instructor at Red River College?						
	Less than 2 years	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years
Web-based (12)	4	3	1	3	0	1
Focus groups (8)	1	4	0	2	0	1
Principal researcher (1)			1			

More than 75% of respondents, including me, had more than ten years of experience in their respective trades prior to becoming teachers so they were well grounded in their trade, and are considered subject matter experts. 75% of the respondents have at least two years of teaching experience at Red River College; nearly half have been teaching for more than five years, including two who had been teaching for more than twenty years.

Definitions

Web-based and focus group participants were asked to explain in their own words their understanding of the terms Competency-Based Education, mastery learning and Outcomes-Based education. The importance of having a clear understanding of the terms is based on the college's requirement that all courses be stated in learning outcomes (learner-centred) and not on Competency-Based Education or mastery learning (content-centred) language.

Competency-Based Education

Web-based respondents understanding of the term Competency-Based Education (CBE) included: demonstrating a minimum standard upon course completion, provision of skill set development, real work as the end goal, prior learning assessment, basic understanding of problem-solving, good hand-on skills demonstrating abilities and meeting a set of pre-set goals (although it is not clear who sets the goals), whether someone can or cannot perform a skill.

Explanations provided by focus group participants were similar. One instructor explained CBE as students having to demonstrate a certain skill level based on previous experience and in certain jobs, being able to demonstrate that skill without being taught on the job. Two instructors said that their understanding of CBE is that students have a number of areas for which they are required to be competent, therefore instructors give them opportunities to learn and practice and by the time they are tested, they will have acquired more skills than they came in with. One instructor said that CBE is about demonstrating an aptitude for a particular trade which then means that they are better prepared when they enter a training program. Another explanation is "testing it to see how competent you are in one general area." Two instructors understood CBE as more about experience and competence: "The more competence you have within what you yourself know as an instructor, the more you're going to be able to give to the clients which are the students" and "based on the material you're given to present the students, the more competent you are at presenting that material, the more competent they'll become when they get out into the real world and work."

One instructor said that in his opinion, teachers do not actually train students to do the work: "cause really, it's a competency, of being able to... they're showing the Government of Canada that they have the ability to do the work, not that they have the mastery, because the master becomes experienced. They're not experienced when they're in school."

No one articulated a clear or near-textbook definition of CBE.

Mastery learning

Explanations of mastery learning from web-based respondents included: broad and deep understanding of a subject, students performing learning objectives, proof of having both theory and practical knowledge, teaching toward an outcome of functional competence, learning to the fullest degree, ability to apply theory to different situations, advanced learning, learning as much as possible about what you need to or want to know and finally, the highest level of learning.

One focus group participant gave a clear and succinct textbook explanation of mastery learning. He stated that if someone is teaching by mastery learning, "they're gonna be teaching until the student can demonstrate that they have mastered whatever it is that you're trying to teach them before you move on to anything else." Another participant agreed with that explanation without additional comments. Two other participants said their understanding of mastery learning is that students have to show that they can do something so that they can say they have mastered that particular skill.

One instructor said that when teaching, mastery is not necessarily something he is aspiring to because students will gain that mastery when they are in the field. He thinks that students are supposed to gain about 20% of their knowledge base in school with the other 80% taking place on the job "and come back to school and show how they have mastered it." He stated that he is responsible for giving them directions on what they are going to be expected to know and do, and hopes that they'll achieve that and work towards being self-directed in their chosen trade or skill. Another agreed that mastery does not come from the classroom: "it comes from applying what we've taught them in the field."

One instructor's understanding of mastery learning is that he teaches something to a student but when the student goes to the employer, s/he does not have an opportunity to master that skill because it is of no advantage to the employer. If employers are challenged about this, they state clearly that "he's my employee. I'm paying him. He's gonna do what I am telling him to do." The instructor saw this as problematic.

Three instructors explained mastery learning from the perspective of teaching: "You need to be a master. You need to have a lot of different skills" One said that instructors are being told that they need to complete their Certificate in Adult Education which will give them the teaching tools they, as tradespersons, may not have experience with. "It's one thing to have your trades experience but it's another thing to have a methodology. They're training you to assimilate what has been done in the past." "If you're competent, you can work on it but if you master it, you can teach others." Another said that to master something means to be so

proficient at it that you do not have to give a second thought as to whether a decision you are making is right or wrong.

Finally, one instructor said that mastery learning is no more than academics "running the show" and using the right buzz words.

Outcomes-Based education

As with the previous two definitions, Outcomes-Based Education was understood differently by instructors. One respondent provided a comparable explanation, saying that it is "education that is measured in specific outcomes for the students rather than measured in what we think we're teaching them." Another two respondents provided a partial explanation of OBE as "teaching to predetermined outcomes" and "setting out the concepts that students should understand and the skills that students should have mastered."

Web-based respondents provided the following explanations: success is based on ability to do certain things; students can demonstrate a minimum standard upon completion; achievement of specific goals or criteria for evaluation; Not necessarily useful practical skills and/or knowledge but more emphasis for personal growth; education that gives you an option for a career after school; right answer, no emphasis on how to get there; testing, testing, testing.

The focus group participants had a variety of understandings such as having clear outcomes at the start of class and seeing if the outcomes were achieved; that Outcomes-Based education, similar to Competency-Based Education, is about presenting information so that the outcomes that teachers aspire to are greater than

the expectations of society. Another instructor said that OBE is similar to mastery learning and that he can teach a student a skill but the student may not understand it because he has not mastered it: "mastery is attained when he is on the job."

One teacher provided his summary of OBE: "the logical outcome of any training is to apply it and make money. I think the fact that is, if we give them that education, they're able to apply it in the real world. In other words they get jobs."

Finally, two participants agreed that after considering the three phrases, the end result is that "they all blend together." One instructor said that while taking courses toward his Certificate in Adult Education, he did not think that:

...there's any kind of profession that has as many buzz words and as many labels to talk about something as simple as learning. Yup, there's a label for a label....Because all these things, outcome-based education, mastery-learning, what is it? It's all education. How do you become competent, how do you have, at the end, Outcomes-Based education? What is the end product and mastery learning? Well, it's learning, education.

Almost all instructors had some confusion about the definitions - not being really being able to make the distinction between Competency-Based Education, mastery learning and Outcomes-Based Education. In her critique of Competency-Based Education, Jackson (1993:49-50) stated that:

a wide variety of broader and apparently more humanistic approaches to 'outcomes-based' instructional management can serve the same purpose. What matters is the power of the approach to organize not the practical

activity of instruction per se but rather the social relations of instruction. In particular to redistribute the power to make decisions about the goals and outcomes of instruction.

If the more humanistic shift from Competency-Based Education to Outcomes-Based Education was to be the panacea for governments and policy makers, it might indicate from the responses of the instructors that after almost two decades of its implementation in colleges, it failed to do that.

Classroom-based questions (Micro-politics)

Satisfaction with being a vocational teacher

All web-based and focus group participants were asked to tell what they most liked about being a vocational teacher and to provide at least one example that illustrates this. Three themes emerged from the feedback: 1) Relationships with students especially helping them; 2) Pride as a craftsperson and personal satisfaction, and 3) Peer support between instructors and between students.

Relationships with and helping students

All respondents from the web-based survey and said that they liked being able to pass on the skills and knowledge they acquired during their career to help students. Comments included:

- Opportunity to explore ideas and bring them to the classroom
- Being able to improve the abilities and understanding of students
- Making the material clear and simple for the students to understand

- Actually teaching students that choose to be there
- Sharing ideas and information about the field that the instructor loves and having that help others in their pursuit to their careers

All focus group participants said that they liked helping students in and out of the classroom and help sometimes went beyond the students graduating and working in industry. One instructor said: "The biggest thrill is when I get stopped in a shopping mall and the guy takes time to say hi and introduce me to his wife and I can't figure out who he is because he's a grown man and he's got a kid with him now and he remembers me from class." Another instructor reiterated that point with his example: "Even now when other students that I have taught, and I haven't been here that long, they come in for their other levels and they're coming and stopping me and talking, and I recognize the faces but the names are gone but they are not forgetting me."

One instructor also said that he gets phone calls from students who have successfully completed their interprovincial exams (which takes at least four years of work and study) and "they just called to let me know that they were successful on the exam and that's a pretty high honour as far as I'm concerned and it doesn't get any better than that. You can't put a money value on that." Another one stated that students do not need to call but they do because "somehow or other they value the opportunity that you had as an instructor to help them along." One instructor stated that when students visit after successfully completing the interprovincial exams, the thank you handshakes are not limited to one instructor, but to all the instructors who helped them to be successful. An instructor talked about how impressed he was with the level of maturity that he sees developing in the students as he takes them from

one level of apprenticeship to the next: "when you get the younger ones, it sort of reminds me of myself when I was unsure about what my future held and now here I am, doing what my teachers were doing and saying... You see them becoming good craftsmen and trades people."

One instructor said that his satisfaction comes from students' understanding of the material: "I really enjoy working with the kids and seeing when the light comes on when they really see that, yes, this is what I want to do." Another instructor said that it was the personal relationships that he builds with the students that make teaching meaningful, stating that his satisfaction comes from using his skills to "see the lights shine in their eyes when they understand a topic."

Mentoring students in and out of school was a recurring theme, especially if the student does not have anyone else (including the employer) to turn to for trust and support. One instructor stated that he builds rapport with students and enjoys seeing them progressing and becoming excited learners. Another said that if his students are willing to work hard and show a professional attitude, he is willing to give them all the help they need. He went on to say:

It's one of the nicest things in the world when you have a student that at the beginning of the year says, "You're a hard-ass. You mark the tests too hard" but at the end of the year, they come up and shake your hand and say "Thank you. You helped me grow this term". It's a good feeling.

A similar comment was made by two other instructors who said that considering the vast amount of information that students have to make sense of in a short space of

time, they see students struggle and finally make sense of it and they are excited that they were part of that growth and development.

Pride as a tradesperson and personal satisfaction

Some instructors from the web-based survey indicated that they like passing on the knowledge and skills they learned in their respective trades. Comments included:

- Talking about things I know a lot about and passing on the information
- Being able to pass on some of the knowledge I acquired during my career
- Passing on the knowledge and skills of my trade
- Passing on my experience and knowledge
- Liking the challenge of taking complex ideas and simplifying them

All focus group participants also said that they liked being able to pass on the knowledge and skills that they acquired in order to help students to be successful in the field and went further to explain that it was also pride in craftsmanship: "Just seeing the passion for the trade that I had when I was a student as well. It really makes me excited to see that and trying to introduce the passion to the ones I see." One instructor said: "It's pretty satisfying to be able to come full circle and just be able to pass on my experience and my experience in life in the trade and it's kinda neat to come back to teach in the same classrooms that I sat in when I first came through here. I came full circle." Another said:

It's giving back what I've gained in knowledge over the years. It's nice, to know that there are people that are going to be continuing on in my craft and

hopefully I had an impact on them in such a way that they are going to enjoy their careers. Of course, there's going to be monetary benefits for them, and that helps, but more than anything, it's the success.

A third instructor said that when he was a journeyman (sic), he did not take the accolades from site inspectors when his apprentices did good work. He maintains that same attitude in school with his students. On the same theme, another instructor said:

I expect them as trades people to raise the bar of the trade, to look after their craft and their trade, to be proud of what they do. And each generation, I tell them, "You're the future of the trade; you're going to be the future inspectors, the future teachers, so it's your responsibility to look after the trade, too. You should be proud of being what you are." I want them to be a better teacher, a better tradesman than my generation.

Several instructors had feelings of self-satisfaction for being recognized outside of school because "it's very easy for people to turn away the other way and go 'I didn't see him. I hope he doesn't see me.' And these people actually stop, so that's my reward." A few instructors said that they try to instill a sense of professionalism in their students so whether they are on a practicum site or a work situation, the quality of their work speaks for itself.

Peer support (Colleagues and Students)

The focus group participants said that teamwork and peer support, both among instructors and among students, was an important aspect of job satisfaction.

They mentioned the peer support they get from colleagues in their department, especially those for which the subject matter they are teaching is not their area of expertise. They felt that in those instances, they are both student and instructor, and can relate to what the students are experiencing. They also felt that some of the credit for their success as instructors has to go to their peers and the team approach with which they work. One instructor put it this way, "One of the greatest things about being an instructor as well as the most gratifying thing is a combination for me - is that you're never alone. You have the support of other instructors that you work with." Another instructor added, "When I first came, I know that if it wasn't for the senior guys in the department, I don't think I would've been able to be successful; so it's a great honour and great opportunity. It's motivating." A third instructor said, "For me to be successful, it's definitely a team effort. I don't know if you can say that for any other profession."

The instructors shared similar experiences about students helping other students. One instructor provided an example of a student struggling with the coursework throughout the term: "You could see the effort and more than anything, you could see the other students helping him, so that tells me that a team developed. It wasn't just him anymore. It was the entire team."

In addition to the three themes mentioned previously, two web-based respondents said that they liked the pace of the work and the schedule that teaching provides. None of the focus group participants mentioned this point.

Challenges with teaching (non-technical)

All web-based and focus group participants were asked about the cultural, social and individual issues for students that make teaching challenging. They were asked not to think about or address the specific technical skills related to their areas of expertise.

Students' academic preparedness

i. Lack of academic skills

All but one of the respondents from the web-based survey stated that the biggest challenge they face is students who are not academically prepared to enter into the program – specifically students lacking Basic Math skills and Basic English as an Additional Language skills. Because of this challenge, students have more difficulty succeeding in the program.

Focus group participants identified a number of challenges that they face in the classroom. Respondents said that some students entering the trades want to be there but their high school education in reading, writing (e.g. grammar, spelling,) basic math (e.g. multiplying and dividing) and problem-solving does not adequately prepare them for the rigorous content, because much of high school learning is theoretical. Some college programs have a Grade 10 entry requirement which give entrants a false sense how much effort they might have to expend in learning. Participants also believe that students are getting a similar message from their high schools that if they are not good academically, they can go into a trade, but the

reality is, "If you come in weak, academically, in to one of the trades, you're going to have a problem in the trades."

ii. Lack of English language skills

Focus group participants said that some students whose first language is not English or who have English as an Additional Language are bright, and in some cases, already have the technical skills, but struggle with English. They can explain concepts orally but have difficulty with written English. One instructor explained that because there is so much trade-specific language that is not easily translated, even with academic upgrading in English, students have trouble with the content.

iii. Lack of study skills

Focus group participants said that because students lack proper study skills, they (the instructors) have to spend a great deal of time with related math and science concepts that students lack. Instructors are also teaching students how to study, telling them that "it is difficult to condense 35 hours' worth of information into three hours one night and do it justice." Having had similar experiences and having to learn how to study, instructors stated that they are now able to transfer that learning to their students by tutoring students during lunch or after school.

They explained that students rely on memorization, much like they used in high school, but while memorizing works well with some content, in the trades where much of the learning is applied, memorization is not an effective way of learning. Some students are "book smart" but that does not necessarily mean that they are good in the practical applications. Conversely, a person who may be weak at "book

learning” may be successful in the practical skills, having a deeper conceptual understanding. “Some people understand concepts very easily and usually those people are people that naturally, in their everyday life, do not memorize. They pick up concepts, and they’re able to extrapolate.”

iv. Inexperienced peer tutors

Instructors said that they rely on peer tutors - teaming up academically stronger students with weaker ones. This helps to build tutoring/teaching skills in the stronger students, while the weaker ones are encouraged to aspire to the upper level students. Reliance on stronger students presents its own set of challenges however: a) In a lab setting, because the pace is often different, it is difficult for a faster paced student to be working with a slower paced student; b) Some stronger students are not good teachers – teaching the way they were taught and not necessarily the way the weaker student would understand; and c) Some of the stronger students, not recognizing the value of peer tutoring as building a different set of skills, do not want to be peer tutors, believing that they are not being challenged academically and thinking that: “I’m not here to be teaching or looking after somebody.”

Students’ personal issues

i. Culture shock

Focus group participants stated that they have to contend with the racial and cultural challenges that students bring into the classroom. Students who come from Northern communities are no smarter or slower than other students but often experience culture shock with having to make adjustments to life in a big city, not

interacting well with classmates, and not having a social support system that they can rely on. One instructor, self-identified as First Nations, had this to say:

It makes it really difficult and a lot of them fail our programs. They have to repeat two or three times so I know there's a big problem there. Depending on where they come from and if they are coming from an outlying community, it's a way different pace of life and a different lifestyle when they get here in our programs. In our department, they're very fast paced. What medium you pick to adjust your class to, that pace is going to be a lot quicker than what they are used to where they come from so they struggle with it right off the bat. I'd give them encouragement when I was there but there were obviously things that were affecting them.

Another participant confirmed that this was his experience as well, stating that in his case he has an Aboriginal student who is quite successful but he attributes that to living in the city and becoming accustomed to that way of life. The instructor qualified his statement by saying that in his experience, this student is an exception rather than the norm. The instructors said that the way they try to connect with the students is to share their own backgrounds and encourage the students to do the same. They do team assignments and projects at the start of the program as another way to address this. A third strategy is to use a variety of teaching styles to ensure a more interactive classroom.

ii. Lack of finances

For some students, lack of financial resources can cause immense stress. For students being funded by employment insurance, this challenge appears to be

greatest. Some students do not fill out their forms correctly so they do not receive their benefits in a timely manner. For others, it is a lack of money management skills: "When the money issues start to hit, and as we ramp up our teaching as the year goes on, it becomes overwhelming to some." Instructors see some bright students entering the program averaging more than 90%, whose marks start to drop, and are finally forced to withdraw from the program as their money issues confound them.

Students' personal competencies

Focus group participants said that the different levels of maturity of the students, the use of cell phones and computers in the classroom, and students' attitudes about school are other challenges for instructors.

i. Maturity and attitude

Instructors said that they see two kinds of students in their classrooms – those who have just completed high school and those who are changing careers. Given this, the general levels of maturity and attitudes of each group are so different that it becomes problematic. Mature students who are changing careers bring a whole skill set to school, so their perception of school is entirely different from those students just out of high school. Second career students are often dealing with adult problems:

I had two young fellows in this intake. Both of them, their wives ended up having babies, and that's something we have to discover at the beginning of

the year, like "Is there a chance that you're going to have to take time off, do you have any babies coming, are there operations?"

For those who may have been out of school for some time, getting back into the routine of studying is difficult. Added to that, the changes in technology also present challenges for them. Instructors felt that some students do not have the same level of discipline in school as they might at work, believing that if they are not good academically, they can succeed in the trades. Students get a rude awakening when they realize that they have to work and there is a lot of material to comprehend, so they have to work equally as hard in school as they would at work. Some students are afraid to admit that they do not understand the course material - viewing this as a sign of weakness in front of their peers - so they will not ask for assistance when they need it. Instructors have to reiterate that asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a part of learning.

