Problematizing social studies curricula in Nova Scotia

Pamela Rogers

Department of Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University
Education and Society
McGill University, Montréal, Quebec
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Abstract

This study questions the implementation of social studies curriculum in Nova Scotia. Indigenous knowledge, and anti-racism educational principles form the basis of high school curricula created from the perspective of African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq histories. The courses, African Canadian Studies and Mi'kmaq Studies, were implemented in 2002. To understand the distance between the intended objectives and practical realities of the curriculum, three methods were used: narrative, critical discourse analysis, and teacher interviews. Narrative provided a springboard for the analyses that follows by situating the context in the classroom. Centering on specific language use, critical discourse analysis connects implementation problems to the discourses employed in each curriculum document. The teacher interviews exposed the depth of issues through practical experiences, and critique of the school system, which link back to the knowledge which African Canadian Studies and Mi'kmaq Studies were formulated upon. The analysis connects the three methods to illustrate implementation issues in a broader context.

Résumé

Cette étude question l'implémentation du programme des sciences humaines en Nouvelle-Écosse. Les connaissances indigènes (autochtones), et les principes de l'éducation anti-raciste forment la base des programmes d'études secondaires créés à partir de la perspective des Afro-Nouvelle-Écossais et des Micmacs. Les cours, d'études afro-canadiennes et d'études Micmaques, ont été mis en place en 2002. Pour comprendre la différence entre les objectifs visés et les réalités du programme, trois méthodes ont été utilisées : le narratif, l'analyse critique du discours et les entrevues avec les enseignants. Le narratif a servi comme point d'accès pour l'analyse qui suit, en situant le contexte de la salle de classe. Centré sur le langage employer, l'analyse critique du discours a lié les problèmes d'exécution des cours aux discours utilisés dans chaque document du programme. ont été formulées. L'analyse lie les trois méthodes pour illustrer les questions d'implémentation dans un contexte plus large.

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Introduction

Context

　　Due to racial tensions in several Nova Scotian high schools in the early 1990's, and a low success rate for both African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq students, two independent reports were created that offered suggestions for improvement (Nova Scotia Department of Education [NSDE], 2002). In 2002, the Department of Education in Nova Scotia formally adopted three new social studies courses to satisfy the high school history graduation credit. Before this time, the only history courses offered were taught from a European perspective.

　　The Task Force on Mi'kmaq Education (1993) recommended a course be created that would "accurately reflect Mi'kmaq culture, history, language, sociology, and art" (as cited in NSDE, 2002, p.9). Almost a decade later, the Mi'kmaq Studies course (MST) came into being. It was created to benefit all students, regardless of their background, and would provide a history of the Mi'kmaq experience in Nova Scotia, with connections to the national context. To address achievement rates and race relations in Nova Scotian high schools, while also fostering understanding between communities, the Mi'kmaq studies course would aid in the development of a more positive self-image and sense of pride for Mi'kmaq students (NSDE, 2002). MST was created from an Indigenous knowledge perspective, and looked to holistically incorporate the cultural, spiritual, political, and social aspects of education to allow students to better understand where they have come from, in order to better understand the direction in which they are headed.

　　In the early 1990's racial riots at a high school in the province sparked debate concerning disenfranchisement of African Nova Scotian learners, and the need for Afrocentric courses in the provincial curriculum (BLAC Report, 1994). The Black Learners Advisory Committee submitted the BLAC Report (1994) which recommended the creation of an inclusive curriculum that would reflect the cultural, social, and political aspects of African Nova Scotian communities, so as

to develop cross-cultural understanding and give African Canadian students a sense of pride in their heritage (BLAC Report, 1994, NSDE, 2002). Since the BLAC Report in 1994, an external review including seventy-five recommendations for change was created in 1997, and a follow-up to the recommendations was written in 2001 (Frank, 2001, p.6). The context for the African Canadian Studies course stems from the initial BLAC Report in 1994, leading to the implementation draft of African Canadian Studies in 2002. The African Canadian Studies (ACS) course was written from an Afrocentric learning perspective, looking at the history of the world from an African standpoint. The course was critical of European history, and looked to change perceptions, prejudices, and stereotypes surrounding people of African descent (NSDE, 2002).

Based on these recommendations, the Department of Education piloted Mi'kmaq Studies 10 (hereby referred to as MST) and African Canadian Studies 11 (hereby referred to as ACS) in the late 1990's. The third course, Canadian History 11 (hereby referred to as CHS), along with ACS and MST, was implemented provincially in 2002. Although implemented in 2002, in 2011, the curriculum documents for all three courses remain in draft stage.

Research questions

The two new curricula have been beset by implementation challenges. I am interested in exploring the difference between intended uses of equitable social studies courses as compared to their practical application. My first set of questions relates to the philosophy of Nova Scotia secondary social studies curriculum: what are the intended objectives of the MST 10 and ACS 11 courses, and how are they articulated in the curriculum documents? How have the MST and ACS courses been implemented in the school system? Have the implementation procedures accurately reflected the objectives as articulated in the curriculum documents? Secondly, how do teachers make meaning out of these documents in their practice? Finally, how might posing these questions lead to a larger discussion of implementation procedures, and ultimately, bring about constructive changes?

Purpose

After existing for nine years, MST, and ACS need to be critically reevaluated to observe whether the courses were being implemented according to the original philosophies in the documents. My interest in this topic arose from interactions with colleagues and students who are concerned by the various issues stemming from implementation procedures for ACS and MST. The present research focuses on the questions being asked by teachers, and their discussion of social justice issues arising from the positioning of ACS and MST in a hierarchical structure of knowledge in social studies departments.

Problems including class size, teacher experience and educational background, course expectations and perceptions, and resources, threaten the success of these courses. These issues arise in the implementation of new courses, however for ACS and MST it is compounded to create a larger concern in the school system: how does the implementation process contradict original aspirations of equitable curriculum development, and how is the local knowledge in the curriculum documents positioned in the broader social studies context in practice. My hope is to further understand this topic through a critical discourse analysis of the curriculum documents, along with interviewing teachers to gain an "on the ground" perspective of their experiences in teaching these courses.

Positioning as researcher

I have used narratives to explore how my experiences as a student and teacher have shaped my questions for this study. The narrative process situates my teaching and learning experiences as intertwined with the analysis, as my research questions are born from these experiences. In the narratives, my assumptions and beliefs are reflected, as I question the public education system, looking to find answers for social injustices that exist at various levels. Bringing a background in anti-oppressive education, social theory, and critical race theory has given me a particular perspective on this topic.

In the last ten years, the shift in education for greater teacher accountability, funding cuts, and standardized testing in Nova Scotia reflects

larger global, conservative educational trends (Fairclough, 2009). The inclusion of social justice initiatives, such as the creation of the ACS and MST courses directly oppose the conservative educational trend toward producing elite students for a global economy (Fairclough, 2009). The two philosophies are pitted against each other in the school system in Nova Scotia. As a teacher, I am critical of the corporate principles being applied to the public education system.

This being said, I am aware that my beliefs and assumptions about the current educational milieu are shaping my research, and I intend to maintain a high level of transparency throughout the writing process. My expectations with my research are that I will be able to clearly show that although the new courses have been formulated for authentic equitable practice, the implementation, lack of resources/training, and even the assumptions held in the curricula documents themselves are creating a dynamic that is problematic.

Conceptual framework

Drawing upon a broad theoretical background is necessary to answer an underlying hermeneutic question of teacher experience: how teachers come to understand their experience through a dialectical process of teaching experience and reflection. Anti-racism education theory, Indigenous education theory, curriculum theory, and critical discourse analysis are the main areas I am drawing information from. In order to situate the theoretical context of this research and create my conceptual framework, I have drawn on certain key ideas and theorists from each of the four areas.

Michael Apple (2004) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2006) point to the construction of knowledge, its underlying assumptions, and the process by which assumptions become embedded in educational systems. Assumptions are unavoidable and are not inherently dangerous, but can become so if the author does not explicitly situate their views in the text. The danger arises when assumptions aid in the construction of a worldview that privileges some information or knowledge over others. Apple (2004) discusses how dangerous assumptions can be when translated into various curricula, while from an

Indigenous perspective, Smith (2006) unpacks the imperialistic nature of writing and theorizing and its implications for education. Decolonization is a complex process that interrogates power relations between institutions and their impact on peoples, specifically those who have been misrepresented, forgotten, or silenced (Smith, 2006).

Smith (2006) has written extensively on the impact of white colonialist structures on Indigenous peoples, and her work is vital for understanding the process of written history and power. The process of including non-Eurocentric histories in public schooling is indeed a large and important step needed to start the decolonization process on a larger level. However, the ways Indigenous knowledge is being imparted to students need to be questioned. While MST has been put into place in Nova Scotian high schools, issues pertaining to large class size and lack of resources re-situates Indigenous knowledge as peripheral to Western history.

Michael Apple's (2004) analysis of power and curriculum also provides a solid theoretical understanding of how and why 'knowledge' is produced, and the ways in which it is then disseminated in education systems. Curricula that have been developed for humanitarian and social justice reasons must be historically and culturally contextualized: where has the curriculum been developed, for whom, by whom, and what purpose is it serving? What power relations are invoked in specific communities where such courses are being implemented? For example, how do teaching ACS and MST in a rural, mainly white, Nova Scotian community serve the original objectives and philosophy of the courses?

Afrocentric theorist, George Dei (2000), and Indigenous knowledge theorist, Marie Battiste, are Canada's leading researchers in the area of anti-racism education and Indigenous education. Dei (2000) calls for a de-centering of whiteness and Eurocentric (colonialist) thought in schools to initiate discussion of power and privilege with those who are marginalized, oppressed, or silenced. The intentions, and purpose, of an inclusive curriculum is questioned via Dei and Battiste's critical analysis. Dei (2000) interrogates the intention of such courses, asking such questions as: what segment(s) of the population does the inclusion of

ACS and MST attempt to acknowledge? What is the motive underlying their creation? These are difficult but important questions to ask when looking at the implementation issues of ACS and MST. Both Dei's and Battiste's writings have influenced the creation of MST and ACS in Nova Scotia. While the ACS and MST courses were adopted in 2002 for province-wide use, many issues still exist. Dei's critical perspective on the inception of Afrocentric theory sheds light on these questions.

Battiste (2002) addresses the difficulty in incorporating Indigenous knowledge into Eurocentric frameworks. She asserts that since Western society is founded on the withholding of knowledge from those who are not Western European, it becomes almost impossible to holistically and fully incorporate Indigenous knowledge into a racist system that has degraded said knowledge for centuries. She discusses the importance of Indigenous knowledge, and the critical perspective and awareness needed to implement Indigenous knowledge into a rigid and often disrespectful structure (Battiste, 2002). For my research, Battiste's work is a necessary step in understanding the creation of MST and its implementation. How does this knowledge fit into the current educational milieu, and what is being done to make sure this knowledge is not tokenized or misrepresented in its use?

Curriculum theory provides a perspective that allows teaching to be understood as an art by which educators navigate curriculum in various ways, dependant on their schooling and life experiences, in order to draw meaning out of practical experiences. William Pinar's (2004) 'complicated conversations', as a process of connecting curriculum, practice, and reflection, is a major tenet for the curriculum theory discussion. Through understanding teacher experience, the practical can be connected to theoretical educational perspectives. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) discuss the ways in which teachers engage with curriculum they use, and how it becomes a living document through creative incorporation in the classroom. Parallel to this reading is Ellis and Bochner (2003), who use personal narrative to explore various phenomenological aspects of their own teaching. Hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy is a necessary backdrop for

understanding how teachers practice a certain narrative artistry in their class, and that narrative can serve a similar function with respect to the art of research.

Curriculum theorist Madeline Grumet (1991) captures the complexities of curriculum in the discussion of art and daily life. The author likens the process of curriculum development to the way we order our daily lives in our heads: how humans sentimentalize the things we care about, our home life and families, how we reinvent ourselves daily through the incorporation of new information; all of these processes order what is important to us in our minds and hearts (Grumet, 1991). What curriculum creators do, as Grumet eloquently describes, is take those "sacred objects, sacred spaces, secret names and jokes and curses and songs" and form what is to be known out of this understanding of knowledge (1991, p.76). This is not to say that curriculum is primarily developed for sentimental reasons, but the ways certain pieces of knowledge are given priority and respect, while other aspects of life are ignored, is an important facet of knowledge creation. Why are so many aspects of the affective domain not given a high level of importance in educational settings? Teachers bring their own lives and histories to the classroom, yet oftentimes the lives of the teacher and the student are put aside and not used to their full potential – so heavy is the focus on 'fact', that so much of life becomes ignored. Considering that I am interviewing teachers on their own experiences with curriculum, and also using my own narrative, I found these pieces of writing vital for my research as Grumet's (1991) interest in curriculum is grounded in phenomenological philosophy.

Lastly, critical document analysis (CDA) is used to connect the content from the curriculum documents to their issues in implementation. ACS, MST, and CHS are analyzed for their use of language, connected to Fairclough's (2003) analysis of discourse, and ideological language as it relates to power. The document analysis followed Norman Fairclough's (2003) particular use of CDA. Fairclough analyzes the use of language, and theoretical underpinnings to explore underlying assumptions in various documents, and in my case, curriculum documents. This analysis connected the curriculum to the implementation issues discussed in the interviews, to demonstrate how the content in the curriculum

varies from practice. In addition, the CDA provided an avenue to critically analyze the varying language use between the ACS, MST, and CHS.

Research Design and Ethical Issues

This qualitative study used narrative, semi-structured teacher interviews, and CDA of the objectives in the ACS and MST curriculum guides. Triangulation was used to explore the research questions from several perspectives: the perspective of the teacher who creates meaning out of the course and curriculum, my personal teaching and schooling narrative, which describes how I have come to be interested in the research questions, and an analysis of the curriculum guides to find emergent themes to see if they correlate with the teachers' understandings of the courses. The interview questions were created to explore various factors that could possibly influence the implementation of ACS and MST. The ensuing conversations broadened the scope of the original research questions, and included results that added layers of depth and complexity to the research. Without these insights, pieces of the analysis would be incomplete.

The interview participants are colleagues who have been teaching in the Nova Scotia public school system. The three participating teachers are involved in the teacher's union, curriculum development, and social justice initiatives in schools, which have given each of them a unique critical perspective on issues of equity in schools. While they were not chosen for their identity affiliations, one teacher self-identified as 'part-Mi'kmaw', one as African Nova Scotian, and one as White. Two were male teachers; one was female. Their experience of teaching a variety of courses in many schools, has given a broad perspective on how courses are implemented, what resources are available, and in what direction the program is heading.

A potential harm for the participants is of a political nature: the danger of critiquing the public school program and its issues in implementing socially equitable courses can be detrimental to their public image or possibly cause issues within the administration of their school. These issues were discussed with teachers during the consent process. These risks were both acceptable and

expected given the nature of the teaching profession and the risk of critiquing the status quo in an institutional setting. Teachers' identities have been protected using their chosen pseudonym; the schools in which they work have also been protected, but they have allowed for their membership of a particular group to be used as an identifier. The participants were debriefed after the second interview, and were given the opportunity to read the transcript and analysis to change or omit any information gathered during the interviewing process.

To comply with McGill University's Research Ethics Board ethical policies, I first gained approval from the school board to conduct the interviews, which was followed by a process of gaining consent from colleagues who are interested and willing to be interviewed. The data collected in the interviews was stored in a secure place for a specific amount of time as denoted in the consent form. The interviewees were briefed on the full purpose of the study. Research integrity was maintained through the compliance with the ethics framework set forth by the research board.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection for this study consisted of three methods: the writing of my personal student/teacher narratives; six semi-structured interviews with the teachers (two each); and gathering of the relevant curriculum documents (no mean feat). To account for my own interest in the topic as well as to uncover underlying assumptions, I have been journaling and writing teacher narratives over the past year. For the interview data collection, two interviews were conducted with each teacher participant, the first up to ninety minutes and the second up to their discretion, so as to debrief from the first interview as well as add or retract any information. Interviews were used to gain insight into how teachers come to understand what they are teaching. For example, how did they view the curriculum documents, what were their uses and understandings of MST and ACS, and how have they situated these courses in the larger picture of the public school system?

The third method for data collection consisted of public curriculum documents that were requested from the Department of Education. These documents can be made available to any person who requests them. Document analysis gave me the necessary insight into the objectives of the course and how the documents were designed and written: language used, specific wording and themes in their relation to course objectives.

Data Analysis

Two types of analysis were used: Fairclough's (2001) CDA centering on power and language for the curriculum document analysis, and thematic coding for the interview data. Gibbs (2007) explains that coding in qualitative data varies depending on the type of research one is conducting. For the purpose of this research, the theoretical and practical knowledge from the teacher participants were the most important aspects of the interviews, as their experiences guided the discussion of implementation issues with ACS and MST. The interview data was analyzed using conceptual themes apparent throughout the six interviews, but also important were the distinctive features of each interview at each related to the unique experience of the participants (Etherington, 2004).

Data-driven coding was used, also referred to as open coding, whereby the researcher does not start with a list of codes, but lets them emerge from the data (Gibbs, 2007). Gibbs (2007) notes that it is unrealistic for researchers to think that they can analyze data without having preconceived notions or assumptions. The data-analysis is related back to the teacher narrative and conceptual framework.

Overview of Thesis

The structure of the thesis was designed to outline theoretical and methodological aspects of the research as a precursor to the three analyses: narrative, CDA, and interview. Chapter 1 lays the Conceptual Framework for the succeeding chapters, addressing anti-racist, Indigenous knowledge, and curriculum theorists pertaining to the analyses. In Chapter 2: Methodology and Methods, the study design is explained in relation to hermeneutic philosophy

underpinning interpretation, CDA, and researcher role and reflexivity. In Chapter 3, narrative situates my perspective and life experience as a student and teacher, to provide context for the research questions that shape the thesis. Chapter 4 contains a critical discourse analysis of specific language use in three curriculum documents, MST, ACS, and CHS, in relation to one another, and connected to larger implementation issues. In Chapter 5, teacher interview data is used to analyze curriculum implementation issues through the practical experiences of teachers in the education system, in connection to the difference between curriculum as document, and curriculum in practice.

Chapter One:
Conceptual Framework

Introduction

The theoretical structure, on which the subsequent narratives, critical discourse and interview analyses are based, stems from two theoretical backgrounds: critical educational theory, and curriculum theory. In the first section of this chapter, the notion of 'Othered' knowledges (or non-European knowledge, from Said's (1979) definition) is taken up through George Dei's (1996) principles of anti-racism education, Marie Battiste's (2002) critique of Indigenous knowledge in Eurocentric school systems, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2006) theories of the ordering of knowledge. These theories are discussed in relation to implementation issues for African Canadian Studies (ACS) and Mi'kmaq Studies (MST), as they relate to the interview and curriculum analysis. The three theorists encapsulate the vision and philosophies of the ACS and MST curriculum developers through the interrogation of power and privilege in the school system as it relates to larger structures.

In the second section, curriculum theory will be discussed as a reflective exercise where teachers' practice informs their understanding of the curriculum, which in turn informs their practice. Curriculum theorists Madeline Grumet (1991) and William Pinar (2004) highlight this dialectical process through Grumet's use of narrative, and Pinar's notion of 'complicated conversation'. Both theorists' work is pertinent for the narrative, interview, and CDA portions of the document, as a dialectical (hermeneutic) understanding underlies ensuing analyses[1].

'Othered' Knowledges

Educational theorists, Dei (2000) and Battiste have written extensively on Afrocentric and Indigenous knowledge and philosophy in Canada. Dei discusses

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[1] The role of hermeneutics in the thesis will be addressed in Chapter 2.

the development of social identities in educational contexts, and how "race knowledge is produced, organized and regulated" through the ideological frameworks in educational institutions in both Canada and the United States (2000, p.11). Dei (2000) calls for a de-centering of whiteness and Eurocentric (colonialist) thought in schools to start the discussion of power and privilege with those who are marginalized, oppressed, or silenced. Oppression is complex and varied; every province is situated in a unique community and socio-historical context, therefore creating curricula intended to break historical injustices must be treated according to the needs of specific communities (Dei, 2000). This line of thought is especially important when taking into consideration the demographics of various high schools in Nova Scotia. In other words, in school communities that serve large populations of African Nova Scotian and/or Mi'kmaq youth, discussions of power and privilege are vital.

What is the purpose of inclusive curriculum and who is it for? Dei (2000) calls for serious questioning in the motivation of such courses: what is the underlying motive in their creation? What role does the implementation serve? These are difficult but important questions to ask when looking at the implementation issues of ACS and MST, as they have both been produced for province-wide use, yet many issues still exist both at the classroom and administrative levels. Dei's critical perspective on the inception of Afrocentric knowledge through the philosophy of anti-racism education sheds light on these questions.

Anti-racism Education

The creation of anti-racist educational theory and practice has grown from the sociological tradition of critical theory. This critical perspective is wary of Western European and North American educational institutions that are deeply embedded with value and knowledge systems from a colonialist and imperialist history (Dei, 1996). George Dei is a leading Canadian researcher and educator in the field of anti-racism, who defines anti-racism education as:

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…an action-oriented strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression. Anti-racism is a critical discourse of race and racism in society and of the continuing racializing of social groups for differential and unequal treatment. Anti-racism explicitly names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity rather than as matter of cultural and ethnic variety. (Dei, 1996, p.25)

Central to anti-racism education is the social significance of race. Unequal power and privilege in education have been created and sustained through the denial and exclusion of Afrocentric and Indigenous knowledges in school curriculum (Dei, 1996). Dei's (1996) nine principles of anti-racist practice, such as the intersectional nature of social oppressions, and the need for holistic education to see students as complex learners, guide the theory and its translation into educational praxis.

The tenets of anti-racism education are directly applicable to educators, administrators, and curriculum and policy makers alike. As an action-based strategy, anti-racism education has the capacity to promote change at various levels of the education system, first through a theoretical and philosophical understanding (and subsequent restructuring) of power, secondly through teaching practice.

The creation of ACS resonates with the theoretical underpinnings of anti-racism education, which looks to specifically address issues of race and power within society through classroom discussion and instruction. Dei notes that "anti-racism rests on the importance of teaching critically about difference", but this also relies on the proper training of teachers in the field of anti-racist praxis (2000, p.37). As for ACS, there is no structure in place that ensures teachers have the adequate knowledge basis in place to teach this course, which creates a dangerous situation where course materials can be conveyed in a way that is uncritical, or from a perspective that reaffirms the status quo in society. While teacher education goes beyond the scope of my own research, it remains an integral piece of anti-racism practice. Educators who choose to engage in anti-racist praxis are

involving themselves in the process of educating for social change (Dei, 1996). The following selected principles of Dei's anti-racism education underlie the philosophies of ACS.

Guiding Principles

Teaching about power and difference in schools must be backed by a structure that supports teachers in this endeavor. For example, administrators, counselors, and department heads all play important roles in the implementation process of courses like ACS. Subtleties such as administrative attitudes and resources made available to teachers can have a large effect on the success (or lack of success) of a course developed to induce change. Educational discourse at all levels requires a critical race analysis in order to properly implement a course developed for change. When a critical race analysis is missing from texts, educational discourse, and classroom discussion, power structures remain unquestioned and legitimized. Dei agrees that the subtle nature by which race is left unquestioned in most classrooms "hinders further investigations of historical and contemporary inequities", therefore leaving the discussion of race and social oppression at a standstill (1996, p.27). Subtleties also lie in the way by which knowledge is disseminated. Whether or not teachers are given access to resources and professional developmental opportunities play their role in the shaping of such knowledge.

The third principle, pertaining to White privilege, and fourth, anti-racism education, question both the maintenance of privilege, and the silencing of marginalized voices (Dei, 1996). Central to this critique is the way power has accrued historically, through political, social, and economic means "that continue to accrue to certain individuals in society due to the dominance of White (male) power" (Dei, 1996, p.28). Privilege must be unpacked in the classroom in a way that opens up the discussion of social oppression in a multifaceted way as to not alienate students. Understanding one's position of power and privilege can be a very unsettling experience that can bring out defensive and angry responses, and Dei acknowledges this, but affirms that "anti-racism calls for creating spaces for everyone, but particularly for marginal voices to be heard" in order to have

authentic discussion of power and privilege (1996, p.30). Incorporating ACS opens up the discussion of power and privilege, and has the potential to begin the process of involving previously disengaged youth into discussions of their own educational experience.

An understanding and respect for the collective also plays a large role in the fifth tenet of anti-racism education, which focuses on an "…appreciation of the human experience, comprising social, cultural, political, ecological and spiritual aspects" of society (Dei, 1996, p.30). This form of holistic education is necessary in order to imbue a true understanding of the saliency and scope of racism at various levels, not just in its physical manifestations, but through the various ways in which power is created and maintained in social institutions. With a complex understanding of human experience, a broad viewpoint can be attained in order to think holistically. For this principle of anti-racism education, Dei calls for the "spiritual and social development of the individual" to bring about change (1996, 31). Having a strong mind, body, and spiritual connection allows a person to focus on externalities instead of only having to focus on the self and its own issues with oppression (Dei, 2000). In the anti-racism educational philosophy, both ACS and MST courses have the content to produce a strong race analysis, in its overt and covert forms found in educational, political and economic realms. More importantly, unpacking layers of oppression in each of these domains can give a better understanding of a much richer picture of society and how it functions. It is very important to note, however, that the point of discussing oppression in the classroom is not to lead students to feel disempowered. In fact, a deeper understanding of this reality, in its socio-historical context, is to give meaning and voice to students' lives to effect change in their communities.

Viewing the school as a site of the production and reproduction of social inequalities within the state is the eighth principle. Dei acknowledges that these inequalities are not only racial, but gendered, sexualized and classed, and that they are being reproduced through state-funded institutions. At the heart of this principle is a critique of schooling as a means for economic success. Students who are successful in school will have skills and knowledge to support economic

functions in society. In this business model of education, students who can perform at a high level in their educational careers are the most rewarded with high-income employment; therefore, the highest-level teachers and courses are granted to these students (Dei, 2000). Conversely, students who are guided into vocational streams, or those aiming at securing a high school education and nothing further, are informally streamed into courses that are considered "bird courses"[2] or lower level classes. Meritocracy, the belief that people will achieve success from hard work alone, is heavily embedded in this principle (Dei, 1996). Students who are in higher-level math and science classes, compared to those who take vocational courses, are considered as the most deserving. Due to various implementation issues, ACS and MST have been isolated as "bird courses."

The four principles of anti-racism education, outlined above, inform the critical discourse analysis of the ACS and MST curriculum guides, as well as guide the Interview analysis. In the following chapters, the broader implications and consequences of implementation practices will be discussed with reference to Dei's principles. For discussion and analysis of MST curriculum content and implementation, a background of Indigenous knowledge theory is needed.

Indigenous Knowledge

Similar to anti-racism education principles, the philosophy of Indigenous knowledge is critical of educational structures in Canadian society. This critique is largely formed from a socio-historical understanding of colonialism and the destructive impact of European peoples in North America on Native populations. While anti-racism education focuses primarily on race and its embedded features in institutional and everyday educational settings, Indigenous authors such as Marie Battiste and Linda Tuhiwai Smith analyze the ongoing impact of colonialism on these same structures. The result is an integrated analysis of social

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[2] Historically, the term "bird course" was sexist slang, used to describe a class perceived as easy enough for women. The term now refers to courses that are perceived as being simple, or easy enough to "fly through." (Canadian Council of Teachers of English, 2000, p.22)

structures, with a focus on the remnants of colonial impacts embedded within (primarily) educational institutions.

Incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge in Schools

Marie Battiste is a renowned Mi'kmaw scholar in the field of education, specifically in the realm of Indigenous knowledge and education. Battiste (2002) discusses the difficulty in incorporating Indigenous knowledge into Eurocentric frameworks. She asserts that since Western society is founded on the exclusion of knowledge from those who are not Western European, it becomes almost impossible to holistically and fully incorporate knowledge that has been denigrated for centuries into a racist system (Battiste, 2002). When speaking of understanding Indigenous knowledge in the current Canadian Eurocentric schooling paradigm, she is skeptical of the ability to fully incorporate Indigenous knowledge without negative effects: "It is a knowledge system in its own right, with its own internal consistency, and ways of knowing, and there are limits to how far it can be comprehended from a Eurocentric point of view" (Battiste, 2002, p.2). Battiste's work questions the limits of including Indigenous knowledge in a Eurocentric system. Her questions are pertinent for understanding the creation of MST and its implementation. How does Mi'kmaq knowledge fit into the current educational milieu, and what is being done to make sure it is not tokenized or being misrepresented in its use?

