THE MYTHING LINK: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARCHETYPES, IMAGES, METAPHORS AND MYTHS IN THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Graduate Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE ARCHETYPES, IMAGES, METAPHORS AND MYTHS IN THE
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Abstract

This narrative inquiry uses the story schema (Polkinghorne, 1988; Bakhtin, 1981) to comprehend the current state of education through the perspectives of the characters, investigating how setting, role casting, and plot influences their thinking. The question is posed: Can I, as a character in an educational story, decipher and decode my own personal story, as well, as the larger socio-political story I act within? The 'crisis in education' serves as a starting point for discussion with ten participants—a teacher, principal, board chair, associate director, parent, student, federation president, ministry official, critic, and current government. The research text takes the form of a story—employing an aesthetic discourse as a means to convey representative qualities (Eisner, 1991). Social, economic, and political conditions create the setting. Portraits of archetypal character are presented and their relative castings in the story are examined (Campbell, 1959: 1949). A narrative and linguistic analysis (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981; Lakoff, 1991) of the structure and coherence of the images, metaphors and myths used by the participants when describing the crisis produces the plot. What follows is a dialogue between education allies and adversaries about story themes and education issues (Barlow, 1994; Saul, 1997). How does one read the current swirl of events in education for insight and meaning when from the onset events have taken on fictional qualities, the characters and incidents seemingly wholly or partly imaginary? What constitutes a plausible story? How is crisis justified? What happens when politicians cast themselves in the role of hero and cost-benefit management strategies define political actions? How does curricula appear when qualitative elements are quantified?

Questioned is a politically motivated mythology of education that casts characters in restrictive roles.
Acknowledgements

Dr. Marcel A. Laprade, master linguist and exquisite communicator, whose ability to read people and situations inspired this work. He has taught me more about language and communications than any post-graduate course or book ever could. I dedicate this research to you.

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Dr. Andy Hargreaves, political sociologist, whose understanding of postmodernity enables him to identify the social and political master plot this thinking has created and the paradox education finds itself in the year 2000.

Dr. Mary Beattie, a fellow narrativist, whose outlook assisted me in grounding this work in the arts and narrative traditions. Her example encouraged me to continue to forge new trails in and beyond these disciplines.

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The ten participants, whose guidance provided the map on the educational trail we are travelling.

Finally my parents, Joyce E. Speir, whose faith sustains me and Donald R. Speir, who applauds this achievement.
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CHAPTER 1

The missing link created far more interest than all the chains and explanation of being.

(McLuhan)

In the spring of 1995 a conservative majority government was elected in the province of Ontario. Their political platform was a ‘common sense revolution’ and a promise of accountability to taxpayers. What followed was a series of actions directed at re-structuring the public services of welfare, health care and education. In October, the Minister of Education made mention of the crisis in education in an interview with the press and when questioned, suggested that his government was prepared to go as far as to create a crisis in order to justify its educational reforms. This apparently unplanned announcement became news! In a subsequent statement, the Premier explained that despite 24 different studies on education, Ontario students still lag behind the rest of the country and in international scores and that his government would make the necessary changes to improve Ontario education. He maintained that education dollars in Ontario were inflated, in comparison to the rest of the country, with little evidence of students receiving any better education and that taxpayers were not getting value for their money. The government’s common sense revolution for education included: a new province wide curriculum setting out clear, challenging and consistent standards for what students should learn year by year; annual province wide testing of students in grade 3 and 6; a simplified standardized report card; a new 4-year secondary school curriculum; a new funding model focused on classroom spending and school board accountability; and increasing parent involvement in decision making through school councils. In October of 1997, the Current Government presented Bill 160: The Education Quality Improvement Act into legislature. With the passing of this bill, the right to raise and administer tax
dollars would pass from local school boards to the government; principals and vice-principals would be removed from the teacher federation; class sizes and teacher preparation time would be provincially regulated; and a five year high school program would be reduced to four years. Opposition to the Bill came primarily from the teachers and teacher federations who viewed the Bill as anti-democratic in its intent; legislating provincial jurisdiction over what were local matters. Concerns raised by teachers were loss of teaching jobs through increasing class sizes and attrition; reductions in teacher planning time; one less year of secondary school; and the use of paraprofessionals in the classroom. Teachers and principals protested through a massive provincial walkout.

In January 1997, Bill 140: The Fewer School Boards was passed. In a year's time, the number of school boards would be reduced from 129 to 72 through amalgamation of existing school boards into new district school boards, further reducing the number of trustees to one third the current numbers and limiting salaries to a small honorarium of up to $5000.00.

How does one read the current swirl of events in education for insight and meaning? From the onset, the events have taken on fictional qualities, the characters and incidents seemingly wholly or partly imaginary. Who can judge what is real and what is imaginary? For in the story each player holds a subjective perspective, seeing and believing only what supports or informs his/her point of view. By what criteria is reality established? Does reality even enter in? Or as characters in a story, are we interested only in finding support for positions we hold or have taken?

This inquiry poses the question: Can I, as a character in an educational story, decipher and decode my own personal story, as well, as the larger socio-political story I act within? The purpose of this research is twofold. First, to evaluate whether or not an
objective perspective can be gained on subjective experience. Second, to offer an approach with its own language and means to understand educational situations, through which the social and political, as well as, personal voice of characters may be objectively heard and subjectively comprehended.

The ‘crisis in education story’ serves as a starting point for discussions with characters in education about the structure of the educational context. Accepting the current events in education as an unfolding narrative, the procedural and structural characteristics of narrative are the method and the means used to objectively examine and analyze the myth and mythologies that are its underpinnings (McLuhan, 1962). The research questions how genre, theme, plot and archetypal roles in the crisis story influence the thinking of characters.

**Teachers’ Thinking: Myth Making Or Theory Building?**

This inquiry’s focus is the nature of teachers’ theories and beliefs, a component of the research studying teacher thinking. Proposed is that teachers are mythmakers rather than theory-builders. And, that the nature of teachers’ theories and beliefs, in a world where story is the means of discourse, is myth. Further, that the language of story and myth, is inherently different than the language of theory, the predominant means of discourse in educational research.

The medium is the message, McLuhan (1962) tells us. To understand the message from the perspective of characters, researchers must investigate their medium, the language they use to describe their experiences. This research builds on the notions put forth by researchers such as Sapir-Whorf (1929), Circourel (1964), Korzybski (1993), and Laprade (1998). These general semanticists hold that social reality is shaped by linguistic usage. The language we use defines how we think (linguistic determinism);
further, when different language structures are employed perceptions of reality shift (linguistic relativity).

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face; on the contrary, the world is presented in a kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds - and this means largely by the linguistic systems in our minds. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significances as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it in this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. The agreement is, of course, an implicit and unstated one, but its terms are absolutely obligatory; we cannot talk at all except by subscribing to the organization and classification of data which the agreement decrees.

(Whorf 1940, pp. 213-14; his emphasis)

This research explores and offers the structure of story (image, metaphor and myth) as a mode of thinking fundamentally more suited to the world of education, comparable in intent to theory, yet distinct in process and structure. I argue that this alternative language remains unrecognized, largely misunderstood, and often misrepresented by academic and research communities.

Early studies in teacher cognition emerged from studies in teacher behaviour, and the notion that action was as indication of thought. Employing quantitative measures, teacher thinking was conceptualized and codified according to then popular behaviourist and theoretical paradigms (Beattie, 1995). Recent research, using qualitative methods, has attempted to describe and understand the activities, beliefs, understandings, and ways of knowing of those who live their lives in educational settings. This has led to the acknowledgement that the realm of teaching is qualitatively different from the world of research and researchers. Theorists such as Polkinghorne (1988), Bruner (1986), and Eisner (1991) have provided models of narrative both as a form (structure) and process of thinking, that is equal to, yet qualitatively different from theory and theoretical notions.
The research of Elbaz (1983) and Connelly & Clandinin (1988) forged new trails for teacher development research first positing the notion that teacher knowledge is personal and practical rather than theoretically based. Criticism focuses on the limited scope of this research and its emphasis on the personal; in particular its failure to address political and social factors that shape and influence teacher knowledge (Goodson 1998; Hargreaves, 1996). This research seeks to broaden this focus to include the social and the political, the contextual and the collective (Goodson, 1998), offering the teacher perspective, as shaped and informed by the current socio-political context of education.

Aided by Bahktin’s (1981) dialogic imagination, the researcher explores how the various voices, perspectives and mythologies of the different characters play off each other, lending insight into the structure of a character’s thinking and the role that characters play in a story. Embracing a social constructivist perspective, this research rejects the scientific paradigm that has dominated the field of education and the thinking of researchers. In this ideology the world is a vast universe of multiple realities, not a single symbolic world, “because different groups of people construct different stories, and because different languages embody different ways of experiencing life” (Anderson, 1992, p. xi).

Story and myth encompass these multiple perspectives and represent a different way of thinking about experience (Campbell, 1949; Polkinghorne, 1988; Reason & Hawkins, 1988). Researchers identify that the actions and explanations of teachers are “guided by internal frames of reference which are deeply rooted in personal experiences, especially in school ones, and are based on interpretations of those experiences” (Marland, 1998). Reason and Hawkins (1988) might argue that teachers’ interpretations follow a line of thinking called expression; from experience through story to myth then
archetype. In contrast, the line of thinking called explanation interprets experience through case study to theory then paradigm. This research considers the possibility that myths are the storied version of implicit theories that researchers have identified.

If the notion of myth is broadened to encompass perspectives and priorities that we take for granted, just as ancients took for granted the stories of gods, goddesses, and heroes and as people subscribe to exposed myths before their exposure, then we find ourselves facing a much more positive sense of myth—that of living myth, as unavoidable as it is elusive. It represents commitments in life that are so basic and assumed that we normally do not notice them, much less reflect on them (Grant, 1998, p. ix)

Researchers’ failure to engage these mythologies is largely a question of semantics—a question of language. In this research, language patterns signify the mythological lines (plots) that underpin storied lives; linking past to present to future; linking individual to culture. Building on Reason and Hawkins’ (1988) inquiry into storytelling and Elbaz (1983) and Clandinin’s (1986) concept of image as a central construct for understanding practical knowledge, I decipher and decode the symbolic codes (image, metaphor, myth, and archetype) of the stories told by characters with an educational story.

Central Concepts

The Story Mind: Thinking in Narrative Terms

The Mything Link, a narrative inquiry, is directed to the story mind of individuals and cultures in education. For the goal of the research and the story mind are the same; to create a plausible story, one that resonates with the listener and one that renders contextual truth.

The Realm of Meaning

To think in narrative terms one must enter the realm of meaning. Passing through the portal of desire for objective truth and the forsaking the need for details devoid of
judgement (an empirical approach) we ask --what does it mean? The question shifts our focus from objective external analysis of the world around to an internal subjective interpretation of what we make of it. This realm constitutes a reality, for human existence is composed of various orders of reality: material reality, organic reality and the reality we call meaning (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 157). It is in this realm that we experience the world and define what the world means in terms of our human experience.

Linguistic forms have as much reality as the material objects of the physical realm. For human existence, linguistic forms are paramount, for they filter and organize information from the physical and cultural realms and transform it into the meanings that make up human knowledge and experience. On the basis of this constructed experience, we understand ourselves and the world, and we make decisions and plans regarding how we will act.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p.158)

An Act of Mind

Eisner (1991) describes experience as “consciousness of some aspect of the world”: a cognitive achievement. Dewey (1956) distinguishes between two modes of attention. The process of categorization he called recognition. The process of visual exploration he called perception (Eisner, 1991, p.18). Experience differs from merely sensing, for example—‘a smell’ or identifying—‘the smell of apple pie.’ Experience as a perception requires discernment, a process that has emotional and judgmental qualities attached to it—‘mmm, smells like delicious apple pie, like mom use to bake for Sunday dinner’ (in this case the emotion and judgement is related to a recollection of another ‘like’ experience). Through perceptual differentiation we see beyond the apparent and the simple “to those aspects of the world that are subtle and complex” and “experience is what we achieve as those qualities come to be known” (Eisner, 1990, p. 17 & 21).

Experience is much more than an event—it has significance. If the individual’s experience of Sunday dinners is a positive one, perhaps associated with a loving family atmosphere,
the smell of apple pie could take on loving qualities. Eisner (1990) suggests that through qualitative inquiry we gain an “intelligent apprehension of the qualitative world” (p. 21) and I argue a more conscious apprehension of how we make sense of the qualities we experience (at a cultural level the identification of the apple pie baking by an individual may be interpreted as connoting an Anglo-Saxon, pioneer background).

As human beings we exist primarily in a bodily mode and interpret the world through our body in its physical relationship to the world (Merleau-Ponty cited by Polkinghorne, 1988; Lakoff & Johnson, 1981).

Our linguistic ability enables us to descend into the realm of our primary perceptual and emotional experience, to find there a reality susceptible to verbal understanding, and to bring forth a meaningful interpretation of this primary level of our existence.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 29)

“It is the body which creates meaning, and speaking is a bodily activity which refines preverbal behaviours of communication, such as gesturing” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 28).

Language is one of the means we use to give perceived nature human signification. Our experience of the world is directly linked to our expression of it. Language then can be considered a perceptual system.

A Matter of Qualities

Traditional empirical models of language hold that we sense the energy radiated from the world and transform these waves or chemicals through the brain into sensual images. Descartes called these “inner ghostly snapshots” of the objects in the world. At perception, the object is named according to mental constructions of class categories. From first order perception, images are mentally gathered into classes and then higher-level units. “To know the truth requires that general notions be broken down into their component parts, which are a reflection of reality itself.” Thinking in this model is a
process of assembling and dissembling ideas. This model of language creates the need to be “on guard in using language for reasoning” because language could mislead or take attention away from the images or ideas themselves. “Language was the ‘great seducer’: it tempted people to be satisfied with mere words, when its real function was to ground thought in the ideas to which words referred” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 24). In the 1920’s and 1930’s effort was directed towards keep language transparent and definitions referred directly to objects in the world. Attempts were made to describe without employing specific referents. “The goal of shedding subjectivity from language was to clear the way for access to pure (objective) reality” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 25). In the late 1950’s and early 1960’s the idea of a purified language linked to an external reality was questioned. The language of naming and classifying was learned, dependent on theoretical, cultural and valuing schemes. Saussure’s analysis of the way in which a single language system distributes meaning broke down this notion of a purified language accurately reflecting the world. He proposed that words signified not external objects but an internal organization specific to a language system (the meaning of an object being determined by the other ideas in the language). Wittgenstein argued “that the meaning of words are social constructions, parts of a language game one has learned to play and so linked to the following rules that allow members of a community to understand one another” (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 26). He posited that words are not pictures or personal ideas but social practice.

We move almost instantaneously from the qualities we are able to see to their classification and labeling. We categorize. Of course, categorization is useful: by categorizing we know the species of our experience. But categorization can also be a liability when it forecloses, as it often does, the exploration of the qualities that constitute this classroom, that student, this particular school. If our perceptual experience is aborted for the sake of classification, our experience is attenuated; we do not experience all that we can.
Polkinghorne's (1988) treatment of 'language as display' suggests that language itself can provide insight into the qualities that reality and linguistic structures share. Eisner (1991) suggests that narrative, as an art form, is a tool to keep our perceptions open. He defines qualitative research as the ability to grasp the qualities of a particular experience and then to represent these as text. “The writer starts with qualities and ends with words, the reader starts with words and ends with qualities” (Eisner, 1991, p.22).

To imagine is to generate images; to see is to experience qualities. Both the content of the world and the content of our imagination is based on qualities—not only those we can see, but those we can experience through any of our senses—that our consciousness comes into being. The Enlightened Eye is about the perception of qualities, those that pervade intimate social relations and those that constitute complex social institutions, such as schools. It is also about the meaning of those qualities and the value we assign them.

(Eisner, 1991, p.1)

Through attention to qualities we can interpret not only the meaning but also the process of constructing meaning towards understanding our own and another's experience.

**Figurative Forms**

These symbolic forms are not imitations, but organs of reality, since it is solely by their agency that anything real becomes an object for intellectual apprehension, and as such is made visible to us.

(Cassirer, 1946, p. 8)

Figurative language forms require the listener to treat what is presented as symbolic; pregnant with potentialities. The narrative form creates space for interpretation. Its meaning is contained in symbols (images, metaphors, myths) requiring interpretation. The route to deciphering is indirect and circuitous; it must be traveled. Its meaning is layered and requires unpacking.
The mythical form of conception not something superadded to certain
definite elements of empirical existence; instead, the primary 'experience'
itself is steeped in the imagery of myth and saturated in its atmosphere.
(Cassirer, 1946, p.10)

These forms must be lived, “to enter into this plastic medium, in which the two (self and
environment) do not merely make contact but fuse with each other” (Cassirer, 1946, p. 10). For the message lies in the form (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 33). Understanding comes
only through experience of the process and the form of narrative thinking: requiring an
open-minded stance towards the experience of the unknown.

If the message is intended primarily to convey information, then it should
be assessed in term of clarity of formulation and the validity of the
information it provides. If in contrast, a message is to express the
emotional conditions of the speaker or to engender an attitude in the
recipient of the message, then it should be assessed in terms of its
performance force.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 34)

Like watching interpretative dance, as audience, we must patiently take it all in,
experience the emotional tone, tolerate the gaps and wait for the meaning to unfold.

Image

Merleau-Ponty held that in whatever part of our lived experience that has
not yet been spoken of, there is a raw meaning, a “wild logos.” This raw
meaning calls out for thematic expression. Expression is a response to a
solicitation from below. “True speech,…speech which signifies,…frees
the meaning captive in the thing.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 30)

The origin of an image may be a particular watershed experience or a collection of
experiences over time. Like Decarte’s inner ghostly snapshots, symbolic images are the
impressions of our lived experience. Their qualities continue to haunt us in dream and
semi-dream states (Jalongo & Isenburg, 1995; Speir, 1996). Images, living in the
unconscious, bubble up into consciousness to reveal or to crystallize to us some aspect of
our direct experience of life and truth. Images make possible the perception of fundamental relationships between seemingly diverse forms or appearances (this was the case when the smell of apple pie connected us to childhood memories of Sunday dinners). Images serve as mediators between the unconscious and conscious levels of being, "the source of inspiration, ideas, insight, and meaning" (p. 17). Images according to Clandinin (1986) have moral, emotional and personal private dimensions that derive from experience. The moral emerges from the person's judgement based on how the person views self in the experience. The emotional dimension colours the image through the use of feeling words. At the unconscious level, the image communicates from one culture to another—crossing the boundaries of the personal private to inform professional actions. Schon (1983) has suggested that professional action flows from clusters of thought even images or pictures. Clandinin (1986) found that teachers' do express images as metaphor and then translate these into action.

Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1981) argue that our ordinary conceptual systems, in terms of what we think and how we act, are fundamentally metaphoric in nature (p. 3). Metaphors structure what we perceive and define our everyday realities. In this light, language becomes an important source of evidence for identifying a conceptual system is like. Recalling Mealeau-Ponty's orientation interpretation of the world through our body, human beings systematically characterize abstract ideas--thoughts, religious beliefs, and political and ethical situations--in terms of bodily movements and bodily functions (Polkinghorne, 1988). For example, our ordinary use of language is largely structured by metaphoric and metonymic principles that exhibit directionality. Lakoff and Johnson (1981) claim these metaphors and the directionality are not arbitrary, but instead are a
natural outgrowth of the mind/body connection. Polkinghorne (1988) postulates that the
narrative structure of language is employed because it reflects the narrative scheme
through which we think and make meaning of experience. Munby (1986) suggests that
"metaphor is not just a linguistic entity but a process by which we encounter the world"
(p.199). Metaphor then, is not just a matter of words but a reflection of human thought
processes. Examining “the metaphorical content of a teacher’s speech appears to be a
promising approach to learning something about how a teacher constructs educational
reality” (Munby, 1986, p.201).

**Myth**

Myth is the projection of a culture’s dreams onto a large screen.  
(Campbell, 1949)

The way we imagine life is our reality. A reality that is shaped, shifted, filtered, framed,
and/or distorted by the structures we employ for interpretation. Linguistic structures are
the lens through which we view the world and the forms through which we think. One of
these forms is narrative.

Images coalesce along mythological lines that link the past to present to future.

These mythological lines, like the story lines of the Australian aboriginal, link us to the
places we have lived. Intergenerational lines join one sacred memory to another. Family,
culture, and society have lovingly gifted us these mental patterns, what Dawkins calls
memes—the cultural equivalent of genes (Anderson, 1992). Identities are constructed in
relation to personal and cultural mythologies. Myths are the evidence of the underlying
structures of the constructed self. Stories passed from generation to generation remind us
of who we are and where we come from. As organizing schemes for our life and our
being they influence what we attend to and the significance we give to experiences.

Intrigued by this phenomenon, I search for the tools to decipher and decode story’s
meaning, a missing link in educational literature. What are the stories we are inheriting now? Which ones will we choose to tell our children?

Temporal Schemes

Language takes up the contingencies of existence and the perpetual openness of life to the natural and intersubjective worlds, and molds them into a meaningfulness that is greater than the meaningfulness they originally hold. One of the ways language does this is to configure these givens into a narrative form in which desires and aspirations are used to transform the passing of life into an adventure of significance and drama. (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 31)

Processing our experience through organizing schemes, such as a story or a drama, events are endowed with relative significance. These dramas have beginnings, middles and ends. Events are figured onto plot lines. Determinations are made about how this particular event fits in the story of a life cast in a plot within a cultural world. The fit determines the event's significance. Past, present and future are factored in; past informs present, present informs past, present informs future, etc. Narrative thinking positions one not only in time and space but also relative to others. The plotline of my life story describes who I am, who I am likely to be, what I will do and whom I will associate with. Employing different temporal schemes affords different ways to tell a story—will it be comedy, tragedy, romance, or drama? (Keen, 1995).

Elements of a Well Formed Narrative

What are the necessary elements to creating a good story? Gergen (1999) synthesizes the characteristics of the well-formed narrative (story plot) in contemporary culture as establishing an endpoint, selecting events relevant to the endpoint, the ordering of events, the stability of identity, causal linkages and demarcation signs. Gergen (1999) draws from the domains of literary theory (Frye, 1957; Scoles and Kellogg, 1966; Martin, 1986) semiotics (Propp, 1968; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983), historiography (Mink 1970; Gallie,
1964), and certain sectors of social science (Labov, 1981; Sutton-Smith, 1979; Mandler, 1984) to create this synthesis.

1) Establishing a valued endpoint. The point of the story is an outcome or a state to be avoided or reached. This endpoint is saturated with value, either desirable or undesirable. Reaching the endpoint is necessary for the story to have coherence and significance. “Narrative requires an evaluative framework in which a good or bad character helps to produce unfortunate or happy outcomes” (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 456). The demand for a value endpoint introduces a strong cultural component or subjective bias into the story. The teller of the tale, in a cultural tradition where certain valued events are made intelligible, determines the endpoint and its value.

2) Selecting Events Relevant to the Endpoint. The established endpoint dictates the kind of events that can be figured into the account. “An intelligible story is one in which selected events serve to make the goal more or less probable, accessible, important or vivid.” Narrative demands ontological consequences. All the events included in the story must be relevant to the story’s conclusion.

3) The Ordering of Events. Events are ordered or arranged according to culturally specific chronotypes, a term employed by Bakhtin (1981) to govern space-time relationships. Events may be ordered by importance, interest, value or recency, and may not match the sequence in which they actually occurred.

4) Stability of Identity. “Once defined by the storyteller, the individual or entity will tend to retain his/her identity over time.” Variance in personality is usually not tolerated.

5) Causal Linkages. “The ideal narrative is one which gives an explanation.”

Explanation is typically achieved by selecting events that by common standards are
causally linked.” Where events are related in an interdependent manner the outcomes approximate more closely a well-formed story.

6) Demarcation Signs. Stories employ signals to indicate a beginning and an ending. The framing of the narrative by rule-governed devises (e.g. once upon a time, a punch line) indicates when one is entering or exiting the world of story.

**Discourse and Dialogue**

Narrative is a discourse, a particular language form that integrates words and sentences to create and communicate meaning, one that requires a particular pattern of comprehension. Polkinghorne suggests (1988) that “human sciences need to attend to the role that language plays in the construction of human meaningfulness and to examine how this construction affects human action” (p. 31). Analysis of language can occur at various levels—word, sentence, and discourse (punctuation signs: changes in pitch and breathing and grammar; and organization rules: designating how groups of words cohere).

Bakhtin’s (1981) study of the novel, as a contemporary genre, provides insights that can be employed to understand the workings of the mind as it constructs stories and as a research framework through which to examine the world of education. In this context, the limitations of characters, plot structure, and genres are accessible and there is merit to understanding these for teacher development. Inherent in the novel is a perspective not available in other genres. Three basic characteristics distinguish the novel. 1) Stylistic three-dimensionality linked with the multi-linguaged consciousness; 2) the radical change it effects in the temporal coordinates of the literary image; and 3) the new zone opened by the novel for structuring literary images, namely the zone of maximal contact with the present, contemporary reality (Bakhtin, 1981).
The multiplicity of voices and the ability to mimic, make fun and critique these voices are qualities needed in the study of educational stories with many perspectives. Further, the ability to inquiry critically (a perspective available in the novel) may address the need to find a way to be objective within a highly subjective realm. D. H. Lawrence thought the novelist superior to the scientist, the theologian and the philosopher, for only the novelist gets at life whole. The artists' imagination and understanding is grounded in rich lived experience and a talent for expressing the realities of lived experience under the constraints of given personal characters, social forms and circumstances. It is the pressing of this living against reality that brings to light the nature of the character. It is through bringing together the various perspectives that we can begin to develop an understanding of the larger picture.

The genre of the novel is as yet uncompleted, its generic skeleton, being far from hardened, has plastic possibilities. While studying other forms is like studying dead languages, studying the novel is like studying languages that are alive and still young. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 3)

Ancient literature had memory, not knowledge, as the source and power for its creative impulse. Without any consciousness of the possible relativity of any past, it is impossible to change. Mythologies are language patterns predicated on belief systems that are closed in nature. We perceive the world and describe our perception using the language patterns inherent in these mythologies. These limit our view of the world. The past remains sacred, making change difficult. The novel however orients itself in the present, determined by experience, knowledge and practice. Examine the romance novel focused on the experience of falling in love. The world opens up, becomes a different place and as readers we open to experience it afresh and anew. We enter into the experience of another. Whether the emotion is one of love or of tragedy, to empathize we
put our perspective aside in order to see through the eyes of another. The novel recreates this experience. Presenting different characters complete with worldviews, the novel gives them voice to express their thoughts and the ability to act and react/respond to the plot. The novel allows us to experience other worldviews vicariously—taking on the perspective of another for a time—imagining what it would be like to act, talk, think like that individual.

From this perspective the world becomes a different place. It is the zone of proximity and contact that the novel offers with reality, that allows us to enter in. We have not lost the sense of ourselves by taking on this perspective but have suspended self in time, in order to experience--the other. “We can experience these adventures, identify with these heroes; such novels can become a substitute for our lives” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.32). Taking on the other involves adopting new language patterns. The limitations we impose on characters may be our own. Difficulty seeing the world through the eyes of another may provide clues as to how we are defined and being defining by the mythologies of our own character role.

Plasticity

The novel has the capacity to ingest all other genres and still remain intact. Bakhtin (1981) portrays the novel as having an open and flexible form in comparison to previous language forms that were unitary and completely finished off. The novel inserts an “indeterminacy into other forms, a certain semantic openness, a living contact with the unfinished” (p.7). Its form is inclusive allowing “a living mix of varied and opposing voices” (p.xxviii). While in other forms, language is assimilated to form, the novel by contrast seeks to shape its form to languages. It constantly experiments with new shapes in order to display the variety and immediacy of speech diversity. Michael Holquist in his
introduction to Bakhtin’s (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination* calls the novel “a consciously structured hybrid of languages” (p. xxix). Defined by its proclivity to display different languages interpenetrating each other. Bakhtin (1981) describes these languages as dialogized.

Permeated with laughter, irony, humour, elements of self-parody and finally—this is the most important thing—the novel inserts into these other genres an indeterminacy, a certain semantic openendedness, a living contact with unfinished, still evolving contemporary reality” what he calls “the openended present” (p. 7)

Through acts of carnival or humour the novel gains freedom from constraints of form. The comic characters, the Harlequins, are able to move within the plot and not be subsumed by it—these heroes are not dictated and determined by the past but are of the present—heroes of free improvisation, heroes of a renewing life process, forever contemporary. Bakhtin (1981) suggests that through humour and laughter we are released from our past.

Laughter destroyed epic distance; it began to investigate man freely and familiarly, to turn him inside out, expose the disparity between his surface and his centre, between his potential and his reality. A dynamic authenticity was introduced into the image of man, dynamics of inconsistency and tension between the various facets of this image; man ceased to coincide with himself, and consequently man ceased to be exhausted entirely in the plots that contain them. Of these inconsistencies and tensions laughter plays up…(p.35)

Subject to Revision

The novel parodies other genres; it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others in its own peculiar structures, re-formulating and re-accentuating them. (Bakhtin, 1981, p.5)

Like the process of writing of a novel, narrative as an organizing scheme is subject to revision. Events are arranged and rearranged, cast and recast as information is added:
what was once significant becomes insignificant. what was once insignificant may take
on new significance as events are realigned. The open-ended and developing nature
reveals “more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the
process of its unfolding” (Bakhtin, 1981, p.7). The novel is structured not in the distanced
image of the absolute past but in the zone of direct contact with inconclusive present-day
reality. At its core lies personal experience and free creative imagination...it is plasticity
itself. “It is a genre that is ever questioning, ever examining itself and subjecting its
suggest that educational chronicles are a vehicle for re-examining stories of the past that
continue to inform our actions in the present, allowing us to view situations more
objectively. Recovery of meaning presents the potential to articulate new understandings
and envision new possibilities. Chronicles provide opportunities to rewrite and reexamine
our stories and our lives in a conscious way, for images, experiences and decisions made
in the past may or may not serve us in the future.

Reality Check

Is narrative form an accurate description of human reality or merely an artificial
construction projected on our existence? Whorf (1956) posits that experience is an
artifact of language rather than reality.

Merleau-Ponty proposed that truth is not a natural property of the world in
itself but that consciousness discovers truth in contact with the world.
Truth is inseparable from the expressive operation that says it; it does not
precede reflection but is the result of it. In short, truth is a creation within
speech that presents itself as adequate.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 30)

Rejecting the notion of objective truth Merleau-Ponty suggests,

The meaning of the world and of our existence is not given in advance,
and the task of knowledge is not merely to discover this given. Rather, the
perceived world imposes a task to be accomplished, which is to make out of what is given something meaningful...Life presents itself as a raw indication that needs to be finished by interpretation to make it meaningful.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 30)

By finding meaning in experience and then expressing this meaning in words, the speaker enables the community to think about experience and not just live it.

(Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 30)

In response to the question posed, language is an accurate description of interpreted or constructed reality. Each interpretation conveys something towards our understanding of the reality of experience. Language as an indicator of meaning serves as a key to unlock hidden messages.

Reader Response

Communication presupposes a message, a sender and a receiver. Jakobson's theory of communication necessitates three elements: a context, code, and contact (Polkinghorne, 1988). The context, through cultural parameters, defines the code through which messages can be conveyed and possibly even the contact made. Since narrative, as a form and a structure, communicates in ways that cannot be communicated in other forms, the sender may choose this code because it best conveys his or her message. It may be that the receiver will better understand the message in this form or this form may render the message more acceptable. The sender may also choose this form for political reasons. Heilbrun (1988) in Writing a Woman's Life, suggests that women who write their lives through fiction and story give expression to that which they cannot express through other means.

The assumption is made that the sender and the receiver understand the code and that the contact is sufficient for the communication to be relayed. Reader response theory
raised has made us aware that messages are interpreted at all three levels and what is received is not necessarily the sender's message but the receiver's interpretation. The message received depends on the reader's lens—experiences, culture, etc. Narrative creates space within its text for the reader to enter. The text weaves together the known and the unknown, the familiar and the unfamiliar, creating gaps to be filled by the reader's imagination. Through this process, the static text is brought to life. The reader imagines the speaker, her look, the tone of her voice, the type and degree of emotional overtones. Anticipating where the story is going, the reader develops expectation, and when the plot shifts, the reader must adjust and re-assess.

This code is one that requires decoding. The text speaks in symbols and signs. The subject and object are not clearly defined, however clues are given. Through the search to unravel the message the reader encounters conflicts, themes and dilemmas that resonate in his or her own life sphere. The reader uses his or her own life experience to comprehend the characters, their thoughts and their feelings and in the process is drawn into the performance. Suddenly I am a character in the story and the others are speaking directly to me. Through the act of reading, their experience becomes my experience. I am implicated in the actions and the outcomes because I have also acted, played a part in this unfolding tale. As reader, I can hear the thoughts of the others, from a distance. I have more information than any one character and I cannot deny this vision, not can I warn characters of the pitfalls or their likely demise. I must wait and let the story unfold.

Whether communication is between conscious and unconscious minds, between individuals, or an individual and a community, the assumption is made that both the sender and the receiver understand the code. This is rarely the case. The process of reading a work of literature and receiving an individualized message is in itself quite
powerful. As the author’s words reach the reader and evoke a response, they gain power in the dissemination of information. The power exchange between author and reader demonstrates a political relationship. The dynamics of this relationship is politics in action. Viewing narrative from an audience-oriented perspective allows multiple interpretations to exist within a shared framework. When one interpretation is not valued over another, the cacophony of voices and the questions raised by the readers’ responses opens rather than closes the work.

Characters, plot, theme, and genre are the different families of considerations in the story mind made tangible. Readers can see them at work and gain insight into their own methods of solving problems. Characters represent the motivations of the story mind. Plot documents the problem solving methods employed by the story mind. Theme examines the relative worth of the story mind's value standards. Genre establishes the story mind's overall attitude, which casts a bias or background on all other considerations. When a story is fully developed, the model of the story mind is complete.

Characters

Plato used the terms, idea and form, interchangeably. Ideas structure form. In order to understand the idea, Plato taught that we must learn to look beyond the form to the particular essences—love, goodness, evil, beauty, justice, might, desire, wisdom, change, etc. These same ideas structure the form a character takes.

Archetypes are not conceptual abstractions that the human mind creates by generalizing from a class of particulars. Rather they possess a quality of being, a degree of reality, that is superior to that of the concrete world. Platonic archetypes are from the world and also stand beyond it. They manifest themselves within time and yet are timeless. They constitute the veiled essence of things.

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 6)
From their essences characters speak, our role as readers is to read them, by listening and hearing what they have to say. One of Plato’s critics once stated, “I see particular horses, but not horseness.” Plato answered, “That is because you have eyes but no intelligence” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 8). Plato asks us to look with penetrating eyes of the soul, through illuminated intellect. “For archetypes reveal themselves more to the inner perception that to the outer.” Ideas are the only stable reality, as far as Plato is concerned, these underlie, motivate and order the flux of phenomenon. Any particular object in the world is actually the meeting place for many different forms “which at different times express themselves in varying degrees of intensity” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 9). The world of ideas is in a constant state of being while the world of objects is in the shifting state of becoming. In Greek mythology gods were the essences of life. Through contemplation of the gods individual lives took on meaning and substance. In narratives, archetypal characters are in a state or becoming and it is through this shared state that we relate to them. By considering the state of constant and universal being they represent we learn from them.

Plato’s definition of ideas, as objective and universal, differs from our current use, as mental constructs private to the individual mind. According to Plato, ideas are fundamental elements of both the theory of being and the theory of knowledge for they constitute the basic essence and deepest reality of things.

The archetypal realm, far from being an unreal abstraction or imaginary metaphor for the concrete world, is here considered to be the very basis of reality, that which determines its order and renders it knowable. To this end, Plato declared direct experience of the transcendent ideas to be the philosopher’s primary goal and ultimate destination.

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 12)

Cast within a particular story and subject to a particular plot, characters are scripted to play particular roles in relation to the central story concern. Some are for and some are
against. The protagonist is for the story goal: the chief proponent and the principal driver of the effort to achieve the story goal. The antagonist is diametrically opposed to the protagonist's successful attainment of the goal: trying to stop the protagonist or have goals of his or her own that causes negative repercussions. The contagonist hinders the protagonist by placing obstacles in the way to lure the protagonist from success. The guardian functions as a teacher or helper and represents the conscience: eliminating obstacles and illuminating the path ahead. The guardian helps the protagonist stay on the path to success. The sidekick represents the conflict between confidence and doubt. This character is a faithful supporter although who or what he or she supports remains to be seen. The skeptic disbelieves. Where the sidekick supports the skeptic disbelieves. The main character in the story are the eyes through which we see the story unfold. He or she represents the insider view of the story while the obstacle character is the outsider.

Plot

There may be set of foundational plots from which all stories derive. Frye (1957) proposes four: comedy, romance, tragedy and satire—each rooted in the evolution of the seasons. Campbell (1956) proposes a single monomyth, rooted in unconscious psychodynamics, where the hero overcomes personal and historical limitations to reach a transcendent understanding of the human condition. Gergen (1999) isolates three rudimentary narrative forms, the progressive, regressive and the stability narrative. He posits that these exhaust the fundamental options for the direction of movement in evaluative space. Plot lines of various narratives can be charted according to whether the slide is upward, downward or unchanged. The narrative of stability requires enduring, integral, or coherent identity over time. This may be important to demonstrate roots to a local culture or to show how commitment and ideals are unfailing essential to a
continuing relationship. Progressive narratives may be characterized as problematic, oppressive or odious. Hardships are endured and personal resources sacrificed in order to participate in positive change or to demonstrate how undesirable characteristics have diminished over time, even when there are reasons to doubt. People use progressive narratives in the early stages of relationship as the reason to invest the relationship with increased value and promise for the future. Regressive narratives are characterized as soliciting attention, sympathy and intimacy. With a goal of engaging in more relationships, these narratives may solicit pity and concern, excuse from failure or deliver punishment. Regressive narratives can furnish the important means of motivating people toward achieving positive ends. This compensatory function operates on a national level when a government demonstrates that a steady decline in the balance of payments can be offset by grass-roots commitment to locally manufactured products (Gergen, 1999).

In establishing a given endpoint and endowing it with value and in populating the narrative with certain actors and certain facts as opposed to others, the narrator enters into the world of moral and political evaluation." Value is placed on certain goals (e.g. winning as opposed to non-competition), certain individuals (e.g. heroes and villains as opposed to communities), and particular modes of description (e.g. the world as material as opposed to spiritual) (Gergen, 1999, p. 8).

However, narrative tellings do more than create conversational realities; they are themselves constituents of ongoing and often institutionalized patterns of societal conduct. In this sense, they function to generate and sustain (and sometimes disrupt) cultural traditions. In Austin’s (1962) terms, we must not only pay attention to the constative character of narrative discourse--its portrayal of the world--but to its performative aspects--what it achieves in the very act of expression. Narration
incapably functions then, to sustain (and transform) cultural tradition. Cultures may approve or reject certain narratives, thus limiting the repertoire of possibilities.

“Language functions to index a state of affairs for all practical purposes within a given community”. Certain words are assigned to given conditions. Language, a derivative of social interchange, can be viewed according to its social function.

Theme

The use of particulars to provide guidelines for the future is a central function of both folktales and proverbs. In the case of the folktale, the story is to be appreciated not only for its interesting narrative or its humorous qualities, but also because there is an important lesson to be learned from it. The point of learning the lesson is that it is intended to influence our understanding or behavior; it has some instrumental utility. The same is true of a proverb. More compact than the story, it too encapsulates an idea that has instrumental utility. “Fools rush in where angels fear to tread” is a statement about neither fools nor angels, but caution and prudence. Aesop’s tale about the tortoise and the hare is about neither tortoises nor hares, but perseverance. My point here is not simply to describe the utilities of folk wisdom, but to illustrate the fact that the process of generalizing is a pervasive feature of life and that it takes many forms.

(Eisner, 1991, p. 104)

In a general sense theme represents the implicit point of the story, the moral or the lesson that the reader either gets or doesn’t get. It represents a value and a judgement placed on the story by its author. Theme functions in different ways in various forms of discourse. Within the context of research for instance, the point is explicitly stated in the critical analysis section (Eisner, 1991). Within the context of narrative thinking there are many themes embedded in particular situations that extend themselves beyond the situation leading the reader towards the final point of the story. This extension function, conceptualized by Stake as a process known as ‘naturalistic generalization,’ is what Eisner employs when conceptualizing themes as generalizations (Eisner, 1991). Using story’s lesson we try to make sense out of situations and use what we have learned to
guide us in the future. In narrative research, "the formulation of themes is a process of identifying the recurring messages that pervade the situation about which the researcher writes."

Themes are the dominant features of the situation or person, those qualities of place, person, or object that define or describe identity. In a sense, a theme is like a pervasive quality. Pervasive qualities tend to permeate and unify situations and objects. Themes are distillations of what has been encountered. They provide a summary of essential features. They also provide clues or cues to the perceptions of other situations like the situation from which the themes were extracted.

(Eisner, 1991, p. 104)

**Genre**

Genre casts an attitude or bias over the story, it is the tone or emotional quality inherent in a perspective. A genre can be related through a character, through the reader’s judgement of the story events and through the setting, but ultimately it remains in the hand of the author. Frye (1957) outlines four basic forms of narrative grounded in our experience with the seasons. The birth of new life in spring gives rise to the comedy in which a challenge or threat is overcome and harmony is restored. The hot days of summer inspire the drama in which the protagonist through a series of threats emerges victorious. In the autumn the life of summer is contrasted with the death of winter and tragedy is born. In winter when expectations and dreams die comes the satire (explained by Gergen, 1999). Bakhtin (1981) observes that the genre of the novel is far from hardened, it has plastic possibilities. As such it allows for a potential mix of genres. Eisner (1991) views the school as a space having many genres, available for interpretation to those who have the tools to understand them.