Students who enter the college programs right out of high school have what instructors referred to as "a high school attitude," where they lack any meaningful work experience, have no applied skills and therefore look at college as another high school where they do not have to be accountable or show up for classes and will succeed in the program anyway. Instructors try to make students understand that beyond the technical skills, students have to develop the personal competencies that will enable them to be successful in work and in life:

I try to explain to them, "You are a blue collar worker. You're going to be in a service industry. That's what you're doing here and if you're coming to me and I want you to do something for me, and you're gonna charge \$500 for

doing it, you'd better be able to explain to me what you're doing. I might not know what the hell you're talking about but if you leave me with the impression that you (emphasis) know what you are talking about, that's good." So I want to establish that you are trying to give the student some self confidence that they can represent themselves to a customer to say, "This is why I need to take this much money out of your pocket. We have to fix this."

Beyond having to communicate in a professional manner, a bad attitude on the part of the student can have serious safety implications because failing to follow safety rules of the profession can cause serious injury or death.

If you don't follow those rules? Guess what? Your boss is going to fire you. That's a harsh reality. You're not going to go back and say, "Ah, yeah, but there's a No Fail policy." No, the fact is you failed and you're fired. Good luck in your next job. A lot of people don't want to face that fact that it is there, and it's an existing world. And it's something that we have to face as people.

ii. Cell phone and computer use

Although the college has policies about the appropriate use of technology, instructors said that they are frustrated with the lack of clarity about when cell phones can and cannot be used in the classroom. Instructors recognize that cell phone use is an everyday part of life for most people, and younger students are much more adept at computer skills, but they sometimes view themselves as "white or background noise" because students are talking, texting and surfing the internet during class time when they should be paying attention to the lesson.

Lack of teaching related skills

Focus group participants listed the lack of technological skills, lack of classroom management skills and lack of teaching related skills as additional challenges they face as teachers.

i. Technology

Learning and keeping current with the various learning technologies is a major challenge for many instructors. Learning computer related terminology and learning to use hardware such as data projectors, visual presenters, cameras and recorders all contribute to high levels of stress and frustration. Many instructors have to learn how to prepare and use word processing, presentation, and records-management software for the first time.

ii. Classroom management skills

Instructors indicated that they find classroom management a big challenge. The world of work is very much different than teaching and one instructor said that because he is new, he is not sure how far he can step when it comes to disciplining the students, so he tries to make the students understand that what they do and how they behave affects their classmates. He stated that often times the student who is creating the problem is smart and may act out because s/he is bored. His concern is for students who are struggling and how they may be affected by unruly behaviour. The balance is in "finding a medium ground to make certain that the pace of the class is fast enough to challenge, but still at a steady pace so that the slower students are not left behind." Another instructor said that when he was a

tradesperson, he mentored apprentices, but teaching is quite different so "it's real challenge to get them to grow up."

Some instructors said that the courses in the Certificate in Adult Education program help them to find different ways or strategies to manage their classrooms including using humour as a strategy. One instructor admitted, "A lot of times I would have to say - I hope everybody agrees with me because I do it a lot - I just wing it ... try different things that work."

Several instructors said that without the assistance and insight of more senior instructors, teaching would be even more challenging: "All of them have come up and given me some very good advice and that helped me make my first steps with a little bit of confidence." Some of the more senior instructors have more than fifteen years teaching experience including public schools so they are familiar with the level of preparation that high school students receive prior to entering college and can deal with those challenges a bit better.

Factors that contribute to challenges

Focus group participants and web-based respondents were asked what they felt were some of the factors that contributed to the challenges and frustrations they face as teachers and how they thought some of the issues might be addressed. Some challenges that were mentioned include lack of, or insufficient resources, student attitude and lack of academic preparation prior to entering the program, lack of administrative leadership, insufficient time to participate in relevant professional development opportunities, student academic accommodations, and government regulations.

Lack of or insufficient resources

Web-based respondents and focus group participants identified lack of resources as a major worry, which contributes to their frustration with teaching. They cited a lack of supplies, lack of appropriate technology and training aids that are often broken, missing or so dated that they are useless. These are important points because most applied learning requires specific tools, equipment and supplies and if they are not available, students will not have the appropriate training to prepare them to go out into industry.

Class space and size

Class size is also an issue for several reasons beyond the obvious challenge of trying to teach to a large number of students whose learning styles may differ. Too many students in a lab setting without sufficient supervision can compromise the safety of students, leading to serious accidents and even death. When class sizes are too large and there are not sufficient pieces of equipment to practice on, students have to take turns, leading to boredom for those who master the skills quickly as they wait for slower learners to catch up. It also does not provide enough practice time for students to master the necessary skills.

Lack of lab space is another resource challenge as there are too many classes being held concurrently and scheduling the use of equipment can be problematic. Added to that, more and more, classroom space is being utilized as office space, leaving less room for instruction to take place.

Instructors are encouraged to pay attention to environmental concerns by “building green” but some classroom labs are not well equipped to handle concerns like indoor air quality and dust. Dealing with some of these challenges becomes a problem because these issues are beyond the instructors’ control and becomes a facilities-management issue.

Out-dated texts and equipment

Equipment for most trades is specific and costly. Tools for practice in some trades can be in the thousands of dollars and specialized equipment can cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Replacing them in a timely manner is difficult, but instructors felt that it is important that teaching and learning remain current and relevant. Sometimes equipment is donated by companies who are upgrading theirs, but the students then have to learn on outdated equipment so that by the time they go to work, their skills are already dated.

Textbooks are another major concern. They are old and outdated but current versions are either not available, or the college’s budget does not allow for newer texts, so instructors are left searching for teaching resources elsewhere. One instructor said:

We have issues with textbooks that need to be a little bit updated but of course our budget doesn’t allow that. We don’t have the facilities to train people to make textbooks because there is nothing out there about the environment for our trade that is suitable or strong enough to actually publish that we can actually focus on to make it a bit better teaching tool.

One participant said that many instructors rely on searching the internet for information.

Student attitude and lack of academic preparation

Most instructors felt that students have a decreasing amount of respect for their teachers, their peers and the college in general which they attributed to a lack of societal expectations. Many students are inattentive and have what one teacher referred to as a high school attitude of "I came every day so I should pass" and expecting everything handed to them without having to earn it. Other instructors talked of the use of cell phones, texting, gaming and other laptop distractions. One instructor said that he cannot ask students to close their laptops when they can take notes more quickly by typing than by writing. He is not sure if that is the reason the students have such poor spelling and grammar skills and he generalized to all students, including Canadian born and educated.

Lack of administrative leadership

Several web-based respondents and one focus group participant said that lack of administrative leadership and management is worrisome. Instructors said that they are not evaluated and given feedback about their teaching by their supervisors, which they feel is important to their professional growth. One instructor felt that his supervisor has troublesome working relationships with most staff members, making it nearly impossible to work with him. Other supervisors, however, face a different challenge in that "even though they themselves feel that they need to take control of

the situation, as soon as they do take control of the situation, usually they're vetoed by somebody up above."

One instructor said that his supervisor is so overly concerned about safety that this is preventing him (the instructor) from learning to use new equipment, even when it is on his own time. He recounted this:

I can only use it during school time. If I want to stay after school and try to learn on a piece of equipment that the company just bought that is \$20,000 or \$30,000 worth, I can't do it unless I fill out 3 pages of safety forms and I'm sitting there saying "I'm not filling out 3 pieces of paper so I can use my time to work on this machine." I wanna stay here and use this machine but my boss wants to make it so hard on me that I have to ask permission.

Other instructors had the same experience but also said that from time to time, they can be granted professional development release time to go for training outside of the college which the college will pay for. The training is provided by someone who is an expert on using the equipment so that instruction covers the safe use of the equipment. This is important because instructors are then expected to teach students how to use the equipment in a safe manner.

Another administrative issue that teachers have to deal with is not knowing well enough in advance what courses they are going to be teaching in the next year, leaving them little or no time to prepare or revise course materials before the start of class. Older teachers, who are disgruntled with teaching, affect the morale of other staff but administrators are unable or unwilling to address the situation.

Insufficient time for professional development

Several instructors said that one of the factors that contribute to the challenges they face in the classroom is the lack of time to participate in relevant professional development activities. One instructor said that lack of administrative support for teachers learning to use equipment after school hours not only affects his ability to use the equipment but to make connections to other faculty members from other departments who used to provide supports related to teaching strategies and classroom management. He said:

We used to take care of each other. I would help somebody out in a different department and they would help me out. I would use the equipment and I would become very familiar with it but since we can't do anything anymore, I don't even know who works in different departments anymore. That hinders my job because I see that piece of equipment over there. I know that I should be using it with my students because they're using it out in the trade but I donno how to use it because I'm an old dog. I never had this tool when I was in their spots... The equipment is there. Let's use it.

Another instructor said that in his case he is learning to use a particular piece of very expensive equipment (in the tens of thousands of dollars) on his own time, but since none of the other instructors appear to know how to use it safely and there are many safety concerns for that equipment that cannot be overlooked, he has decided to seek appropriate training for which his department has agreed to pay. He said:

It gives me an opportunity to actually excel... to get an opportunity to actually work with that tool. Right now I'm gonna educate myself so when they [students] do ask, I can say, "Yeh, I do know how, and when we have some spare time I'll show you how to use it or I'll give you a demo," so that to me is really important.

Another factor that contributes to the challenges that instructors face is the amount of course material that has to be covered a very short time. Some instructors have only one eight-week block of time to deliver one level of apprenticeship training so, not only is the material challenging but also, because all students are not at the same level academically, some get left behind and others get bored. Instructors find themselves rushed to cover all the content and as one instructor said: "I thought every class would sort of be..., you'd have some strong students, some middle students, some weak students. Sometimes the middle is way down there." One instructor said that students from Manitoba Hydro are better than average when they enter his program and have a higher success rate, but he is not certain if the company has higher pre-requisites for their employees or if there are other contributing factors.

Student academic accommodations

Having to make academic accommodations for students was another major factor that contributes to the challenges teachers face in the classroom. Instructors felt that "academias, for instance..." are making decisions for them (instructors) about student accommodations in programming without fully understanding the implications of working in the trades. Specifically, they said that the Student Services

department does great work, but “academics” do not understand the realities of the workplace. Using the example of providing accommodations for test anxiety, one instructor said:

If you’re going to have an anxiety just writing a test, you’re really going to struggle in a trade. Because there’s going to be times, not just a time, times, when you’re going to have to make a decision and you’re going to have to stick to it.... In the fourth level, when they’re going to go for their final certification, they no longer have their calculators. Calculators are given to them, and over and above that, there is no Student Services. They’re going to pass the course or they’re going to fail it.

One instructor said that he has students with different kinds of disabilities in his classroom of twenty-five to thirty students. The students with disabilities are sometimes assigned instructional assistants to assist them with the program, but the instructor said that it is difficult for him to “deliver a quality product” [program] when the standards of quality are not being met. Another instructor said that students may not always be aware of, or disclose their disability, but he is able to recognize it sometimes so he refers them to Student Services and also lets them know that they may have a different learning style that will be addressed by his teaching style.

Government regulations

Instructors said that government rules and regulations contribute a great deal to the challenges that were previously identified. Some instructors said that they

have addressed the lack of student academic preparedness with their apprenticeship counsellors on a number of occasions, even suggesting that in order to ensure student success in the programs, there ought to be assessments of reading, writing, math and problems-solving skills prior to entry into the programs. The response from the Apprenticeship counsellors is generally to say that they cannot exclude anyone, but the instructors' intention is not to exclude: "You're not excluding them; You're going to exclude them from my classroom until they're at a certain level, and then you're going to bring them into my classroom so I can teach to the middle and the middle is in the middle, not down here. And I don't get anywhere [with the counsellor]." Another instructor confirmed that this was also his experience. He said that he looked at the results of a student who scored 1 out of 7 in the first week of the program and explained to the Apprenticeship counsellor that the student was going to have major problems with the program, but to no avail.

Several instructors restated similar experiences saying that they believe that administering an assessment test when students sign up for their initial apprenticeship in-school training would alleviate some of the challenges both instructors and students face when they (the students) are poorly prepared. One instructor said:

I know all those other things I have no control over - whether they came from a broken home, whether they came from up North, whether they actually got a Grade 10, - they're supposed to have a Grade 12. That means nothing... got a Grade 12, or were they just passed? Some of its Grade 12. There's some algebra, but a lot of it's not a Grade 12 level. I'm not excluding anybody, but I need you to be at a certain level before I get you.

Given the vast quantity of material to be covered in the program, they believe that if students get sufficient upgrading prior to starting their program, they (instructors) can “teach to the middle” and work with the slower students as needed. Another instructor said that this was not the case when he was a student. During his time as a student, he was given a pre-test and he believed that it was not to exclude students but to identify where their strengths and weaknesses were so that they could get the appropriate remedial help as needed. After appropriate upgrading, students would again be given an assessment to see if they met the entry benchmarks.

Two instructors believed that non-administration of assessment tests prior to starting a training program is an issue of money, both for the college and the Manitoba Apprenticeship department. They saw it like this: “We have to find a space for them and there was thirty-two people to a classroom, and now it’s like, well, if we get them through it won’t cost as much.” They said that during their training, in the 1970’s and 1980’s, work was hardly available and the need for tradespeople was limited. At that time, people were lucky to have employment so they generally stayed at their jobs. But the current economic reality is that there is a high demand for qualified tradespersons:

It’s almost like it’s free game. Let’s get as many in, without any repercussions. Let’s worry about getting the numbers done, and that’s it. At the end of the day, what are we actually doing? Are we just meeting numbers because the government says so? Or are we actually training people in what we should be training them? Pushing them through is what we do.

Another issue that instructors have with Manitoba Apprenticeship is that they (instructors) believe that oftentimes:

You have somebody that comes from an academic background determining what is good for the trade. There is an awful lot of academics who are really good academically that understand philosophy and I'm not putting that kind of learning down, because I think that's all really important learning, [but] you have academics deciding and looking at what we're going to do.

The same instructor related an incident where apprenticeship counsellors did not value what one instructor had to say about programming because he was a tradesperson and "nothing he said to them carried premiums." He felt that he should have a voice in how his program is taught. He had this to say about the apprenticeship counsellors:

I think sometimes there's academics that think that tradespeople are below [them]. Our coordinator had all sorts of nightmares dealing with the apprenticeship people, because as you say, they're academics, he's a construction tradesman that's got his teaching degree. You have academics sitting, not knowing what I do, how I do it, the fact that how much material I cover, how important is it, and I get a little frustrated that you have people making the rules that don't understand what I do, and they don't understand my trade, they don't understand how important it is to do what we do.

As with the previous point, the lack of understanding by academics also affects how curriculum is organized and delivered. Instructors are expected to deliver

instruction by using what one instructor refers to as a modular system (competency-based curriculum). This is problematic for him because:

I can teach a small module, give them a test, oh, they pass the test, so, and that's it. They won't see that module again for four or five years. They know that module enough to pass it. Does that mean to say that they're at the point where I want them to be to become a tradesperson? Not on your life.

He said that someone with just enough basic understanding to pass one small test at a time is not sufficient. They need to be able to put all the modules together to pass the course, and if they are not required to write end of course exams for all the modules, they will not be able to pass the provincial certification exam which is one exam that covers the entire program content (a sum total of many courses). He believes that: "[students] have to put things into long-term memory. Just putting things into short-term memory and then moving on... Guess what? I don't want you working on my building, my house. You could kill me. You have to have a more than basic understanding of something. You have to have some long-term memory." Added to this, factor in students who have had exam accommodations made for them because they have exam anxiety and been given alternate forms of testing; they are being set up for failure because everyone has to pass one multiple choice provincial certification exam in a specific timeframe with no assistance, and has to achieve a pass mark of at least 70%.

Institution-Based Questions (Meso-politics)

The next set of questions invited the instructors to think more broadly at the institutional level and asked them to identify the kinds of supports and resources they would find most useful and helpful in improving the aspects of teaching that they found challenging and frustrating as previously identified. The supports and resources were categorized into four areas: support for teaching, support for students, support from immediate supervisors and support from college administrators.

Support for teaching

Several web-based respondents and focus group participants said that they felt that a better mentoring system for new instructors would be most helpful. They also felt that seminars about teaching would be of great benefit. Hiring qualified instructors would also help to alleviate some of the challenges they face as teachers. Several instructors felt that the Certificate in Adult Education (CAE) courses "are very lacking and some of the instruction is very poor" because of disorganized instructors. Another instructor said that the CAE courses give instructors some tools "but you don't become a great teacher from being a poor teacher by taking a CAE course." One instructor credited the degree he earned from Ferris State University (a degree program from Ferris State University in the US which is delivered on the RRC campus to a cohort of instructors) for his success as an instructor. He said that the courses helped him with classroom management issues and to understand what he was doing in the classroom in terms of teaching content: "I found that it made me a better instructor because it gave me different opportunities, different ideas how to handle different situations in the classroom." The additional benefit was that,

because he was with a cohort of instructors, they related to each other and he relied on the peer support when he felt overwhelmed: "I sat in my cohort's office and I was this far from tears cause I was overloaded doing my daytime job and trying to do my university program stuff and in the end I succeeded and I believe it made me a better instructor." He did feel, however, that the situation has now changed and instructors will be less likely to overwhelm themselves with work and study if "there's no carrot for them to take that course" and the college will not reward them in some tangible way. Another instructor felt that rather than general courses related to teaching, he needed courses specific to his core subject that would help improve his teaching.

Other instructors said that having access to educational assistants - especially in the labs - would be helpful in providing assistance to students during guided practice sessions on equipment, and as an extra pair of eyes to supervise in preventing accidents or improper use of equipment by the students. This would alleviate the stress around safety issues that teachers face in the labs when managing large numbers of students around equipment that can be dangerous if used improperly.

One instructor said that he values the instructor feedback that he gets from students because in his case, he thought he was doing well with teaching until he received his instructor evaluation for one course and realized from the comments that he had spent so much time with a student with a disability during the term that he had neglected the students who he perceived as stronger and not needing his help. He said, "If you don't know what you're doing wrong, how do you correct it?"

Peer support was a theme that resonated with several instructors. They said that they rely heavily on other more experienced instructors in their department for support. This was especially true for new instructors who are good in the field and may, over time, have specialized in specific aspects of the trade or may have preferred topics of interest, and now have to re-learn some basic content they had forgotten. "They have a great thing here. I'm not good in code. They are. I'm good in theory. They're not. We intermingle, and eventually, you do code whether you're good at it or not. You just learn it." They said that peer support for new instructors can also be in the form of team teaching:

You've got different instructors teaching different things and some of them are really not sure what they should be instructing let alone how much, how little, is it the same content? Yeah, you can have all the material given to you, but you're not going to, you're not going to deliver it the same 'cause you've not had previous experience.