In an address at the University of Saskatchewan in 2004, Battiste acknowledged that the field of Indigenous knowledge is in fact a newer conception in academia. While many have studied isolated aspects of Indigenous culture (such as literature, spirituality, art, philosophy and history), there has not been a field of academia to coherently address all aspects of Indigeniety. In this light, how can a course on Mi'kmaq knowledge assure the full incorporation of cultural elements such as spirituality, art, and philosophy, while at the same time deconstructing White European colonial history? For such a course, there needs to be a background on colonialism and its modernist formulation, "postcolonialism." In the same university address, Battiste (2004) discussed the idea of living in a postcolonial society:

'Postcolonial' is not a time after colonialism, but rather for me it represents more an aspiration, a hope, not yet achieved. It constructs a strategy that responds to experience of colonization and imperialism. As a critique, it is about rethinking the conceptual, institutional, cultural, legal, and other boundaries that are taken for granted and assumed universal, but act as structural barriers to many, including Aboriginal people, women, visible minorities, and others. (p.2)

Understanding education through a critical postcolonial lens is imperative in creating a humanities course based on Indigenous knowledge. As Battiste describes above, this type of educational strategy requires the questioning of so-called neutral institutions as places where real boundaries exist, as well as understanding the political nature of knowledge construction and dissemination. Peoples' lived experiences with institutional racism and other forms of oppression cannot be denied or hidden in this critique, which is similar to the holistic view of Dei's anti-racism education philosophy.

An important aspect for the discussion of MST is the concept of Indigenous knowledge as a decolonizing strategy. In what ways will the MST curriculum, and perhaps more importantly its teachers, be able to address all of the above issues in an otherwise Eurocentric social studies framework? Battiste (2004) draws attention to this issue, specifically highlighting the practical difficulties faced by teachers in the classroom: "…teachers who attempt to bring forward the oppressive historical and contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada…find that breaking the silence of oppressions is fraught with pressures and emotional forces," which can be detrimental to both teachers and students (p.8). One reason for such difficulty is the intense emotionally charged nature of social oppression for those who have experienced it, and the lack of understanding from those who might not have the same social knowledge. Having this dynamic in the classroom can foster a lot of resistance from (primarily) "White students who do not know this history [who sometimes] counteract with guilt, anger, denial or racist justification for continued colonial privilege" (Battiste, 2004, p.8).

In order to traverse this deeply entangled emotional minefield in the classroom, it is necessary for a teacher to have knowledge of anti-racism education philosophy and techniques, but also knowledge and understanding of the purpose for such a course. Unfortunately, there are no guidelines for hiring educators to teach MST (or ACS for that matter), therefore leaving the huge potential for this course in a precarious position where further colonial harms can be dealt if not taught from a critical pedagogical stance. Teacher training is a large part of this problem; the lack of engagement with critical theory in teacher training can contribute to the further marginalization of students, as an understanding of social theory is vital for educators to be able to teach in an antiracist or critically pedagogical way. Battiste (2002) acknowledges, "few teacher training institutions have developed any insight into the diversity of the legal, political, and cultural foundations of Aboriginal peoples, often treating Indigenous knowledge as though it were a matter of multicultural and cross-cultural education" (p.9). Only teaching Indigenous knowledge through a framework of 'culture' disengages from objectives of an activist nature (education for change) to remain in the realm of uncritical pedagogy (Battiste, 2002).

In order to have a successful integration of Indigenous knowledge into a Eurocentric framework, according to Battiste (2002), the process of schooling needs to be recognized as a (historically) colonial and racist enterprise. Secondly, teacher education must change to incorporate postcolonial and antiracist critiques of our current school system, and thirdly, a balance needs to be struck between Indigenous knowledge and Eurocentric knowledge. This balance is difficult due to the "interpretative monopoly" Eurocentric thought has on education systems, which are guided by European epistemologies of education (Battiste, 2002, p.10). In other words, in order for a balance to happen between Eurocentric thought and Indigenous thought, there must be a paradigm shift to acknowledge the pervasive political nature of Eurocentrism in the classroom, but there also needs to be a comparable shift in incorporating new methods of teaching that are holistic and beneficial for all students.

In a literature review prepared for the National Working Group on Education and the Minister of Indian Affairs Canada, Battiste (2002) describes how Indigenous views of knowledge differ from Eurocentric views of knowledge:

> Knowledge is not what some possess and others do not; it is a resourceful capacity of being that creates the context and texture of life. Thus, knowledge is not a commodity that can be possessed or controlled by educational institutions, but is a living process to be absorbed and understood. (p.15)

In the Eurocentric view of schooling, however, knowledge is something that one owns through their 'successes' and/or 'failures' in the school system. It is mediated through a process of highly structured time and behavioural management principles that have been strictly enforced. In the Eurocentric framework, knowledge is something that can be bought and sold to the highest bidder, and is rigorously maintained only for those who can navigate their way through institutional obstacles such as racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism.

According to Aboriginal learning principles, experiential knowledge is paramount; a student must learn how to work independently by "observing, listening, and participating with a minimum of intervention or instruction" (Battiste, 2002, p.15). Conversely, in the Eurocentric schooling structure, students are highly instructed, with a large amount of intervention from teachers. Can a balance be struck between these two vastly different ideological stances on education? One is holistic, student-driven, and used for social change, while the other values the status quo, exclusivity, and scarcity. Battiste recognizes these differences and offers a suggestion: "The contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies between the two knowledge systems suggest that the next step needed in the quest is a deeper understanding of Indigenous knowledge (p.10)." While there are many issues at the classroom level that would need to be addressed, from a theory of knowledge perspective, Linda Smith's (2006) work on decolonization offers suggestions on possible avenues for change.

Decolonizing Knowledge – Theoretical Foundations

Linda Tuhiwai Smith's Decolonizing Methodologies (2006) is concerned with the construction of knowledge, its underlying assumptions, and how those assumptions become embedded in educational systems. While the context of Smith's work is New Zealand, there are many parallels to the history of European settlement in Canada. Smith (2006) unpacks the imperialist nature of writing and theorizing, and its implications for education from an Indigenous perspective. Decolonization is a complex process that interrogates power relations between institutions and their impact on peoples, specifically those who have been misrepresented, forgotten, or silenced (Smith, 2006). She has written extensively on the impact of White colonialist structures on Indigenous peoples, and her work is vital for understanding the process of written history and its linkages to power. The process of including non-Eurocentric histories into provincial curricula is indeed a large and an important step needed to start the decolonization process, however the ways by which this knowledge is being imparted to students needs to be questioned. Smith (2006) provides a valuable critique on the relationship between knowledge and imperialism (and colonialism) that guides the interrogation of Indigenous knowledge usage in mainstream schooling.

Smith (2006) begins her first chapter, "Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory," by defining the terms 'imperialism' and 'colonialism.' Understanding the full meaning of these two words, which are often used interchangeably, is essential in order to critique a Eurocentric schooling system founded on European Enlightenment principles. Smith (2006) defines imperialism through four major uses of the word: the first pertains to imperialism primarily for economic expansion, the second to the subjugation of Indigenous peoples, while the third use of imperialism refers to the ideological expansion of Europe through knowledge and scientific thought. The fourth interpretation of imperialism concerns a field of knowledge that critiques European expansion (in all its forms) and its insidious effects on the world and its peoples.

Colonialism is based on the settling of colonies in the image of Western Europe, "an image of the future nation it would become" (Smith, 2006, p.23). Indigenous peoples were not part of this vision of nation, and thus suffered

extreme violence at the hands of the Europeans. Smith acknowledges that both words are "constantly being reworked" in order to continue Indigenous critiques of Eurocentric forms of knowledge and power that are often hidden under a neutral guise (p. 24).

The writing and teaching of history need to be challenged in a way that questions grand narratives used in curricula. What views of colonialism and imperialism are being taught, by whom, and to what audience? It is safe to presume that in most public schools, there is primarily a Western European discourse which does not question colonial expansion; colonies provided natural resources to the imperial center, and as an economic endeavor, this was a positive undertaking for the Western world (Smith, 2006). MST and ACS curricula both question the 'inherent good' of Western European expansion, to include discussions of slavery and exploitation, however, the MST curriculum often leaves these in the pre-colonial past, with little to no linkage to present manifestations of colonialism. I will address the issues of classroom implementation at length when analyzing interview and curricula data.

Smith critiques the discipline of history as a project of colonial and imperialist knowledge expansion. The critique of history at its epistemological roots has an important function for education. Unpacking the construction of European grand narratives, which remain unquestioned in Canadian schools, is a necessary step for decolonizing classrooms. Two of the historical critiques are of interest for education: one being the concept of a universal history: "the concept of universal assumes that there are fundamental characteristics and values which all human and societies share" (Smith, 2006, p.30). From an educational perspective that leaves room for only one point of view, or one central way to think about history, with all Other perspectives deviating from the center.

A second important critique by Smith (2006) stems from the notion of Enlightenment and its idea of "progress." From this historical perspective, development takes place in a linear fashion, encompassing categories through which societies must pass on their way to becoming developed: "As societies develop they become less primitive, more civilized, more rational, and their social

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structures become more complex and bureaucratic" (Smith, 2006, p. 30). Thus, the power to name societies as 'primitive' also carries the alleged authority to categorize peoples as primitive, meaning not fully human, when juxtaposed to European counterparts who are considered fully functioning and rational human beings (Smith, 2006). Definitions of progress and development included in Western European historical discourse permeate public school systems, giving only one perspective, while many other views are either excluded, or mythologized as primitive.

Smith (2006) interrogates how European knowledge since the time of the Enlightenment has colonized (and continues to colonize) Indigenous peoples.

> The project of the Enlightenment is often referred to as modernity and it is
> that project which is claimed to have provided the stimulus for the
> industrial revolution, the philosophy of liberalism, the development of
> disciplines in the sciences and the development of public education.
> (Smith, 2006, p.58)

Educational institutions in North America stem from Enlightenment philosophies of knowledge, progress, and rational thought, consequently pedagogy and curricula are inextricably linked to this formative perspective (Smith, 2006). In relation to MST and ACS courses in Nova Scotia, which are created out of opposition of this worldview, there is a need to critically assess the curriculum and its use in practice. To what degree do these courses stray from the deeply embedded Enlightenment principles of education? Several factors, such as administration, teacher education and experience, curriculum development, resources, class size, and local context may contribute to this answer, which will be further discussed in the chapters on curriculum and interview analyses. There are many practical (systemic) obstacles to consider for the theoretical deconstruction of Enlightenment educational foundations.

Smith (2006) begins her third chapter with a theoretical discussion on the positional superiority of Western knowledge and its connection to colonial expansion: "the production of knowledge…ideas about the nature of knowledge and the validity of specific forms of knowledge, became as much commodities of

colonial exploitation as other natural resources" (p.59). Colonialism, on the level of culture and ideology, is much more detrimental and pervasive today than pure economic exploitation of natural resources, for the reason that educational, political, and economic decisions are all based on liberalist philosophies stemming from Enlightenment thought. What Smith calls "the globalization of knowledge," or the spreading of Western superiority through realms of commerce and research, reaffirms legitimate Western sources of knowledge as universal (2006, p. 63). Knowledge from this perspective is something to be sought after and owned through a process of collection; those who have the skills to do so can claim knowledge as theirs (Smith, 2006). In terms of education, the only knowledge considered rational, scientific, and rigorous, is that collected through a specific method devised from Enlightenment rules of knowledge attainment.

Smith's critique of knowledge collection and production questions the intentions of Indigenous knowledge use in an education system build upon Western Enlightenment ideals. What are the true intentions of MST and ACS according to this critique? Are these courses being used to de-center and contest Eurocentric frameworks, or is their implementation simply reaffirming Western knowledge as universal, as 'truth'? A look into issues pertaining to large class sizes, lack of resources and teacher education re-situates Indigenous knowledge as on the periphery with respect to Western European history classes.

Dei, Battiste, and Smith provide a significant critique of knowledge and power in schools through the discussion of Indigenous knowledge, anti-racism education, and the theoretical discussion of knowledge production in a colonialist framework. Most importantly, for courses such as MST and ACS, intentions and course objectives need to be questioned: in what ways are these courses being used for true social justice goals (educating about power and privilege to as a catalyst for change), or to reaffirm the Eurocentric status quo?

Curriculum Theory

The theoretical background surrounding the creation, implementation, and criticism of curriculum is vast and varied. Curriculum can mean many things,

including the list of topics to be covered in a classroom in a given amount time, to a legal document that a public school teacher is in charge of imparting on their students at a satisfactory level of completion (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Curriculum theory has meandered away from the 'content and objective' based 'Tylerian' (1949) curriculum development, to a deeper epistemological discussion of why certain content is included, and why some content is left out. The definition, and subsequent philosophical and theoretical ideas of curriculum with which I will be aligning my analysis, is connected to the idea that curriculum, and its use, is an experience derived out of a dialectical (and therefore hermeneutic) relationship between theory and practice, outside of the realm of subjects and outcomes (Pinar, 2004).

> Curriculum is often taken to mean a course of study. When we set our imaginations free from the narrow notion that a course of study is a series of textbooks or specific outline of topics to be covered and objectives to be attained, broader and more meaningful notions emerge. A curriculum can become one's life course of action. It can mean the paths we have followed and the paths we intend to follow (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p.1).

In such a broader definition of curriculum, there is an emphasis on the meaning created in classrooms out of the way teachers relate to the courses they teach. Apart from learning objectives, assessment, and methods of teaching, there lays what Connelly & Clandinin (1988) call "personal-practical knowledge" (p.25). This knowledge is what teachers bring into the classroom, separate from curriculum as document, which guides them in their everyday conduct with students. For my research purposes, I use interviews to understand how teachers make meaning out of the curriculum through their practical experiences. Using theories that critique and re-envision the common conception of curriculum, I investigate how practical knowledge can be applied to promote change. In the following discussion of curriculum theory I focus on two separate, yet interrelated facets: re-envisioning curriculum through narrative (Grumet, 1991), and critiquing curriculum through a 'complicated conversation' (Pinar, 1992, 1993, 2004).

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Re-envisioning Curriculum through Narrative

> Domesticity has always been denigrated as a source of knowledge, and because home, the place we all come from, is anathema to the academy, we wander through academic halls like vulnerable and bewildered exiles who speak a language nobody wants to hear. (Grumet, 1991, p.75)

Madeline Grumet's (1991) "Curriculum and the Art of Daily Life" looks to explain curriculum through our understanding of 'home,' and how this understanding of the domestic relates to the process of educational meaning and value creation. Grumet (1991) asserts, "choosing and naming of what matters, and the presentation of those values for the perception and engaged participation of others are the deliberations that constitute curriculum development" (p.75). The choosing of what matters is of great importance for curriculum development, and conversely, what is not chosen (and hence what experiences and knowledge(s) are not given value) is left out of the 'legitimizing' educational realm. I use the term 'legitimize' in quotes as a reminder that the process of curriculum development and implementation is political; perspectives not taught in schools, or topics ignored in progressive curriculum documents, point to deeper issues of representation and the social construction of knowledge. This concept is not new, and Grumet (1991) links the perspective in curricula given in most public schools to a feeling of loneliness and disengagement stemming from our experiences with what is means to be human – what it is to order our knowledge of home with concepts of education.

The dislocation of domestic knowledge from scholarly knowledge causes a disjuncture in education; naming the things that matter become alien to where people have been brought up (Grumet, 1991). "Domestic" knowledge refers to the learning that takes place in the home and broader community, which lies outside of the realm of formal schooling. The difference between domestic knowledge and scholarly knowledge lies in what is valued by those who create the curriculum. If curriculum is created out of meaning from a small segment of the population's version of what matters, then what happens to the rest of students to whom that knowledge does not relate? In this sense, personal narrative, or more

specifically, how we come to understand and interpret everyday aspects of education into our existing realities, becomes the place where curriculum needs to be reevaluated. Without connection to symbolic aspects of our personal lives, curriculum becomes emptied into "texts, facts, scores…devoured as credentials and value seeps out of the experience of education" (Grumet, 1991, p.86). Re-centering domestic knowledge through narrative can help discourage the recent shifts in education to a credentialist system.

Curriculum, vis-à-vis teacher narratives, becomes ingrained with value and meaning that needs to be extrapolated into the broader socio-political milieu. The next section gives a background on curriculum theory to better understand how teachers, through their life experiences in and out of the classroom, construct knowledge. This construction does not take place inside a vacuum. The presentation of information is political, and guided by personal theories and philosophies of life.

Critiquing Curriculum through Complicated Conversation

Curriculum ceases to be a thing, and it is more than a process. It becomes a verb, an action, a social practice, a private meaning, and a public hope. Curriculum is not just the site of our labor; it becomes the product of our labor, changing as we are changed by it. It is an ongoing, if complicated, conversation (Pinar, 2004, p.188).

The 'complicated conversation' Pinar (2004) describes above is one way to change curriculum: through open, difficult discussions about what matters most in education. Curricular change in this sense is not a simple process, but one which needs a great deal of understanding and commitment to change powerful and deeply embedded educational discourses that hide social issues instead of bringing them to the forefront of the conversation. The possibility of these types of discussions happening in the current conservative educational milieu is slim; an oppositional approach needs to be taken. The word 'milieu' is used to describe current educational trends, which are impacted by larger political policies, shown

in Apple (2004) who discussed the recent trend of standardized testing, based on a business model of schooling. In an oppositional curricular model, political activism, not accountability or standardized test scores, is the priority (Apple, 2004).

According to Pinar (2004), the way to 'wake-up' from an educational system entrenched in conservative measures is to challenge the hidden common-sense assumptions about knowledge, and their social construction, through curriculum.

"Alterity structures and animates complicated conversation" (Pinar, 2004, p.188). Looking at curriculum development through a critical lens, and from a non-traditional perspective, gives life to the discussions that need to take place (non-traditional, meaning the incorporation of voices and views that have traditionally been excluded from curricular development). The incorporation of non-Eurocentric curriculum into a system created from power gained from exclusion is not an easy task, given the pervasiveness of European power and privilege in the education system. Authentic curricular change, where community members have input, and courses are developed to reduce societal power imbalances, needs to accompany structural change for results. Otherwise, the implementation of said curricular advancements will be riddled with issues of an ideological nature.

Systemic issues aside, curriculum firstly needs to be understood as more than outcomes or objectives by those who are teaching. Understanding the intent behind curricular creation in its broader socio-historical context, and how this context relates to the ways in which it can be used in the classroom for social change, is more important than the document itself. Challenges arise when accumulating factors such as lack of critical teacher education, accountability measures, and standardized test taking are given more importance than whether or not the original aspirations of the course are being upheld. Learning taking place inside the classroom goes above and beyond quantitative measures.

> Individual teachers have always helped to keep hope alive, our faith…that
> individual educators can somehow find ways to work with children outside
> official directives and bureaucratic inertia, outside that patriarchal public

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sphere dominated by right-wing politics and capitalistic economics...Those children in our classrooms compel us to continue to converse, privately and in public, inspired by those who have gone before us, those who faced odds much worse than we face today (Pinar, 2004, p.226).

Pinar demonstrates that even against tough odds, there are teachers who incorporate "oppositional discourse" into their methods of learning in the classroom. Teachers who care about the content they teach, and the implications of its delivery, discuss avenues for change through curriculum modification. These discussions blend theory and practice to give a greater understanding of the larger educational picture. Delving into the ways educators manage teaching in classrooms with a myriad of issues, whether accountability and behavioural management related, to deeper issues of representation and power difference, their experiences are necessary for curricular change. I am interested in the ways educators create meaning from these experiences, and in turn how these experiences contribute to curriculum development in relation to social change. What path are we on as educators, to ensure that common-sense assumptions about schooling and society are not left unchallenged in our classrooms?

Chapter 2:
Methodology and Methods

Hermeneutics

The hermeneutical has to do with bridging the gap between the familiar world in which we stand and the strange meaning that resists assimilation into the horizons of world. (Linge, 2004, xii)

The subsequent chapters are based upon the theoretical hermeneutic philosophical tradition of Hans-Georg Gadamer (2004). In this brief introduction of philosophical hermeneutics (Gadamer, 2004), I will discuss how my methods are informed by this background philosophy to include a dialectical understanding of 'text' and its relation to the hermeneutic circle (Ricoeur, 1981). The use of Fairclough is discussed within the same tradition, as a means of critically analyzing the curriculum text. I return to what hermeneutics has to say with respect to the application of knowledge, and apply this to my researcher role as well as the dialogue (interviews) between the teacher participants and myself.

Hermeneutics and Interpretation

Hermeneutics is the reflexive search for meaning from our common-sense knowledge of the world, and through the interpretation of this meaning, growth and understanding occur, which then leads to further exploration. As a reflexive means to interpret text (written, verbal, situational), hermeneutic application can aid in unpacking prejudices, or biases, when uncovering and producing meaning (Gadamer, 2004). This is expressed by the hermeneutic circle, which is the dialectical relationship that occurs when understanding a text; in order to negotiate meaning, there is understanding of text as a part, and then how that text is situated in a larger context (Gadamer, 2004). In this dialectic, understanding takes place in the relationship between the two processes of meaning creation, with both having equal importance for a sum that is greater than its initial parts.

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Hermeneutics does not provide a step-by-step method for understanding this dialectical process, but refers to the methodological (or philosophical) underpinning for clarifying the conditions in which understanding takes place (Gadamer, 2004). Meaning is temporal. Each time we interact with a text or situation, our understanding of it changes, becomes more complex, and continues in this dialectical (cyclical) process of interpretation. "Understanding is not to be thought of so much as an action of one's subjectivity, but as the placing of oneself within a process of tradition, in which past and present are constantly fused" (Gadamer, 1975, p. 258). The temporality of understanding, as Gadamer notes, places the act of interpretation within a space where the interpreter is consciously aware of their past, and its relation to the present context, in order to make meaning. The process of understanding requires the interpreter to situate themselves in the present, while fully understanding their past context(s) to produce a synthesis of these spaces into a new space; awareness of this process can impart greater fluidity and dynamic interaction between person as interpreter and text (Gadamer, 1976). As a highly reflexive way of understanding the ontological basis for deeply knowing oneself, and the self in relation to the broader context, is especially relevant for this research.

Narrative is a means to reflexively situate one's self in our daily experiences in order to understand how we relate to the world (Ricoeur, 1991). Through narrative, constituent parts, which remain fragmented in the mind, became more whole, and hold more value through the writing process. Ricoeur (1991) refers to this method as a "dynamic circularity between life and narrative" which harkens back to the hermeneutic circle of understanding text (p.17). Methodologically, hermeneutics provides a philosophical springboard for narrative; understanding one's social position, biases, and preconceptions, are all necessary for narrative writing. As Gadamer (1976) notes, "the important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness, and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings" (p.272). In this situation, Gadamer refers to the self-awareness necessary to fully engage with a text. Narrative, as a reflexive method, provides a beginning point for the

researcher to be transparent in her intentions, but also to be completely conscious in the process of curriculum and interview (textual) analyses. Hermeneutics, and the search for meaning through a circular understanding of life experiences, provides a basis for narrative:

> To understand a text is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue. This contention is confirmed by the fact that the dealing with a text yields understanding only when what is said in the text begins to find expression in the interpreter's own language. Interpretation belongs to the essential unity of understanding (Gadamer, 1975, p.57).

Hermeneutics and Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the second methodological approach on which the analysis relies, focusing on curriculum document analysis. The above quotation describes the process of textual interpretation of the curriculum document as a 'dialogue': the reader is engaged with the curriculum text, but only insofar as the capacity of that person's language (and background knowledge) allows them to be connected. To clarify, I will be applying CDA to the curriculum document analysis, as consistent with the theoretical framework; I am interested in the choice of language use in the curriculum documents. For the stories and examples teachers use to situate their experiences with the ACS and MST courses in relation to issues of power and privilege, a hermeneutic approach is adopted, using dialogue to help advance my understanding of their experiences in teaching the courses.

From a hermeneutical perspective, CDA is an ideal method with which to analyze curricular language, by examining: word choice, discourse, and values attached to these facets of language use. The teachers who then read and interpret the curriculum are subject to this language, and are simultaneously engaged in a dialogue with the text. Fairclough's (1988) use of CDA focuses on power and ideology in analysis, and it is in this way that I will be engaging with the curriculum documents.

Hermeneutics and Researcher Role and Reflexivity

Hermeneutic analysis will extend to understanding my experiences as a learner and teacher, which are situated in a specific socio-historical context. As a researcher, my experiences cannot be separated from the textual analysis, since "all understanding is applied understanding" (Wilson, 2000, p.60).

According to Wilson (2000), researchers cannot be neutral in their involvement with participants, due to the nature of human interaction. In an interviewing scenario, both the researcher and participant will be affected by the meaning created from the information shared in the conversation (Wilson, 2000). When using semi-structured interviewing, the researcher needs to accept his/her involvement as a co-creator of knowledge, both as affecting, and being affected by, the interaction (Wilson, 2000).

The decision to have an interview open to being guided by the participant was chosen in order to have an organic dialogue between colleagues. In this way, meaning would be co-created through conversation. Interviewing with this method in mind, the text and subsequent analysis of the text has emerged from an interaction where two people have created meaning out of their experiences together. The sum of both participants' experiences and sharing of knowledge has created something larger than the experience on his/her own. Similarly, as the conversation progresses, learning takes place through a dialectical process, and understandings can shift and even change within a small amount of time.

The analysis of conversations will be based on emerging thematic patterns created through meaning produced by the both the researcher and participant, which will be further explained in the methods section. The analysis of interview data will be a second hermeneutic process: re-reading the conversations to create an in-depth analysis is a process that involves, once again, engaging with the text in relation to its context, to create a larger meaning from it. Therefore, I will be participating in a conversation where meaning will be created out of a dialectical process, in which I will further engage to have a deeper understanding in a slightly different context.

The task of philosophical hermeneutics…seeks to throw lights on the fundamental conditions that underlie the phenomenon of understanding in all its modes, scientific and nonscientific alike, and that constitute understanding as an event over which the interpreting subject does not ultimately preside. (Linge, 2004, xi)

Philosophical hermeneutics, as a methodology, involves coming to understand the ways by which interpretation and meaning are construed through various means. These means are always temporal, shifting, and need to be contextualized. By being a reflexive researcher, through the methods I have outlined above, I hope to provide an analysis, however incomplete, to better understand the phenomena associated with curriculum production, implementation, and teacher practice.

Methods

Introduction

The methods chosen for this research closely follow the methodological and theoretical framework laid out in Chapter 1. Related to the critical theoretical perspective(s) defined in the Conceptual Framework, critical discourse analysis was used (CDA) to analyze the information included in the ACS and MST provincial curriculum documents. CDA, further explained in this chapter, is closely connected to the hermeneutic tradition, as it represents the dialectical move between textual understandings of the curriculum documents in relation to broader implications of power through language. Interviewing and narrative are methods that also reflect the methodological and theoretical background of this work; the reflexive nature of both methods combines to create a well-rounded analysis through triangulation. Through these three methods, the analysis encompasses both theoretical and practical aspects facing the implementation of ACS and MST, and an analysis of the difference between the curriculum guides (as documents) and how these documents are translated into practice.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The critical discourse analysis (CDA) method has developed out of the philosophical backgrounds of phenomenology and hermeneutics (Weiss & Wodak, 2003). While some theorists apply CDA as a methodology as well as a method (as have I as well), I will primarily be using it as a method that has roots in phenomenological hermeneutics. Phenomenological hermeneutic philosophy is used to view human experience as a dialectic phenomenon, which must be theorized in order to truly understand how we each make meaning out of our lived realities.

Understanding, according to Alfred Schutz, "[is] the particular experiential form in which common-sense thinking takes cognizance of the social cultural world" (1962, p. 56, as cited in Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p.4). Through the analysis of text and language, certain versions of reality begin to surface that are compatible with distinct theoretical ways of viewing and being in the world. Such versions of reality are not neutral; language is political, and depending on its usage, ideological and hegemonic constructs often go unrecognized due to common-sense readings of text (Fairclough, 1989). CDA is a method that has the potential to put theory into practice. Through the analysis of (primarily) language and text, one can come to understand the how certain versions of reality are produced via deconstructing meaning (Fairclough, 1989).