Classrooms, schools and teaching participate in a history and are part of a tradition. They reflect a genre of practice and an ideology. Those who know the tradition, understand the history, are familiar with those genres, and can see what those settings and practices consist of are most likely to have something useful and informed to say about them.

(Eisner, 1991, p. 3)
CHAPTER 2

METHOD IN THE MADNESS

No narrative that seeks to portray life experience can be identical to the experience itself; editing, emphasizing, and neglecting through selection are all ineluctably at play. Hence we seek not a mirror but a tale, a revelation, or a portrayal of what we think is important to say about what we have come to know. This narrative should be supported by evidence, structurally corroborated and coherent, but it cannot be a disembodied listing of what someone said or saw. It needs both a cast and a plot; it needs to have a point.

(Eisner, 1991, p. 190)

This research begins with the premise that a ‘good’ story is analogous to a single mind trying to deal with a paradox. The ‘crisis in education’ is the central concern or paradox that occupies the mind of this research. The characters are the different perspectives that the story mind has on the central story problem and they exemplify in their actions various strategies for solving problems. Stories are not neutral; they make points and apply judgements. They indicate good and bad ways of solving the central concern. A balanced story presents arguments for and against particular ways of solving the puzzle.

The context is the conditions under which the story is set. The context provides the backdrop against which the content of the story makes sense. The context or setting for the crisis story is the post-modern era including social, political and economic trends (Chapter 3). As the research story unfolds, the significance of the context becomes clearer. The crisis in education is the story paradox or problem, the content of the research. The pieces of the crisis puzzle are pieced together from images, metaphors and myths provided by participants to recreate the story plot (Chapter 5). What happens when we interpret the crisis through linguistic structures of images, metaphors and myths? The story structures include characters, plot, and the casting of these within particular genres and themes. The process of deciphering and decoding the structures of story and
structures of linguistics to comprehend the effect is utilized throughout the research (especially in Chapters 4 and 5) where characters are introduced and their views on the crisis examined.

The Setting

The announcement of a crisis in education and the subsequent events is the focus of this inquiry. The setting is the social, economic and political conditions that led up to and exist at this point in time. Participants define these times as signified by an economics agenda based on profits and losses, anti-authoritarian sentiments, public demand for accountability, and chaos theory. To understand the content of the research it is necessary to understand these conditions and their foundations. Drawing on the work of Tarnas (1991), the nature of the post-modern era is described and the ideas that shape this current worldview outlined. The construction of social realities through manufactured realities is introduced (Anderson, 1992). The influence and effect of media is provided (McLuhan, 1962; Saul, 1997; Littleton, 1996) and the political nature of language discussed (Orwell, 1949). Then a historical glance back to the origins of public education (Saul, 1997) and the path we have traveled to get where we are today (Barlow, 1994). What follows is a description of current state of education in Ontario and chronology of the events from the announcement of a crisis (Opposition Party, 1999).

Over the course of the year of this research a number of events occurred which influenced the thinking of participants, these are introduced here and revisited later in the body of the research.

Participants and Their Perspectives

The criterion for the selection of participants was the role they play in a specific a school district (local story). The goal was to have a representation of the significant
players in order to gain a cross-section of the cast of characters within education recognizing that various castings render multiple points of view. Playing various parts affords novel vantagepoints (Principal). From the perspective of the story mind, multiple perspectives afford a more complete and interesting view of the story concern. In the selection of participants care was given to include voices that are dissonant as well as harmonious (Hargreaves, 1996) and to select a variety of male and female, young and mature characters. I invited individuals who held particular positions to participate in this research (principal, teacher, student, parent, trustee, politician, critic, associate director, federation president and ministry representative). For the most part, I knew these people professionally. Those I did not were recommended for their involvement in education. Beyond their involvement in education, the defining characteristic of the group was they each had something to say about the current state of education in Ontario. When a specific invitation was made, each agreed to be involved. An outline of the research purpose and method was provided and permission obtained from the participants and the local board's executive committee to locate the research in the school district (Appendix: letter of information, letter of permission).

The assurance was made that anonymity would be maintained. Participants expressed concern that a point of view might be misconstrued as representative of a class of people rather than that of an individual. Several suggested their perspectives were not commonly held; one said that she did not share it within the profession, others commented that perspectives modified based on experiences, events and conversations with people. Hargreaves (1996) raises this same concern in relation to narrative research, where one voice appears to speak for many. In this research a distinction is made between the archetypal characters and the actual participants and the function that each serves.
Archetypes are symbolic and not actual or representative. The purpose and the point of their characterization is so that reader can learn something of what it might be like to be such a character and to experience the world of education though this character’s skin. Butt et al. (1992) argues that each perspective “carries the tone, the language, the quality, the feelings” conveyed by the way a person speaks or writes. “A single voice can represent both the unique individual and the collective voice: one that is characteristic of teachers (and other characters) as compared to other groups” (p. 57). It is the tone, the feelings and the qualities that I seek through these archetypal portrayals of characters and not the rendering of an actual voice or of a group. Having stated this, I think it is possible that some generalizations will be made, as characters qualities or essences resonate with the experience of the reader (Eisner, 1991). The focus is likely to be on purpose, motivation, method or evaluation. In the analysis and conclusion sections of this paper, I use themes for interpretation and for understanding, the point is not to make generalizations but to elucidate meaning (discussed in detail in Chapter 4).

Participants commented that perspectives are shaped by experience and several updated their perspective based on their most recent experiences. This link between perspective and experience highlights the process through which experience/perspective is constructed and reconstructed within temporal schemes. Over the course of the interviews several events impacted upon the thinking of the participants--in the United States President Clinton’s impeachment hearings, Canada’s participation in NATO’s bombing of Kosovo, and the student shootings at a high school in Littleton, Colorado. The presentation as much as the content of the messages seemed to influenced our thinking. In Ontario pre-campaign election ads and announcements by the Premier of more educational reforms, includes the testing of teachers. In the United States a
President who lies is acquitted based on political support rather than moral standard. This President, who while the impeachment hearings are going on, leads the Western world in illegal bombing based on moral grounds. In Colorado, students against jocks, go on a shooting spree killing 12 classmates and a teacher. A copy cat event occurs a week later in Taber, Alberta. These ‘crisis’ created the backdrop against which our discussion of the crisis in education was cast.

The Interviews

The ‘crisis in education’ served as the starting point for discussions with characters that play a part in this particular education story. My immediate interest was in the images, metaphors, and myths employed by these characters to describe their experience of this situation. And how the structure of story (genre, plot, and character casting) shaped their thoughts and responses, specifically those of the teacher as main character. Knowledge gleaned through personal observations, in particular the signs and signals conveyed through attention to body posture, gesture, intonation, word selection, and conversations were considered as sources of information. Research data included transcripts and notes from three individual interviews, each of approximately 1-1/2 hour in length, conducted between January and June during a single year. The mutually agreed upon locations for the interviews varied: including homes, school classrooms and offices. Each of the interviews was audiotaped with permission from the participants. Participants were given opportunities to reflect and make changes to their written perspective and to read and comment on each of the other participants’ perspectives.

During the first interview, I asked each of the participants to provide information on themselves and their lives, both in and out of education. These back-stories provided insight into the character, their background, influences, interests and experiences in
education. Following a methodology suggested by Reason and Hawkins (1988) for initiating storytelling, by telling a story about a story, I invited each to give their perspective on 'the crisis in education'. A series of questions served as prompts for their storytelling.

Indirect versus direct questions; focused on personal versus impersonal referents; concrete versus abstract referents; and cathartic versus low-affect issues were employed according to the criteria established by Lortie (1975) in his sociological study of teaching as an occupation. These questions are favoured for the following reasons; respondents provide more spontaneous responses and details of personal experiences, the more concrete the response the freer the analyst is to develop categories of analysis; and questions tied to strong feelings come closer to expressing core sentiments.

**Interview One: Questions.**

**Background information (character).**

1. Tell me about your life in education?
2. Describe your life outside of education?
3. What were the major attractions for you to education?
4. Who influences you?
5. If you were given the gift of making a significant difference in education, what difference would you make?

**Perspective (crisis in education).**

1. What do you think is the crisis in education?
2. What is it about?
3. Who started it?
4. What drives it?
5. What effect is this crisis having?
6. What are the obstacles that need to be overcome?
7. How do you imagine the crisis will end?

"If participants are allowed to continue in their own way until they indicate they have completed their answers, they are likely to relate stories" (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 163).
Participants all agreed to be taped and were relatively at ease with the process. The question prompts guided our conversations and were open-ended enough to allow participants to construct their own individual responses. Since the purpose was to get participants to tell stories during the interview, I listened and followed their lead, encouraging and asking questions to extend ideas presented. I allowed participants to interpret questions and to answer based on their own design. The style of response was individual. They all told stories and elaborated on answers, some more than others. Prior to the second interview, I provided the transcript of the first interview to each participant. We met to share this ‘research text’ and I asked for clarification and elaboration about aspects of their perspective that remained unclear. By providing the perspective as a written text, I hoped to encourage reflection by distancing the participant from their perspective, enabling them to disassociate and talk about it as a story. I invited each to give it a title, discuss themes and define their character role in the ‘crisis story’. In the second interview I asked each to describe in more detail an image alluded to (through metaphoric language) in their perspective.

**Interview two questions.**

1. What are your thoughts on reading the transcripts?
2. Does the crisis piece capture your perspective? Is there anything that you would add or take away?
3. What stands out for you in this piece?
4. Tell me more about this image...
5. If you were to treat this piece as a story, what title would you give it?
6. Is there a tension or a struggle in this perspective? If so, describe it.
7. Do you see yourself as playing a role? If so, what role?

Pokinghorne (1988) suggests that the “oral stories produced by respondents in an interview are dynamically different from written texts” and that “insights of discourse can help us understand the production of narratives in the interview context” (p. 165).
Discussing the metaphoric language proved to be quite effective in clarifying images participants' employed to understand the situation of the crisis and to elicit more metaphoric language. This process was also useful for analysis. Asking participants to define their role clarified the archetypal character that they play in the larger education story. Participants had some difficulty distancing from the written text which had qualities of oral conversation that do not appear in the revised and edited forms of writing we most commonly read. When asked to comment on their transcripts, participants commented on the 'ums', 'ands', 'gots' and scattered thoughts. This appeared to make participants self-aware, possibly resulting in a more associated reading. One participant thought this verbal rendition was probably more accurate and closer to the truth than a written version would have been because it had not been edited. She commented that in courts-of-law verbal comments are recorded as evidence and used to find inconsistencies. Her comments echo many of the narrativists who claim that it is the silenced aspects of narratives that are the most interesting and perhaps more revealing--those elements that usually get edited out. The oral text provides a means to examine these aspects and to read between the lines. Another participant was quite comfortable with the format of recorded oral speech. Having read historical accounts, where the actual words of the people who had experiences in particular settings and situations were recorded--he thought this more authentic. In synthesizing perspectives to 1-2 pages it was important that I maintain the voice and the integrity of each perspective. I asked participants to confirm that this shorter version reflected their thinking and that the language that was significant or meaningful was intact. When given the opportunity to make changes to their written perspective, one participant rewrote a particular answer, another asked me to edit for 'ands' and 'gots' and another asked me to remove the 'crisis' word.
Providing the background transcript, I imagined that participants might make links between their past and present; gaining insights into those elements that influence their perspective today. Transcribing and analysing these I found many parallels between lives lived and current ways of thinking. Many participants commented on how particular values and beliefs held by family and community influenced and shaped their lives and their life choices. Only one participant (the Teacher), who was quite open in terms of talking about his past, drew directly on this information to frame his present thinking and his future actions. His past and his present convictions were revealed to him in one of the stories he told, a revelation that he returned to in the next two interviews and an insight that he used to direct his future actions (to become a political activist). These back-stories (and this particular back-story) proved to be rich sources for understanding the qualities of the participants and for creating character portraits (Chapter 4).

Polkinghorne (1988) describes a method employed by Labov where a core story is abstracted from a particular content and then compared to other stories with a similar structure but told in other contexts. I forwarded to each of the participants a synthesized version of each of the ten perspectives—two pages long, the front and back of one page, for the third interview. References to particular positions or roles were removed and each of the perspectives was identified and referred to by a letter of the alphabet at the top of the page. I invited participants to read and reflect on the perspectives, as they were inclined. The questions (listed below) that would guide our discussion were provided in advance with the package. Again a modified version of Reason & Hawkins (1988) inquiry into story telling of telling a story about a story (about written text), this interview asked participants to respond to the stories before them and tell their version. In literature
circles, reader response is used to evoke the meaning from text, meaning that may be individual or collective.

Interview three questions.

After reading the ten perspectives.
1. What do you think about what the others had to say?
2. Was there a perspective that you were drawn to, interested in, intrigued by, repelled by, opposed to...?
3. What similarities or differences did you notice?
4. Did reading these perspectives provide any greater understanding? If so what?
5. Can you identify any of the speakers? How?
6. Choose a particular perspective and describe how this individual would respond to your perspective.

Having participants identify perspectives that they had strong feelings about either in agreement or opposition proved to be very useful in determining the relationships of one character to another. Asking participants to note similarities and differences provided insight into a mode of thinking—whether they sorted by similarities, by differences, by mostly similarities with some differences or mostly differences with some similarities. Although one style was not consistent, the pattern that emerged was interesting. Generally participants sorted for similarities, one participant (the Critic) sorted for differences with some similarities and only one (the Parent) sorted for differences. Participants had difficulty determining who the speaker was and looked for clues in language patterns. In the process of trying to determine who the speaker was, stereotypical characterizations of different players emerged as participants commented that such-and-such-a-character would not know that or talk like that. This provided an interesting contrast to the archetypal portrayals I was in the process of creating. Having participants respond to their own perspective by taking on the perspective of another confirmed how they thought about the others. A few had difficulty speaking for another,
most picked opposing views, one (the Teacher) selected a supporting view. Some of these presentations were quite dramatic and it was at the very least entertaining to hear how they thought others would respond to them. Most interesting for me was whether the participants could assume this third position in relation to their own perspective (Chapter 6).

Analysis

Meaning does not reside in a text but arises in its interpretation, and interpretation is shaped by sociocultural contexts. Conventions regarding what are considered appropriate uses of language in particular social contexts exist both in 'everyday' uses of language and in specialist usage (Whorf, 1956).

Building on the notions posited by researchers Sapir-Whorf (1929), Korzybski (1993) and Laprade (1998) language indicators can be used decipher and decode the social political reality of education as well as the patterns that shape teachers' stories and influence teachers' thinking. Story and narrative as a language form offers a process and structure for understanding the dynamic relationships between characters, plot, theme and genre within the larger socio-political education story. And, story response provides a means for eliciting underlying mythological meaning.

The Characters

The ten characters are introduced to the reader in three ways—what they say about themselves, what others say about them and what I say about them. Each of these points of view offers a different angle from which to view the character. As the character describes his or her life we look subjectively on the character. As the ten characters respond to each other the number of subjective angles multiplies. As I, the researcher, talk about each of them, we glimpse the objective research angle. This research angle builds upon the foundation supplied through the first (participant telling a story) and
second telling (story about a story or comments about others). Figuring large in the analysis of the characters is how each participant viewed their own character and how the characters fit together in relation to the central story concern—the crisis in education.

Archetypal Qualities

A line of distinction is drawn between archetypal and stereotypical characters and then an appeal made to the reader for a reading of characters as archetypes having qualities that manifest themselves in this time and space, yet are timeless in their essence. Their appearance in this research is so that aspects of their character and methods of problem solving may be understood. The particular forms they take are bounded, for each of these characters must position themselves relative to one another and operate within the framework of this story, a function that limits the particular parts they can play. There will be some that oppose; others who support and still others that depend upon another. These relative positions shift according to which character becomes our focus.

Portraits of Characters

A portrait of each of the characters is created through text, its purpose to “generate a powerful visual image” (Eisner, 1991, p. 20). The portrait should enable others to not just look at or admire but to see and understand the qualities of the character. This method is consistent with the aim of qualitative research which according to Eisner (1991) is “the application of the art of seeing and presenting research in such a way as to render the experience accessible to the reader and the viewer” (p. 3).

To achieve this aim, one must be able to use language to reveal what paradoxically, words can never say. This means that voice must be heard in the text, alliteration allowed, and cadences encouraged. Relevant allusions should be employed, and metaphor that adumbrates by suggestion used. All of these and more are as much a part of the tool kit for those constructing qualitative inquiry as analysis of variance is for those working in conventional quantitative research modes.

(Eisner, 1991, p.3)
Research examples provided by Lightfoot (1983) and Ayers (1989) serve as examples of portraiture work in the description of a high school (a compilation of multiple perspectives) and six preschool teachers (individual interviews). Theme is used to tie the portrait of a person or a place together. In the creation of each of the character portraits I attend to theme, sub-themes and supporting dialogue. Reading over the transcripts from the interviews, significant themes in the life and the perspective of the individual participants become apparent. Drawn together are those elements that represent and provide insight into the character, their aims, motives, beliefs and values and the means by which they judge experience. The events and dialogue that exemplify these are included in the research text.

**What they say about themselves.**

Each character portrait opens with an introduction to the character provided based on my experience of them, setting the stage for their entrance into the research story. What follows is a thematic rendition of the character as revealed through their life story and their view of the world, as well as, the role they identified themselves as playing in this education story. In this section the background information from the first interview was primarily used and particularly helpful in this regard. The text itself is thematic and presents the words of the character as they speak to these.

**What others say about them.**

Gleaned from the final interview, this information is presented in response to the portrait of the character. Collected and compiled based on theme and presented as a dialogue (see Bakhtin, 1981) the other characters respond to what the character had to say. This method of responding to an unknown speaker proved to be valuable in eliciting stereotypes of certain characters, a fascinating contrast to the archetypal characters presented. This
method also provided a means to confirm the position of one character in relation to another. In diagram, chart and description the relationships between each of the characters are illustrated—relationships that include ‘allies and companions’, ‘adversaries’ and ‘dependents’. The status of ‘other’ is reserved for characters who did not identify themselves as for or against. Specific examples are once again used to highlight these positions. The characters’ means of problem solving, whether they employ holistic (female) or cause-effect (male) strategies are contemplated.

What I say about them.

The Casting of Characters

The relationship of one character to another is charted based on their relative positioning through comments made, issues agreed upon or disagreed with and the naming of opposing views. Specific examples support whether characters are companions and allies, dependents or adversaries. How the character thinks is considered in terms of the problem solving strategies that each employs and way each sorts the different perspectives.

Objective and Subjective Roles

Consideration is given to whether characters present an objective or subjective point of view in the crisis story—whether they speak from the inside looking out (subjective) or the outside looking in (objective).

Purpose, Motivation, Methodology and Evaluation

A master chart of the relative positioning of characters to one another is presented. The purposes, motivations, methodology and evaluation of characters is discussed, citing specific references from the interview data. The character’s purpose is the result they desire or intend. Motivation is the underlying inequity that drives them in a
particular direction. Methodology is the approach (either mental or physical) they employ to achieve their purpose. Evaluation is the meaning the person finds in a situation or circumstances (how they view the pieces as fitting together). Examining these dichotomies makes clear the forces at play between characters either attracting or repelling them.

Characters and their Archetypal Functions

When participants were asked to name their role, they provided clues as to their archetypal functions. These are categorized according to the six character story functions; the protagonist (stands for the story goal); the antagonist (opposes); the contagonist (places obstacles in the way), the guardian (represents the conscience), the skeptic (stands for doubt) and the sidekick (represents confidence). These archetypal functions were compared in the research story, the provincial story, the local board story and the mythic story. Presented in chart form, this comparison of the characters serves to illuminate how and why the crisis plot has been effective and efficient.

Analysis of the Characters’ Perspectives on the Crisis in Education

In a discussion of plot, the analysis of nine characters’ perspectives on the crisis in education is presented (Chapter 5). The metaphoric and mythic language patterns are analysed and the implications discussed. Subsequently the parts are pieced together towards producing a metaphorically coherent whole.

Storytelling

Outlined here is the path that the research analysis follows in the analysis of the character’s perspectives on the crisis. Reason and Hawkin (1988) in their inquiry into storytelling define the path of expression that a story goes through from experience to metaphor to story to myth. I insert image into this sequence as a non-verbal symbol that
arises from experience and gets expressed as metaphor (see Clandinin, 1986 and description of image in Chapter 1).

Figure 1. Path of Expression

The Story Plot: The Crisis in Education

Image.

Clandinin (1986) proposes a concept of image with moral, emotional and personal dimensions that guides thinking and consequently action: often expressed as metaphor. Images that guide or inspire can be detected from the descriptions and responses provided by participants during the interviews, both in response to the crisis in education story and their reflection on it. The pictures that participants' paint with words, whether direct or indirect references, were attended to. As participants talked about the crisis they used descriptive metaphoric words that created images—a tunnel, walls falling down, a battle, a swamp, a war etc. In the second interview I asked participants to describe these images in greater detail. Participants found this a relatively easy task, quickly identifying what the image was and how it worked. The detail and relationships were quite explicit in some cases (as in the Teacher's description of the boiling pot as a political cartoon). In two cases (the Parent and the Teacher), images appeared to be lifted from a literature context (e.g. Orwell's 1984, Dickens' Oliver Twist). The parallels between the image of
the crisis and its counterpart in literature were explored, in terms of the similarities in the images, as well as, the setting (socio-political times) and the author’s message.

**Metaphor.**

Munby (1986) suggests that it is through metaphor that teachers give voice to tacit knowledge. Using a methodology similar to Munby’s (1986) I attended to the words, phrases, and images of the participants collecting, classifying and considering these. Utilizing the participant’s language patterns, I posed and then responded to the questions what is this like and what does this describe, to name specific metaphors. Munby (1986) suggests that “metaphor is not just a linguistic entity but a process by which we encounter the world” (p.199). Metaphors are not just a matter of words; human thought processes are metaphorical. Examining “the metaphorical content of a teacher’s speech appears to be a promising approach to learning something about how a teacher constructs educational reality” (Munby, 1986, p.201). Examining the metaphorical content of characters’ language is a means to learn something about the way they think and to understand how they define the current education context.

The language patterns of the participants were telling. Structural, orientational, personification, and ontological metaphors were employed by participants to describe the ‘crisis in education’ (categories defined by Lakoff and Johnson, 1981). In most cases this metaphorical language was very explicit. Word such as ‘is’ ‘as’ and ‘like’ linked two particular abstract concepts (e.g. education is politics). Lakoff and Johnson (1981) employ ‘structural metaphor’ as the umbrella term for metaphor, employed when “one highly structured and clearly delineated concept is used to structure another” (p. 61). In cases where metaphors were implied, but not explicit, the language that surrounded the
concept was explored. Lakoff and Johnson's (1981) analysis was particular helpful in knowing what to look for.

Words indicating an orientation such as ‘in’ ‘out’ ‘up’ ‘down’ in association with some aspect of education and the crisis indicate an orientational metaphor. Through our physical orientation in the world we experience concepts in terms of spatial orientation (e.g. in-out, up-down, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral). These orientations imply a judgement of good or bad. Good is typically associated with orientations such as ‘up’ ‘in’ and ‘on.’ Our experience of our own bodies as being ‘bounded’ causes us to understand experience in terms of objects and substances, allowing us to pick out parts and treat them as discrete entities or substances—we can refer to them, categorize them, group them and reason about them.

A concept treated as an object or entity is an ontological metaphor. Examples of these occurred in the research when participants referred to education as a tunnel, as walls and closed doors, and negative scores. Personification occurs when a physical object is comprehended as a person. This “allows us to comprehend a wide variety of non-human entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics and activities” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981, p. 33). The metaphor ‘money rules’ in the image Profit and Losses: An Economics Graph serves as an example of personification. The metaphors that are used to describe images of the crisis are highlighted. Following the examples provided by Lakoff and Johnson (1981) these are interpreted based on what each metaphor presents, as well as, what each hides. A dialogue ensues between the various characters, journalists and education critics (Saul, 1997; Barlow, 1994; Lapham, 1996) as they speak to these metaphors, their applications and their implications.
Myth.

It is commonly agreed that myth is both individual and collective, shaped by culture and circumstance and passed by word of mouth. Campbell's (1949) comparative analysis of world mythology suggests that there is one story that underlies all stories. Feinstein and Krippner (1988) claim that personal mythology is the vibrant infrastructure that informs a life. Harste, Woodward, Burke (1984) suggest from their work with teachers, that teachers' assumptions and beliefs are the basis for actions and classroom practice. Could myth be the underlying opinions, ideals, beliefs and assumptions upon which thought and the subsequent actions of characters are based, the implicit plotline of a character and a culture's story? What informs the participant's story? What governs the actions of the characters and the direction of the storytelling?

During our conversations each of the participants stated opinions and beliefs that had mythic qualities—suggesting keys to the crisis paradox we were all attempting to solve. For example, “Education is the only enterprise in the world that people expect to stay the same and kids always get an education in spite of the teacher and the system.” These broad statements, often said without any particular supporting evidence, are indicative of mythic thinking. In the discussion of each image these belief statements are analysed using the six dimensions suggested by Lakoff and Johnson (1981) for
determining the truth of a sentence. In order to understand a sentence as true, we must first understand the sentence (p. 166). Truth is defined as structural coherence and the six dimensions of structure on which truth is determined includes participants, parts, stages, linear sequence, causation, and purpose. For the sake of coherence, I present these belief statements with the images that elicited this response rather grouping them according to the speaker.

**Story.**

Gergen (1999) synthesizes six necessary elements for a well-formed narrative in contemporary culture: establishing an endpoint; selecting events relevant to the endpoint; ordering of events towards the endpoint; stability of identity overtime; causal linkages between events; and demarcation signs marking the beginning and end. Based on these criteria, several layers of stories are considered in this research. I imagine them as nesting blocks, one fitting into and being contained by the next. First, each of the characters provides a story of their life. These are the back-stories to the second story, their perspective on the crisis in education. The third story is the description of the image that symbolizes that perspective. Although I have separated each of these stories for discussion purposes in the methodology section, they all come into play when attempting to make sense of the character, his or her perspective, and the image he or she has constructed to convey meaning. As threads of the same cloth, each is an integral part of the whole, weaving its way back and forth it complements the others and reinforces the whole.

**Genre.**

The genre delineates a form that locates the narrator in relation to the story, as well as, determining the parameters of plot and the actions of characters (Keen, 1995).
The genre of the story speaks to the position of the main character in the larger story, whether hero, victim, fool or martyr. Determination of genre is based on a number of factors: the characters' actions, the types of story events, how the story ends and the voice or general tone with which the story is told. The participant’s images are discussed in terms of their perspective genre--whether tragedy, comedy, irony, or romance (Chapter 5). Then, the genres in the crisis story are discussed in terms of their functions and implications.

**Theme.**

Themes are the “recurring messages that pervade the situation”, the “dominant features of the situation or person” and the “pervasive qualities that permeate and unify situations and objects” (Eisner, 1991, p.104). In this research, themes are considered in terms of what obstacles and events challenge the character and how the character positions in response to these. Theme is especially helpful in understanding the world of education from a perspective, providing further insight into the metaphors employed by the character. Further, theme is used to create dialogue between one character and another as they present a position on a particular topic, justify their own thinking and challenge another’s. Theme pays a particularly important role in the sections on What Others Say (Chapter 4: Gathering of the Allies) and in the discussion of each of the images on the crisis (Chapter 5: The Plot Thickens). In both of these chapters, the subtitles following the presentation of a character or an image are themes drawn from the data and what follows is a discussion of these. The themes that permeate all of the discussions are considered in the final chapter (Chapter 6: Conclusions).
Synthesis of the Crisis Images

The next step in the process of analysis was to synthesize the various images of the crisis in order to get a sense of the whole. Having examined each image as a single story, the stories as a whole are compared through contrastive analysis. The story of the blind men feeling the elephant (an analogy used by the Parent) is used to frame a process of taking each of the parts and placing them side by side in order to discover what each lends to understanding of the crisis paradox. Contrastive analysis aids the researcher in understanding the similarities and differences of the character's thinking. Through creative and imaginative story writing I play the voices of the characters, themes, plots and genres one against the other. Here the work of the literary critics are employed (Bakhtin, 1981). From the analysis and synthesis of this data a sense of each character's thinking is developed. Surprising and interesting relationships between the characters and their perspectives emerge.

Metaphoric Coherence

Metaphoric coherence is a concept employed by Lakoff and Johnson (1981) to examine the structural basis of a metaphor by naming the concepts being compared and examining the "internal systematicity of the metaphor" or how one concept overlaps with another (p. 91). Each metaphor can be conceived of as a branch of the same concept, in this case the concept of the 'crisis in education.' Whether single or multiple, metaphors can be cross-examined for coherence as a means to gain insight into the qualities or characteristics that are the foundation upon which this metaphor is constructed. In this section, I respond to the question, how does the metaphor work and what does it have to say about the qualities of the concept in question--the crisis in education?
Concept of Education

What is education? Why do we have schools? What will education in the future look like? These basic questions concerned participants as they attempted to answer my questions. Failing a direct response, I recognized that each of the images presented particular view of education and I wondered what each had to say and how each might inform the others. As the first step in this process I listed the representations provided from the images of education in chart form (see Table 14) and beside each of the representations the corresponding content, structure, process, and context. Content is defined as the elements; structure the framework that binds this elements together; process the action taken on the elements; and context the conditions under which such action takes place. To conceptualize each of these I drew on my understanding of the image and the significant themes that each character related. This process was illuminating. Reading down the context column I was struck by conditions or causes that produce effects. We understand these with our culture as ‘the effects of living in wartime.’ What follows is a discussion of these war time conditions, drawing on study of the metaphors of war presented by Lakoff (1991) and the mythology of war and peace by Campbell (1972), the sociological-economical-political time in which we currently live is elucidated.

Metaphorical Entailments

What is the basis for this conception of education? Using a technique presented by Lakoff and Johnson (1981) for examining the overlap between metaphors (the metaphoric entailments) I created a skeletal framework. Placing the representations of education (gruel, statistics, building, swamp, tunnel, age, button, target, value) side by side I listed below the entailments. The shared entailments became clear. Quantifiable
variables, predictability and methods that cause certain effects—were the qualities of education these metaphors collectively convey. What follows is a discussion of what happens when qualitative aspects are quantified (Lakoff, 1991) and specifically what this may mean in terms of education.

**Character Casting**

What roles do educational characters play? I create a table of the metaphorical castings of characters by listing each of the metaphorical representations of the various characters alongside each of the images that it was drawn from (see Table 1). Reading down the columns, some characters appear passive and others active, some are objects of action and others act on objects. By corresponding each of the characters to a part of speech I define their relationships to one another, in terms of their functions in speech. Linguists' hold that language shapes our view of the world. Here the part of speech and its function defines whether characters in this education story act at all. Discussed are the implications of the parts they play. Manipulating language within a sentence structure produces cause-effect relationships that are represented in diagram form (see Figure 5). The politician is all action, the teacher re-action and the other characters are objectified. Applying these speech functions to a sentence structure I examine the relationships between the characters. What happens when politicians act and others respond? Placing each character in a sentence according to function, I confirm this analysis of their function.

Next I examine the prepositions related to the object 'education'. Education is contained, directed towards, or applied depending on how the character views him or herself in the story—as being controlled, under attack or being re-cast. Exploring the prepositions that related to the parent (modifying the actions of the politician) an
indication of whether the parent (as a noun) is perceived as definite or indefinite becomes evident. I relate each back to the speaker, outlining which character views the parent as definite and which as indefinite. Consideration is given to the relationships of adversary, companion or dependent outlined in the character analysis (in Chapter 4).

**Plot**

Employing the three rudimentary narrative forms outlined by Gergen (1999)—that of progressive, regressive and stability narratives—the plots of each of the images is illustrated. Plots of each of the crisis stories are presented in diagram form with a brief explanation, using the sequence of story events, including how the story begins and how it is likely to end. The information for the creation of these plots is drawn from each of the three stories of each of the characters. The image represents the current state (middle), the participant's response to the question of how the story will end establishes the ending (end) and descriptions of their lives in education gives clues as to how they viewed education in the past (beginning). These plotlines are contrasted in terms of who tells what kind of story. Those that maintain education tell tales of stability, those who make it happen tell progressive tales, and those who it happens to tell tales of regression. A discussion of the regressive plot line presented by the Current Government is considered and the possible reasons for telling this narrative is discussed (using Gergen, 1999). A cycle showing a possible relationship between the plots of each of these characters is presented in diagram form and discussed in terms of how it may serve the different characters in this education story.

**Research Text: A Dialogue**

“Dialogues framed by a story.” Bakhtin (1981), speaking about the novel, contends that it is through dialogue that “contemporary reality and its concerns become
the starting point and centre of an artistic ideological thinking and evaluating of the past” (p.29). This research is rich in layers of dialogue. In the context of our interviews participants include dialogue as a way to present another’s point of view, points of view that have the potential for influencing them. The Teacher talks for his neighbour down the street, the Federation President spoke for her friends, her husband and her daughter outlining their opinions about what teachers should be doing in schools. When asked to take on another point of view and speak to their own perspective, most participants did so, some quite dramatically.

This research text is a dialogue in which voices representing particular lines of thought can be heard throughout. The subjective line of thought consists of the voices of the participants telling their stories and providing their own interpretations and insights into their stories and others. In the subjective line of thought, the perspective of a main character (Teacher) and obstacle character (Government) provide focal points presenting the story from within and the story from without. The objective line of thought consists of the analysis and interpretation of the stories that the characters represent and the stories that the characters tell. It is through these particular lines of thought that the story is understood and its effect on characters. The aim is to present a balanced view of the issues that lie at heart of a crisis story. Various judgements will be made through the reading of this text depending on the perspective one employs. These lines of thinking should be scrutinized in terms of how each perspective functions and whether each serves to illuminate meaning on the crisis and the characters in relation to it. The aim is provide a complete story by offering multiple perspectives.

Reviewing the information contained in the metaphorical coherence analysis, I revisit the position of the main character in relation to the obstacle character and the
objective story in relation to the subjective story. Through text and diagram I present
what each line of thinking lends to the research in terms of understanding. Then illustrate
this through describing the realm each occupies; the specialty each presents; the questions
each poses, the tensions that exist for each; and the story problem each embodies.

**Genre**

Genre is the tone or emotional quality of judgements inherent in a perspective; a
zone and field of valorized perception of the world. Each of the lines of thinking is
considered in light of the Fry’s (1957) description of four narrative genres grounded in
our experience with the seasons—tragedy, satire, comedy and romance. The birth of new
life in spring gives rise to the comedy in which a challenge or threat is overcome and
harmony is restored. The hot days of summer inspire the drama in which the protagonist
through a series of threats emerges victorious. In the autumn the life of summer is
contrasted with the death of winter and tragedy is born. In winter when expectations and
dreams die comes the satire (explained by Gergen, 1999). Each line of thinking is
considered first and then the relative position of each to the story as a whole. Bakhtin
(1981) suggests that the genre of the novel, far from hardened, has plastic possibilities.
As such it allows for the potential for a mix in genres. Following I discuss what happens
when a mixed arrangement of genres is presented through the various characters.
Figure 3. Lines of thinking presented in the research text.
CHAPTER 3

SETTING: THE CALL TO ADVENTURE

It was a time of rapid and unsettling change. The newly elected conservative government acted swiftly to implement its “common sense revolution.” Introducing provincial control proposed to remedy inequities in education. Providing a back to basics approach and raising the standards of performance it promises a reduced cost to taxpayers. Teachers and their federations protested against the changes identifying this common sense revolution as a business agenda, a ploy to win taxpayer support while eroding local autonomy and eliminating real decision making power.

Employing the support of the press and media the government begins their public campaign to discredit education. The Government feigns emotional support for the welfare of students. Through press releases and public statements the government paints a picture of a broken and failing educational system. They take corrective measures to right the wrongs of irresponsible teachers, administrators and local politicians. When the proposed cuts are questioned, they spent thousands of dollars on media campaigns to boost their sagging public image, attempting to sway the peoples’ impressions of schools towards their way of thinking. Their covert ploy, aimed at getting the support they need to manipulate educational structures to serve their capitalist agenda—to gain control of education’s tax dollars.

Teachers’ identified the covert agenda and understood the crisis in education was created to gain public support for the implementation of tighter systems of control.

Parents are skeptical. The Boards of Education and the Local Politicians spout rhetoric. They tow the party line.

The first stage in the mythic journey is a wasteland where “hopes are thwarted, rigid forms imposed” and lesser players are discounted. The setting creates the need for the main character to find a way, to discover new possibilities and potentialities. A radical shift in consciousness is needed, however, to turn the situation around (Houston, 1996, p.134).

The Postmodern Era

All human understanding is interpretation and no interpretation is final. (Tarnas, 1991, p. 397)

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As setting, the postmodern era is not one reality but many. The proverbial shape-shifter, it takes on many different and diverse forms. In an information age and networked society of "timeless time" and "distance locales" (Castells) this era spans the beginning of recorded time to the present, fluidly embodying forms without attachment to any particular way of being or thinking. The slightest shift in conscious thought, belief, or action can cause transformation. Described as open and indeterminate, Tarnas (1991) in his review of the ideas that have shaped our world-view, names these intellectuals and cultural currents as the shapes this era subsumes:

- Pragmatism, existentialism, Marxism, and psycholanalysis to feminism,
- heurmeneutics, deconstruction, and post empiricist philosophy of science,
- to cite only a few of the more prominent.

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 395)

Analysis of language is credited with bringing forth skeptical currents in the postmodern mind.

- Neitzche’s analysis of the problematic relation of reality to language;
- C. S. Peirce’s semiotics, positing that all language takes place in signs;
- Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistics, positing the arbitrary relationship between word and object, sign and signified, Wittgenstein’s analysis of the linguistic structuring of human experience;
- Heidegger’s existentialist-linguistic critique of metaphysics;
- Edward Sapir and B.L. Whorf’s linguistic hypothesis that language shapes the perception of reality as much as reality shapes language;
- Michel Foucault’s genealogical investigations into the social construction of knowledge;
- and Jacques Derrida’s deconstructionism, challenging the attempt to establish a secure meaning of any text.

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 398)

Advances in anthropology, sociology and linguistics have made us aware that factors such as class, race, and ethnicity create and bias perspective. This results in “a sympathetic view attitude toward repressed or unorthodox perspectives and a more self-critical view of currently established ones” (p. 397). Pragmatism, heurmeneutics, and
poststructuralism inform us that the world does not exist except in interpretation and that our interpretation calls reality into being.

Because human experience is linguistically prestructured, yet the various structures of language possess no demonstrable connection with independent reality, the human mind can never claim access to any reality other than that determined by its local form of life.

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 399)

In the contemporary academic world, the character of intellectual analysis is up for revision. All human knowledge is “mediated by signs and symbols of uncertain provenance, constituted by historically and culturally variable predispositions and influenced by often conscious human interests” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 397). Language has been interpreted as a cage (Wittengenstein cited by Polkinghorne, 1988). Unending relativity renders a schizophrenic way of thinking about the world. Uncertainty, displacement, pluralism, and distressing incoherence are the conditions of the postmodern era. “The fate of human consciousness is ineluctably nomadic, a self-aware wandering through error” (p. 399).

The Western mind’s overriding compulsion to impose some form of totalizing reason—theological, scientific, economic—on very aspect of life is accused of being not only self deceptive but destructive.

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 400)

Disenchanted with a history of “ruthless expansion and exploitation—the rapacity of its elite from ancient times to modern, its systematic thriving at the expense of others”—the focus has become the rejection of an intellectual canon and the deconstruction of traditional assumptions through sociological and political, historical and psychological, linguistic and literary avenues (Tarnas, 1991, p. 400).

Texts of every category are analyzed with an acute sensitivity to the rhetorical strategies and political functions they serve. The underlying intellectual ethos is one of disassembling established structures, deflating pretensions, exploding beliefs, unmasking appearances...
Any alleged comprehension, coherent outlook is at best no more than a temporary useful fiction masking chaos, at worst an oppressive fiction masking relationships of power, violence, and subordination.

Our potential for intellectual “flexibility” and “cross-fertilization” of ideas with a global community calls for the practice of open ‘conversation’ between different understandings, different vocabularies and different cultural paradigms” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 402). Forms from the past have come actively into play including elements of the classical Greece—“Platonic and Presocratic philosophy, Hermeticism, mythology and the mystery religions’ (p. 403). Contemporary religion has been revitalized, “ranging from Eastern mysticism to psychedelic self-exploration to liberal theology and ecofeminism spirituality” (p. 403). The collapse of meaning has been countered by an emerging awareness of self-responsibility and capacity for self-transformation. Science has rethought and reformulated the human relation to nature referencing archaic and mystical conceptions of nature. Examples include Bateson’s ecology of mind, McClintock’s theory of genetic transposition, Lovelock’s Gaia hypothesis, Lorenz and Feigenbaum’s chaos theory and Keller’s recommendation for empathetic identification with the object to be understood. The shape and nature of imagination has changed from simplistic (in comparison to perception and reason) to informing perception and reasoning. The work of Jung and post-Jungian depth psychology has wrought new appreciation for the power and complexity of the unconscious as well as insight into the nature of archetypal patterns and meaning. Recognition of the metaphorical nature of philosophic and scientific statements has affirmed the archetypal categories of the unconscious that condition and structure human experience and cognition (Jung, Hillman).
Archetypes are recognized as enduring patterns or principles that are inherently ambiguous and multivalent, dynamic, malleable, and subject to diverse cultural and individual inflections yet that possess a distinct underlying formal coherence and universality.  