They felt that having a more structured team of instructors to provide some guidance about teaching and learning would be beneficial to all instructors. Relying on each other as tutors has some advantages, but instructors also realize that other more experienced instructors carry heavy workloads, and newer instructors quickly "learn to read their little innuendos" that they are too busy to help. They felt that a mentorship program would help to address this. When they face challenges, they would like "somebody we can go to when we run up against a wall that will help us out."

Several instructors felt that as new teachers, they need time to prepare prior to their first teaching assignment: "I know the first day I started work as a teacher I ended up in the classroom. That's the way it is. They hire you on Friday and you start on Friday." One participant suggested that new instructors work time should be divided between shorter teaching loads at the beginning, combined with observing more experienced teachers, rather than the six-hour days they are now expected to teach. "I think for the first little bit of time, the instructor shouldn't be thrown into the classroom full time. I think there should be some time they actually sit in another classroom... just to be able to watch some of the other teachers, how do they do things, so you can develop your own style. You have to figure that out on your own. How do you... how are you going to relate to the students?"

Supports for students

In terms of supports for students, several respondents felt that the college's requirements and prerequisites for entering programs need to be more rigorous. The minimum standard for English Comprehension needs to be set higher for English as an Additional Language students. Assessment tests should be conducted to ensure that students actually have the learning requirements prior to admission, and remedial courses should be offered if students do not meet the requirements; having these requirements means that students are less likely to fail. Compulsory college courses appropriate to the area of study (e.g. studying skills, basic tool handling skills) should be offered to all students.

Instructors also felt that the college could have what they refer to as "a closed loop system" for students whose classroom behaviour suggests that they should be seeing a counsellor. Having clearer direction and support around issues of

appropriate use of computers during classes "would be extremely helpful." Instructors suggested that the college could have "a wifi lock out system in the classrooms" because in spite of students being adult learners, their addiction to the internet is problematic. "They think they are learning while they playing but we [the instructors] become the background noise."

Support from immediate supervisors

Most respondents and participants felt that it is very important that they receive adequate support and feedback from their immediate supervisors. Most instructors said that they would appreciate more communication from their department heads, especially on what is working and what is not. Specifically, they want comprehensive teacher evaluation reports by someone other than students, whom they feel may not always be giving appropriate feedback. They said that they would like supervisors who do not put up road blocks in front of them doing their jobs.

Instructors identified scheduling of resources as a very problematic issue. Specifically, they would like to have better scheduling for use of classroom and lab space so that they could achieve their teaching goals. In addition, scheduling of teacher preparation time is a challenge because although they have prep time, when they have students, the contact hours are six hour blocks each day, every day, with prep time being scheduled either before or after a block of study, rather than being distributed during periods of time each day. This kind of contact hour scheduling does not allow teachers to adequately prepare for their classes. As well, although department chairs suggest that new teachers spend time observing more experienced teachers, it is extremely difficult when they have to be in their own

classrooms for six hour blocks of time, then try to spend their prep time doing marking and preparing for the next set of instruction.

A few instructors said that they would like to see departmental support for new instructors because they are simply “given a course outline and a bunch of pages” at the beginning of teaching and they are supposed to figure out what they have to do next. They said that it is a struggle to get through the first week, feeling a sense of relief, only to realize that they have to prepare for the second week in the same manner. They said that they themselves are on a learning curve – not having seen some of the basic content in a very long time, so they are learning the material at almost the same time their students are learning it. Compound that with having no teaching experience, and it is a struggle just to keep up.

Support from college administrators

With respect to the college as a whole, most respondents and participants felt that they need more overall support from senior administrators on an individual basis. One instructor said that he has received none. On a broader scale, support in the areas of finances, accountability for enforcing academic policies, and a safe and healthy work environment are also needed. One instructor summed it up this way:

RRC is probably one of the worst places I have ever worked as far as management and empire building goes, and of course this is at the expense of the students. Instructors are required to be self-sufficient or you just can't deliver any kind of quality teaching since management is too busy building their empires and avoiding making decisions on the delivery of programs.

Other departments that are in place to support education waste so much money it's criminal and do nothing to help or even fulfill their mandate.

Several instructors believed that the college should allocate sufficient money for proper training aids, equipment, tools, computers and computer-related software to replace out-dated versions. They also said that the allocation of funds for updated facilities needs to be distributed more equitably based on need rather than what they perceive as politically motivated reasons. They gave as an example, the amount of money being allocated to building a new facility for the Greenspace Management program because "there was a kind of green thing" for the college, while other departments need the funding just as much, but "it's not spread out properly and the funding is not properly addressed in some places and so it would be good if it was spread out a little bit more." Other instructors agreed and added: "It gets really loud. It gets really dusty and kind of crowded because we have space limitations. It's usually a safety concern more than anything." This point was reiterated by another instructor: "I don't know what the comfort level is [in other classrooms]. Ours are awful. The students have complained that they can't concentrate. It's too hot. It's too cold. Way too hot. Way too cold. No air flow. Terrible. Dust. It's terrible."

On the subject of support for instructors, most instructors felt that the college could be doing much more in this area. They felt that "the college should give us more supports. We don't get enough academic education" nor do they get the support or encouragement to take university courses. One instructor suggested that it would behoove the college to financially reward teachers who seek further academic qualifications. One instructor put it this way:

All of us here are professionals in our blue collar area. We know our own jobs but we're all playing instructors. Some of us are better at it and some of us learn how to be good at it. The college hires us as professionals in our trade areas and there's no problem with that but I wasn't a teacher when I came here. You have a Red Seal and I have a Red Seal. We are considered equal now and I'm going to say that I am not offended. I got a bachelor's course out of this and the college paid me on successful completion. They actually gave me a carrot. They gave me a little bit more money because I picked up my education and now they seem to deem it not important because now there are other guys in this room who have a Red Seal and I have a Red Seal, we are considered equal now.

Two instructors agreed that having a Red Seal certification is not sufficient to be considered a good teacher. Furthermore, teachers holding a Red Seal designation should not be considered equal to those who hold a Red Seal and a bachelor's degree. Teachers are told that the college will pay for them to earn their degree but the qualifications are deemed "worthless" because after the investment of time, a bachelor's degree does not translate into more pay. The instructor said that the college should invest in better education for their instructors because "we should be better instructors to our students and the college should push us to do that, and that means they have to pay us a little bit more money and give these guys the opportunity to take this program. I really think that they should. And if that means a bump in pay scale for a guy if he gets extra education, so be it." On the same point, another instructor said: "If they give us more education and they reward us for more education, they'll get better work out of us and when we become better educators,

the students become better.” He used a trade analogy to explain his point, saying, “You buy better tools so you could do better quality work so better education makes you a better instructor.” He said that the world works around rewards and [college] teachers are not likely to get about earning a degree in education if they do not get financially compensated for doing so.

Teachers complained about the lack of availability of CAE courses from Red River College, saying that even when they are willing to pursue further education, they: “Sometimes have to take three or four cracks at it to get in. For me it’s huge.” They thought that learning how to teach was important because some of them with university education did not want to be the kind of teacher that they had in university. One of them said that he had professors who “would come in, they’d throw a few formulas on the board, tell you what chapters you could read in the book, and they’d leave. You wouldn’t see them for the rest of the day. If you had questions, well, you had to try to figure it out for yourselves.” One of them said that most college instructors have some teaching experience. “The guys were journeymen that are teaching for the most part. They’re used to dealing with apprentices. They’re used to purveying their skills onto the apprentices, because the better the apprentices, the more favourably it reflects on you as a journeyman” and therefore it is important that they learn how to teach by having the CAE courses available to them in a timely manner.

A few instructors said that the college should consider reducing the number of students in each class because in terms of safety, the numbers are “way too high.” One instructor said that although he uses different teaching styles to accommodate students’ varying learning styles and uses teamwork support student learning,

smaller class sizes would make for more one-on-one time with instructor and student and make for a better learning experience.

Another way that the instructors think that the college can provide support is to give new instructors some time at the beginning of their teaching to sit alongside students for a period of time and observe and work alongside more experienced teachers. It would be similar to student teaching for pre-service teachers: "it will cost the college money in order to do that, and a lot of money especially for the amount of instructors that are coming in. But it really is a prudent way to do it, because if you do that, then you're going to get a better standard as well." One instructor summed it up this way: "In the end we're all trying to deliver a quality product. I want my students to have a good understanding of what they they're supposed to know. And I want the bar to be raised. I don't want the bar to be lowered."

Finally, instructors agreed that the college has to have solid policies and be willing to stand behind them, especially around use of technology in the classroom.

Government Involvement in TVE (Macro-politics)

In this section, instructors were asked to think even more broadly to express their understanding of the role that the provincial and federal government play in technical and vocational education. They identified five main areas for federal and provincial involvement in TVE: funding, certification, job creation, education awareness, and political interests.

Funding

Respondents and participants said that governments provide funding in a number of ways and for a number of reasons including funding “to support an infrastructure that produces competent people to meet the demands of society’s current technical and vocational needs.” They asserted that funding vocational education is no different than providing funding for infrastructure maintenance such as roads or providing appropriate healthcare. This funding is an investment in “the needs of a functioning society that plans ahead.” They believed that funding is also provided for research and for equipment grants, as well as resources to facilitate training. They said that the government funds are also spent to regulate what is being taught and monitor what is being learned. In some cases, money is allocated to certain sectors which taxpayers identify as lacking in funds. A few participants also alleged that in the case of federal financing, “They throw money at certain times if they want to move in a different direction.”

On a similar note, two instructors believed that if the government decided they are no longer going to fund a program, the program could be shut down because the vast majority of program funding comes from the government. They gave as an example that close to forty-four instructors in one area could be “trimmed in half at a moment’s notice.”

Certification

In terms of certification, respondents and participants said that the federal and provincial governments enforce licencing and establish academic standards, benchmarks and guidelines for education. One respondent said that most trades are

provincially regulated, "thus training is controlled at the provincial level." Several said that the government develops comprehensive evaluation procedures and certification based on a syllabus, but qualified that by saying that they (the government) have no real understanding of what employability skills really are.

Two instructors said that the federal government has a very small part to play in their day-to-day teaching because the provinces have jurisdiction on education, but they do not see that as a good thing because the provinces should be talking to each other about setting and maintaining apprenticeship standards "because it makes really good sense." They asserted that one province may have a process that works really well but other provinces do not necessarily have access to that information, making for replication or isolation. "We all work off of an interprovincial Red Seal but we're all not taught at the same." They maintained that the federal government could be involved in discussions about trying to standardize the interprovincial certification process so that what is taught in each level of each trade is the same throughout every province.

Two instructors surmised that part of the challenges they have to contend with is that beyond the immediate apprenticeship counsellor at the Manitoba government's Apprenticeship department involved in their specific trade, "what happens in the ivory tower downtown to what I do on my day-to-day kind of things, they don't know what I do, I don't know what they do." Their perception is that supervisors at the apprenticeship department are often academics who have no experience in the trades and are not interested in, or have no idea of the realities of the classroom: "Anything higher than our apprenticeship counsellor and I don't think they understand what we do. They have no concept. I think they should actually be

in our classrooms and see how much we...What do we cover? What do we need? What are we doing?" They also noted that if they attempt to communicate with Apprenticeship supervisors about issues related to their classrooms, they are more likely to be reprimanded or have their "hands slapped for not going through the right channels because egos are involved"

Job creation

In terms of job creation, several people said that governments provide supports to industry. Specifically, "the federal government is implicated for the future technical industry requirements." They reasoned that "they [governments] have gone down the road now where it's more industry driven. Governments are wanting to know what industry wants – standards, content, how much they invest, how much they are going to invest in certain areas." They regarded this to be major reversal from when colleges were first established. They said that historically, colleges were determining the requirements for the workforce for industry whereas, now industry is saying to governments and colleges "this is what we need."

Participants said that another way that governments are involved in TVE is through the incentive program whereby \$1000 in grants is given to certain apprentices to help pay for books, tuition and lifestyle. They also mentioned some specific initiatives targeting students and new immigrants who are qualified tradespersons from another country. They did, however, see some problems with recognizing foreign credentials because Canadian qualification standards for tradespersons are often much more rigorous than those from some other countries. They cite their own experiences of working in other countries with Canadian credentials and said that "Canadian tradesmen will always be foremen,

superintendents. They'll always be in the upper echelon of workers because of the standards we have." One instructor remarked that his own failing is that "when it comes to immigrant workers, I don't understand them. I don't have the language skills to be able to deal with this. This is something that I know I could do better." He also concluded, "There's going to be changes coming and as, as teachers we've got to prepare for it."

Education awareness

A few instructors acknowledged that governments are involved in educational awareness for TVE programs. Governments advertise on billboards and they provide funding to establish programs in high schools. This publicity helps to get information directly to "those young students that are lacking in abilities and academics" that vocational education is an option. Others speculated that the federal government should be applauded for having a certain amount of success marketing apprenticeship programs – presenting a career in the trades as a viable alternative to a university-based education. The evidence they see is the increased numbers of university educated students who have been successful in other employment now deciding "that a career in the trades is a good thing."

One instructor emphatically disagreed with this. He saw government involvement as "too much interference." He recounted his experience with employers, college administrators and government personnel:

I can sit there and I can tell you that I was invited to a meeting in my trade area out of political correctness and when I attended the meeting, employers were going over curriculum and they were saying, "Well this is what I would

like." It was immediate "me" on their part...on employers' needs...but I'm the asshole in the front of the room and they're telling me - this one employer wants a room built ...and I'm going, "This doesn't work. I know. I'm the guy who's gotta do this in front of the room. It's not gonna fit." I was told very politely that I'm only a guest here and I'm not here to voice my opinion. They bring the employers on because they want the course to be driven by industry. Industry wants their needs and I can just tell you that they want Level 1 students which are entry level, which are the poorest paid, but they want them to be able to walk on water and the water is not frozen. They're asking too much of the student. They're wanting too much of a student as an entry level.

Political interests

A few instructors claimed that government involvement in education is nothing more than political expediency for some politicians. They said that when governments fund a project, it is out of political correctness and they want to see results so that they can use it as a political platform to boast to their constituents about how successful they are. "It's what you can boast about because that's what politics does—it's all about boasting. It's not about what is really good. You can't tell the truth and be a politician." One instructor said that he observed a politician using a flooding crisis as a photo opportunity by posing with a sandbag and when the camera was gone, so was the politician. Instructors felt that programming is constantly at the mercy of political parties: "They start a program and something that's really starting to work really well, they cut it, because an election comes along. Well, another party gets in and all of a sudden, that's not their thing. Their thing is 'now, we're into something else.'"

Conclusion

All twenty instructors - web-based respondents and focus group participants – articulated that in the end, they loved teaching and wanted to be the best they could be. They also said that they appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the understanding of some of the challenges they face as TVE teachers.

This chapter reported on the interviews and web-based responses. The next chapter will provide an analysis of the themes that were presented in this chapter in relation to the literature from Chapters 1 to 4 on the micro-, meso-, and macro-politics of TVE. I will also provide some strategies on how these can be addressed in pre-service and in-service in teacher preparation programs.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction
Analysing the
micro-politics of TVE
Analysing the
meso-politics of TVE
Analysing the
macro-politics of TVE
Recommendations

Introduction

In this final chapter, I provide an analysis for the data that was collected from the focus group and online survey participants. Specific questions and emergent themes are discussed based on their relevance to previous chapters. The data analysis will follow as related to the micro-, meso-, and macro-politics of TVE. Recommendations are made using the application of critical education theory as outlined by many respected scholars in the field, synthesized with my personal experiences as a tradesperson, vocational teacher, adult teacher-educator of TVE teachers, and as a curriculum consultant working at the college in which the data was collected.

Chapter 1 provided a federal or macro view of technical and vocational education (TVE) in Canada with special reference to the Manitoba context. It included a review of specific pieces of federal legislation pertaining to TVE over the last 100 years - how they impacted provincial educational policies, including the training of TVE teachers as well as the province's mandating of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) as the preferred mode of educational delivery. Chapter 2 provided a provincial or meso view of TVE, providing a comparative analysis of Outcomes-Based Education and its relation to the business model of Total Quality Management, and the implications of applying such a model to technical and vocational education. Chapter 3 gave a review of literature pertaining to critical pedagogy, the politics of such pedagogy and the ways critical pedagogy is represented in classroom practice. Evident were the gaps in literature pertaining to its specific application to TVE. Chapter 4 was an autoethnographic account of my experiences related to my personal interest and professional work in the field of technical and vocational

education, my social, academic and professional location, and my growing interest in pursuing this very important research. Chapter 5 reported on the data from two focus groups and an online survey of technical/vocational teachers who were asked about their perceptions and understandings of the macro-, meso-, and micro-politics of technical and vocational education.

The chapter is organized in five sections. The first section provides an overview of the participant selection for the study. The second, third and fourth sections provide analyses for the micro-, meso-, and macro-politics of Technical and Vocational Education respectively. The last section concludes with recommendations on the need for a pedagogy specific to technical/vocational teacher preparation and the ways that pedagogy can be operationalized.

Analyzing the micro-politics of TVE

In this section there were three main questions that instructors were asked to respond to: 1) What do you like about being a technical/vocational teacher and give one example to illustrate this? 2) What are some of the cultural, social, and individual issues for students that make teaching challenging? 3) To what do you attribute those factors?

Satisfaction with teaching

The three major themes that emerged were relationships with students, their pride as craftspersons, and peer support among instructors as well as among students. From the variety of comments that instructors made about their relationships with students, it was evident that they cared very much about their

students succeeding. Some of them said that they liked the ability to pass on the knowledge and skills that they learned throughout their careers as tradespersons and they liked the ability to take complex ideas and make them understandable for the students. They likened sharing of knowledge to a light going on in the students' heads when they finally understood a concept, especially when the students experienced a high degree of frustration at the beginning of learning and felt that the teacher was being "a hard-ass." The students came to recognize that the instructor helped them to grow as individuals. These comments are probably common for most teachers, regardless of where or what differentiates technical/vocational teachers from other teachers. When speaking about what gives them satisfaction with teaching, most instructors talked about the help that they gave to their students which often extended beyond the classroom, in some cases to many years after graduation. Why would students care to stay in touch with their instructors long after they have left school? It is the first time that many students find success in school and the instructors become like an extended family member who they can turn to for professional as well as personal advice.

One instructor said that a relationship of trust is built over time and when students feel that they need a loving and supportive role model or friend, they turn to their former teachers. When I refer to loving in this context, it is the kind that bell hooks (1994) refers to as *eros*, where a teacher is not afraid to show that he cares for his students by transgressing those invisible boundaries of detachment to provide a nurturing learning environment.