"The concepts 'theory' and 'interdisciplinarity' refer to the conceptual and disciplinary framework conditions of discourse-analytical research" (Weiss & Wodak, 2003, p.1). Since the 1990's, theorists such as Fairclough, Wodak, and van Dijk have led the field of CDA, stressing the necessity of interdisciplinarity (Meyer & Wodak, 2009). Although the field of CDA is vast, there are several main principles that are followed:

> …CDA is characterized by the common interests in de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systematic and retroductable investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual). CDA researchers also attempt to make their own positions and interests explicit while retaining their respective scientific methodologies and while remaining self-reflective of their own research process. (Meyer & Wodak, 2009, p.3)

At the heart of CDA lies the critique of power and ideology found in specific discourses located in language and text. Important to note is the way terms are defined by each theorist; words such as 'discourse', 'ideology', 'power', and 'critical' are used differently, depending on the background of the writer (Fairclough, 1989; Meyer & Wodak, 2009). Aligning oneself with one of the main CDA theorists can denote an agreement on the definitions of the terms used above. For the use of CDA as a research method for this thesis, I most closely align my interests and political position to Norman Fairclough's version of CDA. Wodak (2009) explains Fairclough's (2009) CDA as "understanding the relationship between complex historical processes, [and] hegemonic narratives" (p.11). Eurocentric grand narratives found in curricula, and their relation to power and ideology in course implementation, is an area of analysis where Fairclough's CDA is particularly pertinent.

Starting with the book Language and Power (2001) , Fairclough distinguishes himself as a leader in the area of CDA. Language and Power is a seminal resource for a detailed description of the theoretical framework of CDA, and as a useful guide for those who are interested in using CDA as a method of analysis. In the following discussion, I will outline Fairclough's (2001) definitions of ideology, discourse, power, and common-sense language analysis through CDA, and explain I how I intend to incorporate these ideas into my curricular analysis.

Fairclough (2001) emphasizes critically understanding language through its various uses, whether spoken or written, and by means of the common-sense ways in which we come to understand it. This critical awareness of underlying assumptions found in language use allows us to understand how ideologies contribute to unequal power relations through language. Such assumptions, when left unquestioned, have consequences; hierarchical knowledge construction through language is upheld by ideology (Fairclough, 1989). Ideologies, in Fairclough's (2001) analysis, "are closely linked to language, because using language is the commonest form of social behaviour, and the form of social behaviour where we rely most on 'common-sense' assumptions" (p.2).

Teaching, through this view of language use, becomes a highly politicized event, and curriculum construction and use even more politicized. Word choice in curriculum impacts teacher's language selection in the delivery of course materials; uncritical use of curricular materials can create openings for ideological assumptions to make their way into student consciousness (Fairclough, 1989). Although this is not usually done for malicious purposes on the teacher's behalf, much of the language used in school materials are entrenched in Eurocentric assumptions, as has been criticized by Smith (2006). "Moreover, the operation of ideology can be seen in terms of ways of constructing texts which constantly and cumulatively impose assumptions upon text interpreters and text producers, typically without either being aware of it" (Fairclough, 1989, p.83). The hidden ways in which meaning and power are created and upheld through ideological educational discourse often remain uncriticized.

Depending on the way in which discourse is defined in CDA, subsequent analysis will change. Fairclough (2009) determines three commonly used variations of the term discourse: "(a) meaning-making as an element of the social process, (b) the language associated with a particular social field or practice, and (c) a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective" (p.163). All three of the aforementioned characteristics of discourse have an important relationship with language, power, and social phenomena, and cannot be reduced without understanding their (complex) dialectic relationship (Fairclough, 1989, 2009). Based on the view that discourse is the particular language convention used to reflect ideological values embedded in social structures and institutions, I will discuss Fairclough's analysis of discourse, in relation to language, power and ideology.

As a social practice, discourse is directly related to the ways in which language is used to maintain or change the status quo, whether conscious or not (Fairclough, 1989). In this view, discourse is directly linked to politicized forms of language, and the ways in which they are used in everyday contexts. For example, in my earlier discussion of Smith's (2006) work Decolonizing Methodologies, the term 'colonialism' needs to be understood from several

perspectives. Similar to the political nature of 'discourse', words need to be understood in their multiple uses, and how each of their uses denotes a specific political affiliation in a broader social sense. In short, with CDA, the seemingly 'neutral' use of language is taken out of its common sense framework to uncover its ideological discursive function.

Fairclough (2001) defines discourse analysis as the dialectical relationship between the various ways we create meaning through language use, which Fairclough (2009) further describes as semiosis. Semiosis is the view that humans create meaning out of various language modalities (spoken, written, visual, body language) through a process that is mutually, but not equally, dialectical. All language forms influence social structures, as power and ideologies affiliated with social structures influence the various meanings and uses of language.

The dialectical-relational approach to CDA is an important aspect for curriculum analysis; the ways in which educational instructional texts are produced for classroom use is highly dependant on the socio-historical context in which they have been produced (Fairclough, 2009). Depending on the context, educational discourses used in the creation of curricula will display different political meanings attached to the text, especially in word choice associated with course outcomes. Through this, a dialectical association between semiosis and educational discourse occurs, which must be understood through an in-depth textual analysis.

Distinguishing 'discourse' from 'text' is an aspect of discourse analysis that involves processes of production and interpretation. Since "text is a product rather than a process," Fairclough (2001) uses the word discourse to describe, "the total social interaction that text is part of" (p.24). For example, the interpretation of a curriculum document would involve an engagement with the text, employing the reader's prior knowledge in relation to the document. A crucial element in discursive text analysis is trying to understand the prior resources people bring when engaging with various forms of text, and the ways in which individuals socially position themselves as they interpret text (Fairclough, 1989).

As Fairclough (2001) states, "resources which people have in their heads and draw upon when they produce or interpret texts – including their knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on," are impossible to know completely, and undeniably important when considering the dialectical relationship between discourse and text (p.24). From the perspective of teaching, it is impossible to predict how curriculum documents will be read and interpreted by educators, due to the large amount of variables involved in the meaning-making process described above. However, what can be analyzed is the dialectical relationship between the interpreter (a teacher in this instance), the chosen discourse and word choice in curriculum text, and the broader system of social structures and institutional social conditions in which the text has been created and disseminated (Fairclough, 2009). What needs to be explored is the power to define knowledge through discourse, and the relationship between discourse and power.

Power, in Fairclough's (2001) analysis, is mediated through the uncritical, and sometimes coercive, use of ideological assumptions in language:

> Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often
> embody assumptions, which directly or indirectly legitimize existing
> power relations. Practices which appear to be universal and
> commonsensical can…sustain unequal power relations, I shall say they are
> functioning ideologically. (p.33)

Having the power to project one's views as 'natural' or as common sense is considered ideological power, and from an educational standpoint, power is gained through the uncritical discursive use of language and text, which maintains hegemonic power relations in the institutional and broader social sense (Fairclough, 1989).

Power in discourse is mediated through several controlling constraints: content (what is done or written), social relations of people involved in the situational discourse, and the subject positioning of the people involved (Fairclough, 1989). These categories are overlapping by nature; the dynamic interplay of people's interpretation of text, their relations within a specific group,

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and how those relations position them socially are important aspects to consider when analyzing power in discourse. Fairclough (2001) discusses the idea of power behind discourse as a hidden effect held in place through various linguistic norms, some of which are blatant while others are much more covert.

In the context of education, the grammatical conventions, word choice and meanings from middle to upper class (White) English speakers has been privileged, and remains so (Fairclough, 1989). In education, the power behind chosen language conventions can be seen when such language use is "imposed on all those involved…apparently by the [educational] institution or the system itself" (Fairclough, 1989, p.61). Power is hidden in education systems by the positioning of knowledge, for instance, by which topics are considered valid in courses, compared to what is not discussed or included. In terms of curriculum, language use, word choice, positioning of knowledge, style, and tone are all examples of how power can be hidden in text.

In order to develop coherent interpretation of language, power, discourse, and ideology in curricula, Fairclough (2001) gives a very clear description of how CDA can be used as a method of analysis:

> Firstly, you certainly need to work out how the parts of the text link to each other. Secondly, you also need to figure out how the text fits in with your previous experience of the world: what aspects of the world it related to, or indeed what conception of the world it presupposed. (p.78)

As noted in Fairclough (2001) above, the textual analysis is equally as important as the reflexivity of the researcher, which connects back to hermeneutics. Due to this facet of CDA (briefly discussed in the introduction), personal narratives brought forth teaching and learning experiences. Fairclough's (2001) idea of coherence connects researcher with text, and text with the broader social world, which are notions very useful to the context of this study. To interpret text using this method is also an interpretation of how a researcher comes to understand text; implicit assumptions, social subject positions, and inferences drawn from the text all need to be explored as part of the textual analysis.

Fairclough (2001) also offers a practical guide to using CDA in Language and Power. The three stages of CDA are: description of text, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context. The three provide a strong framework for content analysis of curricular outcomes. Although Fairclough (2001) places a large emphasis on many linguistic features of text, derived from Hallidayan systemic-functional linguistics, which is interested in grammar and syntax, I will focus mainly on the vocabulary of the document, and how it relates to forming a specific world-view. The process of description involves analyzing three value-specific aspects of word choice: experiential, relational, and expressive (Fairclough, 1989).

Fairclough (2001) calls textual features "experiential" pieces of language that contain information about the text producer's "experience of the natural or social world" and how that world is represented (p.112). The experiential values of words are heavily laden in ideological language, which show the epistemological foundations of a text. Varying language use between curriculum documents reveals differing worldviews. For example, the Canadian History curriculum document uses the word Globalization in the unit explaining how Europeans settled in Canada and how the Canadian economy has historically been built around natural resource use (NSDE, 2002). In the African Canadian Studies document, the term describing the settlement of Europeans in Canada, and the subsequent building of global trade routes is Colonization (NSDE, 2002). The words carry different meanings, and although describing similar historical foundations in Canada, the variance in word choice signifies opposing worldviews. This will be explored in more depth in the curriculum analysis chapter. The experiential values of text in curricula need to be investigated thoroughly in order to establish an epistemological framework upon which to base the rest of the text analysis.

The second type of value I will analyze is the "relational" value; this is based on the text choice of the writer/producer of the document, which situates it in relationships between people, and creates social relationships between larger

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social groups (Fairclough, 1989). An example of relational values in text is the use of racist language formalized by a process of acceptance in a group (Fairclough, 1989). While relational values in language are associated with establishing and maintaining power relationships between groups, in terms of racist language usage, there is also an experiential value where ideological discourse needs to also be addressed. When implemented in the classroom, word choice in curriculum, with all (or any) of its ideological discourse, shapes social relations of students and teachers.

Following relational values, as the third type of descriptive analysis, is the expressive value of words: this is a main concern for persuasive language use, ideological and/or politicized language used, and discourses associated with this form and style of text use (Fairclough, 1989). Social identities, or subject positions, emerge at this level of analysis. From the ideological basic of text, expressive values are closely associated with the experiential and relations aspects. However, expressive values are the outcome of ideological and social relational presuppositions. All three of the above dimensions of language meaning are needed to fully explore a text. In the realm of education, curricular discourse guides the construction of social relations in practice. The extrapolation of meaning from the above three formal features of text are vital for analysis, but cannot be used to link to a broader analysis of social structures alone; more steps need to be taken to connect language use to larger problems of social injustice (Fairclough, 2009).

The next stages of discourse analysis are interpretation and explanation, which I will discuss in relation to curriculum analysis. The second stage, interpretation, is dependent on the relationship of textual features to the descriptive stage of discourse:

> …the values of textual features only become real, socially operative, if they are embedded in social interaction, where texts are produced and interpreted against a background of common-sense assumptions which give textual features their values. These discourse processes, and their

dependence on background assumptions, are the concern of the second

stage of the procedure, interpretation. (Fairclough, 1989, p.140)

Interpretation is the stage in which the analyst is concerned with the ways in which participants come to understand texts, as well as the ways in which texts are produced. Fairclough (2001) stresses that members' resources are an important feature of text interpretation: peoples' background knowledge, life experiences, and assumptions all play a role in the way text is interpreted. For my purposes, I am interested both in the way curriculum is written, and the way curricular text is interpreted by teachers with varying backgrounds and knowledge bases. It is important here to note that background knowledge takes into account common-sense assumptions and ideological constructions held by a participant (Fairclough, 1989).

Fairclough's (2001) second stage of interpretation largely deals with face-to-face interaction, which I will not be analyzing in my research. Context is much more relevant for this analysis, and is an important facet of text interpretation: "interpreters quickly decide what the context is, and this decision can affect the interpretation of text" (Fairclough, 1989, p.145). All inferences and guesses of the meanings in text ultimately determine the meaning made by the interpreter. In terms of curriculum interpretation, ideology and power relations must be taken from common-sense discourse to be fully understood: "ideologies and the power relations which underlie [texts] have a deep and pervasive influence upon discourse interpretation and production, and are embedded in the interpretative procedures" (Fairclough, 1989, p.151).

The third stage of analysis is explanation. This final stage aims to incorporate the first analysis of value-laden content in formal language, with the second stage of analysis which deals with ideological and power contexts of language, to finish with a social context of discourse (Fairclough, 1989). The third level of interpretation relates to the way teachers' implement curriculum after the initial interpretation. Fairclough (2001) asserts while the first two levels of analysis are important, the third level of analysis is ultimately the stage in which socially constructed realities (knowledge) engage in real social struggle

institutionally. Fairclough (2001) poses three types of questions at the explanation level of analysis:

1.   What power relations at situational, institutional and societal levels help shape this discourse?

2.   What elements of members' resources, which are drawn upon, have ideological character?

3.   How is this discourse positioned in relation to struggles at the situational, institutional and societal levels? Are these struggles overt or covert? Does it contribute to sustaining existing power relations, or transforming them? (p.166)

The questions pertaining most to my research are the first and third groupings, with the second group more related to an analysis of how people understand discourse in face-to-face interactions, which I am not analyzing. The analysis of curricular documents with these in-depth questions, along with teacher interviews concerning the way in which the courses are implemented in practice, will, it is hoped, lend itself to a highly critical analysis of power and persistence of social inequality in course implementation.

Fairclough (2001) finishes with a discussion of the analyst's position, with a high amount of importance being placed on transparency and "self-consciousness" in order to understand how one interprets discourse through one's own experiences and knowledge base. "For the critical analyst, the aim is to…develop self-consciousness about the rootedness of discourse in common-sense assumptions" (Fairclough, 1989, p.167). It is my hope through the methodology, conceptual framework, and narrative aspects of this thesis to specifically explain (through theoretical discussion and personal experience) how I have come to interpret curricular discourse. "CDA oscillates…between a focus on structures and a focus on the strategies of social agents, in which they try to achieve outcomes or objectives within existing structures and practices, or to change them in particular ways" (Fairclough, 2009, p.165). Critical analysis needs to take place between the dialectical process of structure and agency. Within the

context of this research, discourse analysis is situated in the space between the structural aspects of curriculum, and action in order to promote change.

Methodologically speaking, I have aligned my overall research with a phenomenological hermeneutic philosophical perspective, which coincides with CDA through Fairclough's (2009) dialectical-relational approach. This approach addresses semiosis, or the way meaning is created through various dialectical social relations such as the dialectical relationship between social inequalities and curriculum development. Fairclough establishes however, that CDA needs to be theoretically grounded as a method: "I see the process as a theoretical one in which methods are selected according to how the object of research is theoretically constructed. So it is not just a matter of applying methods in the usual sense – we cannot so sharply separate theory and method" (p.167). Through the methodology section and conceptual framework, I have established the theoretical background in which I will be grounding CDA as an analytical method to apply to the curriculum documents.

Narrative

The following discussion on narrative as method applies to sections of the thesis research that are based on my personal experiences as a teacher and a student.

> As well as gathering local stories, narrative research encourages the inclusion of the researcher's story, thus making transparent the values and beliefs that are held, which almost certainly influence the research process and its outcomes. This is what I am calling researcher reflexivity (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p.27).

Along with interviewing teachers about their classroom experiences in various social studies departments in Nova Scotia, I have chosen to write my own experiences in teaching, from two different perspectives. These narratives show the differences between two schools where I have had the privilege of teaching, but more importantly the ways in which I had come to negotiate my position in the school as a young teacher. While writing the narratives, I found myself linking teaching experiences and observations in the system to theoretical concepts,

specifically around class and race. When teaching I also found myself (informally) deconstructing the school space as raced, classed, and gendered. Although I had been observing the issues in the schooling structure and had discussions with colleagues about several systemic concerns, this was the first time I had actually had a chance to put these thoughts on paper. As a process, the narrative writing has been the most difficult part of the research process for me, for several reasons that I will explain in the latter part of this section. Narrative is an important of my research; the process of reflecting upon my own teaching experiences, and delving into reasons behind my current interests in the Nova Scotian social studies program has proved invaluable.

In a more general sense, narrative situates people in their social reality. How humans understand their experience as gendered, classed, and raced beings (among other socially constructed categories) in their daily interactions within social institutions and in everyday situations is highly relevant (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). The ways in which people negotiate these constructed facets of identity through various means, "shows how people can and do resist the forms of social control that marginalize or silence counter narratives…" (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p.217). Narrative can highlight the ways in which people interact within social constraints, and demonstrate how people are agents of social change through small, seemingly everyday occurrences. "Moreover, as communicating humans studying human communicating, we are inside what we are studying", therefore, the need to understand our own feelings, thoughts, and positions is an integral aspect of studying human experience and the ways in which we create meaning from experience (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p.216). Narrative can be a vehicle for situating oneself in the research process, to better understand the meaning created out of various experiences.

Reflexivity and Transparency

The writing of narrative can contribute to greater transparency by bringing to light assumptions embedded in everyday life, or the mode of their narration, that might otherwise be overlooked. The philosophical and theoretical underpinnings found in methodological approaches, methods chosen, and

positioning in analyses can be made more explicit through a well-constructed narrative (Etherington, 2004). If life experiences, values, and theoretical standpoints are transformed into narrative form, the audience can become informed of the writer's ontological and epistemological worldview (Ellis & Bochner, 2003).

Reflexivity on narrative, though, not narrative itself, is the way in which researchers make these worldviews, values, and experiences more explicit (Grumet, 1991). Through reflexive research, greater transparency may be gained (Kvale, 2007). Reflexivity, according to Etherington (2003), "requires self-awareness but is more than self-awareness in that it creates a dynamic process of interaction within and between ourselves and our participants, and the data that inform decisions, actions and interpretations at all states of research" (p.36). Reflexivity then, is more than the process of being transparent; it also involves the way by which researchers interacts with their work in ways that are both ethical and transparent. Grumet (1991) notes that the process of narrative writing can leave spaces where meaning is lost, due to gaps in memory, and in the process of writing information can be misplaced to fill in the gaps where memory fails us. The term Grumet uses for the memory work necessary for narrative is "excavation", where daily activities after sifted through for deeper meaning (Grumet, 1981, p.122, as cited in Strong-Wilson, 2008, p.11). Excavation is an ongoing process: as one uncovers more information through memory, the "drama" that covers underlying meaning must also be processed (Grumet, 1991, p.74).

While the process might be ongoing, the uncovering of memory used for narrative through excavation is genuinely difficult work where the researcher has the to face their past to understand the present. In order to truly become reflexive and transparent through the narrative writing process, emotionally difficult experiences and memories often needed to be sifted through. This process of recollection was an enlightening, interesting, and emotionally challenging part of being a researcher.

Difficult Work

"The self-questioning autoethnography demands is extremely difficult…Honest autoethnographic exploration generates a lot of fears and doubts – and emotional pain" (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p.207). Ellis and Bochner (2003) use the term 'autoethnography' to refer to the same process that I am calling 'narrative.' The difficulties experienced when writing so openly and honestly about one's life is complicated and rife with emotional pitfalls, as well as rewards. As mentioned in the opening paragraph about narrative, this part of the writing process has been the most challenging. The suggestion from my supervisor to start with narrative to better understand the reasons for choosing my research topic was crucial; this initial writing was used to support the conceptual framework, methodology, and subsequent sections of the thesis. The narrative writing process took the most time in order to fully understand how my experiences have guided my research interests. Many hours went into thinking about the ways in which teaching related to my theoretical understanding of society; the more I thought about the experiences I had, the more emotion I began to uncover.

This process, as Ellis and Bochner (2003) so accurately describe, was an exploration of "fear, doubt, and emotional pain". Looking into my past as a teacher and as a student forced me to revisit some unpleasant memories I had wanted to distance my (present) self from. When using narrative, this distance is bridged through deep introspection, and in a truly honest narrative account, cannot be avoided; there are many lessons to learn from emotional pain. Narrative situates emotional experiences within the social realm, not just as individual accounts, but also as a larger story of the (structural) institutional affects of racism, sexism, homophobia, and poverty: "…these issues touch all of us. So it's important to get exposed to local stories that bring us into worlds of experience…Maybe that's depressing to some of you, but I think it's enlightening and possibly transforming" (Ellis & Bochner, 2003, p. 223). The difficult work needed to relay painful memories has the potential to become a site where important discussions on social injustices begin to take place.

Criticism

Positivist social science heavily criticizes narrative as a method for researchers (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). Such criticisms stem from the belief that narrative is subjective, therefore cannot be used in real social analysis; this criticism is deeply rooted in an epistemological view that all realities can be objectified and measured. This positivist view does not accept personal accounts of life experience as 'truth', and distinguish narrative as a therapeutic method and not a research method (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). According this view of social science, therapeutic methods cannot be analytic, but I share the views of Ellis and Bochner (2003), who assert:

> A text that functions as an agent of self-discovery or self-creation, for the author as well as for those who read and engage in the text, is only threatening under a narrow definition of social inquiry, one the eschews a social science with a moral center and a heart. (p.221)

As a method used in triangulation, narrative is a way to be both reflexive and transparent. It is also important to note that just as society is ever changing, people are too. An interview or narrative is simply one picture of a person's experience as they have analyzed it to date, and it is likely to unfold upon further inspection and with more experience, becomes richer. It is in this light that I have written my own teaching narrative as an unfolding narrative that will undoubtedly change. The same is to be said for the teacher interviews, which I will now discuss.

Interviewing

> It comes close to an everyday conversation, but as a professional interview it has a purpose and it involves a specific approach and technique; it is semi-structured – it is neither an open everyday conversation nor a closed questionnaire. (Kvale, 2007, p.11)

I was very fortunate to speak with three educators who have been teaching MST and ACS at the high school level. Research Ethics Approval was obtained from the McGill University Research Ethics Board (See: Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews were chosen to deconstruct the formal roles of 'researcher'

and 'participant', in order to build meaning of everyday teaching experiences via in-depth discussion (Kvale, 2007). As Kvale (2007) notes about the semi-structured interview as a method, "[it] is a uniquely sensitive and powerful method for capturing the experiences and lived meanings of the subjects' everyday world"; in effect, the interviewing process allows for a partnership in the discussion (p.11). This type of interviewing has been described as "reflexive", where both participants participate in a conversation that provides a deeper understanding of the topic and of each others' experiences (Etherington, 2004).

Since the participants and I had already established a relationship as colleagues, a certain level of comfort and familiarity had been achieved. This prior knowledge of each other as professionals will undoubtedly have had an impact on the conversation, and I suspect that the interviews were enriched by this trust. The topics that emerged out of these conversations were loosely based on predetermined interview questions, but the interview itself was much more informal and heavily dependent upon the participant's experiences to guide the discussion (Etherington, 2004). In this way, the interview allowed more meaning to be created out of a 'natural' conversation than using a traditional researcher-subject approach. This being said, there were still certain realities in the interviewing process: the questions were constructed for a specific purpose, the meeting itself was instigated by the researcher, and the conversation, however organic it may have been, was still subject to the process of transcription and analysis (Kvale, 2007).

The research participants were chosen from a pool of high school teachers with whom I have worked over the past four years. These were educators with whom I have had many conversations about the school system, the classes they teach, and issues that arise from the format and implementation of the courses under discussion. Being a less experienced teacher than my participating teacher-colleagues, I have listened to their stories, and as I documented their experiences, I did so with a great deal of respect. Although the discussions are co-constructed, participant stories were the guiding force for the interview (Etherington, 2004).

Transcription

The interviews were transcribed from audio recordings, and for privacy, participants chose pseudonyms, and the schools they have worked at, or other distinguishing factors have been edited out of the transcription. To stay true to the conversations held in the interview process, the representation in transcription was verbatim to the audio recording, with the exceptions mentioned above. I chose to transcribe the interviews, rather than using memory recall or notes, to be able to stay in the conversation as authentically as possible (Etherington, 2004). While still having a goal in mind for the conversation, I withheld from taking notes to allow the discussion to unfold in a way that was guided by the stories and examples given by the participant.

According to Etherington (2004), the process of transcription allows the researcher to "pick up on nuances, hesitations, pauses, emphasis, and the many other ways that people add meaning to their words" (p.78). The small language conventions used in conversation can add a lot of meaning to the process of data analysis (Etherington, 2004). Also important is the accurate depiction of emotional responses in the interviews; without transcription and access to audio, meaning could be lost.

Ethics and Representation

Privacy and confidentiality are a large concern for these interviews; the discussions involve a critique of the school system, which could have an impact on participants' reputations as teachers. In the consent process, the potential for harm was discussed thoroughly before the interview took place. In reflexive research, as Etherington (2004) notes, ethical dilemmas arise in areas of confidentiality and representation – how was the participant be represented in a way that total privacy is guaranteed, and their voice is accurately portrayed? Being reflexive means to understand the role of researcher as a person who constructs meaning out of interactions such as interviews (Etherington, 2004). Moreover, to be reflexive requires a deeper understanding of how we are situated contextually, in order to grapple with how we relate to the data produced in interviews, and how this relation can produce certain effects.

In this way, reflexivity can help defend against ethical issues in interviewing: "[ethical] dilemmas like this can be discussed with participants so that mutually agreed and morally satisfactory decisions might be reached" (Etherington, 2004). An openness to discuss the research process with participants, and to allow input on decisions surrounding representation, is an important facet of reflexivity. In my own interviews, the participants had the right to retract, clarify, or add any information in the follow-up portion of the interview. Privacy and confidentiality was maintained in the process of transcription and analysis to ensure no harm was done to the participants. Representation of the participants was carefully conducted so that the voice of the participant does not become merged with that of the interviewer.

Analysis

After the data was transcribed and checked several times for accuracy, with confidentiality measures ensured, the data was analyzed through a thematic approach that was largely concept-driven (Etherington, 2004; Gibbs, 2007). The concepts were taken from thematic patterns in the interviews, which were derived from the themes in the interview guide. These conceptual themes were connected back to the theoretical underpinnings of the research, but also related to the intrinsic "messiness, depth, and texture" that each interview brings, as to not leave out any important meaning created in the interview process (Etherington, 2004, p.81). The interviews, then, were analyzed both for the knowledge they contain, and as knowledge in themselves (Etherington, 2004).

Conclusion

Through the above three research methods (hermeneutics; CDA; narrative), I hoped to piece together an analysis of teacher experience and meaning making in classrooms, coupled with a critique of the implementation of ACS and MST. The theoretical background necessary for this critique has been covered in the methodology and conceptual framework sections, which helped to scaffold the methods I have chosen. A triangulation method, along with a strong theoretical discussion, provided a deeper meaning than any of the methods could if used in isolation.

Chapter 3: Narrative

Introduction

The problem with practical knowledge is that we don't know we have it until the context has changed. Then in a new place, seeing again the events, relationships, and configurations of the old, we experience re-cognition, recognizing the world we know and realizing that we know it well. (Grumet, 1991, p.75)

Narrative provides a springboard for recognizing what Grumet (1991) describes as "the world we know" (p.75). The ability to recall seemingly banal events from memory, and synthesize our experiences from these memories, is part of the process of 're-cognition'. Contextualizing everyday experiences through narrative aids in the piecing together of fragmented events to provide a larger understanding of the whole. This hermeneutic understanding of one's life events, where reflection leads to a broader understanding, is necessary to disentangle the events that unfold over time. The act of learning 'how we come to know' is hidden in these experiences that need be "excavated" for meaning (Grumet, 1991, as cited in Strong-Wilson, 2008, p.60). Strong-Wilson (2008) uses Grumet's (1991) term "excavation" to "refer to the process of uncovering, for the purpose of casting suspicion on [the] familiar" (p.7). I came to understand the larger picture of everyday teaching and learning experiences I have accumulated through the process of excavating memory.

Through the emotionally painful process of uncovering events as a student and a teacher, the following three narratives unfold a story of my understanding of the world as student, teacher, and researcher: "Stumbling Through", "Robocop", and "Uniformly Lackluster". The difficult and lengthy process of remembering reveals darker places that can remain hidden by larger events, which makes "the dailiness…hard to recover" (Grumet, 1991, p.74). Grumet (1991) adds, "memory often records [dailiness] only as a backdrop to the drama that interrupts it" (p.74).