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 406)

A tension exists between a press for radical deconstruction and unmasking of knowledge beliefs and world-views of integration and reconciliation. Categories that have sustained traditional oppositions and dualities—between male and female, subject and object, human and nature, body and spirit, self and other, have been deconstructed and reconceived, permitting less dichotomized alternative perspectives. “A chaos of valuable but seemingly incompatible interpretations prevails, with no resolution in sight” (p. 409).

The culture suffers both psychologically and pragmatically from the philosophic anomie that pervades it. In the absence of any viable, embracing cultural vision, old assumptions remain blundering in force, providing an increasingly unworkable and dangerous blueprint for human thought and activity.  

(Tarnas, 1991, p. 409)

As the twentieth century draws to a close a widespread sense of urgency is tangible in many levels…a time of intense expectation, of striving, of hope and uncertainty. An era marked with desolation and regeneration, for we are responsible not only for planetary destruction of the physical world in terms of the planet earth but also in the metaphysical world with the death of God. Without a god to lead us the temptation is to create other gods.

We are living in what the Greeks call the kairos the right moment—for a ‘metamorphosis of the gods’ of the fundamental principles and symbols. This peculiarity of our time, which is certainly not of our conscious choosing, is the expression of the unconscious man with us who is changing. Coming generations will have to take account of this momentous transformation if humanity is not to destroy itself through the might of its own technology and science…so much is at stake and so much depends on the psychological constitution of modern man….Does the individual know that he (she) is the makeweight that tips the scales?  

(Jung quoted in Tarnas, 1991, p. 413)
Social Construction of Reality

Amid the collapse of old belief comes the discovery that we are capable of creating many layers of belief and unbelief, of living partly in and partly out of socially created realities.


The postmodern era, according to Anderson (1992) is a social construction of reality; a culture of virtuality according to Castells (1998). All those things that define a society: boundaries, culture and political institutions; individual identity; and collective beliefs are social constructions. As a result, all sectors of society are deeply interested in what people believe and modifying those beliefs. What the people believe is ‘public opinion’ and the means for altering beliefs is through advertising, propaganda, brainwashing and public relations. In the postmodern era, life is perceived as drama and our major issues revolve around definitions of roles. Fabrication of stories is the means we use to give purpose and shape to our social existence. Public happenings, such as the kind that are conveyed through the media, have the quality of scenes created or staged for public consumption. These are ‘pseudoevents’ (a Daniel Boorstin term). Nationalism and the nation state are such events (Anderson, 1992). As the predominant form of political identity it is the mythmaking of monarchs and politician types. For the real “fount of political power, the source of all loyalty and all independence is the reality-creating process by which we decide who we are and what we think is happening” (Anderson, 1992, p. 107). In its making, nationalism must overcome all other identities that may dilute allegiance to the mother or fatherland. Symbols are pressed into service and when necessary so are forms of repression that range from outlawing the use of a dialect to genocide. The individual self is a recent socially created reality. The modern individual still internalizes values and beliefs and structures the world within the language and
myths of his or her civilization, however, now he or she must determine who to be, what to be, and how to live. “The individual in search of self-identity becomes a consumer of reality” (Anderson, 1992, p. 114). “Political institutions can help create ourselves and contribute to the re-creation of our societies, or they can exploit our urges toward self-creation” (p. 115). It is through public opinion, a democratic phenomenon and a socially constructed idea, that individual identity is created. The implication is that different realities can exist in the same environment and that people can come to different conclusions from the same data. In a democracy, groups seeking power become very interested in manipulating public opinion. When a socially constructed reality goes public the PR person is born. This expert views public opinion not as something to be learned but something to be created through the games of reality making—advertising and public relations—the by-products of modern politics and democracy. Anderson (1992) claims that propaganda came on the scene at the same time as totalitarianism—both focused on creating a monolithic reality structure in a pluralistic world. Democracy and totalitarianism are similar in the way in which they deal with a relativistic world; recognizing individualism and public opinion as sources of power; and expressing a creative and revolutionary impulse to smash old structures and start again. Hero leaders maintain a stable and separate structure of social reality in a world being transformed by globalism and cultural change, while constantly at war against any threat to undermine it. Feeding on the need for a personal identity and public opinion these are used to provide “a pre-fabricated self respect based on grandeur and transcendent purpose of the state” (p. 116). Anderson (1991) outlines a two step process, first manipulation and then repression. With the ability to shape identities and belief systems political leaders are interested now not only “in winning wars but hearts and minds” (p. 120).
Politics, the media and the mobility of life has created a theatre where “ordinary people can participate in the unfolding historical dramas of the time—not just vote but participate emotionally” (p. 121).

When people talk about politics as theatre, they tend to speak as though political events become less real when they come more closely to resemble drama. Which is precisely what does not happen. Politics is the theatre of reality. The ‘political arena’ as we sometimes call it, is a stage upon which dramas are improvised while real people succeed, suffer, fail, or die—and upon which real people create their conception of who and what they are.

(Anderson, 1991, p. 122)

Contributing to the act of creating the social reality, each individual receives in turn, a definition of identity. While Boorstein distinguishes between reality and pseudoevents, Anderson thinks that in the postmodern world pseudoevents become real life. The raw materials of experience are used to fashion a story that becomes reality and real life experience is processed almost instantly into documentary style entertainment. This Anderson (1992) calls the theatre of reality.

**The Matter of Language: A Manner of Speaking**

In the beginning was the word.

Linguists, Sapir (1929/58) and Whorf (1956), view language as structuring reality.

Every language is a vast pattern-system, different from others in which are culturally ordained the forms and categories by which the personality not only communicates, but also analyses nature, notices, or neglects types of relationships and phenomena, channels his reasoning, and builds the house of his consciousness.

(Whorf, 1956, p. 214)

Korzybski (1923) thought the largest semantic problem was the everyday act of naming and describing. The word ‘is’ used to identify things is the cause—for “the word is not the thing” and “the map is not the territory”. Chase (1938) postulated that a better understanding of referents (the object, situation or thing being referred to) would result in
better communication and rational thought. He defined three labels 1) common objects—chair 2) cluster or collections—public opinion and 3) essences and qualities—truth. The labelling of common objects creates minimal problems since actual examples exist. Clusters and collections are abstractions of the highest order and since they do not physically exist, other than in our minds, confusion is created. Labels for qualities and essences create a fantastic wonderland that are the zone of philosophy, politics and economics (Chase, 1938).

General semanticists provided a means to critique politics. Orwell (1968), in his essay *Politics and the English Language*, argues against sloppy language designed to make lies sound truthful.

Now it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely... It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary step toward political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers.

(Orwell, 1968)

Vague and insignificant forms of speech, and abuse of language have so long passed for mysteries of science; and hard and misapplied words, with little or no meaning, have, by prescription, such a right to be mistaken for deep learning and height of speculation, that it will not be easy to persuade either those who speak or those who hear them, that they are but the covers of ignorance, and hindrance of true knowledge.

(Locke, 1690)

But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation even among people who should know better. The debased language that I have been discussing is in some ways very convenient. Phrases like *not unjustifiable assumption, leaves much to be desired, would serve no good purpose, a consideration which should do well to bear in mind* are a continuous temptation, a packet
of aspirins always at one’s elbow... This invasion of one’s mind by ready made phrases can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one’s brain.

(Orwell, 1968)

The idea of anaesthetizing the mind echoes the work of McLuhan (1962) who predicted such an effect on the mind with exposure to media. He posited that the focused concentration of sensory input into one sensory channel (auditory, visual, or kinesthetic) over stimulates with the effect of neutralizing. For example, kinesthetic experiences of television and video pacify. The medium, in essence, sends a message of non-action. To further exacerbate the process, it is in this open and passive state that particular words are received.

The Construction of the Canadian Reality: Universal Public Education

Many Canadians would have difficulty accepting the idea that Canada is a poor county. According to Saul (1997), the large geographic area, severe climate, lack of critical density, and large population of refugees, make it so. Without an elite ruling class to impose social order, democracy, social egalitarianism and cooperation became the necessary characteristics for survival. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century, when most other western nations were caught up in the dream of the self-regulation market place, through competition and free trade (dreams of the early and mid-industrial revolution) government intervention in Canada became a core policy. Canada could not afford to be romantic. These three elements—public education, government intervention in both social and economic structures, and transfer payments—built prosperity on the foundation of systemic poverty. It was on the basis of the social equilibrium created by these policies that the business sector was able to blossom. Left to its own devices,
particularly in a resources-based economy, the marketplace would tend to accentuate rather than minimize differences.

"The Canadian answer to systemic poverty was based on a successful public education system...bolstered by continual government intervention in the economy at all levels." (p. 136). In 1852, Prince Edward Island with the solid reform government passed the Free Education Act. Nova Scotia, Upper and Lower Canada were moving in similar directions and engaged in similar debates. The principal opposition came from the elites who would have to finance it through taxes--they portrayed it as everything from authoritarian to communistic. Emily Carr wrote of how English settlers in Victoria took a generation and a half to stop sending their children to private schools and accept the Canadian public schools.

It's also worth noting that Tupper, Ryerson and Meilleur, sought out the elements relevant to their system of public education not in England, where the class system dominated education, and not in France, where the church still dominated, but in places like Prussia, Holland, Scotland, Switzerland, Massachusetts and New York. There the idea of universal education had made great progress. This was long before the American systems would decline back into the English model of unbridled opportunity, with money and influence giving itself the best schools by creating a larger private sector, leaving the underfunded public schools for everyone else.

(Saul, 1997, p. 135)

The success of the public system could be seen at the turn of the century. Out of a population of five million, one million were in school. Only seven thousand were in university. Eighty-three per cent of the population could read and write. In Toronto alone there were 150 publications.

(Saul, 1997, p. 135-6)

Central to Canadian society was democracy and social equilibrium. Economics was, if anything sacrificed, for these. Saul (1997) cites examples. In the late 1840's, when during deep depression brought on by British free-trade policies, "the economic elite of Montreal called for annexation by the United States as the only road to prosperity." The population
of Lower and Upper Canada (anglophone and francophone) with a resounding unified voice ignored them. The building of the railroad across Canada was not primarily an economic act. "Had economics been the driving force we would have saved ourselves time and money by going the American route...Laurier's refusal of the Empire Pact was in part a refusal of an economic life-insurance policy" (p. 137-138).

Saul (1997) acknowledges that it is hard to understand these arguments today. We think that everything has changed and that the principals that held in the creation of the country no longer hold true today. We naively believe that we are too sophisticated to reclaim and protect our roots. Saul questions, "What precisely does our new sophistication consist of? In what way are we thinking at a more complex level about how a country functions that that of Lafontaine, Baldwin, Cartier, Macdonald, Laurier?" (p. 138). In comparison, he judges the politicians today as exemplifying regression in sophisticated analysis and the disappearance of intellectual discourse. "In its place are simplistic formulae, emotional manipulation and a slavish adherence to the most banal economic clichés of our day" (p. 138). We are in the grips of corporatism that makes effective use of the new means of communication, allowing materialism and utilitarianism to be presented as "romantic, noble, courageous, masculine, intelligent, fun and, in complete contradiction with all the proceeding, as inevitable" (p. 138).

**The Ontario Reality: Chronology of a Crisis**

September 1995  
Education Minister announces plan to create a crisis

November 1995  
Current Government announces intention to reform secondary school system

December 1995  
Financial statements reveal $400 million to be cut from education grants
March 1995
Details of cuts result in $555 million taken from education. $425 million cut by the former government’s social contract are made permanent ($231 million from operating grants, $167 million from capital, $145 million from Junior Kindergarten, $150 million from adult education, $39 million from transportation. Minister of Education announces a moratorium on capital projects.

January 1997
Bill 104, The Fewer School Boards Act is introduced to amalgamate school boards.

April 1997
Bill 104 is passed.

June 1997
Release of the elementary math and language curriculum to be implemented in September.

August 1997
Justice calls Bill 104 breathtakingly arbitrary and says the powers it provides are constitutionally suspect.

September 1997
Current Government spends $1 million on media ads and propaganda sent to every household. Bill 160 is introduced on September 22, 1997. Current Government spend another $1.3 million on radio, newspaper and TV propaganda.

October 1997
Minister of Education is replaced. Leaked documents reveal Current Government’s intention to cut another $667 million from education. Province wide political protest as teachers walk out over Bill 160.

November 1997
Justice denies Current Government application for an injunction to order teachers back to work. Government introduced an amendment to Bill 160, which removes principals and vice-principals from the teacher’s federations.

December 1997
Bill 160 becomes law. Parent councils no longer advisory. Local communities no longer have local flexibility to make decisions on the funding of local priorities. The Minister of Finance given the ability to raise $ 6 billion in property taxes without public debate.

March 1998
Opposition leaks education funding formula detailing among others: cuts to operating and maintenance budgets, staffing and programs. Minister of Education releases funding formula for education. $ 95 million in early learning programs cancelled.
April 1998
Boards begin to announce layoffs, school closures and cancelled programs. Principals and vice-principals are forced to decide whether or not to remain teachers. Premier stages televised infomercials with a handpicked group of parents.

May 1998
Child care centres in schools face evictions or higher rents. Ministry announces funding for new textbooks. Publishers given two weeks to produce books consistent with the new curriculum. Teachers given three weeks to review materials submitted. Media reveals that the government indicates they intend to set up photo-ops with new books and Tory MPs at the schools in the fall.

July 1998
Justice rules that parts of Bill 160 are unconstitutional. He comments that there are serious concerns over the funding formula.

August 1998
Bill 160 forces all teaching contracts to expire on August 31.

September 1998
Current Government spends approximately $2 million tax dollars on government education advertising. Premier holds half-hour infomercial on education. Minister repeatedly interferes with local negotiations through comments in the media.

(Ontario Liberal Party, 1999)
CHAPTER 4

CHARACTERS: GATHERING THE ALLIES

In a rural southwestern Ontario, a once small board of education has officially amalgamated with a neighbouring county. Founded on the conservative attitudes and values of a largely homogeneous rural population, this board’s reputation was built on frugal financing and providing fundamental skills.

A recently appointed Principal of one of the secondary schools makes it happen. Determined to stay on the cutting edge of change, she sets the pace while balancing the needs of parents, teachers and board administration.

The Associate Director, an educator of 33 years, is nearing retirement. An active community member in his off-hours he serves his church and a local service club. He views his work for the board as a public relations role, softening the message of the government and maintaining the confidence of his staff.

The Board Chair, born and raised on a nearby farm, tries to be a credible voice in the community. Through letters to the editor she communicates what is really going on in education to parents and the public.

Exposed to the protests of the 60’s and having taught out west during the teachers’ strike, this Teacher stands up for what he believes in. He has benefited from the conditions fought for by his union and the task before him now is to work for his younger colleagues entering the profession.

A Student, in her OAC year of secondary school, is making plans to go to university. The problems she notices in education are the things that are wrong at her own school. She is concerned about the students and teachers who just don’t seem to care and an aging system that seems to be out of step with the youth today.

This parent is actively involved in her children’s schools, as a parent volunteer, starting the PTA, and serving as a school council member at both the local elementary and secondary school. Her desire is to help out where she can and keep pace with what is happening in schools.

Overcoming obstacles is the theme of the local Federation President’s career. Currently she advocates on behalf of teachers, the heroes, she believes in the current educational story.

The Ministry Official joined the ministry ranks with Bill 180 and was instrumental in making changes in the way special education was delivered in the province of Ontario. Now she works with local school
boards, assisting with the implementation of school reform. Her focus is
curriculum and her role, she thinks, is to inspire others; looking for the
benefits in these changes for students as learners and as citizens.

The Opposition Critic is a stanch supporter of public education. Her history in
education is expansive. She fought for the changes in special education and
witnessed a shift in attitudes towards individuals. She is the active resistance: a
force against trendy back to basic notions and an elitist private system of
education.

Archetypes or Stereotypes

Errors like straws upon the surface flow:
Who would search for pearls must dive below. (John Dryden)

In technical terms, a stereotype is a surface impression. A reproduction of an image made by
impressing a surface upon a template. One-dimensional impressions, like cartoon or caricatures
renderings, are forever static. They represent "a conventional or hackneyed expression, custom,
or mental image." In novels, film or real life drama, a stereotyped character is "a person
possessing or believed to possess characteristics or qualities that typifies a particular group"
(Funk and Wagnalls, 1974). Consciously and unconsciously, we classify individuals according to
race, culture, gender and role. Ethnic, feminist and cultural studies highlight the inherent dangers
of stereotyping. These impressions hinder our understanding both of the individual, the actual,
and the ideal. Classifying behaviour in this way affords little in terms of understanding,
evaluating or responding to behaviour. Using stereotypical images as models from which to
pattern behaviour is like the putting on of a mask, a public façade behind which the private
mythology is hidden (Edel, 1984).

In contrast, an archetype is an original or standard pattern or model; a prototype or an
ideal (Funk and Wagnalls, 1974). Archetypal characteristics are symbolic and not representative.
The Greeks held that the essences of the archetypes were so definite and enduring that they were
believed to possess an independent reality of their own (Tarnas, 1991). Archetypal characters,
like those found in Greek mythology and post-modern fictions, personify timeless essences such as light and dark, good and evil, male and female, unity and multiplicity, love and temptation. In narrative research, the purpose is to portray the essence of a character: the fundamental and deep-rooted qualities that guide an individual's purpose, motivation, methodology and judgements, is the purpose. Houston suggests that archetypes resist analysis and can be only known through direct experience (Houston, 1996). Through story, dance and drama--

We form a powerful sense of identity with the archetypal character, and this mythic being becomes an aspect of ourselves writ large. Symbolic happenings appear with undisguised relevance, not only for our lives and problems but also for the remaking of society. Working with myth and archetype we discover that we are characters in the drama of the anima mundi, the soul of the world. In this discovery we push the boundaries of our own human stories and gain the courage to live mythically and to help heal our world.

(Houston, 1996, pps. 100-101)

According to Campbell, archetypes are recurrent mythological motifs that have the power to stir emotion and propel action (Segal, 1997, p.206). Experience activates an archetype defined as acquired or learned stimuli (Freud) or an innate predisposition (Jung).

Once imprinted, a stimulus, upon activation by subsequent experience, activates a innate releasing mechanism, which in turn impels the corresponding emotion and behaviour. Without the archetype the subsequent experience would make much less of an impact. The power of past experiences, imprinted in the form of an archetype, accounts for its impact. Functioning as a symbol, subsequent experiences activate the archetype and thereby begins the process that ends in the manifestation of emotion and behaviour.

(Segal, 1997, p. 208)

Through his comparative study of world mythology, Campbell (1959) concludes that the gods and demons (the ultimate archetypal figures) are not conceived in a hard and fast ways, as positive realities, but can be simultaneously in more than one place and further lose nothing through multiplication. For the purposes of this research, archetypal
characters are not conceived of in hard and fast ways. They may take many forms and perform in diverse ways depending upon context.

The mask in a primitive festival is revered and experienced, as a veritable apparition of the mythical being that it represents—even through everyone knows that a man made the mask and it wearing it.  
(Campbell, 1959, p.21)

It is through belief that an individual enters a play sphere of the festival,

As in the play of children where undaunted by the banal actualities of life's meager possibilities, the spontaneous impulse of the spirit to identify itself with something other than itself for the sheer delight of play, transubstantiates the world—in which, actually, after all, things are not quite as real or permanent, terrible, important or logical as they seem.  
(Campbell, 1959, p.21)

Dr. David Booth, renowned storyteller, differentiates stereotypical and archetypal characteristics using an educational example:

My son says, "You spelled this wrong Dad, my god, you are a teacher." My son's response is to a stereotype of a teacher and the expectation that all teachers' spell correctly. An archetypal image of a teacher allows for understanding the process of spelling correctly, how to teach it and the strategies and tools that can be employed in order to spell correctly.

The characters portrayed by this study are certainly not typical. Participants said as much. The Parent commented that her perspective was not shared by many and for that reason she rarely shared it, however lately she noted that more and more, people seem to be aware of the possibility and more acceptant of this particular line of thinking. What each of the characters does provide are interesting insights into an individual's approach to problem solving (purpose, motivation, methodology and evaluation). Particularly engaging are those places where the thinking of characters converge and diverge.

Hillman (1975) describes archetype as the "deepest patterns of psychic functioning, the roots of the archetype govern the perspective we have of ourselves and
the world.” In reading the character portraits, the reader must be open to experience the character as one reads a good fiction. Allowing the essence of the character to speak, we learn something of what it is to be a teacher, a principal, a parent etc. We walk for awhile in this person’s shoes and come to some understanding his/her perspective of the world of education. The characters are interpretative and not actual, meant to be believable and believed. Attempts to attach particular identities would be misleading and a misrepresentation of the intention of this research, for the rendering of these characters is not an attempt to represent a certain category of people nor an actual person.

The Characters

Whether we listen with aloof amusement to the dreamlike mumbo jumbo of some red-eyed witch doctor of the Congo, or read with cultivated rapture thin translations from the sonnets of the mystic Lao-tse; now and again crack the hard nutshell of the argument of the Aquinas, or catch suddenly the shining meaning of a bizarre Eskimo fairy tale: it will be always the one shape-shifting yet marvelously constant story that we find, together with a challenging persistent suggestion of more remaining to be experienced than will ever be known or told.

(Campbell, 1949, p.3)

Teacher

On the cold, windy days of November 1997, we walked. Although we had worked together briefly on two different occasions at two different schools, during the provincial walk-out, as we trudged side-by-side in a line following a muddy trail created by the feet that went before us, I came to know this Teacher differently. At school, he was the Junior teacher down the hall. His dishevelled classroom a surprising contrast to the neatly organized primary rooms on the floor below. During staff meetings and in the staff room he was the one who questioned—the troublemaker? However, on the picket line, his sense of humour, his energy, and his enthusiasm were catching. This middle-aged man of close to 50 years exuded confidence; he did not hesitate to stand before a microphone in a
crowded gym to ask a question of some official or to stand before a protesting group and deliver a motivational message. He arrived for his shift, complete with props and slogans. Other elementary teachers, in contrast, were insecure about leaving schools and students to protest the proposed changes in legislation; changes we all believed would fundamentally eliminate the local public input in local schools. Long after the strike had ended and we had returned to our schools and classrooms, and daily routines resumed, this Teacher continued talking about the issues.

The hero, therefore, is a man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the general, normal human forms...

The hero has died as a modern man, but as eternal man—perfected, specific, universal man—he has been reborn. His second solemn task and deed therefore is to return then to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed.

(Campbell, 1949, p.20)

This teacher’s story is the classic hero tale, outlined by Campbell (1949) in his mythological study, *A Hero With a Thousand Faces*. To be a hero one must pass through rites of life including awakening (birth), initiation (trials), death to self, atonement (forgiveness), and return (new life). Strongly influenced by the protest days of the Vietnam War years, his is a political story, its background the social and political conditions of the 60’s and 70’s. Eras, political leaders, and the economic situation punctuate his historical narrative. Through the course of our interviews he realizes the significance of one event that guided his decision to enter teaching and directed the subsequent course of his career.

I was in school in Michigan in 1968 to 1970 during the Vietnam War. All the kids at school had deferments for the Vietnam War. The kids that ended up fighting the Vietnam War were mostly black, because they couldn’t afford to go to college. Others were like my buddies out of high school who really didn’t know what they wanted to do with their life yet and they tried college. They dropped out of college. They got jobs.
Suddenly their number came up in the draft and off they had to go. Had one buddy who ended up as a medic in Vietnam. He went because his father had fought in the Korean War and it was his duty to go and defend his country in Vietnam. Whether Vietnam was right or wrong, he went. He lived. It changed him.

When the killings on Kent State occurred between 68 and 70, they had protest marches on campus. They had hundreds of college kids and they had the professors and they had other people and the Michigan national guard was standing there with guns watching this protest wind its way through the campus because the night before they had taken over the student union. I am standing there watching and I see my economics professor. He looked at me and I looked at him and I can’t remember now whether he said, “Come and join us”. And I didn’t, because I wasn’t sure if you should be protesting when you should be supporting your government that is fighting. I wasn’t saying it because as a Canadian and this doesn’t affect me, it was more at that time I thought the government won’t lie to us. They must be doing the right thing. This must be the right thing to do.

The Teacher’s blunder is his failure to respond. According to Campbell (1949), this ‘call to adventure’ is an opening to a destiny—the desire to no longer stand on the sidelines. In this calling lies a gift, the symbol of the Teacher’s virtue—making a difference!

Three other guys and myself went out to a migrant workers camp on the outskirts of town. We went out to this farm were they had these bunkhouses and trailers and we helped the kids in a reading program and that is all that I can remember. It is almost as if it is blacked out now...put aside. Then go off to Michigan, get the degree and go into teaching and yeah now that you mention that it was that, it was Vietnam, the fact that we could make a difference. Yeah!

Enrolled in a Marketing and Advertising program, where he hoped to make lots of money, he reconsiders, thinks about joining the Peace Corps, then decides on teaching. His teaching career begins, during the 70’s an era of growth and expansion, when money and teaching jobs were plentiful: exciting times for young enthusiastic teachers.

I started teaching in 1971. The 70’s were exciting times, Bill Davis’ government had increased the budget, there was more money to spend and suddenly they needed more teachers. I stayed in Toronto for a couple of years and then moved west. I was hired in only 3 days, because this was 1975 and what with the oil embargo of ’73, Calgary just started booming. I learned later that from 1975 to 80 the Calgary school board hired on
average one schoolteacher a day. It was exciting! I taught in open area schools, I team taught and eventually ended up at a community school with a wonderful principal. I worked my way up to vice-principal and it was nice but very demanding.

These were different days from the days of Vietnam. Money and economics were the issues that loomed large, creating tensions and dilemmas for teachers as a group, and this teacher in particular. Money came to mean value, and being paid well was a sign of respect. Interest rates skyrocketed and suddenly there are debts to be paid. Teaching turned out to not be a financially rewarding enterprise for a young father and a provider for five and so this Teacher looks beyond teaching:

Even then there were problems that arose over time and I mentioned to you we were on strike for 4 months. It started in May went to the end of June, through the summer and we didn’t negotiate until mid-September of that year. And that was the first strike that I had ever been on and basically back then it was always money, salaries, inflation, you know the cost of living. And you know Alberta; Calgary at least had all these oil revenue coming in. They had all this money that they could pour into education.

My wife didn’t work and the kids were young and prices were going up. The interest rate hit 18% for mortgages and we got caught in that. So I did some work on the side, formed a small company with some friends, and that was exciting. There was no greater joy than driving home with a cheque in your pocket because someone liked what you had done.

Drawn in by the allure of making money, the Teacher sets aside the call and turns his attention to other interests. In so doing so enters the second phase of the hero’s journey ‘refusal of the call.’ “Walled in boredom, hard work or culture, the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved” (Campbell, 1949, p. 59). Teaching has lost its appeal. The Teacher begins to feel out of step with reality: a reality he perceives that exists beyond the classroom door: a theme that repeats through his story. Moving back to Ontario, he thinks it is time to change.

I thought maybe this was the time to change jobs again and try something different. I have always felt that maybe after every 10 years a teacher
should get out of education, take a year off, a sabbatical of something, just to get in touch with what the real world is about.

Although he tries to leave teaching on two different occasions, he returns. Teaching jobs are available and the working conditions are better than the entry level jobs he applies for. Trapped in the trappings of teaching, he rationalizes how teaching is like being an independent: an entrepreneur. Still the tension of not being more financially fluent comes through.

A local business man told me, “You know being a teacher is like being your own business man because you more or less are on your own and you don’t answer to anyone during the day as such and you have the freedom to do as you wish.” Little does he know, but he is right in the sense that when you close the door, so to speak, you are in charge of your own day. And the truth is you are in charge of a lot of other things and that sense of being independent, not self-employed but self-directed that is nice. And I often thought couldn’t I make money doing that?

It is in the ‘crisis’ scenario that the Teacher reawakens to his calling, what Campbell calls ‘the awakening of the self’ and the opportunity to offer his gift and become a hero. This time the cause is making a difference for the younger teachers just entering the profession.

And I think that has moved me into politics…because of what Harris has done, and the fact that he has basically said “you are a lousy teacher and what you are doing is not good quality and the attack on that”. And it is sad to think of the number of teachers, and I think I would be included, who would quite happily leave education right now because of the pressures—the lack of support we seem to get, the attacks, the little jibes and comments that are made. Not because of the strike but because of the public’s perception of us is still wrong and skewed the other way.

He finds his allies, what Campbell calls his supernatural aid, through recollections of images of heroes who stood up for what they believed was right; political figures from the early 70’s.

Sometimes you need a John Kennedy or a Pierre Trudeau don’t you? And Dalton McGuinty just wasn’t one of those people unfortunately. So I think I have decided, and age and experience does help, that education is more than educating the children and there are your colleagues and there are issues you have to stand up and fight for. So I think that I will do it that way and I won’t sit back anymore.
From the example of great men, he finds the wisdom and the strength to become active in local politics and as a leader in the local teachers’ union.

I stood there and booed and hollered at him as he (Harris) drove by in the bus and all these other conservative fat cats that drove to the meeting... I didn’t stand on the sidelines this time... the war is not over.

Returning home, he prepares to serve his community, offering the learning he has gained from his life experience as enlightenment for others.

What Others Say

Readers correctly identify this individual as a parent: his language gives him away. Specific references to children in school and references to ‘hockey’ and ‘my son’ are suggestive. However, they erroneously assume his role is singular rather than complex, an assumption that limits the potential of this character. The Teacher identifies the Current Government as the cause of the crisis. “Kicking the premier out” they suggested is a male approach to solving a problem by taking action (a cause and effect problem solving orientation). The Federation President doubted that a female would use these same terms.

A well informed historical background.

Participants considered the Teacher’s perspective unique and interesting because of its historical background (Parent, Principal, Associate Director). They commented that this individual was obviously well read and well-informed (Principal, Associate Director). Specific references to a book by Neil Postman on the death of childhood and to Trudeau lent to this impression. The Associate Director thought that this person might be a history professor or a political science professor or maybe a ministry person. Comments about grade 3 testing and union activities suggested to the Ministry Official that this might be a teacher speaking. The Board Chair thought it might be an
administrator. Most did not identify the speaker as a teacher. The Ministry Official and the Associate Director determined this was a broader and more academic perspective than a teacher would hold. While the Principal found this perspective interesting, she did not identify the speaker as a teacher. She commented (in response to the Ministry Official’s position on change) “the teachers that I work with anyway do not understand the magnitude, the speed, the need of the changes. I think they think this was a blip in the road and we would go back to the way things use to be.”

Humanistic: A belief in the child.

The Federation President was particularly drawn to and intrigued by the Teacher’s perspective.

I think we see jobs and employment in a similar light. I relate to the humanistic solution. I found it an enjoyable read and wrote down the comment the kids are getting a good education in spite of the teachers and the system, which is a type of a positive thing.

The Federation President contrasts the Teacher with the Parent who comments that children are being squashed by the system. “This person says that it really doesn’t matter particularly what changes the government makes the kids will carry on in spite of it.”

Anti-government.

The others interpreted from the number of references to the Premier and his stupid ideas that the Teacher was anti-government. The Federation President expressed concerned about what the teacher might do once these ideas (like funding for private schools outlined in the Current Governments blueprint) actually happen. She and the Student thought the Teacher was not accepting his responsibility for education, instead viewing the crisis as someone else’s problem. “I guess I’m disappointed that this person wouldn’t feel that there was something they could do to help this situation. I guess I like to think that in education everybody has a role... (Student) “I think he was putting all his
hope for the future in the democratic process and it didn’t work out” (Federation President). The Parent thinks that this person was “probably very disappointed with the election results.”

Not conservative.

The Teacher is identified as definitely not conservative since his solution is to get rid of the government in order to solve the problem (Parent). While he is definitely anti-Harris, he does not appear to be married to a particular political party. The Teacher in the context of our interviews claims first to be an NDP’er at heart and then a Liberal-Conservative. The Student and Federation President both comment that focusing the blame one person is too easy. They propose that each voting person in a democratic society bears responsibility for the politics of the day. Perhaps his shifting political position is a sign of his preference for a cause-effect problem-solving strategy?
Table 1.

**Relationships Between the Teacher and Others**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allies (Companion)</th>
<th>Adversaries (Conflict)</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Chair</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Federation</td>
<td>Ministry</td>
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<td>Parent</td>
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<td>Opposition Critic</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Student</td>
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**Allies and Companions**

The Parent aligns with the Teacher’s thinking; she says she relates to it.

When teachers say something about the child’s education, unthinking parents turn around and blame the teachers before turning around and agreeing maybe they could help more (Teacher).

She thinks this comment made by the Teacher is particularly true. Is the Parent siding with the Teacher against other parents who are not so willing to help? Is she commenting that parents and teachers need to work together? Her position is perhaps indicative of the changing relationship that this Parent is experiencing with schools and the more dependent roles between teachers and parents that are coming into play as resources in schools are dwindling. The Parent and the Teacher share a direct relationship with the child. What may separate them are their respective foci. Traditionally, a teacher’s focus has been thought to be objective and academic and a parent’s more subjective and social-emotional-physical. In this research, however, the Federation President, the Parent, and the Teacher present a holistic view of the child. The fact that these characters are also parents adds another dimension (complex characters). The concept of 'schools as social agencies' also influences the Teacher’s thinking towards social-emotional-physical goals.
in school. The Parent finds the Teachers take on education interesting—“in the past education attempted to educate the whole child and not just fill a job”…“not to just fill a job but to take an active part in society”. She contrasts this to comments where education was criticized for doing too much.

The Teacher’s comment that government was serving bigger boards fit with the Board Chair’s understanding of what is happening at a provincial level. She shares with the Teacher a focus on providing structures that support the education of students in classrooms. She notes that the attitudes and values of trustees have changed since parents, particularly middle-aged mothers, have taken board positions. The Board Chair found the Teacher’s perspective to be sympathetic to the financial crisis in school boards and she commented, “someone understands!” This led her to think it was a parent speaking.

The Critic shares with the Teacher a focus on resistance to the Current Government and its interventions in education. Valuing the past goals of public education (based on the acknowledgement and celebration of a diverse population) they both resist the changes that are suggestive of privatization of public education. The Critic appreciates the Teacher’s point of view because “it is the reaction of a person in the front lines versus what I think is the administrative willingness to believe it can work.” The Teacher sorts through perspectives in much the same way as the Critic, by those directly involved in education and others removed. He, however, positions himself with those who presented the broader aspects of the problem rather than specific classroom examples.

**Dependents**

The Federation President and the Teacher have a dependent relationship, their focus and needs are complementary. Teachers are the reason the federation exists and in
return the federation provides support, council, and a voice for teachers. The Federation President disagrees with the Teacher and others who commented, "teachers are demoralized." She bases this on the fact that she is a teacher yet does not feel demoralized. The Teacher commented that the Federation President had a philosophical viewpoint. A perspective he thought he would like to use next time he talked to someone.

Adversaries

The Teacher describes the Current Government perspective as non-argumentative. Initially, he thought it might be a local politician speaking and then decided that it was far too intelligent. Prior to the election, the Current Government positioned in direct conflict with teachers. During the provincial walk-out and the ushering in of Bill 160, they cited teachers as not doing an adequate job; as not having adequate resources; being only concerned with job conditions and failing to have the interests of students at heart. The Teacher sees his colleagues' (the other characters) concern for the students and the future of public education while the government he sees are heartless, having only political control and provincial economic concerns.

Others

The teacher thinks that he and the Associate Director and Board Chair think along the same lines, however these characters make no specific references to the Teacher. The Associate Director and Board Chair say they are supportive of teachers and yet they do not recognize or identify with the Teacher's position.

How He Thinks

The Teacher interprets the perspectives as being similar. He describes them like a Venn diagram with certain parts overlapping. He hears in these echoes of his own thinking; a commitment and deep concern for public education conveying the sense that
the province will not be better off for awhile. He suggests that these perspectives have all hit the target or missed it. The views of those outside education, those he calls the ‘average Joes’, he thinks would be quite different from those in educational circles. His concern is that educators are “too close to the problem and being connected with it, we are demoralized and stressed and not seeing it properly.” When asked how others would respond to his way of thinking, this Teacher was most interested in talking to those who had similar perspectives to his. He saw discussion with them as an opportunity to solidify his own thinking so that he could talk to teachers in the staff room and people in the community with a clear intelligent message.
The Current Government

Politics entered schools through the front door in September of 1975. No longer content with back room entrances: no longer content to wait in the wings while others took centre stage. Politics wanted to be recognized; it had both a face and a name. The Minster of Education, the man who bore responsibility for uttering the crisis word became the face and the name. However, the face of politics changes. Another replaced him during the teacher's provincial protests, a different face for a different effect. The face of the Premier is constant. A man reputed to have been once been a teacher himself and a trustee before his appointment. Although not officially reported, the word on the street is that he was fired from teaching and took on the trusteeship as a get-even strategy and that his mean spirited attitudes are reflective of his general disregard for education.

The Current Government is a mask, it does not speak directly to us: instead others speak for it, so we are never certain who it is or what it stands for. Try to get an interview with the Minister and you speak to his Press Secretary, someone with no official or formal involvement with education, rather a background in reporting. He spouts the party line. Are personalities of politicians designed, a construction of the media, as means to political ends? The Current Government has an impartial, objective personality. Those in education read this character as heartless. How would the Minister tell it? An Internet site, provides an outline of his theory of management and change.

Lines are drawn between the public and private. The public is old, slow, focused on survival. The private is new, vital and focused on accomplishment.

For my purpose, private sector and public sector tend to act more alike than different. I think the public sector; much of it is overdone in terms of its slowness, stodginess. An older organization generally moves into designing itself around survival. That's not bad thinking, because the alternative to survival is not always pretty...What it costs though is accomplishment. Because survival, in my experience, is always the enemy
of accomplishment... In order to accomplish, you have to put something at risk, and often your own survival, in terms of your identity, and all of those other things you hold close to you. The same is true for an organization. (When organizations are young) they go through brief bursts of accomplishment. Very quick. Typically when an organization is in that frame, they'll have lots of vitality, they'll have a lot of uncertainty...They have limited resources, and lots and lots of change happens...And accomplishment shifts to survival about the time you win at anything. You know, nothing fails like success. They can write that on a rock.

As a political leader he is a manager with a systems approach. His prime directive is effecting change? How? Bankrupt the organization. This move is brave he tells himself and he is willing to take the risk.

There are two theories of change management. One is this: shortening down the survival period or - and this is all theory - bankrupting the organization. The alternative to that is bankrupting the organization at the point of its highest accomplishment. This is kind of brave stuff. And when you take on leadership of an organization you are saying, I am willing to take on one of these two things, both of which are counter-intuitive, both of which are difficult to survive.

In September of 1975, the Minister of Education announced his plan to create a crisis, if need be, in order to implement the Current Governments' Common Sense reforms. Did he neglect to tell the public that education was at its peak, at its highest point accomplishment? The assumption is that it will be downhill from there. On the leading edge of management theory, he positions towards education as creditor would towards a debtor— he calls in the loan.

Let's talk about why that is. We've talked about transformational changes. Transformation is putting at risk the success you've been for the possibility you are; that's the personal definition of transformation...unless you threaten the survival of the organization...then change is not real change, core change, transformational change. That kind of change...isn't available unless you bankrupt how it is. Really bankrupt how it is. If you don't bankrupt it, if you don't create a great crisis, you'll improve to death.
The headlines of the newspaper might read, 'Minister, self-appointed hero, saves education from death!' Was his intent to transform education positively or did he merely hope to gain access to its coffers?

What Others Say

The political overtones of this perspective were easily identified by the Ministry Official, the Critic, Board Chair, the Teacher and the Parent. The Principal, Student and Associate Director however did not directly comment. The Federation President suggested this was a trustee with the focus on money and testing results. "Perhaps a local politician," the Teacher thinks, then decided it sounded far too intelligent. The Parent and the Teacher both commented on the spin; the non-argumentative, pat answers to what they consider are complex problems. "Sugar coating," according to the Teacher. "Rhetoric;" the Board Chair says, "It bashes the right people and promotes the right things."

**A need for tension.**

The Federation President describes this perspective as presenting the need for tension--creating it or managing it, she does not say.

The key word is tension. Tension is positive when balanced carefully—somehow the tension is "off" at the present according to this writer. I perceive a basic confidence in the system along with some fine tuning suggestions. I recognize the accountability factor—that everyone needs to gain something from educators. This writer empowers teachers to end the crisis—rather interesting, thought!

**Teachers are the key.**

Recalling that the Federation President thinks this may be a trustee speaking, she hears in this perspective the suggestion that teachers can end the crisis through empowerment. Will the difference teachers make be one of claiming power or laying it down?
Education costs.

According to the Ministry Official the jury is out on whether there is more money available now for classroom spending, as the government claimed there will be. The Current Government’s focus has been on providing money for classrooms and off elaborate board offices and central office staff. She admits that “we did have a very top heavy admin thing and yet we have heard of schools where they don’t have pencils and erasers.”