One instructor said that considering the vast amount of information that has to be covered in a program, he was excited to see the students' progress, growth and

development. Unlike many academic programs that have students completing their studies over consecutive years, most trades in Canada require students to complete one portion of their studies, find employment in the appropriate trade and complete a minimum number of hours of documented work experience (approximately one year or 1500 hours), go back to school for another portion of their studies, complete another period documented work experience and do this two more times before being able to challenge the Interprovincial Red Seal Exam. That means that students are in and out of school, often returning to the same institution and the same instructor for further education over a period of several years, with an average minimum of four years. The instructor can see the growth and developing maturity of the students as they return to school: "You see them becoming good craftsmen [sic] and trades people." That process by itself builds the strong relationships that the instructors mentioned. Another dimension of the satisfaction with helping students is that the students develop a sense of professionalism as they leave and come back to school; therefore the quality of their work on practicums and worksites is really a reflection of the teaching they receive. By the time students reach the point where they are ready to write the Interprovincial exam, they have established a solid relationship with their instructors who may have become the much needed mentors. Some instructors related stories of students calling or visiting just to say that they were successful at their exams. As one instructor stated: "That's a pretty high honour as far as I'm concerned and it doesn't get any better than that. You can't put a money value on that." Another said that students do not need to call but "somehow or other they value the opportunity that you had as an instructor to help them along." A third instructor said: "When students complete the interprovincial exams, the thank you handshakes are not limited to one instructor, but to all the

instructors who helped them to be successful.” Besides the obvious monetary benefits of gaining a Red Seal designation, the success that the student has achieved is so fulfilling for the student and the teacher. I can relate that to the sense of family that is established where parents watch, nurture and support their children until they are successful and although they go out and become successful members of society, they still come home to visit when they can.

I provided similar examples previously from my own teaching in the trades: to this day, I still have students keeping in touch with me through social media, email, phone calls and sometimes even lunches and dinners. One instructor related an incident of meeting a former student and his family in the mall and not remembering the student’s name but feeling thrilled that the student not only made the effort to talk but to introduce his family. I can attest to meeting former students in the unlikeliest places like hospitals, theatres, streets, vacation spots and sometimes as far away as another country (once at the World Trade Centre in Taipei, Taiwan). One may make the point that many teachers make an impact on the lives of their students in very significant ways but in the case of technical/vocational teachers, there is an expectation on behalf of society that teachers will not only provide the required training, but in most cases, they will assist their students in finding employment. A great deal rests on the shoulders of those teachers and in many cases, the teachers, because of their industry connections, are able to assist students in this capacity. As part of their Key Performance Indicators, RRC collects and publishes yearly data on graduate satisfaction and employment and student evaluation of the program. For some teachers, this evidence may indicate that they are successful teachers – if their students find employment at the end of training. A more intrinsic benefit is that teachers see these students as a new generation taking

pride in their trade and raising the bar of the profession. One instructor said that he sees the future of his trade in his graduates and wants them to be better teachers, tradespeople and inspectors than he was, so they have a responsibility to look after the trade. That is a powerful message: caring goes beyond the subject matter; it goes to the very identity of the person.

Most instructors also reported that as far as job satisfaction goes, they really appreciated the support they received from their peers. They talked about the camaraderie that developed when they were stressed out from pursuing further studies, learning how to use a new piece of equipment or learning theoretical content that may not be their area of expertise, the opportunity to share teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and overall general survival skills that novice teachers find useful. They even go as far praising their colleagues for their success as teachers. Comments such as "You're never alone," "You have the support of other instructors that you work with," and "It's a great honour and great opportunity," all relate to the teamwork approach. One instructor speculated that the same cannot be said for other professions. As a teacher in the trades, I can attest to the team approach where I worked with two other colleagues. We very often discussed student-related issues, prepared students for competitions, celebrated our students' successes, raised funds for participation in competitions, and agreed, disagreed, and came to consensus on curriculum related content, teaching strategies, and assessments. Again, the point could be made that many teachers in academic classrooms work as part of a team. However, my many years of university experience as a student tells me differently. Many of my instructors appeared to work independent of one another because often-times knowledge and skills I was

learning in one course, although I found them directly applicable to another course, were not connected by lectures or assignments. I had to be able to transfer the knowledge built from one course to the other. Even content between sections of the same course appeared to be very different.

When I became a teacher-educator, instructors were very possessive of their notes and resources. At RRC as with most colleges, the rules regarding intellectual property is that anything developed for a course or for that matter, as part of your employment at the college is the property of the college. Bearing that in mind, I recall being asked to share my notes and resources for a course that I was not able to teach one semester. I copied a CD with all teaching materials, including handouts, assignments, and schedules. I even included many documents that I had collected over a number of years that could be used as additional resources. I did this sharing in the spirit of collegiality and not because I was required to hand over the materials. A few years later, I was teaching the same course and the instructor who I had initially shared my resources with was asked to share her resources with me. What I received in return was a course outline which was already available from the department with a suggested textbook that could be used for the course. There were no additional resources provided. I could have made the point that teaching materials developed as part of a course are the property of the college but when weighing the importance of the kind of working relationship that I wanted to have with my colleagues, there seemed to be little point in doing so. As disappointed as I was about the selfishness of such an act, when asked at other times to share resources for other courses, I gladly hand them over, including meeting with new instructors to review notes and pass on any teaching tips that I can offer. For

vocational teachers, the sub-culture of the classroom has some special dimensions. A sense of collegiality and teamwork prevails, partly I think because we, as teachers, feel a sense of responsibility for the success of our students. Many of them enter the program with less than an ideal academic background, have very little to no disposable income, have to work, sometimes full-time, have to balance family responsibilities and school, and perhaps the biggest disadvantage, have no social networks to support them while in school or to help when trying to build a career.

The combination of points mentioned above may help to explain what some instructors see as the same kind of camaraderie and teamwork that develops amongst the students: "You could see the effort and more than anything, you could see the other students helping him, so that tells me that a team developed. It wasn't just him anymore. It was the entire team." I often saw that when I was teaching hairstyling. A student would cut a client's hair and another would get the broom to clean up. They shared lunches, collected money for bus fare for a student who lost her bus pass, and offered rides at the end of the night to those students who had to rely on public transportation during cold winter nights. That developed partly because of the effort and attention I paid to making sure that the learning space was always welcoming and students felt that they wanted to be there. I was once chided (not quite disciplined), without benefit of an explanation, for leaving my classroom unattended while I attended to a student's personal crisis. In that instance, the student in question was pregnant and thought that she was about to have a miscarriage because she was bleeding. I told her that I would call an ambulance to take her to the hospital but she refused, saying that she, her husband and her son were just evicted from their apartment and she was living in an unheated trailer in a

farmer's field (this was winter) and she could not afford the cost of the ambulance. I made a judgement call and asked a colleague from another program to supervise my students while I drove my student to the hospital and waited till her husband arrived. I explained this to the director after my reprimand and he said that although what I did was a good deed, I had to consider the college's liability when I left my classroom unattended for a period of time. I said that I had briefly considered that point and decided that the student with a medical emergency took precedence over the others. I also reminded him that I did ask another instructor to supervise my students while I was away. Asking a colleague who knows nothing about my content area could pose a problem because, as an example, if students were working with chemicals and encountered a problem, the other instructor would not know what to do or perhaps even recognize the danger. In hairstyling, the dangers are not as huge as they might be in a welding classroom or a heavy duty mechanic program. I was fortunate that this was not the case that day as there was no lab work being done. I am not certain what my other options would have been if the situation was different. What made this example especially poignant was a few years later, the same student was diagnosed with terminal cancer and with the assistance from me and an entirely new group of hairstyling students, she was able to enjoy her last Christmas with her family with the Christmas hamper that was given to her.

It was interesting that only two web-based respondents said that they liked the pace of the work and the schedule that teaching provides. For most of us with prior experience in the trade, the working hours of teachers are far less than in the trades. Added to that, working in a unionized environment provides a certain amount of job security and pay that is not always achievable in industry. Many trades,

especially those traditionally dominated by women, are non-unionized. I am not certain that I can name one salon that is unionized: if there is, it is a rarity. For me as a hairstyling teacher, teaching offered some job security and definitely a much higher salary than I would be able to earn, even with a journey person designation. I do know, however, that the pace of the work is no less than I had as a hairstylist because I feel that there was so much I still had to learn about teaching and learning – for me and for my students. It would have been fascinating to have asked this question to the focus group participants but unfortunately, the web-based survey was conducted after the data was collected from the focus group participants.

Based on the overall positive comments from instructors about what they like about teaching including sharing their knowledge and the camaraderie that exists between instructors, one might speculate that because instructors self-selected for the study, that they were perhaps more thoughtful and engaged than others. While that may be the case in some instances, my experience tells me that over time, many vocational teachers build social and emotional relationships with students who enter their program, sometimes lacking in skills and abilities, and leave self-assured and capable of contributing to society. TVE teachers make overall contributions to a student's life not just in terms of a focus on the acquisition of technical skills. Often they draw from their own life experiences to share with students rather than because they have learned how to engage students from their teacher preparation courses. Some teachers are naturally better mentors and role models than others but all teachers can benefit from being taught how to provide mentorship.

Challenges with teaching

Every teacher has to deal with challenges when teaching a diverse group of students and technical/vocational teachers are no different. Instructors were asked besides the technical content, what were some of the cultural, social and individual issues for students that make teaching challenging. All instructors had a lot to say about this. Instructors first addressed the low level of academic preparedness of many students entering the program, including lack of appropriate levels of Math and English, which then makes it more difficult for them to succeed in the program. Several instructors said that what students are learning in high schools do not adequately prepare them for applied learning. They cite memorization as an example that does not work well in most parts of an applied curriculum. They said that high school counsellors who have no real understanding of the trades will often encourage students who are academically weak to enter a trade without realizing that if a student is weak in Math for example, s/he will likely be weak in a trade that requires a good foundation in Math. Students whose first language is not English also find the trades challenging partly because of the trade-specific language and partly because of the level of English with which they enter the program. Some of the instructors said that they try to create a more interactive classroom by using a variety of teaching strategies and planning team assignments at the beginning of the course. Without the appropriate supports, the student will have difficulty in the program and certainly with the provincial exams where tests are written in English. The age-old blame game is evident even with vocational teachers. Every instructor who has a student without the appropriate academic skills is wont to blame the system before, so college teachers blame high schools, just as high schools blame junior highs, and

junior highs blame elementary schools. Elementary schools are left to blame parents. The argument can continue forever but schools, should be prepared to provide the appropriate supports throughout the program for those who meet the minimum entrance requirement, recognizing that some students may be more or less prepared than others.

Instructors related stories of bright students dealing with culture shock, having to cope with living in a culture that is foreign to them. It is generally assumed that only those people moving from one country to another experience culture shock, but it can be felt moving from one city to the next within the same country or even from a rural to an urban location, as was mentioned with many Aboriginal and First Nations students who are leaving their Northern communities for the first time. As some instructors noted, the students are adjusting to life in a big city; they are not sure how to interact with other classmates; and they lack the familial and other social networks that most of us take for granted. One self-identified First Nations instructor said that because of these factors, many students either have to repeat courses or fail altogether. Besides the obvious emotional burden of having to repeat a course, if funding agencies are paying the cost of the student's training and housing, they are not apt to look too favourably on students having to repeat courses. Those students who are paying for their own education, either by student loans or by working part- or full-time find finances to be a major stressor. Teachers gave examples of students not being able to manage their money carefully or losing their funding, or funds being delayed because the paperwork was not completed correctly. The sad reality is that many students have little or no money or time management skills and those life skills are not generally built into training programs.

In some cases, students fail - not because they are not academically capable, but because they lack the skills that will take them through life. The lack of life skills probably speaks to the level of maturity that students enter into the program with. Instructors repeatedly have to talk to students about appropriate use of cell phones and other technology in the classroom, and they see it as a general sign of disrespect for teachers, other students, and society as a whole. A few instructors attributed this shift to a lack of societal expectations as they likened their lectures to background noise. A student entering a pre-employment college program with few life skills has, in some cases, less than one year to graduation before being expected to be fully prepared to go out into the world and function physiologically, socially, and legally as an adult.

Two instructors said that since they are new to teaching, they lack basic teaching skills, classroom management, computer and technology related skills. They said that as journeypersons, they mentored apprentices, but as teachers, they are not sure about the rules around student discipline when a student is acting out, or endangering another student's life because of misbehaviour or horseplay. They did say, however, that the CAE courses help them with these issues, and the support of senior faculty went a long way in giving them confidence.

Factors that contribute to challenges

Instructors had a great deal to say about the factors that contributed to the challenges they face. They identified a general lack of teaching supplies, appropriate technology, and old or outdated training aids and text books. A few instructors said that although they know the course texts are old or outdated, funds are not available

from the college to purchase new ones. In one program area, the text for the course is poorly written, complemented with an answer key that has many wrong answers, but it is the only available textbook for that program area so the instructors are at the mercy of the publishers, or they have to search the internet for supplementary resources. The lack of availability of good and current textbooks is systemic in the trades and almost every trade has the same issues. I mentioned previously two textbooks by Milady Publishers - *The standard Textbook of Cosmetology* and *Black Cosmetology* that I consider to be overtly racist, but those texts continue to be printed in new editions without question. Textbooks for specific program areas require a certain level of expertise in the subject matter that is not always available. That lack leaves many instructors looking to business and industry for teaching resources, which then leads to the other complication of having to train with a particular tool or piece of equipment because the manufacturer is willing to provide the training almost always with conditions attached. This situation is similar to soft drink manufacturers offering to provide learning materials for schools in exchange for exclusive contracts for vending machine foods or bottled water or whatever it is that they are selling. Vocational education is no different, and they are suitable candidates for corporations to take advantage of. TVE has not traditionally had many advocates for its social place in society, so there is often little opposition to business and industry funding training programs when the return on their investment seems to make economic sense from many positions. In many academic classrooms such issues as the presence of corporations in schools are hot topics. I have also been a parent lobbying for healthy foods in schools but as a vocational teacher, I have yet to hear in any of those classroom discussions anyone speaking about big businesses "supporting" entire training programs in exchange for job-ready graduates. I refer to

instances in Manitoba where the aircraft manufacturers support the college's aviation program and what they get in return are job-ready graduates, that is, if there are jobs available. If businesses are paying any training costs, it is a fraction of what it would cost them to do so on their own.

Instructors complain about the numbers of students in their classes and the lack of physical space to accommodate them, as well as their (instructors) inability to schedule sufficient time on the equipment so that students can master the required skills. Working in cramped and overcrowded conditions is difficult enough without compounding it by compromising the health and safety of both teacher and students. One instructor said that safety violations can lead to serious accidents or death. These situations have a multiplicity of challenges, made worse when classroom space is at a premium and more of them are being turned into office space. It is an unfortunate barometer about the value and importance placed on some things. A few instructors said that they are encouraged to be attentive to environmental concerns in their programs by "building green," but the working conditions for which they have to teach these concepts barely meet minimum standards for indoor air quality and dust. Having a well-functioning lab that students can practice in can be costly, but if graduates are expected to be sufficiently trained, then the tools and equipment they are learning on have to be close to current industry standards. I have observed some classroom labs at RRC and been impressed with the stacks of equipment, only to be told by instructors that they are really nothing more than scrap metal. I have also been in some currently used classrooms in the trades areas where the walls are in need of painting, heaps of wires are lying tangled on the floor causing a safety hazard, the instructor's desk is barely visible under the piles of old and scattered

papers, and posters from more than fifteen years ago are still taped on the wall, dusty and torn, as if the room was abandoned. Those are some of the spaces that students have to spend several hours each day trying to learn. It is interesting to note that RRC was voted one of the 50 "greenest" employers in Canada, while some teachers and students are in classrooms that contradict that award. In this case, the attention paid to the physical environment supersedes the social environment.

Most people feel some degree of apprehension at the thought of being evaluated by their supervisors, but most instructors agreed that the lack of leadership from their immediate supervisors and college administrators as a whole was troubling to them. Some of them said that except for end-of-course student evaluation of instruction, they have received no formal feedback or evaluation from their immediate supervisors which they felt was important for their professional growth. In other cases, instructors felt that their supervisors did not have the necessary skills to work with their staff, so any feedback in these cases would not be of value to the instructors. One instructor felt that his supervisor was so concerned about being liable, that he (supervisor) became overly cautious to the point of adversely affecting the teacher's growth and professional development. Another instructor said his supervisor funded his professional development activities from external sources and generally wanted to do the right thing for his staff but was thwarted by a more senior supervisor. When there are multiple layers of bureaucracy, the struggle to get anything achieved is that much more difficult.

Most instructors agreed that they have very little time to participate in professional development. For novice teachers, this is even more of a problem because of simply trying to keep up with the workload in an unfamiliar area

(teaching). As an example, not being able to learn to use the equipment after school without a great deal of headache means that from a technical point of view, instructors often lack the necessary skills to teach their students. From the social dimension, teaching/mentoring relationships between instructors are diminished. One instructor said instructors now have fewer opportunities to take care of each other, help each other, learn together or even get to know new staff members. They also have to continue to work with disgruntled senior instructors whose attitudes affect the morale of other staff members. These issues are exacerbated by the inability or unwillingness of administrators to lead and manage staff.

Some instructors said that the length of time between when they are given their course load for the next term and the start of the course is so short that it means that they have little time to adequately prepare their curriculum, never mind trying new teaching strategies, classroom management techniques or more authentic methods of assessment. As if that is not enough, instructors in apprenticeship programs have an even more daunting task of having to teach very large amounts of complex information in an eight-week period. It means rushing through the content as quickly as possible so that students can write the government exam. There is no good reason for this, except that the apprenticeship department wants the program delivered in a timely manner so that it does not cost too much money. It hardly makes sense to provide funding for a student's education but not give them sufficient time to complete their studies. Many students fail because they have to cram too much information in a short space of time. The financial cost for students to repeat the program becomes prohibitive. Add to that, the emotional toll of having to repeat a program, and the social costs are even greater.