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The narratives weave through the 'dailiness' of a disorderly adolescence, an often-uninspired education as a young adult, and teaching experiences that questioned the purpose of my own education and place in the system as an educator. Due attention has been paid to ethical issues to protect confidentiality. Details have been changed or omitted to disguise schools and their geographical location.

Stumbling Through

An interesting phenomenon happens when you meet someone for the first time: you discover where that person has grown up, possibly where they attended school, and you piece together their life in your head like a puzzle, trying to determine if they fit into a particular schema or archetype of people from similar backgrounds or situations you might have met in the past. Whether one likes to admit it or not, this happens on a daily basis as we try to make meaning out of the relationships we create and co-create. Perhaps even more interesting is when we form a picture or narrative of another person's life without asking these questions, simply based on what we know at the current moment. Not only can these assumptions carry power, but they can also distort or deny another's lived experience, especially in the field of education.

It is a fascinating moment when a person realizes that you no longer fit into the narrative that they have created for you. To be in mid-conversation and discover that you have made that person step outside their own preconceived notion of what you are or what you have been, is a microcosm for what education should be: the perpetual, and hopefully gradual, process of discovering that these imaginary borders exist, and then the expansion and reorganization of this space.

I attended a small maritime university to complete a Bachelor of Education. I found it challenging personally, being very shy and knowing that I would have to step into a classroom to teach in the near future. I also found it challenging in classroom discussions when the notion of a 'good' or 'bad' school arose; many of my classmates immediately equated an inner city school as being among the group of so-called lousy schools. Interestingly, most of my classmates

grew up in rural areas, and had very negative perceptions of what it must be like going to school in places that they thought were dangerous. The overall concern of my colleagues was that students who went to schools where many behavioural issues existed in the classroom could not get an education that would take them far in life. Granted, when teachers are forced to deal with many issues in the classroom that do not pertain to instruction alone, time is taken away from students' working or learning. However, in my own experience there are also students who can work through adversity and still manage to learn under difficult circumstances.

As I expressed this concern, the professor asked me where I grew up and went to school, and I answered her honestly. She was quiet for a second and then said, "Wow. You really went there? Well, it's amazing that you made it this far, because that is really not a good school."

I am never quite sure how to handle that comment. What did it mean that it was amazing that I had made it this far? Was I an anomaly of some sort, or was she hinting that it is difficult to grow up in a 'poor' neighbourhood and attain an education? What about everyone else I grew up with that did not 'make it' this far – are their lives not as valued since they do not have letters beside their names? I could not decide whether I should be offended or appreciative, but it did leave me with many questions about my experience with education, and how different it must be from others' viewpoints in the class. I felt alienated and misunderstood because of it.

This conversation has been replayed over and over again for me throughout my life. When a person asks me what part of my home city I grew up in, they often have the same look of surprise on their face. As if something in their mind has been disrupted for a second, they search to adjust the image they have created in which to fit the new information . Often when I tell people where I have grown up, they ask questions about my involvement in crime, and then attempt to joke about owning a gun or if I was ever shot, or went to jail. For some apparent reason, a person from my part of the city could not fit into his understanding of what constitutes a McGill graduate student. Most times when people who know

the area discover where I am from, they are shocked, and only upon deep reflection on my experiences with the educational system can I sincerely try to uncover what it is about myself that causes such a reaction.

Perhaps being white, with blond hair and blue eyes, somewhat well dressed and well-spoken, clashes with the image of what most people possess for someone with my upbringing. I am not claiming to have experienced injustices based on my appearance, as I have experienced the opposite effect – doors have been opened for me (literally and figuratively) due to my whiteness and associated privilege, and I do not deny that. What I find most interesting is when it is assumed that I have held the same experiences in education that other university students have had, that is to say that they have had a mostly positive experience in the system, hence wanting to teach in it. My experiences have not been overly stimulating or inspiring.

In my first year in an English Arts Methods class, the professor asked us all to stand up and give the name of the teacher who changed our lives when we were growing up. No one hesitated, but I felt sheer panic. What teacher was an inspiration in my life? I quickly flicked through the educational memories I had stored and found nothing. I felt my heart race and seriously thought for a moment that I was in the wrong program – why was I even there? Had I never been inspired in school? The sad truth was that I did not have a teacher to proudly claim as an inspiration. No, it was not until my second year of undergraduate studies when I finally felt inspired and found a love for knowledge by way of an amazing sociology professor. Had I gone all of those years drifting numbly through education without feeling inspired? It was true. What was it that kept me in school all of those years, when most of my peers from junior high did not finish high school, or struggled to finish?

I always found school quite boring and unchallenging. All through my elementary and junior high years I glided through school as a top student without much effort at all. I loved reading and writing from a very young age, and was gifted in these areas. My parents expected a lot from my sisters and I, and being from a family of four girls, we competed with each other to do the best in school.

My three sisters were all just as smart as I was, and I am sure found school to be as mundane as I found it to be. My parents were not university educated, and very few in my extended family had the chance to go to university, so there was no question about it – we were all going to attend university, and all four of us did complete post-secondary degrees. This expectation of doing well in school was placed on us from a very young age, and I think had a great deal of influence on me. My parents rarely discussed university per se, as their lack of experience did not lend itself to many conversations. My teachers rarely talked about higher education, and in junior high, university was not an expectation teachers had for most students at my school.

Many boys I went to school with did not make it through junior high without going to juvenile detention centers for robberies, assault, theft, and drug-related crimes. I can count on one hand how many boys I knew from my neighbourhood that finished high school. The girls seemed to be more successful, but not by much; only two of my friends attended university, and many had children before they turned twenty. It is not that I believe university attendance is a sign of success in life, but the apparent absence of motivation towards educational goals on the part of teachers and community members from my neighbourhood does raise some questions.

Although I did not find school challenging, and was not inspired by teachers or others in my class, there was something in my life that was an inspiration: sport. There is a distinct time in my adolescence when I had to make a decision between being involved in crime and being involved in sport. I am fortunate enough to say that I had coaches in my life that cared enough about me to recognize that I was a very talented volleyball player, and who mentored me through some tough years growing up. What most people can say about their most influential teacher in their life I can say about several coaches; they were supportive, they pushed me to excel, and had extremely high expectations of me. None of my friends had this experience in their life. We lived in an environment where alcoholism, theft, bootlegging, domestic abuse, welfare, and drug abuse were the norm. These aspects of life were disturbingly normalized for me until I

graduated from high school. The young men and women I grew up with did not have the chances I had with sport to see above the choices we were faced with everyday. My parents didn't know that I was on a bad path, but they certainly knew who my friends were, and were wary of them.

By the age of thirteen heavy drug and alcohol use was already the norm in my group of friends, and school became secondary. Finding alcohol and drugs was not hard, considering my friend's family was involved in bootlegging, and another's parent sold marijuana. Luckily enough, I found school so easy that I hardly had to work to keep on top of things. For my friends, they were not as fortunate, and many of them struggled to pass. I was blessed with a great family and support network of teammates and coaches to pull me out of this lifestyle. As I became more involved in volleyball and people started to see that there was a future in it for me, they began to caution me about my habits.

At one point, I was heavily using marijuana, and cared less and less about doing well in school and sport. School to me was just a place I had to go on a daily basis to put my time in, and my teachers felt the same, I am sure. My Friday afternoon art and technology class only had four people in it, and we would play basketball for the last hour while the two teachers looked on in a half-drunken stupor from their lunch at the tavern down the street. There were no expectations for us. If the teachers didn't have to break up a fight or deal with the realities of most of my friends' lives, they were content to let us stumble through school.

My parents did not suspect anything, or if they did, they did not talk to me about it. It was not until my best friend, one year wiser, threatened to tell my coach and parents about my drug and alcohol use that I started to change. I cared about volleyball more than I cared about anything else, and the last thing I wanted to do was to disappoint my coaches. The relationship I had with my parents was shaky at best; I would come and go as I was asked, and because I was even-tempered and easygoing, I slipped under their radar. They had other issues to deal with at that time, namely my older twin sisters. I might have been running with the wrong crowd, but at least I was not drinking and driving, stealing, and bringing the police to our door to break up their fights. They were both kicked out

of the house during their adolescence, and while they could still pull off the best marks in their high school classes, their social lives were in disarray. I wonder what would have become of us four if we did not have the natural ability to perform well in school. We certainly did not have to work for it.

As time wore on, I grew out of the peers I was hanging around because I was involved in volleyball and made new groups of friends from other parts of the city and province. The boys that I was friends with continued to do break and enters, sell drugs, and commit assaults. All of a sudden they disappeared from my classes, and dropped out of school or attended an alternative program for youth with addiction problems or those in trouble with the law. My high school years bore a vague resemblance to the life I had known in school before – there were smart people in my classes who were confident about what they had learned in junior high. While I was in the higher-level math class, I quickly fell behind, as I did not have the proper background to understand the new material given to me. Math in grade ten was the only class I ever took at the advanced level. I was good at hiding in my classes; I was obedient, and respectful. So much so that my teachers did not call home even after I failed a test or missed multiple classes.

This was the same high school my parents had attended, notorious for its rowdy population, fights, and 'lower class' population, known to produce blue-collar workers, while a nearby high school pumped out future doctors and lawyers. I had friends at this other school and would visit them from time to time. I even had the chance to sit in a few classes with them, and the difference in the way they were treated in the classroom was mind-blowing for me. The teachers expected so much from them, and they responded accordingly. The classes were challenging, and even the smartest students had to work hard to attain good marks. It scared me, and I felt at home in my bubble where the teachers did not care about any talent I might have had. I could show up when I wanted, do as much as I needed to do to get honor roll marks, and leave. I did not have to invest any other part of me, or care. At parent-teacher interviews, my father would always come home with glowing remarks about what a 'nice' student I was. I was

happy that my parents did not have to worry about me, and I did not want to burden them.

After grade ten I started to distance myself from my early childhood friends, and began to spend most of my time out of my neighbourhood hanging out with friends from rich families. We rarely chose to venture to my area for entertainment purposes, mainly because they were not allowed to go there. I would jump on the bus to the more affluent parts of the city and spend time in the large, beautiful homes of my friends, in the old wealthy area, or the brand new suburbs, only to return to my street at the end of the night, past the darkened downtown, the housing projects, the homeless shelter, the prostitutes. Class was something I decided to hide from that time on. I subconsciously learned how to change my accent so people could not determine what area I was from, as there is a distinct accent from my neighbourhood. I knew how to dress the part, and how to fluidly change from one accent to another, depending on my company. These survival strategies, along with the ability to blend in well with any crowd, have allowed me to go far. Being a tall white woman has helped to masquerade any remnant of being from a working class neighbourhood, but most of my peers could not do the same, due to the colour of their skin.

Race, when growing up in a poor area, is secondary to class. One thing we all had in common was the fact that we struggled in our home lives in one way or another due to lack of financial resources. It was a binding force that created a sense of community, and although a negative (and tough) self image grew out of this, one thing was true – we all lacked expectations for our lives, and no rich person from the more affluent areas could make us feel inferior – outwardly. It was easier to become involved in crime and drop out of school than to face the stark reality of difference every day in school. Most of my male friends fell to this. Although there are many reasons they dropped out of high school, I often wonder what it was that made them leave: was it the lack of support from home, the years of schooling lost due to suspensions and misbehaviour in the classroom, or was it that they knew people did not care whether they were there or not? In my prom pictures, teenagers from other areas of the city surround me, and not one of

my childhood friends is present. A piece of me was lost during the transition in high school, and although I still keep in touch with the people I grew up with, who now are settled with families in the old neighbourhood, the question of the purpose of education haunts me. Who is it for, and what part am I going to play in it for students who are like me?

Fast-forward ten years from high school graduation. I find myself in a Masters program at McGill. Far from the late night basketball games and drinking on the streets of my youth, many things have changed. Volleyball was the catalyst in my life to progress; having an athletic scholarship for an undergraduate degree allowed me to pursue other avenues. I began to feel challenged in school at last, and social theory stole my heart. I fell in love with theories of class, race, gender and sexuality. I found my place in academia and began to set higher expectations for myself, with the help of a few professors who believed that I was worthwhile and understood where I was coming from. Fearing that I was not smart enough to do a Masters in sociology, I decided to do a Bachelor of Education, but it did not feed my craving for academic challenge. Finishing high school and two undergraduate degrees still left me feeling unsatisfied. After teaching for two years I needed another challenge, one that would help me piece all of my teaching and learning experiences together in a way that would create meaning for me in my teaching and learning career.

Last year I took a seminar class in the sociology department at McGill on the topic of social stratifications. The course had eight people in it, four of whom were American, and it was a shock to be back in a sociology class after a five-year absence. As I sat listening to the comments of the students around me, I flashed back to the classroom in the high school I visited where I had felt completely out of place. This was a classroom where people were confident, assertive, and who were challenged by the topics but not enough so that they were intimidated. I was intimidated, and surely looked that way. The course was centered on discussions about class, and its apparent nonexistence, because there are an infinite number of markers for class, and people can have both upward and downward mobility. It was assumed, time and time again, that all of the students in the classroom were

from affluent backgrounds, and many jokes were made about those less fortunate than them. It was the strangest schooling experience I have had in all my years of being a student; I was an imposter in that classroom, one that looked the part, but had no similar experiences.

My classmates' parents were doctors, lawyers, or professors, and they laughed and carried on about 'lowly' jobs, like being a firefighter, homemaker, or garbage collector, based on a scale created by social scientists. I suppose there was no way for them to know that my father was a firefighter and that my mom a homemaker, and that no one in my extended family had a Masters degree, with very few having attended university at all, aside from my sisters and I, who all hold a Bachelor degree. I had never been on this side of the conversation before, oddly enough, and did not know how to handle it. I wavered between rage and dejection throughout the semester, often feeling silenced with a lingering bitterness I could not properly express. I did not belong here, not because I did not have the intellectual capacity to discuss the complex theories we studied, or because I was from a different background. I wasn't interested in pretending to take part in the reality they created in that classroom. In the past, I had changed the way I spoke and how I related to people to fit in, but now I did not want to be part of this. Losing a piece of me was not worth fitting into a space I had no desire to be included in.

I think about the friends I grew up with who dropped out of high school, or who rebelled very harshly against the institution. Perhaps it was not because they were not able to be successful – the cracks in the system were too large for them to negotiate. Maybe they were more aware of their difference at an early age, coupled with the fact that we were not expected to go anywhere in life, to create a defeatist attitude internalized by an entire neighbourhood. Perhaps they, like me in my classroom at McGill, did not want to be included in a system they were morally opposed to.

I have been fortunate enough to have sport in my life to get me where I am now. However, for those without an outlet, or a person to place high expectations on them, what happens when the education system perpetuates unchecked cycles

of defeatism and hopelessness? How do we break through our created assumptions of students, schools, and neighbourhoods to influence change?

Robocop

I realize that my appearance is not only symbolically violent to some students, but one that represents a system that is deeply militaristic.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Education, I went back to teach in the city where I was born and have spent most of my life. I had a very good working relationship with my practicum teacher in my first year in the education program, and the three months I spent with her, I discovered that my talent was not in teaching per se; rather it was with making connections with the students. My most enjoyable moments in teaching in the last four years are times when I was able to simply talk to the students about their views on education, their family, and what they wanted in life. I would still say that is my strength in the teaching profession, although being a white girl with blonde hair and blue eyes does not necessarily grant me automatic trust in some communities.

My first (paid) teaching position was in 2007. I was called into the school by the vice principal, who happened to be a good friend of my former practicum teacher. It was two weeks into September already, and the school needed to create new blocks for the overflow of students in the grade 11 and 12 English courses. Being a new graduate, I was excited to have an opportunity to teach at the high school level, but did not fully understand the context in which I would be teaching in that year. This high school has been called "the most notorious school in Canada" in the media for its riots since the 90's, with links to racial fighting since the inception of the school in the previous decade. Growing up in an area where there is the highest representation of African Canadians in the province, I did not feel it could be much different than the community I grew up in. Not only were the communities I was serving incredibly different, it changed the way I viewed teaching and learning, and my role in both: the police presence, lockdowns, mistrust, and riots that year signaled to me how unsafe a public space could become.

Walking into the building that first day I cannot say I remember a lot. For a school built to house seven hundred students, the twelve hundred that stormed the tiny hallways was overwhelming at best, and terrifying for a newly graduated teacher who cannot get a glass of wine at dinner without being carded. I was to teach grade 11 and 12 academic English and one block of Resource, which I was happy to take on. My grade 12 class was 34 students evenly divided from three distinct communities, one being the oldest Black settlement in Canada, the second located near a military base with children of primarily white families, and the third a small white rural coastal community. Not being from the area, the community makeup of students was not apparent at first, but after some time I understood how the class was divided. The Black students sat on the right side of the room, with the White students from the military community on the far left, and everyone else in the middle. I got along well with all the students, and there were few behavioural problems. However, I will never forget the tensions that existed in that classroom; I could not get the boys (especially) from the right and left sides of the class to work together in groups. The divisions in the school were so normalized, and students often spoke openly about these divisions with me.

I was trying every intervention strategy possible I could come up with to build a team atmosphere and trust, but the students in my windowless classroom, with walls made of painted cinderblocks, refused to budge. When attempting to use literature circles as a technique to bring students together, discussing poetry dealing with social issues, one of the Black male students pulled me aside. I remember him telling me that if he was to sit in a group with the White boys from the left side of the class, things would happen in the classroom and the school that I did not want to see. Taking his warning seriously, I regretfully submitted to the historically enduring hatred running through my classroom. It was something I would not give up on, but did not necessarily presently have the answers for. I have never before and still have not experienced such segregation in any forum in society, and to be honest the hopelessness I felt as a teacher in that situation is something that has deeply affected me.

The second semester of the school year is when I changed as a teacher. I taught Global Studies 12 (GST - a non-university preparatory course), English 11 again, and Child Studies 11. The 'studies' courses were filled with students who mostly were not interested in, or heading towards a university education. To most of them it was a major goal to finish high school. For some reason in the GST course I could not get through to two Black male students; I couldn't get them to meet my glance or for them to trust me at all. I learned about a month into the semester that they were convinced I was an undercover police office there to investigate them. I scoffed at the idea and discussed it with a colleague of mine later that day, and in this discussion I found out more about the school than I wanted to know. There were actually two undercover police officers 'working' as teachers in the school that I was not aware of – no new staff were told this fact. They were investigating a pimping ring being run out of the school with females recruiting young women from classes, one of which was my mine. I will talk about this in more detail, but first back to my students who I felt sincerely did not like being in my presence.

It took me two months to get the young men to trust me. Up until this point in my life, I lived, worked, and played in a racialized community where crime and violence were highly normalized as everyday events: my male friends spent time in and out of 'juvie' (and now jail) for break and enters, petty theft and drug related crimes. I understood that police officers in my community were highly disliked, and not welcome at public events, but to be considered a police officer as a teacher opened my eyes to a schooling experience that disturbed me. I can understand now why the students might have thought I was a police officer: tall, in decent physical shape, with an aptitude for observation, I was always asking about peoples' lives to get to know them better, not in an intrusive way, but to build rapport. In their eyes, however (as they told me jokingly later on), that made me seem like a cop – they thought I was in the classroom to get into their business because they knew other blond female police officers in the area and automatically associated me with them. To let me know they did not trust me, the two young men (and all their friends) would only address me as "Robocop" or

"Cop" in the classroom and the hallways. This was problematic. I did not take it as a personal attack on my teaching, but it pointed to a larger problem in this school: there was an anger simmering under the surface of the student population, which the unique timetable we were all subject to attempted to quell.

Classes start much earlier than other high schools, with only five minutes in between classes, and thirty-five minutes for lunch. Since the cafeteria is only large enough to sit one quarter of the student population, there are two lunch times. The day goes by with very little time to interact with students outside of the classroom, and the day ends with buses shuttling students out of the yard as soon as the bell rings. The bell schedule was put into place after large riots broke out in the 1990's when students (and relatives of students) fought each other with iron bars, leading to a school closure for several days. An investigation done by an external source lead to a report with 75 recommendations to implement for changing race relations in the communities this high school serves – thirteen years later, only six have been implemented. The tensions between the communities, although said not to be race-based, still exist and can be felt upon entering the school. Recent en masse fighting has closed the school down again, except this time no intervention has been used to build community. The official reports vehemently deny any race issues at the school.

Back to the issue of policing, there is a full time security presence and a militaristic schedule in place that resembles a prison more than a high school. It is not surprising that the students in my class associated teachers and authority in general with policing; it was and still is a sad reality for the students and teachers who work in this school. I am not saying that every day is filled with violence, which is far from the truth. I have had some of my best moments in teaching at the school: it was here I came out as a gay female to my students for the first time in a classroom setting, as a way to discuss homophobic comments that were being made in the school. I truly enjoyed the students, and teaching at this school but the harsh realities of many students' lives made the classroom a difficult place to navigate as a teacher. Multiple systemic issues existing in these communities such

as poverty, drugs, prostitution, and racism are amplified in the school system that tries so hard to suppress (not change or solve) the issues.

The day I found out about the pimping ring in the school, with one of the lead females in my class, I lost a lot of faith in the school system. I felt betrayed by the school system for not preparing me to protect the students in my classroom, and even more betrayed by the administration who did not take the time to fill me in on the details. Knowing that two girls dropped out of my class and were found stripping in clubs still haunts me, because I noticed them slipping and could not figure out why. How can these issues still plague any school in 2011? Why are school administrators and board officials against addressing the underlying causes of the fighting? Is there a way to create a trusting and open classroom atmosphere in a school where yearly lockdowns have taken place? What is the alternative to a strong policing presence in schools?

Uniformly Lackluster

Sensing the anxiety and nervousness of the students crowded in the foyer, I tried to make my way through the crowd of high school students and into the building. I straightened my spine, lifted my eyes and attempted to exude confidence as I squeezed past the hundreds of excited teenagers blocking the doors. This school was definitely different than the last one I had taught at. No solemn faces, no police cars or school buses hurriedly dropping students off at seven-thirty in the morning. The building, less than five years old, was not a reminder of societal injustice or riots that occurred on its grounds; this building was new in every sense of the word. It was certainly in a space created out of wealth, and that affluence lent an experience of education that I myself had not had in my own schooling. My own memories, all too familiar with a strong police presence and students dispersing into dark corners of an old building, clashed with the large welcome signs, loud music and free food being handed out to students. I felt completely dislodged and uncomfortable, not to mention by the time I had reached the cafeteria I had twice already been mistaken as a student.

I immediately dove into my usual mode of comporting myself under stress, and with a big smile and nervous giggle, I approached the social studies department after being lost for ten minutes in the monstrously large school. The small space, surrounded by semi-soundproof glass and located in the middle of a crowded hallway, was filled with several teachers who looked rushed and uninterested when I walked into the room. After unsuccessfully trying to find my voice to speak up, a teacher whom I have known for years and who was tearing up old and unused resources turned to see me, and discovered the look of sheer panic on my face. Class was to start in fifteen minutes and I had still not met my department head or had a classroom assigned to me. Memories of familiar smiling faces of former colleagues were torn away as the new staff sized me up, asked where I had been teaching, and then carried on their previous conversation. Being a seasoned athlete, I knew the feeling of being the rookie all too well, and the survival strategies I had developed in my years as a freshman were about to be fully employed again. I was not afraid of the challenge to fit into this new blend of teachers, and knew that it would take some time and patience to feel comfortable once more.

Breathing a huge sigh of relief when I made it to my classroom, I sat down and looked at my new surroundings: white boards on two walls, a digital projector on the ceiling, large light-filled windows, air-conditioning, and a nicely painted brownish-gold back wall in the classroom. The room was completely lit with natural light, and outside the window was a walking path going into the woods. At that moment I wondered who was teaching in my old classroom, without these technological advances, without windows, circulated air or a view, and I feared that I would not be able to fit in here. Being in such an emotional state as a young teacher in a large school, I quickly dismissed these thoughts and brought my attention back to my tasks at hand – teaching, and being open to new relationships with staff and students at this school.

The students were friendly and polite. They were on time for class, and stopped talking when I was ready to begin. I did not have to give them 'the stare' to stop talking and I did not have to raise my voice above anyone else; this

certainly was a new school, with differing expectations from the one I had left. Oddly enough, I found this obedience unsettling, for a reason I could not grasp. Thinking back to my own experiences in school, I could not think of a class I attended that was so obedient, not since elementary school. What was it about this school and classroom that I found so strange and unnerving? The day went on without a hiccup, and I felt much more at ease with my new environment. On my prep period I walked the halls to get to know the layout of the school, and found no students. There were several in the cafeteria, chatting about the summer, a few more in the library, but no one was out of place. I did not have to cajole or corral students down the halls and into their classes, nor did any other teacher. The students who I would have normally caught intentionally strolling into the wrong classrooms to visit their friends did not exist in this school. The students who smoked cigarettes and weed between classes – where were they hiding? I was having a difficult time understanding where my deep lying discomfort with this situation was originating. Perhaps my own understanding of what it meant to be a student in high school, or even a teacher in a high school, was very different than my new reality. There had to be issues at this school, but they were not as blatant as I had previously experienced.

As many issues as there were at my previous workplace, the staffroom was an area where there would be support; you could walk in and talk to anyone who was there, and if there was an issue someone would be there to listen wholeheartedly. The set-up of the staff room, with its leather couches and round tables, was inviting to anyone who walked into the room. During my year at this new school, I ate lunch in the staffroom on one occasion, in September, and did not want to go back for the rest of the year. It is worth noting that at this school with over one hundred teachers, the staff room could only sit about thirty to forty comfortably, so when I walked into the packed staffroom and sat down at a table where there was a spot available, I immediately knew that I had committed a faux pas of the worst kind – I took a teacher's claimed spot, at the table where the most experienced female teachers sat. Needless to say I made polite conversation, ate my lunch and left, but the feeling of being unwanted was so strong at that

moment, that I did not venture back into the room for the rest of the year, except to check my mailbox. This occurrence pointed to issues of hierarchies within the school for me, and then led me to ask what other hierarchies were hidden in this school, and where could I find them?

Time went on and I became accustomed to being mistaken as a student, or a student teacher, by other teachers and cafeteria staff (who would often refuse to sell me coffee because they thought I was a student). One thing I could not get used to was an underlying feeling of discontent or discomfort, especially amongst teachers. This school was very proud of being an International Baccalaureate (IB) school, where the (allegedly) hardest working students take the most difficult classes and have the chance to graduate with a different diploma than their peers. This diploma can be used towards university credits at some post-secondary institutions, so it is very valuable for some students to take part in the program. The issue with the program overall is that it does not follow the Provincial curriculum, and many students cannot handle being in the IB stream because it is way too demanding and stressful for them to take on at that age. Teachers need to take separate training in order to teach IB courses, and usually the most experienced and educated teachers are asked to teach sections of IB. In our social studies department office, where our department ate lunch and chatted about the events going on in the world, there was always a clear tension between those who taught IB and those who did not. To be fair, the IB program is tough on teachers, who are supposed to deliver a course that is very demanding in a short amount of time, and they experience a high level of stress. On the other hand, their classes are very small (sometimes as small as five) and due to the external assessment practices in the program, they have half of May and all of June off. Other teachers in the department had classrooms of over thirty students, with many adaptations and individualized program plans needed, and language barriers and needs of newly immigrated students they have to juggle. The dynamic due to all of these factors made for some very tense conversations during the lunch hour and on prep periods.

The courses I taught, Canadian History and Global Geography, were both mandatory credits. To graduate, students need one history credit and have a choice between three different courses: Mi'kmaq Studies (MST), African Canadian Studies (ACS), and Canadian History (CHS). The course selection trend in recent years in this school was disturbing: previously, students had been dispersed quite evenly, with the bulk of the school population choosing CHS as their history credit. As time went on, more and more students were taking MST and ACS, which is a very positive sign that the new courses were becoming popular and students were interested in what was being taught in these courses. On the surface, this is very promising for new curriculum; however there is an interesting shift that has happened in this school in regards to the new courses – the sudden overwhelming need for more MST courses to be added due to popular demand, followed by ACS, and finally CHS. What has happened in recent years to cause this shift? Do students finally recognize the need to be exposed to new ways of thinking about the world and how important it is to unpack the colonialist structure of our understanding of Canada? Although it seems highly unlikely that this is true for most students, I started to ask around to see how the staff and students perceived this sudden shift in course enrollment. The answers I received from my interactions with staff and students, as well as my delving into the expectations from both, have shaped my research questions.