What the government is saying now is that with the different envelopes there should be more money now than people have ever had. More money now spent on kids, teachers and classrooms, so we will just have to wait and see when we do comparative cost analysis over time and iron out some of the bugs and wrinkles that mitigation has brought on.

The Critic comments that the Current Government’s agenda is clearly one of cost cutting. She charges the Current Government with altering results in order to justify their actions and achieve their desired end results—a leaner system.

They (the government) made not secret about the fact that they needed a billion dollars out of education for the tax cut—that was said by the Premier, by the Minister of Finance and the Education Minister of the day. And what was the best way to cut a billion dollars. You convince the public that we have got an expensive system, so you can take a billion dollars out and not actually hurt the classroom, cause all you are doing is taking the waste out of the system. You convince the public that they are not getting value for their money by publishing false test results showing that our students are at the bottom of the heap in international tests. Cutting the graph off at 15 out of 15 when in fact there were 33 countries participating in the international test and our students were actually in the mid-range and not the bottom. So that may have all been part of building support for the cost cutting so the public would not be critical of the government.
The Parent thinks that there were elements of truth in the Current Government’s perspective however she did not buy the pat answers or the presentation. I find it interesting that media spin is recognized but not debated. Understanding that pat answers influence our thinking, do we let it go at that?

New curriculum: Greater accountability.

The Critic, Parent and Teacher agree that most teachers agree with the new curriculum and many teachers agree with accountability. The Board Chair, Principal and Ministry are for improvements.

Natural growth or single standard.

The Critic calls the Current Government’s presentation as suggesting ‘natural growth’ while failing to identify that “this so called move towards standards is actually a move towards a single standard and that move is not an evolution that move is a regression.” The natural growth theme underpins the Ministry Official’s perspective as well. She considers the changes of policy to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

Mediocre students achievements.

The Critic is totally opposed to the Current Government’s idea that Ontario’s students are mediocre. She claims that it took a misrepresentation of student achievement to demonstrate that. “I think the person believes that but I think that that belief is a result of misunderstanding and a very deliberate misrepresentation of student achievement.” She claims that the test results were manipulated to show Canadian students at the bottom when their actual achievement is mid-range in international comparisons. The Associate Director comments that students are reading better than they ever have and performing math skills better than ever. “Still there is the expectation by some that grade 3 students should be performing at a grade 5 level” (Associate Director).

Get in the real world.

The Principal reflects on the anti-government sentiment amongst educators. She contrasts this to the election results with the majority supporting the Current Government. To the Principal, this vote represents the real world, a world that educators are cut off from.

It makes me wonder how victimized we are by the media and the propaganda. Like how, as teachers, we could have believed that we represented the masses and this was going to happen (new government). I really think that teachers had this belief! I mean that is what this is about, we don't really get out and know the rest of the world. We are so insular.

She feels a division between the education system and the masses and a shift of power that now she thinks is in the hands of the people. She shares this comment from a taxpayer as reflective of how the public thinks.

Well get business people in there (education), get people who know the real world and maybe it will have some relevance. These educators with their ivory towers and their hooded gowns and academe who don't relate and don't connect with the real world. It is time they got tossed out of there.

The Teacher feels isolated. He agrees that the average Joe thinks very differently from educators and that educators need to find ways to get in touch with the world. The Principal expresses her concern "this is sort of the Joe Average person out there and as hurtful and painful as that comment was, I really worry that it represents the masses and as the masses now have the power."

How He Thinks

The Teacher suggests this person is male. Certainly the face we imagine on the Current Government is male. Consistent with this is a male problem-solving strategy of bankrupting the system (creating an effect by effecting a cause). The problem solving strategy presented by the spokesman for the Current Government might be considered
more female, however, one of balancing inequities—putting support systems into play, more spending in the classroom and providing help to teachers. Could it be that what we hear is not what we get? One strategy portrayed for the public while another goes on behind the scenes.

![Diagram](image)

**Table 2.**

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<th>Allies (Companion)</th>
<th>Adversaries (Conflict)</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>Board Chair</td>
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<td>Critic</td>
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Allies and Companions

None of the characters in this study clearly align themselves with the Current Government. The Teacher and Principal indicated that I would have to look outside educational circles to find those that support this way of thinking. They tell me from their comments that the masses do not generally support higher learning or educators with their long summer vacation and their short workdays. The sense that I got from listening to them is that education is not viewed as relevant to people’s lives today and as a result is not valued or is losing value.

Dependents

The Ministry Official and Associate Director act as agents to the Current Government. Their roles and their lines are scripted by government policy and through legislation. Although clearly neither agrees with the Current Government’s strategies and bully tactics, they prefer to think of education on an evolutionary path and step aside from any discussion of revolution. Both the Ministry Official and the Associate Director’s mandate is the implementation of the Current Government’s policy. The cost for taking a stand against the Current Government might be their jobs!

Adversaries

The Critic is directly opposed to the Current Government. As representative of the Opposition party that is her role. She treats the Current Government’s perspective as “misguided beliefs” rather than “deliberately engineered strategies.” Having stated this, she does admit that the testing results were deliberately falsified and the Current Government’s media campaign well orchestrated. She comments on the mean-spiritedness of the Current Government’s approach. When I ask specifically about the Premier as a character and about rumours regarding his background in education, she
commented that his interest was never education and explained that trusteeship can be a stepping stone into provincial politics, as can municipal politics. What does she know? Is there a person behind this government mask?

The Teacher reads the Current Government’s position as one of control; providing simple answers for what the Teacher thinks are complex problems. The message is that a little tinkering with the system will help teachers and then everything will turn out all right. He thinks this position is one of being in the middle, listening to the views on one side and the views on the other side. The Current Government is the “give and take person.” The question remains what will be taken and who gets what?

Others

The Principal, Student or Federation President don’t position for or against the Current Government. The Principal is worried, the Student doesn’t think the best interests of students are being considered and the Federation President doesn’t think economics can drive the decision making of schools. Each of these characters, however, shares the view that society is charging and that the Current Government acts only as an agent of society. They believe each member of society, themselves included bears the responsibility for voting and deciding what form and shape education will take. In the end, this responsibility keeps them from blaming the Current Government, limiting how they can respond. The Principal thinks that this is evolutionary, the Federation President thinks it is a reflection of the values of society and the Student admits, it does not matter what she thinks, she is the passive recipient.


**Opposition Critic**

The official Opposition Critic for Education, she has a longstanding political involvement in and commitment to education. First elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1987, she served as Minister of College and Universities, Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Energy, on the Policy and Priorities Board of Cabinet and as leader of the Ontario Liberal Party. She served for 17 years as a school trustee, including seven years as chair. For her outstanding contributions to education in Ontario, she received many awards. She is the wife of a medical doctor, mother of four and grandmother of two. I attended a political rally in our local constituency where the Critic was the speaker. This meeting, a precursor to the election, focused on educational issues. Small in stature, but large in voice, this woman stood before us and delivered a message of hope and a return to the values of public education. I arranged an appointment through her office at Queen’s Park, to meet one day early in March. Set like an icon at the centre of a thoroughfare is this impressive stone building. I pulled open heavy doors and walked the long expansive hall with its richly polished wood surfaces, got my security clearance then ascended via elevator to the fourth floor. The halls in the upper floors narrow, they are carpeted and smell of neglect. Is it possible, that in this place, you do not rise but descend to power?

Still in the Critic’s space, complete with outer office and inner sanctum, there is a sense of prominence and authority. Perhaps it radiates from her, this woman of close to 60 years. Somewhat frail in body, she is incredibly bright, confident and articulate. Her wisdom and experience radiates through.

As a member of the resistance, social reform is her raison d’être, the thread that draws her life events together. Her story is told with a backward glance to a time when social reform was a focus of reform in public education. Working in social service
settings, she recognized gaps in the service of children that she thought education, with its continuity, could better fill. This thought propels her into the faculty of education for a teaching certificate.

In my first year out of university I did what is called untrained social work. They simply didn’t have enough people trained in social work and with a bachelor’s degree I was working at the Children’s Aid Society. I soon became very frustrated with the lack of continuity and the ability to have any real influence on the lives of the children that I was involved with and felt that teaching would be a way to have more continuous involvement. After I had my own child, I was not ready to go into the classroom, but had a continuing interest in the role that education can play in children’s lives.

As parent and a community member, she becomes involved in grassroots movements that turn political. Her beliefs and her background make her the natural leader for a small town revolution.

The first year we moved north there was a town talk. An interesting experience, a series of discussion groups were set up to talk about issues that concerned people in the community. The group that I happened to be a part of included a couple of parents of deaf children. I was appalled to hear that in 1967 if you lived in the north and you had a deaf or seriously hard hearing child there were no educational services here at all. So children at the age of 6 were sent south, came home at Christmas and in the summertime. I couldn’t imagine doing that with a 6-year-old. So special education concerns in our local community became a very big concern for me.

It was shortly after that time that a group of people in our community were looking to make some changes on the board. Back in those days school boards were not seen as very pro-active in terms of bringing about change. They operated very quietly, so it was considered rather earth shaking for a group of people within a community to actually start to look for people to actually run for a board in order to bring about some changes. But that is how I got involved.

Her election as trustee coincided with the release of the Hall-Dennis report, commissioned by the government and accepted by the ministry of education in 1968. She embraced this report for it identified and responded to her concerns. It recognized the individual needs of children and considered these needs in the context of a life, a family
and a community. It recommended that curriculum development be the responsibility of school boards. It enabled each community to tailor education to local conditions. Further, it acknowledged the rate and style of learning as individual and focused on the need for utilizing a variety of instructional group sizes to accommodate different student needs and different learning experiences.

I was a new trustee when the Hall-Dennis report came out in 68-69 and I was an advocate for it because I thought it was the most beautiful document about children that I had ever read. As a school trustee I was very much involved in taking the new philosophy and adapting it for our school system and looking and how we could make it work.

There were inherent difficulties with the implementation of the Hall-Dennis report. Some have identified these difficulties as systematic and structural and many say it was never successfully implemented by School Boards. The Critic talks about the struggle to work within the system to put theory into practice and then of her personal decision to leave the Board.

I remember trying to struggle with the idea that kids do learn at different rates. If you continue with a continuous progress model at some point they are going to be so out of step with their age peers that it is going to be impossible to teach all those different levels...

So we have never been able to deal with the organizations of schools such that we have made it be able to fit with our goals of individual progress...

I was obviously deeply involved with the Board for a time and that was through the period of amalgamation. That was the first big amalgamation. It was an exciting time to be involved in education. But I became convinced within a few years that boards still did not have very much effect in terms of bring about significant changes.

Twice she leaves the trustee role, only to return, lured back because of unsettled times.

On one of her sabbaticals, she takes a master's degree in clinical psychology and accepts a job in a hospital setting. This experience only confirms the need for change in
education. Once again she sees the opportunity to be instrumental in reform, this time at the provincial level, an exciting challenge for a budding politician.

I was working in a hospital setting, unusual for someone working with children and adolescents because they are suppose to be dealt with in a community and social service setting. I had an opportunity to do assessment and counselling with children and adolescents and I was in a position to be doing second opinion work on a lot of children who were somehow being missed in the school system. Again, that gave me a sense of some of the gaps were in our education system and at the end of only one year I got lured back into politics and ran provincially.

She describes some significant changes in the ways Board of Education operated during the times she was involved. Playing an instrumental role in implementing some of these new directions, she was part of developing a collaborative way of policy decision-making involving various groups. This community-based approach continues to influence the Critic’s thinking about governance and government.

It was a very different day and I guess one of the things that characterized it most was it was a time when salary negotiations would be carried out by having two meetings and a handshake. I remember one meeting at the end of June we made a decision to close school and there was no community involvement, the school just didn’t open in September.

I was involved in education at a time when there were some enormous changes and I can only describe it as a very paternalistic, pat-on-the-head kind of system to a system that had far more professional involvement in policy setting and parental involvement.

The old ways did not work and Boards were forced to question the way they did business, finding new ways to address new concerns. Collaboration consultation and team building were the words of the day. The Critic embraced this refreshing innovative approach.

After the mass resignations and the collective bargaining situation was resolved we really undertook to say, “What was the cause of this? What do we need to do differently in our education system? We were involved in some tremendous changes both in terms of professional relationships and the kinds of things we were trying to create in a school system to make it truly consultative, collaborative place where everyone was working together to meet the goals of serving children.
She enters the provincial political arena and very quickly rises to the top. As Opposition Critic she is the main resistance against the government that moves in ways she is totally opposed to. She continues the fight using collaborative processes as her arsenal and her banner is the belief in the potential of education to remedy social ills.

I have a very consultative approach. I don’t think that anyone can make a good decision unless you have understood the different perspectives of an issue. Recognize that it is more difficult to make categorical decisions about what is right and what is wrong in terms of dealing with an issue, with this approach. Invariably, if you go out with a real willingness to understand different perspective, you end up understanding that there are lots of legitimate and often opposed perspectives. None the less they are legitimate and that makes it that much harder to find an easy resolution to issues. But I believe it is the way to develop policies, to resolve conflicts. It is the only way to make people really feel involved in carrying out changes. So that means in any situation, as an education critic or as leader of the party, getting out and being involved with people across the broad spectrum of constituent groups with any particular issue is the way. I am in regular contact with trustee groups, teacher groups, parent groups, which are becoming more organized and politically active than ever before, and students to the extent that I am able to meet with students.

What Others Say

The others were not sure who was speaking; a grandparent, a teacher, maybe a trustee? The fact that this individual thought the Current Government was responsible for the crisis caused the Ministry Official to think it was a teacher. The student thought this might be a Trustee because “they came out a bit more on the board level with some of the problems.” The Teacher wondered if it might be a catholic supporter based on the support given for funding education. Surprising that on the heels of an election no one identified her in her role as Critic or as a member of the opposition party. Perhaps there are clues in this perspective as to why the opposition failed to unseat the Current Government or at the least reduce it to a minority government?
Negative thinking.

The Federation President, Ministry Official, and Principal found the Critic's perspective to be a negative one. They identified it as fear based, expressing fear for the future and for public education's future; fears that they think are unfounded. The Ministry Official stated that she thought blaming others (in this case the government) casts education in the role of victim, as the oppressed. The Ministry Official defends against this kind of thinking. "We can't let that negativity paralyze us because I think the minute we let paralysis set in we have done ourselves in." The Principal was sorry that this person was negative and without hope. This form of "stinking thinking" bogs her down. A productive focus would be on "what are people asking us to do because if we are a public institution accountable to the public than this is what we have to do." The Ministry Official saw this outlook as robbing educators of the joy from their work. A "very threatened" perspective thought the Associate Director. There is a "strong sense that everything is being manipulated and everybody is quite helpless and yet this person does say getting rid of the government will not solve the crisis."

The public and public education.

The Federation President disagrees with the Critic, suggesting that the public does support public education.

In my experience, there are large sections of the public who support public education. The people who don't support public education are not talking about stopping public education, they are asking that there be tiers of public education and education leading to particular outcomes--not the stopping of education processes.

She thinks the Critic is speaking in generalizations and would like to hear her justifications in support of statements that suggest a lack of public support. In my first interview with the Critic, she stated that the public, by in large, does support public
education. "We see it in all the polls. I think it is a bit like national unity. If you ask the public why it is good, they probably won’t be able to tell you. But there is support for it.” Rather than suggest that the public does not support public education, the Critic is saying is that public education is at risk, if we do not support it.

Cost-cutting.

The Federation President hears the Critic’s concern in regard to cost-cutting and her question of whether this is good for education or just necessary because it would improve the county’s financial credit rating. The Parent and the Student are concerned that cutting back resources is no answer when the need at this time is for better education. The Board Chair has become cynical as a result of cuts and phantom promises of more money to small boards.

Celebrating public education.

Many liked the idea of celebrating public education (Associate Director, Federation President, Ministry Official, and Teacher). The Federation President wanted this person to talk about the role they saw for themselves in changing the public message for public education. The Ministry Official, like the Critic, thinks that teachers and school boards should be celebrating public education. “Being very proactive and having a very positive public relations campaigns and tooting their horns no matter what is going on politically or whatever government is there.” The Ministry Official does not however read celebration in the Critic’s perspective.

The Federation President saw a lack of responsibility reflected in both the Teacher’s and the Critic’s perspective. She interprets the Critic as not taking responsibility for change, with no personal commitment or personal connection evident in her perspective. Does she have a role? If so, what would the next steps be? This notion of
the denial of any responsibility comes in part from the Critic’s focus on getting rid of the Current Government and having someone else fix the problem. Perhaps her position as resistance places her behind the scenes where her role is less apparent?

Public education is threatened.

The Ministry Official disagrees with the Critic’s position that public education is threatened and the notion that the crisis began with the Current Government. Although she admits that the Current Government’s style has created crisis she claims that the seed for the changes occurring today were planted a long time ago.

And maybe another government would have used other strategies, more democratic, more participatory kinds of strategies to bring about the same ends. I certainly would not be an advocate for the kind of strategies they (the current government) have used but at the same time we have needed tremendous overhaul in the education system.

According to the Ministry Official, the changes that have occurred “have made it more possible now to recognize the learner and that there are different ways of learning, more possible now then it was 10 years ago.” The Ministry Official refers to the same educational tenets that the Critic stands for, however, the Ministry Official does not recognize these in the Critic’s perspective. The Ministry Official’s position is that it does no matter what government is in power these progressive changes would still be occurring. The Associate Director is unsure how he feels about the Critic’s comment that public education is being threatened. “Public education means different things in different places. In Ontario it is not a pure public system because there is a high degree of discrimination in the way education is treated here, with one religious group receiving funding.” He wonders what exactly the Critic thinks is being threatened.
A movement towards privatization of schools.

The Ministry Official thinks the threat of private schools to public schools is a misconception. As an inspector of private schools, her perception is that the standards in public schools are higher and that public schools will rise above any competitors.

Other people would argue that they (private schools) are stricter and more rigid and that to me undermines education. Where kids do benefit is in smaller groups and a set of values or beliefs that permeate the curriculum. I think that is lacking in the public education system. Because they (private schools) have that philosophical base I think that gives you a greater sense of community then you get when you are in a public school.

Well it (private school) means there is more rote learning, there is more grammar, and so from their value system, they think it is a more academic system, whereas the more process oriented things are missing. She does admit the perception of private schools patrons is that private schools are more academic. She just doesn’t accept that they are. The Associate Director does have some concerns about a movement towards charter schools and privatization. He thinks it odd that we would be moving in that direction when other parts of the world are coming out of that. He sees this idea of privatization, much like the Ministry Official, as church-based separate schools. He wonders aloud why we can’t learn from the experience of others.

Back-to-basics.

The Ministry Official disagrees with the Critic’s position that the back-to-basics movement influences the Current Government almost exclusively. As a public servant, she views the curriculum as identifying the key knowledge, skills and values that kids ought to have in the province not just the 3R’s, reading, writing and arithmetic

We are looking at how do those things connect, link, integrate and how do we construct a learning environment in which kids can apply this stuff? That is a lot different from a back-to-basics movement.
I think that is an erroneous perception and no doubt this government has given that perception with terminology like raising the standard and rigour which I suppose is very reflective of a mentality that suggests or has the innuendo with a back-to-basics movement. It is back-to-basics in the sense of we are providing a framework for what we expect.

The Associate Director almost laughs at this thought.

Obviously this is a person who feels that not only do governments attack teachers but certain kinds of movements attack teachers and also certain kinds of lobby groups attack teachers.

Apparently this movement poses no threat to the insiders but to the Critic viewing the situation from a provincial level the threat is real. Why the difference?

Demoralization of teachers.

The Teacher, Associate Director and Board Chair agree with the Critic that the Current Government has discredited teachers in the public eye resulting in the demoralization and disillusionment of teachers. The Federation President disagrees. The Ministry Official and Principal think this focus is a waste of energy.
Allies and Companions

The Teacher agrees with many of the issues the Critic raises. He views the Critic as "interested in educating the whole child and public education." In this piece he hears his own thoughts echoed--societies strength lies in public education. "We make it or break it on public education rather than in the private sector," comments the Critic. The Teacher believes in public education because "a society is only as strong as its weakest..."
link.” Public education has a place in society and in creating a stronger society. He’s also concerned about the direction that education is headed and wonders how new teachers will cope. Recognizing the need to stand together and have a collective voice in order “to weather the storm” he sees the experienced teachers as assisting the younger ones to pace themselves so they don’t burn out. If this does not happen he concludes, “teaching is in trouble, schools are in trouble and then maybe we are headed for a lot of private and voucher systems.” Like the Critic, he wonders, “Do the people who have been fighting for the last four years have the energy and the will power to continue?” He adds “The closer you get to retirement some don’t, it comes down to personal conviction and spirit.”

Adversaries

The Current Government is an obvious adversary of the Critic. The roles are scripted by the parliamentary system. While they both claim to want the best for education, their perspective on what is needed is different and their motivations are suspect. The focus of the Critic and her party during the election campaign was directed at the mean-spirited actions of the Current Government against public servants. She mentioned in our interview and in her speech in this constituency that her party would for the most part continue with the changes that this government had implemented in an effort to slow down the rate of change. The opposition party’s proposal to rescind Bill 160 amounted to cosmetic changes. The Ministry Official explains that although strategies differ, the direction of change remains very much the same, regardless of the government. Are the Current Government and the Critic different masks on the same face?

The Ministry Official’s adversary relationship with the Critic is mandated, based on job descriptions and the Ministry Official’s affiliation with the Current Government.
The Ministry Official and the Critic think alike on a number of issues. They have similar interests and backgrounds in special education. They differ fundamentally in the roles they play in the story and the orientations that those roles require. The Ministry Official as a public employee works for the Current Government, her role is to implement the policies of whatever government is in power. In this sense she is non-partisan. She recognizes that the strategies and tactics of governments differ, however, she views the changes that are taking place as part of a global movement that continues regardless of the party line. The Critic recognizes the Ministry Official's role, as administrative—"their job is to make it work." These characters differ in their orientation in time. The Critic looks fondly on the past and the direction taken in the Hall Dennis report toward addressing individual differences and she harshly judges the present movement towards a single standard system under the Current Government. She opposes this. Her role is to be oppositional. The Ministry Official's orientation is towards the future. She views the current changes as part of an evolution in education that respects learners by making explicit the expectations for learning and recognizing different learning styles through academic and applied streams. Her role is to make it work. She views her work as consistent with her beliefs about what is good for students. The Critic and the Ministry will always be in opposite camps as long as they play their respective roles. However, should the Critic's party become the government, these two characters would become allies!

The Associate Director and Principal, like the Ministry Official, represent for the Critic the administrative perspective of "putting a good face" on whatever initiative is being presented. These administrators lose credibility with the Critic because they are distanced from the classroom and they do not tell it like it is. The Associate Director and
Principal sees the Critic’s perspective as negative, and a tad whinny, quite possibly because it reflects what they hear from teachers. The Associate Director proposes an alternative.

I think there is a lot of frustration in most of these (perspectives) with power. I hear a lot of people being very frustrated in their powerlessness. So frustrated that the only solution that they see is turfing out a government rather than working within the situation that is not very positive. Basically people give up for four years and just take what comes rather than say, “Okay it is going to be tough let’s work with it.” Not realizing that within and supporting all government are people that are not elected, working as civil servants who do not have a political perspective and have a much longer vision both forward and backward. Often we need to get to know these people because they will be there for a long time.

**Dependents**

With the adoption of the Teacher’s perspective by the Critic, the Opposition and the Federation form a dependent relationship. In return for teachers’ votes, the Opposition empathizes with teachers and works to restore public confidence in teaching and in public education. Never before has the Federation so clearly taken a party position. However, the anti-government feelings were so strong amongst teacher groups and the threats to teachers’ solidarity so great that they united in efforts to unseat the government, at the very least create a minority government—an effort that ultimately failed.

**Others**

I found it interesting that the Parent, Student, and Board Chair had very little to say about the Critic’s position. I had imagined after having transcribed both the Parent and the Critic’s perspective that they would align. The Critic was intrigued by the Parent perspective, but reluctant to go as far in considering the possibility that the Current Government’s plan was to de-skill students and create a larger working class. The Parent makes no comment Critic’s perspective, she passes over it. The Student viewed the Critic’s perspective as negative and a failure to acknowledge a democratic process. The
Critic blames a government, while the Student thinks the public has given the Current Government its mandate to lead.

**How She Thinks**

The Critic solves problems through collaborative efforts, balancing needs and inequities. Her party will correct problems created by the Current Government by adjusting and realigning without fundamentally changing anything. She sorts the perspectives into two groups: the front line and the bureaucrats. Her party’s position is less clear and less straightforward that the Current Government is, possibly having a greater impact on the election results, then the Critic or her party predicted. The contrast between the Critic’s strategy for problem-solving (female) and the Current Governments (male) is interesting.
Federation President

She has played many parts in our local board: teacher, consultant, instructor, then vice-principal before her election to Federation President in 1996. She comments that although the years that separate us are not significant, the conditions that shape our experience are vastly different. She entered teaching when equity for women was an issue. By the time I entered teaching, however, her role as an active member of the women’s federation appeared to be one of arranging for year-end retirement parties for teachers and annual banquets, visiting schools, leaving snacks for teachers in the staff room and addressing the professional concerns of teachers. She was a friendly face, a smile and a word of encouragement and her influence was seen in the details: flowers, poems, and gifts of recognition. Yet, in 1997 she walked the picket line during the provincial walk-out, gave inspiration talks, handed out new bulletins and encouraged letter writing to MPP’s. In solidarity she stood with OTF (elementary men’s), OSTF (secondary teachers) and the Catholic Federations, joining hands to create a united front in opposition to the changes the Current Government was legislating through Bill 160. She recognized the end of local women’s federation and was actively involved in the creation of a new federation joining elementary men and women, a first in the history of education in Ontario. She witnessed the removal of principals and vice-principals from the Teachers’ Federation, another first. In 1998, she was elected President of the local ETFO branch, serving two counties and all elementary teachers. This year, when teacher contracts were declared null and void she negotiated working conditions, filed and proceeded with teacher grievances and supported an increasing number of claims for long term disability. Now in the final days before her retirement she reflects with me on her career in education, on the past and future challenges. We meet at her home on Saturday mornings as snows melt, spring
arrives, and flowers bloom. Overlooking the gardens she has carefully tended, in a house filled with plants and flowers, we drink tea with milk served in china cups.

Her life and her career are coloured; a term she uses to describe a time when what a woman could do was restricted. Her story begins with a career that was chosen for her, one that limited her choices and prevented her from doing what she wanted to do. The tuber that connects her past to her present is a theme of overcoming obstacles.

My parents were older and I distinctly remember this conversation with my dad when I was in grade 12, a conversation that came up a number of times. It was a waste to money to educate a girl because they were just going to get married. I went to Teacher's College. It was an ultimatum, because there was no way my parents were going to pay for a girl to go to university. If I wanted to go to university I had to fund myself. So I went somewhat under protest!

At teacher's college there was a mix of men and women. When the men graduated they taught for a couple of years and then they became principals. They got jobs that were never accessible to me because by the time that they were ready to retire, I was also ready to retire. So that forced me to look to other things. That has coloured my career in some ways, in order to overcome one roadblock I have to look at something else.

I cried the day I had to turn in my resignation (because of a pregnancy). I was horrified because I had invested a lot in my career at that point and to have someone say that they didn't want you. There was no guarantee at that point that you would ever be hired again because there were lots of teachers, coming out of teacher's college, that weren't getting jobs.

Becoming a teacher afforded her the opportunity to go to University. It seemed to be the ticket to take her somewhere else. As we talk, she realizes that she has always been a student. For the 35 years since graduating from Teacher's College she has taken a course, taught a course or been teaching herself. Her desire for another life has kept her in school.

I went to Teacher's College right out of grade 13 when it was a one-year course and at that point I started working on my degree at night and Saturdays and during the summer. I have a degree in History and Philosophy. I did a second degree in Philosophy of Education and then a
Masters' degree in History and Philosophy of Education, specializing in Religious Education. Then I started doing Principal Courses and most recently I have been doing courses in conflict resolution and negotiation courses.

Having been raised in a rural community and attending a one-room schoolhouse in the 50's, certain values were instilled. Having completed the one-year course at Teacher's College, she returns to her rural roots. Her career in education begins during the transition from the one-room schools to consolidated schools (1967).

I grew up on a farm and because I was the oldest and there weren't boys, I got to do all kinds of things that other people wouldn't have done like drive tractors and plant crops and harness horses. So my experience has always been if something is broke, fix it, if there is a challenge you have to be self-reliant because that was the attitude that people had on the farm. So I don't necessarily wait for someone else to help me do something or expect someone else to do for me because that is not my family's concept. My parents were older and they were pretty well established by the time we came along. Money was not an issue. My dad was very much involved in a lot of community stuff and so that has always been an expectation, you needed to pay something back to the community, you needed to be involved. I remember the first time I was eligible to vote. And I came home from teaching school and my dad asked had I gone to vote? When I said, “No.” He said, “You will turn around and you will go back and vote.” He wasn't telling me how to vote but he couldn't understand why I was not using this opportunity. That was an example that there were certain things you had to do and voting was one of them.

After teacher's college I went back to teach in a one-room country school. There were 8 grades at that school and 48 kids. I bought into the job. I wanted to make it successful. Even though I didn't want to be a teacher, I felt a responsibility to this group of kids I had inherited at SS #2. Probably 5 or 6 times in 30 years of teaching I have filled in the papers to go and do something else. And in doing that I always have a backup plan. Every time something has intervened and I never left and so I have kept on in education even though I never really intended to stay.

Living within a community, she is responsible to a community of people. The children she teaches; her husband and her daughter; and “all those people I taught with over the years (some retired) still want to have a voice and want to have something rectified that was wrong when they were teaching.”
My husband will say, "Why don't you teach kids in public school to do something?" My daughter will say, "Why don't you do something about all those teachers who put girls off math?" Another friend will say, "Why don't you teach those children how to spell?" It would be nice to walk away, but for my own personal credibility I feel that somehow that question is directed at me and they expect me to do something about that. If a stranger questioned me it would be easy to walk away but these are people in my life.

Over the long term individual children have influenced my career. Something happened that makes me want to go and try to change the system, because of what has happened to them. I have always been interested in the gifted kids and have always has a special interest in what they are doing along the way. Some of the kids who relate to me, and I could never really understand why they latched onto me, were the special ed. kids. So over the years I have come to know some of the fringes on both sides. Some have been very successful and some have been a disaster from the standpoint of what society is thinking. The more you get involved with those fringes the more you are forced to make a choice and that choice sometimes brings you into conflict with the middle. One of the things I regret the most is that two of the students that I taught committed suicide. Both of them extremely gifted, they just couldn't decide where they fit.

This idea of different voices trying to shape the nature of education is one the Federation President grapples with. She views education and educational mandates as having a top down structure. She believes that people should have a voice in deciding the nature of education. However, the difficulty at the bottom is that people do not always have all the information and parents do not understand what it is they want or how to get organized.

**What Others Say**

This person philosophically questions the purpose of schools, like an administrator (suggests the Ministry Official) or an economics professor (submits the Associate Director). The Teacher enjoyed this perspective. "This person is definitely not a new teacher and not likely an elementary educator in this county," declares the Associate Director. References to when the education act was written, the Hall-Dennis Report and the application of 50's and 60's solutions date this individual. References to
suicides in Toronto, street people, Northern Ontario and native reserves place this person's reference point outside of the county. This person is "a more social kind of person and yet it is a person who seems to understand the history of education" (Associate Director).

Let's examine whether or not this is a crisis!

The Federation President grapples with the question of whether or not there is a crisis. The Ministry Official agrees this is the place to begin, for she is not sure there is a crisis either and even if was so that would be a bad thing. The Federation President thinks there are may be good things in a crisis. She sees the current events placing education in the limelight, drawing attention that will ultimately benefit education.

A flaw in the idea we are preparing students for business.

The Federation President asks about the purpose of education and then suggests that there is a flaw in the present thinking that we are preparing students for business. The Ministry Official agrees. She sees the purpose as much larger. The Parent interprets the President's comments to mean that schools are not job oriented.

I thought that was what boards of education were set up to do. After the war, businesses were approached and said, "Look what do you need people to know in order to be viable workers in the workforce?" and that is how they created a curriculum at that time.

I expect the inference here is that we have evolved to something higher or different. I guess to some extent we have. One of the things we do in parenting is try to prepare children to be responsible adults and be contributing members to a society and I think that some of the educational system's purpose is to prepare workers or someone who can survive and contribute with that education. Education isn't something to do as a pastime or for a hobby.

I guess some of that is difficult in that the world is changing so quickly and information is increasing exponentially. I heard that 60% of the jobs that children who are entering grade nine this year will have when they graduate haven't even been invented. So that is a big challenge for educators and the education system to try to educate students to take part
in a job that they don't even know about. I guess it was almost mission impossible.

The Parent agrees with the Federation President who says, "we are in a situation where we are trying to apply 1950's, 60's and 70's solution to a 2000 problem." The Parent relates this to the job market.

In the 50's and 60's, as late as the 70's, we had a pretty good idea of what the job markets were going to be when students graduated and now we have no idea and we can only speculate. We can only try to keep pace somewhat with progress.

I think it is good to offer a broader education than they were able to offer at the end of the war. But I think we have to keep focusing on the primary purpose and that has always been to make it easier and possible for our own students to take part in the world of business, industry, commerce or higher learning, whatever they choose upon graduation.

The Associate Director recognizes the current influence of business on Government directed towards schools. He acknowledges that education's purpose, once focused on social needs and concerns, is now a business agenda. However, the message from business is a mixed message. He wonders, "What do they really want?"

Business has argued that they want to improve the quality of the people they hire and yet at the same time they will say they will do the training. They don't really want them trained they just really want them able to fit in. Governments everywhere seem to be more responsive to business dictates rather than social needs and concerns. That is probably because we spent a lot of time on social needs and concerns and now another group wants to guide the agenda.

Although the Principal makes no direct reference to the Federation President's position, she admits she is attracted to the business possibilities in education.

I would love to run my own school. I think there is enough entrepreneur in me that gets excited by the prospect of charter schools. You advertise yourself, as a certain kind of leader in terms of your passions and interests and that is what you put energy behind, for the consumer that wants that. "Here is my product, do you want to buy it?" You answer to a smaller group of parents instead of the larger society, rather than trying to be all things to all people and winding up not being perceived as doing a good job, even if it is not true. You don't have to worry about seniority, you don't have to worry about taking your turn. If you have the product that we are looking for that is all you need.
The Teacher and the Board Chair thought the Federation President have a good viewpoint toward business. The Board Chair liked the car production analogy that the Federation President used. Comparing the production of cars to educating children, the Federation President wonders, “What are we going to do with the models that won’t sell?”

**Education costs.**

The Parent and the Ministry Official agree that in current times “everything has to make a profit. The big business concept is financial.” Individually they talk about the cost to students who do not fit the standard--the special education students, either delayed, disabled or gifted. As the standards are raised the Parent has real concerns about the effect on students, an effect that erodes confidence and squashes potential.

**Defining and redefining education.**

The Ministry Official and the Critic agree with the Federation President: the definitions of public education need to be clarified. While the Ministry Official, Federation President and Principal see this as a natural redefinition over time (an evolution) the Critic sees past definitions as something to be held onto. The lack of definition does not surprise the Critic because she believes this is what has been missing in public education and that is why it can easily be put at risk. She states that “those who are not supportive of it (public education) have not felt that it needed a definition or felt that they needed to define it.” Do the Federation President and Ministry Official fit these categories? The Critic compares public education to national unity. “National unity is always threatened because when it comes right down to it you can’t always say exactly what we are caring about here.” Although the Federation President thinks that schools should share common elements and that concepts such as national unity be preserved, she sees schools and education as operating as part of a society. She says that “if indeed
education is in such a crisis then the whole society and all the social groups will pull education back into the foreground and take some responsibility." She appears confident that society will respond whereas the Critic is less confident and is trying to evoke a response.

Morale is normal.

The Federation President thinks that teachers are not demoralized. She is a teacher and she is not feeling demoralized. Many of the other characters disagree (Teacher, Ministry Official, Associate Director, Critic). The Associate Director views morale in this way,

Teachers and principals and educators, we are all performers, just like the actors on the stage. It is hard to imagine how well those actors would perform on the stage if no one ever applauded. Three hours with no applause and yet there are people watching, listening, breathing.
Table 4.

Relationships between the Federation President and Others

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Allies and Companions

The Ministry Official aligns with the Federation with a backward and forward glance to where education has been and where it is going. They both exude a confidence that public education will survive, a belief rooted in the strength of the human spirit and of a society. In response to the Parent expressing fears that children’s potential is being squashed by the system, the Federation President talks about the human strength to overcome adversity and rise above the obstacles faced. This is very much the theme of her own story. She holds a view of the school as a reflection of society and a confidence that issues and concerns will balance out in the end. The Ministry Official seems more directed in her approach, in part perhaps because her job mandates implementation. She too, however, has confidence in the process: events in education are unfolding as they should.

Dependents

The Teacher’s relationship to the federation is dependent. Efforts have been made by the federations to unify teachers as a united voice (protesting as a provincial group—walking out and voting for a single party). The Teacher is interested in making his voice stronger and he thinks the Federation President’s perspective is one he will employ the
next time he is speaking to someone. He has committed himself to be a more active union person so that he can make a difference locally.

Although the Critic is not allied with the federation on an ideological level, they formed a partnership in an effort to unseat the Current Government. The Critic and her party are dependent on the support and the efforts of the Federation.

Adversaries

The Parent’s position in relation to the Federation may be one of conceptual disagreement rather than adversarial. They disagree on the functions of schools in society, on what they should be doing and what they have been doing in the past. The Federation President however supports the idea of parents shaping the nature of schools, in fact, she appears more receptive to this idea than to having business alone determine the direction. The Parent and Federation President fundamentally agree that business is driving education at the current time.

The Current Government has been portrayed in the media as anti-union, a position that evoked a strong response from union representatives and teachers. Some think that the Current Government’s goal is to break the union’s power over education in the province. The federations took their campaigns against teachers personally and focused their efforts on casting votes against the current government, in an attempt to override their majority.

Others

The Student, Parent, Associate Director, Principal and Board Chair stand apart from the Federation President for different reasons. The Student has little to do with unions, although she is subject to some of the effects, she may not identify them as Federation. She disagrees with seniority clauses that keep older teachers in positions
when younger teachers seem to be more current and have more exciting ways of teaching. The Parent may disagree with some of the same systematic problems but again may not recognize them as federation matters. The Associate Director, Principal and Board Chair all must negotiate with the federation and Federation President. Their responses to her position neither strongly support or display a lack of support.
When I met her she was raising her second family, two children of 5 and 3 years of age. Her oldest daughter was away at University working toward a doctorate. Once a single working mother and trust administrator for a bank, now a stay-at-home mom. Her husband, a senior executive with a multinational company, was working out of Toronto. They chose to raise their two youngest in a small rural community and I was the Kindergarten teacher at the school on the next concession. She maintains that I was the reason her reluctant five-year-old went to school. Over the course of seven years, we shared casual conversations and amazement at the growth of her children. An active parent in school functions, she provided transportation for class-trips, organized elective programs and could often be found helping out in the kitchen after concerts, open houses, and during family fun nights. Over the years her involvement in the school increased. With another parent, she revived the parent-teacher association, purchased playground equipment, and created gardens around the school. Later, she became involved in school council, first at the elementary and then, when her children graduated, at the secondary level. During the course of our interviews, she was appointed trustee to the board when her predecessor resigned. On Sunday afternoons, over a mug of hot tea, we talk. Her teenage children laugh in the background while the cat attempts to establish himself on her lap. She shares her latest sewing project with me, a quilt she has designed to commemorate the life of a friend who died of cancer. She and a group of others will each make a block to represent their memories and she will piece it together.

Like pieces of a quilt, her life is one of parts. One represents her childhood, another a single parent with child, and another a family with many generations. She lovingly lays these parts on the table before her. Each has a beginning and an end, and
follows, one after the other in a series. As we talk about education, she contrasts these--comparing how it was for her, how it was for her and her oldest daughter, and how it is now for her youngest two.

Her interest and her involvement as a parent necessitate her involvement in education. Raising two families, she has been connected to education for 30 years across a continuum from elementary to post-graduate studies. She notes changing attitudes on the part of teachers and administrators in schools towards parents and of parents toward involvement in education.

When my oldest girl was in school, I wasn’t a part of it (schools) because I worked full time and I didn’t feel the same welcoming attitude in schools compared to this day and age. Whether it was because of my age, how old I was then, and where I am now at this place in my life I don’t know. But, I certainly have a different take on education now.

She notes changes in her own attitude towards parenting and towards a more active involvement in her children’s lives.

When my younger daughter started school, I became an actively involved parent--very interested! My parenting was very different this time around and I was very aware of things I should be doing with my children. There was no question about it I was going to be involved and knowledgeable about what was going on, so I did. I went to school as often as I could and was available and if there was something that I didn’t understand I asked. I wasn’t hesitant. I made it my place to ask. I always felt listened to. I wasn’t always agreed with, but that’s life. I didn’t always agree with the people that I was talking with either, but I never felt I had no business going back or that I wouldn’t be welcomed back.

As the guardian, she stands at the ready willing to serve and if need be, to protect.

Now there were times with my son that I felt frustrated with the educational system. I felt he had some special needs and I had to fight for him because he was on the bright end of the scale. I felt that if he had been on the needy end of the scale he would have been more readily helped. I could see that he was becoming lost in the system, so I stepped up my involvement.
For her son's sake, she gets involved. Concerned with the amount of work that teachers do that take them away from teaching, she and another parent develop a support system. Her sense was that teachers were overwhelmed and barely able to keep up with what was required. There were "not enough hands" and not enough manpower and in some cases only the bare minimum was getting done.