One unexpected point which was mentioned by instructors was the number of academic accommodations that they have to make for students with disabilities. A few instructors felt that it was a disservice to some students, because the Student Services staff who make decisions about academic accommodations do not fully understand the realities of working in a trade. They cite students being accommodated for test anxiety, who will then go into the workplace and sometimes have to make life and death decisions independently at a moment's notice and be able to stand by that decision. If they are anxious about writing a test, they would - or should - be even more anxious about making important life and death decisions. Some students with disabilities are assigned teaching aides but that is only in the case of a student being formally assessed as needing an assistant. Some students are not aware that they have a disability that might affect their learning and others chose not to disclose their disability for fear of being labelled. Instructors say that they have to be astute enough to see some of the signs that a student is having difficulty with the content. A few instructors felt making accommodations meant that students are not expected to meet the same standards of quality for the program. Depending on the degree of ability, some trades lend themselves better to accommodating students with disabilities. In hairstyling and culinary arts, there are many more students with disabilities than there are in other programs that require students to have a minimum level of manual dexterity or cognitive ability. I had a hairstyling student who was hearing impaired and now works quite successfully as a hairstylist. A Deaf student in the hairstyling program (not my student) was assigned an educational assistant who acted as her interpreter. The student remained in the program for most of her studies but the reality was that she was not able to get that assistance in her final theory or practical exam and should she have passed anyway,

she would not have those supports in the workplace. The other difficulty was that unlike culinary arts where students have several exit points, in the hairstyling trade, there is only one exit point – you are either a qualified hairstylist or you are not. You cannot work in a salon performing parts of hairstyling services without obtaining a hairstylist's licence. In many other apprenticeship trades, there are no exit points prior to the first level of apprenticeship. It is a disservice to students to let them think that they can be successful when the government exam makes no allowance for educational assistants or extra time. Students are simply given instructions, calculators (if required for the test), and are expected to write the test within the specified time frame and with no assistance from anyone. Many students do not make it as far as the exam, which means that they cannot work in the trade. The dismal actuality is that government regulations around trade exams are not congruent with other government policies around inclusivity. The same goes for students whose first language is not English or French. They are not given an option of writing the tests in their language, even when, in some cases, they'll be finding employment in their communities where they would likely be conducting business in their native language.

Government rules and regulations are perhaps the most distressing factor that contributed to instructors' frustrations with teaching. Instructors said that they have discussed many issues with their apprenticeship counsellors including the lack of student academic preparedness, and the problems with being required to organize their curriculum into small modules. They felt that beyond the level of apprenticeship counsellor, the more senior managers did not value what TVE teachers have to say because they are viewed as tradespersons who happen to have a teaching certificate

or degree rather than the professionals that they are. Many senior government managers are academics who may have studied vocational education at the theoretical level but have no life experiences working in the trades from which to draw. One instructor succinctly said: "You have people making the rules that don't understand what I do, and they don't understand my trade, they don't understand how important it is to do what we do." Having dealt with some of those senior managers, I can attest to the accuracy of the instructors' experiences. In my earlier years of teaching, I attended meetings with apprenticeship managers who I felt were being disrespectful by dismissing what I had to say as if it was of no consequence. In one instance, I was a vocational teacher having to explain to an apprenticeship manager with a PhD that "e.g." and "i.e." were not the same and could not be used interchangeably. In later years, the opposite happened. I applied for a position in the apprenticeship department because I felt that if changes were to be made to business as usual, I had to be in a position to make that happen. I was shortlisted as one of two final candidates but subsequently I was not offered the position. Later on I was told by one of the interviewers who I knew from a previous job that even though I met the criteria of best qualified, the interview committee was concerned that some male instructors might challenge my authority. In an interview for another position in the same department a few years later, I was actually asked how I would handle male instructors who see me as another academic. I said that besides being an academic, I am a journeyman with a Red Seal and a teacher-educator who teaches male instructors regularly therefore I was quite capable of handling problematic situations. I did not get the job but when I asked (as per the government policy about freedom of information) for the reasons why I was not offered the position, I was told that the interview notes would be mailed to me. They

never arrived but I at that point I was no longer interested in pursuing it as I found some place else where I felt that I could make a difference.

Continuing with the theme of government policies, rules and regulations that do not seem to be compatible with the realities of the trades, several instructors said the way the apprenticeship department wants curriculum to be organized and delivered in a modular manner (competency-based) is problematic for them as well as the students. Instructors teach and test one small module at a time and the students successfully complete it; they then move on to another module and do the same; years may pass before the student revisits that module. By the time students are ready to write the Red Seal exam which has a minimum pass mark of 70% and covers the entire content of more than four years of study, they have to be able to synthesize all the information they learned over several years. Some are able to commit this much information to long term memory; others who have relied on memorization as ways of studying are not successful.

With respect to curriculum being organized in modules, there is a far greater problem that teachers face than simply working with them. Their understanding of some key terms used in TVE - Competency-Based Education, mastery learning, and Outcomes-Based Education - is extremely helpful in seeing how the politics of education impacts what they do in the classroom. One instructor had this to say about the definitions (which was already reported in Chapter 5 but bears repeating in the analysis):

I don't think there's any kind of profession that has as many buzz words and as many labels to talk about something as simple as learning. Yup, there's a label

for a label....Because all these things, outcome-based education, mastery-learning, what is it? It's all education. How do you become competent, how do you have, at the end, outcomes-based education? What is the end product and mastery learning? Well, it's learning, education."

No education is neutral so everything that happens in a classroom happens for a reason. The way curriculum is organized, delivered and assessed speaks to the philosophy of those in power. Government policies that favour training over education are cloaked in language that serves to perpetuate the hegemony of the dominant ideology, and if teachers are not aware of the philosophical beliefs that underpin the programs they teach, they may not be able to critique, let alone interrogate such inequitable systems. Although nearly half of all participants in this study had more than five years teaching experience, when asked about the definitions, most of them had no clear understanding of the terms, even though the modules they refer to are competency-based (content-centred curriculum, similar to mastery learning) which is not consistent with a college and government that requires all courses to be stated in outcomes-based language (student-centred curriculum). The significance of that discrepancy is not to be underestimated. If we do not understand the rules of engagement and the hidden nuances of the systems that we work within, then we are destined to walk blindly into the abyss that is TVE. Some teachers understood the definitions to mean that: students could demonstrate a skill without being taught on the job; the more competence teachers have, the more they are able to give to their students so that they (students) can go out in the world and be successful; not aspiring to build competence in students because the workplace does that; competence and mastery is about showing the government

that students have the ability to do the work; advanced learning is the goal; mastering the content in school is of no advantage when students gain employment because employers have different ways of doing things; it is about academics using the right buzz words; acquiring teaching credentials that give instructors the tools to be competent; there is an emphasis on personal growth; it is about repeatedly testing, and lastly, that education is measured in specific outcomes.

Most instructors could not clearly distinguish one of the definitions over the others; hence the comment from the instructor who summed up the discussion about definitions as different buzz words to describe learning.

Analyzing the meso-politics of TVE

Instructors were asked what kind of supports and resources they would find most helpful in improving the aspects of teaching that they found challenging, including those related to the classroom and the administrative structures of the college. They identified four areas: support for teaching, support for students, support from immediate supervisors and support from college administrators.

With reference to support for teaching, several teachers said that they need a mentoring system for teachers in general and for new teachers especially. There is ample evidence to support mentoring as a benefit to both the novice teacher as well as the experienced teacher. For new TVE teachers with little or no training in teaching methodology, mentoring would be practical for several reasons: 1) When new teachers have no experience in teaching, they are likely to go back to what was familiar to them when they were students, which may not have been the most

effective way of learning. Depending on how long they were away from a formal learning environment, the classroom management and teaching strategies that they rely on may be limited; 2) Novice teachers are generally expert workers who are confident in their technical abilities but not with some of the non-technical issues that arise in the classroom; they can learn from more experienced teachers how to deal with some of those challenges; 3) While they know the technical content at the level of an expert worker, some novice teachers may have to revisit skills and knowledge in order to teach them at a basic level; they may not be certain about how much to teach, how to pace the lessons, what to focus on, and how to evaluate students (both formative and summative). A structured and formal mentoring system would encourage them, rather than trying to struggle through, to ask for assistance when they need it , which then leads to a more successful first or second year experience; 4) A mentoring system builds capacity in the organization because the mentors themselves revisit their educational philosophy, they develop leadership skills, they have an opportunity to review technical content, they team teach, and they learn to take a more collaborative rather than individualistic approach to teaching and learning; 5) When teachers are in their classrooms with the doors closed, it can be a relatively isolating and solitary experience; mentoring provides some emotional support to teachers in general but most especially for novice teachers who would just like to have a senior teacher to listen and not necessarily give advice. One instructor shared his experience with being overloaded with a combined teaching load and academic studies and how it was good to have someone who understood what he was feeling. My experience is of a similar nature – teaching full-time, carrying a full-time university course load, and trying to balance that with a family life. There were times when I felt overwhelmed but had nowhere to turn for

help. So like many teachers, I tried to figure it out myself. Others quit the profession, preferring to do something far less stressful. It should be understood that for a mentoring program to work well, mentors have to be given sufficient professional development as well as the time required to be able to do it well. A few instructors said that while they work with a team of experienced instructors who are willing to help, the heavy workloads that they are carrying preclude them from doing so, or not at the level that the new instructors would find adequate.

Most instructors said that more professional development related to teaching, such as the CAE courses and other teaching related seminars would be beneficial, but they did caution that a poor teacher does not become a better teacher simply by taking courses. One instructor said that he believed that further education in the form of a degree helped him to be a better teacher, with the added benefit of peer support from the cohort of teachers he studied with. Having myself been in that position, I can say that although I had earned my Certificate in Education and my Vocational Teaching Certificate at RRC prior to teaching full-time, my first two years of teaching were far different than my later years, partly I believe, because I had learned more widely about multiple aspects of teaching and learning rather than the narrow focus of the vocational teaching certificate. My continued learning gave me the tools and the language to question curriculum or policies that were not equitable, but more importantly, to try to at least attempt to address them in and out of the classroom.

A major issue for instructors is the time commitment that is required for attending seminars and other professional development activities. Having delivered such seminars, the constant challenge is that they are held during the teaching day

when most instructors are teaching, so the very people who are the intended audience are not able to participate. New teachers are already overwhelmed with staggering teaching loads so they are less likely to participate in such activities although they would benefit the most. In addition, they are just becoming familiar with educational jargon, they have no context for the presentations since teaching is new to them or they do not yet understand how the workshops might benefit them, so they opt to stay away. An example of "need-to-know" information is how to write a good learning outcome because they appear (or should) on every course outline. I have held workshops for teachers on how to do this and I would be surprised if more than ten instructors showed up (from a faculty of more than 800 full-time instructors), even though I can pull most course outlines from the college's repository and see which ones are good and which ones need work. Pre-employment and apprenticeship programs are designed in such a way that they are delivered in six hour blocks of time. That means that an instructor's contact hours with students leaves no time during the day to attend professional development workshops and seminars. The end result is that they do not have the same opportunities for participation as do other instructors. This ongoing systemic issue with timetabling can be addressed if college administrators see the value, and are willing to place equal importance on teacher professional development as they do the funds they receive for the programs they deliver. Michael Apple (1999) posits that the manner in which curriculum content is organized and evaluated is really an argument by those who have power; in this case it is about timetabling that excludes rather than includes.

Some instructors did say that even when they are willing to pursue their CAE courses, the lack of availability of such courses, or the number of times it takes to enrol in a course because the courses are full, is frustrating. Several courses are offered during May and June when RRC instructors are still under contract but do not have students. This is an opportune time for many of them but when the maximum enrollment is twenty students and there is only one section of one course, it is a lesson in frustration to enrol online when the computer system jams because too many instructors are trying to enrol for the courses that are offered at that time. They are told that the availability of instructors is a problem. The timely availability of courses has been an ongoing complaint for many years, so this should send a clear message to the college that teachers, when given the opportunity (albeit on college time) are willing to enroll in teacher certification programs. Being one of those instructors who were asked to teach one or two courses in the intersession or summer session, I said my full-time schedule did not permit me to teach a week-long course offered during the day. I proposed to teach the course on alternate weekends, which is a format the college uses to deliver the CAE at another college in Manitoba. I was told that most RRC instructors would not want to give up their evenings and weekends to attend classes. The courses have minimum enrolment numbers anyway so if there are not enough registrants, the college can cancel that session so it costs them nothing to open another evening timeslot. This was exactly the same scenario that I was faced with many years ago when I was working as a substitute teacher in a public school at the beginning of my teacher education studies. I suggested since the facilities were locked after 3:30pm and not used until the next morning, that the college could offer full-time evening programs. The administrators gave me a number of reasons why they could not offer programs,

including that students might not want to attend school full-time in the evenings for a full year, the bus service was poor and the tuition would be too expensive. Fortunately there was a change in administration and the new director saw the sense in the suggestion. Twenty years later, the college still has full-time evening program offerings. Many of the students accessing those programs are holding low/no skill full-time jobs that have little possibility for advancement. One cannot assume that an instructor (in or out of RRC) will or will not participate in courses if they are offered in a format that has not been the standard at the college (but has been the standard for the same program at other colleges). A simple survey of all students registered in the CAE program would answer that question.

Some instructors believe that the college needs to re-think how they hire and prepare instructors for the classroom. One instructor said, "I know the first day I started work as a teacher I ended up in the classroom. They hire you on Friday and you start on Friday." That is indeed the sad reality. Most vocational teachers are hired for their expertise in a particular trade and they are then given training on how to teach after they are in the classroom. Contrast this with the induction method of teaching used in university teacher preparation programs. This model would work well in college level education, only if the college is prepared to do some upfront investment by giving new teachers a lighter teaching load in their first year so that they can spend the other portion of their teaching day in learning how to teach. That may include courses, seminars, observation of more experienced teachers, or team-teaching with more experienced instructors, who have themselves been trained to be good mentors or team leaders. Novice instructors could be given one course to teach independently, perhaps with the help of an experienced educational assistant who

can supervise students on the proper use of tools and equipment so as to learn the new skill and to prevent accidents. They felt that reducing the maximum number of students in each class would help address some of the challenges related to the safety aspects of the labs as well.

One instructor stated that teachers are not likely to overwhelm themselves with additional learning beyond the CAE unless they are adequately compensated for doing so. He believed that RRC would benefit overall from teachers with teaching experience and as such the college should have some compensatory structure for further education beyond the CAE. Presently, the normal salary range for instructors is anything ranging from trade experience to less than a master's degree. Educational stipends are paid if the instructor holds a master's degree or higher. Hypothetically, an instructor with a Red Seal and no teacher education designation can earn as much money as another trades teacher with a post-Baccalaureate in Education. The teaching knowledge between the two will obviously vary quite widely. One instructor puts it this way: "All of us here are professionals in our blue collar area. We know our own jobs but we're all playing instructors. Some of us are better at it and some of us learn how to be good at it." He said that there was a time when the college rewarded instructors for learning, but the emphasis is no longer there. Recent job posting for instructors at several colleges reveal that a Red Seal designation is required for some advertised positions with experience in teaching seen as desirable rather than required.

Rewarding teachers for learning is an investment both in the teacher and the learner, because the reality is that colleges spend a great deal of money and time on student engagement in the short term (the length of the students' program of

studies) without making a similar long term investment in teacher engagement. Research has shown that teachers who are committed to being better teachers develop learners who are also successful. Using a trade-related analogy, if you expect to produce good work, you have to be prepared to invest in good tools. One instructor said that the world works around rewards and as unfortunate as that is, even educational institutions buy into the post-capitalist reward system when thinking about their financial bottom line.

Instructors said that there need to be more rigorous academic requirements for entering into some programs, especially English comprehension and Math skills, and having such requirements mean that students are more likely to be successful in school. They believe that assessment tests should be conducted to ensure that the requirements are actually there rather than relying on a transcript that says so. Currently, assessment tests are not mandatory for students accepted into programs unless they do not meet the standard entrance requirements. Having conducted interviews with early leavers from some program areas, I found many of them do pursue some kind of academic upgrading while wait-listed for programs. They do, however, face a variety of challenges including course content that has very little to do with the actual program, instructors who have no teaching experience and therefore cannot cover the content in a manner that makes it easy to understand, instructors who are difficult to understand because of their level of English, courses offered in geographic locations that exclude rural students, and courses offered in a format (e.g. distance learning) not conducive to the student's preferred way of learning. In the case of courses being offered by distance, in my experience as a teacher, the students who require academic upgrading do not generally do well in self-study

courses and would benefit greatly from being in a classroom with a teacher who can answer questions as the material is being covered. Once students have started in the program, instructors feel that there should be supports in place whereby if a teacher identifies a student who is having difficulty, the student should be sent to a counsellor to discuss available options. While many teachers feel that having stricter entrance requirements would mean better students, research suggests that meeting the minimum entrance requirements for entry into a program is not always a predictor of success in the program. Another problem with setting entrance requirements that everyone has to meet is that they may unfairly disadvantage students who may not have access to college under normal circumstances.

Perhaps the single most important issue for instructors is the lack of support they receive from their immediate supervisors specifically, and college administrators in general. An overall lack of support from their immediate supervisors includes a lack of substantive feedback about their teaching abilities. Part of the problem may be that department chairs are now hired for their technical expertise and financial acumen rather than their ability as educators to mentor teachers and other staff. They are becoming much more focused on administrative tasks - managing a large staff and trying to balance their budgets - and less on teacher development and mentoring. Once again, there is ample evidence to suggest that timely feedback from students as well as supervisors can improve teaching, but for some instructors, the only source of feedback that they receive is student evaluations which some of them said are not always appropriate. The instructors said that they would welcome feedback from supervisors. Discussions between instructor and supervisor could include what works well as what does not, the intent of which would be to improve

the teaching and learning experience, rather than deciding on merit pay. Meetings would also give supervisors an opportunity to observe firsthand how students are behaving in the classroom, how resources are utilized, including how lectures and labs are scheduled, what the general conditions of the classroom are (including heat, cold, dust, ventilation) how the teacher is managing the classroom, what teaching strategies are used to deliver course content, and what challenges teachers may be facing on a daily basis (including plagiarism and the use of electronic devices). The supervisor can then offer any number of suggestions and/or other professional development activities for enhancing or improving the teaching/learning experience. This approach is especially useful for novice teachers who are "simply given a course outline and a bunch of pages" and they then have to make sense of something that is completely new to them. One instructor said that new instructors struggle just to keep up with the teaching load from week to week, so to know that a supervisor is there to offer support can go a long way in providing much needed emotional and scholarly support.

With respect to senior administrators, it is important that the administrators have policies in place that deal with a host of situations and that they are willing to stand behind the policies by putting the appropriate accountability checks and balances in places and ensuring that they are met. For instructors, accountability means enforcing policies around academic conduct, the use of electronic devices, and safe and healthy work/learning environments. Senior administrators must have policies in place to deal with multiple issues or eventualities, and be accountable for enforcing them. A case in point: a college policy was approved and put in place several years ago that all RRC courses have to use the approved course outline format. Almost ten

years later, there are still hundreds of courses that do not use the approved course outline format and there are no apparent repercussions for not doing it. Is this important? It is to the student who goes on the college's website to see the courses and course numbers offered in a particular program only to start school with a course outline that has a course code that is no longer valid, or worse, that there are courses with no learning outcomes (from an outcomes-based institution). That would be similar to telling a student that they will be taking a course and at the end they will be assessed, but they will not be told what they are going to learn until they are done the course. If students ask about the mismatch of course codes, they are directed to the college's webpage with the course conversion codes. These actions seem to violate the rules of what is fair or what is right in an academic institution. This situation can be remedied by asking for evidence that every course now uses the standard course outline format, but that would require the will and effort of senior administrators.