My small class of seventeen students – unheard of in high school – was the dream class. I did not have to raise my voice above a conversational tone. I did not once have to write a referral for a student to go to the office or to be disciplined in any manner. Most students were in class every day on time, and very rarely did people skip. The students did not swear or try to use their cell phones, and they were very sweet. To be quite honest it was boring. I found the course boring, and although I tried to breathe life into the Canadian History moments using drama, art, and music, the class fell flat, and the students would tell me point blank that they loved me but hated the material. I agreed with them. It was not that Canadian History was boring, but it was the way the textbook, curriculum, and previous teachers had taught it that had brought me to this point

in the course's evolution: the course is a one-dimensional view of history. The day here and there spent on African Canadian or Native Canadian achievements and brief history did not get to the root of the issue in this course – no discussion of colonialist expansion and its lingering effects in the world, no discussion of institutional racism, or of social issues in general. It is no wonder the class and I were bored; where was the underlying truth and meaning in the facts presented? I did not have an answer for them when they asked why it was important to learn about Canada's economic policies in the global context. I could tell them, however, why it was important to discuss Canada's historically racist immigration policies, and how displacement of peoples connected to contemporary social issues. The lack of emotional connection to most of the material produced an atmosphere of disinterest in the room.

As I became more comfortable with the class, we started to have very interesting discussions about why they were taking the course, and how teachers, guidance counselors, and peers guided them in their selection process. I made an assumption (wrongly) that they were interested in Canadian History and that that was the reason for their being in my class, but they said it was because they were interested in going to university after high school, and they were told to take this course because it was looked upon much more favorably than MST or ACS. When asked who gave them this information, the consensus was that it was just a well-known fact, and when choosing courses in grade nine and ten, they are pushed into certain courses depending on what they want to do after high school. This in itself is not surprising, as students are informally streamed into various courses based on what they want to take after high school. I asked them what they thought of the 'other' courses, and why had they not signed up for them? Once again there was a consensus in the class, and they explained that MST is a 'bird course' where you do art projects and never have any work, and ACS was similar. Some students had taken MST the year before 'as an easy credit', but wanted to take CHS as a course to have on their transcript for university. I questioned the validity of their claims, and wondered how much truth there was in their perceptions of the different social studies courses.

If the students' perceptions were true about the social studies courses, then knowledge was being funneled into a hierarchy that was highly problematic. There are undoubtedly hierarchies created in science and math departments, where the 'best' students take calculus and advanced physics, while students struggling to get a high school diploma enroll in everyday math (figuring out percentages and how to budget) and oceanography. This is a fact in high school – the informal streaming process lends itself to reproducing certain inequalities, often class based, mirrored from broader societal formations. As large a statement that might be, there is a distinct difference between the hierarchical organization of math and science courses compared to social studies.

Unlike math, where all students use numbers at every level, what issues arise when knowledge is constructed in a similar hierarchy? I was beginning to understand why there was a sudden jump in MST enrollment but needed to talk to teachers about this to get a clearer image of what actually was happening. How did they feel about this disparity in course enrollment?

After the September rush each teacher in this particular school was required to submit their adaptations to the learning center specialists. This was to report any students who teachers identified as needing learning support, or continue adaptations used in the past for students, who needed extra help in different areas of their schooling. For example, an adaptation would be to give a student extra time on tests, or to write in a separate room if necessary. Other adaptations included using a scribe during tests, or to having extra time on assignments. Basically whatever a student needed to be successful, without creating a full-individualized program plan (IPP), has to be documented and tracked. In my CHS class I had one adaptation, and one student who was on an IPP who did not do work in my classroom but in the learning center. One adaptation in a course is quite low, even with my number of students. In the other course I was teaching, Global Geography, I had over ten adaptations, and several IPP's in each class, just to give a comparison. This paperwork should not take teachers very long to complete. However, the more adaptations in a classroom, the more time needs to be put into the documentation process. For IB teachers,

adaptations and IPP's are rare, and sometimes non-existent. For the MST and ACS teachers, some had over half of their students needing adaptations, making the planning and curriculum implementation a much more difficult task in a higher-needs classroom.

The issue of course implementation and adaptations arose in a conversation with social studies staff. There was a lot of bitterness towards teachers in the IB program, and anger towards the way the courses were being developed. One teacher was enraged that they had a large number of students in a grade ten MST course, and half of them needing a range of adaptations, while an IB teacher with several students had no adaptations to make. The conversation continued and moved into issues teaching sensitive topics like citizenship, reparation, and social injustice with so many students in the course who were young, and who perceived the course to be what they termed a 'bird course'. Historically, a 'bird course' refers to a class for women, who were thought as being intellectually inferior. The historical gendered significance has shifted, although 'bird course' still refers to an easier class. A 'bird course' to students then, meant that they would not have to work hard, and if they showed up, they would gain the credit, simply by 'floating through' material. The teachers did not think that MST was getting the justice it deserved, and felt that there was too much focus on material culture instead of deeper issues of social inequalities. The material culture focus was used to make the course fit the students who were enrolling in it. I asked what materials they had to teach the course and they laughed. One threw me a copy of the 'textbook', which was a fifty page flimsy book with lots of glossy, colourful pictures depicting traditional Mi'kmaq culture. Other than that, they had to beg, steal, and borrow from other teachers in the province, create their own resources, and accumulate as much as they could from the Mi'kmaq community center. One of the issues, they admitted, was that there were so few students who could relate to this course, and also that most teachers are given this course to teach are beginning teachers who use whatever materials they can get their hands on from past teachers is what is used whether it is a good resource or not.

As the year progressed, the tensions in the room remained, only to be fully realized in May and June, when the IB teachers were finished for the year while the rest of the staff had to keep up a break-neck pace until the end of June. I had found ways to integrate more social justice themes into the CHS course, and the students began to enjoy it much more, but something was still missing - there was no heart in this course, at least none that I could find. Students can sniff out disingenuousness and lack of authenticity from afar, and they too knew that this was just another course in a long line of classes they were going to take that lacked meaning for them. Did the students in ACS and MST feel the same? Unfortunately, this seemed to be the underlying chord that made me quite uneasy. The elitism existing in the social studies department posed a threat for every student and teacher aware of its presence. What value was there in building wigwams, or creating a calendar to celebrate African Nova Scotian accomplishments, when the teachers and students knew that these topics were unimportant in the IB world?

The construction of difference through the multilayered issues in this particular social studies department lends to larger questions: are MST and ACS an avenue for change and social justice, or a political tool to quell anger in disenfranchised communities? Is every school experiencing such issues? With the province embarking on the largest IB high school implementation expansion in North America, will ACS and MST continue to receive little support due to the high needs of the IB courses?

Reflecting on that year brings back the same feelings of apathy, disconnection, and overall indifference. The clean floors and brand new computers hid a larger social injustice in my department: the disservice of providing courses developed for a greater good, which are not being taught to their potential due to a range of reasons. The bubbling undercurrent of student dissatisfaction also intrigued me. Instead of attending school for enjoyment, or to find meaning in life through learning, most students go to school as a means to an end. It made me wonder if, in their life outside of this pristine institutional space of school, they are similarly obedient because it is what is expected of them. It left

me feeling a sense of unqualified lack – precisely the feeling I had from the time I stepped into my beautiful classroom. It made me miss the space without windows, without technology, but that possessed an indescribable passion and energy.

Chapter 4:
Critical Discourse Analysis

Introduction

In 2002, the Department of Education in Nova Scotia introduced three social studies courses to satisfy the high school history graduation credit. The courses were designed to allow for greater student choice in learning, and to create curriculum that included various historical perspectives. Historically, Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian historical perspectives were largely ignored in social studies courses, therefore the inclusion of these perspectives proved a positive and necessary step for inclusive and equitable education for the province. The three curriculum guides were locally developed and introduced as pilot courses in various schools across the province, later to be adopted province-wide, with the creation of the 2002 implementation drafts of Mi'kmaq Studies 10, African Canadian Studies 11, and Canadian History 11.

The curriculum documents have been in the draft stage since 2002, without being revised since the original implementation format (NSDE, 2002). The course outcomes are arranged using a thematic approach, which addresses key concepts in a non-linear fashion. The outcomes are divided into three categories: Essential Graduation Learnings, which relate to the broader life skills a student gains from the course (such as aesthetic expression), General Curriculum Outcomes that are based on the themes, and Specific Curriculum Outcomes which are the specific pieces of information taught in the course. The Specific Outcomes are the points which students are tested on and expected to know by the end of each unit. A major benefit to the thematic approach is to connect otherwise unrelated historical events or trends to a broader theme, such as 'Education' in the Mi'kmaq Studies 10 curriculum. For example, in the 'Education' module, a non-linear approach connects "traditional Mi'kmaq education", to the "impact of European contact, and current trends" (NSDE, 2002, p.9). The disadvantage to this approach is trying to fit information coherently into

six predetermined categories without overlooking important historical aspects that might not fit into the devised themes. In the CHS document, the Globalization module begins with an "investigation of theories…regarding the peopling of the Americas", moves into an analysis Canada's role in World War I and II, and finishes with Canada's role in the late twentieth century (NSDE, 2002, p.7).

The analysis of the curriculum documents focuses on the General Curriculum Outcomes and Specific Curriculum Outcomes, as related to the thematic approach and overall objectives of the course, found in the Essential Graduation Learnings sections. As described in the Methods section, the critical discourse analysis (CDA) is based on Fairclough's (2001) description of CDA. There are distinguishable uses of language between the three curriculum documents, and my analysis will focus on the broader meanings they convey. I will show that the use of language directly relates to the myriad implementation issues of ACS and MST, and corresponds to Fairclough's (2001) assertion that particular discourses are closely related to underlying values found in social structures and institutions.

Analysis

The following will not be a complete analysis of each Specific Curriculum Outcome in the three documents, but for my purposes connects implementation issues of ACS and MST to embedded values and assumptions in curriculum language. More specifically, the word choice in ACS 11, MST 10, and CHS 11 differs greatly, and this difference demonstrates how each document was created from a certain worldview. The curriculum documents contain a particular focus on key words that are used throughout the document. I am most interested in the way important terms and concepts relate to each document's main objectives, how these linguistic features adhere to a broader perspective of education, and how the documents then relate to each other due to these factors. The consequences of these differences will be discussed, along with their implications for implementation. The General Curriculum Outcomes and overview of Specific

Curriculum Outcomes will be examined for each document first, followed by the comparison of discourses and further implications for these differences.

African Canadian Studies 11

The ACS implementation draft document reflects George Dei's (1996) anti-racism educational principles, and implicitly, Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2006) critique of history as a project of colonialism. Dei (1996) is explicitly cited in the ACS document twice, under Suggested Reading and in the References sections (NSDE, 2002, p.227). Dei's definition of Afrocentricity, "…the continued survival and unity of African peoples, irrespective of national borders", is used in the Development and Change module of the ACS document (NSDE, 2002, p.40). This module looks to explore the differences between Afrocentric and Eurocentric worldviews through historical investigation (NSDE, 2002, p.39). The juxtaposition of the two worldviews creates a critique of European expansion beginning with philosophies that justified the enslavement of African peoples, and unjust treatment of Native populations in North America (NSDE, 2002, p.133). The ACS critique of European imperialist expansion implicitly echoes Smith's (2006) connections to power and written history, and will be further discussed in the Language Analysis section.

The ACS curriculum document covers a very broad range of issues covering racism, power and privilege, colonialism, disenfranchisement and marginalization of populations, and historical periods, from Africa as the birthplace of humankind, through pre-colonial Africa, to contemporary struggles facing African Canadians (NSDE, 2002). The background information and course philosophy at the beginning of the document provide a coherent overview of ACS. The overarching course objectives are further articulated in the Essential Graduation Outcomes under *Citizenship*:

Students are expected to:
- Analyze the relationships among economics, politics, power and disenfranchisement;

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- Analyze the roles and responsibilities of citizen action groups towards empowerment of African peoples in terms of civil rights;
- Internationally, nationally, and locally examine how the European rationale for slavery provided the seedbed for racism;
- Analyze the relationship between forms of discrimination, human rights issues and social justice;
- Identify their own and others' cultural heritage, cultural identity, and contributions of people of African descent to society. (NSDE, 2002, p. 8)

The above outcomes exemplify the progressive nature of ACS in terms of critical theory and its association with anti-racist praxis (Dei, 1996). The direct association between socioeconomics, power, and disenfranchisement is a major thread throughout the document. A second theme in the document is the relation of colonialism to racism, which is understood through an historical investigation of slavery and its continuing effects on society, from local to global perspectives (NSDE, 2002). Resistance and empowerment, through social justice and political action, and culture are also important facets of the ACS course that bring together the larger themes of power, privilege, and colonialism. These concepts are major threads that continue through six thematically divided modules: "Evolution and Change, Elements of the African Diaspora, Impact of Colonial Expansion, Struggle for Identity, Pursuit of Justice, and Journey toward Empowerment" (NSDE, 2002, p. 6). The specific concepts used as threads in the ACS curriculum document portray an Afrocentric perspective that is openly critical of European expansion, and its historical connections to Canadian social institutions.

Predominant Concepts

As mentioned, the ACS curriculum is a powerfully written document that attempts to convey the lasting effects of colonial expansion to high school students in a framework that is inextricably connected to concepts from critical social theory. Power, privilege, exclusion, oppression, institutional racism, resistance, empowerment, Eurocentrism, and Afrocentric learning are the

concepts which I will discuss, both in their relation to the ACS document as a whole, and with details of ways this language presents a specific worldview.

Power and Privilege

Throughout the ACS curriculum document, the themes of power and privilege are investigated as correlating factors, which have been historically constructed through societal conditions of inequality through colonialism (NSDE, 2002). Through an investigation of civil rights and social movements, power and privilege are also linked to "[the] disenfranchisement, segregation, and racism of African people as it relates to their social conditions, i.e. employment, housing, education, and politics" (NSDE, 2002, p.132). Histories of disenfranchisement and segregation are directly related to social conditions of people from African descent. The concepts power and privilege are understood in relation to consequences of European imperialism, and its continued presence in contemporary contexts. Europeans are afforded privileges due to historical power imbalances, whether political, economic, social, or educational, and these privileges benefit some, creating power differentials (NSDE, 2002, p.131).

It is important to note that although guiding concepts in the curriculum document, and are explicitly named, power and privilege are not defined. The document focuses on historical inquiry to teach power and privilege through historical cases, instead of theoretical discussions: "Teachers can have students examine various cases that analyze disenfranchisement, segregation, and racism of African people as it relates to their social conditions," (NSDE, 2002, p.132). Under the Pursuit of Justice Module, students are asked to investigate issues of power through cases of injustice faced by African peoples in South African, North American, and Nova Scotian contexts (p.129). While there are many examples given in the resource section for educators to exemplify the injustices faced by people of African descent since pre-colonial times, teachers must have the theoretical background knowledge to correctly and coherently articulate the connection between power and privilege that manifests through employment, political, and educational differentials (Dei, 1996). In order to teach the content as

the curriculum creators intended, this theoretical knowledge is necessary, but often missing due to teacher hiring practices (see Interview chapter).

Colonialism is the theme that succinctly links the historical construction of economic, political, and social conditions in Canada to power and privilege. However, this major point is not included in the document; colonialism is vaguely defined, and is investigated through the perspective of the African continent alone, with contemporary connections assumed.

Colonialism

The ACS 11 course attempts to coherently explain African history, from the beginning of humankind, to contemporary effects of colonialism (NSDE, 2002). The topic of colonialism in the ACS document begins with a discussion of Africa as the birthplace of humanity, followed by an historical investigation of the differences between pre-colonial and postcolonial Africa through social, economic, and political systems. Colonialism is defined in the ACS document as, "the process of acquiring and maintaining colonies" (NSDE, 2002, p.69). Imperialism is defined as "the process of signing treaties and occupying territory through the control of education, communication, language, religion, and commerce", which is used as a base to understand the developmental issues in postcolonial Africa (NSDE, 2002, p.69). The document does not include a discussion of other possible definitions for these terms, nor, unlike Smith (2006), does it suggest that a deeper understanding of colonialism and imperialism are imperative for understanding post-colonial realities for people of African descent.

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith (2006) defines imperialism and colonialism through an in-depth exploration of their possible meanings. These concepts need to be understood in their various contexts (historically, sociologically, politically, psychologically) in order to understand the wide-ranging impacts of imperialism and colonialism throughout history (Smith, 2006, p.19). As Smith notes, "imperialism still hurts, destroys and is reforming itself constantly…[it is] an epic story telling of huge devastation, painful struggle, and persistent survival" (2006, p.19). The concepts should be understood as having a direct relationship with one another but should not be confused, whereas

colonialism and imperialism are used interchangeably in the ACS document. Smith (2006) discusses the various ways the concept "imperialism" is often used: two of its meanings explain European expansion as a process of economic expansion, necessary for globalization, while the other two definitions explain expansion as the "subjugation of 'others'" to benefit a few (2006, p.21). Furthermore, imperialism is an idea that permeates common-sense notions of progress and development (Smith, 2006). The complexity Smith brings to the concepts of imperialism and colonialism is both necessary, and missing in the ACS document.

There is an assumption made by the curriculum developers that colonialism and imperialism have negative connotations, and taking into account Smith's (2006) discussion of the concepts, they would be correct. However, the reasoning behind this assumption is not explicitly stated in the document, nor is Smith (2006) or other authors cited. An example of how colonialism and imperialism are negatively associated with European expansion is in the Impact of Colonial Expansion Module, where teachers are asked to "have students identify other words that relate to colonialism, imperialism and neocolonial as they relate to oppressions" (NSDE, 2002, p.68). This exemplifies the negative connotations associated with connecting colonialism and imperialism to oppression, without overtly discussing the deeper meanings of the words. Although there are no contrasting or further definitions given for these terms, the Module contains a caveat: "this whole section will require sensitivity on the part of the teacher", which is necessary to discuss the implications of colonial expansion throughout history due to the injustices faced by many peoples worldwide (NSDE, 2002, p.70).

The European rationale driving colonialism and imperialism is also the underlying cause of slavery, discussed in the Colonial Expansion module. However, after slavery ends the continuing effects of colonialism are not investigated (NSDE, 2002). There is a missing connection from colonial rule in Africa, to economic, social, and political inequalities in North America. The basic framework is in place for a strong critique of colonialism as a continuing

phenomenon in North America, but the curriculum document does not bring together the information in a way that explicitly makes the links between the past and the present social realities, due to its narrow scope in defining the concepts of colonialism and imperialism.

Afrocentric Learning and Eurocentrism

The ACS curriculum is a document based on Afrocentric learning principles, which look to situate both African learners and worldview as center, not the periphery of knowledge, as seen in Eurocentric educational structures (Dei, 1996; NSDE, 2002). Afrocentric learning is an important thread in ACS to demonstrate that the Eurocentric view of history is biased, and presents people from African backgrounds in a negative light, which contributes to prejudiced attitudes, and stereotypes about African Canadians (NSDE, 2002). Afrocentricity then, "is an effort to present African history from the African point of view…the validation of African experiences and histories. It is also a critique of the continued exclusion and marginalization of African knowledge and scholarship" (NSDE, 2002, p.39).

The inclusion of African students' experiences and perspectives in the curriculum is an important facet of Afrocentric learning: to develop a sense of pride and respect for African culture and history, which is not gained from Eurocentric history courses (NSDE, 2002). Cultural aspects of the course, such as music and art, are appreciated for their aesthetic value, but more importantly to reveal the struggle of African peoples, expressed through the arts.

Resistance and Struggle

Exploitation, slavery, oppression, and racism are difficult concepts to discuss in a high school classroom due to their sensitive nature. All of these are necessary for understanding the content in the ACS curriculum. Struggles faced by African populations, from European colonization to contemporary African and North American societies, guide the themes in the ACS document. The threads of resistance and empowerment run parallel to the negative aspects of colonialism in the ACS curriculum, demonstrating the significant societal changes that have taken place due to people resisting oppression and colonial rule (NSDE, 2002).

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From the resistance of slaves through networking and music, to the abolition of slavery, civil rights movements in North America, and resistance in post-colonial Africa, there is a clear link from struggle to change (NSDE, 2002). This message is threaded throughout the document and very well articulated. In the 'Journey to Empowerment' Module, students examine an empowerment model such as "CAAA – Catalyst, Awareness, Analysis and Action", and "explain how it impacted people of African descent through institutional change" (NSDE, 2002, p.152).

Empowerment is a key message in the curriculum. The word is found thirty-four times in the document, in several sections (NSDE, 2002). In Module VI: Journey Towards Empowerment, students are asked to "investigate the importance of collective consciousness of peoples of African descent as a strategy for empowerment" (NSDE, 2002, p.24). This Module is an important connection from disenfranchisement and oppression to activism and change, as students explore the many ways peoples of African descent have struggled for empowerment over time. The three expected learning outcomes from this module demonstrate the importance of organizing for change:

- Students will investigate the global impact of political empowerment and independence of colonized countries from the 1950's to the present
- Students will be expected to explain how community-based groups/grassroots organizations have developed and changed over time
- Students will examine the contributions and achievements of African Canadians, both men and women, with emphasis on African Nova Scotians in the following contexts: social, educational, political, religious, and judicial institutions (NSDE, 2002, p.24-25).

As the final Module of the curriculum, the concluding information connects struggle to change, and is buffered with a multitude of examples that connect the peoples of the African Diaspora in a global fight for empowerment.

Language Analysis

The ACS document uses language that positions the course as a critique of

Eurocentric education. Although not fully integrated at the draft stage of ACS, concepts of power and privilege have the potential to be articulated more clearly to guide the course information in a coherent manner. The ACS course has been developed to give a very specific worldview, an Afrocentric perspective, which is openly described in the beginning of the document. The underlying assumptions in the course are also directly discussed in the content of the outcomes; the agenda for the course is clear. ACS is a critique of European history from an anti-racist educational perspective, which is based in critical theory. Power, privilege, resistance, and empowerment are the guiding themes of ACS, and although still young in its implementation, it has the potential to become an influential history credit for the Department of Education in Nova Scotia to promote change. This being said, implementation concerns, not pertaining to the information in the curriculum document, are a larger issue for the success of ACS than the document itself.

Canadian History 11

The Canadian History 11 document is divided into five thematic sections that address five overarching questions, relating to each theme:

1. Globalization: What has been Canada's place in the community of nations, and what should Canada's role be?

2. Development: How has the Canadian economy evolved in an attempt to meet the needs and wants of all Canada's peoples?

3. Governance: Have governments in Canada, past and present, been reflective of Canadian societies?

4. Sovereignty: How have struggles for sovereignty defined Canada and how do they continue to define Canada?

5. Justice: How has Canada struggled for a just and fair society? (NSDE, 2002, p.13)

The CHS 11 curriculum does not provide a philosophical basis for the course, or a rationale. What is given in the introduction of the course is the above outline of the five thematic modules, and the overarching question to be answered

in each module. Without a broader rationale, there is a sense of fragmentation from the beginning of the document. Each theme is related to a specific historical question. However, the questions do not necessarily relate to one another, or lend themselves to a larger discussion of the course objective as a whole. The titles of each unit are important to deconstruct, as they hold very specific meanings. For example, the terms globalization and development could relate to colonization and free trade, or technological advancement and community organization, depending on the working definition. The curriculum document specifically states this dilemma, "development, globalization...do not mean the same thing to all Canadians" (NSDE, 2002, p.11). There is no working definition given to these concepts, however. It is left to the interpretation of the reader.

Predominant Concepts

The main themes are connected to the five units, but are found as common ideas throughout the document. Canada's place in the world, in the economic, political and social spheres, is a main concern for the course. Canadian identity, globalization, economy, political structure, and justice are the central concepts that guide CHS 11. Compared to ACS 11, fewer concepts guide the curriculum document, so the concepts covered are discussed in more detail. The CHS 11 course attempts to bridge a Eurocentric historical approach, which has a heavy focus on the economy, progress and development, by interjecting sections on justice, colonization, and a focus on First Nation peoples' contributions to Canadian society. The First Nation perspective does not always logically fit into the units, but is the first outcome for each module. The design of the Modules follows a general format. Specific Curriculum Outcomes (SCO's) further divide each module into smaller sections, which are the pieces of information students are expected to know at the end of the unit. For each SCO listed there are suggestions for teaching and learning, followed by suggestions for assessment and references. All CHS Modules follow this format (See: Appendix D). Furthermore, the SCO's addressing First Nations peoples' contributions to Canadian society are uncritically added pieces of information that do not necessarily correspond to the

module. For example, the use of sentencing circles in restorative justice does not have a connection to land displacement or immigration policies. The CHS 11 curriculum document would need to be revisited to allow a critical perspective to be incorporated. I will know turn to a consideration of three units: Globalization and Identity, Economy and Progress, and Justice.

Globalization and Identity

In the ACS 11 and MST 10 curriculum guides, the term 'colonialism' is used in place of globalization. The CHS 11 document does refer to the European populating of North American as colonization, and there is an analysis of the effects of colonization on the First Peoples of Canada, but the effects are not connected to a contemporary analysis. Also under the theme of globalization is the role of "African labour in the New World" (NSDE, 2002, p.38). Interestingly, the word slavery is not used. After the populating of North America by European settlers is discussed, and subsequent colonization, the focus shifts to Canada's place in the global community through its ties to Britain and France, followed by Canada's place in the first and second world wars (NSDE, 2002). Canadian identity figures prominently with the concept of globalization; how Canada is viewed by other nations is an important topic for CHS. In the CHS curriculum, Canadian identity is discussed as an intricate piece of the economic development of Canada in global markets.

Economy and Progress

Similar to the Globalization unit, the section on Development begins with a pre-colonial description of the various First Nations economies. However there is no return to this concept in the remainder of the curriculum. The discussion of First Nations economies is not clearly linked to the next outcome that covers the Staple Trade from Canada to Europe. The remaining part of the unit is from a Eurocentric, uncritical perspective on trade, without referring back to the original outcome that covers the First Nations people and the resources, which are being sent to Europe for European residents. The topics covered are free markets and Canada's economic policies, from the First World War forward to contemporary

society. The economic thread is the predominant topic in this curriculum, and carries through all units.

Like globalization and development, progress can also be interpreted in many ways. Not defined in the curriculum, "progress" is connected to the economic facets of Canadian society through industrialization and growth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (NSDE, 2002).

Justice

The unit on Justice begins by analyzing the contributions of English, French, and First Nations perspectives to the Canadian legal system. The constitution is not covered in this unit, although it would link coherently to the latter part of the Justice module. Forced displacement of people from their land is discussed in this last part of the curriculum document, as are immigration practices, and how the lack of political and economic power has led to inequities in Canadian society (NSDE, 2002).

The topics covered in the Justice unit are scattered and remain disconnected from the other four units. Likewise, no connections are drawn between the displacement of people from their land, and negative long-term social conditions faced by landless people. In this section, the curriculum document asks teachers to "carefully choose" examples of inequity in Canada only if there are clear economic *and* political ramifications for that group of people. The last unit in the CHS 11 curriculum, and the only unit to address issues of displacement, inequality and racism in Canada, does not properly address any of the three in depth, and the word 'racism' is not once used in the entire CHS 11 document. In contrast, in the ACS curriculum 'racism' is found eight times, and in MST curriculum twice (NSDE, 2002).

Language Analysis

At first glance, it might seem that the CHS 11 document, through the words 'diversity', 'displacement', and 'colonialism', with outcomes based on First Nations contributions, sets out to provide a balanced perspective of Canada's history. However, when inspected closely, the CHS 11 curriculum places very

little emphasis on equality and social justice. Topics that are briefly mentioned, like displacement, are addressed only in a manner that allows for a surface discussion of land ownership without linking it to power and privilege. Many words carrying ideological meaning such as 'progress', 'development', and 'globalization' are left to the interpretation of the teacher. The way in which these concepts are used in the curriculum document is closely linked to Enlightenment philosophies, which hide an undercurrent of racism (Smith, 2006).

Smith discusses how imperialism is bred from Enlightenment ideals that underlie Western-bred concepts of progress and development: "…imperialism is located within the Enlightenment spirit which signaled the transformation of economic, political and cultural life in Europe. In this wider Enlightenment context, imperialism becomes an integral part of the development of the modern state, of science, of ideas…"(2006, p.23). Imperialist economic expansion, or 'globalization' in the CHS curriculum, neglects the reality of "exploitation and subjugation of indigenous peoples" in the imperialist search for growth and progress (Smith, 2006, p.22). Similar to the focus on economic expansion of European powers, Canada's economic identity is portrayed as the most important aspect of CHS. Stemming from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the question of how to sustain international economic success is of paramount concern. This exemplifies the nature of the CHS curriculum as an uncritical and problematic view of Canada's history that disregards issues of race and power to focus on Canada's place in the 21st century as an economic leader.