At that time the teachers were doing all the fund raising and that to me was overburdening them and we felt that we needed to have more involvement and so we jumped in. It just took off. We had a real strong core group of helpers. There had been a home and school at one time but it had dissolved and there were bad feelings around it. We had to walk carefully and we didn't know what the issues to avoid were but after a year everyone became comfortable. Now I think the teaching staff is just grateful that there is help. The budget in a year is $20,000 and that is extra money in the coffers not to mention the volunteers that they pull whenever they are having something special they come to home and school.

In on the ground level with the initiative for school councils, she contrasts the tightly organized structure of the elementary school council to what she finds in the loosely knit organization at the high school.

In 1996 the government mandated school councils. We established the constitution and we dealt with issues that came from the government, more policy things. A lot more theoretical things whereas the home and school were a lot more involved in the school.

And now both of the kids are in high school and I have joined the high school council. We have a very loosely woven membership, there are no elections, there's no constitution and actually we have two co-chairs. There’s no secretary, the principal sends out minutes but he never takes notes so it is just from his recall. Quite different! Now I don't think that as a school council they have done a lot and now they are finally getting to the point where people are saying lets do something and so they are trying to formulate some concrete ideas and goals that are attainable, realistic, timely, you know.

Initially her involvement with school began because her children were there. Wanting to have a positive influence, she focused on doing things to enhance the school. Her
knowledge of the world and what will be required of her children in their future, does not match what she sees happening in schools.

Following them through the system I see the different changes that they (education) have made. And I have been involved enough in the world to see that there are many more changes that need to be made. The speed of the changes and the changes are coming faster and faster and when I see education paring down at the same time that is frightening to me.

The removal of specialist teachers is an example she gives of how schools are scaling down; a concern that is fuelled by her own background in physical education and her oldest daughter’s training in Kinesiology and Physiotherapy.

In North America we would be healthier if we were more active. You see the government promoting participaction and yet in school, which is very grass roots, we have removed physical education experts from the schools. There is an attitude that it is just elementary school and they can let anyone teach it. Excuse me, that is not acceptable! The teachers who are teaching are doing the best they can but they do not had 4 years of intensive training and they do not know what kinds of exercises are appropriate for a child at say grade 3. I know someone who is physically fit and considers herself to be an expert who has been doing physical exercises that are dangerous for children to do, not realizing that that can be damaging. But you see that in the scaling down, cutting down the number of teachers. We have a teacher with seniority and she has the right to have a full-time class and how are we going to timetable this. We have wonderfully talented and knowledgeable people out there but we are not putting them where they can do their best.

If you are going to do something then do it right and I sort of think that there is too much lets do it, never mind if it is done right. Not enough attention is paid to the integrity of the thing being done. I think we need to be very very careful of the changes we are making and examining them a little more thoroughly.

She views the system as restricting, even suppressing children’s potential.

Adequate learning ratios, the assessment of different learning styles and adequate support to address these difference, as well as, available experts to work directly with children are recommendations she makes.
What Others Say

Although the others had difficulty identifying who the speaker was, the perspective of the Parent generated emotion and became a focus of debate. This perspective disturbed the Federation President and intrigued the Critic. The Federation President described it as sad. She thought age and experience would factor into this perspective. "I would be very curious to know how all the capacities of a person’s life that led them to this." The Ministry Official thought this perspective was filled with gloom and doom. "Kids are not getting the education that they use to get, the quality of education has gone down" (Ministry Official). Reading this perspective, the Student got the impression that a kind of evil, higher power was looking over the whole system. Since principals watch over the whole school she wondered if it might be a principal. The Board Chair, who is a parent, was looking for a parent perspective and couldn’t find it. If she looking for a perspective that matched her own, this wasn’t it. The Ministry Official thought it might be a community member, a parent or a teacher because of specific references made to the grade 3 testing.

The education system is flawed.

The Federation President calls this idea “a cancerous thought.” She finds it in the Parent, Ministry Official, Critic and Teacher perspectives. Like a deadly disease this idea, that there is something wrong with education, appears to be spreading. She comments that all of these perspectives see any improvement as being a very difficult and arduous task. She interprets the Parent as saying that perhaps we have almost gone too far to recover. As I read these reflections I wonder, what are these cancerous thoughts and what are they destroying?
Low morale.

The Parent agrees with the Ministry Official, Critic and Teacher that morale is low. She empathizes with teachers, thinking they are overburdened and under-qualified for the requirements of their work today. The Federation President disagrees. Again she sees this attitude as a buying into a public perception rather than an understanding of a reality. Who will be the judge of what is real and what is not?

Anti-government sentiments.

As far as the Parent is concerned, a step in the right direction is getting rid of the Current Government. With the election results in The Federation President questions, “Now that the government has been re-elected and been re-elected with a very strong mandate to get on with what they are doing and the general population of Ontario is approving of the moves. So now what?” She sees the problems in education as “everybody’s problem and it is not necessarily the government’s problem and it is not necessarily the government who needs to fix it.” She wonders how the Parent would explain that “this is happening everywhere and not just in Ontario, in Canada, in the States.” The Associate Director also finds this perplexing. He wonders why we continue down paths that have already been tried and somewhat unsuccessfully. Is the Current Government merely following the trend or part of a larger scheme?

The demise of public schools.

Is the Parent suggesting that soon everyone will venture off into some kind of private school system and that would be the end of public education? The Federation President is undaunted by this, saying “Every time schools have started up there has been some reason for that and the laws of supply and demand will soon filter out the schools that are not successful.”
Schools and education do not operate in isolation. They are a part of a whole society and if indeed education is in such crisis and turmoil then there is some connection between this and the whole society. All the social justice groups would pull education back into the foreground and take some responsibility for education.

(Federation President)

The Federation President's confidence lies in society and the effect of social justice groups representing the public interest. The Parent, a member of the same society, is less than confident.

The quality of education has gone down.

The Ministry Official thinks the Parent is suggesting that students are not getting the education that they use to get and that the quality of education has gone down. She interprets the Parent's position as equating quality education to the 3R's and the mastery of reading, writing and arithmetic. She maintains that the 8 elementary curricula identifies "the basic knowledge, skills, values, attitudes that kids need to acquire in order to become literate in every sense of the word; in order to function as a citizen of the world." Having expectations for all students in the province, she thinks, raises the quality of education in Ontario.

Before it was very ambiguous what kids should learn in reading, writing and arithmetic. It varied from school to school, from school board to school board, from city to city. So we have identified a body of knowledge and there is content there but we have also recognized that the learning processes, instruction strategies and learning strategies are an important part of that process. Before Secondary School was geared towards preparing kids for University and we left out the kids from the general streams and the basic streams. Those streams were based on intelligence and not based on learning styles or learning approaches or whatever. What we are trying to create is a far superior quality of education that recognizes different kinds of intelligences, different kinds of learning styles. In relation to the assessment and evaluation question this invites kids to participate and to know before hand what they are going to be evaluated on and they have models like the exemplars for what that looks like.
We are looking at other ways of addressing the needs of students for other than those headed towards University, preparing them a different way of being and I don't think it means mediocre jobs. I think the workplace is going to change as we recognize that we need a whole variety of skills here, as we make this world work not just for the kids that have the academic smarts.

The Ministry Official views this curriculum as different and more advanced, the Parent views it as regressive.

**Big business pressuring government.**

The Parent thinks that the crisis is the infiltration of business into education through applied pressure on the government. The Associate Director sympathizes with the Parent and her reference to big business pressuring government.

One power base trying to dictate to another power base and for what reason, who knows? Business has argued that they want to improve the quality of the people they hire and yet at the same time they will say they will do the training they don't really want them trained they just really want them able to fit in. The government, well governments everywhere seem to be more responsive to business dictates rather than social needs and concerns and that is probably because we spent a lot of time on social needs and concerns and another group is wanting to guide the agenda. I think there is a lot of frustration in most of these (perspectives) with power.

"Education is politics," the Ministry Official states. She is not sure that it is big business alone that has applied pressure to government, she acknowledges the pressure from other groups including parents. She sees the Minister as responding to these pressure groups.

There was also the pressure from parent groups, tremendous pressure, more pressure than we have ever seen in the history of education in the province of Ontario. Parents suddenly discovered their voices and began to speak at the local level, the district level, the regional level and provincially as well and you see new structures emerging that allow parents to say "I am not so sure that I like what is going on here. I am not sure I understand it but at least I have a forum." They are not as politically astute as some other groups are and sometimes more crass at how they express what they perceive as the problem. Nevertheless, for the first time we see a lobby group pressuring the Minister of Education directly saying "We want this and we want that." And he is actually listening to that and responding to it in some way.
She claims that the need to change is broadly recognized and that many organizations and institutions have had a voice not just business.

So I don’t know if we can actually say that one group started the crisis because it began so long ago in the early 80’s. There was recognition that we need to change something here, that we need to grow and address the learning needs of kids in a different way, and yes, responding to the needs of the community, business community, and the parent community. I mean all of those things need to work together. There is the trustee council that brought pressure to bear, I mean there are just so many organizations and institutions that really had a voice in this, that I don’t think we can lay it at the doorstep of the current government or any one group.

The theme of the 90’s is accountability, that maybe it is not the same kind of accountability for a parent group as it is for a business group. Certainly accountability is the same, how each group interprets that is based on their own perception or vested interest. Teachers are being called into question about what they are teaching, how they are teaching, how they evaluate, how they assess, how they know, what their instructional strategies are, how they do their planning, how they do their organizing and what kids are learning here. How do kids take this learning and go to the next stage or the next level and in turn how does that prepare them for university, for college, for employment in the workplace, for other settings? I mean all of those things are connected.

This issue of business in education surprised the Student, she had never thought of business “weaselling its way into education.” She thought business probably should have some say, because from her point of view—“Education is ultimately for job.” She qualifies; however, that business can’t have all the say—education needs to be more balanced.

_**Discouraging children.**_

The Parent comments that the messages sent by the system are squashing children’s potential, with the new rigorous standards children with the potential to be achievers now repeatedly get C’s. The Federation President counters, she thinks the parent fails to recognize students’ ability to overcome.
This person disregards the human spirit to make the best of things despite adversity. History tells us that in every part of the world there are creative genius people, or genius people who find ways of making the best of a situation despite what restrictions that education and society put in place for them and this person doesn’t seem to recognize that. If you are going to be put down if you don’t score well on a test then you are going to be scared forever— I find that troublesome!

The Student in turn thinks that parents bear some responsibility for students’ perceptions. At home you have to teach your child that they are good enough if they can’t do things. The report card shouldn’t affect them that much, it should make them want to do better, not just settle and that is something that you will get at home, not just school. I don’t think you can just lay it out on the education system.

The Ministry Official thinks the Parent just missed the point. The grade 3 testing and the provincial standards were not intended to discourage children, the testing was to change the system.

The grade 3 testing was not about individual children. It was about taking a look at our expectations and seeing how well the learning is matching that. “Are kids really learning what we say they are suppose to be learning?” We are suppose to look at those results in terms of how can we change the program then to make sure that those needs are being addressed. How can we enhance the learning? Somehow, the message that is being read into this is that kids you are not good enough, so if you are not good enough in grade 3 you are not going to make it in University and I think that is a sweeping generalization that just doesn’t hold any water.

When the new curriculum was introduced in elementary schools the message was this was a rigor curriculum that students would find challenging. There were many debates at that time in schools as to what constituted an ‘A’ and if students work should be measured by the same criteria as before. Teachers were being asked to design assessment that went beyond the classroom requirements in order to test if a child was achieving at an ‘A’ level. Knowing the course material was not enough; students had to demonstrate more. The Ministry Official claims this is a misunderstanding. I remind her that when the grade 3 test results were released and the majority of children in the province achieved to
the standard, a standard that had been set before the test, that the minister of education commented that the standard was not high enough. This appeared to be a response to students doing well, an indication that schools were doing what they were designed to do.

The Ministry Official responds:

That is the politics and that is the reality. Whether there is truth in it or not is another thing. They take the stats and they manipulate them to suit the purpose of the day. If the results were all level four, the comment might be, “The results were good and glad that kids are achieving at a high standard and we have got to ensure that we continue to grow and improve and provide options etc.” I mean that is the political platform; we want to move things forward and achieve whatever the agenda of the party is.

De-skilling the population.

The Critic interprets the Parent “as leading towards the idea that it might be deliberate goal of the government to actually under-educate large numbers of people.” She has heard that discussion and explains it as “a theory coming out of the US because there are a limited number of jobs, really high skilled jobs and in fact the agenda of the right wing reform is to de-skill.” The Critic however refuses to believe that that could ever be a deliberate strategy in Ontario. She calls it an Orwellian kind of notion. “Social engineering to create the kind of world that the governing powers think it should be...in order to create a very definite two class system, the one being an educated class and the other being an uneducated class; workers for menial work.” Although she agrees with the probable outcome, she prefers to see this as misguided rather than deliberate.

I think it a very definite outcome of moving to a single standard system and I see us moving more and more to a single standard system. I think the de-skilling of large numbers of people who will drop out is certainly going to achieve the result of a well-educated class of people and less well educated class of people. That is a reversal of what public education has been trying to achieve. What I have trouble believing is that that is a deliberate engineering strategy as opposed to a misguided belief in the survival of the fittest kind of thing—that everyone should meet this particular standard and if you can’t meet it the problem is with you. In essence they are the same, but one is slightly more misguided and less of a
Machiavilian approach to people. There is not a lot of difference when it gets right down to it.

Has she convinced herself? Her final comment leads one to think she has not. I ask her to explain the idea of a single standard system.

It is the whole charter of rights and responsibilities and the testing of students. Students will have to meet a standard. Every child will write a provincial test. We are moving towards a pass-fail situation because what other standard is the government going to have to put in its place. In Manitoba, the provincial testing started out to be a sample testing and now it is turning out to be an every person test and now it's 60% of the final mark and promotion is dependent on it. I think that is the direction we are going toward here.

The teacher testing got a lot of public attention in the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities. But it is the testing of students that has me frightened because it is expanding the grade 3, grade 6 testing to every grade. It says that no child will be promoted unless they meet a standard. Not that they shouldn't meet standards but if we are moving to a single standard, and certainly in the secondary school curriculum the single literacy test becomes a single standard for a diploma, I think a lot of people are going to be shut out by this.

Who do we want to educate? Do we go back to the pessimistic view of the first person perspective? It makes you wonder if it is deliberate.

Only a few jobs for the intellectually superior.

The Critic comments on the thinking of the people who are in power.

I think the people who actually hold the power would not be endorsing this kind of thinking (de-skilling) they would be more likely to be sort of the "Let's set a standard" "Is it politically popular to talk about a standard?" "Is it politically popular to say that students are not achieving well and that we have got to have a higher standard?" and so they buy into the political trendiness of that kind of thinking. As far as the thinking of the people behind the people in power, I think there is a greater range of the philosophical bent to their thinking. I don't know if any of them would go so far as to say, 'What we really need is an educated and an un-educated class.' I guess it is very much along a continuum--whether you believe the end is worth the means, even if people get hurt, is one end of the continuum, and you are prepared to blind yourself to what is actually happening. Or whether you move all the way along to a more deliberate notion that we can't afford to have everyone well educated, that there would be too much competition for jobs and not enough people to wash
windows. I have not met anyone yet who ascribes to that theory but then I am not close enough to the Frazer Institute fans either.

The student, optimistically making plans for her own future, compares what the Parent has said about the future to what she knows now. When the Parent talks about the elite at the top and the menial labours below, the student comments, “This is how it is now. People are needed at the different levels and not everyone can have a management job.” She has a hard time believing that there will only be a few jobs out there. “There are always jobs. And there are always going to be jobs in agriculture, forestry, wildlife management and you could go into your own business.” She doesn’t agree with the idea that a person has to be supersmart to have a job in the future.

Power and powerlessness.

The Associate Director senses frustration from the Parent with those in power. “I hear a lot of people being very frustrated in their powerlessness so frustrated that the only solution that they see is turfing out a government rather than being able to work within the situation.” The Associate Director imagines that the Parent would want him to be more tough-minded in his position.

You have got to stop being so sensitive to these people, these people have to wake up and smell the coffee. They have got to understand that times are changing, the world is changing either shape up or ship out, we need tougher minded people, people who are more in tune with reality, people who understand education is business and it is here to serve the community. So you know tell the people to put bandages on their diminished self-confidences and get on with the job.

The Associate Director may have it wrong, the Parent is empathetic toward the Teacher but not with the System. She sees the system as standing in the way. Perhaps the Associate Director has not heard this. She calls for making tough decisions, to serve the
needs of her children and their futures not to satisfy a business agenda. She wants a system that is supportive.

![Diagram](image)

Table 5.

**Relationships Between the Parent and Others**

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<tr>
<th>Allies (Companion)</th>
<th>Adversaries (Conflict)</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Federation President</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Board Chair</td>
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<td>Critic</td>
<td>Ministry Official</td>
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<td>Associate Director</td>
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<td>Current Government</td>
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<td>Principal</td>
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**Allies and Companions**

The Teacher thinks that the Parent's perspective is similar to his own. He distils this down to three elements; schools were not factories, kids aren't widgets, and we need to educate the whole child. The Parent aligns with the Teacher, thinking that parents and teachers must work together for the benefit of children and society

**Dependent**

The Parent acts as the Guardian watching over the Student's journey through education. Given the need and the opportunity she advocates for her child. The Student as the recipient of education, does not feel that she has voice or the ability to make a
difference--education is what happens to her! Although the Parent and the Student
disagree on what the future holds, they both are directed towards the Student’s future and
to the best possible outcome for the Student. The Student is dependent on the Parent to
provide guidance and advocacy. The Parent is dependent on the Student as a means to
stay in touch with education. The Student tends to be optimistic while the Parent tends to
be pessimistic. Perhaps this is based on life experience, the parent with a perspective
based on a history versus the present day focus of the Student. The Parent and Student
both see ways that the quality of education is being eroded through out-dated methods,
aging teachers and seniority clauses that keep old teachers in and new teachers out, and
force specialist teachers to be come generalists.

Adversaries

The Parent appears to be pitted against the big guns: the government, the ministry
and the federation. Together these three define the structure of the public education
system in Ontario. The Parent is opposed to the structures, like seniority, that prevent
students from receiving the best education possible. The Ministry and the Federation
view the Parent perspective as misinformed. They have heard the messages directly,
before they have filtered down, and think they know what they mean. Are they not the
educational experts? Does the actual experience of these messages at the local level
matter? Does intention outweigh experience, or experience outweigh education?

Others

The Board Chair had very little to say about the Parent and her perspective, other
than the fact that she did not hear a parent in this perspective. What does she think the
parent perspective sounds like? She aligns herself with parents yet doesn’t recognize this
perspective. Does her role distance her? Or is she seeking a perspective that closely aligns with her own?

The Associate Director and Principal if anything are oppositional to the Parent position. The Principal calls this “stinking thinking” with a focus on the current state and a resistance to forward movement. She hears the same thing from teachers. In apparent contradiction, she advocates that the school belongs to the community and advocates a more open door policy with the community creating a climate where parents have more power in the school and are comfortable coming in to express their concerns which she sees as legitimate. The Parent, on the other hand, recognizes a more open and inviting climate in schools. She has taken an active role in her local school and has concerns that she is raising. Is the Principal listening?

How She Thinks

The Parent found it very interesting that everyone had a totally different perspective on the situation in education and what the crisis is. Although the speakers talked about education, she thought the topics and the implications were very different. She credits this effect to a crisis that was never defined, only mentioned by Minister.

Everyone stood up and said, “Oh yes, crisis, let’s find out what it is?” Everyone started thinking about a crisis but never did anyone define it externally, therefore all of us plebians (laughs) are allowed to decide on our own what it is, “Well what do I think it is?”

It proves to her that people are manufacturing what they think the crisis is from their own perspective. She suggests this may be a deliberate strategy.

If the government says there is a crisis but doesn’t spell out exactly what it is then it is up to everyone in their own mind to decide what it is and they can hardly be criticized for dealing with the wrong things.
Student

Tall and lean, her hair pulled back into a ponytail from her lightly freckled face, she is dressed in jeans and a navy school sweatshirt with the words 'student council' embroidered on the upper right arm. She presents as innocence, sincere and honest, not the least bit pretentious. She is a student trustee, an executive member of her high school’s student council, who represents the student body at school board meetings. Our interviews occur over the course of her final OAC year at a small town high school. She lives on a farm with her parents, the youngest child of a family of five. University educated parents; her mother, once a teacher, helps with the farm. Her parents influence her she tells me; always taking an interest in what she is doing and encouraging her to get involved. Wanting to have say at her own school, she took on the student trustee role, not so much for the Board experience but to have say at her own school. Although the current changes in education will not directly affect her, she imagines that they will affect her children when they go through school. She tries to keep a balance between school and her outside life. Doing well at school, gaining experiences and being involved are her priorities. She has been involved in music studies and athletics and school clubs during her first four years of high school. For 3 ½ years she has held a job at a local retail store. In her spare time she likes to go out with friends.

Broadening her interests and having experiences is a theme that runs through the Student’s story. She thinks that education is important, not just what goes on in class, but what is learned from being involved in different activities inside and outside of school. It is clear that she thinks that students who don’t get involved miss out. Dropping out of school, she considers a bad decision.

I just think that there are so many things you can do at school than just going to class and without these you really don’t get the full experience of
the school life, meeting new people and seeing different sides of the
school. If you are not involved in anything then all you know is your
friends and your homework and this way you get to see what is behind all
the events that go on in a school and the decisions that have to be made
and all the organization. These are all learning experiences and gaining
knowledge that you can use later.

She decided to get involved in Students’ Council to play a part in planning and
organizing events and activities for students. Her memory of how it was for her when she
was starting out prompted this desire. Her reasons for becoming a student trustee are not
political; she wants to make things better and more interesting at her own school.

That is sort of why I am doing it. I had a lot of ideas and things that I
would like to see go on at our school. Things that I liked and I would like
to see brought back, things they did when I was in grade 9.

I did sports in the first few years and I joined different clubs in my fourth
year and this year I wanted to be involved in government itself and student
trustee was about the only position left, so that is what I decided to do. Not
so much for the board part of it but to have my say in our own school.

Her home life and specifically her parents have instilled the value of getting involved in
her school community. She views the home as having a role to play in shaping student
perceptions about themselves as students and building the desire to do well in school and
to get an education. Teachers also play a part in recognizing potential and encouraging
students to get involved.

Well, I guess my parents kind of put that in me, they didn’t push me, but
encourage me to do well and to get involved and to have a good time at
what I am doing. A lot of my friends are on the student council so that
helps too. Teachers, certain ones, that you get to know, will say, ‘Maybe
you should do this’ and will encourage you toward different things. They
see the potential in you. But not all the teachers are like that. There are just
a few.

She sees disinterest in students at her school, both in classes and in education generally.

She thinks that education is important and she is concerned that students are dropping out
and making choices that limit their options. She thinks that some of the old fashioned ways of doing things are causing this adverse effect.

I think schools should be about learning yes but more about getting responsibility and having the motivation to learn. You don’t always get that in a school. A lot of students I find aren’t that interested in education anymore. And that is something, if there are certain changes made or if it was more fun or if you were learning better more people would be wanting to finish high school or want to go and not skipping.

At our school people don’t have the best attitude towards it. There are more people who just don’t care. And it is a lot because the older teachers and they are just stuck in the way they have been teaching for the last 30 years and we need new teachers in there because they have lots of new ideas that haven’t been brought forward yet.

She views the school as not rising to the challenge of educating today’s youth. Cutting back at a time when the expectations are the same if not greater; limiting course offerings, limiting sports teams, limiting choices in teachers, teachers who are distracted with political issues, limited funds, fewer trips, and larger class sizes.

I see classes filled with students, some with not enough desks, getting more in, books falling apart and no money to buy new ones and not as many outside opportunities. You can’t go as many places because the buses cost too much. Like at the start of the year with the work-to-rule. We had no activities, no sports, no yearbook committee, and no clubs. There was a lot that was kind of at a stand still. This wasn’t what school should be like. Students kind of gave up. This year they are just kind of getting through it because for two months there just wasn’t anything. The biggest thing though is the class sizes are so big and teachers are teaching classes they are not qualified for. Our head of guidance now, his major is phys. ed. And that really affected me because applying for University, talking to someone who doesn’t know all that much and I was, really hard, trying to go to someone for answers and they don’t know.

Different schools offer different things and I come from a small school and we don’t have a lot of courses that larger schools have. We don’t have even some of the sports teams. We don’t have access to everything. There is a huge difference between catholic schools and public system. Students left our school to go to the catholic high school just because our school can’t offer the courses. We might only offer it once a semester and it doesn’t fit into your timetable so you can’t get the credit. And some of the classes aren’t offered. We don’t have a lot to choose from, you have your basic maths, basic sciences. There are not a lot of fun courses you can take; it is
just the core subjects, so you can’t broaden your interests and experiences that way. We had Creative Writing OAC English and 25 people were interested in it and they didn’t offer the class. They needed 30 and I don’t think that was right. I mean there were 25 people that were interested and it would have been a good experience and now we don’t have a chance for that. I would like to see it evened out so everyone can have the same opportunities. No matter where you come from a small town or a larger town.

Her perspective is one of comparing things “to the way they use to be and the way they are now and the way they are going to be.” She contrasts her experience to her brother’s and her sister’s and her own, and finds the education she is getting lacking.

I just find it strange, my brother is four years older, and his OA classes had 12 people in them and that way you could interact more with the teacher. You could learn more. Now I have at least 30 people in all my classes and you don’t get the same amount of one-to-one attention, at the senior level that is (attention) is really important. Yeah, even my sister two years ago had smaller classes. Even when I think I was in grade nine…everyone was in school because they hadn’t dropped out yet and a few years ago I had smaller class sizes than I do now. It is kind of strange.

I think we need to stop focusing on how much money we are spending and how much is too much. There isn’t too much. I think cutting teachers, and increasing class sizes, that is something that has to change. I think making sure that the teacher who teaches the class knows what they are doing. I had a music teacher teach me grade nine math. That is not the way it should be, teachers go to school to get educated in a certain subject and then they go into classes and that is not what they are teaching. I don’t think that should be the way it is either. Cause students need to have someone that knows what they are talking about and someone to ask questions, you have to go to someone that knows. It has to be focused on the students and them getting the best education that they can. There are some of the things that need to be changed.

I always heard that Canada had one of the best education systems in the world, so I don’t know why they wanted to change it so bad. Cutting OAC’s and making it four years, I don’t think that is a good idea at all. In grade 12, I didn’t know what I wanted to do or what school I wanted to go to. I wasn’t ready to leave home. The last year is important too. The OAC classes are a good thing, I have learned a lot not just from the curriculum but from having to do independents and working on your own, at a higher level, it prepares you for going on in education.
Since making good educational choices is important to her, the Student thinks that choices about education should be focused on the students and not money based. She comments that a lot of money can be wasted when good educational choices are not made and she gives the example of her cousins who graduated after 4 years and did not know what they wanted to do, went to University anyway and then dropped out.

I'm not sure they want to do things better or that they have the best interests at heart. I think more should be put in because it is the future and we can't get that far without education. I think maybe that is it (the crisis), just wanting to cut back, looking for ways to cut corners, to save money, maybe the need for change.

I think I would have made the wrong choices and it is a lot of money to spend to make the wrong decision. I have cousins in Manitoba, who graduated from grade 12, and they went into one subject in their first year of University and after that they changed their mind. They just didn't know what they want then. You shouldn't be expected to make that decision. I don't think a lot of people will go on. They take a year off and they might not come back.

She sees the elimination of the OA year as a wrong choice one that will end up affecting students' choices about whether to continue in education or not. When I ask her what role she plays in education she tells me that she has none. She is the passive recipient of education, whatever it may be.

I am kind of like the person that just has to deal with it. Like there is nothing that I can do, like I am not going to make a difference to the government and say, "Hey you shouldn't do this," it is not like they are going to stop. I am just kind of floating on the river as everything changes. I am kind of stuck in the middle of it.

What Others Say

Few participants picked up on this perspective, although the Student was sure that it was different and stood out from the rest because it dealt with local problems. The Associate Director commented that he wished there had been more personal dilemmas and personal problems but that he didn't find them in these perspectives. The Student and I
were surprised that the student voice was not recognized. The Board Chair and the Teacher were the only two characters who tried to name this speaker. The Board Chair thought that it was a student. References to teachers, teachers not having enough seniority, class sizes and no money for textbooks indicated a student. "It is pretty clearly a student’s backyard and they know all about that stuff." The Teacher thought it might be either a junior high or secondary school teacher because of the comments and the tone. Ministry Official concurred based on references to OA classes and class size. The Teacher felt distanced from this perspective, admitting that he wasn’t aware of some of the comments and concerns they were talking about.

**Frustration with the system.**

The Federation President senses a general frustration with a system from the Student. "Despite the surface tensions I think this writer believes there is inherent good in the system. There was not a clear definition of the problem or any solution given other than more money." The Federation President found the comments about teacher training versus teacher allocation interesting. The Parent agrees with the Student, teachers with seniority are taking jobs that specialist teachers without seniority could be teaching.

**What change?**

The Student comments that she has heard that Canada has one of the best educational systems in the world and wonders why change? The Ministry Official considers this a naive perspective. She hears a secondary school teacher speaking. I get the sense that she has heard this all before.

With all due respect for this perspective, it is naive. Education is the only enterprise in the world where people expect it to stay the same. In the world look at how everything is changing around you. You need to be adaptable and flexible and willing to change and learn. Why would you want to do the same thing for 32 years, same lesson plans, same resources, same marking scheme? Do you not think the world has changed dramatically?
Do you think that the same education that you had is going to serve these kids well? Teachers feel that things never change. Change is a part of the culture. When you enter teaching you need to take an oath that you are willing to change and committed to change as a person, as an educator, as an administrator, as a curriculum developer and as a facilitator. Because it is not a static world and you are dealing with kids and kids our future. Why are we teaching our future like it was our past?

This last line is particularly potent and ironically reflects the Student’s perspective. When she talks about undesired changes, the Student is referring to the diminishment of educational resources and thus the quality of education. She in fact supports the idea of more money, smaller class sizes and new resources, something she and her older siblings had a few years ago and lost. The Ministry Official interpreting this as a teacher’s perspective views it as a response to the new secondary school reform initiative which she has been commissioned to implement.

Although the Parent, Teacher, Principal, Associate Director and Critic don’t comment specifically on this perspective there are some interesting places where their perspectives overlap and diverge.

Front lines and personal dilemmas.

Although the Critic identifies most with those in the front line she does not pick up on the Student’s perspective. The Teacher does not either. The Student picks out the faults and sees regression while the Critic wants to celebrate progress. The Student comments on the textbooks at high school as having copyrights now 20 years old. She thinks that the system would want to stay current. The Student thinks her perspective is more personal and local, speaking about the problems at her school. The Associate Director was hoping to find in these perspectives “an appreciation for the personal dilemmas or the personal frustration. Perhaps because the student talked about the problems at the school, these were not understood as her problems. As a passive recipient
of education, these are her concerns. The Student thought the Principal might identify with the problems she outlined in her perspective. The Principal however made no reference to this perspective.

**Trends in education.**

The Associate Director is puzzled by “Why can’t we learn from others experiences?” and the Student questions “Why we have to follow suit?” The Associate Director and the Student wonder why we do not learn from what others have tried. Even when we can see that the outcomes are not good... we continue. The Student speaks specifically of the elimination of the fifth year of high school and the Associate Director talks about some of the outcomes from the reforms in England and Australia.

**How She Thinks**

The Student tells me she kept an open mind when reading the perspectives, treating them as opinions--she did not respond positively or negatively to them. She tells me she is not bound to her own opinions. She identified that everyone spoke from their own perspective about the crisis and that hers was different, because it was focused on what was “at hand” what was wrong at the local school rather than the others which reflected the big picture. She concludes the others may be exposed to more. Is it a matter of more exposure or have they in presenting their opinions exposed more? The Student problem solves by balancing inequities. She thinks small public schools should have the same offerings as larger schools and that the inequities between separate schools and public schools should be equalized.
Table 6.

Relationships Between the Student and Others

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<tr>
<th>Allies (Companion)</th>
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<td>Teacher</td>
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Allies and Companions

Disconcerting as this may be, the Student appears to have no allies or companions based on the responses from the participants to her perspective. Perhaps in naming the local problems and not providing any external solutions, she reminds us of our shortcomings. Apparently she has no voice, at least not one that is recognized?

Dependents

The Student’s relationship to the Parent is dependent. In our interviews she talks often about the role that parents and home have in the education of a student and she is
reluctant to put all of the responsibility for student achievement onto schools. The Parent and the Student share a similar perspective—looking back at what was, comparing to what is, and projecting what will be into the future. The range of this perspective for the Student, based on age and experience, is limited in comparison to the Parent. The Student tends to be optimistic, confident that the way things are will continue. In contrast, the Parent tends to be pessimistic, comparing the inadequacies of education in the current times to the accelerated expectations of the future and education as not progressing quickly enough. Where the Parent sees the system penalizing some students the Student thinks this is a function of some people being smarter than others and learning occurring at different rates. The Student views it as the student’s responsibility to match their own skills to the job while the Parent sees it as the government’s responsibility to ensure jobs are there for the people. On the topic of student uniforms and the dress of students today, the Parent and Student come from the same place. They both see differences and acknowledge that people classify others by how they dress. “You are a preppy, you are a jock, or you are a skeeter” (Student). Uniforms, they agree, would take away one way of sorting people. While the Student credits the home with establishing a sense of self the Parent thinks the school is squashing it. The Parent, frustrated with the system, tends to view schools as undoing some of the good work of the Parent.

Adversaries

The Ministry Official takes an adversarial position toward the Student’s perspective—an apparently negative attitude toward changes. The student however is concerned about less money and a lack of concern for student learning.
Others

Many others stand in the wings. If the Student’s perspective does represent the local problems, the Critic, Federation President, Board Chair, Associate Director, Principal and Teacher, in failing to recognize her perspective, appear as wanting to focus internally at the local problems while actually preferring to look externally at the provincial problems. This provides clues as to where the locus of control in education currently resides.
Prin~cal

Working out of the Education Centre and completing Master’s courses during the same time period, courses, course content and progress were frequently the topics of our conversation. An inquiry on her part as to how my course work was progressing, led to my invitation for her to join as the Principal participant in this research. Sitting waiting for our appointment, I observe the activity of the office of a small secondary school of 400 students located in a small town it services the surrounding rural area. The office area of the school is relatively quiet, two secretaries respond to phone messages and student inquiries, teachers drop in on preps to make a phone call, pick up mail or to outline bus arrangement for an upcoming drama presentation. A student sits in one of the chairs facing the front counter, and the vice-principal enters and escorts him to his office. The Principal’s office is located behind the counter area and to the left. The door opens, and invites me in. Settled into leather chairs, we sit around a small coffee table. The Principal appears very comfortable, her legs crossed at the ankles, her right arm resting on over the back of the chair, she sits back in the chair, turned slightly towards me. Three years ago she had the distinction of being the second female to be hired as principal of a secondary school. The first, hired just before her, retired the following year. Out of 10 secondary schools in the two amalgamated counties there are currently only two female principals.

Her life has been defined by school and regulated by a school calendar. During her formative years, she watched her parent and their roles and decides what she will not become. She moves away from being less educated, a role defined by her mother, choosing to be educated like her father, for the opportunities education afforded. This devotion to education she describes as a blinding focus, one that consumes her. Although
she married and raised two children, she admits that she did that superficially. Chasing a career required a commitment to school and taking courses.

My life in education started at home of course. My dad was a teacher and my mother was not. My mom had very very little formal education. She quit after grade 11. When I saw the roles playing themselves out in my family a large motivator for me was I wanted to be like my father. I feel fortunate that I didn’t have to quit school to go home and run the family business as she did. She grew up in different times of course! And, I was encouraged to continue in school but not overly encouraged. I had the good fortune of connecting with peers in high school who were going onto university and so it sounded like the thing to do to stay with this crowd. I started out in dietetics and then switched into education in my third year in university. I never regretted it.

I recognize now that I really have devoted too much of my life to my profession and my career. I have had very blinded focus on education. Not everyone has the mindset of an educator and not everybody out there thinks the way as we do in education system. My personal life has suffered and I am excited that I realize this at 45 years of age and not at 65.

It had just been a natural part of who I have been--this drive to the next step, the next step, and the next step and then finally come to a point where, I rest on this step.

Her decision to switch into education came from a desire to be connected with people and for relationships. As a teacher, she defined success by the relationships she had with students. As a family studies teacher, she had the opportunity to develop these relationships.

I found in a summer job that I took working in a lab that I missed the contact with people and I found working with the product did not suit me and that I had better steer myself towards a people profession.

In family studies I had more of an opportunity to know the person and I had the opportunity to have closer relationships with students and that nurtured me because I had all these personal relationships with students and that was important to me. And I think that is why I got the fulfilment from the profession.

Boredom with teaching however quickly sets in and she looks for other challenges. She finds this challenge through a career plan with a goal of administration.
My involvement in education started out as a teacher and then I became a department head, and seven or eight years into it I remember saying to the vice-principal at the time, I'm bored. I can't do this forever and she was very, very encouraging to pursue additional qualifications and to look at administration. I was strongly encouraged to pursue that path. I wouldn't be here today if it hadn't been for all those people along the way, who encouraged and supported. I never set out from day one dreaming that this is where I would be today. It evolved.

I have been very influenced by my superintendent and fellow principals who have been principals much longer than I have. I found that the job shadowing experience that the board offered many years ago--invaluable--I took full advantage of that. Even though it was only 3 or 5 days that I actually walked in their shoes while they were doing their job they then became part of the support and network. And I saw how they worked and it gave me an appreciation for what they did. That was part of the whole relationship.

She contrasts the role of principal to that of a teacher in terms of the kinds of relationships and the impact she has now.

Taking principal courses I heard over and over again that the best job in the system is that of a principal. Oh yeah, I thought, they are just trying to sell us on the job. Well in a short time I have to say from the different jobs that I have had I see where they are coming from. At the Board office doing various co-ordinator, consultative kinds of jobs you are sort of in the middle. You don't have the decision making, final word. There isn't the accountability for your integrity, for your personhood that I find in the principalship and the contact with adults and the impact on student's lives. When I was job shadowing a vice-principal, I remember saying "Don't you miss the contact with kids?" His reply was, "No because in this role I get a more intimate, in-depth relationship with fewer kids. I really feel that I have more impact on the outcome of their lives than in the classroom with 30 at any given time, 3 or 4 times a day." And I remember that and really treasured that comment. It bears witness to what I have experienced, particularly in the vice-principal role. I just sort of translate that to now hoping to have a significant impact with people on my staff. The classroom has just changed to what it was when I started.

At this point in time, she questions some of the choices and sacrifices she has made in order to get where she is today. She questions the structures that define her educational life and the structures that define the lives of her staff and her students.
I have made a conscious decision at this time to stop here. This is where I want to be because, as principal of a high school, this is the most exciting job that anyone could ever have in education.

I guess I am starting to question as we look at year round schooling for example. What would that mean and how would that play out in a rural community. I get really excited because for the first time in my life I would have some choice about vacationing and reorganizing my life calendar.

Roles and responsibilities in education are changing as schools open to the community and the community demands having more meaningful roles in the organization of schools. The bottom line as far as she is concerned is that "schools are not our (educators') sacred territory anymore."

I think the whole school council movement, school autonomy and site based management are really trying to return back to the community their school for them to build and mold and shape the way they want to. Last Monday in my department heads' meeting when I brought forward issues from school council. The question was raised, Who makes the final decisions? Aren't school councils just an advisory board and it doesn't matter really what they say, ultimately it is our school and our decision? My immediate response at the meeting was, “No I make the decisions, I am charged with the responsibility as the principal of the school to make decisions for the school and you are right they are only an advisory board.” But 48 hours later I went back to the same teacher and I said, “I really thought more about this and what you identified for me is the kind of paradigm thinking shift that we have to go through.” All of us! Because the bottom line is it is not our sacred territory anymore and we have had our heads in the sand too long. When you get right down to it, we as a staff move in and out of this building. We don’t even live in the community, we drive in from other areas. We work here. This is our job, this is where we work. The people who live in this community own this school; it is their school.

The role of Principal is to manage this transition.

I think the principal is key as the change agent and I do very much see myself in the middle. Change can come this way and it can come that way and from the top down. To keep the teachers and the school on the cutting edge and in front of the change, pacing the change for what they can handle yet still meeting the needs of the political government, curriculum and keeping it in balance so we can all move forward. I think it is the principal that can have a sense of what that tenor is. I think the principal plays a key role in chunking that and in keeping the key players together on it the best they can and to liaise between the different groups and I think
they also have a role to play at the provincial level. Everything coming out of Toronto right now is coming directly to principals in schools. That is a switch. It use to go through the Board office. That is very symbolic. Why do we have trustees? I am not sure they get private mail out of Toronto.

The change or the business agenda in schools does not threaten her, instead she is excited by it.