One instructor felt that the reason senior administrators appear uninterested in accountability, is they are more interested in "empire building" and less interested in the staff they manage (rather than lead). Instructors also said that administrators, in an attempt to gain the most political mileage, allocate resources in ways that may be or seem to be inequitable. For example, a large amount of money is being allocated to building a new facility for the Greenspace Management program because it can be promoted as building "green." Contrast this allocation with the working and learning conditions of some instructors and students. They refer specifically to classrooms and labs that have no proper ventilation, are too over- or under-heated, are overcrowded noisy, and dusty: "Ours are awful. The students have complained that they can't

concentrate. It's too hot. It's too cold. Way too hot. Way too cold. No air flow. Terrible. Dust. It's terrible." The less than satisfactory working and learning conditions are happening simultaneously as the college was named as one of Canada's fifty greenest employers. The less-than-ideal working and learning conditions is unfortunate given that the college is regularly lauded for its contribution to revitalizing the downtown campus by "building green" while instructors and students at another campus are working and learning in conditions and with training aids, equipment and even computer and related software that are less than satisfactory.

Analysing the macro-politics of TVE

Asked about their understanding of the role of the federal and provincial governments in relation to technical/vocational education, instructors identified several areas where governments are involved, most notably, funding, certification, job creation, education awareness, and political interests. In analyzing these roles within significant pieces of legislation pertaining to TVE, instructors made a number of inferences, some of which support and some of which contradict the historical reality.

Regarding funding, some instructors said that governments, as a way of planning ahead for the needs of society, invest in educational infrastructure, much as they do for roads and healthcare. Based on historical legislation for almost one hundred years, the evidence does not support the instructors' beliefs. Historically, funding for technical/vocational education was provided in response to Canada's economic downturns, rather than as an attempt to plan ahead. The following pieces of legislation are

particularly noteworthy: The *Agricultural Instruction Act* (1913), the *Technical Education Act* (1919), the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* (1938), the *Youth Training Agreement* (1939), the *War Emergency Training Schedule K* (1940), the *Vocational Training Coordination Act* (1942), the *Apprenticeship Training Agreement* (1944), the *Vocational and Technical Training Agreement* (1957), the *Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act* and the *Apprenticeship Training Agreement* (1960), the *Adult Occupational Training Act* (1967), the *National Training Program* (1982), and *The Canadian Job Strategy* (1985). What these legislations have in common is that they were all initiated and funded by the federal government, and they were directly related to the economic realities of the time. In some cases, the provinces had to provide equal amounts of money in order to access federal funds. That resulted in an unequal distribution of funds, further marginalizing them because they were not as wealthy as other provinces. These were direct federal funds for education, when education is the mandate of provincial governments.

In the last two decades the federal government has implemented a number of initiatives with respect to technical/vocational education, such as equipment funding to facilitate training, completion grants directed at students and graduates, and research dollars, most often directed at scientific/technical projects. There are few funds directed to the social dimensions of TVE, and in a search of literature pertaining to TVE teacher training, this deficiency is evident. On the surface, the following pieces of legislation can be viewed as progressive thinking: the *Canadian Opportunities Strategy of 1998* (including the *Canadian Millennium Scholarships*, the *Canada Study Grants*, the *Canada Student Loan Program*, and the *Registered*

Education Savings Plan) (Government of Canada, Department of Finance, 2008), but upon closer examination, these had their own set of issues especially regarding access to such funds by the people who needed them most. Canada, with its heavy reliance on immigrants to fill labour market needs, found itself in a period of critical shortage of skilled tradespersons and the federal government, in an effort to retain skilled workers, offered incentives of up to \$2,000 in the form of tax credits to employers through the *2006 Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit* (Government of Canada, Department of Finance Canada, 2006) if they hired apprentices. Apprentices and TVE graduates were also offered yearly taxable grants of up to \$2,000 under the *Apprentices Incentive Grant*, (Government of Canada, Service Canada 2011), the *Apprentices Completion Grant* (Government of Canada, Service Canada 2011), and the *Tradespersons Tool Deduction Credit* (Government of Canada, Canada Revenue Agency (2012). One instructor astutely said that governments "throw money at certain times if they want to move in a different direction."

When it comes to certification, most instructors said that since many trades are provincially regulated, training is controlled at the provincial level. They understood that governments are involved in establishing academic standards, benchmarks and guidelines for TVE; they develop comprehensive evaluation and certification procedures based on existing syllabi, and they are responsible for enforcing licencing. While it is true that trades are provincially regulated, based on my experience and those of the instructors, academic standards in Red Seal trades are also inconsistent from province to province. As an example, the exam requirements for working in the hairstyling trade vary considerably from one province to the next

(based on my experience as a teacher working with students who came from other provinces and were seeking refresher courses to write the provincial exam). The issue is not with the actual Red Seal exam, which is based on one hundred multiple choice questions; rather it is based on passing provincial certification exams which then makes one eligible to write the Red Seal exam. In Manitoba, students must complete 1,400 hours of in-school training before being allowed to write the provincial theory exam. Upon successful completion of that exam, the student is then allowed to do the practical exam. Any deviation from that 1400 hour requirement makes students ineligible to write the theory exam. In Ontario, the eligibility requirement for provincial exams is two to three years of on-the-job training, which accounts for about 90% the learning, and 16 weeks of in-school training, which accounts for the other 10%. What this means is that graduates from different provinces often have different skill sets and different levels of competence for the same trade, or as one teacher put it: "We all work off of an interprovincial Red Seal but we're all not taught the same." My teaching experience with this particular requirement was one of frustration. The mandate at the college where I taught hairstyling was that every student should participate in a 4-week (120 hours) practicum at or near completion of their program. The practicum was built into the 1400 hours of in-school training. The Department of Apprenticeship however, did not recognize those 120 hours of practicum as part of the hairstyling curriculum; since it was not technically "in-school" training, students either had to complete an additional 4 weeks of school, for which they would pay extra fees but get no additional credits, or the college would have to drop the practicum component from the curriculum. Students did not want to stay in school for an additional four weeks (bringing their total hours to 1520) if they were only required to do 1400 hours to

write the provincial exam. The college administrator at the time saw the value in students having a practicum (literature at the time supported such experiences) so he continued to go against the ruling of Apprenticeship department and build the practicum into the programs. This relates directly to the points the instructors made that dealing with the Apprenticeship branch is an exercise in frustration. Some instructors felt that beyond the level of apprenticeship counsellor, the people managing the Apprenticeship department have the "Ivory Tower" approach to TVE, that is, they are far removed from day-to-day classroom activities because they do not have the academic background, work experience or interest in TVE to understand the realities of the classroom. The disconnect between the apprenticeship department and the instructors creates a great divide between them and teaching staff, resulting in programming and policy implications that adversely affect the classroom. They cite as an example "employability skills." Again, based on my experience as a curriculum consultant working with many programs at RRC, this is troublesome. Programs at RRC are expected to imbed employability skills into their curriculum, but after ten years of adapting them from the Conference Board of Canada (for a more detailed explanation, see Chapters 1 and 2) and imbedding them into curriculum, there still appears to be no clear understanding of what those employability skills are and how, if at all, they are taught, let alone assessed.

Several instructors believed that the federal government has very little involvement in the day-to-day operations of TVE. Again, significant pieces of legislation contradict the instructors' perceptions. The reality is that the federal government, if not involved directly at the classroom level, is at least involved through legislation which heavily influences policy decisions at the provincial level.

The instructors believed, however, that the federal government had a role to play in facilitating discussions about setting and maintaining apprenticeship standards between provinces so that what is taught in each trade is the same from province to province. Given the depth of federal involvement in TVE to date, it behooves them to work harder at making this happen.

Some instructors said that the federal and provincial governments provide funding for: educational awareness, promoting vocational education as a viable add-on to a university education, as another alternative for high school students, and as a good option for those students who are not academically strong. The points mentioned contradict a later statement that some of the instructors made that if students are weak academically, they would likely find vocational education challenging because it is the application of theory rather than simply performing a technical task that matters. In my experience, the image of vocational education as a viable alternative in Canada is still a hard sell for most parents, and it continues to be a second best or last choice for many. The image continues to suffer, and marketing slogans such as "Learn to Work" and "Hire Education", while catchy, still focus on selling one's labour in a capitalist society.

Job creation was another way that some instructors said that the federal and provincial government are involved. They see the emphasis on job creation as a change from what happened previously. Historically, colleges determined the requirements for the workforce, but the current reality is that industry is now driving the agenda when it comes to skills training and what is needed. The federal government even provides support in the form of funding for employers who create new jobs for TVE graduates. Since employers are the ones hiring the graduates, they

are more powerful and influential in determining how programs are offered. Two examples of the power of big business are: 1) The adoption of the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills Profile in most college programs across Canada, and 2) The importance the federal government places on Essential Skills (discussed previously) needed by workers in specific occupations. The Board of Directors of the Conference Board of Canada represent some of the most influential business, utility and banking corporations in Canada whose mission is to build leadership capacity by "creating and sharing insights on economic trends, public policy and organizational performance" (Conference Board of Canada, 2011). Notably absent are some of the social dimensions of the workplace, such as worker rights, including how to challenge corporate structures that do not favour the employee, how to negotiate for such things as workplace daycare, flexible work hours, how to decline overtime work without being penalized, or a host of other issues that are left to workplace unions to negotiate, if there is one in place. It is not in the interest of business to have workers who ask too many questions unrelated to the company's bottom line of ever higher profits. The irony is that if employees have fair and equitable working conditions, they are happier, more productive, and less likely to leave, thus making it a win-win situation for both worker and employer.

The Manitoba government places a substantial emphasis on Trade Advisory Committees, giving them much more clout than their mandate of advising stipulates. These advisory committees date back to 1944 when the province appointed its first set of trade advisory committee members (see Chapter 1 for a more detailed explanation). RRC has a policy that states that every program at the college is expected to have an active advisory committee consisting of representatives from

industry who meet at least twice a year to provide recommendations on program content (including curriculum), based on the needs of industry. The level of industry involvement in the college's programs is not to be underestimated. A case in point is how new programs are developed, or renewed (another word for reviewed), in a five-year cycle. The first step in developing a new program (beyond the initial feasibility study) or renewing a program, is an occupational analysis, whereby expert workers identify the skills and abilities that make for a successful worker in a particular field. Based on the emerging chart of 10-15 major competencies and 100-200 related skills, faculty are then asked to identify which of the skills they can reasonably expect to teach in the allotted time for the program, and the level of competency that the graduate will be able to perform the skills. Then curriculum is developed based precisely on the emerging chart. Having facilitated a number of such workshops, I can attest that while most employers say they do not care about the graduate's level of technical skills and that they would prefer graduates who are proficient in the employability skills (personal competencies), the veracity of such statements is questionable. As one instructor stated in the focus group: "Industry wants their needs and I can just tell you that they want Level 1 students which are entry level, which are the poorest paid, but they want them to be able to walk on water and the water is not frozen. They're asking too much of the student. They're wanting too much of a student as an entry level." What he is saying is that employers want the best of both worlds – a well-trained graduate who has good technical skills but who the employer does not have to pay well. The instructor who made this point also went on to add that he saw this depth of involvement as too much interference on the part of employers, the government and college personnel who have little respect for, or understanding of, what goes on in the classroom,

including challenges that teachers encounter when providing training. He related an incident where he as the instructor was invited to attend a meeting of various stakeholders but was not allowed to voice his opinion because he was "only a guest." Again, I can attest that the instructor's experience was similar to my experience when I was teaching hairstyling around the time that hairstyling was being considered as an apprenticeable trade. I, as an instructor, was invited to the meeting, but I was not allowed to have any input in what was to be taught in the curriculum. My role was solely to facilitate delivery of the curriculum but not to question or have any input as to the content. Although trade advisory committees are supposed to advise, they are often given much more influence in determining the direction of programs and curriculum content.

Some instructors identified government involvement in initiatives targeting specific groups such as new immigrants, whereby the government is putting mechanisms in place to recognize the foreign credentials of tradespersons qualified in their country of origin. They see this move as problematic in that the training standards in Canada are more rigorous and as such, the teachers are finding that they themselves are not as prepared as they should be for dealing with the challenges students face with language and level of technical ability. It is fine to say that governments are working toward recognizing credentials of foreign trained tradespersons, but from personal experience, the discussion thus far has been rhetoric for some professions and trades. I give as an example two trained hairstylists in from Sri Lanka who were told by a counsellor at Manitoba Apprenticeship that in order to qualify as a hairstylist they would have to go to school and complete the 1400 hours of in-school training before they could write the

theory exam. In desperation, someone who had graduated from my hairstyling program told them to speak to me. I asked about their qualifications and they said that although they were good at the practical skills because they were educated in an apprenticeship model, they would need some assistance with the 400-hour theory component of the program. I tested them on some practical components and indeed their technical skills were very good. I discussed their situation with the college's director suggesting that they could attend school for the theory portion and upon completion, they could be granted credit from the college for the portions of the program for which they could demonstrate competency. This was my attempt at recognizing their prior learning, although at the time, I did not call it that. The director agreed with my suggestion letting me know that it would be my responsibility to ensure that they were able to demonstrate competency in the practical skills. All of this contravened what the Department of Apprenticeship required, but it seemed to be the only way to assist the students to break down the barriers to their education. The students both graduated and have been successful business owners for a number of years. My actions (as well as the Director's) in this instance was another example of subverting the rules of the establishment.

Instructors noted that governments are involved in TVE out of their own political interests, sometimes providing, or at the very least, directing funds to programs that are in their political interests. A notable case in Winnipeg was the funding for Winnipeg Technical College. At the time the college was built in 1984, Lloyd Axworthy was the federal Minister of Employment and Immigration for Winnipeg South. Along with other provincial politicians, funds were acquired from three levels of government to build the school in his riding. We are often reminded

that education is a provincial mandate but in this instance, without the federal minister's involvement, the college may well have remained someone's vision. Directing money to one's constituency is not a new idea for politicians wanting to score points with their constituents, especially when the focus was more on the number of people the college would provide training for than where the money was coming from. Political interests can have an adverse effect on some programs, especially after a change of government. Programs that were once funded because they were seen as viable or in the political interest of one politician can suddenly be cut because they are not on the new political party's agenda. Participants said that they were concerned that their programs could be cut for political reasons and not because it was no longer viable.

Although instructors may not have mentioned specific pieces of legislation, for the most part, their discussion accurately represented the role of the provincial government in technical/vocational education. Most of them are of the opinion that education is a provincial mandate, so their understanding of federal involvement in TVE is less clear. It is not sufficient simply to be familiar with the various pieces of federal legislation that impact TVE, as I was taught in my university courses, but to look deeper into finding out why funding was provided, for what reasons and whose interests would be served.

Recommendations

Although Red River College was the site of the research, it is a microcosm of a larger system in which technical/vocational education and training function. The issues identified by instructors should not be assumed to be endemic only to that

particular institution, because most colleges in Canada (some now renamed to applied universities or polytechnics) function in much the same way. I would posit that the issues raised in this dissertation and the perception of instructors is really a global phenomenon. It is not entirely realistic to think that systems will change simply because someone points out inconsistencies in the messages. I was told recently by another teacher-educator that everything there is to know about teaching has already been written. I agree that much has been written about teaching and learning that can be applied to TVE, especially in the area of critical pedagogy. After all, critical pedagogy was born out of the frustrations of the working class. I do, however, disagree with my colleague that everything there is to know about teaching has already been written. Technical/vocational teacher preparation is a most ideal place to embed a critical pedagogy. Before providing any recommendations, I would like to restate my definition of critical pedagogy offered in Chapter 3: "I see critical pedagogy in the context of TVE as a "pedagogy for the dispossessed" – one in which I as a teacher, help facilitate a learning environment that enables my students to create meaning from the world they live in, one in which I am concerned with every aspect of the student's life including that which is messy and difficult, that which is troublesome and that which does not have an easy answer. I come by this understanding based on my life experiences, shifting slowly back and forth between socially constructed borders..." When I refer to a pedagogy for the dispossessed, I am relating it to an educational system that shamelessly takes the most underprepared and often most disadvantaged students, and put them in classrooms to be taught by the most underprepared teachers, and in some cases, teachers with no training - and expect brilliant results. Astonishingly, many of those teachers have a great deal of success in spite of such a flawed system that does not

support them. Technical/vocational education in its current state is really not about education; it is about training and producing workers. If TVE teacher preparation programs adequately prepared their teachers, the teachers would have a better understanding of how to help those underprepared students they keep referring to and they can also see how they themselves contribute or not to their students' success.

Based on the literature review and theoretical framework put forth in the preceding chapters, and given the pragmatism of needing to live and work within a hegemonic culture in order to challenge it, the following recommendations are put forth to make a case for the necessity for a specific pedagogy to address the current shortcomings in technical/vocational preparation and further teacher professional development. The recommendations are framed to be operationalized within the micro-, meso- and macro-politics of technical/vocational education.

1. Teacher preparation courses such as RRC's Foundations of Applied Education, and similar others offered in university pre-service teacher education programs should provide opportunities for students to critically analyze historical pieces of legislation and the ways they impact current conditions in and out of the classroom. Having taught this course a few years ago at RRC, I can confirm that when I asked students to think critically about the course content, including the social, political, philosophical and economic foundations of applied education, it was only at a superficial level. Although I had studied about federal involvement in TVE at the graduate level, the deep analysis looking for patterns was absent, and upon reflection, I believe that my professors held a particular world view which did not include thinking of TVE

in a socially sustainable way; thus, the knowledge they imparted in the classroom was the way I taught the course, until I gained other perspectives from later studies.