Mi'kmaq Studies 10

The first piloted Mi'kmaq Studies 10 (MST) course took place in 1996, after a Task Force on Mi'kmaq Education was formed in 1993 (NSDE, 2002). The rationale for MST 10 is to educate all school students in the area of Mi'kmaq history, because the story of the Mi'kmaq people has been misrepresented or absent from curriculum in Nova Scotian high schools. The MST implementation draft of 2002 has not been updated, and a textbook has not yet been adopted for the course. The philosophy for MST implicitly follows Dei's (1996) anti-racism

principles of spiritual development and student identity by focusing on the themes of cultural identity and Native spirituality as it relates to each student, regardless of their background. Dei's fifth anti-racism education principle, the incorporation of "spiritual and social development of the individual in the classroom" seeks to connect classroom learning and holistic growth (1996, p.23). The MST Spirituality Module is closely related to this principle, although Dei's work is not explicitly cited. One of the main objectives in this Module asks "students to explain the significance of the creation stories within Mi'kmaq spirituality and recognize the connections between spiritual beliefs and a Mi'kmaq person's identity and sense of place" (NSDE, 2002, p.10). Students who are not of Mi'kmaq heritage are also asked to identify their beliefs to understand how their worldview affects their sense of identity. Through the lens of Mi'kmaq spirituality, all students investigate their spiritual and social identities to foster personal growth.

Besides spirituality, other main themes highlighted in the MST course philosophy are cultural appreciation and understanding, values, and contributions of Mi'kmaq to Canadian society, for Mi'kmaq students to develop a sense of pride in their heritage, and to better inform non-Mi'kmaq students on issues facing First Nations communities (NSDE, 2002).

Predominant Concepts

The Specific Curriculum Outcomes are divided into six thematic modules: Introduction, Political Unit, Culture Unit, Education Unit, Social/Economic Unit, and Spirituality unit (NSDE, 2002). Each unit carries the underlying course philosophy of cultural identity, appreciation, and understanding, as shown in the Essential Graduation Learnings in *Citizenship*:

Graduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context:
- identify unique features of the Mi'kmaq language and recognize that language reflects a unique world view
- identify and describe contributions of Mi'kmaq culture to Canadian

society

- explore ways in which conventional schools might change to more effectively meet student needs

- explain the concept of Netukulimk[3] (ne-du-qu-limk) and appreciate how this view of nature can guide the treatment and use of the environment

- identify key points in various treaties and agreements signed by the Mi'kmaq and recognize the political significance of these treaties. (NSDE, 2002, p.14)

The described outcomes are indicative of the type of language used throughout the document, which will be discussed in the Language Analysis section. The wording of the MST document is neutral, meaning that it does not provide a direct critique of Canada's colonial past in relation to contemporary issues, which could allow for differing interpretations of the curriculum. One example is in the identification of treaties and agreements signed. There were and continue to be significant political ramifications, but the outcomes do not connect contemporary issues with historical information in the document. The most common themes and concepts in the MST 10 curriculum guide center on aesthetic representation, spirituality, appreciation and understanding, culture, and colonialism.

Aesthetic Representation

In the Essential Graduation Learnings section of MST 10, Aesthetic Expression is highlighted as a major aspect of the course outcomes: students are expected to critically respond to art forms, as well as create various visual representations of their learning (NSDE, 2002). Throughout the six modules, artistic methods are suggested for teacher methods. *Appreciation and understanding* are repeatedly mentioned, and visual arts is one way by which

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[3] "Netukulimk is a Mi'kmaq concept that includes the use of the natural bounty provided by the Creator for the self-support and well-being of the individual and the community at large. It is the Mi'kmaq way of harvesting resources without jeopardizing the integrity, diversity, or productivity of our native environment". (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2002, p.78)

teachers can get their students to better appreciate and understand Mi'kmaq culture. Various methods, such as drama, poetry, film, painting, music, and craftwork, are listed in the Teaching Suggestions sections at the end of each module. The aesthetic component of MST is closely related to cultural appreciation and understanding, which is threaded throughout the document.

Appreciation and Understanding

Starting in the course rationale, the words "appreciation" and "understanding" appear on twenty-eight and forty-seven pages, respectively. These two words embody the purpose of the MST curriculum document: cultural understanding and appreciation of contributions of Mi'kmaq communities in Nova Scotia, through an understanding of students' cultural identities (NSDE, 2002). For First Nations students, it is hoped that MST 10 can bring a sense of pride and promote a positive identity. For non-Native students, "it is anticipated that they will bring an openness to learning about a culture different from their own. As they learn first-hand from Mi'kmaq writers and speakers, students may acknowledge their own stereotypical thinking and attitudes" (NSDE, 2002, p.2). Through a cross-cultural understanding model of education, students will develop openness to people from varying communities.

Culture

This is the most pervasive and connecting theme in the MST implementation document. 'Culture' is the title of one of the six modules, and is the main theme in the Introduction, Education, and Spirituality modules as well. Culture is broadly defined as, "…a people's shared way of thinking and acting. It is a way of life" (NSDE, 2002, p.46). From this definition, culture can have many interpretations, including dangerous interpretations that essentialize populations based on 'cultural' differences that might actually be based on narrowly defined roles and stereotypes (Dei, 1996). This is not to belittle cultural investigation, but to question the intentions of placing so much importance on material culture in the curriculum.

Colonialism

Similar to the ACS 11 curriculum, MST 10 also discusses the impact of

colonialism through social, economic, historical and spiritual factors. The major difference between the two documents is in the way ACS uses colonialism as a critical thread throughout its entirety, whereas the MST document connects colonialism to the Indian Act and Reserve system in the Political Module, without clear connections to contemporary issues. Colonialism appears in only one module in the MST document, although it could arguably be used as one of the most crucial concepts to understand how historical conditions are related to present social, economic, and political issues facing contemporary Mi'kmaq communities (Battiste, 2004). Colonialism is surprisingly not named in the Spirituality Module as one of the reasons for loss of traditional spiritual practices. As a major objectives of the unit, students are expected to understand "the influences of Roman Catholicism on Native spirituality and recognize the unique blend of both traditions in some of the spiritual practices and belief systems of the Mi'kmaq" (NSDE, 2002, p.92). The focus is not on residential schooling or the forced conversation of Mi'kmaq populations to Catholicism, but on the unique hybrid spirituality stemming from European influence (NSDE, 2002). Eurocentrism is used to explain the process of residential schooling and conversion of Mi'kmaq peoples into Roman Catholicism: "clearly ethnocentrism (and in particular Eurocentrism) influenced the way Europeans viewed Native spirituality and interacted with Native peoples" (NSDE, 2002, p.94). The language used in the spirituality section is indicative of the overall tone of the document, which is uncontroversial and neutral towards the atrocities committed during European expansion in Nova Scotia. European contact contributed to the production of a, "unique blend of both traditions" (the combination of traditional Mi'kmaq spirituality, and Roman Catholicism), but does not investigate the forced conversion of spiritual practices (NSDE, 2002, p.92).

Language Analysis

Alluded to in the above section is the apolitical use of language throughout the MST curriculum document. While there is one section (the Political module) in the outcomes dedicated to the complex ramifications of Eurocentrism and

colonialism, the overriding theme in this document is to foster understanding and appreciation for Mi'kmaq culture. According to the curriculum document, the potential positive impact for non-Native students is cultural awareness, which can lead to "students rethink[ing] their views of history and reconsider[ing] the nature of early relations between European and Aboriginal peoples in Canada" (NSDE, 2002, p.34). The cultural awareness perspective assumes that students will be open to new ideas and experiences, and asks students to be respectful of their classmates when discussing sensitive topics. Non-Native students might not have been exposed to any Mi'kmaq knowledge in school prior to this course, and as such will need to examine their own biases they bring into the classroom. "As they learn…students may acknowledge their own stereotypical thinking and attitudes", and "understand that we interpret the world through our own culture" (NSDE, 2002, p.2, 38).

One theme missing completely from the MST 10 document is racism. It is mentioned once, in the Essential Graduation Learnings, where racism "can be alleviated in schools by promoting pride in one's heritage" (NSDE, 2002, p.14). Without the missing link of racism, contemporary issues can only be investigated under the realm of culture, which leaves out a critical race analysis that incorporates systemic and institutional aspects of power in society (Dei, 1996). The lack of race analysis, and the high level of importance given to material culture in MST, promotes a surface level analysis of complex issues. Since MST is a grade ten course, the apparent lack of critical analysis might have been intentional. Comparatively, ACS, a grade eleven course, offers a deeper level of historical investigation, supported by the curriculum.

Comparative Analysis

The ACS 11, MST 10, and CHS 11 curriculum documents are written from vastly different perspectives, which convey grand narratives through specific language use. The predominant concepts in each course document connect to these broader underlying narratives, and situate a particular worldview through varying educational discourses. According to Fairclough (2001), "ideological

differences between texts [and] their representations of the world are coded in their vocabulary" (p.112). *Experiential* features of language, via discourse, have traces of a text producer's epistemology (Fairclough, 1989). Vocabulary used in the curriculum documents illustrates what knowledge is valued, and what concepts are not valued, through omission. The following analysis will focus on key words and concepts in each document, and how these concepts connect to broader narratives (or worldviews) comparatively.

Grand Narratives

African Canadian Studies

Key concepts in the ACS 11 curriculum document, such as resistance, oppression, marginalization, colonialism, disenfranchisement, and privilege, provide a political framework for the course. These concepts represent an Afrocentric worldview that seeks to explain contemporary Canadian society through a specific use of language, or 'discourse'. Fairclough's (2009) definition of discourse, "a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular social perspective…the language associated with a particular social field or practice", suggests that word choice in the ACS document originates from a politicized perspective (p.163). According to Fairclough (2001) , discourse is related to politicized uses of language that can uphold or change the status quo. Based on this definition of discourse, language used in the ACS document attempts to illuminate the unequal balance of power in society through the specific use of these concepts.

The words resistance, oppression, marginalization, and disenfranchisement reveal a conflict between sides of unequal power. They describe the unjust acts that have silenced, pushed aside, and taken something by use of force, while resistance shows opposition and fighting back. The epistemology and grand narrative in the ACS 11 document is made obvious in the introduction to the course: the knowledge perspective is Afrocentric in nature, meaning that the history of African peoples will be told from an African viewpoint, which includes cultural values and political stances. For example, the cultural value of music as a

form of resistance, politically aligning with the left to change the status quo, relates to an Afrocentric perspective (NSDE, 2002).

The broader narrative, or story, the vocabulary invites is one that criticizes European actions throughout history, beginning in pre-colonial and continuing to contemporary society. Two modules out of six are based on this critique: Module III - The Impact of Colonial Expansion, and Module IV - In Pursuit of Justice (NSDE, 2002). Module III explores how colonial and imperial systems led to slavery. Students are expected to "describe the development and difficulties of slave culture economically, politically, socially, and spiritually in North America and the Caribbean" after completing this unit (NSDE, 2002, p.18). Module IV provides the contemporary critique, with the goal of "analyz[ing] the correlation between power, disenfranchisement, segregation, and racism of African people as it relates to their social conditions" (NSDE, 2002, p.23). Students are also expected to understand how "the European rationale for slavery provided the seedbed for racism internationally, nationally, and locally" (NSDE, 2002, p.8).

Interpreting European imperialist expansion from an Afrocentric perspective allows students to see the relationships between current forms of discrimination, human rights and social justice issues, and how these problems arose from a particular (Eurocentric) worldview. This discourse also describes how Europeans disrupted the pre-colonial continent of Africa through colonialism and slavery, and tells the story of the African struggle to regain power in the world through resistance and empowerment.

Canadian History

Unlike the ACS 11 curriculum, CHS 11 is much harder to untangle, due to its differing ideological nature; key concepts in CHS do not include a critical perspective of Canadian society or attempt to change unequal power relations. Instead, concepts like globalization, economy, progress, development, are left open for teachers to define as they see fit. The word 'globalization' in CHS 11 is the equivalent of 'colonization' in the MST 10 and ACS 11 curriculum documents. Whereas the 'Globalization' module for CHS briefly discusses the

"effects of contact and subsequent colonization", in the ACS document, globalization is viewed as colonial expansion through the enslavement of African peoples: "enslavement has been used to shape the world" (NSDE, 2002, p.18). The two words have very different connotations, and in the context of CHS 11, globalization is used mainly to describe the process of economic change and development through world markets and free trade (Module 1, NSDE, 2002). Colonialism is briefly discussed in the CHS 11 document, but only in a historical discussion of European expansion, not connected to contemporary 'postcolonial' critique as it is in the ACS and MST documents (NSDE, 2002).

Progress, development, and globalization are used uncritically in the CHS document, and these themes are linked to Canada's place in the world as a global economic leader. The use of these terms is in itself Eurocentric: progress and development are two themes that emerged from Enlightenment philosophy, which is the historical period during which colonialism and slavery were justified in the name of 'progress' (Smith, 2006). Progress, development, and globalization are not explicitly defined in the CHS document, and it is suggested that teachers discuss "what is development or progress and by whose definition/perspective could begin students' critical examination of what counts as progress and to whom" (NSDE, 2002, p.16). This point is made as a suggestion, and is not part of the outcomes of any unit. After suggesting the discussion on these terms, it is mentioned that Canada has, "a rich and complex history, in many ways, because of the diversity of peoples, geography, and their perspectives" (NSDE, 2002, p.11). In other words, a discussion centering on the multiple meanings of progress, development, and globalization would show that Canada's people have varying experiences, but is not meant to lead to a deeper understanding of why some meanings are more prominent than others.

The word "Globalization" is found thirty-three times in the CHS document, and is the title of the first Module. The guiding question for the document's longest Module is: "What has been Canada's place in the community of nations, and what should Canada's role be?" (NSDE, 2002, p.30). The topic of globalization does not include a discussion on the impacts of imperialism or

colonialism, and instead focuses on Canada's role in the World Wars, as peacekeepers, and as an emerging economic power (NSDE, 2002, p.46).

There is hope for the curriculum document in the last unit. Justice. However, there is no mention of 'racism', even when displacement and immigration are implicated. Several examples are cited in this unit, such as the displacement of African Nova Scotians from Africville, the Acadians from Grand Pré, and Mi'kmaq centralization in Nova Scotia (NSDE, 2002, p.114). It is suggested in teacher resources to use a "teacher-led discussion", to introduce "the barriers to economic and political opportunities (ethnicity, race, gender, geographical location, social class)", but it is not an objective of the module. The social justice unit is more of an overview of past wrongdoings the Canadian government has made, with no connection to a colonial past, or contemporary institutional racism.

Fairclough (2001) defines ideological language as "vocabulary used to sustain unequal power relations", and includes the common sense, and uncritical ways that words are used (p.54). The CHS document has a politically conservative discourse that is aligned with Western concepts of science, progress, and development. The major concepts are discussed in a manner that represents the status quo, and does not look to change it. Ideologically and politically, the ACS 11 and CHS 11 curriculum documents are on opposite sides of the spectrum. While diversity and justice are covered in the latter document, the focus is mainly economic, which again is a conservative perspective of governance. The epistemological view from CHS stems from Enlightenment principles of positivism, where knowledge can be deduced from the world using scientific methods (Smith, 2006). Exemplifying this point, the first outcome of the course is to evaluate scientific evidence and Native Canadian theories of how the first peoples came to Canada (NSDE, 2002, p.30). Underlying this objective is the assumption that science can be used to prove this point, and secondly that Indigenous perspectives can be judged against this scientific model.

The attempt to connect Canada's roles as a current and future dominant nation in the global economy, with the humanitarian and multicultural aspects of

the curriculum creates a large gap that creates a bi-polar view of Canadian values; which is more important – humanism or economy? The curriculum leaves this up to interpretation. The grand narrative deduced from the above analysis places Canada as a leader in the global economy, while upholding values in humanitarianism and multiculturalism. The story is told from a Eurocentric perspective that seeks to include the contributions of Native Canadians and 'others' in the outcomes. However, it does not integrate this information in a way that leads to a coherent understanding of Canada's past and present social realities.

Mi'kmaq Studies

The MST 10 curriculum politically lies between the CHS 11 and ACS 11 curriculum documents. Its discourse, like that of CHS, does not provide a significant critique of Canada's history in the way ACS does. The document does connect the Indian Act and Reserve system to current social issues facing First Nations populations, but racism is not mentioned in the critique of colonialism. Only one unit addresses issues of a political nature, with the remaining four sections focusing on cultural aspects of Mi'kmaq history (Introduction, Education, Spirituality, Culture). The main vocabulary concerns cultural appreciation and understanding in every facet of the course. Appreciation and understanding are the driving concepts of the document, along with respect. The language used in the MST 10 curriculum is an uncritical multicultural discourse that looks to develop cross-cultural awareness and appreciation, but does not look deeper into the issues and reasons for needing appreciation in the first place (Battiste, 2004). The words appreciation, respect, and understanding imply that there is disrespect, misunderstanding, and lack of appreciation for the issues and content covered in the course. Kubota and Lin (2009) discuss how 'culture' has taken over for race, as "a more benign and acceptable signifier…used as a means to exclude certain experiences of certain racial/ethnic groups as Other or undesirable" (p.4). In this light, the focus on culture and cultural appreciation in the MST document, could be replacing a 'race' analysis as a politically neutral route to take in a field where

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non-White knowledge is often dismissed as "illegitimate" (Kubota & Lin, 2009, p.7).

The lack of critical (race) analysis can trivialize the struggles and violent history of displacement and marginalization of First Nations peoples. In the ACS 11 course, students are asked to view the world from an Afrocentric perspective, irrespective of their background. One of the expectations for Module I – Evolution and Change, is for students "to demonstrate an understanding of the development of culture and Afrocentricity" (NSDE, 2002, p.16). The Afrocentric perspective is investigated through historical analysis as having developed over time in response to slavery and oppression, to pursue justice (Nova Scotia Department of Education, 2002). In MST 10, students are asked to appreciate and acknowledge contributions and cultural facets of Mi'kmaq heritage, but not to truly take on an Indigenous perspective of the world: "students will come to recognize that each person is unique and views different cultures through the prism of his or her own experiences. Students may rethink their views of history and reconsider the nature of early relations between European and Aboriginal peoples in Canada" (NSDE, 2002, p.2). This is a major point of difference in terms of the epistemological foundation of MST in comparison to ACS: the ACS course asks students to see the connections between colonialism and imperialism to current realities and social injustices, MST asks students to "reconsider" European and Native relations, without connection to the present.

In MST knowledge is valued and created through various aspects of one's culture. Without an understanding of Eurocentrism, and White being positioned as 'center', non-Native students might not see their lives as having a particular culture, therefore missing the point of the course. The story told from the MST document and concepts used, is that the Mi'kmaq people are trying to find a way in Canadian society, but are still marginalized due to lack of understanding and appreciation of the culture. There is a lack of discussion on residential schooling, and significant losses (land, spirituality, language), which creates a veil of positivity centering on cultural appreciation and understanding. What is not named in the MST document points to the apolitical nature of the course; a large

part of the story is not present.

Conclusion

Implementation of the history curriculum documents, from the position of critical discourse analysis, centers on the teacher's academic background and ability to critically facilitate the information provided. In order to teach the CHS course critically, teachers would have to extrapolate meaning from the documents and carefully guide the students through information heavy with value-laden language. The MST course would need to be expanded in order to connect contemporary social realities such as poverty, and crime to social injustice and persistent effects of colonialism. The issue of time is important here; a lot of time is needed to research, reorganize, and develop course materials, especially if a teacher is taking on the task alone. The ACS course curriculum is well written and quite advanced for grade eleven. Implementation issues surrounding the academic level of students in the class, and the teacher's academic background, are more pertinent for ACS than the curriculum language itself.

Based on a document analysis alone, there are implications for the CHS and MST courses as written. CHS 11, if taught from an uncritical Eurocentric worldview (as an interpretation of the document allows), posits itself as a 'neutral' or central perspective for the three courses. The supposedly apolitical CHS curriculum document positions both MST and ACS courses as peripheral, through the lack of race analysis and of coherent inclusion of non-White perspectives in the course. If MST 10 is taught as a cultural appreciation class with little depth in schools where there is a small Mi'kmaq population, a binary us/them could be created. Especially if the teacher does not have the proper academic background, the purpose of the course could be trivialized, increasing stereotypes of First Nations peoples and issues. Further implications for implementation will be discussed in the Interview Analysis chapter, which investigates the aspects of teachers, students, administration, and the curriculum document when put into practice.

Chapter 5:

Teacher interviews – A Snapshot of the practical

Introduction

The following analysis is based on three semi-structured teacher interviews that took place in January 2011. The conversations kept to a basic outline of questions that were prepared in advance, but each of the interviews was unique, and while the discussions were focused on the same topics, all uncovered similar experiences with implementation issues. The interview questions, centered on the 2002 implementation of three social studies courses which were created to satisfy the history credit for graduating: African Canadian Studies (ACS), Mi'kmaq Studies (MST), and Canadian History (CHS). The discussion was generally participant-led, and while the facilitated conversation was guided to areas that were included in the interview guide (See: Appendices), most of the topics were covered. What took shape under the guise of an interview was very similar to a collegial conversation about important educational issues.

Data

The cumulative time for the audio recorded interview data for all three participants totaled four hours. Each interview ranged from seventy to ninety minutes in length, with a brief follow-up conversation to clarify, add, or retract anything that was discussed. The follow-up conversation was not audio recorded, as all three took place over the telephone. During the follow-up discussion, notes were taken, then transcribed and amended with respect to the original interview transcriptions. The transcribed interview data is eighty-seven pages in length.

Participants

As discussed in the methods chapter, the participants chosen were colleagues with whom I have had previous personal communication concerning the implementation issues of MST, ACS, and CHS. They were chosen based on their interest in the topic, and their teaching experiences with ACS and MST. All three teachers have been in the profession from ten to twenty years, and have

taught at several high schools in the province. All have taught in high schools across Canada, and two have taught internationally. Two educators identified as male, while one identified as female, and racially, one teacher self-identified as 'part-Mi'kmaw', one as African Nova Scotian, and one as White. In the subsequent analysis, the teachers will be identified by their chosen pseudonyms: Sarah, Robert, and J.P.

While the participants were not selected based on their identities, each represents a specific perspective on the courses based on their experience as, respectively, an 'African Nova Scotian', 'Mi'kmaw' and 'White' teacher in the school system. Two of the teachers' identities are especially important to note, as the ensuing conversations are informed by the experience of what it is to be a non-White teacher in a predominantly White system. Their 'insider' views of schooling, which are illustrated in the interviews, bring an awareness of identity politics into the classroom that a White teacher may not have. The racial identities of the teachers are especially important to discuss, given that MST and ACS speak to historical injustices enacted upon African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities.

Methods

In order to allow themes to emerge from the conversations, and to authentically represent the teachers' experiences, transcriptions and audio recordings were revisited for four months following the interviews. The interview method was used primarily to gain insight into teachers' practical experiences with ACS, MST, and CHS, and the meaning they created out of these teaching experiences. Two separate dialectical processes took place: one during the interview, and another when engaging with the transcription data. Wilson (2000) describes the philosophical hermeneutic process in semi-structured interviewing as being one of co-creation, whereby the interviewer is implicated in constructing knowledge vis-à-vis their participation in conversation. The second process is mediated by the dialectal relationship between the initial conversations, and the broader applied context in education (Gadamer, 1976). Synthesizing pieces of knowledge drawn out of the transcripts forms a larger depiction of the issues

presented in the data. While a larger whole is being created from the original conversations, the intention is to convey, from the teachers' perspectives, how the courses are working in practice.

The analysis includes a discussion of themes that emerged out of the three interviews. To illustrate the teachers' experiences, concerns, and insights into each of these themes, quotes are extracted from the transcriptions. Threaded through the themes is a discussion of the broader context in which the teachers' perspectives are situated.

Emergent Themes

The interview guide was formulated to elicit conversation based on issues of implementation from several angles, such as curriculum and resources. While the guide was used to steer the interview, conversations unfolded organically, and did not deviate greatly from the intended questions. Space was given for the participant's teaching experiences and stories to be disclosed when expanding on a topic. The larger themes emerging from the conversations center on: guidance/administration, students, teachers, curriculum, and knowledge hierarchy. The conversations surrounding each theme were complex, and diverged into several directions. Analyzing the conversations as a whole, it becomes apparent that the themes are inextricably connected to one another, further complicating the discussion, which will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter. The participants delved into the issues at great depth, which will be discussed in relation to the myriad of issues concerning the implementation of these courses. The themes are presented in the order in which the teachers addressed issues of implementation for ACS, MST, and CHS.

Findings

Guidance Counselors

> They (guidance) threw the course out there as being something much
> lighter than what it was. Then you end up getting students in the course

that are lower level students, who didn't expect the content and are really put off by the course from the beginning. (Robert, 01/22/11)

When asked how the course selection process occurs for high school students, all three discussed guidance counselors as at the first level of implementation. High schools in the province focus on student choice for course selection. This philosophy promotes student ownership and responsibility for their learning, and through new technologies that allow course selection to be completed online. Based on this rationale, guidance counselors, in theory, have less influence on the courses that students select. The role of the guidance counselor is to have an information session with students from each grade level for their course selection, and to double check with students to make sure they are selecting courses appropriate for their educational goals, and choosing those required for graduation. The question then, is what role do guidance counselors have in informing students' decisions for course selection, if that role has been diminished by recent changes.

According to the teachers interviewed, guidance plays a much larger role than may be initially expected. Grade nine students who are visited by high school guidance counselors can be misinformed about the content of MST and ACS, contributing to a large imbalance in student enrollment between the various history options (Robert, 01/22/11). Robert also discussed the teaching background of guidance counselors having an impact: misunderstanding ACS and MST course objectives can perpetuate negative perceptions of the courses, especially if teachers are not knowledgeable in the area of social studies. In turn this can lead to students to choosing courses that they might not be prepared to take, as far as content is concerned, and teachers then have to change the course to fit the needs of the students who are placed in ACS and MST (content will be discussed in a following section). One interesting point is that all teachers found guidance to be a large issue in three separate schools, and although the issues change slightly between schools, guidance nonetheless remains a large factor.

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When asked how students are placed in their ACS or MST courses, all teachers immediately jumped on the subject of guidance counselors:

> It has to be guidance…they're the ones who talk to the grade nines, and they have a huge impact on those kids. They often go in and the kids aren't sure, and they suggest that students steer more towards math and sciences, or toward the "lower level courses" like MST and ACS…and I think that they're doing it because they're trying to be helpful, but why do we have six Canadian History classes and only one or two ACS? (Sarah, 01/19/11)

The above quote describes, from one teacher's perspective, the annual trip that high school guidance counselors make to local junior high schools, which feed into larger high schools, to discuss course choices and general expectations for the transition into the secondary system. Every spring, these meetings with grade nines happen in junior high schools across the province to prepare students for choosing high school courses. According to Sarah, guidance counselors exert a great influence on course choice for grade tens. Students this age might not know what they want to take, or lack awareness about high school courses in general, so suggestions from guidance counsellors are influential (Sarah, 01/19/11). Furthermore, if guidance is suggesting that (certain) students take CHS instead of ACS or MST as their history credit, this can create large disparities between course enrolments. As Sarah mentioned, why should there be only one or two sections of ACS compared to six CHS sections? In this teacher's school, there is a misconception that ACS is primarily for students of African Nova Scotian descent. The division of students along racial lines will be discussed further under the *Knowledge Hierarchy* section. Also, MST has only recently been incorporated into the social studies department, which promises to change the dynamic of course selection for that school.

A similar dynamic in course disparity can be seen at another high school, where there are twelve sections of MST and only two of CHS, with one ACS:

> For me one of the problems with MST is guidance. They don't know what's going on in this course. And, every time I try to bring it up with them, they kind of just change the subject…So, I think that's a major

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problem right there. That's why we have twelve sections of MST and two
of CHS. (J.P., 01/31/11)

From this teacher's perspective, guidance needs to have a greater
awareness of the MST course in general, and more discussion is necessary
between the teachers and guidance to better implement courses in the area of
social studies. Similar to this experience, issues stem from the meeting of grade
nine students, which translate into students misunderstanding the purpose of MST
or ACS before the class even begins:

Many times we've asked counselors to come to the ACS professional
development days and they're few and far between who actually come.
Another issue with guidance, when they went out to the grade nines to
pitch their courses for selection, they threw the course out there as being
something much lighter than what it was. Then you end up getting students
in the course who are lower level students, who didn't expect the content
and are really put off by the course from the beginning. So we have
guidance who don't know the document, and then they're slotting the
wrong people there. (Robert, 01/22/11)

Professional development sessions would be particularly helpful for
guidance. However, participation is not mandated, which only perpetuates
misunderstanding. From this perspective, many students are expecting the course
to be easy, or "much lighter" than the actual content, therefore attracting a certain
"type" of student who comes into the class with misinformed perceptions of
course objectives.