A part of me says I would love to run my own school, I am too chicken to run a private school but I think there is enough entrepreneurial in me that gets excited by that prospect rather than be frightened by it. Charter schools, all that really means is you kind of get to set or you advertise yourself as this kind of leader in terms of your passions and interests are and that is what you put your energy behind for the consumer that wants that. “Here is my product, do you want to buy it?” I have applied to Quality Schools International and my intrigue when I read it is, here is basically a private school that is doing their own thing with their own mission statement that includes how they want to run the school and what it should have for their stakeholders. They answer to 300 parents instead of the larger society and I was just so fascinated by the focus that they were able to take because they advertise this--this is the product that you are buying. It is up to us to deliver that, rather than trying to be all things to all people and wind up just not being perceived as doing a good job anyway, even if it is not true.

What Others Say

Those who attempt a guess said this is someone outside the system. The business language, such phrases as "schools for work" "skills and products" "businesses receiving schools clients" and "paradigm shift" created this impression for the Board Chair. The Ministry Official interpreting the same terminology suggests a well-informed trustee or maybe a senior administrator. She cites this example; "educators are marketers they are not trained to think about satisfied customers. They do not have a business perspective at all...if they don't they are not going to be here." Is the Ministry Official suggesting business language is the current language of education? The Federation President thought this point of view was well presented by a person with a different knowledge base then some of the others. The Teacher thought this was a humanistic perspective talking about
“trust” and “faith” identifying the product is being treated as more important than human beings at this time. The Teacher did not identify this as a Principal. When the Principal commented that educators are defensive, the Board Chair was sure this was someone outside the system.

**Educators don’t own schools.**

The Principal comments that “educators don’t own schools, communities do.”

The Federation President agrees that educators are generally defensive. She defines what she thinks is the role of educators in the community.

But some educators believe in what they are doing—believe that they are expected to be the leaders in society—that the community looks to its teachers for direction/leadership.

She links this defensiveness with the perceived problem of accountability, a result of the media hype.

The Student appreciated the Principal’s comments “about how teachers aren’t a part of the community that they teach in.” The Student thinks that maybe teachers should. If teachers lived in the community then teaching would be more than just their job, it would be their community and their kids. “Then they would have more of a direct relation with the people and they could make changes that better the school and the community.”

**Trust.**

The Federation President, Ministry Official and Teacher agree with the Principal that trust is an important issue. The Federation President would like to have the Principal define trust. She believes parents trust local schools where they do not trust the “system”. She wonders if perhaps the whole thing just got too big and we need to start getting smaller. The Teacher talks about trust as two-way from the school to the public and from
the public to the school. He defines this trust as faith and he liked this focus. The Ministry Official discusses the example the Principal provided about a parent being fearful about expressing concerns.

When parents have some concerns that are legitimate, we have not really been open to exploring that. We pay lip service to the fact that parents know their kids better than anybody, so when they do come in and they have legitimate concerns, we have not been very welcoming. We tend to discredit with comments that undermine. We are not very good at making them feel that they are part of the team, we set ourselves up as educators, because we have all this knowledge and training, so we must know better. And in some cases we do, but we still need to work on respecting and valuing this other perspective. There is some learning there for us. We need to step back and take a look at how ridiculous we are sometimes and what structures we have put into place. Do we really invite the parent into share and do we value that?

The Ministry Official shares an example from her own experience, as a parent in interviews with teachers about the special needs of her son. She felt that her points were not recognized as valid because she was a parent and her expertise as a special education teacher and ministry official was certainly not taken into consideration. Things did not change until university when her son could ask for what he needed and it was granted. The Ministry Official thinks that a belief in the survival of the fittest underlies this attitude in schools.

The school system is for the most able, it is like survival of the fittest mentality. It is for providing an environment where everybody can benefit, flourish, be nourished or have his or her learning strategies increased. It is about are you smart enough and can you do the things, the obstacles that I set up, that I create for you, and how well can you overcome them?

This Darwinian notion of achievement is reflected in the Principal’s concern and the Critic’s discussion of the Current Government’s goal toward a single standard for student achievement. Also, in the Student’s discussion of some students being smarter than others and the expectation that there will naturally be differences in rates of learning and achievement levels. The Ministry Official’s position like the Critics is based on
individual differences and education based on these differences, especially when it comes
to special education students. This is not an issue as far as the Student is concerned. She
doesn’t understand why a parent would have a hard time coming into a school. Parents
have every right to come into schools. “So I don’t understand why it would take all of
your strength to go into a school. I just didn’t understand that.”

Those who cannot march to the beat of the drum.

The Parent agrees with the Principal when she expresses concern for those
students, and perhaps some teachers, who cannot keep up to the speed of change or the
standards once they are raised. She talks about grade 11 courses that will be taught soon
in lower grades.

There seems to be a lot of concern about the people who are on the fringes
and not just the average middle of the road person, especially at the high
school level. And it seems that again I think we are talking about special
education here. The concern is very high right now that they are not being
addressed or the way they are being addressed is just to get them out after
two years after they get their certificate after grade 10. And then what do
they do, just as this person had indicated “What do they do?” what can
they do with a grade 10 certificate?

I think it is to our credit that we have opened schools up to all. I have seen
that in my lifetime. Having never gone to school with anyone with a
disability, the opportunity my own children had to go to school with
children with disabilities, I always felt that my kids grew tremendously
from the experience. Knowing children that needed more help and
watching them learn to care and treat them as even better than equal.

The Student is not overly concerned about students who achieve at different levels. She
thinks this is to be expected. If students don’t do well in one area they will have another
talent. She thinks it is a matter of finding their skills and matching them to a particular
job.
Student: The products of education.

The Teacher interpreted the Principal as recognizing that at this time the product of education is more important than human beings and thought her comment implied a humanistic approach. The Board Chair, however, interpreted this as a business perspective coming from someone outside of education. The Board Chair admits that the concern for people that can't march to that drum appears to contradict this position. The Board Chair concludes this must be a well-rounded individual.

Education in the future: Home schooling, students wired.

The Principal suggests that in the future schools may not be buildings and students may get their education at home, on-line. She considers the money that could be saved in terms of the maintenance of buildings and bussing. The Parent finds this speculation interesting.

The downside with distance education is the lack of personal touch. It doesn't seem to matter what stage of education students are, at they need to have the human contact. Apparently, the students who are actually with the teacher do better than the ones by remote even though they do have access to the same information and theoretically to the teacher.

Because we are humans we need human contact. It is just a basic need. People thrive right from babies at birth. When students are older they need to know that they are cared for in order to prosper and be successful.

Technology is terrific and I think we are going to see more and more as the populations decline and the program requirements dictate that there will have to be some technology. Either that or transport our students away so that we can have the student body to get the programs they require.

The Board Chair agrees with the Parent that the value of schools is the interaction with other people. She believes that it is through this interaction that we learn how to behave with each other. She accounts for the recent events in Columbine, US where 2 students
shot and killed a number of their classmates with ‘being wired’ to the Internet. Societal ills she believes can be addressed in schools.

Although the Student agrees with the Principal that technology and computers are taking over everything, she finds the idea of learning at home on a computer interesting, she does not like it. “You can’t make it everything. You can learn a lot but that shouldn’t be outside the school, you need to learn basics too and interact with other kids and you can’t do that on the computer.”

How She Thinks

The Principal identifies that being in the middle means balancing between teachers, community members and the senior administration. This is typified as a female orientation toward problem solving. Instead of focusing on cause and effect, the focus is away from differences and towards similarities and from inequities towards equities. This creates a position of being of more than one mind. The Board Chair identifies this when she notes incongruities between the business perspective and the concern for those who cannot march to the beat. The Principal who keeps her thoughts to herself perpetuates the Teachers’ interpretation that the Principal thinks as he does, in humanistic terms. She admits that her staff doesn’t know what she thinks and if they did she is sure they would view her as a traitor—“one of those.”
Table 7.

Relationships between the Principal and Others

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allies (Companion)</th>
<th>Adversaries (Conflict)</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ministry Official</td>
<td>Critic</td>
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<td>Government</td>
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**Allies and Companions**

The Ministry Official and the Principal's thinking are aligned. Oriented towards change, they view the changes in education as evolutionary. The Critic comments that they have to think this way, their jobs depend on it. They are charged with overseeing the implementation of the Current Government's directives. To be against rather than for would cause dissension among the ranks. These two characters have adopted the theory of change and chaos theory and find some comfort in its tenets. They see change as a
process. As much as they may rail against survival of the fittest in practice they support this ideology. Perhaps they attribute their own success along these lines. Certainly they are not threatened by the idea of private schools. Excitement and motivation comes from finding the positive and from being the ones to make things happen. The Principal sees the apparent downloading of responsibility as a perk rather than a punishment. Are they really making it happen or just following marching orders?

Dependents

The Principal responds to the Associate Director. The Associate Director makes no direct comment on the Principal’s perspective. From his perspective the crisis is one of confidence, he may have expected to have found a loss of confidence in the perspective of the Principal and have been surprised by her apparent confidence.

The Teacher is dependent on the Principal. She is his up-line. Since the Principal’s focus is on change and forward movement, the Principal has little desire to hear the complaints of her staff. While the Principal’s glance is forward, the Teacher’s glance is backward, setting up an interesting dichotomy in terms of change. This difference is not discussed however since the Principal has determined that her staff would not understand.

Adversaries

The Critic opposes the Principal’s views because the Principal appears to think it is “alright to reject past values and move on, to accept change for change sake.” The Principal talks about chaos theory and the new patterns that emerge from chaos. The Critic thinks the Principal is side-stepping the issue of erosion of values.
The Student thought she and the Principal would view the problems in the local school similarly. The Principal however makes no comment on the Student’s perspective. While the Principal supports community involvement and ownership in the school, she classifies the Parent’s perspective as negative, the kind of thinking that bogs her down.
Ministry Official

The rumour ignited like dry grass on red-hot embers in this small rural community—"a woman as principal!" The next two years at a small rural school were tumultuous, to say the least. This red head, well-dressed and confident woman seconded from the ministry, she took over administration of the school as if she had always been in charge and I grew to admire her skills and her strength. Her background was special education and she had been rewarded with a job at the ministry of education early in her career. With supervisory officer qualifications and masters degree she might have been considered by the community as overqualified, however in a rural school you build respect by reputation. In other words, she had to prove herself! She was an outsider, a foreigner with unfamiliar ways that were judged as odd if not dangerous. In those two years, she encouraged me to take risks, I have the stretch marks to prove it. After her term was up, she returned to the Ministry. Involvement in new curricula, provincial report cards, assessment and evaluation, and secondary school reforms have occupied her since. I drive to the core of a large southwestern Ontario city to meet with her. Parking I enter the side door of a glass, multi-storied office building and announce my arrival to a receptionist with an overwhelmed look. The Ministry Official greets me. As we walk through a maze of cubicles to an interior conference room, we catch up on old times. She is dressed casually in black jeans; an autumn coloured sweater the same tone as her hair, a black pinned striped jacket and black cowboy boots. She has a flair for the dramatic and it shows. She sits and lengthens her legs in front of her. Running her hand through her hair she laughs, some might say, too loudly and too easily.

She describes her experiences in education as pioneering. Connections between her past experiences as a teacher and her present work as a Ministry Official
implementing educational policies create a story of progress. Teaching for her was natural and the idea of becoming a teacher blossomed early. From the moment she stepped in front of a grade one class as a grade 6 student she knew this was an area where she could shine and shine she did.

I grew up in Northern Ontario. I was the youngest in a family of eight kids. And I use to play school on the veranda of the house in summertime, collect kids and run summer school, play library and have stamps and stamp the books out and loan out books in the neighbourhood. I think that interest came from two places. I had a couple of sisters who had special needs? One had polio, she was physically handicapped and another sister who was born retarded. So I always had a special kind of place for kids who have the need for something extra.

In school, because I didn’t have a lot of difficulty they use to give me extra things to do. I would do the announcements and I would do the writing and once there was a chicken pox epidemic in the school and so the teacher in grade 1 was out and I was in grade 6, healthy as a horse, and they asked me to go in and teach.

There were two things I wanted to be, an actress and a teacher. When I talked to my parents about those options they said, “You definitely want to be a teacher.” My father said, “No daughter of mine is going to be an actress, not one of those women.” My parents were European, very old fashion and very traditional and from their point of view being a teacher was quite acceptable but being an actress was not. I really didn’t argue about that because I really felt that either one would have been fine for me. I like a bit of drama and there is an opportunity to use that in education, you can use the same skills and certainly being a messenger from the Ministry, I have to say that is helpful.

After attending the one-year at teacher’s college she returned to the north, taught grade 3 and kindergarten then she was drawn into special education. It was exciting work, making a difference for students who were struggling in school. She describes herself as a teacher as always growing and developing; seeking strategies, taking courses, doing whatever she could to improve student learning, to give them an edge.

I began to take courses in spec. ed. those continuing courses that the Universities offered and moved into special education resource because I saw that that was an area where I could make an even bigger difference for kids who are disadvantaged. I think it connected to the family I grew up
in, knowing how important it is for those kids to have good support. And so I worked in spec. ed. for a long time and then I went back to school and did a master’s degree and did some work with Dale Willows in diagnosis. Then came back to the board and did work on assessment and evaluation and diagnosing in a more formal way the learning needs of special ed. children. I became a consultant with the board and did a lot of work with teachers on how to do informal diagnosis. I realized there had to be more and I really grappled with what is my role and how can I really help and what is best for these kids? I took a lot of master’s courses and went to Hawaii and studied there at the University of Honolulu with Ramona Spalding. Some of the ways were quite prescriptive and rigid but I considered if they were going to get these kids reading and writing then they were worth a try. And I have to say that taking that course in Hawaii I was able to make some in-roads.

Advocating for children and making a difference for the disadvantaged or needy is a theme that runs through her experiences as an educator. Her work is validated by in-roads. She describes one of these experiences with a neighbourhood boy

I really connected with this boy. He was a young man who had this terrible experience in the education system. Misunderstood and no one seemed to have the expertise to give him the skills to be successful so he had very low self-esteem. He was a good candidate for this kind of program he needed sequential teaching. We worked for about 10 months after school and on weekends and the success just ignited him. He said that the first few times he got 20 out of 20 the teacher searched his desk to make sure that he wasn’t cheating. What he did for me was validate that this was an instructional strategy that could work for some children and make a difference.

Having developed an appreciation and expertise for children with special needs, she identifies these in her own child and advocates on his behalf.

My son had some struggles as a gifted kid. Because he made so many mistakes in his written work, people had a hard time understanding how this kid could be gifted. So he experienced a lot of bumpy roads and frustrations in his own school experiences and I kind of had to be the buffer and his advocate. People would say, “We can’t give him more time on the test. We don’t want the other kids thinking that he has an advantage over them.” Then me saying something like, “Well, if he had a broken leg would you say that he shouldn’t be able to use crutches because everyone else in the class has two legs”
The contrast between what she believes should happen and what does happen for students drives her. As a pioneer her role is to empower people and raise consciousness. She describes one of her pioneering experiences, as a consultant to a private high school on an island in the south.

There is a two tiered education system, a private school for the very wealthy and one for the very poor which most of the black community attends. They are still set up on the British system where you write an exam after grade 12, kind of comprehensive exam. If you fail it you are done. If you pass then you are able to access higher education. So as a result a lot of black boys are roaming the streets. They have a high drug, Aids, and crime rates because these boys are idle all day. The system propagates failure for these kids. So I went out with the PTA mothers at a fabulous restaurant and I asked them why they chose to send their kids to the private school over the public school system that was there? That they feel the public system is rather archaic. I said, “There really needs to be some change take place here in the community to make a difference for those kids. If you want to reduce the crime rate then you need to open up the doors for these kids and get them a higher quality education and get some community college programs that these kids can access.” And everyone was silent; there was just silence at the table, like this terrible silence. It was like I had said something wrong.

Rolling up her sleeves and mucking about with teachers and children is where she thinks it’s at. Although her mandate may be to work with board trainers she identifies the classroom as the place where it all happens, where initiatives take hold or they don’t, so she tries to stay in touch with the classroom. The Ministry has new terminology for this—staying in touch.

I try to build in opportunities to stay connected to the classroom cause to me that is where it is happening, nowhere else. No matter what policies and procedures, what support documents, what procedures we put out, if it is not having an impact on the classroom then it is meaningless. The teacher has an awful lot of power and control on a daily basis. If it doesn’t mean something for that classroom teacher then it doesn’t have an impact on student learning.

Part of my role is to provide field intelligence to the Minister. So we go out and gather this data, trying to identify issues that need to be addressed. And what do I feed back to the Minister? Well, people are working on it. People need support. They need resources and they need materials.
People are struggling with it and trying to make it happen. I try to focus on the aspect on what can we do to support them, when I do write a report on it.

Although she values the work of classroom teachers she senses resistance to change from some. Those teachers expect to be able to use the same course of study and dittos that they have for the last thirty years. She wonders “Why are we educating our future like it was our past?”

If they are not going to change that change is going take over their lives anyway. They will not have any choice and I think it is far better to go along with the flow then be dragged along kicking and screaming against the current because that is a tough way to go, that is white knuckling it all the way.

She identifies political change and global change. She talks about the globe transforming itself, an evolutionary process that provides opportunities for growth and development. Still even in this perspective of global change and transformation, mitigation appears to be necessary. She views this as the work of the educators in the Ministry who are well-informed.

I mean it doesn’t matter who the party is and it doesn’t matter who has the power at the time. It really had more to do with how we are evolving as a world and as a community and being able to put something into place that really meets the needs of the learners regardless of the decade and regardless of the century that we find ourselves in. Fortunately we have had some very good people at the Ministry who have had some influence in shaping the policy to really soften it and to put some things in it that are really good for kids. Without those movers and shakers and shapers we could have had something that was far less workable and manageable and respectful of teachers and kids. The thing about these documents is that they don’t tell the teacher how to do it. They respect the professional judgement of teachers and allow for a wide variety of instructional strategies and organizational strategies that allows for all kinds of creativity.

As a Ministry Official, she walks a tight rope between political mandates and good pedagogy, performing what she calls “a juggling act,” trying to keep the balls in the air,
running back and forth to keep it all going. "The bureaucracy itself puts limits on your ability to be competent at times."

The new initiatives encroach on my personal life. In 1986 there were 27 education officers and each of us had our speciality. We moved from a building where we each had an office to cubicles and an English staff to as of last summer I was the only English-speaking staff member left in this building. Being the senior person on staff, the other 3 come and ask me questions, "How do I get this? Who do I contact? What is the process for this?" Then they say only one person from the office can go for training in Toronto. How am I suppose to train people if I have no training? I can’t get bent out of shape about it. The universe will unfold as it will unfold and maybe I am suppose to deal with this ambiguity and chaos.

What Others Say

The Federation President didn’t see a clear message here. Her reading was that the character was "talking on both sides of the issue." The Teacher thought from the tone it might have been a secondary principal: talking in generalities, talking in terms of the whole school and not in terms of the classroom (a principal’s concern). The Board Chair agreed the broad view and the use of terminology suggests someone in administration. The Student couldn’t determine what the Ministry Official thought the crisis was.

Resistance

The Federation President picked up resistance. She thought this might be to change. "There seems to be two poles in this one and they really haven’t come together--on one side, the interpersonal classroom relations and on the other side a whirlwind of external happenings. She gathers this person agrees that the interpersonal relations of the classroom are ultimately for the good of the child and serve a useful purpose. On the other side the issue of the curriculum and international tests don’t seem to be focused in any kind of way. Her conclusion is that the Ministry Official has not made the connection between these two poles. She also noted a personal commitment was lacking."
Close the Door.

I believe that when they (teachers) close the door it doesn’t matter what the Ministry says or does, it doesn’t matter what the Board office does, it doesn’t matter what the principal says. It is teachers’ commitment to what they believe is good for kids, it is their commitment to what they think the role of the school is and what that school is about that is going to make a difference in the classroom.

(Ministry Official)

Closing the door is an interesting way to solve the problems, comments the Federation President. The Federation President compares this to the Parent’s cynical perspective and takes solace in the Ministry Official knowing what is good for kids. She thinks of the closing of the door as a Dale Carnegie concept. “If you are going to be successful you have to waterproof the compartments in your life. You don’t let something that is happening in one compartment sink the whole ship.” She recalls her own experiences as a classroom teacher shutting the door “because I felt the pressure to get something done or because there was chaos in the hall.” Closing the door creates the calm in the storm. The power is placed with the individual teacher to make the best choices for students. The Parent interprets the Ministry Official’s perspective as one that suggests teachers are going to be the ones to save education in the end. “It is the teachers’ commitment, what they believe is good for kids.” While the Parent thinks the point is well made, it must be predicated on the teacher keeping up. She thinks that teachers have opinions and perspectives that are really worthwhile, however, teachers have the responsibility for how to deliver the information and she doesn’t think they have the responsibility for deciding what education students should have.

The blueprint was laid out in 1986.

The Parent found it interesting where different people place the beginning of the crisis. The Ministry Official places it in 1986 in the throne speech. “The blueprint was
laid out and it took 12 or 13 years to make it happen.” Others think it began with the Current Government. The Ministry Official thinks change occurs regardless of the government.

Current educational changes are a natural growth in public education.

The Critic was most opposed to this notion of evolutionary change. She thinks that this person “fails to recognize this so called move towards standards is actually a move towards a single standard and that move is not an evolution, that move is a regression.” She positions against both the Ministry Official and the Government. The Associate Director, like the Critic identifies the influence of big business in education at this time and the frustration that people within the system are experiencing. He does not call this evolution. For him, it is more about who has the power. People seem more willing to give up then work it out. He thinks people have forgotten that not all people in education are politicians. He renders a positive image of people like the Ministry Official and possibly of himself in his role.

Not realizing that within and supporting all governments are people that are not elected that are working as civil citizens or whatever who do not have a political perspective and have a much longer vision both forward and backward. Often we need to get to know these people because they will be there for a long time.

(Associate Director)

The Ministry Official says the good Ministry people soften the Government’s policy, making it good for kids. The Teacher mistrusts the people in the Ministry, thinking they may be more political than educational and maybe the ones behind the government who have the agenda and are leading the change. The Associate Director disagrees.

Certainly a government will attract people who will support and sustain an agenda and obviously the public servants have to deliver on the policy directions so it does become a chicken and egg thing.
Rather than decide which came first, perhaps the Ministry and the Current Government should be more accurately classified as belonging to the same family.

Table 8.

**Relationships between the Ministry Official and Others**

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**Allies and Companions**

The Principal does not directly comment on the Ministry Official’s perspective however they think very similarly, identifying the need for change and expressing comfort with the apparent chaos in change. Their prime directive is the implementation of policies and procedure, the Ministry Official responding through the Ministry to the Current Government and the Principal through the Associate Director to the Board of Education. Whereas the Principal views her role as change agent, the Ministry Official
inspires. They are both charged with making it happen. They both work with teachers, the Principal as an immediate Supervisor and the Ministry Official as a facilitator working in a train-the-trainer model.

The Federation President and Ministry Official both value the role of the classroom teacher. The Federation President takes comfort in the notion that the Ministry Official values classroom teachers' ability to make good decisions for students regardless of political happenings. This confirms her own support of teachers as professionals and the idea that the politics of education is external to the classroom. Although they both view society as being responsible for shaping education, they place the power for decision making about what is good for students in the classroom and with teachers. Whereas the Parent sees the Teacher as having the direct impact, she thinks Teachers have and should continue to have the responsibility for the 'how' of curriculum delivery, not the 'what.'

Dependents

The Ministry Official has a dependent relationship on the Current Government, a dotted line back to the minister and his cabinet. Her role aligns her with whatever Government is currently in power. She is charged for the implementation and the monitoring of the policies and procedures of the Current Government. Although the Associate Director and the Ministry Official view her role as apolitical, the Ministry Official works to separate the pedagogical from the political. The Federation President picked up on her resistance to the external political forces. The Ministry Official, in our interviews, asked that the 'crisis' word be eliminated from her perspective. Dismissing it as political, she preferred to talk instead about the growth and opportunities available.
Clearly she struggles to walk the line between what is politically motivated and what is good for teaching and learning. For her it is a balancing act.

Adversaries

The Critic is very opposed to the Ministry Official’s perspective. She responds to the ministry rhetoric as she responds to the Current Government. She views the Ministry Official as willingly giving up the values that are the foundation of public education instead of fighting to hold onto to them. She sees the Ministry Official as failing to recognize the values of public education and actively working towards the erosion of public education. Although the Ministry Official is confident that public education holds its own in contrast to private schools, her point of reference is for the most part under-funded parochial schools and one elite secondary school struggling to implement secondary school reform. Do these accurately reflect what private schools would look like once funding were applied through voucher systems?

The Critic and Ministry Official are cast in oppositional roles by their job definitions. As mentioned in the character description of the Critic, should the Critic’s government gain the provincial seat, these two characters would be aligned.
Associate Director

We meet after-school on Friday afternoons in what has been described as a small town school. Built in 1929, it represents a dying breed. Surrounded by 100-year-old trees this two-storey brick structure with large windows, tall ceilings and wooden railed staircases houses 110 students and 6 staff. In the principal’s office on the second floor, we sit on opposite sides of a wooden desk. In the background a vacuum whines as the custodian makes his final rounds for the day and through the tall open window, we hear the sounds of children playing. A lot has changed, he tells me, since he started as Principal. The phone never rang, parents never came in and the order of the day was teaching classes of students. After 5 years of teaching and 1 year as a vice-principal he was promoted to principal. After 9 years as principal he was promoted to superintendent for 13 years with various portfolios including Associate Director. Like a displaced person, the Associate Director and supervisory officers, effective November have been on the move. With the amalgamation of two coterminous boards and the selling of one education centre, offices to store books, files and create local workspace were created in schools located in supervisory areas, where upper management were subjected to the rhythms and routines of schools. At the new corporate headquarters, superintendents use a workstation, a cubical area with phone and space for lap top computer. The Associate Director is not distracted, a sign of his well-rehearsed skills. Outside of education, his life centres on his family, his church and his community. He and his wife share an interest in education and church life. Together they have acted as caregivers, coaches, leaders and lay ministers. A community minded person he gives of his time to his community serving on boards of directors, and as an active member and executive of a local service club.
With a flare for the dramatic, the Associate Director weaves together his tale of education and of his role in it. He tells a good story, in fact, our conversation is punctuated with good stories.

I have always had a great interest in drama. I even took a couple of courses in my bachelor’s degree, theatre and dramatic production, and in one of those courses we actually mounted a series of plays and we had to do all the different functions mounting lights etc. I think that is why I was interested in education because I realize that my teachers were performers. There were days they were entertainers and they kept the interest of all my friends while we were learning. I have always admired teachers for that and the performing arts professions where the people have to be a little bit on the stage when they are doing it. Although I would never wanted to make a living out of the theatre I think I always valued the performing skills that teachers have to have in order to work with children.

His interest and his influence are the people that he comes in contact with. He learns from having dialogue with people, a dialogue that in his role mostly occurs in meetings. He believes that the personality of the person is what enables that learning and he wishes that he could communicate that to teachers.

I like meetings! One of the reasons I like meetings is that meetings allow for dialogue. People express views and state concerns. I see a meeting as a learning situation. The people that I contact in those meetings influence people—whether a service club meeting, a community board meeting or even a Sunday worship service which is a meeting. People in those contexts influence me. Some of the teachers who have contact with me, the people that I work with, we are constantly together, other superintendents, director of education, these are the people.

It’s okay for teachers to be themselves when they are working with young students. It is okay to share your interests and it is okay to share your enthusiasms. I think we would probably have success with prescribed curricula if we continued to be confident in the human relationship. There is more to education than imparting a set of skills. And when I talk to people, at the present they feel they are not supposed to be doing that. They have got to put the shoulder to the wheel, the nose to the grindstone, keep the eye on the ball in terms of the curriculum and try to work in that position.

He describes the contortions that teachers must go through in order to meet the expectations of the times. Positions that are not only uncomfortable but destroy
the fluidity of teachers' performance. He believes the expectations for achievement will in the end have disastrous effects on students' ability to learn and to complete their education.

Every aspect of the educational enterprise is off balance. Everybody is looking over his or her shoulder wondering what is coming next that is going to shake us all off this tightrope that we are walking. We've got forces in play right now who are trying to expect from grade 3 kids what we would normally expect from kids in grade 5, who are trying to expect from our graduates what we should be expecting of people who have had on the job training. And it's not fair! It is hard to know how to deal with a government which has tackled absolutely every aspect of the process and has changed it all and not much of it is working as well as it should. If we are not careful we are going to go back to the 30's and the 20's when significant number of students left school at the end of grade 8, because there is no hope. There is no hope for them!

Power plays make or break the educational system. The Associate Director has witnessed the different powers coming into play. Education is a pendulum that swings, it swings now to tighten up the perception of looseness, it swings from social to economic considerations. He views history as a cycle, one that repeats itself.

It is an attempt to involve some of the stakeholders more closely with the educational process. Some people see the education system as providing them with their workers for the future and so they want to have a say. Some people see the education system as fulfilling part of what use to traditionally be the role of parents and so they want the parents to have a say.

For the Associate Director, the story of the man, his son and the donkey represents the different powers that are throwing education off balance.

I think that if Aesop was around he would just tell us his story about the man and his son and the donkey and how they were going off with the donkey and people at different points criticized what was happening. One group said, "Why are you walking you have this great animal, why are you not riding the donkey? You are silly." So one of them rides the donkey. Then the next group say, "Well you lazy boy, you lazy boy. You are so strong and your poor old father is walking. He should be on the donkey and you should be walking." And so they change. So somebody else says "Well you should both be on." So they both climb on. Then some
other group of people say, “What are you doing on there, this animal has rights. By rights you should be carrying this animal?” So they truss the donkey up and of course the donkey is incensed by this and breaks free and leaps off a pole and into the river and drowns.

You see everybody right now has an opinion and right now the education system is this man and the son and the donkey. And everyone is saying do this and then a little bit later, do this and then a little bit later, do this. So every wind of change causes a slight adjustment or a major adjustment. And that is what I think Aesop would say. It’s been around for a long time, it happens every once in a while and it is happening now.

The times that we live in create some of these adjustments. In society today the Associate Director identifies concerns about deficits and debts, a desire for a commonly understood curriculum, a call for accountability and visibility, and an anti-authoritarian movement that manifests itself in opposition to any kind of authority type position. A lack of confidence on the part of communities, parents and graduates is the crisis. Education does not function well under these conditions.

One of the things that we have always believed is that if education is going to occur that there needs to be a situation or situations in which there is some kind of order. There can’t be total confusion. There can’t be total discomfort. We know that if children come to school tired, if they come to school hungry, if they come to school not well care for then they are not learning. If adults have worries they are not going to be good learners nor will they always be good instructors or administrators. If there is too much then it just breaks it all down. I think people are very worried right now and sometimes don’t know what they are worried about. And that worries me.

And even though we are faced with very rapid change almost to the point were people cannot catch their breath and know that they have got a year of stability. These things do get institutionalized. The big obstacle is there has been an expectation created that everything is going to change like that and yet we are not an enterprise that can work that way. We have too many people. We are not assembly lines. It is not like you can retool us over the summer and we will turn out a different model in September and October.

There is an exodus of experienced people. For the longest time we couldn’t seem to hire enough young people, because we seemed to have enough and they were all staying around and now we have this quick reversal and everybody is leaving. And yet as these experienced people are
leaving, they are the very people we need to try to deal with these new expectations.

Completing his own cycle of storytelling he comes back to educations’ performance, a drama where no one applauds.

Teachers and principals and educators, we are all performers and just like the actors on stage, it is hard to imagine how well those actors would perform if no one ever applauded. Three hours with no applause and yet there are people watching, listening, breathing.

The Associate Director is a messenger and the message he brings gets no applause. His role he thinks is to soften the message and bring confidence to his people.

What Others Say

The others were reluctant to identify the speaker. The Ministry Official thinks teachers, principals, superintendents, directors and trustees all feel a crisis in confidence. The Parent thinks it may be a trustee. Using terms like “stakeholder” reflects someone who is familiar with the system or close to it. Although this term is not exclusive to education, the Parent comments that it certainly has been used a lot lately. The Teacher comments that this person talked about the broader issues of education rather than specific classroom examples. The Critic might imagine that this is the perspective of a bureaucrat.

Crisis in confidence

While, the Associate Director talks about a crisis in confidence, one that is debilitating the performance of educators, the Ministry Official says the blind trust that we once had in educators had been eroded and she thinks this may not be a bad thing.

People are now questioning that and saying, “We are not sure that you really know” and I think that does undermine and that is part of the crisis and that does come with the accountability thing. I think that is an opportunity for us to take a look at what is the truth and it there something
here we do need to look at. I don't really see it as a crisis but an opportunity; crisis has such a negative connotation to it. It is an opportunity to grow so it is an interesting comment, a crisis in confidence. (Ministry Official)

This theme of trust is a focus in many of the characters' dialogues. The Principal, like the Ministry Official, thinks that perhaps educators need to look at themselves and to assess what needs to be done in order to open communication with the community. The Teacher talks about the faith that is exchanged between parents and the school. The Critic, although she does not comment directly on this perspective, speaks generally to those perspectives that were concerned about what is happening to public education and about the lack of confidence and lack of trust. She thinks that “there has to be some argument as to why confidence and trust is justified.” She believes that public education has failed to make success apparent to the public and as a result lost the confidence of the public. The Principal talks about the distance that has been created between the public and academe. She quotes a disgruntled tax payer as telling her, “These educators with their ivory towers and their hooded gowns and academe who don’t relate and don’t connect with the real world. It is time they got tossed out of there.” The response of the educators is to withdraw rather than confront the issue. “I didn’t do anything pro-actively or assertively about that because it is so emotional. I went within and therein lies the problem.”

Business is running schools.

The Ministry Official thinks the Associate Director believes business is running the schools. The Parent, Teacher and Federation President agree. The Student, however, is surprised, “Aren’t schools for jobs?”

A change of government is not going to undo things.

The Associate Director comments that a change of government will not remedy the situation, since things get institutionalized. The Student takes this as reason to not
blame one person, such as the Premier. The problems from her point of view are provincial issues and not the responsibility of any single person. She thinks many students would agree that “since we are in a democratic country, the government is doing what the people want, so you can’t blame the government.” She continues, “society just wants to blame someone, something is wrong and someone has to be involved. It is easy to blame one person. You see that a lot on TV and in the news.”

The government doesn’t have the children’s best interest at heart.

The Associate Director thinks the best interests of students have been set aside. The Student comments that the decisions regarding education should be made with students’ best interests at heart. The Teacher thought the Associate Director had an accurate perception and that the immediate concern of the government is “money and profit and reducing the deficit/debt.” Whose interests does the Government have at heart?
Table 9.

Relationships between the Associate Director and Others

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Allies and Companions

None of these characters align their thinking with the Associate Director, although there are elements of his thinking reflected in the perspectives of the Student, Parent, Teacher, Principal and Federation President. The Ministry Official unknowingly aligns with the Associate Director in how they view their respective roles. They both call themselves messengers who soften the message from the Minister/Ministry, she to ensure the best for students and he to maintain the confidence of his staff. His position at this time is focused more on how the political agenda is undermining the confidence and the performance of educators, her position, however, is focused on the need for change and the opportunities for teachers’ growth in that process.

Dependents

The Associate Director has many dependent relationships. In the school board he is indirectly responsible for the Principal and Teacher and to the Parent and Student. He
is directly responsible for the implementation of the directives of the Current Government requiring that he work in conjunction with the Ministry Official and be directly responsible to the Board Chair. These dependent relationships do not mean that these people agree. There was little discussion about his perspective.

Adversaries

The Critic opposes the Associate Director’s perspective, in part because he acts as an agent for the Current Government and also because he bears some responsibility for upholding the values of education in the public eye. She tends to think he puts a happy face on the directives because his mandate is to make it work.
Board Chair

A parent of three and the wife of a farmer, she quickly gained a prominent role in the local board of education. Elected to chair in her first year as trustee, she served in this capacity then took on the chair of the committee struck to plan for the amalgamation with a coterminous board. In the first year of the newly amalgamated board she was appointed chair again. She and her husband live with their children in a nearby township on an expansive Holstein farm. A parent and community member, she and her husband are actively involved in farming, raising children, as well as church and rural organizations and associations. She describes her relationship with her husband as “a kind of a team,” she playing secretary to his presidential roles. She describes this foray into education as the first thing that she has done entirely on her own. Her family history may have determined her involvement in school affairs. Her father was on the board of trustees for SS# 10 the one room school she attended. Her husband’s father was chair of the board that built the elementary school that their children attended and his picture still graces its halls.

She aims to be the voice of understanding within the local community. She brings the perspective of a parent to a boardroom, grounding the policies and procedures in everyday language. She hopes she helps others to make sense of all that is happening.

Apart from being educated I had no formal training in education. I considered going to teacher’s college but then I got the first job that I applied for out of school so I took it. My kids were in school and it seemed to me that it was important to have representatives on the school board that had children in school so when the opening came up in the area I put my name forward and I was lucky to be elected.

It was the first Board that had more women than men. Most of us ran in elections and it was fairly shocking. Most of us were women. That was new to the director and a few of the others who didn’t know how to handle us upstarts. It turned out there was 9 new trustees out of 15 and I think it
was a real culture shock to the administration because they were not use to that kind of turn over.

Being a parent she connects with the other women who were new to the Board, who were also parents of children in public school. Together they learned the ins and outs of the system. She was surprised by the respect the position granted.

Being a trustee she suddenly had power and was encouraged to go to meetings "so I embarked on a very steep learning curve." As trustees we were allowed to go to whatever meetings we wanted to go to, that always surprised me. All of a sudden we were people with all this power and it wasn’t something that I had anticipated or even enjoyed really. We went to quite a few meetings just to get ourselves up to speed because the debating skills and the oracle skills of some of the trustees were so intimidating.

She judges other perspectives based on whether or not they present the big picture, the system perspective, a quality that she think characterizes a trustee.

As a parent, who is now a trustee, you have more of a perspective and more of an understanding of what is going on and what could be going on, and by that I mean potential. I think you have a responsibility as a trustee to share that perspective with anyone who asks, as far as helping them understand. Generally that is a role that I enjoy doing. I think I have a fair bit of credibility. I use to do a lot of letter writing to the editor. I always got positive feedback from people who read it and said it helped them to understand what was going on.

She makes decisions by gut instinct and finds she is not usually too far off. In the former board she could ask the supervisory officers questions or talk to the trustees she had come to know. Most of the familiar faces, however, are gone and she finds it more difficult without these relationships.

You get to know who thinks the way you do and you seek those people out. If you are really brave you will talk to those people who don’t think the way you do just because you are trying to understand the other position. But at present there are trustees that I talk with a lot and there are trustees that I hardly ever talk to except at the board table.
Amalgamation created all kinds of problems for her and for others. Trustees, loyal to their former boards and to their own constituency groups, vote against rather than for change and things grind to a stand still!

I ended up being chair of the amalgamation committee. That was awful quite frankly. The only thing we had to cling onto was that we were going to get increased funding. There was no reason for these two boards to amalgamated other than that they were side by side, because it wasn’t going to make things cheaper. We were already cheaper than anyone else in Ontario.

Where once she felt confident speaking publicly on behalf of the board now she is unsure, trustees are at odds with one another. She views the moves by the Current Government as moves to discredit boards of education and trustees who she thinks will be eliminated. Once in a position of power, now the ability for boards of education to make meaningful contributions dwindles.

I don’t write so many letters now perhaps because the board itself is not so cohesive. I am not going to put my name to something that isn’t approved by everyone.

They (the government) have set it up for the public to lose confidence in trustees and boards of education—we were the first target. They have clearly been targeting teachers. Now they are targeting kids.

What Others Say

No one identified the speaker as the Board Chair. The Federation President thought this person was a satisfied customer, one who recognizes Ontario education as one of the best in the world and students as still getting their education in spite of the problems at the local level. References to the 85 factor caused the Ministry Official to think it might be a teacher. The Teacher also thought it might be a teacher because of all the references made to Special Education. The Parent first comment that she didn’t think that this was anyone directly involved in education, then that she thought it could be a
well informed parent, or perhaps a school council member. Empathy conveyed in this perspective towards teachers however made her reconsider—it might be an entry level teacher. Her parting line, “If I was Mr. Snobelen’s mother I would say think it through” suggested it was a woman speaking.

**Schools are a reflection of society.**

Reading this perspective reminded the Federation President that “schools are reflections of society—that schools are there to bring continuity and connectedness from generation to generation.” The Board Chair thinks that schools are where we learn how to treat each other. The Teacher thinks schools should and do reflect society and is concerned about how society’s values have changed.

**Are we headed toward charter schools?**

The Ministry Official reads in the Board Chair’s perspective a fear of charter schools. Whereas the Board Chair wants the education for children to stay the same the Ministry Official welcomes the competition. She thinks that having some charter schools may be a good idea, providing for different students’ learning needs and challenging teachers to adapt and change. The Ministry Official comments,

> If the school system isn’t going to respond to the different needs of the kids, then maybe there is a need for a school that will respond. You know we have alternative settings now that are more responsive to certain kinds of kids. If teachers don’t want to change and they want to continue to replicate what is there and they just want to cater to a certain kind of kid then maybe there is a need that justifies charter schools or other kinds of school settings. I think more than charter schools perhaps the threat to public education is technology. Maybe kids won’t be going to school in the next hundred years.

The Critic and the Parent are also concerned about charter schools, although they do not express their opinion here.
Following Alberta’s system.

The Board Chair views education in Ontario as following what the Alberta education system has been doing. The Parent picked up on this comment because she recently read an article in a weekend paper about Alberta’s schools. The Board Chair doesn’t think Alberta’s example is a good one—neither does the Associate Director. The Teacher having experienced Alberta schools thinks a diversity of styles of delivery models is good. He knows, however, that oil money made it happen!