2. It is imperative that TVE teacher-educators have the required knowledge and industry experience to be able to fully appreciate how vocational classrooms function so that they can engage faculty. It means hiring people whose qualifications allow them to explore issues from a number of perspectives rather than what has traditionally been a scientific and positivist world view. This shift would help address the concerns some instructors have about the quality of the teacher educators in the CAE program. Technical education can, and should be analyzed through the three pillars of sustainability as defined by UNESCO – economic, social and environmental. Curriculum has traditionally focused on preparing graduates with technical skills to find employment. Some are now building environmental aspects (at least the physical environment) into curriculum. The time has come to address the shortcomings of the social dimensions of TVE. The economic and environmental pillars cannot succeed without realizing that the human aspect has to be accounted for.
3. Every teacher education course should include aspects of critical education, where teachers are introduced to language that may not be familiar to them. The instructors in this study are dealing with some of the issues that critical pedagogues write about. Some of those relate to issues of students' access to education including those with disabilities; students' lack of strong life skills upon entering the program; the disrespect paid to instructors from senior government managers because of their perceived place in society; teaching

with a curriculum methodology that does not really help students to succeed; and lack of support from college supervisors and other administrators. While some of these issues are not specific to TVE, they have advocates in other areas of education – advocates who are willing to be heard. With a class-based education that is TVE, there are few advocates critiquing it, so if TVE teachers are not engaged in such discussions in their teacher preparation courses, they are not likely to encounter it when they are teaching. It is important that teachers be given the skills to critically reflect on such issues as to why they are told that education is a provincial mandate when the evidence says otherwise and why this evidence continues unchallenged (see Chapter 1 for federal involvement in TVE). They should also be able to ask who, if anyone, would challenge such legislation, and in whose interest it would be to maintain the status quo.

4. No education is neutral; therefore teachers should engage in discussions about acknowledging their biases and ask students to do the same. Every teacher should define and commit to paper their own philosophy of education - why they choose to teach, how they manage their classrooms, how they include or exclude students, how they can help to break down some of the barriers to access to such education, who is represented in most vocational programs and how this might be linked to one's social class based on a hegemonic system that supports it, and how in spite of their good intentions about student engagement and success, they can be stymied by government regulations and policies that are beyond their control.
5. Courses are added on the use of technology because it is the way of the future. In the same way, specific courses could be added about teaching

methodologies such as popular education, that allow for other world views. Course content must include in-depth examinations of the institutional and government systems within which TVE functions. It is no good to talk about student engagement and their civic responsibility if teachers themselves are not engaged. Civic responsibility should not happen in a haphazard manner but within a human and financial resource structure that supports it.

6. Every teacher should have a plan for professional growth. Rather than waiting for supervisors to give them feedback, they can, and should, use the results of their yearly Student Evaluation of Instruction results to request professional development for the areas in which they may need it. Although not ideal, it is a move in the right direction. Additionally, they can ask more experienced teachers from non-related program areas to serve as mentors, or simply to sit in their classes and give constructive feedback. This kind of feedback gives them another perspective to consider. I have offered this option to many teachers that I have taught, but to date no one has taken me up on the offer to sit in the classroom, although several have asked for assistance or feedback on teaching or classroom-management issues. Taking the initiative means that teachers are in control of their learning.

Recognizing that TVE teachers cannot make changes singlehandedly, the obligation for providing a welcoming learning environment is the responsibility of educational institutions and governments. The following recommendations are intended to address those shortcomings.

1. Instead of focusing on the lack of academic preparation that students are entering the program with, assessment tests should be conducted for every

student, not as a way of excluding them, but as a way to assess the level and appropriateness of supports that need to be in place to ensure success for all learners. This assessment would be similar to an ACCESS model used at RRC to support under-represented and marginalized students throughout their program of studies. It would also mean acknowledging that many vocational students meet the criteria for support, even if they are not labeled as such.

2. Paid peer tutors can be trained and mentored to offer program-specific tutorials and study skills seminars. Beyond the obvious benefit to the student who needs this kind of support, tutoring is not seen as extra work because the tutor builds leadership skills while earning a part-time income.
3. Upon entering a program of studies, every student should be assigned to a faculty member who would be responsible for checking in to make sure that there are no issues and should any arise, the faculty member can point the student to the appropriate resources.
4. Colleges could move to course-based rather than program-based tuition. Course-based tuition would address two issues: 1) A compulsory life-skills course could be added to program offerings so that students are at least somewhat prepared when they are in the workplace; students who already have these life skills could be credited for the course through recognition of prior learning if they can provide evidence of the learning; 2) Students who are not successful in a course could repeat the course rather than the entire program.
5. An evaluation system should be put in place so that faculty and staff can provide feedback on their supervisor's performance, similar to college policies around student evaluation of instruction. Staff evaluation would provide

senior management with feedback on how well or poorly managers are performing. This is in keeping with the principles of Total Quality Management that many organizations like to endorse, but do not model themselves after. A non-threatening feedback system gives employees a sense that their voices are being heard.

6. On an institutional level, when teachers are hired, their teaching loads should reflect the level of professional development they would require to be considered minimally competent teachers. It means that contact time for teachers with no teaching experience should be proportional to the time they need to take teaching related courses or prepare curriculum. Differential course loads could be reflected in a differential salary from those teachers with some teaching experience. Of course allotting time for novice teacher development would cost money initially, but the end result would benefit teacher and student.
7. A well-thought-out, rather than hit-and-miss plan for mentoring and supporting all teachers should be part of every college's strategic plan, but it has to go beyond words and rhetoric and must have with the appropriate financial and human resource allocation. Novice TVE teachers especially, would benefit tremendously from a well-planned and comprehensive mentoring system. A coherent plan would mean that teaching related courses and seminars may have to be offered multiple times to accommodate the long contact days that vocational teachers have. It would also mean offering courses in alternate formats such as streaming video or in evening and weekend timeslots. Alternate formats would have the added benefit of

alleviating the backlog of instructors who are teaching without benefit of formal training.

8. At the institutional level, a concrete plan with a core set of key indicators should be put in place, identifying the persons who have responsibility for monitoring whether supervisors are meeting their commitment to providing appropriate professional development opportunities for faculty in a timely manner. It means that the person/s should ensure that the financial resources are in place. A yearly report on such activities would mean that senior managers would also have to be accountable for doing their jobs.
9. Hiring practices at colleges need to reflect the nature of the education that is provided. That means that student services counsellors must have experience working in the trades so that they can fully appreciate the nuances of that area of studies and counsel students accordingly. It would also mean that if department heads are to provide support and mentorship, especially for novice teachers, they must have required educational background to do so.
10. Senior administrators should be hired in the same manner. They must have proven expertise in the area of technical/vocational education so they can fully grasp their place in society as educational providers who have a duty and responsibility first and foremost to the people they serve. They are not corporations who need to engage in corporate social responsibility. They are the educational institutions whose *raison d'être* is about providing the kind of critical education that helps politicize their students on the importance of being watchdogs to businesses and corporations who do not contribute to their community unless it positively affects the bottom line. It takes courage and daring to politicize our students, because it is a counter challenge to the

hegemonic education they are receiving albeit such challenges can come with personal and professional risks of their own. Senior administrators should dare to take those risks.

11. Governments enacting legislation and policies regarding education must be willing and prepared to provide the necessary funds for professional development required to help teachers understand the meaning of terms such as Competency-Based Education and Outcomes-Based Education. Such professional development would mean, of course, that ministers of education should know something about education, or at the very least, ask their advisors to explain in simple language what they are promoting. A good example would be the outcomes-based education model that was mandated in Manitoba more than a decade and a half ago. It appears that the government is itself not clear about the difference between competency-based education and outcomes-based education. It is hardly surprising that classroom teachers are confused.

Recommendations are only that – proposals for change. The foregoing recommendations all have resource implications for colleges and governments, and with the perpetual shortage of funds, these could slip through the cracks entirely. If there is no willingness, desire, plan or opportunity to prioritize and operationalize them, then they are destined to remain on a bookshelf serving no useful purpose. Throughout this dissertation, I have given many examples based on my life experiences as an instructor in the trade of hairstyling, as a technical/vocational teacher-educator and as a researcher, of how critical education can be operationalized in an attempt to affect change within and outside of educational institutions. If education is intended to level the playing

field, by making education, as well as the field, accessible to all students, then it is incumbent on us as a society to provide the necessary funds to ensure that TVE students have the same opportunities offered to others. It means fashioning a pedagogy that allows us as practitioners to politicize our lives, and not merely to sell our labour to the highest bidder.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aboriginal Healing Foundation (2004). *Where are the children?: healing the legacy of the residential schools = Que sont les enfants devenus?: L'expérience des pensionnats autochtones*. [DVD] Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

acumen research (2003). *RRC Learning Outcomes Research. Final Report*. July. Red River College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Alderson, Anna & Martin, Marie (2007). Outcomes-Based education: Where has it come from and where is it going? *Issues in Educational Research*. Vol. 17, pp. 1-14.

Andrich, David (2002). A framework relating Outcomes-Based education and the taxonomy of educational objectives. *Studies in Educational Evaluation*. 28. pp. 35-59.

Autobus, Peggy (2004). *The Global Women's Movement. Origins, issues and strategies*. Fernwood Publishing. Nova Scotia.

Apple, M. W. (1999). *Power, Meaning and Identity. Essays in Critical Educational Studies*. Peter Lang, New York.

Apprenticeship Futures Commission (2006). Retrieved from <http://www.apprenticeshipfuturescommission.mb.ca/index.html>

Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (no date). *The Atlantic Canada Framework for Essential Graduation Learnings*. Retrieved from

<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/pdfdocs/curriculum/camet/essential-grad-learningse.pdf>

Barndt, D. (1989). *Naming the Moment: A Political Analysis for Action*. Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice. Toronto.

Benavot, A. (1983). The Rise and Decline of Vocational Education. *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Apr.), pp. 63-76.

Berlach, Richard G. & McNaught, Keith (2007). Outcomes-Based education? Rethinking the provision of compulsory education in Western Australia. *Issues in Educational Research*. Vol. 17.

Berlach, Richard G. (2004). *Outcomes-Based education and the death of knowledge*. Paper presented at The Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, The University of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. Nov 28–Dec 2.

Berry, Kathleen. (1998). *Students as researchers: creating classrooms that matter*. Edited by Joe L. Kincheloe and Shirley R. Steinberg. London, England: Palmer Press.

Bezeau, R. N. & Hoskins, J. R. (2007). *The fallen feather [DVD]: Indian industrial residential schools Canadian Confederation*. Revelstoke, BC: Vision Productions.

Black, E. & Silver, J. (2008). *Building a better world. An Introduction to Trade Unionism in Canada*. Second Edition. Fernwood Publishing. Winnipeg.

- Blackmore, J. (2000). Hanging on to the edge: an Australian case study of women, universities and globalization, *Globalization and education: integration and contestation across cultures*, pp. 333- 352, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, Maryland.
- Bloom B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*. New York: David McKay Co Inc.
- Bodley, John H. (1999). *Victims of Progress*. Fourth Edition. Mayfield Publishing. Toronto.
- Burns, Wendell A. & Wood, Robert W. (1989). Teachers Perceptions of the effects of Implementation of Outcomes-Based Education. *ERIC Digest Number ED308618*.
- Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2008). *Stolen children [DVD]*. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Toronto: CBC Learning.
- Capper, Colleen A & Jamison, Michael T. (1993). Outcomes-Based Education Reexamined. From Structural Functionalism to Poststructuralism. *Education Policy, Vol. 7 No. 4*. December. pp. 427-446.
- Casanova, F. (2003). *Vocational training and labour relations*. Montevideo: CINTERFOR. 77 pp. (Trade Unions and Training, 4). Retrieved from <http://www.oitcinterfor.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/publ/tunion/casanova/index.htm>

Conference Board of Canada (2011). *About the Conference Board of Canada.*

Retrieved from <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/about-cboc/default.aspx>

Conference Board of Canada (2000). *Employability Skills 2000+*. Retrieved from

http://www.conferenceboard.ca/Libraries/EDUC_PUBLIC/esp2000.sflb

Conroy Jr., W.G. (1980). The Economic Effects of Vocational Education. *The Journal of the American Vocational Education*, Sept.

Co-op Connection (2102). *About co-op stores*. Retrieved from:

https://www.coopconnection.ca/wps/portal/fclretail/FCLInternet/CoopStores/AboutCoopStores!/ut/p/c5/hY_LboMwFES_qPLFhMcWYp4NxKZBgDcVSajlYuy2VFXC15fsqqpR7yyPZuYO4miV7r-k6D-l0b1CLeLuMz6wGsfOBvzMiyFLWIITWmConZV393lm_-POERfKHNeepzGCzGBIBGp5iUEIR5xvs8SGeVPJoiKVD1M2rvScIQTszyKQP0vloF8qUp9ZcbTVy2OxeE5gft7hrtXXmVx8nfLIYdJbx_H72a7KlqnLFi1cYO0bNbe-PD6Hcw5pUh7sqZgCB-4v_se_G4c4FgMrUTAN6m9piGCv_G1mNMkQ!/dI3/d3/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/

De Jager, H. J. and Nieuwenhuis, F. J. (2005) 'Linkages Between Total Quality Management and the Outcomes-Based Approach in an Education Environment', *Quality in Higher Education*, 11:3, 251 - 260

Dewey, John (1997). *Experience & Education*. Simon & Schuster. New York.

Dewey, John (1997). *Democracy and Education*. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. Simon & Schuster. New York.

Dominion of Canada (1938). *Journals of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada*. January-July. J. O. Patenaude, I.S.O Ottawa. Retrieved from http://www.archive.org/stream/hcc761938uoft/hcc761938uoft_djvu.txt

Dominion of Canada Department of Agriculture (1915). *The Agricultural Gazette of Canada*. Volume 1. January to December. Ottawa Government Printing Bureau. pp. 31-37. Retrieved from <http://www.archive.org/stream/agriculturalgaze01canauft#page/34/mode/2up>

Donnelly, K. (2007). Australia's adoption of Outcomes-Based education: A critique. *Issues in Educational Research*. Vol. 17, pp. 1-17.

Dupuis, A.M. & Gordon R.L. (2010). *Philosophy of Education in Historical Perspective*. University Press of America. United Kingdom.

Education Commission of the States (1995). *"Outcome-based" education: An overview*. Denver, CO: Author. January. Retrieved from <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/go/go4outcm.htm>

Elias, J. & Merriam, S. (1995). *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education*. Second Edition. Krieger Publishing Company. Malabar, Florida.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of*

qualitative research 2nd ed., pp. 733-768. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Employment and Immigration Canada (1983). *National Training Program*. Retrieved from <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/National/40.htm>

Finn, Chester (1998). Why do bad things happen to good ideas? *American Experiment Quarterly*, Spring. Retrieved from <http://www.americanexperiment.org/uploaded/files/aeqv1n1finn.pdf>

Freire, Paulo (1973). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Seabury.

Freire, Paulo (2000). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum.

Galli, Michael (2004). Review of *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation*, by Paulo Freire (1985), In D. Schugurensky (ed.), *Reviews of Paulo Freire's Books*. Retrieved from http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/freire/mg.html

Giroux, H. (2006). Higher Education Under Siege: Implications for Public Intellectuals. *The NEA Higher Education Journal*. Fall. Retrieved from http://www.nea.org/assets/img/PubThoughtAndAction/TAA_06_08.pdf

Glendenning, D. (1964). *Impact of Federal Financial Support on Vocational Education in Canada*. PhD thesis. Indiana University. September.

Glendenning, D. (1968). *A Review of Federal Legislation Relating to Technical and Vocational Education in Canada*. Ottawa: Programs Branch, Department of Manpower and Immigration.

Gouvernement du Québec, (2003). *Policy on the Evaluation of Learning*. Ministère de l'Éducation. Retrieved from <http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/lancement/PEA/13-4602-03A.pdf>

Government of Canada (2012). Canada Revenue Agency. *Employed tradespersons (including apprentice mechanics)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/tpcs/ncm-tx/rtrn/cmpltng/ddctns/lns206-236/229/trds/trdsprsn-eng.html>

Government of Canada (2011). Service Canada. *Apprenticeship Completion Grant*. Retrieved from <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/apprenticeship/completiongrant/program.shtml>

Government of Canada (2011). Service Canada. *Apprenticeship Incentive Grant*. Retrieved from <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/apprenticeship/incentivegrant/program.shtml>

Government of Canada (2008). Department of Finance. *Budget 2008*. Retrieved from <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2008/plan/chap1-eng.asp>

Government of Canada (2006). Department of Finance. *Advantage Canada - Building a Strong Economy for Canadians*. Retrieved from <http://www.fin.gc.ca/ec2006/plan/ecpame.html>

Government of Canada (2006). *The Budget in Brief 2006. Focusing on Priorities*. Retrieved from <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budget06/pdf/briefe.pdf>

Government of Canada (1982). The Constitution Act, 1867 (*THE BRITISH NORTH AMERICA ACT, 1867*). Retrieved from http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Canada/English/ca_1867.html

Government of Manitoba. (2009-2010). *Entrepreneurship Training and Trade Annual Report*. Retrieved from http://www.gov.mb.ca/ctt/pdfs/09-10_ett_ar.pdf

Government of Manitoba (2009). *The Colleges Act*. Retrieved from <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/c150-1e.php>

Government of Manitoba (2007). *Technical Vocational Initiative*. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/tvi/index.html>

Government of Manitoba (1996). *Presidents. Manitoba Post- Secondary Institutions Offering Teacher Pre-Service Training*. John Carlyle, Deputy Minister of Education.

Government of Manitoba (1960). *1959 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report*. Archives of Manitoba. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Government of Manitoba (1948). *1947 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report*. Archives of Manitoba. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Government of Manitoba (1947). *1946 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report*. Archives of Manitoba. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Government of Manitoba (1945). *1944 Manitoba Department of Labour Annual Report*. Archives of Manitoba. Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Government of Manitoba (no date). *Co-operative Education. Advanced Education and Literacy Manitoba. Council on Post-Secondary Education*. Retrieved from http://www.copse.mb.ca/tax_credit/index.html#coghi

Government of Manitoba (no date). *Essential Skills - Get Ready to Succeed*. Competitiveness, Training and Trade. Retrieved from http://www.gov.mb.ca/tce/apprent/future/essential_skills.html. Access date: September 13, 2009

Guskey, Thomas R. (1994). Defining the Differences Between Outcome-based education and mastery learning. *The Free Library*. September 1. Retrieved from [http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Defining the Differences Between OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION AND MASTERY ...-a077196526](http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Defining+the+Differences+Between+OUTCOME-BASED+EDUCATION+AND+MASTERY+...-a077196526)

Gutek, Gerald L. (2005). *Historical and Philosophical Foundations of Education. A Biographical Introduction*. Pearson Education Inc. New Jersey.

Harrow, Anita (1972). *A taxonomy of psychomotor domain: a guide for developing behavioral objectives*. New York: David McKay.