It is important to note that all three teachers felt guidance counselors'
actions are genuinely well intended, and decisions were not being made
maliciously to belittle ACS or MST. The critique from teachers focuses mostly on
the lack of critical awareness and understanding of the curriculum for both MST
and ACS. Misperceptions of ACS and MST objectives then translate into student
misperceptions, which can unfortunately shape the direction a course takes. One
teacher suggested that meeting about this issue would be in everyone's best
interest: "I think they don't know. I think it would be in everyone's best interest to

have a meeting. We have enough meetings...but we need to sit down with them, and discuss what's going on" (J.P., 01/31/11). The role of guidance counselors in the shaping of ACS and MST is a pivotal aspect in the extremely complex issue of curriculum implementation. However in order to comprehend this issue at a deeper level, the placement of both students and teachers (including, hiring) for MST and ACS, curriculum content and implementation, and resource allocation need to be considered.

Students

Discussions centering on students resurfaced throughout the interviews at different times. "Students" emerged as having a major role in the sections covered in the interview guide (implementation, curriculum, experience, and concerns). This complex and multifaceted issue contained several concerns that arose under the larger topic of 'students': academic ability, maturity, behaviour issues, expectations and perceptions. Many of these subtopics were, once again, not included in the original interview guide, but emerged organically out of conversation. The educators linked many of the larger issues back to the students enrolled in the courses. In their view, better attention needs to be given to the way in which students are placed in these courses.

The level of students' academic ability was a large concern and specifically, why grade tens were enrolled in ACS and MST. All three teachers commented on the complexity of social justice aspects in the MST and ACS curricula, and the difficulty of relaying these topics in a way that students understood. In particular, topics of power and privilege were an issue:

> I think because of the social justice component of the courses, and some of the things that are being discussed around race, gender, and socioeconomic class, that you have to have a certain amount of maturity to be in that class. It takes a very smart kid to be able to go into these courses and do well, and really be able to wrestle with some of the ideas around power and privilege to be able to come out unscathed. (Robert, 01/22/11)

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When discussing the levels of student academic ability in ACS, Robert demonstrates the important link between maturity level and academic skill. In order to truly understand the issues brought up in ACS and MST, which center on a history of Eurocentric privilege and power, a certain level of academic ability is necessary. Moreover, the ability to see outside of one's life to understand how broader society privileges some over others, is a skill that requires understanding the social ramifications of political, economic, and educational complexities. This quote also discusses the intersecting nature of issues that are covered in the ACS course; being able to understand and absorb issues of race, class, and gender, in relation to Canadian society, students need to be mature.

Maturity was discussed in the context of the student's ability to incorporate points of view in the ACS course that are either very close to the student's lived experience, therefore bringing up strong emotional responses, or very distant from their reality, which can lead to feelings of guilt or shame (Robert, 01/22/11). In both instances, students could distance themselves from the course material, rendering it difficult for the teacher to facilitate necessary discussion. The level of maturity needed for these discussions is necessary so not to alienate the students, and in Robert's words, so the students "come out unscathed." In the context of the conversation, the teacher meant that the student could leave the course feeling empowered: if White, understanding privilege in a way that is not debilitating. The term "exile" is used in Strong-Wilson's (2008) discussion of social justice education. She asserts that "…exile (viz. alienation)" from one's own culture "cannot be the purpose of education" (Strong-Wilson, 2008, p.8). Having the maturity to incorporate information from the course into a new worldview would allow a student to retain belief in his or her own culture, therefore not being "exiled." Likewise, understanding the complexities of privilege in a way that is empowering will leave a student "unscathed" at the end of the semester.

All three teachers agreed that understanding the intricate nature of power and privilege is a very difficult task for grade ten, even for those who are academically advanced. Although ACS is a grade eleven course, most students

take the course in grade ten, which does not allow for some of these in-depth conversations to take place due to maturity issues. When asked why grade tens were allowed to take the course, the teachers elicited several explanations specific to the schools where they have worked. For one school, one teacher discussed the impact of having grade tens choosing MST (a grade ten credit) which deals with very serious issues of injustice and reparation:

Why are they encouraging kids to get their history credit over with in grade ten? That's insane. The maturity level to deal with the issues is rarely there. To be able to seriously critically think about tough issues is not at the level needed to really be successful. (J.P., 01/31/11)

Being in the system since MST's incorporation, all three teachers commented on the alarming pattern of students in MST who do not have the life experience to tackle difficult issues. As an MST instructor for several years, J.P. questioned the devaluing of social studies courses: why is the history credit viewed as something for the students to "get over with" in their first year? When asked about this, the teacher did not have any answers, nor had been given any justifications from guidance or administration (J.P., 01/31/11).

Academic level was thoroughly discussed across teachers. All three teachers linked difficulties in teaching ACS and MST with high levels of students needing extra help, whether they are on an Individualized Program Plan (IPP), or adapted program. In Nova Scotia, students who are on an IPP graduate with a diploma that is adapted to meet their needs, "for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable" (Province of Nova Scotia, 2008, p.32). Students who are on adapted programs still follow the Provincial curriculum outcomes for the course, but might have slight adjustments made to ensure their success (Province of Nova Scotia, 2008). According to the three participants, both MST and ACS encounter more students needing IPP and adapted programs, which increases the challenge to have in-depth, academic conversations in the classroom due to the higher student needs.

I had seven IPP students, 4 adaptations, and three other, out of fifteen students. And, every one of them had discipline problems…then you're

divided whether, because you have so many IPP and resource, do you focus on literacy skills, or do you focus on material and content? (Sarah, 01/19/11)

There is a large concern with the type of students being placed in MST and ACS. If the teacher only focuses on content, then the students' basic reading and writing skills might not improve as much as they need to succeed in other courses. Conversely, if mainly literacy skills are focused on, some of the content does not get covered, and meaning for the course is lost. Another issue in this example is discipline problems. Out of the three conversations, this discussion particularly centered on the issues in the classroom which made it "almost impossible" to teach (Sarah, 01/19/11).

In this story, the teacher had administration come into the classroom to help, but it did not make a difference. "It was brutal, brutal, brutal…just getting up and hitting each other, throwing things across the room, screaming and hollering, telling me where I can go…I was in survival mode everyday" (Sarah, 01/19/11). Therefore, the students in this classroom greatly affected the outcome of the course, and in the process brought a teacher with ten years experience to question her abilities.

One teacher, who had taught ACS at several schools, also discussed the issue of high numbers of IPP and adaptations at length, but added a critical race analysis:

> Because they (ACS and MST) are considered to be "courses of colour", they often just throw students in there of colour. Now if you look at the general population, there is a disproportionate number of African Canadian students on IPP. There are also a disproportionate number of First Nations students on those programs. So there's a misconception of how high your literacy skills need to be for the course. (Robert, 01/21/11)

Due to the misconception that MST is for Mi'kmaw students, and ACS is for African Canadian students, there are often a disproportionate number of students in those classes who are African Nova Scotian or First Nations. This issue is made more complex by the influx of students on IPP or adaptations, also

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from those backgrounds. The issue of race will be taken up in more depth in the section on Knowledge Hierarchy, but it is important to note the complexity of this issue.

In a school with a high number of students new to Canada, J.P. had observed a similar, yet interesting phenomenon with MST:

> I don't know why it's like this, but there are a lot of new Canadians taking MST, who need a lot of ESL help. Again, it seems to me, and I can't prove this, but it seems to me that the perception is that the skill level and literacy level doesn't have to be very high in order to succeed in MST. (J.P., 01/31/11)

This situation is slightly different than the two described above, as it adds another layer to the higher needs population of MST and ACS: students in these (MST) courses are in need of extra help as students whose first language is not English. In the opinion of this teacher, there is a perception that academic ability does not have to be high in this course to do well. In this sense, the students populating the course directly affect the way in which it is taught, making the "low level" stereotype a self-fulfilling prophecy. This perception, in turn, is often internalized and adopted by students who "continue to have low expectations for the course" (Robert, 01/22/11).

Student misperceptions of MST or ACS can influence their acceptance (or reluctance to accept) course material. In the example below, a student was misplaced in MST and, in a discussion with a teacher, shows her deeply racist attitudes toward the MST course:

> "You know Sir how do I get out of MST because they slotted me in there, and I don't want to be in there and I don't agree with some of the trials that Mi'kmaq's have." And I'm saying in my mind that she's the perfect person who needs to be there to offset some of these misconceptions and stereotypes she has, and basically said that she didn't want to go through a semester learning about Indians…I don't know who slotted her in there, did anyone talk to her about it? So, unless she gets a fantastic, super

fantastic teacher, who could change her perception and her reluctance to being in the course then it's a failure right off the bat. (Robert, 01/22/11)

In all three interviews, the participants then turned to the impact of teacher qualifications and hiring processes for MST and ACS as a contributing factor to the problem.

Teachers

"Teachers have to care about it. It can't just be, oh you have a pulse? You can teach Mi'kmaq studies" (J.P., 01/31/11)

Several key points arose from the discussion of the role of teachers in implementation of ACS and MST: methods for MST and ACS teacher choice, teacher education and ability, and teacher perceptions and expectations. Firstly, when asked about the way teachers were chosen to teach ACS and MST, all three teachers identified major problems with the way in which teachers are placed in these courses. Teacher hiring and selection problems stemmed first from seniority, with the most experienced teachers being placed in the highest-level courses. The Principal has the responsibility to assign teachers their courses, and seniority would be a factor in the decision. One teacher discussed how educators at her school are often given a section of ACS to teach:

How are they chosen? I think it's almost like a seniority thing…it's like they throw the new people in and say, "Here ya go! Let's see if you can survive this!" And, the longer you're there, the more respect, and the higher level of courses you get. And, I really think that's it. And, the more education you have, like if you have your Masters perhaps, or, if you've been there for a long time and you have a reputation of a high quality teacher then you get the highest courses, and if you're a newbie, you get the lowest courses. And definitely, ACS is at the bottom of the list as the lowest course that you could teach, because of the problems, academically, no, not academically, well sometimes academically yes, but behaviour wise it's brutal. (Sarah, 01/19/11)

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She elaborated: New teachers prove their worth by surviving the course. This is clearly problematic for several reasons, the most obvious one being that ACS is being viewed as the "worst course" to teach in the school yet not because the subject matter is challenging. As the teacher notes, its reputation does not come from the course content, but because of behavioural issues faced in the classroom. Teachers in this school view ACS as a "dumping ground" for low-level, mainly African Nova Scotian, students (Sarah, 01/19/11). Also problematic is the linking of behaviour to course content, and both to race. Negative stereotypes of African Nova Scotian learners as low-level and having behavioural issues are being perpetuated. Lastly, why is it that ACS does not attract the highest-level teachers? Why is it the course of choice for teachers of little experience? This is also a problem.

Another educator laughed when asked how teachers were hired to teach ACS and MST, likening the process to "choosing straws":

> It's like picking the shortest straw. There's a cup, all you can see is top of the straws, and all you can do is hope that you pull the longest straw but then "boom" you have ACS or you have MST. The way it happens for whatever reason is that administration or guidance will say we're going to have this many sections of ACS and this many sections of MST, and whoever has the most seniority will basically refuse to teach it. (Robert, 01/22/11)

The hiring process is portrayed as analogous to a game of chance. In this teacher's experience, teachers rarely request to teach MST and ACS. This does not mean it has never happened, as some "very passionate teachers who care about social justice have actually asked to teach ACS or MST, but that's so rare" (Robert, 01/22/11). The "leftover" ACS and MST sections are then put to a secondary hiring process, where new teachers, desperately in need of a job, will take anything, further perpetuating the negative perception of MST and ACS as sub-par courses. Robert, however, also noted that he has been at schools where the teacher was very proud to teach MST and ACS, but the issue of student ability

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in the classrooms remained: "teachers have to care about it. It can't just be, oh you have a pulse? You can teach Mi'kmaw studies" (J.P., 01/31/11).

Teachers provided an inside view of the courses, gathered from staff room comments: expressions of shock, or of condolence. The perceptions of staff demonstrate how ACS and MST are valued (or devalued) in schools. One teacher in particular found the staff comments troubling when they heard ACS was given to her to teach.

> I'll tell you quick what people said: "Like, oh my god, I can't believe you're teaching that," "Oh my gosh, good luck." "Oh man. Oh man, you're in for it now." And a few even said that is wasn't fair that I was teaching ACS, because I do too much to be put into "that course." But I was so excited! I wanted to teach this course because I was so interested in it. I was like, finally, I get an interesting challenge, and I prepared for this course more than I've prepared for any other course that I've taught. And it ended up being brutal. (Sarah, 01/19/11)

Unfortunately, this teacher had a negative experience teaching ACS due to discipline issues. The teacher was a "rare occurrence," coming forward and offering to teach a course that all other teachers did not dare touch. Sadly, Sarah's experience only consolidated the staff room teacher perceptions of ACS as the "worst course to teach." Another teacher experienced a similar situation, except it was MST that was positioned as the unwanted class, provoking heated arguments and even, rivalries.

> Yeah you know what, I haven't heard it, because of the hue of my own skin, there's certain conversations that I'm not privy to in terms of ACS. But for MST, I have overheard teachers being very disappointed and I also know that the school I'm at now, this time last spring, there was an all-out war in the department around scheduling for the next year and who got the MST course. There were people who stood up blatantly and who had a real problem with teaching the course, just because they identified it as being the worst course in the school, the worst kids in the school. Not because they didn't believe in the concepts, it was more like, "just because I'm at

the bottom of the totem pole you're just throwing this on me." (Robert, 01/22/11)

The argument was eventually settled when a young teacher, not from the same department, asked to teach the MST courses. According to the teachers interviewed, new teachers often end up teaching ACS and MST. While the situation ended positively for the new teacher who was excited with their courses, there was no subsequent discussion about the attitudes held in the department (Robert, 01/22/11). Also at issue was race. White staff appeared wary to critique a course on African history in front of someone who is Black, yet as decoy, they were willing to "dig into" the First Nations course (Robert, 01/22/11). These underlying tensions surrounding race will be further discussed later in the chapter.

A teacher's academic background or ability became secondary to finding someone who was willing. When the participants were asked who should be teaching ACS or MST, there were differing opinions ranging from a teacher who cares about equality and social justice, to a teacher who is of a specific (racial) background for MST or ACS.

> I think that I was passionate and tried my damndest, but I don't think I was qualified to teach it at all. I think it should be somebody, I think it could only help if you're African Nova Scotian…it's like if you can bring so many of your own experiences to the table…like if you're talking about White privilege, and you can tell stories about your experiences, then you can really relate to kids on that level. So there's a certain level of understanding it, that I could never understand. (Sarah, 01/19/11)

Sarah believed that she was not, in fact qualified to teach ACS, but it was mostly due to their academic background, as she was not specialized to teach social studies. Interestingly enough, Sarah stated that a teacher did not necessarily have to be Mi'kmaw or African Nova Scotian, but having that life experience relationship to the course material, and to the students, is an asset.

The conversation with J.P. focused on teacher ability, rather than additional factors that often influence the hiring of new teachers, such as coaching expertise, race, sexual orientation, or connections to administrators (01/31/11).

J.P. stated that in order to teach ACS or MST, the teacher needs to be both "someone who's here to learn about these topics and they need to be good at their job" (01/31/11). Conversely, this discussion focused more on teacher ability in terms of effort and understanding the topics over external features or identifiers.

Robert's discussion on teacher selection for ACS or MST centered on an educator who would take up issues of power and privilege in the classroom, using course content:

> You could get someone who cares about social justice issues, which really is a jargon term meaning that you believe in equality, and that you do unto others as you'd have done to yourself. So, if you have a person like that, then they could be brand new. They could be 21 years old, or they could be 61 years old. They could be female, or they could be male. They could be Black, they could be White, they could be East Indian, or they could be Mi'kmaw; it really doesn't matter about the externals. It matter how they feel about the course, and how much they connect to the concepts around the courageous conversations around the power dynamics that have existed throughout history that are obvious – that for some reason – we aren't allowed to talk about. Those are the teachers we need to have teaching it. (Robert, 01/22/11)

This teacher very passionately believed that ACS and MST need teachers who want to be there, who are committed to the objectives of the course, and who will "courageously" discuss the very difficult concepts of power and privilege in the classroom. These sentiments are similar to Pinar's (2004) "complicated conversations", where the curriculum content should be used "as an opportunity for ourselves and our students, as citizens, as ethical and spiritual persons…toward the realization of our private-and-public ideals and dreams" (p.187). Content, alone, is not enough.

Personal life experience with the concepts was not an issue. The most important facet of an ACS or MST teacher should not be their external features, but belief in the course as a vehicle for change. Students need to be enrolled because they are interested, and teachers hired based on willingness and

qualifications in order for the content to become a "complicated conversation" in the classroom.

Curriculum: Resources, Content, Making Connections

> "Everything gets so watered down until it's completely
> unrecognizable…what we're doing is perpetuating racism, and I'm not
> comfortable with that" (J.P., 01/31/11).

In terms of implementation and development, the ACS and MST courses are new. Their implementation drafts from 2002 have been in practice for less than ten years, yet teachers question the quality and availability of resources and, in general, the effort being invested to keep the content meaningful and current. Concepts of power and privilege in MST and ACS need in real life examples found in media and through communication with communities, however, teachers need to look for those resources and make the connections themselves (J.P., 01/31/11).

The conversations centering on curriculum diverged into three distinct threads: resources, content, and implications. The first section will focus on curriculum resources, with the following sections dedicated to curriculum content and implications. All three teachers believed that most of the course content is very well-written, and has the potential to be taught at a high level, however, issues lie in the gap between theory and practice, such as availability of resources to effectively teach the courses. The distance between theory and practice for ACS and MST leads to broader issues of implementation.

Resources

Teachers need to be proactive to get resources for ACS and MST. There are resources, and there is funding, but the teacher is responsible for acquiring this material (Sarah, 01/19/11). Some of the issues with resources is time; teachers do not often have a lot of time to track down specific resources, so what has been used before by previous teachers can be recycled and used again, even if the resource is low quality or out of date. Another issue is having legitimate contacts

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for resources. For? Sarah, a new teacher who might not have many connections, the process of contacting the Department of Education can seem daunting. Most of the issues with resources in both MST and ACS surround the amount of teachers who are proactive and actually try to access these resources:

> [The Dept of Education division responsible for African resources] does have quite a variety of resources available to take on ACS…I don't know how many people access these things though. But they are there. Even when it comes to resources, there are a lot of class sets of books, or videos, etc. that are available, but I think you have to be a little more proactive with the African Canadian services division to get those things. (Robert, 01/22/11)

MST teachers have reported the same issue with locating resources, particularly in relation to creating material that connects with the curriculum. A teacher must be dedicated to developing their course material in order to find the resources needed:

> Teachers have to be really proactive in getting things. Stuff provided is usually such low quality that no one would really want to use it. So for example, we have to branch out and look for resources and expand the curriculum. There's nowhere in the curriculum that says, that I know, a good analogy of residential schools from Canada is in Australia, here's a movie you can use. To make those connections we had to do it ourselves. So we've found these things and made it our own. And for background materials we've had to go all over the place, mostly movies and university texts. (J.P., 01/31/11)

Teachers who care about the course material, and who have a long-term goal for the course, like the teacher above, have emphasized development, both to stay current with events pertaining to Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities, and to create a larger pool of resources from which to draw. This, however, was not mandated; these educators care about the course and want it to improve. One resource that all teachers named was the course textbook. For the ACS teachers, the new textbook was too advanced for the class she had: "The

textbook is what I would like to call 'ideal world', but then there is reality"
(Sarah, 01/19/11). The ACS text, which was put into classrooms for the 2009-
2010 school year, is an advanced text that might not be useful for some groups of
students. One teacher explained that the text was a very good resource for an
advanced history course, but for the class they taught, "only about three kids
could have gotten something out of that book. So I was constantly trying new
ways to teach the material without using the book" (Sarah, 01/19/11).

For MST, a textbook was released but was not adopted by schools as a
primary text. MST teachers were left to research their own materials, which
remained difficult to find, leaving the course open to various interpretations. As
one teacher provided, "I'm a teacher, and not a curriculum consultant. If they
want me to develop curriculum resources that would be great, but I can't do both
at the same time" (J.P., 01/31/11).

Content

The content to be covered in MST and ACS was also discussed. All
teachers found that the curriculum accounts for a vast amount of historical time in
one course. One teacher explained, "these courses were developed before we
switched to a semester system, so in a sense, the curriculum document and the
courses in practice have never matched up" (J.P., 01/31/11). The semester is five
months, during which ACS is supposed to teach from ancient Africa to
contemporary African and Canadian societies. Likewise, the MST timeline
focuses on pre-colonized Canada up to and including contemporary issues. The
teachers then discussed what parts of the course generally are not taught because
of the short time frame, in what one teacher describes as "ideal world versus real
world":

> The curriculum guide is very closely related to the book...and it's lined up
> with my big beautiful teacher's guide, but that is what I would call "ideal
> world," and then there's reality. Well I think that the amount of content for
> one course is unreasonable, and I think they need to focus in, instead of the
> broad swipe, and I think that there should be more courses. So I think you
> should definitely teach…early Africa? I did it because I had to, but come

on, you're supposed to relate to kids, you're supposed to go where they are, and bring them where you want them to be. How can you start a course saying, this is the first human, and make a connection to their daily lives? (Sarah, 01/19/11)

Both ACS teachers discussed how, from a content perspective, there could be two courses made out of the single ACS curriculum: one course focusing on Ancient African civilizations to slavery, and one from slavery onward, with the first being a prerequisite for the second. The difference between the two teacher's perspectives related to the background information on Africa.

Robert thought the historical significance of Africa was a pivotal part of the course, while the second teacher, Sarah, thought it was too difficult to reach the students from such a broad perspective. The reasoning for including an historical understanding of Africa, according to this Robert, was to dispel myths and stereotypes and "replace those with facts and truths…to give the African Nova Scotian students a sense of pride about where they came from, and to question of course, what the hell were the Europeans thinking?" (01/22/11). Robert added, "Africa is a place of beauty, of waterfalls, and mountains and natural resources, and all the kids know is that people are starving, have AIDS, and have flies on their eyes, and that's not right. Africa is beautiful" (01/22/11). These two examples outline some of the difficulties teaching a high school course with a large amount of content to cover, in a short timeframe. The question then, is how do teachers decide which topics to cover, if there is not time to cover all the material?

All three participants agreed that contemporary issues like systemic and institutional racism, and their links with a violent colonial past, are often skipped. Several reasons for missing the most important content in the course were given, including: time, teacher comfort and qualifications, and student ability levels. If there was an enlarged focus on the historical aspects of social injustice, the students could grasp past events, but might not make the necessary connections to contemporary realities faced by people from Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities. J.P. in particular, along with colleagues who also taught MST,

decided to sit down together and completely change the way the course was being taught, from a linear approach to a thematic approach (01/31/11). This very positive step for curriculum development had not been instructed by administrators, but was initiated by the teachers because the course delivery was not connecting with the students:

> Before we used to think we had to cover everything to get these points (like justice, sovereignty, and culture) across, but now we're thinking differently. So I don't think we have any choice, I think we really have to do a good job picking topics that the kids are interested in and that we know about… In general, a lot more thought should be putting into how people are implementing curriculum. I'd really like to see some follow-up. (J.P., 01/31/11)

The teachers interviewed had observed that most teachers often stick with topics they are most comfortable with, which leads to what two of the educators called "watering down of the course." In general, meaning is lost, and topics do not get the full justice they deserve. Important knowledge can be misconstrued, and perpetuate some of the stereotypes it was created to dispel. For example, one ACS teacher said that they had to skip through large sections of history in order to cover ancient Africa to the civil rights movement:

> I skipped. I went from slavery, and then to emancipation, and then I had to go vroom…civil rights! So I had to jump one hundred years, to say, "and one hundred years later during civil rights there's still a lot of bad things going on." (Sarah, 01/19/11)

Sarah was aware that they could not cover all the topics in the given amount of time, so they chose what they considered the "most important" aspects of the course. The subjective nature of choosing topics is very problematic for courses like ACS and MST. What one teacher would consider "important," another might not find important. There has not been any follow-up from the Department of Education to observe what is happening in the classrooms.

Making Connections

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Teachers who might be new, unaware of the assumptions they bring into the classroom, and not have the proper academic background, could potentially teach the course without understanding the effects it can have on students, school culture, and the communities they serve.

> That's very scary. That's not right. That's what's scary and some teachers don't know what they're talking about because they put anyone who is somewhat willing in MST. Everything gets so watered down until it's completely unrecognizable…what we're doing is perpetuating racism, and I'm not comfortable with that. (J.P., 01/31/11)

The "watering-down" of content was an important comment in relation to the curriculum, and for broader implications. Bypassing or overlooking social justice issues in MST and ACS dilutes the curriculum to a course in "food, dancing, and having fun…this is safe," as Robert pointed out, "then it's a really shallow view of peoples' culture" (01/22/11). Both Robert and J.P. expanded on the ramifications of the "watering down" of curriculum, possibly leading to misperceptions about First Nations issues in Canada, and "perpetuat[ing] racism," as J.P. has stated. The three participants discussed racism at length, in both its blatant and institutional (or more covert) manifestations in the school system. One such manifestation is the juxtaposition of MST and ACS to the CHS and International Baccalaureate stream, which will be covered under the next section.

One of the deeper curricular issues pertaining to the reality of MST and ACS is the flexibility to cover certain topics and largely ignore others. As described by Robert above, talking about material culture is "safe" for teachers, but is a trivial perception of culture. In both ACS and MST curriculum documents, culture is only one of several larger themes to be covered. Culture also happens to be one of the topics teachers will find "safe" to stick to, instead of delving into more difficult issues of land rights, residential schooling, or racism (J.P., 01/31/11).

A very interesting point is made about "embarrassing students": discussions on slavery, White privilege, and brutality are not easy concepts to bring up in a classroom, but they are necessary aspects of MST and ACS for

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students to understand, if they are to understand the overall course objectives. Without an understanding of (Eurocentric) power and privilege, other parts of the curriculum remain dislocated. Residential schooling, treaties, slavery, and different forms of racism, need historical contextualization and connections made to present social conditions. One teacher described the effect of "skipping" certain parts of the curriculum:

> You skip over the difficult parts and it trivializes the course. So once again you're watering it down because of the level of students, you're watering it down because you really don't understand or care about the course, you're watering it down the most important parts because they're too controversial, especially in the social justice course – and you lose the point of the course. (Robert, 01/22/11)

What is meant by the frequent use of "watering down"? In the context of the conversation, Robert expanded on this comment by explaining that if meaning is on three levels (curriculum, resources, and student ability), in the end the course will not resemble its original intent. The skill level of students in the course, and who is chosen to teach it, combines with the effect of skipping sections of curriculum, leading to its trivialization. The complexity of implementation issues raises larger questions: how is curriculum a part of a larger ordering of knowledge? How are the courses and materials situated in social studies departments? Is there a hierarchy of knowledge, and does the convergence of all the considered implementation issues perpetuate systemic racism?

Hierarchy/Knowledge

> The great irony of this, the irony, and the great sadness is that you're trying to get students to realize that the Europeans are not the greatest on the Earth, but the way the course is set up in real life, it almost does the course worse. (Robert, 01/22/11)

A larger discussion of knowledge emerged from the conversations. Implementation issues with ACS and MST reaches beyond teachers, students,

guidance, perceptions, and curriculum. When all are taken into consideration, MST and ACS become positioned in a social studies hierarchy, which values some course knowledge above others.

Said (1979) critiques the perception of European knowledge as being more valid, intellectual, and culturally superior to "Other" (non-European) knowledges, which he coined "Orientalism." The maintenance of this perception is "by no means direct…but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power" (Said, 1979, p.12). The perception of CHS as being the most advanced course out of the three options has created a hierarchy of knowledge, where Eurocentric perspectives are resituated as center, or neutral. Similar to the concept of knowledge hierarchy is "positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient, without ever losing him the relative upper hand" (Said, 1979, p.7). Positional superiority is negotiated through various uses of power, seen in the implementation of CHS, MST, ACS, and the International Baccalaureate Program. Said's Orientalism allows for a larger theoretical discussion of positional superiority, however, Goodson's[4] (1993) study of curricular hierarchies in Schools and Curriculum Change, speaks directly to realities in the school system.