Discrediting student by calling for behaviour codes and uniforms.

The Board Chair thinks the Current Government’s call for behaviour codes and student uniforms in schools is ridiculous. There are already codes of behaviour in schools and “You see students at the high school in jeans and sweatshirts. How much more uniform can they be?” The Parent understands the inference but disagrees.

They (teenagers) try to dress like each other but at the same time teenagers themselves know very much who is in and who isn’t in because they are not wearing the right kind of jeans or sweatshirts. I think it is 10 times worse than when my oldest was that age. “I can’t wear that to school”, “I just can’t” “I couldn’t possibly”. Sometimes I think that uniforms wouldn’t be such a bad thing and it would just even the ground for some of the kids. I feel very badly for kids from families that simply cannot afford it and teenagers, despite the fact that they believe they are the most open-minded group on the generational ladder, they are probably the most snobbish--and they don’t recognize it.

The Student likes to think all teenagers are not the same. She sees the clothes students wear as identifying particular styles or groups. She thinks, like the Parent, that uniforms might eliminate some of the judgement that is based on clothes.

I don’t think we look all the same, some people dress really wild and some are kind of sloppy. The only way it would help with say uniforms is that some people class people by how they dress, say you are a preppy or you are a jock, you are a skeeter. In that way it might be better because it is one less way to judge someone.
The Board Chair views the Government's position on this issue as unfounded and unnecessary, just another political shot aimed at a “hot spot.”

**How She Thinks**

The Board Chair tends to see similarities in the perspectives of others that mirror her own thinking. She was relieved to find, on reading the perspectives, that hers was not too far off the others. She questioned whether my editing had made them appear similar. She feels often when she is dealing with the educational matters that nobody else understands and yet she thought these perspectives where very sympathetic to each other. She found that reassuring. Her desire to be the voice of understanding demonstrates a style of thinking towards equalizing, creating checks and balances rather than cause and effects.
Table 10.

**Relationships between the Board Chair and Others**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allies (Companion)</th>
<th>Adversaries (Conflict)</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federation President</td>
<td>Current Government</td>
<td>Associate Director</td>
<td>Critic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ministry Official</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Allies and Companions**

The Federation President aligns with the Board Chair. Both tend to have a positive view towards education, valuing what it is. The Board Chair's perspective is one of preservation of all that is good in the face of change. The Federation President hears with the Board Chair's perspective as valuing societies input into education. The Associate Director shares this view of aiming for stability, restoring confidence, and celebrating the good work teachers and students are doing.

**Dependents**

The Associate Director has a dependent relationship with the Board and so indirectly with the Board Chair. He is officially the Secretary to the Chair.

**Adversaries**

The Ministry Official and the Government both think a little bit of competition might be good for the system, causing bureaucrats to quake and question, and teachers to learn new strategies. The Board Chair identifies the governments' actions as discrediting local boards and reducing their power to make effective decisions with a purpose of
building public support for the removal of school boards. Are these examples of change for the sake of change?
Character Roles

Subjective and Objective Characters

In the research, story characters represent one of two perspectives on the story problem, either subjective or objective. The objective view, represents the perspective from the outside looking in, while the subjective view, represents the inside looking out.

The subjective view is as if the story mind were our own. From this perspective, two characters are most visible: main and obstacle. The main and obstacle characters represent the inner conflict of the story mind. We might say the story is of two minds. In real life, we often play our own devil's advocate, entertaining an alternative view as a means of arriving at the best decision. Similarly, the story mind's alternative views are made tangible through the main and obstacle characters. To the reader of a story, the main character's experience is the readers. The obstacle character blocks the way.

Since only twenty percent of the population have kids in school and only two percent of newspaper articles quote actual classroom teachers, what goes on in the school system is a mystery.

(Ted Johns, The School Story, 1999)

In this research, the Teacher is cast as the main character and Current Government as the obstacle character. The insiders are clearly the Teacher, Parent and Student who position as the ones education happens to. Of these three the Teacher's position as the insider is most revealing. In the last term of office, the Current Government has positioned, through actions taken, in an adversarial position to schools and teachers. We know very little about the Current Government as a character and he appears in this crisis story as the outsider looking in. The other characters take sides, for or against these two characters, providing us with their point of view.
The Casting of Characters

Teacher-Government

At the provincial level, the Teacher's point of view is assumed and represented by the Opposition Critic who speaks and acts as the Teacher. At the local level, the Teacher adversary appears as the current government's agent, the Ministry Official.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Government</th>
<th>Opposition Critic (Teacher)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Knowledge/Actuality</td>
<td>Purpose: Thought/Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Consider/Pursuit</td>
<td>Motivation: Reconsider/Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology: Certainty/Proaction</td>
<td>Methodology: Probability/Inaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: Proven/Effect</td>
<td>Evaluation: Unproven/Cause</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose:** The Current Government appears as having knowledge of the current state of education. With a majority government it has the power to impose or actualize this knowledge. This knowledge may not be true, however, it may be believed to be so. The gap between what is known and what is true can create enormous misconceptions. It is this gap that the characters in the crisis story struggle to fill and it is this gap that the Critic character falls into. The primary purpose of the Critic then is one of perception.

The Teacher pieces together what is happening by cutting out newspaper clippings from Toronto papers attempting to read beyond what is written for he mistrusts the front page perspective. He reads the columnists because he thinks they present a more realistic view of teachers. Likewise, the Critic has limited information. She does not know what course
the current government will take until it is announced—she can only surmise. She watches who the current government aligns with (Fraser Institute and back-to-basics movement) and gleans what she can from their ideologies and actions, in an attempt to determine what the Current Government’s intentions are and future actions will be.

**Motivation:** The Current Government weighs the pros and cons and acts in deliberation. Issues are kept in the public mind, and pondered until they are resolved. This ‘refusing to let sleeping dog lie’ stirs up negative emotions. The attitude is considered by both the Teacher and the Critic to be excessive. A constant barge of television commercials focused at teachers who refused to spend a little extra time in the classroom raised the ire of secondary school teachers. The Critic calls the Current Government’s approach a “public attack on teachers in a way that I have never seen any government attack a group of employees, let alone a group that is suppose to be implementing these so called positive changes that the government wants.” The Critic’s position is to reconsider or avoid. She may re-examine her position and their conclusions to see if they are still valid. The Teacher was comforted after reading the ten perspectives because they were similar to his own way of thinking and he concludes that “we are all hit the target or we have all missed the target and maybe what we have defined as the crisis is not it at all?” This statement expresses clearly a motivation to reconsider. It answers the questions that many participants expressed, Why is he focused on getting rid of the leader as a solution to the crisis? What will he do if the leader returns with a majority? After the election, the Teacher is calm. He took a position (one of kicking out a government) with the hopes of effecting a change, however with a motivation of reconsideration, he can change his position without losing motivation.
Methodology: The Current Government's position is one of certainty and pro-action. Action is taken because this government is convinced that the information it has is true. To be certain requires no risks and absolute security in knowing that the course chosen is risk-free. The Current Government operates from a power base. With a majority government and with the backing of business, certainty is likely. The Current Government acts swiftly, legislating a chain of events that causes changes. This pro-action may cause problems to occur, irritate a situation, cause damage to innocent or non-responsible parties, or not address the true problem. The Critic comments that the Current Government has demonstrated incompetence in implementing change because it has been essentially unconcerned about making positive change. The Critic’s methodology may be characterized as one of probability; playing the odds, changing directions in midstream, and steering clear of dangers. Creating a force of resistance might be interpreted as inaction. The downside of resistance is that it may hinder everything and change nothing.

Evaluation: The Current Government focuses on the end product of a series of efforts; they judge the effect of their efforts. Concentrating on the effect keeps the effort focused on the problem or outcome. Starting with an outcome or effect in mind, they work backwards to create a plan of action that will cause that effect. In contrast, the Critic’s judgement is based on conjecture, suggesting that what is claimed has not been tested or is unproven. Not accepting anything as fact keeps her from jumping to conclusions however it also makes her less able to accept the obvious. The Critic is also concerned with cause, in other words, what is behind the situation. She may look for a single cause or address them all, ignoring the option of simply dealing with the effect. The opposition party’s platform in the election was essentially to remove the Current
Government, no alternatives where suggested in terms of strategies or changes to address the problem, the problem was presented as simply a misdirected government.

**Teacher-Ministry**

At the local school level, the Teacher considers the Ministry more than that agent or messenger of the Current Government's plan. The Teacher suspects the Ministry Official are the secret creators of the plan; a plan that has been in place for many years, one that is picked up by whatever government happens to be in power. The Ministry Official confirms parts of this thinking when she says that the direction for these changes began long ago and without regard for political affiliation. She suggests that the plan is a good one, one that will serve the children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Ministry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Equity/Projection</td>
<td>Purpose: Inequity/Speculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Conscience/Help</td>
<td>Motivation: Temptation/Hinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology: Reduction/Evaluation</td>
<td>Methodology: Production/Reevaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: Expectations/Ending</td>
<td>Evaluation: Determination/Unending</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose:** The Teacher's purpose is equity, wanting to work out the balance and balancing the needs of many (students) is his primary desire. He judges the acceptability of the school situation by its apparent equilibrium. The Teacher believes that, as a society, "our strength is cultural diversity". He claims that a society can only be "as strong as its weakest link". This premise supports his belief in a strong public education. Since "religion just doesn’t unify" he believes religion should be taught at home and has
no place in school. His belief in teaching the whole child also speaks to balancing the needs of the child. In contrast, the Ministry Official appears to be focused on inequities. With a background in special education, she acknowledges that children are different. She considers equal treatment to be an inequity. In reference to the current state of education, she focuses on what is wrong. What is good does not gain her attention. She perceives resistance amongst teachers towards change and she will not be satisfied until they all embrace it. While the Ministry Official speculates on what might happen to the face of education in the future, the Teacher draws heavily on past experience to understand the future (projection). The Ministry Official imagines learning centres at homes in subdivisions with teachers acting as consultants for builders and designers of homes. Her focus is one of preparing students for the future world, beyond the year 2000. She is not bound by what is likely. However, problems will arise if her focus prepares students for something too unlikely. The Teacher, on the other hand, is very present focused and wishes he could see into the future and imagine what it will hold. In the meantime he employs his knowledge of history to suggest some of the pitfalls to avoid. While this focus helps him understand the known, it prevents him from identifying the unknown and recognizing abrupt changes in direction.

**Motivation:** The Ministry Official chooses not to focus on the potential negative aspects of the situation, avoiding the word crisis, preferring instead to think of the changes in education as progress. This might be described as a motivation of temptation, a belief that the negative consequences of an action are imaginary or can be avoided. In contrast, the Teacher employs conscience as a motivation as he forgoes immediate pleasure or benefit because of future consequences. The Teacher identifies some of the personal and professional limitations of teaching. He sees limited opportunities for
financial gain, respect and value, and staying in touch with the reality of the world and professionally. He views the effect public opinion is having on teachers and the challenges ahead for teachers to maintain positive working conditions with boards and the government. Still he commits to continue and to find new interests in his work, such as working with the union and having a positive impact for new teachers. The Ministry Official discusses how the Ministry people “soften” the Current Government’s message. This motivation may be one of hindering. Disputing the validity of teacher concerns can hinder the communication of these. In contrast, the Teacher is motivated to help with the cause of education. Is he qualified? He thinks that he is the only one who can respond and yet his knowledge of education and educational needs may be limited and his helping may conflict with Ministry efforts.

**Methodology:** The Ministry Official’s actions are production oriented. She focuses her efforts on trying to convince others of what can happen and working with Boards to come up with a plan for change. Any movement or change is a good change. The Teacher agrees that change in response to society changes is good and necessary, however, he resists change for the sake of change. He needs to be more certain that his actions will be effective. The Ministry Official through re-evaluation of the information she has been given comes to believe that it is in the long run a positive course for students and for the education system. She is swayed by the information believing that this is true. The teacher, on the other hand, has pieced many of the pieces of the political scenario together and decided the changes that are being made in the structure of education are not good. Having come to this conclusion, he is not likely to change his position.

**Evaluation:** The Ministry Official has determined that the forces in play are working towards the best in education. She names the forces as evolution and she sees the
politics as temporary. What does evolution look like in education? Will only the strongest and fittest survive? The thinking underpinning the privatization of education appears to suggest that a little competition never hurt anyone. The reality is that only those who have and can compete will and those that cannot or have not will have to do with what remains. The danger inherent in determination may be that the political is the force at play and the evolution is towards outcomes that they have yet to be determined. A judgement of expectation is a projection of what one expects to find at the end of a path. This judgement allows the Teacher to anticipate and make plans for both rewards and troubles. The Teacher expects to make a difference by working with the union, he does not expect to win the war, but knows he wants to play a part. This way he will be able to leave teaching knowing that he has not stood on the sidelines, but taken action. The Ministry Official views the evolution of education as a continuum of unending change. Where others see a conclusion, she sees a change in direction. This allows her to string the events of past years together with the current changes into a seamless string. The Teacher, however, views history as eras and political terms. He sees the end of his career approaching and recognizes his time to act is now. He focuses on bring an end to a government. He knows that win or lose they only have a term to exert their influence and wield their power.
Table 11.

Character Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposed</th>
<th>Allies</th>
<th>Dependent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Government</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bureaucrats</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Knowledge/Actuality</td>
<td>Purpose: Ability/Aware</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Consider/Pursuit</td>
<td>Motivation: Logic/Control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology: Certainty/Proaction</td>
<td>Methodology: Probability/Inaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: Proven/Effect</td>
<td>Evaluation: Theory/Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Critic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Desire/Self Aware</td>
<td>Purpose: Thought/Perception</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Feeling/Uncontrolled</td>
<td>Motivation: Reconsider/Avoidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology: Possibility/Protection</td>
<td>Methodology: Potentiality/Reaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: Hunch/Test</td>
<td>Evaluation: Unproven/Cause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Order/Inertia</td>
<td>Purpose: Equity/Projection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Faith/Support</td>
<td>Motivation: Conscience/Help</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology: Production/Reevaluation</td>
<td>Methodology: Induction/Nonacceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: Accurate/Results</td>
<td>Evaluation: Expectations/Ending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Principal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose: Inequity/Speculation</td>
<td>Purpose: Chaos/Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation: Temptation/Hinder</td>
<td>Motivation: Disbelief/Oppose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology: Production/Reevaluation</td>
<td>Methodology: Induction/Nonacceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation: Determination/Unending</td>
<td>Evaluation: Non-accurate/Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characters and Their Archetypal Functions

Every story has to have an objective problem, a central concern upon which the story characters focus. The objective problem of the current educational story is the crisis. Each character provides the reader with a strategy for problem solving. Some of these strategies will be more effective than others. Participants were asked if they see themselves as playing a role in the current educational crisis and if so what? These are the roles they identified:

- Principal as change agent
- Teacher as political activist
- Student as passive recipient
- Parent as guardian
- Associate Director as the messenger
- Ministry Official as inspiration
- Board Chair the voice of understanding
- Critic as the resistance
- Federation President as advocate.

The dynamic structure of story character roles serves to illuminate how and why the crisis plot has been both efficient and effective. What happens when the government aligns itself with the protagonist of time: identifies deadlines and a crisis that needs to be responded immediately then intervenes with crisis management strategies? What happens when the consciousness of society, the public mind is brought on side through a media campaign? What happens when the old ways that have been the active resistance are made to appear outdated and unresponsive? Change happens and it happens fast!
**Protagonist:** The government plays the role of the protagonist, taking the responsibility for pursuing a solution to the story's objective problem, the crisis in education. Time functions as the protagonist in the research story, moving the plot forward. Its motivation is objective and its movement appears as forward. Time, however, is illusionary, a relative term. It can appear to stand still and then move rapidly depending on context and perception. The current government creates a tension between the present and the anticipated future tense and employs this as the reason and rationale for change. Short and some would say unreasonable timelines, constructed by the government, serve as obstacles that the teachers must overcome. School boards perceive the public as changing over time, once supporters of education they act as adversaries. The mythic shape-shifter character is responsible for all of these reality shifts, changing shape according to who tells the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Perspective</th>
<th>Provincial Perspective</th>
<th>Board Perspective</th>
<th>Mythological Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protagonist: principal driver towards the story goal (pursuit &amp; consider)</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Current Government</td>
<td>Public as the face of a changing society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Antagonist:** At a mythic level the school marm archetype maintains the status quo. She thrives on order and routine, reinforces rules and resists change. At the research level, this desire to stay the same, is supported by memetic encodings from culture, society and social groups. The Opposition Critic represents the resistance, her role is to oppose the goals of the protagonist by having goals of her own. Goals that may have serious negative or no repercussions, because time and public opinions, as factors, have not been considered. At the local board level, the Board Chair and the Associate Director
strive to keep things stable and to restore confidence. They hope students will continue to receive the same education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Perspective</th>
<th>Provincial Perspective</th>
<th>Board Perspective</th>
<th>Mythological Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Mythic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonist:</td>
<td>Underlying Mythologies</td>
<td>Critic (resistance)</td>
<td>Board Chair Associate Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diametrically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opposed to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goal (avoid &amp; prevent)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Contagonist:** The conscious awareness of a Canadian province is the elements of democracy, the interests and opinions of a diverse public. Unions, parents, workers, seniors, managers, elites, business (Fraser Institute) and special interest groups (back-to-basics movement) play the contagonist role by making their opinions known: they lure and tempt the government towards their own specific interests and away from the concerns for the society as a whole. They are managed at a conscious level, without question as to unconscious motivations. At the board level, the local school community and Joe Public have something to say about education and the way things should be run. They each bring their own special interests to the subject of education. The mythic trickster is about and tricks are afoot, watch out!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Perspective</th>
<th>Provincial Perspective</th>
<th>Board Perspective</th>
<th>Mythological Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Mythic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contagonist:</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temptation in the</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unions</td>
<td>Trickster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>story mind, places</td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>&quot;a bogus plan&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obstacles in the</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>path of the</td>
<td></td>
<td>Workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protagonist</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(temptation, hinder)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Sidekick:** The role of the sidekick is to keep the faith and build the confidence in the story mind. The Ministry Official comments that each of the characters filter information through their own particular values and beliefs. Inherent in establishing a particular course and the interpretation of the mandate are assumptions and beliefs. The key to understanding lies in identifying these, then understanding what they filter. The Associate Director views the crisis in education as a crisis in confidence and imagines that when the confidence is restored than the crisis will be over. As the messenger, he softens the tone so that it is more easily and readily accepted by parents and staff. The emphasis in this role is on oratory skills and a flare for the dramatic. The Ministry Official inspires educators (boards of education, superintendents, principals, and teachers) to act in ways that will be good for student learning while managing or mitigating political directives. As bureaucrats of the system, both of these characters deliver the political party line. Their purpose is to perceive the impact the government’s direction will have on the local system. Willing to negotiate they reconsider their positions in education, evaluating their success based on particular cause or issue and the outcomes of their actions. At the mythic level the grandmother, wise with age, offers console suggesting that in the end things will turn out fine, ‘don’t sweat the details.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Board Perspective</th>
<th>Mythological Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sidekick: confidence in the story mind (faith, supports)</td>
<td>Assumptions and Beliefs</td>
<td>Ministry (inspirational speaker)</td>
<td>Principal (change agent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Mythic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Skeptic: The role of the skeptic is to doubt. The Teacher functions as a skeptic when he doubts the directions of the Minister and the Current Government. As a political activist, he opposes many of the changes that have been imposed without consultation with teachers. He is for reasonable and manageable change and skeptical of the government’s motivations to change education. He identifies some of the effects in the classroom and is concerned. The Teacher’s method of evaluation may be judged as non-accurate as it is based on what he sees, hears, and feels in the process. At the provincial level, the federation takes legal action, stages strikes and protests to make a point. The mythic hero overcomes obstacles in order to make a difference for his community!

<table>
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<th>Board Perspective</th>
<th>Mythological Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skeptic: doubt in the story mind (disbelief, opposes)</td>
<td>Incongruities</td>
<td>Federation (advocate)</td>
<td>Teacher (political activist)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guardian: The role of the conscience is to remind the characters of their purpose. At the research level, these incongruities between what is said and what is done, highlights the unconscious intentions of characters, a useful tool in decoding meaning. At the provincial level, public opinions guide provincial decision-making. Polls measure which directions and what adjustments need to be made. Like the question of which comes first, the chicken or the egg, the question remains do polls influence public opinion or public opinions influence polls? The Parent is the conscience of the story the character that provides help in evaluating what will benefit children. The Parent’s purpose is equity and protection of what is right or good for her children. She waits in the wings hoping to have a positive effect where she can. Her method of problem solving is judging the
actions and intentions of characters in education. At the mythic level, Spider Woman plays on the web of life, weaving together strands that hold it all together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Perspective</th>
<th>Provincial Perspective</th>
<th>Board Perspective</th>
<th>Mythological Perspective</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guardian: the story mind's conscience, provides help to the protagonist</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Public Opinion &quot;there is a right way and a wrong way of doing things&quot;</td>
<td>Parent (guardian)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Table 12.

Characters and Their Archetypal Functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Research Perspective</th>
<th>Provincial Perspective</th>
<th>Board Perspective</th>
<th>Mythological Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protagonist: principal driver towards the story goal (pursuit &amp; consider)</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Current Government (changing face) (self-appointed hero)</td>
<td>Public as the face of a changing society</td>
<td>Shape-shifter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antagonist: diametrically opposed to the goal (avoid &amp; prevent)</td>
<td>Underlying (old) Mythologies</td>
<td>Critic (resistance)</td>
<td>Board Chair (voice of understanding) Associate Director (messenger)</td>
<td>School Marrn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contagonist: temptation in the story mind, places obstacles in the path of the protagonist (temptation, hinder)</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td>Democracy Unions Leaders Parents Workers Seniors Special Interest groups</td>
<td>Local Community</td>
<td>Trickster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian: the story mind's conscience (help to the protagonist)</td>
<td>Unconscious</td>
<td>Public Opinion &quot;there is a right way and a wrong way of doing things&quot;</td>
<td>Parent (guardian)</td>
<td>Spider Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skeptic: doubt in the story mind (disbelief, opposes)</td>
<td>Incongruities</td>
<td>Federation (advocate)</td>
<td>Teacher (political activist)</td>
<td>Hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidekick: confidence in the story mind (faith, support)</td>
<td>Assumptions and Beliefs</td>
<td>Ministry (inspirational speaker)</td>
<td>Principal (change agent)</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CHAPTER 5

THE PLOT THICKENS: THE IMAGES, METAPHORS AND MYTHS OF THE CRISIS IN EDUCATION

The creature who guards the gateway is a creature of fixed habits and attitudes. It has a narrow and insular view of its place in the world and little can be done to budge it. It blocks our path by turning us into a witless version of itself, destroying our moral and spiritual fiber, or even swallowing us whole.

(Houston, 1996, p. 140)

In the most subtle and devious forms, (the guardian) manifests as a characteristic mood or emotional quality the colours our consciousness, blocking our access to a larger plate of emotional possibilities.

(Houston, 1996, p. 141)

What will it take to awaken us to the scheme of things, a scheme to which we have not been made privy? The focus of this chapter is plot, the pattern of events that form the crisis story.

The Crisis in Education

What is it? Participants did not agree on what the crisis in education was. They thought it was a big business intervention, a sign of the current chaotic and changing times; a public call for accountability; the consequence of an aging system; an economic reality; or a political agenda.

It did not begin with the current government. Maybe they used the language that set that mentality. I think they used the crisis management register and that has been implanted in the minds of people that therefore this government has created the crisis and in some ways they have but the seed for this kind of change was planted along time ago. How they have managed it is probably created some crisis along the way.

(Ministry Official)

The crisis awakened some; scared the hell out of others and other have just decided to tolerate for the next four years.

(Teacher)

Educators are not as open to criticism as they should be or able to see things realistically from another’s perspective as they ought to. They need
to put down their guard, drop their bags at the door and take a serious look at some of the things that need to be looked at.

(Principal)

I think the crisis is that we are going to lose public education in Ontario because it appears that the government has set it up for the public to lose confidence in trustees and boards of education.

(Board Chair)

There are moments right now when I have this sense that the interests of young people are being pushed aside in the interest of trying to serve big business or the business sector who are saying that they don't like the products of school.

(Associate Director)

What is happening is that we are trying to create a false situation in the school system whereby the children of this and future generations going through the system are made to feel inadequate. So many children didn't do well on the grade 3 testing and the emphasis was to go back and put more emphasis on the 3R's.

(Parent)

The basic goals of public education are threatened. We have actually aspired to offer a quality of education that is individual with regard to an individual's needs and without regard for the individual's ability to pay.

(Critic)

I just see what is wrong at our local school and that is where my ideas are coming from. Schools should be about learning and gaining responsibility and the motivation to learn. You don't always get that in school. A lot of students aren't interested in education anymore.

(Student)

First we have to examine whether or not there is a crisis in education.

(Federation President)

The government faced a situation where when you looked at the test results that did exist on international test results, Ontario students could best be described as mediocre.

(Press Secretary for the Current Government)
"What does it take to understand a simple sentence as being true?"

To ascertain the truth of a statement first requires understanding. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1981), understanding is not just a matter of a) picking out the pre-existing and well defined entities in the world and b) seeing whether some inherent relation holds between these well-defined entities. Instead, it is a matter of human projection and human judgement relative to certain purposes" (pps. 166, 167).

Analysis of the statement: The crisis in education (Current Government)

Participants: players in education (students, teachers, boards of education, ministry of education), crisis as turning point or decisive change, the speaker who identified and announced that there was a crisis was a government official.

Parts: Standard for education exists
The standard has not been met
The actual is far from the desired
Response is required
A major turning point has been reached

Stages: Precondition: A series of events
Beginning: A series of events led to this point
Middle: The crisis has been identified and anticipated
End: The crisis is the peak, the big event that passes
Final State: Anti-climax (series of smaller less significant events)

Causation: Beginning and middle enable the end
The series of event leading to this point and the identification and anticipation enable the big event that passes (Bill 160)

Middle and end cause the final state
The crisis identified and anticipated causes the anti-climax (a series of smaller less significant events)

Purpose: Goal: Final state—Anti-climax (series of small less significant events)

Plan: Meet precondition, perform beginning and middle (A series of events string them together towards a particular crisis point, identify the crisis and create anticipation, carry out the big event the turning point (Bill 160). The rest is downhill.
Defining Terms

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

Lewis Carroll

To understand the sentence fragment ‘the crisis in education’ we must first understand the terms: ‘crisis’ and ‘education.’ Crisis is defined as a “crucial turning point in the progress of an affair or of a series of events, as in politics, business, a story or play, etc.; a critical moment” (Funk and Wagnall, 1974). More illuminating perhaps (in a medical context) a crisis means “any sudden or decisive change in the course (of a disease), favourable or unfavourable.” Education is defined as 1) the systematic training of the mind, capabilities or character through instruction or study 2) acquisition of knowledge or skills; especially, formal schooling in an institution of learning (Funk and Wagnall, 1974). The tiny word ‘the’ is a definite article (as opposed to an indefinite article ‘a’ or ‘an’) used to render the modified word more particular or individual. It is used specifically and gives the modified word more substantive force. The word crisis itself can be an emotional word—coupled with ‘the’ significance is increased. ‘The’ also makes crisis singular. In combination the implication is that this event should be known or at the very least understood.

Teasing Out Assumptions

What are the series of events that led to the crisis? For this information we turn to the Current Government’s perspective—children not achieving to a standard, teachers not effective because the system was flawed, money being spent on administration having little effect on the classroom. It all makes sense or does it? What are the standards? Who set the standards and for what purpose? Who is being tested and under what conditions?

The Opposition Critic tells us that the published results were manipulated to show
Canadian children at the bottom of the results when in fact the 15 countries that fell below Canadian results had been cut off. It appears as if Canadian children where the weakest when out of the countries tested they were middle of the pack. Others have suggested that the conditions for testing are different, in some countries the candidates for testing are selected and not representative of a general population, in Canada the candidates are selected randomly. Since Canadian children stay in school longer, the student samples represent more diverse populations.

Who sets the standard and for what purpose? The participants in this study pretty much agree that it is a business agenda and that purpose is global competitiveness! Raising the standards of learning in the classroom and providing a more rigorous curriculum we are told will make us more economically competitive (Ministry of Education and Training, 1977). Does global competition represent more and better jobs for individual citizens? The Parent has doubts. She is concerned that we are preparing for a time when there will be fewer jobs generally and less professional and management jobs specifically. This has been her experience. Her husband, former vice-president of multi-national corporations, has worked his way up and out of the market. Her gifted son finds little challenge in an education system that diminishes rather than celebrates his capabilities. She sees the divide widening between the “have and the have-nots” and she witnesses the adage ‘work hard and get ahead’ as no longer holding true. The Ministry Official and the Principal however, see brighter days ahead. Retirement looms on the horizon. They are tired of the slow grind and anxious to start a new life and they think they see opportunities for marketing their skills in the world outside of schools. The Student and the Associate Director are concerned that the best interests of students are
not at the heart of the Current Governments agenda. The Superintendent views the schools and the administration of schools as a people and not a business concern.

Who will respond? What response will best suit the problem or concern? Prior to 1975, boards of education were charged with implementation of policy at the local school level with sensitivity to local needs. In 1975, the Current Government labelled school boards as self-serving, and ever-expanding bureaucracies who were spending money on administration rather than classroom concerns, and raising taxes which bled communities in order to feather the education nest. The Current Government positioned themselves as the ones who would have to intervene through legislation to clean up the mess. Actions included removal of school boards right to raise local taxes, and tighter more accountable budget formulas enveloping money to direct spending to the classroom and away from administrative costs. The effect has resulted in a lack of ability by local school boards to respond to local needs. This was quite evident in the fall of 1998 with a threat of school closures based on the new formulas for capacity and viable space. Boards found had no options to respond to parent demands to maintain school buildings. The government intervened to top up the budgets providing a years grace for schools with under 80% capacity.

Is the story plausible? Could the same events be strung together toward a different outcome? A crisis point has been reached. The sequence of events that led to this crisis point is deemed to be sufficient to warrant a critical or crisis point. Again we have to examine the steps and stages the sequence of events that came prior to this point to determine whether or not this point in time marked is an actual crisis point or whether it represents a manufactured crisis. Typically after a crisis people are happier, thankful for the reprieve, they often expect less and are appreciative of what they have because of all
that has been threatened. Based on this analysis, we could expect less dramatic minor
events to play out as the anti-climax. Participants have different expectations of what will
happen next. The Parent suspects people will get used to the bombs dropping. The Teacher
and the Critic fear people will lose the energy to respond.

A Matter of Context

Lakoff and Johnson (1981) submit that sentences are not understood in vacuo, we
understand them relative to certain larger categories of experience. To the average
citizen, ‘crisis’ is used to indicate a devastating event, such as an earthquake, a holocaust,
and a war, a terrorist act or assassination of a world leader. We respond emotionally, with
feelings of panic and devastation rather than rationale clear thinking. Why the choice of
words? Quite possibly for the effect it renders. Other words might have been used.
Substitute the word ‘climax.’ The meaning is maintained however the negative emotional
reaction is significantly reduced. The public might respond with pleasure, identifying
climax with sexual experiences. They might simply “oh” and “ah” in response to the
announcement that we were at a climax point in education. The selection of words
highlights an intention to produce a desired effect. In this case, the effect is to incite
public emotion in preparation for the actions that will follow.

Experiential Gestalt

This tiny phase ‘the crisis in education’ qualifies as an experiential gestalt (Lakoff
& Johnson, 1981), an experience for which we have some reference. It could be
understood in a variety of ways--as a climax, a turning point, a calamity, a point of no
return, narrowly as a budget concern, or perhaps specifically as a failure to achieve in
science and mathematics. “But the sentence is virtually never understood on its own
terms without the evocation of some larger gestalt that specifies the normal range of
natural dimensions (e.g., purpose, stages, etc.)" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981, p. 168).

Whichever gestalt is evoked, we understand much more than what is directly given. Each gestalt provides a background for understanding the sentence in terms that make sense to us, that is, in terms of an experiential category of our culture. Without clear definition or concrete experience of this crisis the players who participated in this study sought understanding by contrasting their understanding of current state of education to their conception of a crisis state and through searching for events that could conceive and justify a crisis state. They conclude: there are problems in education, specifically in communication, in confidence, in the ability to respond to the times, and in the effects of certain reforms such as the amalgamation process. To label the sentence as true, Lakoff and Johnson (1981), claim that the fit between our prototypical or normal understanding of the word crisis must fit with our understanding of the state of education. When these do not match then the statement is either false or the true with a qualifier. Examining the ‘crisis in education’ phrase in this way, one can conclude that the statement is true when from a government perspective it represents a plot and not a state. The statement is false from an educator’s point of view with a knowledge of education and crisis as a state.

Conventional Metaphor

The phase ‘crisis in education’ is a conventional metaphor and based on coherence can be understood as true or false in the same way as we understood a simple sentence. This phrase involves two projections. The word ‘in’ suggests that the crisis is contained by education. In order to understand this ontological metaphor we have to think of instances of a crisis and view them as a substance that can be contained and then view such a crisis as being contained by education. Containment suggests the crisis is being held and possibly that it can be managed. It might suggest that since it is inside, an
outside force or intervention is required. Substitute ‘for’ as in the ‘crisis for education’ and the cause of education would be advanced, ‘in’ education connotes that there is trouble within. Applying an ontological metaphor (understood in terms of a substance/object) allows us to categorize things that are not discrete or bounded in order to satisfy certain purposes that we have (i.e., trimming, cutting out the fat). Giving terms like crisis and education characteristics of substance and form serves for referring, classifying, and quantifying purposes. Since the crisis is in education, the characteristics of crisis can be used to describe the state of education. Words/phrases like ‘out of control’, ‘desperate’, ‘emergency’, ‘emergency measures’, ‘containment’, ‘urgency’, ‘zero hour’, ‘necessity’, and ‘dilemma’ (commonly associated with a crisis) are superimposed upon the concept of education to define it.

What does it mean to be the author of such a phrase ‘the crisis in education’? Insinuated is that the one that utters the phrase ‘knows’. In proclaiming it publicly, yet treating it as a slip, the implication is that ‘the cat has been let out of the bag’. Enter the idea! News to the public, we are left to wonder is it real or is it not? Who knows? We are not sure, our concept of a crisis doesn’t fit with our concept of education. We suspend judgement. What was the effect of such a slip? General denial amongst the education community, there was no crisis, things were continuing as normal. Mistrust of the educational community by the government, sets the teachers up for a massive provincial walkout, and boards of education as silent supporters. Mistrust by the public in teachers and educational systems, perhaps feeling duped for not knowing or that what they had always suspected had been confirmed. “Anyway how can you account for these poor results, and our general inability to respond globally and competitively in economic markets, it must be the poor standards being set by our schools” (Current Government). If
not a crisis, the Minister said the government would create one in order to implement the Current Government’s common sense revolution. The public thinks, “It must be bad!” The Opposition employs the phase ‘create a crisis’ to imply that a crisis doesn’t exist independent of the government, that was in fact manufactured. Too late, the evidence to support a crisis is starting to accumulate in people’s minds, besides the government was already responding, taking aggressive measures warranted in crisis situations. It reads like the construction of a story plot, but this is no story, it is all plot, judged based on its plausibility not probability.

Coming to understanding seems to be the crux of the problem for the participants in this study as they wrestle with the concept of a crisis in education. “What is the crisis?” (Student) “Is there one?” (Federation) The Ministry Official and Opposition Critic define the crisis as a political. The Local Federation President struggles with the word crisis, equating it with a calamity of vast or astronomical proportions, something that could not be predicted, planned for or avoided. During the year when the interviews were conducted, two students in Columbine, Colorado shot and killed 11 students; and NATO forces bombed Belgrade, Yugoslavia for 40 days in response to claims of ethnic cleansing. These events represent crisis situations, not the test results of Canadian students on international tests. While the Ministry Official prefers to talk about what is happening in education as evolution, the Opposition Critic determines that the Current Government by its actions has caused a crisis in education, one that threatens public education. The Principal doesn’t acknowledge a crisis in education per say but chaos, a sign of the current times we live in. The Parent suggests that the problem is that ‘the crisis’ had never clearly been defined. As a result each of the participants must work backward to understand the events that had led to the point where the crisis was
identified. The point, that the meaning of the word crisis was not understood, is evident by the fact that although the Current Government's perspective was included in this research study (and the attempt made to define the crisis problem) it was missed by many of the participants.

In our interviews characters employed images as a way of conveying their understanding of the crisis in education. Staying true to the text excerpts of interviews are included as evidence of characters' thinking.
"Well! You have come here to be educated, and taught a useful trade," said the red-faced gentleman in the high chair.

(Dickens, 1900)

The Teacher's Perspective on the Crisis in Education

In our first interview the Teacher refers to the crisis as a "boiling pot of water". He talks about the teachers "getting the heat", "being sensitive" "hurting" and "developing thicker skins". He suggests "turning down the heat from boiling point to simmering" as the way to end the crisis. I ask him to describe this image in more detail.

A Political Cartoon: Boiling Pot

If it was a political cartoon, the boiling pot would be a black kettle and it would have the word society written across it. One person stirring the pot would be Harris and maybe you could have all the politicians there. And someone would have to be adding fuel to the fire to make it bubble. I mean you can stir a pot and see what happens and that is good and sometimes necessary probably, some analogy about the cream rising. So who is throwing the wood in? Oh maybe that is the Education Minister because it is not the parents and on the other hand it could be the unions or the union people throwing pieces in. Where does the teacher fit it? The teacher is off to the side with an apron on. The teacher has a ladle and the little urchins, the students, are standing there with their cups. The teacher has to ladle out the learning and on the ladle is says learning. Put it into the cups of the children except there is not enough, it is too hot, it is spoiled...you know that type of thing.

From Dickens nineteenth century novel Oliver Twist comes this image of insufficient gruel being ladled out to hungry boys (children). The Teacher employs this image metaphorically to represent the conditions under which teachers are currently measuring out learning to students. As a metaphorical image it provides insight into the Teacher's definition of learning, the nature of the student-teacher relationship, and the relationship of education to society. Society, symbolized as a pot, is a metaphorical container. The gruel it contains is learning. The Teacher takes from the pot, what society can afford. In this scenario the teacher is doing the best with what he has been given. The process is one
of imparting learning to students by the master or teacher by measuring out equal portions. The student, dependent on the teacher, is fed this basic need—learning. Living in a poorhouse, students lacking resources of their own, take what is given.

The room, in which the boys were fed, was a large stone hall, with a copper at one end: out of which the master, dressed in an apron for the purpose, and assisted by one or two women, ladled the gruel at mealtimes. Of this festive composition each boy had one porringer, and no more—except on occasions of great public rejoicing, when he had two ounces and a quarter of bread besides. The bowls never wanted washing. The boys polished them with their spoons till they shone again; and when they had performed this operation (which never took very long, the spoons being nearly as large as the bowls), they would sit staring at the copper, with such eager eyes, as if they could have devoured the very bricks of which it was composed; employing themselves, meanwhile, in sucking their fingers most assiduously, with the view of catching up any stray splashes of gruel that might have been cast thereon.

(Dickens, 1900)

The gruel (signifying learning) does not satisfy. The Teacher suggests this by the cartoon’s captions “too hot”, “not enough”, “spoiled.” Dickens implies the same. In the following familiar excerpt Oliver, the starving child, boldly requests more.

Child as he was, he was desperate with hunger, and reckless with misery. He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity: “Please, sir, I want some more.”

(Dickens, 1900)

Dickens outlines the philosophy of education at the time; one of experimenting to see how meagre a diet (learning) one could measure out. The same theory that applied to horses applied to boys. The parallel between this scene from *Oliver Twist* and the Teacher’s view of the economic agenda, where debt determines funding cuts to education, becomes apparent.

Everybody knows the story of another experimental philosopher who had a great theory about a horse being able to live without eating, and who demonstrated it so well, that he got his own horse down to a straw a day, and would unquestionably have rendered him a very spirited and rapacious animal on nothing at all, if he had not died, four-and-twenty hours before
he was to have had his first comfortable bait of air. Unfortunately for the experimental philosophy of the female to whose protecting care Oliver Twist was delivered over, a similar result usually attended the operation of her system; for at the very moment when a child had contrived to exist upon the smallest possible portion of the weakest possible food, it did perversely happen in eight and a half cases out of ten, either that it sickened from want and cold, or fell into the fire from neglect, or got half-smothered by accident; in any one of which cases, the miserable little being was usually summoned into another world, and there gathered to the fathers it had never known in this.

(Charles Dickens, 1900)

Described here by Coby (1999), the context for this 1800’s novel was a society of social classes distinguished by inequalities in such areas as power, authority, wealth, working and living conditions, life-styles, life-span, education, religion and culture.

Early in the nineteenth century the labels "working classes" and "middle classes" were already coming into common usage. The old hereditary aristocracy, reinforced by the new gentry who owed their success to commerce, industry, and the professions, evolved into an "upper class" (its consciousness formed in large part by the Public Schools and Universities) which tenaciously maintained control over the political system, depriving not only the working classes but the middle classes of a voice in the political process. The increasingly powerful (and class conscious) middle classes, however, undertook organized agitation to remedy this situation: the passage of the Reform Act of 1832 and the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846 were intimations of the extent to which they would ultimately be successful.