- Heider, Karl G. (1988). The Rashomon Effect: When Ethnographers Disagree. *American Anthropologist, New Series, Vol. 90, No. 1. March, pp. 73-81.*
- Henley, Dick & Young, Jon (2001). An Argument for the Progressive Possibilities for Public Education: School Reforms in Manitoba. Chapter 12. *The Erosion of Democracy - Critique to Possibilities.* Detselig Enterprises Ltd. Calgary, Alberta.
- Houston, Don (2007). TQM and Higher Education: A Critical Systems Perspective on Fitness for Purpose. *Quality in Higher Education, Vol. 13, No. 1, April.*
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (2008). *Apprenticeship Incentive Grant.* Retrieved from http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/trades_apprenticeship/AIG/index.shtml
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (2009). *Apprenticeship Completion Grant.* Retrieved from http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/trades_apprenticeship/ACG/program_information.shtml
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (2009). *Understanding Essential Skills.* Retrieved from http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/understanding_es.shtml

- Jackosn, N. (1993). If competence is the answer, what is the question? *Australia & New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research*. Volume 1, Number 1.
- Kanpol, B. (1999). *Critical Pedagogy. An Introduction*. 2nd Edition. Bergin & Garvey. Westport, Connecticut.
- Kapur, A., Macleod, N., & Singh, N. (2005). *Plutonomy: Buying Luxury, Explaining Global Imbalances*. Citigroup. October. Retrieved from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/6674234/Citigroup-Oct-16-2005-Plutonomy-Report-Part-1#fullscreen:on>
- Kincheloe, Joe L.. (2002) *Teachers as Researchers : Qualitative Inquiry as a Path to Empowerment* (2nd Edition). London, GBR: Falmer Press.
- Kinsella, E.A (2007). Technical rationality in Schön's reflective practice: dichotomous or non-dualistic epistemological position. *Nursing Philosophy*, 8, pp. 102–113.
- Knowles, M. S. (1980). *Modern practice of adult education: from pedagogy to andragogy*. Chicago: Follett Pub. Co., 1980.
- Kohn, Alfie (1993). Turning Learning Into a Business: Concerns About Total Quality. *Educational Leadership*. September.
- Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Masia, B. B. (1973). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, the Classification of Educational Goals. Handbook II: Affective Domain*. New York: David McKay Co., Inc.

Langhout, R. D., Rosselli, F. & Feinstein, J. (2007). Assessing Classism in Academic Settings. *The Review of Higher Education*. Winter, Volume 30, No. 2, pp. 145–184.

Lazarus, Morden (1974). *Years of Hard Labour*. Co-operative Press Association. Ontario.

Leonardo, Z. (2004). Critical Social Theory and Transformative Knowledge: The Functions of Criticism in Quality Education. *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 33, No. 6, August/September. pp. 11–18

Livingstone, D. et al. (1987). *Critical Pedagogy and Cultural Power*. Bergin & Garvey Publishers Inc. Massachusetts.

Maguad, Ben A. (2003). Using Total Quality to Achieve Continuous Improvement in the Classroom. *Education*, Vol. 124, No.2.

Maguad, Ben A. (2007). Identifying The Needs of Customers In Higher Education. *Education*; Spring 2007; 127, 3; Research Library, pg. 332-343.

Malan, SPT. (2000). The 'new paradigm' of Outcomes-Based education in perspective. *Journal of Family Ecology and Consumer Sciences*, Vol. 28. pp. 22-28.

Manitoba Education and Training (1995). *Renewing Education: New Directions – The Action Plan*. January. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training. Abridged version retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/action/index.html>

Manitoba Education and Training (1994). *Renewing Education: New Directions – A Blueprint for Action*. July. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training.

Abridged version retrieved from

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/blueprin/index.html>

Manno, Bruno V. (1994). *Outcome-Based Education: Has it Become More Affliction than Cure?* Center of the American Experiment. Minneapolis, MN. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED385635.pdf>

marino, dian (1997). *Wild Garden. art, education and the culture of resistance*. Between the Lines. Toronto.

Martin, M & Alderson, A. (2007). Outcomes-Based education: Where has it come from and where is it going? *Issues in Educational Research*. Vol. 17.

Mayhew, Mathew & Fernandez, Sonia DeLuca (2007). The Pedagogical Practices that Contribute to Social Justice Outcomes. *The Review of Higher Education*. Volume 31, No. 1, pp. 55–80.

McBride, S. (1998). *The Political Economy of Training in Canada*. Labour Education and Training Research Network. Centre for Research on Work and Society. York University. Presented at "Trade Unions and the Training Dilemma", Second Annual Conference of the Labour Education and Training Research Network. May 24-26, 1998.

- McGrew, Anthony (2000). Sustainable globalization? The global politics of development and exclusion in the new world order. *Poverty and Development in the 21st century*. Oxford University Press.
- McLaren, Peter. (2003). Critical Pedagogy: A Look at the Major Concepts. In *The critical pedagogy reader*. Antonia Dardar, Marta Baltodano, and Rodolfo D. Torres (editors).
- McLaren, Peter. (1998). Revolutionary pedagogy in post-revolutionary times: Rethinking the political economy of critical education. *Educational Theory*, Fall98, Vol. 48, Issue 4.
- McLaren, P. (1995). *Critical Pedagogy and the Predatory Culture. Oppositional Politics in a Postmodern Era*. Routledge, London.
- McLaren, P. & Jaramillo, N. (2008). Pedagogy and Praxis in the Age of Empire: Towards a New Humanism. Interview by Samantha Cohen. *The Humanities Review*. Retrieved from [Pedagogy.And.Praxis.In.The.Age.Of.Empire-3156532.shtml](#).
- McTaggart, R. (1997). *Participatory Action Research. International Contexts and Consequences*. State University of New York Press. New York.
- Nagda (Ratnesh), Biren A., Gurin, Patricia and Lopez, Gretchen E. (2003). Transformative Pedagogy for Democracy and Social Justice. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 6:2, 165-191

- Nussbaum, Martha (2000). *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ohio State University. (1999). *The DACUM Process. Definition*. Retrieved from <http://www.grindborg.com/Ohio%20State%20DACUM%20Process%20Page.htm>
- Ontario Department of Education (1919). *Recommendations and Regulations for the establishment, organization and management of industrial, technical and art schools and industrial, technical and art departments in high and continuation schools and collegiate institutes*. A. T. Wilgress, Printers. Pp. 54-55. Retrieved from <http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924013369719#page/n57/mode/2up>
- Osborne, Bill (1993). *What Education Leaders Need to Know Generally About Quality and Standards? A presentation at the Second National Creating the Quality School Conference*. March 25-27. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.
- Pascoe, Dave & Kaulback, Darren (2008). *The Aboriginal apology [DVD]*. Listen Up TV. Burlington, ON; Listen Up TV.
- Phillips, Charles E. (1951). Education in Canada, 1939-46. *History of Education Journal*, Vol. 3, No. 1. Autumn. pp. 7-13.
- Poonwassie, D. and Poonwassie, A. (1997). *Adult Education in Manitoba: historical aspects*. Mississauga: Canadian Educators' Press.

- Porter, John (1965). *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*. University of Toronto Press. Toronto
- Red River College (2009). *RRC History; Mission statement*. Retrieved from <http://www.rrc.mb.ca/index.php?pid=316>
- Red Seal Program (2009). *50 years of excellence Red Seal - 1959-2009*. Retrieved from <http://www.red-seal.ca/w.2lc.4me@-eng.jsp?lang=eng>
- Reed-Danahay, D. E. (Ed.). (1997). *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*. Berg Publishing. Oxford, UK.
- Schmoker, Mike and Wilson, Richard B. (1993a). Transforming schools through total quality education. *Phi Delta Kappa* 74.n5. January. Pp389.
- Schmoker, Mike, and Wilson, Richard B. (1993b). "Adapting total quality doesn't mean "turning learning into a business." *Educational Leadership*. 51. n1. Sept.
- Schön, D. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action*. Basic Books Inc., Publishers. New York.
- Schwartzman Roy. (1995). Are students customers? The metaphoric mismatch between management and education. *Education* 116.n2. Winter. P215 (8).
- Scurfield. J. (1998). *The Teacher Compensation Process*. February.

- Selman, G & Dampier, P. (1991) *Foundations of adult education in Canada*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc.
- Sen, Amartya (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Alfred Knopf Inc. New York
- Shapiro, B. (1996). *Manitoba Teacher Education Programmes. An Option for the Future*. A Report to the Manitoba Department of Education and Training.
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Silberman, H. (1980). Non-Economic Returns of Vocational Education. *The Journal of the American Vocational Education*. Sept.
- Simon, R. (1991). *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Simpson E. J. (1972). *The Classification of Educational Objectives in the Psychomotor Domain*. Washington, DC: Gryphon House.
- Skinner, B.F. (1953). *Science and Human Behavior*. The Free Press. New York
- Smith, Doug (1985). *Let Us Rise! A History of the Manitoba Labour Movement*. Public Press, Winnipeg.
- Spady, W. (1994). *Outcomes-Based education: Critical issues and answers*. Arlington, VA. American Association of School Administrators.

- Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 706-732.
- Stewart, Bryce M. (1941). War-Time Labour Problems and Policies in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*. Vol. 7, No. 3 (Aug.). pp. 426-446
- Strega, S. (2005). The View from the Poststructural Margins: Epistemology and Methodology Reconsidered. In *Research as resistance: critical, indigenous and anti-oppressive approaches*. Brown, L. & Strega, S. ed.
- Svensson, Birgitta (1997). The Power of Biography: Criminal Policy, Prison Life, and the Formation of Criminal Identities in the Swedish Welfare State. Chapter 3 In *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*. Berg Publishing.
- Tierney, W. G. (2008). *The impact of culture on organizational decision-making: theory and practice in higher education*. Stylus Publishers. Sterling, Va.
- Truth and Reconciliation of Canada (2009). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: For the children taken; for the parent left behind*. Retrieved from <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>. Access date: June 24, 2010).
- UNESCO (1999). *Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education. Lifelong learning and training: a bridge to the future*. Seoul, Republic of Korea, 26 - 30 April. Retrieved from

<http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/pubdir.php?akt=id&st=&id=ED%2FSVE%2FTE%2F99%2F1&lg=en>

UNEVOC (1989). *Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. Adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-fifth session*. Paris, 10 November. Retrieved from http://p19035.typo3server.info/fileadmin/user_upload/pubs/conv-e.pdf

UNEVOC-UNESCO (2006). *What is TVET?* Retrieved from [http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/wiki.0.html?&no_cache=1&tx_drwiki_pi1\[keyword\]=more%20about%20What%20is%20TVET](http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/wiki.0.html?&no_cache=1&tx_drwiki_pi1[keyword]=more%20about%20What%20is%20TVET)

Usher, Alex, and Dunn, Ryan (2009). *On the Brink: How the Recession of 2009 Will Affect Post-Secondary Education*. Toronto, ON: Educational Policy Institute.

Vocational Teacher Association of Manitoba (2001). *TECtalk*. Volume 18, January. Retrieved from <http://www.vtam.org/newsletterspdf/newsjan2001.pdf>

Watson, John B. (1998). *Behaviorism*. Transaction Publishers. New Brunswick, USA.

Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (2007). *Agreement*. Retrieved from <http://www.wncp.ca/english/wncphome/agreement.aspx>

Wexler, P. (1996). *Holy sparks: Social theory, education, and religion*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Wheelahan, Leesa (2007). How competency-based training locks the working class out of powerful knowledge: a modified Bernsteinian analysis. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28:5, 637 - 651

Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by design*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, c1998

Wink, Joan (2000). *Critical Pedagogy: Notes from the real world*. Second Edition. Addison Wesley Longman Inc.

Winnipeg Technical College (no date). *History*. Retrieved from <http://www.wtc.mb.ca/index.cfm?pageID=43>

Wisconsin Education Association Council (1995). *The debate over outcome based education*. Retrieved from <http://www.weac.org/resource/may96/obe.htm>

Young, D.R. and Machinski, A.V. (1973). *An Historical Survey of Vocational Education in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Vocational Education.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTOR LETTER OF INVITATION

Invitation to participate in a focus group on teaching practices of TVE teachers

Date

Dear Instructor,

My name is Sandra Sukhan, and I am a Doctoral student in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University in Toronto, Canada. I am conducting a research study which focuses on the teaching practices of college-level technical and vocational teachers at Red River College, Winnipeg, Manitoba and I am inviting you to participate in one of three focus groups which is part of my fieldwork requirement. You were asked because you are a technical or vocational teacher at Red River College. I am interested your classroom practices and experiences as a teacher, but the focus will not be on the technical content that you teach. There will be about six to eight participants in each group. The estimated time commitment for the focus group should be about 1½ hours.

The findings from this research will provide the foundation for my final doctoral dissertation, and will be reported in my thesis. There are no direct benefits, costs or compensation to you for taking part in this study. However, I hope the information I get from this study may lead to a greater understanding of the challenges teachers face in teaching and learning in technical and vocational education and in so doing, it may become a useful resource for enhancing classroom practice. This research project involves no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you beyond those that might ordinarily be encountered in daily life.

Some of you may know me in my role at Red River College either as a Curriculum Consultant in the Program and Curriculum Development department or as an adjunct faculty in the Certificate of Adult Education program. This research does not have any relationship to my role as a college employee and will in no way affect your professional work at the college. In order to protect your anonymity and to avoid a potential conflict of interest, I have hired **[Facilitator's Name]** who is a professional focus group facilitator to conduct the focus group sessions. Since I will not be attending the sessions, **you will need to contact [Facilitator] directly to let her know that you are willing to participate.**

Here is some information that you will need:

Date (choose one):

Time (including lunch):

Location:

Room number:

Facilitator:

Contact information:

A lunch and beverages will be provided!

If for some reason you confirmed a date and cannot attend, please let Irene know as soon as possible, so that she can invite someone else and perhaps include you with another group, if this is not the last group. If you would like to participate or have any questions prior to the focus group, please contact [**Facilitator's Name**] at [**phone number**] or [**email**].

I think you'll find the focus group quite interesting and look forward to your participation.

Sincerely,
Sandra Sukhan
PhD (ABD)
York University,
Toronto, Ontario

NB. This research project has been approved by the Research and Ethics Board at Red River College and York University.

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Type of question	Question #	Question	Mins.
Facilitator introduction		<p>Introduction: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group for technical and vocational teachers. My name is [Facilitator's Name] and I am facilitating the focus group on behalf of Sandra Sukhan who some of you may know as a consultant or teacher educator at the college. She is conducting a research study as part of her fieldwork requirement for her doctoral dissertation. The research focuses on the teaching practices of college-level technical and vocational teachers.</p> <p>To provide a context for your responses, the questions I will be asking will not focus on your technical expertise. It is already understood that you are an expert in your subject matter. The questions I will be asking will focus on the non-technical aspects of your teaching.</p> <p>The findings from this research will provide the foundation for Sandra's final doctoral dissertation, and will be reported in her thesis. Her hope is that the information she gets from this study may lead to a greater understanding of the challenges teachers face in teaching and learning in technical and vocational education and in so doing, it may become a useful resource for enhancing classroom practice.</p> <p>I may give you periodic reminders during the session about the focus of the discussion.</p> <p>Ground Rules: Before we begin, it is helpful to let everyone know how this session will flow, so that you all can participate, so that it is a positive and respectful experience and so that we cover all</p>	10

		<p>the questions that Sandra has designed for this session.</p> <p>Recording of the session: I will be using a digital recorder to record the session. In order to facilitate transcription at the end of the session, I will ask that you speak one at a time to ensure the accuracy of recording your responses.</p> <p>One person talks at a time: Each of you will have the opportunity to present your point of view and/or to add to those of others. It is important for us to hear everyone's ideas and opinions. There is no right or wrong answer to questions – just ideas, experiences and opinions, which are all valuable. I will help keep the discussion going and make sure that you all have an equal opportunity to participate.</p> <p>Confidentiality: Please be as forthright as possible with your opinions and comments as your names will not be recorded or associated with any of the responses. All I need is your verbal consent to participate. Do I have it? Thank you.</p> <p>Timeline: We have 90 minutes to cover a large topic. I will keep us on track in terms of time, so that we cover all the questions.</p> <p>Do you have any questions or concerns?</p>	
Participant Introduction		<p>Tell us: Your first name (<i>Participants are asked to use a pseudonym so that the facilitator does not have to keep referring to the participant by pointing. Facilitator will be instructed to ask participants to do this prior to the start of the focus group. Tent cards will be provided for this.</i>) How long were you in your trade/occupation (<i>but don't say the specific trade as that may identify the person</i>) before starting your teaching career? How long you have been a college instructor?</p>	

Key questions			
Micro level (Classroom)		These questions are focused on you in the classroom, that is, you in relation to your students	
	1	<p>a. What do you like the MOST about being a vocational teacher? (reminder about purpose)</p> <p>b. Please tell me about a specific incident or example that illustrates this.</p>	10
	2	<p>What are some of the cultural, social and individual issues for students that make teaching challenging?</p> <p>Prompts: <i>Students:</i> gender imbalance, student preparedness for entry into program student attendance, student attitudes, student lack of financial resources, lack of family supports, social capital, public school education, lack of social network, OR geographic location. <i>Student assessment:</i> student grades, authentic assessment, teaching to the test, <i>Employer:</i> lack of employer support, expectations from administrators <i>Teacher skills:</i> lack of teaching skills, lack of time to attend teaching related workshops, lack of confidence in the classroom, quality of resources</p> <p>Please tell me how you dealt with these challenges/frustrations? (reminder about purpose)</p>	15
	3	<p>What do you think are some factors that contribute to your challenges and frustrations as a teacher?</p> <p>Prompts: <i>Teaching skills:</i> lack of teaching skills, lack of teaching related workshops and professional development opportunities, <i>Employer expectations</i> and expectations from administrators <i>Government regulations</i></p>	15

		How do you think these issues might be addressed?	
Meso level (Institutional and provincial)		Switching to the next set of questions, on a broader level, these are focused on you in relation to the college	
	1	Explain in your own words your understanding of these terms: competency-based education, mastery learning and outcomes-based education. (Put on flip chart if needed)	10
	2	What kinds of supports, resources or professional development activities would you find most useful and helpful to improve those aspects of your teaching that you find challenging? Prompts: better and more (or more accessible) professional development for teachers, more prep time, increased or different employer support, better screening of new students, etc.	15
Macro level (Government or legislation)		On an even broader level, this question is focused on you in relation to provincial and government involvement in education	
	1	What is your understanding of the role of the provincial and federal government in technical and vocational education? Prompts: legislation, funding, certification, provincial economy, job creation	10
Summary question		If there is anything else that you would like to add that I did not ask about, or if there is anything you did not get an opportunity to say, please tell me about it.	5
Wrap-up		Thank you on behalf of Sandra Sukhan. I appreciate your thoughtful and candid feedback and participation. When Sandra completes her dissertation, it will be a public document that will be in the government/educational archives so anyone can read it.	2

		<p>If you have any questions after today, contact... <i>(This information will be provided in the consent form.)</i></p> <p>Thank you again. I've enjoyed meeting you.</p>	
--	--	--	--