Goodson's (1993) work encompasses cases from various schools, across academic departments, over decades, that demonstrate the existence of hierarchies within (and across) disciplines. The hierarchies found in the school system come from perceptions of the relative value of course objectives (Goodson, 1993, p.24). The valuing of math, for example, over geology, shows the relationship between the course material and its perceived worth; the more hands-on, or practical the outcomes, the lower it was in the hierarchy (Goodson, 1993, p.34). Connecting to MST, ACS, and CHS, to begin there is an aspect of positional superiority working in favor of the Eurocentric based CHS course to create a distance from MST and ACS. As discussed, the course materials are derived from academically valued

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[4]Goodson's work was added after revisions, due to suggestions from external examiner Dr. Michael Corbett.

subject matter concerning European expansion. Secondly, CHS has few "hands-on" components, unlike MST, which encourages art and building projects, as an integral aspect of the course. A central tenant in MST is to learn by doing, and according to Goodson this is not viewed as valuable, lending to the belief that "the so-called 'academic' subjects, are suitable for the 'able' students whilst other subjects are not" (Goodson, 1993, p.31).

Eurocentric Curriculum

One criticism of ACS and MST has been that the resources provided are not adequate; in particular, that the resources have been created from a Eurocentric perspective. Amistad is one specific example, in which the heroes are wrongly portrayed: "the heroes are the White lawyers, rather than the Black Africans who were supposed to be the heroes. You know when you get your own story told by someone else, they often make themselves the hero" (Robert, 1/22/11).

At the level of curriculum, there have been many criticisms surrounding the language used in both the ACS and MST documents, particularly for their latent meanings. An example of Eurocentrism in the MST curriculum is found in the information on how people came to North America. From a Mi'kmaq perspective, people have always lived on this land, but from a Eurocentric, post-Enlightenment perspective, this is not true. J.P. added that the CHS curriculum mythologizes the Mi'kmaq perspective from the beginning of the course, by situating Indigenous knowledge as 'different', unscientific, and therefore not rational (See: Chapter 4). Smith (2006) describes the process of delegitimizing Indigenous knowledge as a pivotal aspect in "establishing the positional superiority of Western knowledge" (p.59). Through positing Indigenous knowledge as backwards, unscientific, and irrational, Western knowledge remains modern, rational, and valid (Smith, 2006). This process of delegitimizing can be seen through the naming of the courses.

Course Names

Questions arose when discussing the names of the social studies courses. Why are two of the courses considered "studies" courses (ACS, MST), and one a "history" (CHS) course? Generally, "studies" credits are considered non-university preparatory in this system, and lower on the stratified end of courses (Sarah, 01/19/11). Why are CHS and ACS grade eleven credits, while MST is only a grade ten credit? There is no reasoning behind MST as a grade ten credit, according to one teacher who "has been asking this exact question for three years, and never have been given an answer" (J.P., 01/31/11). MST, as a grade ten credit, automatically makes it a non-university credit. Since universities do not look at students' grade ten marks for admission, "many students who are bound for university do not want to have it on their transcript, because they think it looks bad, or they just don't take it at all" (Sarah, 01/19/11). The simple naming of ACS and MST as "studies" courses and not as "history" courses creates a hierarchy, whereby CHS is situated as dominant, and with MST and ACS as "other" or periphery courses. When asked about the course names, one teacher further explained the sense of hierarchy created, stemming from a simple act of naming:

> You might not have meant it consciously, but you named it 'Canadian History'…The students who end up taking CHS are usually higher up on the socioeconomic ladder, more students of European descent, and they feel as though that course is higher. It may come from the naming of it Mi'kmaw studies, you know, likewise why wouldn't they just drop that name to studies, you know, so that they're standard. So obviously, whether it's conscious or subconscious, there's an effort to separate those three history courses. What is so ironic is that ACS and MST are Canadian History. (Robert, 01/22/11)

The naming of the courses is politically significant, as CHS is legitimized as the most appealing for higher skilled students to take. Course names contribute to the positional superiority of European knowledge as central, in effect displacing ACS and MST as peripheral. While curriculum developers might not have intended these results, a hierarchy of knowledge has been created in social studies departments, which needs revisiting.

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International Baccalaureate Program

In 2005, the Department of Education in Nova Scotia started the process of implementing the highly acclaimed International Baccalaureate (IB) program into several high schools (Sarah, 01/19/11). This program runs a separate, internationally developed curriculum, and students who graduate from this program are considered the highest achievers who are the most prepared for university (J.P., 01/31/11). Teachers receive extra training in order to teach in IB, and the course curriculum is strictly adhered to.

Sarah criticized the IB program in her school as "getting all the resources and the best teachers and students," while J.P. criticized the IB history curriculum as being "blatantly Eurocentric and colonial." In the second critique, J.P. pointed out that the topics covered in the IB history classes were 90% based on European relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with very little time, if any, focused outside of European history. A question centering on the intention of the Province for the instatement of the IB program in terms of future directions in education, led to a discussion of leadership:

> There are potentially explosive situations with Native Canadians building due to social issues, long histories of genocide and blatant racism, and dire poverty. So, when the streets are filled with people striking, what are our IB educated leaders going to do? Put them in jail? Good, we'll have even more jails, with even more Natives in them. (J.P., 01/31/11)

If the IB program is then viewed as the "best" education a student in Nova Scotia can have, how does its incorporation into the Public School Program situate the knowledge learned in MST and ACS? In this teacher's perspective, "it pushes these courses to the bottom of the pile and makes it seem unimportant, not valued, and trivial" (J.P., 01/31/11), relating to both Said's (1979) and Smith's (2006) discussions of positioning Eurocentric knowledge as 'center.' The contrast between IB and MST, ACS is the issue. The incorporation of IB into mainstream schooling has created a two-tiered system of students and teachers as well. Educators in the IB program do not have a choice for professional development,

as they are mandated to take IB professional development over other course options.

> And it's interesting and a shame that when there's a really good PD day being put on for MST, and a teacher that also teachers IB has to go to the IB day inservice, when we have really special experts coming in to talk to us about Mi'kmaq culture. This was put on as a provincial and very special seminar, and there were only twelve people there. Almost every high school has MST. (J.P, 01/31/11)

Important to note is the number of teachers who attended this seminar versus the number of MST teachers in the province. If teacher development is only necessary for some programs or courses, how do teachers become more educated, connect with other educators, or implement positive changes? There were many questions left unanswered in the discussions of IB and hierarchy in social studies courses, which need further investigation.

Division of Students

The conversations then focused on the division of students in ACS and MST. All three teachers discussed this topic at length, based on their experience and observations. One teacher described the division of students as such: "first it's IB, then it's Canadian History, then if you're White you take White history and if you're Black you take Black history. I think that's the way it seems to be" (Sarah, 01/19/11). A second school has the same student perception of who should take MST and ACS: "it's seen that if you're Black you take ACS, and if you're Native, or White and not smart, you take MST. In reality it shouldn't be like that at all" (J.P, 01/31/11). In yet another school a similar dynamic is observed:

> What you need is a mix of people. But you don't get it! The high level kids in this unwritten kind of code, they know that CHS is for the smart white kids, and they know what MST is, and they know what ACS is, it's for the black kids. And MST in this area, there isn't a huge population of Mi'kmaq students, so MST ends up being for the lower socioeconomic white kids. (Robert, 01/22/11)

Perpetuation of negative attitudes toward MST and ACS are compounded in a social studies program that is stratified with an elite group of students and teachers studying Eurocentric perspectives, and an "Other" group of underclass students studying Afrocentric and Indigenous perspectives.

Racism

The 'unwritten code' steers the course selection for students, teacher hiring processes, and general perceptions of MST and ACS. In turn, these implementation issues are perpetuated, and beliefs about the courses become reified. When asked who should be in these courses, the participants believed that students would benefit from having all three courses, and the way students are divided only creates more racial issues:

> You know saying that more people who are Black need to take Black history is like saying that more women need to take feminist courses. The people who need to take feminist courses are men. So let's put it this way. The students who are higher socioeconomic status, who are the smartest students, who are European descent, they need to be the ones who are in these courses. And even in that case I think guidance steers those kids away from those courses. We're supposed to be a mosaic or whatever you want to call it, Europeans still believe this place is theirs. It's sad. (Robert, 01/22/11)

Since power and privilege are pivotal points in MST and ACS, this teacher believes that White students from affluent backgrounds are the students who should be learning about the privilege they have accrued over history by virtue of the colour of their skin. This is not to say that African Nova Scotian students would not benefit from ACS or MST, but the potential for change needs come from a balancing of power, which starts by situating ACS and MST knowledge as valuable, not as periphery or "other."

Discussion

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Several threads emerging from the conversations conduce to a complex understanding of the multiple issues presented in the analysis. Implementation problems for ACS, MST, and CHS are highlighted in this section through the significant use of the words "watering down" and "unscathed."

"Watering down"

The comment "watering down" was found eight times across the two of the interviews. The repetition is significant, and questions how the MST and ACS curriculum documents are being used in practice. The teachers' comments connected the 'watering down' of curriculum content with the multiple issues of student ability, teacher hiring and qualifications, resources, and perceptions of ACS and MST. Student enrollment and ability fronted the discussion of curriculum. Higher numbers of students needing adaptations and IPP's were of concern for the teachers. Having a higher number of students needing extra help lead the teachers to "skip" or "leave out" certain sections of the curriculum, therefore diluting the content due to student ability and connected behavioural issues (Sarah, 01/19/11; Robert, 01/22/11; J.P., 01/31/11).

To fully understand the content of the curriculum in MST and ACS, appropriate resources are necessary for students' understanding. The resources for ACS are "too advanced" for most of the students enrolled in the course, which further leads to skipping content in order to facilitate lessons that are appropriate for the level of students in the class (Sarah, 01/19/11; J.P., 01/31/11). A sustained effort for resource development needs to be in place, to keep the information current and attainable for teachers. Without resources that are both appropriate for the level of students, and within reasonable reach of teachers, the "picking over" of content weakens the possible impact the courses can have on students (Robert, 01/22/11).

The impact of teacher hiring practices also affected the use of curriculum in practice. Teachers who were not qualified in the area of social studies, and specifically in antiracist praxis, often skip over "areas of contention" dealing with power and privilege due to their lack of knowledge, and "comfort" with the topics (Robert, 01/22/11). The lack of knowledge and 'comfort' with the materials also

leads to the weakening of the course content. Staying with what is "safe" for both the teachers and the students was a large concern in the discussions. By keeping with what is safe, students are not forced to interrogate privilege, whether it is related to their own lives, or in a broader context. "Safe" topics do not lead to what Pinar (2004) defines as "complicated conversations," where students connect to the curriculum as part of their life, and not as a separate, inanimate entity.

Perceptions of ACS and MST as "weak," "low-level" courses are perpetuated by the above factors, all of which lead to the 'watering down' of course content, which then becomes "self-fulfilling" (Robert, 01/22/11, J.P., 01/31/11). The self-perpetuated cycle of negative perceptions of ACS and MST further leads to larger issues centering on the ordering of knowledge in social studies departments.

"Unscathed"

While only one educator used the term "unscathed," the word relates back to themes of student maturity, social justice education, power and privilege, and the "positional superiority" of Eurocentric content in the school system (Said, 1979).

In order for students to "properly deal with" content from a social justice perspective in MST and ACS, teachers agreed that a certain level of maturity was necessary (Robert, 01/22/11). Being 'unscathed' meant to examine power and privilege without being left overwhelmed with feelings of guilt and shame as a White student, or on the other hand feeling attacked and belittled as a non-White student. Maturity, in the context of the interviews, was considered an ability to be open to other points of view, which reflects the main philosophies of MST and ACS curriculum.

From a broader perspective, for the ACS and MST course content to remain "unscathed," there needs to be a greater respect for these courses on many levels. The information included in the ACS and MST documents needs to be resituated within the realm of social studies courses as valid and legitimate forms of knowledge. Robert noted, "there has been an effort to separate these courses"

(01/22/11). Considering the inclusion of IB in 2005, only three years after the implementation of ACS and MST, one must question the timing of the Eurocentric curriculum. Whether intentional or not, the IB curriculum re-centered CHS as legitimate and valuable knowledge, while pushing MST and ACS back to the periphery. In this sense, ACS and MST are damaged, although not beyond reprieve.

Conversation and reflection is necessary to change the way ACS and MST are being implemented. Currently, the practices are "perpetuating racism", in its institutional and systemic forms (J.P., 01/31/11). However, as Pinar (2004) notes, "alterity structures and animates complicated conversation" (p. 188). At the level of administrators, teachers, and guidance, there needs to be an effort for educating about the covert and blatant effects implementation processes are having on the courses, the knowledge and communities they represent.

Conclusions

All teachers agreed that the layers of implementation issues from students, teachers, guidance, hierarchy, curriculum and resources, while mostly unintentional, point to deeply embedded institutional racism being perpetuated by a system that is not reflecting on its practices. The uncritical implementation of ACS and MST furthers racial and class based divides in Nova Scotian schools, and according to two of the teachers, in some schools, racial tensions are already high. One teacher described the implementation practices as being "disrespectful to the curriculum document, the community, and the knowledge from the people" (Sarah, 01/19/11).

Change needs to occur on many levels. Although there are many levels to the issue of implementation, change can take place on each of these levels. The intention for the creation of MST and ACS is clearly stated in the documents. However, this needs to be revisited by the Department of Education to ensure the original intentions are being respectfully followed.

It has to be a school-wide effort to legitimize these programs, and there's a certain amount of learning that has to be done by admin, and guidance,

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teachers, around the concepts of power and privilege cause most, staff don't believe that those courses are valid. (Robert, 01/22/11)

Various elements of implementation come together to give a broader perspective of the construction knowledge and the importance of reflection. The danger in these implementation problems lies in the re-creation of power and privilege through the school system; the school becomes a microcosm for larger societal injustices. The division of students along racial lines, teacher and student perceptions, misinformed guidance counselors, Eurocentric curriculum and resources, and general lack of critical understanding of the lasting colonial effects in Canada perpetuates institutional racism. A "complicated conversation" must take place between various people in the system: teachers, guidance, administrators, and curriculum developers, need to reassess their intentions and goals for these course in order to see the broader issues faced by the problematic implementation of ACS, CHS, and MST (Pinar, 2004).

The three educators interviewed, from three different schools, all had similar experiences with the implementation of ACS and MST. Their knowledge and experience as highly respected educators in Nova Scotia is apparent in their in-depth discussions, and passion about the subject, their schools, and their students was ever-present. As stated, one remaining implementation question needing clarification is the process is at the departmental (or provincial) level: what is the Department of Education's intent or philosophy for ACS, MST, and how can these courses be improved? The answer to this question would provide a direction for future improvements, resource allocation, teacher and guidance training, in order to facilitate change.

Conclusion

"There in the interstices, the spaces where the pieces don't quite meet, is where the light comes through" (Grumet, 1981, p.122, as cited in Strong-Wilson, 2008, p.63).

This thesis attempted to examine the implementation issues of social studies curriculum in Nova Scotia. Each chapter addressed an area of concern that was central to the research questions, and attempted to link the theoretical and practical realms in their complexity. The analyses from the three methods used, narrative, CDA, and interviews, displayed inextricable connections through analyses.

The critical discourse analysis attended to the specific language use of the intended objectives in the MST, ACS, and CHS curricula. Through the analysis of language, and highly politicized concepts such as colonialism, racism, and globalization, I argued that CHS was the least able to articulate social justice issues in Canada. MST was neutral in its use of politicized language, and ACS was advanced in the area of social justice, centering on themes of power and privilege. In terms of fostering critical awareness of historical injustice and its links to contemporary realities, ACS had the strongest colonial critique, followed by MST, and lastly CHS with little to no discussion of colonial impacts.

Data collected from the teacher interviews pertained to the research question concerning the implementation of ACS and MST: how have the MST and ACS courses been implemented in the school system, and have the implementation procedures accurately reflected the objectives as articulated in the curriculum documents? The teacher conversations highlighted issues with implementation, which included student enrolment, guidance, teacher hiring and training/qualifications, negative perceptions, and positioning of knowledge. It was shown that the curriculum objectives of ACS and MST were not being upheld, due to the implementation issues. Through teacher interviews and narrative, it was demonstrated that educators connect to curricula, and create meaning through the

dialectical process of practice, discussion, and reflection. From this dialectic process, the questions posed by the teachers led to a larger discussion of implementation procedures, the inequities that exist in the social studies courses, and methods for change.

The three independent approaches used in the study were mutually reinforcing. Themes of race and class, and their deeply embedded roots in the school system, emerged from the narratives. The themes of race and class are echoed in the critical discourse and interview analyses chapters. It was proven that language use varied across the three curriculum documents, particularly through politicized words such as 'colonialism', 'racism', and 'globalization'. Language use across the curriculum documents linked to the underlying philosophies of the course, and created a distance between the three politically. ACS provided an interrogation of colonial remnants in Canadian society through educational, political, and social evidence. MST discussed the need for Mi'kmaq peoples to connect to traditional knowledge, and invited non-Native students to learn from this worldview. CHS focused on the economic expansion of Europe, and asked what Canada's role should be in an increasingly global economy.

Narrative was necessary to situate the critical discourse analysis and interview analysis by invoking themes of race and class, which ran parallel across the chapters. CDA provided a background for the interview analysis, and together presented a picture that described both the theoretical and practical implications for current implementation problems faced. Each method was of equal importance, and to omit one piece would be to deny vital aspects of the larger story. The analyses proved that implementation issues of ACS and MST run deeper than student enrolment and word use. When looking at the broader context of the study, the total analysis reflects a deeply stratified education system, specifically in terms of race and class. The curriculum documents, created to mend historical injustice for people of African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq descent, are being implemented in such a way that is allowing injustice to reoccur.

Limitations

Since I interviewed three participants, I will only have information from a small sample of people who are teaching ACS and MST. Also, when doing a critical discourse analysis of the curriculum documents, I did not critically examine every outcome in the documents but only particular sections, which is consistent with a CDA approach.

Implications of the Study

I hope that my study will raise awareness of issues that arise in the teaching of courses implemented for social justice reasons. The study also holds implications for educators working in administration and as guidance counsellors. Social studies courses, developed through hard-fought battles and community rallying, should not be treated in the same manner as math or science courses that do not have similar historical significance. Attention to resources, teacher training, and class size should be a high priority. A close connection between the objectives of the course, the original philosophies and theoretical backgrounds needs to stay within the framework of what is being taught and why; this information cannot be lost in the multiple interpretations of various teachers over time.

From the perspective of teacher narrative and experience, I believe that this information can bring forth other stories of teachers who have had similar experiences in their own careers that can further add to the discussion. The way in which social studies and humanities courses are taught in high schools is of particular interest, due to the nature of the information being presented; teachers have a very strong influence in how certain ideas, groups, cultures, and knowledges are portrayed in their classrooms. This portrayal can become the difference between a course that is challenging, enlightening, and fighting the status quo, or one that further stereotypes, silences, and misrepresents information.

Future Directions

The study raises the question of why we learn what we are learning, from a very broad perspective, and on a smaller scale it asks how teachers make meaning out of the information they are given to impart to students. The link

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between the two is important. The way teachers make meaning out of curriculum is part of how information is treated in the classroom, with or without passion and respect, which ultimately defines how students interpret what they are learning. I am currently connecting with colleagues to find avenues to disseminate the findings of this study, and would like to further investigate the research questions at the level of policy and government levels. Also, the ways in which other provinces are incorporating inclusive curriculum is a direction for comparative analysis in a future study.

Recommendations

The teacher interviews and curricula analyses point to several recommendations to mend ACS and MST implementation issues, through resources, teacher learning/training, and conversation. There needs to be adequate, appropriate, and available resources for both ACS and MST. Secondly, there should be a focus to properly train teachers in anti-racism education and/or Indigenous knowledge before they teach ACS and MST.

Mandatory training for guidance, administration, and teachers on issues pertaining to postcolonial and anti-racism theory, starting from the Bachelor of Education level would open more teachers' eyes to broader issues in the school system. Guidance and administration should be more informed and prepared to deal with direct and indirect streaming to prevent the watering down of courses.

At the board and departmental level, hierarchy seriously needs to be evaluated, both in structural, policy, and means of evaluating courses. The discrepancy between curriculum as written, and the way courses are being implemented 'on the ground' needs further study in social studies. The relatively low-level of importance placed on social studies in general should be evaluated: why do students need only one of the courses, and not two, or all?

Direct conversations between teachers, administrators, and guidance should discuss how implementation procedures are impacting student learning, and having larger implications for the content in the ACS and MST documents. There needs to be a greater amount of transparency in teacher hiring practices, and student enrollment. What rationale can be given for the large disparities between

the three courses? This question must be asked to guidance and administration in particular, but teachers, staff, students, and community members. The role of the International Baccalaureate program in the public system, and possible effect on locally developed curriculum (ACS and MST) needs to be addressed in further studies.

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Appendix A – Letter of consent

McGill

Faculty of Education   Faculté des sciences de l'éducation
McGill University   Université McGill
3700 McTavish Street   3700, rue McTavish
Montreal, QC, Canada H3A 1Y2   Montréal, PQ, Canada H3A 1Y2

Dear Participant,

I am a Master's student in the Department of Integrated Studies in the Faculty of
Education at McGill University. I am inviting you to participate in my study, and
would appreciate your input to help me carry out my research. If you agree to
participate, the research will consist of one semi-structured interview, and one
follow-up interview at a later date. The purpose of this interview is for me to gain
an understanding of how teachers make meaning out of social studies curricula,
and in turn how courses are implemented because of the created meaning.

I will give you the interview questions before the interview session to allow you
to think about the topics beforehand. You have the right to refuse any question
that you are not comfortable answering. In our follow-up interview, you will have
the chance to add, clarify, or retract any information from the first session. The
length of the interviews will be dependant upon the length of discussion,
determined by your level of participation. Your permission is necessary to audio
tape the interviews, which will then be transcribed. The audio recording will be
used solely for the purpose of transcription. I will be the only person to have
access to this data, which will be kept on a password-protected external hard
drive.

Your name, school name, or school board name will not be used in the publication
of this document, and any information you do not want included in my final
analysis will be omitted. This research will be disseminated through the process of
thesis publication, with the potential of future presentations and publications.
Participants' names, and other identifying information will be kept confidential in
any subsequent use and dissemination of this study. Risks associated with your
participation are of a political nature; critiquing the public school program and its
issues in implementing socially equitable courses can be detrimental to your
public image or possibly cause issues within the administration.
Due to this risk, all information will be completely confidential, and pseudonyms
will be used. The anticipated value to participate in this research is to contribute to
a growing body of knowledge, which questions the intentions and procedures

educational institutions (uncritically) use when implementing courses developed to promote change.

Your participation will be completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time. Thank you for your cooperation and interest.

I have discussed with (participant's name) the above procedures, explicitly pointing out potential risks or discomforts. I have asked whether any questions remain and have answered these questions to the best of my ability.

_____   _____
Date   Pamela Rogers, McGill University

The nature and purpose of this research has been satisfactorily explained to me and I agree to become a participant in this study. I am willing to be audio taped and for this information to be analyzed. I understand that I am free to discontinue participation at any time if I so choose and that the investigator will gladly answer my questions during the course of the research.

_____   _____
Date   Participant's Signature

If you have any questions concerning my research please contact me, or my supervisor, Dr. Teresa Strong-Wilson. If there are concerns with the nature of this study, Lynda McNeil, Ethics Officer at the Research Ethics Board should be contacted (514) 398-6831.

Pamela Rogers   Dr. Teresa-Strong Wilson
(902) 233-4979   (514) 398-4170
pamela.rogers@mail.mcgill.ca   teresa.strong-wilson@mcgill.ca

Appendix B – Interview Guide

Warm-up
How many years have you been teaching?
Why did you start teaching?
What subjects are you qualified to teach?
How many years have you been teaching?
What high school courses have you taught?
What is your academic background; what degree(s) have you completed?

Resources
Which courses encounter the least/most resources and why is this?
Where do the most resources (for example, textbooks, films) exist; where do the most resources lie in the social studies program?
Can you provide some examples of how these differences exist at various levels?

Implementation of Mi'kmaq Studies 10 and African Canadian Studies 11
How have you seen these courses being implemented in the schools you have taught?
What strategies of implementation have been effective/not effective?
What are some of the issues with the implementation strategies used?
At which levels in the school system do the issues lie?
Who needs to play a role in the implementation process of MST and ACS?

Experiences with the courses
How do you view African Canadian Studies 11 and Mi'kmaq Studies 10? Can you provide any examples?
How were you chosen to teach one (or both) of these courses?
In the schools you have taught at, how have staff been chosen to teach these courses? (what methods or justifications)
What challenges did you face?
What materials did you have issues with?
What issues have you faced concerning IPP's (individualized program plans) and/or adaptations?

Curriculum
Have you read the curriculum of either course?
How useful did you find it; was the layout accessible?
Did you strictly follow the curriculum guide or did you deviate from it? If you did deviate, can you provide examples of things you changed?
What are the most important facets of the curriculum? Are you very familiar with the document?
What needs to be changed?
What needs to be added?
Is there enough time in the school semester to cover the full curriculum?
What areas are generally skipped or not covered?

To your knowledge, are all schools teaching the course the same way – if not, what differences are there?

Concerns
In your opinion, who should be teaching these courses?
What experience is needed to teach these courses?
What support and resources exist for teachers of MST and ACS?
What strategies have teachers have used when they have lacked necessary resources or support from various levels of the school (guidance, department heads, administration, etc.)?
What challenges does this give teachers who might be unfamiliar with the course material?

Teaching philosophy
What do think of these courses?
How do MST and ACS fit in with your teaching repertoire?

Concluding Questions
Is there anything else you would like to add that we have not already discussed?
Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix C – Example of Canadian History 11 Curriculum layout

What has been Canada's place in the community of nations, and what should Canada's role be?

Outcomes

Students will be expected to

GL1
- investigate and assess various traditional and emerging theories regarding the peopling of the Americas
  - identify traditional and emerging theories regarding human origins in the Americas [e.g., land bridge, Pacific routes, Solutrian (North Atlantic), Aboriginal perspectives]
  - explain how archaeologists and anthropologists gather and analyse evidence and develop hypothesis (e.g., dating, artifacts, beliefs, linguistics)
  - assess the theories based on evidence provided by archaeologists and anthropologists

Suggestions for Learning and Teaching

Teacher Note: *To begin this study and provide an ongoing visual support for the study of Canadian History 11, a large time line should be created in the classroom that all students can see. As a work in progress students can create icons/visuals throughout the study of each unit. Different colours for each unit could be used. This student created time line should be a handy reference. A variation could be to laminate the icons/visuals and use double-sided tape. A quick assessment could be to remove all items from time line, scramble and give to students to put in proper place either individually or through discussion and decision.*

Brainstorm with the class to determine prior knowledge and understanding. A KWL organizer could also be used.

Using GIS software, students can develop maps based on research that reflect the various hypothesis of the early peopling of North America. The following should be included:
- routes
- key archaeological finds
- effects of physical geography (climate, terrain)
- layer maps reflecting waves of migration

In a jigsaw activity using appropriate articles, maps, and primary sources, students can investigate and assess the traditional and emerging theories. Some guiding questions for the groups could include the following:
- What is the theory?
- What evidence supports the theory?
- Are there questions of validity?
- How was the evidence gathered and assessed?
- What contrary evidence has been brought forward?

At some point in or before or after the jigsaw activity, teachers can lead a discussion on the limitations and challenges of historical evidence. Make sure to include oral history in the list of types of evidence. A focus for the discussion could be the question of "validity of any evidence."

An extension or introduction to the jigsaw activity could be a brief lecture on the concepts of traditional and revisionist interpretations of history.

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What has been Canada's place in the community of nations, and what should Canada's role be?

Suggestions for Assessment

Students select two plausible theories and complete a Venn diagram noting similarities and differences in evidence. Then they write a one-page defence of the selected theories. Suggested criteria for this assessment includes

- thoroughness of evidence
- correct identification of supporting evidence
- insight into similarities
- weakness(es) of theory (gaps in evidence)
- use of conventions of language

Based on the brainstorm regarding the issues of the theories of peopling of Americas, students write a one-page opinion sheet (what they think about the issue/topic). At the end of the jigsaw and map activity, students now write a second one-page opinion sheet. This should be assessed by both the teacher and the student to reflect growth.

A rubric for jigsaw activity that addresses process and content can be developed. It is suggested that the rubric be shared with students, prior to the activity.

In an application exercise, students can research an archaeological issue (e.g., Kennewick Man, the Annansazi, effects of climate, environmental impact of migrations) and relate the issue to the theories and evidence.

Notes

National Geographic, December 2000, and map

Closing the Circle, Gwynne Dyer

National Geographic, May 2000

Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, pages on oral history

MacLean's Magazine, March 19, 2001