Success in business and industry shaped the thinking of the upper class rising from the ranks of the middle, they controlled those below through politics. Dickens’ novel is a commentary on the times. “By means of the melodramatic mode, Dickens' Oliver Twist, like theatrical melodrama, stages this conflict between the old law and the new in terms of the older law's assumptions” (Hadley, 1995). In a similar way, the Teacher employs the political cartoon to highlight the conflict between the old and the new reforms in education, putting students and the public system into the poorhouse.

Throughout the eighteenth century, deferential, "familial" feelings among the ranks had been nurtured through highly public displays of punishment and benevolence, one of which was the scene of relief staged by the old
poor laws prior to 1834. In these parish rituals, the impoverished appealed to their local gentry for the assistance they considered a birthright. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 intervened in these public exchanges, imposing a system of relief based on a mainly economic version of modern classification. This not only altered the rules of exchange between the ranks, but also changed the constitution of personhood for those involved in the transactions.

The Context: Demise of Society to Welfare State

In the nineteenth century, the poor beg for their educational birthright and the authorities determine what that birthright will be. In the twentieth century, the Teacher’s political cartoon depicts the Politicians stirring the pot that is society. The tension in the story and the political cartoon is an external one between the government and public education. In the twentieth century the dynamics of society and thus of school change—according to the Teacher it all depends on what people value. The Teacher laments that society is not what it once was. Values of family and community have eroded. Society, he thinks, is turning a blind eye to the signs that indicate things are not so good. He talks about the recent shooting of 12 high school students at a high school in the States as having little affect on Canadians until a week later when a similar event takes place in an Alberta school. Living for a time in the States, the Teacher has witnessed the lethal result of racial tension coupled with gun control. He sees the inability of the United States to accept minorities, and he names specifically the Black situation, as the eventual downfall of American society. Consumerism is rampant and has gone to an extreme, people are working longer and harder in the quest to achieve material things with little time left to get involved and care about things that are important like family and community. Families and children are sacrificed as divorce rates and consequently children’s needs increase. Afraid because the effect of cut-backs in education are not felt directly he thinks that “parents are allowing the government to make decisions about education that will
affect their children and they are not standing up and saying things about it.” The Teacher believes that parents as voting members of society, however, can make a difference.

Socialization: Schools in Society

In the 1800’s the role of schools put people in their place. By default or design, according to Hayley (1995) it makes little difference.

What schooling there was sporadic and its primary function was to fit people for their place in the social order. To say that schools in the early Victorian years were simply instruments of social control is simplistic, but that they filled this role more clearly than others is unquestionable. Even a cursory glance at the reports of the Central Society of Education (1837-39) bring this into clear focus.

The Teacher gives credence to the social mix in public education. Ideologically he stands for strengthening society through diversity by educating and fortifying its weakest links. Although he likes religion he thinks it has no place in schools because it does not unify.

According to Barlow (1994), Christian fundamentalists (a vocal minority) view education as the vehicle for inculcating ideology and are lobbying against content and processes that smack of humanism, relativism, universalism and socialism. Safe sex, critical thinking, multiculturalism and global education are viewed as anti-Christian. The movement for Quality Education is rooted in these fundamentalist viewpoints. To return to the image of the boiling pot, this is the mix of society that the Current Government is stirring up, a mix that ends up hurting teachers if they get too close.

Of greater interest to Victorianists would be the many and varied philanthropic movements concerned with education. Among the most important were the National and the British and Foreign Schools Societies. These were founded on the Monitorial Principles of Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell and were proclaimed the STEAM ENGINE OF THE MORAL WORLD. In fact, by using older children to teach the younger, and by carrying on education in one large room, it was possible to justify fewer teachers and lower building costs. In the words of G D H Cole and
Raymond Postgate (The Common People, 308), "It is a notable example of the gullibility of the historian that this probably retrograde step is still frequently referred to as an advance.

(Rosen, 1997)

The Politics of Teaching: Passing the Buck

In the past, conduit (electrical), transmission (mechanical), cultivator (agricultural), facilitator (sports) and programmer (computer) metaphors have been employed to describe the teacher’s role. In each of these metaphors the teacher has a part to play, on a continuum of active to passive roles—a channel, a transmitter, nurturer, coach or administer. However this image describes a welfare state and conveys the teacher doling out the learning, as a worker providing aid/compensation to dependent children.

The Teacher separate from the learning process plays no meaningful role, socially or academically. He does not add to the ingredients, mix the gruel, ask for more, in fact, none of it touches him—he merely passes the buck. The Teacher comments that “kids always get an education in spite of the teacher and the system.” Employing Lakoff and Johnson’s (1981) analysis to determine whether or not this statement holds truth provides insight into the Teacher’s thinking and casting in this crisis story.

Analysis of the statement: Kids always get their education in spite of the teacher and the system. (Teacher)

Participants: children (kids) students, the educational system (students, teachers, and boards of education, ministry of education), speaker is a teacher (one of the players in the system).

Parts: Education is given
Kids get an education (object to be received)
The teacher and the system do not always deliver
Kids get an education even when they don’t deliver
Education is broader than teachers and the system
Kids learn even when they are not taught

Stages: Precondition: Students learn
Beginning: Education (an object or entity) is delivered
Middle: Teachers and systems may get in the way of education
End: The students still learn
Final State: The student always gets educated

Causation: Beginning and middle enable the end
Education, an entity, gets delivered even though teachers and the system who have been commissioned to deliver it stand in the way, students always get an education. The question remains what education did they get?

Middle and end cause the final state
Teachers and the system stand in the way and still the child learns, so it follows that students always get an education. The implication of the statement is that the student is responsible for getting an education, knows how to get it and always does (based on probability the chances of this seem slim). The statement can only be true if learning and education are the same thing.

Purpose: Goal: Final state—The student gets an education
Plan: Assume the precondition (assume the responsibility for delivering the education is someone else’s) and then when teachers and system get in the way, you can confidently state that students always get an education. This statement seems to equate education and learning, although neither is defined. No differentiation is made between a good or bad education nor learning’s relationship to education.

Based on this analysis this statement does not hold true. It may be true that children always learn but it does not follow that learning always represents an education, based on a definition of education as a systematic training. When obstacles are put into the way even learning can be reduced if not eliminated. What is learned? Learning may be negative rather than positive, moving a student away from a subject or a goal rather than towards it. Fear or confusion can be learned. Can teachers and the educational system be content with learning of any kind? What kind of learning constitutes an education? What is there about this statement that causes educators to agree with it? Are the complexities of the classroom and the difficult cases where teachers feel they don’t make a difference
contributors? Is there safety in believing that children will learn no matter what? This kind of thinking has little foundation or support for those charged with the responsibility for educating. More and more that responsibility has been eroding to the point where outsiders suspect the teacher does not know or have the answers. When the pressure is on educators may take solace in or behind such statements. The Federation President thought this statement celebrated the human spirit and the ability of humankind to make the best of the bad conditions. Does confidence in teaching come through accepting poor conditions and having confidence in the learner to learn or through accepting responsibility for teaching and understanding the requirements for learning and therefore teaching?

The Politics of Teaching and Learning

What is in the gruel? Barlow (1994) discusses the political nature of instruction, as political as the curriculum it teaches. In each choice of methodology (how to teach) comes unconscious assumptions about which students deserve the greater share of instruction attention. She maintains that socio-economic status is the strongest predictor of school graduation. Shaped by patterns beyond the classroom, they can be reinforced in schools. She cites the disproportion attention that middle class boys get from teachers compared to boys who are not white or middle-class--they are treated like girls. Girls who are rewarded for interpersonal competence over academic achievement are less likely to receive remedial intervention and be identified for enrichment programs (Robertson, 1992). The point she makes is that the Teacher is a political force, perpetuating societal and culture standards in the classroom, even though he may do it unconsciously. Children whose parents have unskilled occupations were about ten times as likely as children from professional families to end up in basic level programs. Lower
class children dominate the slow learner, behavioural and learning disabilities classes
(Curtis et al., 1992). The Teacher talks about the disinterest in education and contempt of
teachers amongst the local factory workers at a plant where his son is employed. They
claim education is not going to do anything for them or their children who will one day
become factory workers too. Does the teacher recognize the subtle reinforcement of class
structure in the role he plays by passing out the gruel?
The Federation President’s Perspective on the Crisis in Education

In an image where “money rules”, “profits” in education are attached to a particular product and “costs” are related to servicing or not servicing particular populations. The Federation President considers this a trend. “It is not just in this province it is any place where money rules.” She tells me that this image’s origins are in Economics 101 (an introductory university course).

**Profits and Losses: Economics Graph**

Unless you make a profit you can’t continue. The whole reason that a business exists is to make money and at the point that you are not making money you become a cost to society. So there is that concept of money ruling. I didn’t think there was an accent over rule, there is an accent over the word money. Money drives decisions. It is a negative-positive bar graph and the moment that anything you are doing drops below the zero line you have got to move and make some corrections. My perception of what is happening in education is that we have a few places where it is dipping below the line and those people who are seeing those dips below the line are saying, “Well you can’t go forward.” If you take that concept and apply it to education then negative test scores on a standardized tests or low scores or declining scores are a cost that you aren’t allow to continue because ultimately they are a cost that you are going to have to address.

**Education: Social Concerns to Economic Priorities**

The Federation President has seen a shift in the philosophy of education from social concerns to economic priorities. Opposing philosophies create tension. Currently there is an expectation from the business community that everyone should work and education is producing X, Y and Z in future workers. She is concerned for those on the fringes of society who, when success is narrowly defined, have difficulty participating. She cites artists, musicians and a particular young man with Down’s syndrome as examples. She thinks the Current Government, with strong ties to the business community, believes that everyone should work, produce and contribute to society. In our conversations, she recalls that historically, this ideology did not exist in every
civiliration. This thinking that everyone should work, she attributes to a communist ideology. Sullivan (1999), however, debates Western notions about Communism presenting Karl Marx and his ideology as humanistic and anti-capitalism.

Marx was concerned ultimately with human freedom, reviving the ancient concept of communism, wherein human beings could fulfill their cooperative roles within society without fear of exploitation. He saw the historical stage of capitalism as the "insidious" antagonist of such freedom; insidious because unlike serfdom (capitalism's predecessor in the evolution of social relations) capitalism was (is?) able to perpetuate the illusion of freedom even though its raison d'être relies on those who have nothing to sell but their labor and those, who through the power of capital and property, exploit such labor for profit (my emphasis)

(Sullivan, 1999)

In the structural metaphor, 'labour (work) as a resource', the clearly delineated concept 'resource' defines another concept 'work' (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981). 'Labour as a resource' and 'time as a resource' are predominant metaphors in Western civilization. These metaphors "emerge naturally in our culture because of the way we view work, our passion for quantification and our obsession with purposeful ends" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1981, p.67). The image of the economics graph serves as an indicator of this propensity towards quantification. As is the case in all metaphors, 'work as a resource' accentuates what is important to our culture and hides what is not. Underlying the metaphor are assumptions that work is defined and differentiated from things that are not. In this case labour is associated with manufacturing. Labour or work is treated independent from the person who performs it and questions about whether it is humane, satisfying or meaningful are not considered. Possible conceptions of work might include 'work as play' and 'inactivity as productive.' Much of what we consider work in Western culture may in another culture serve no clear or worthwhile purpose. This is the Federation President's point, the definitions of contribution are too narrow--different forms of activities can contribute in different ways to society!
Attached to every chart and graph and mathematical equation is an interpretation—a mini-narrative. Phrases such as ‘dipping below the line’ ‘negative scores’ ‘drops below the line’ suggest a regressive narrative (Gergen, 1999). The Federation President interprets this as necessitating a corrective response. The decision making power in this image is money. ‘Money rules’ and ‘money drives decisions’ treats money as an entity; a personification that grants money the ability to rule and drive (decisions). Personification “allows us to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with non-human entities in terms human motivation, characteristics and activities” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1981, p.33). Hidden is the notion that money is an abstract concept, an intangible representing a currency of exchange, it’s value determined by people and cultures. The Federation President tells me that in our culture ‘money is value’. The teacher confirms it with his struggle to be valued within a society that doesn’t reward teachers with money. In the economics graph image, money is granted the power and authority to define ‘students as products’ by profits and losses. This metaphor objectifies the human element. When money is endowed with human characteristics then a role reversal occurs and human beings become objects. The Federation President advocates instead for ‘people having value’.

**Analysis of the statement:** Schools are not factories and kids are not widgets and we have to educate the whole child. (Teacher).

Participants: children (students), schools (students, teachers, board of education), education.

Parts: Schools and factories are different (content, structure, process) The manufacturing process differs from the education process Kids are not manufactured products Products are anything produced by some operation (growth, labour, study or skill) The purpose is to educate the whole child

Stages: Precondition: The elements of educating and manufacturing are
Students are people not products

We can't educate kids like factories manufacture products

We have to educate the whole child

Education cannot operate as manufacturers do

Beginning and middle enable the end
Students are people not products and we can’t educate kids like factories manufacture products so we have to educate the whole child

Middle and end cause the final state
We can’t educate kids like factories manufacture products and we have to educate the whole child so education cannot operate as manufacturers do.

Goal: Final state—Education cannot operate as manufacturers do

Assume the precondition (the elements of education and manufacturing are different). Students are people and not widgets, we can’t educate kids like factories manufacture products so instead we educate the whole child. Education cannot operate as manufacturers do.

The speaker disputes the manufacturing metaphor of education that views students as products. In attempting to understand this sentence, I inserted words for ‘students as people’ that contrast with ‘students as products’ such as dynamic vs. static, complex vs. simplistic, unpredictable versus predictable. It is not difficult in these terms to understand how a student could be like a product for certainly there are products that are complex, dynamic and unpredictable and at times the process of education appears like a formula or prescription. What is hidden is the ability of the child to think; to act independently.

The truth of the statement may be conditional on ignoring these qualities. Incoherence lies in the leap to educating the whole child. The term ‘whole child’ implies the recognition and identification of all aspects of the child, used to describe the endeavour by schools to educate the social, physical, emotional, as well as intellectual child.
However idealistic, it remains an unrealistic expectation. Schools represent a particular context and encounter a very limited version of any student. Barlow (1994) in *Class Warfare* discusses the down loading of social ills onto schools in the hope that the school could solve these problems or at the very least be held accountable for failing to do so. Barlow (1994) suggests that the expectation that schools should do it all has led to the perceived failure of schools to do anything well.

‘Negative scores is an adversary’ provides not only a way of thinking about negative scores but also a way of acting toward it. Lakoff and Johnson (1981) analyse the use of the metaphor ‘inflation as an adversary’. Substituting negative scores for inflation their analysis of negative scores would read like this.

*We think of (negative scores) as an adversary that can attack us, hurt us, steal from us, even destroy us. The (negative scores) is an adversary’ metaphor gives rise to and justifies political and economic actions on the part of our government; declaring war on negative scores, setting targets, calling for sacrifices, installing a new chain of command, etc. (p. 34)*

Given Gergen’s (1999) plot analysis the purpose of the regressive narrative appears as control of the human element by focusing on objects (test scores) while denying human responsibility for decision-making by granting the decision-making power to the inanimate (money). Gergen (1999) suggests that politicians and governments often use regressive narratives to motivate towards change. The economics graph serves to eliminate roles and responsibilities and any suggestion of a plot: the information is presented as objective data. This represents the dichotomy between the objective and subjective, in which the hard sciences of mathematics and science are positioned as superior to the social science, languages and the arts. Numerical scores are the hard data upon which objective evaluations are based. The heart of this objectivist tradition comes from the tenet that the world is made up of distinct objects with inherent properties and
fixed relations (Lakoff and Johnson, 1981). What is measurable and seemingly objective is chosen over what is considered soft and therefore subjective. Denied is the way in which we understand our experience, our thoughts, and our language. Denied is the context from which we draw meaning. The issue according to Barlow (1994) is not objective or subjective, but a choice of simplicity over complexity. The image of the economics graph presents a single line rather than multiple lines representing individual students, a variety of subject areas and comparisons and contrasts over time (see plot analysis).

Global Competition

"Politically motivated reforms nearly always flow from simplistic analyses and justifications that ignore systematic ramifications" (Barlow, 1994, p. 116). Saul (1997) comments that global competition assumes that physical realities are equal. The only variables become competition and specialization. An abstract theory, he wonders, or delusion? Canada's physical reality is not equal; a stubborn reality that is obscured through blaming those who can't keep up. "The theory of a single economic model is a derivative of a turn of the century management methodology in which content is treated as an interchangeable filler for the ideal management form" (Saul, 1997, p. 137). Embracing these theories undermines what Canadian society is based on—social equilibrium through public education and redistribution of wealth—and is the reason why cutbacks of the last decades have produced more poverty than prosperity.

The government's response to business demands is what Barlow (1994) calls "product-testing students". The business community, represented by The Business Council on National Issues (BCNI), the Conference Board of Canada, the Canadian Manufacturer's Association and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, has been calling
for standards. The Federal Government has responded by overruling provincial jurisdiction for education matters and supporting a move towards national testing, encouraging the public to view the prospect of national testing as the solution to complex problems of schools. Barlow (1994) suggests that standardized testing fulfills most political criteria: the public has faith in the objectivity of numbers and there is little effort made by the press towards interpreting the reliability of statistics. “As more than one critic has observed, if testing created excellence American students, the most tested students in the world would be winning the educational sweepstakes” (p. 117). A powerful force for curriculum reform, what gets tested becomes the priority and other curriculum priorities fall away. Again the complexity of the human being and the complexity of teaching and learning are denied.

If human beings are more than their cognitive capabilities, then schools must respond to more than cognitive capabilities, then schools must respond to more than cognition. The development of curiosity, judgement, empathy, aesthetic appreciation and skill, respect for difference, and so forth have time and again been validated by the public as capacities schools should encourage. How to teach these goals and how much emphasis each should receive have been the stuff of decades of curriculum debate. Measuring student’s progress towards these goals is much more difficult than measuring their success in spelling or computing, but surely that complexity is precisely what makes these goals so important to teach. (Barlow 1994, p. 119).

The testing of students in the province of Ontario is limited to reading, writing, and mathematics and some science at the secondary school level. The Federation President is concerned for the Arts, an important component, she thinks, in the life of a society, a school and in the lives of students. Having recently attended a conference where Howard Gardner spoke she commented on how narrowly defined the current perspective on intelligence is recognizing only three of many different forms of intelligence that human beings exhibit. Narrowing the range of intelligence narrows those who can actively
participate. The cost of limiting the playing field results in human causalities. She cites the suicide of two gifted students that she once taught as a cost when students do not fit.

**Curriculum as Political Clout**

"The primary means of influencing what schools do and whom they serve is to control what is taught" (Barlow 1994, p. 124). Curriculum guides address the question, What is worth knowing? Underlying are the political questions, who decides what is worth knowing, how and why? "While in theory the curriculum allows for the application of professional judgement in selecting an approach, teachers have found it prudent to let the curriculum guide answer the question of what is worth knowing, or to select an approved 'curriculum resource' pre-packaged and uncontentious. In a system under such close scrutiny, it becomes important to anticipate which questions and what kinds of content are least likely to stir up parents, administration and trustees—a classic case of the self-censorship that flourishes under political pressure" (Barlow, 1994, p. 125).
The Ministry Official’s Perspective on the Crisis in Education

The Ministry Official introduced the image of the swamp as she talked about accountability. “some people would say that it is like the alligators in the swamp” “they are up the tree and jumping out of the swamp” and “you drain the swamp and there are the alligators.”

Alligators in the Swamp

The politicians are the alligators. Educators understand implementation as a process, something that occurs over time. I don’t believe that in September 1999 every grade nine teacher in the province of Ontario is going to have it all together. But the politicians have created in the minds of the public that this has to be done by September 1, 1999. There is no money for in-service and we can’t get release time. There are no resources and there are all these units of study and people haven’t had time to look to see if they really do reflect the expectations. That is the scenario that represents the swamp. What has created that is the politicians, they are the alligators, and they have enlisted the support of the parents “Snap” “Snap”! “My kid hasn’t learned that, how come?” Alligator right? Right! So that has been created it is a misunderstanding about the implementation process that the politician promotes.

Adversarial Relations: Teachers Up a Tree

The image reveals interesting perceptions of characters and their relationships to each other including politicians, parents and teachers. The saying goes ‘When you are up to your ass in alligators it is hard to remember that your purpose was to drain the swamp.’ In this image the educators are the ones commissioned to drain the swamp and the politicians are the alligators distracting them from their purpose. So intent are the educators on saving their own butts they do not think that perhaps draining the swamp might level the playing field making it more difficult for the alligators to pursue them and provide time for the educators to organize a solution. Metaphorically, this list of qualities can be read as a characterization of politicians. ‘Politicians as alligators’-- ‘opportunistic feeders,’ ‘protect their territory,’ ‘extremely powerful,’ ‘closely related to
dinosaurs,’ ‘strong homing instinct, will protect their territory against other alligators,’ ‘wild animals.’ A fact sheet of safety rules may be practical for those looking for practical advice on dealing with political alligators:

1) Don't feed the alligators. Providing food for these wild animals not only makes them bolder and encourages them to seek out people.

2) Keep your distance. Although they may look slow and awkward, these animals are extremely powerful and can move with a startling burst of speed on land over short distances.

3) Never disturb nests or small alligators. Some female alligators protect their young and may become aggressive if provoked.

4) Keep your pets and children away from alligators. Large alligators do not recognize the difference between domestic pets and wild food sources.

5) Don't swim in areas that are known alligator habitats. Always be careful around water. Splashing can attract alligators that think a prey animal is injured. They may act on instinct and attack.

(Dr. J. Whitfield Gibbons, SREL senior ecologist)

According to the Ministry Official’s image, educators (teachers and principals) are in retreat, looking out for their own safety they do not think to plan a course of action but run for cover. The Ministry Official imagines them up a tree. ‘Helpless’, ‘trapped’, ‘non-rational’, ‘in a state of panic’, ‘self-preserving’ could describe their re-action. Parents, acting as agents of the politicians, help to chase teachers up a tree. The purpose ‘to drain the swamp’ (educate) has been abandoned because of the actions of politician and the re-action of teachers. The Ministry Official’s image of the crisis presents politicians and the educators are cross-purposes. Mean spirited politicians defend a territory, a political ploy. Spineless educators abandon the territory and seek refuge up a tree. The Ministry Official distinguishes between the process of implementation in education, one that takes time and focus and the demands of a political system that wants results now! She presents
educators as forsaking their mission and defending old habits (self-serving) and politicians as focused on public image through forcing change (self-interests). Her role in this scenario is mediator, enticing through inspiration the teachers to come down out of the tree and to take positive steps towards finding solutions towards serving the collective good. No doubt a circuitous path that is likely to bring an outcome in the end...that neither educator, parent or politician desired.

The Politics of Accountability

The Ministry Official explains that ‘education is politics.’ In this structural metaphor the two elements ‘education’ and ‘politics’ are made equal by the verb ‘is’. So, understanding the metaphor comes through the characteristics they have in common—publicly determined institutions; employ civil servants are subject to public scrutiny; having means-end focus; housing divergent elements. Silenced are the differences, politics is motivated towards an end, control through policies, concerned with the theoretical and dependent on popular vote. Educators, however, are focused on methods, control through collaboration and persuasion, concerned with the practical, and dependent on doing a job. In terms of plot lines, politics tends to be very erratic with many ups and downs (regressive and progressive narratives) whereas characters in this study viewed education as either a progressive narrative or more traditionally as a stability narrative (see section of plot analysis for further discussion).

Analysis of the Statement: Education is Politics (Ministry Official).

Participants: education, the educational system (students, teachers, boards of education, ministry of education), speaker is the Ministry Official (one of the players in the system).

Parts: The systematic development of the mind, capabilities or character Through an institution of learning For the management of public affairs Based on the principles, aims, policies of a government
Stages:
Precondition: Public affairs need to be managed
Beginning: Education as a public institution provides the means
Middle: Systematic development and training of the masses
End: Public affairs are managed

Final State: The principles, aims and policies of a government are instituted

Causation: Beginning and middle enable the end
Education as a public institution provides the means
(beginning) for systematic development and training of the masses (middle) enabling public affairs to be managed.

Middle and end cause the final state
Through systematic development and training of the masses (middle) public affairs are managed (end) and the principles, aims and policies of a government are instituted (final state).

Purpose:
Goal: Final state—The principles, aims and policies of a government are instituted

Plan: Assume the precondition (public affairs need to be managed). Since education as a public institution can provide the means then through the systematic development and training of the masses (mind, capabilities or character) public affairs are managed. The result is the principles, aims and policies of a government are instituted and institutionalized.

Based on the definitions of education and politics this analysis renders this a true statement. The equation of politics and education appears to be recent. Barlow (1994) states that education is political (Barlow, 1994). She references Ken Osborne as commenting that education’s content is a vehicle for political education (Barlow, 1994). Saul (1997) comments on the original purpose of public education as providing political know-how to the population to allow participation in the democratic process. A very conscious decision was made in the founding of Canada as a county, on the part of the politicians of the day, not to follow in the footsteps of England and France whose system was two-tiered (rich and the poor) and whose government was authoritarian. But to create
a democracy supported by a public education system and paid for through money was raised through taxes. In *Class Warfare*, Barlow (1994) confirms education's political potential.

By definition, education is political. Literacy and knowledge enable citizens to make choices concerning their future and to acquire beliefs about people systems and priorities. Education is power; education is political (p. 112).

Subtle shifts in language create differences in meaning. Sometime between 1994 and 1999 it appears that a shift has occurred in the minds of the people. Education went from being political to being politics. But what exactly does this difference mean? To be political denotes being concerned with the science, organization or activities of politics. ‘Education is political’ could mean the study of politics for the purpose of citizenry as - Saul suggests that was in fact the purpose of public education--the creation of an educated society that could actively participate in the democratic process. However, ‘education is politics’ represents something altogether different as the analysis of the statement reveals. To say that education has become politics, implies that their purposes are shared-- the systematic development of the mind, capabilities or character through an institution of learning--for the management of public affairs based on the principles, aims and policies of a government. What could be neater? Managing public affairs directly rather than through participatory democracy. The slight shift in language is large in implication. Many educators note the change although few have named it. Some name it as the change in the role of the ministry of education. The ministry, once composed of skilled and highly educated educators with a pedagogical mandate, now hires officials on short term contracts for specific purposes; they appear as mouthpieces for the current government. The Teacher goes as far as to say that he thinks the non-appointed officials
in the ministry direct the change and that the Current Government supports it. Caught in
the middle creates real dilemmas for ministry officials, who as educators are cognoscente
of what is sound pedagogical practice and must walk the line between the political and
the pedagogical. I witness, with interest, the struggle it creates in the archetypal character
of the Ministry Official. The public educational system must manage this tension and
maintain the balance.

The recognition of this evident connection has shaped our tradition of
maintaining education as a public institution, guided by democratically
determined public policies—at least in theory. The temptation for special
interest groups to exploit the political potency of education is too great for
it to be left in the hands of those with only their own opportunities to
consider. Thus public education has not been intended to serve the
particular priorities of parents, teachers or future employees—or even
those of the government of the day. Public education is intended to
balance the interests of citizens, since we all stand to profit—or lose—
from the skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired by children at school.
(Barlow, 1994, pps.112-113)

Barlow (1994) suggests that rather than de-politicizing education, its political nature
should be made more evident. The following questions should be posed. Why are
changes being made? Whose interests are being served and at what price? These
questions tend to be asked only by those who have a political stake in the public's
perception of education. “As education rises as a public expense and as a policy issue of
substantial political risk, governments and opposition parties have looked to education
reform as a way of boosting their standings in public opinion.” She goes on to say that
when governments abandon the half-completed reforms of previous governments or
announce new initiatives, they are courting short-term political gains rather than
supporting the complexities of change in schools.

Some of the losses inherent in the new reforms have been elicited from the
characters as they have discussed their images of the crisis. They predict we will lose the
children on the fringes—the gifted and special needs students (Parent, Federation President); the foundations and structures that stabilize public education (Principal); the community school (Critic); and the local ability to make meaningful decisions; and the tax dollars to respond to local needs (Board Chair). What we have already lost are options (Parent); the confidence of the educators within the system (Associate Director); and the trust of the community that we work with (Principal).

Filtering Information: A Process of Mitigation

Political ideologies are assumed to be independent of educational philosophies, but what one believes to be in the best interests of society (or of a particular slice of society) shapes one’s beliefs about what should go on in schools.

(Barlow, 1994, p.121)

Students are taught the contextual history of democracy now in the junior grade but not their roles and responsibilities as the citizenry. Have educators missed that point? If education is politics, what then? What is the role of the teacher? Lesson plans are designed for what purpose? To fit the needs of individuals and improve their lot in life or to fit the needs of a system, inculcating the masses so they will not question, blindly accepting and following whatever the politicians tell them? Barlow (1994) comments that teachers who are aware of the things that are wrong in the system have eagerly joined the forces of the reform from the right. Superficially these reforms hold out a hope for simplifying and making manageable the tasks of schools and teachers, even if some of the goals of education are sacrificed. Many have refused to be drawn into the debate not taking a side from disinterest or fear of reprisal. Perhaps, they are too busy teaching to worry about education! Teachers in the Ministry Official’s view are up a tree and won’t come down until the alligators quit their snapping.
Reading the perspectives of the characters in this research study, the Ministry Official is surprised at the different understandings that many have about the educational reforms. The Parent views reforms as regressive rather than progressive and the Parent misinterprets the grade 3 testing as a put down on children's capabilities, the results forcing a return to a more basic education. The Ministry Official talks about values and beliefs as the filters through which we view the information that comes to us. “It depends on what shoes you are wearing, your take on it is different.” She also talks about information filtering through “tiers in the Ministry and as you go down you get closer to the reality of what is going on in the district school boards.” As it travels down the line, from cabinet to minister of education to deputy minister to policy people, then staff development people to school boards to administrators to teachers in schools and students in classrooms, it goes through translations that make it more operational. It is, however, also translated through ideological filters. The Ministry Official filters what the Critic calls a right wing ideology through her belief in a natural evolution of the planet. She sees windows of opportunities in this situation to make differences for students. Ignoring the political dilemma teachers’ face (snapping alligators) she calls on teachers to find the positive in the situation.
The Parent’s Perspective on the Crisis in Education

As the Parent talks about her life as a journey, she refers to education as a tunnel through which she and her children travel. She uses phrases like “the end of the tunnel” “down the road” and “at the other end.” I ask her to describe this tunnel to me.

Traversing the Tunnel

We are going through this uncharted area and we can’t see ahead. The education that we receive, the formal education that is, is a big part of the influence as to where we go or how we travel and what tools we can use as we are approaching the end of the tunnel. At birth or the very early stages of education you could be at a point in the landscape where there are several tunnels and as you go further and further along it becomes streamed. Once you are into that groove or tunnel you don’t have the same opportunity to branch off so it becomes narrower as you get to the end which also restricts your view until you are at the very end. I think there is a sort of natural selection process in any system. Children have all different abilities and talents and gifts, some have more than others do and they can’t all be expected to come out of the tunnel, of any tunnel, with identical talents and abilities. They have to be allowed the diversions of choice and some will not go all the way through the tunnel but that is a part of life. The dollars and cents the profit and loss has created the crisis situation. That is not the journey itself. They are just charging toll at the tollbooth.

‘Education is a journey’ is a structural metaphor; its basis is travel, movement from one point to another. Shared is the notion of beginnings and endings, of lines drawn between points and of different routes to different ends. ‘Education as a journey’ metaphor could imply a progressive narrative. A journey is often associated with a plan, a map and often with enjoyment; a vacation atmosphere. Traditionally, education was a vehicle that could take you places in life—granting a certain status in society, leading to employment opportunities and financial rewards. However, in the Parent’s tunnel image education is presented as a stationary obstacle through which student/parent must travel. Options are limited—the ‘tracks’ or ‘grooves’ define the way (secondary and post-secondary streaming). At the beginning there are branches (choice), however, as they progress the
tunnel narrows and options are limited (as one travels through elementary to secondary to post-secondary). The stakes are high; this is a lifetime commitment and at the end they hope is an outcome of employment. However, the tunnel by its nature ‘restricts their view’ and they cannot see what lies ahead (uncertainties of the 20th century). The fact that the course is ‘uncharted’ yet ‘streamed’ (sea voyage) reinforces this. Choices cannot be evaluated until they reach the end. “Will our children be successful or not?” the Parent asks. Only time will tell.

Future Uncertainties

The image presents the idea that parents and student are required to make life-determining decisions with very little information. This tunnel could be part of a labyrinth with interconnecting passages and the possibility of different endings? However, the image that the Parent presents is hollow, empty and lacking light or illumination; the tracks are predetermined and rigid; and the journey long and uncharted. When I ask if the tunnel is dark, the Parent laughs “no” she assures me then without hesitation adds “but there may be a cliff at the end.” She is unsure. There is no map provided. Guides and helpers are strangely absent. The government has set up a tollbooth. Education costs and students and parents must pay. The Parent may be tapping into the metaphor of ‘money as a resource’ and the idea that those with the most resources (i.e. money) will get the educational advantages (at the very least a map of the course). This adds to the Parent’s burden. The Parent views big business as pressuring the Current Government, a pressure that the parent interprets as competition for the good jobs, as limitations being put on children’s choices and future prospects. At a time when the need for a good education are increasing, the funds are being removed and the costs downloaded onto parents.
While the Parent thinks this is a deliberate social engineering strategy others call it a misguided belief or wrongheaded, at cross-purposes to the value of public education “according to individual needs and regardless of an individual’s ability to pay” (Opposition Critic). ‘Survival of the fittest’ is the message according to Michael Apple, critic of American education (Barlow, 1994). The message is couched in the language of excellence and achievement. Business has worked hard to convince the public that their motivations are the same, the deficit has become the sole economic issue and the opportunities made to appear inexhaustible through Free Trade agreements and NAFTA. Barlow (1994) suggests that public mistrust of business has not carried over to create skepticism at businesses’ involvement in education. This Parent however is skeptical!

The conservative alliance has had on its side public anxiety about a harsh economic climate (largely of its own making, but for which it takes no responsibility). The legitimate fears of parents about their children’s economic and social prospects, and even for their safety, have been appropriated by the conservative alliance to move arguments about education onto their own ground.

(Barlow, 1994, p. 122)

The Parent views business interests as suppressing the future interests of students. She imagines a larger working class with fewer jobs, those that exist as menial labour. Her involvement in school provides her with information about how short-changed the schools are in resources. She has observed the removal of specialist teachers and the declining interests of schools in developing specialist skills. She finds herself knowing more about some things than the teachers who teach her children. She knows that the competition outside schools is greater and yet she watches schools reducing, reusing and recycling resources. The Critic has difficulty believing the Parent’s suggestion that this is a strategy on the part of business and government.
Analysis of the Statement: What I have trouble believing is that this is a deliberately engineered strategy as opposed to a misguided belief in the survival of the fittest kind of thing, that everyone should meet this particular standard and if you can’t meet it the problem is you (Critic).

Participants: public education, standards of fit, survival, speaker the Critic

Parts:  There is a standard of fit
         Survival depends on being fittest
         A competition
         Only those who are fittest last
         Those less fit do not last

Stages: Precondition:  Competition
        Beginning:  Standards of fit are rising
        Middle:  Some exceed the standard, others meet the standard, others fail to meet the standard
        End:  All those who fail to exceed the standard fall away

Final State:  The fittest set the standards

Causation:  Beginning and middle enable the end
            Standards of fit are rising and some exceed the standard, others meet the standard and others fail to meet the standard.
            As a result all those who fail to exceed the standard fall away and only the fittest survive

            Middle and end cause the final state
            Some exceed the standard, others meet the standard, and others fail to meet the standard. All those who fail to exceed the standard fall away and all that remains are the fittest who then set higher standards

Purpose:  Goal: Final state— The fittest set the standards

Plan:  Assume the pre-condition (competition is survival). Standards of fit are rising. Some exceed the standard, other meet the standard and others fail to meet the standard. All those who fail to exceed the standard fall away. The fittest survive and they set the standards higher.

The phrase ‘survival of fittest’ is based on the Darwinian notion of biological evolution of the species: one of natural selection through variation. The theory is based a model of competition. In the past, education and society created a sanctuary for people who did not fit the norm or average (Federation President). Her take on the current situation in
education is less and less tolerance for those on the fringes—both the intellectually challenged and intellectually gifted. The Parent and the Ministry Official, based on their own experiences with the school system and their gifted children, agree. They have had to fight to get their children recognized as exceptional and for the system to respond to the needs of their children. They witness overworked teachers, with a lack of understanding of special needs ignoring the situation, and trying to cope with what they have been given.

What does a single standard system represent? The Current Government suggests a rigorous higher expectation for all students in the province. The Ministry Official agrees that the standards of achievement will be raised. Will students who do not make the standard have the opportunity to repeat? With full disclosure of failed attempts at a course, will eventual success be considered success? Little has been mentioned about students failing to meet the standard, although there has been discussions about eliminating social promotion. The underlying assumption is that all should be able to meet the standard. However, the students in public schools vary in their capabilities and support systems. There is a continuum of achievement levels—from the intellectually challenged to the intellectually gifted. A single standard suggests a standard of middle ground or perhaps a standard of the middle-class. There is a level of competition that occurs in international private schools, where only children of the elite attend, that exceeds the standards of the public system and leaves the middle and lower class (in the public system) right out of the game. Disguised as an achievement standard measuring success could this new standard more likely be a standard of mediocrity? The very thing the government claims they would eliminate. Who gets to determine the standard and for what purpose? Should this standard be set by business? Is the purpose one of creating a
more competitive educated population or compliant workers who will work for minimum wage?

The Parent suggests that this movement will depress student’s perceptions of their capabilities and ultimately their goals. She views the standards as creating a false situation, one that does not measure or respond to student’s capabilities, but delivers a message that they are not making the grade. She suggests that the purpose is to de-skill rather than skill and to create workers rather than managers. In a competitive world, Orwell in his book 1984 paints a picture of the cross-purposes at work within a class-structured society.

Throughout recorded time, and probably since the end of the Neolithic Age, there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low. They have been subdivided in many ways, they have been borne countless different names, and their relative numbers, as well as their attitude towards one another, have varied from age to age: but the essential structure of society has never altered...The aims of these groups are entirely irreconcilable. The aim of the High is to remain where they are. The aim of the Middle is to change places with the High. The aim of the Low, when they have an aim—for it is an abiding characteristic of the Low that they are too much crushed by drudgery to be more than intermittently conscious of anything outside their daily lives—is to abolish all distinctions and create a society in which all men shall be equal.

(Orwell, 1949, p. 105)

Although the Critic does not want to believe in social engineering she admits that in the end the effects of a single standard system and de-skilling are the same. “If you can’t meet the standard then the problem is you.” People take it personally. The question of where the problem lies (and the assumption that there is one) is the debate that the education system is currently embroiled in. Blame the parents and a conflict is created between voter and government. Underlying this assumption is that it is the nature-nurture debate. Blame genetics and the cry is likely to be discrimination. Blame parenting and the plea will be for social assistance. Blame the public education system and a conflict is
between the system and the parents, one that erupts at the local school level. In this scenario, the heat to taken off parents and off the government, however, has the problem been properly named? Once the public schools have been blamed, the task of the school system is to overcome and try to achieve a standard that is always increasing. Or so it seems. If standards for success exist on an elite plane where resources exist, who is to blame when students fail? The Principal, Associate Director and the Board Chair think that latter is true the schools will be held accountable. And if students succeed, will the problems and the crisis end or will the standard then be raised higher? Perhaps the public will have been deluded into believing they are even in the competition. In the end the Critic secedes, no matter what you call it, an engineered strategy or misguided thinking, the outcome is likely to be the same.
The Student's Perspective on the Crisis in Education

The Student talks about the things wrong at her school, she contrasts older and younger teaching styles and contrasts a new science lab to "classes filled with students, not enough desks, books falling apart, no money to buy new ones, no activities, no sports." The impression is of a mismatch between the old and declining attempting to service the young and the progressive.

Aging Facilities, Aging Faculties

Our school is kind of old, not modern. Our school just redid our Science section and I like those classrooms better than the other ones. There are sections for your class work and then there are all the lab desks and there are room for groups and in each group there are cupboards where you keep everything you need. It seems brighter and bigger, compared to the basic rectangle room, blackboard at the front with the teacher's desk and rows of desks for students. In some classrooms where you have an older teacher you look at all the bulletin boards and they all have that corrugated material up. It is all faded and sun-bleached and there are old posters. If a poster is moved there is a bright spot because all the rest is faded. This teacher's clothes look really old too, like 20 years ago maybe he was a new fresh teacher but he hasn't changed. My older brother and sister both took his class and did the same experiments, the same fun activities that he did 5 and 15 years ago. I really like my Chemistry teacher. I find him a lot more interactive with the students. He has fun when he teaches.

The Effect of Time on Appearance and Properties

The old is faded, sun-bleached, rectangular, rows in a line, and dull while the young is bright, fresh, interactive, happens in a group and different. Using contrastive analysis, the Student creates a dichotomy--old at one end and young at the other with a tension between them. She might have considered them on a continuum of time or on a fulcrum one balancing the other, but she doesn't. From the Student's point of view, the old is a regressive narrative while the young is progressive. The closer one is to the now the closer to the ideal. The young teacher with newer ideas is associated with the present and as more in touch with reality. The experienced and older teacher, however, may view
past, present and future as a flat line (stability narrative) and argue that the past informs the present and so the future.

The Student judges using criterion of appearance related to the structures and processes rather than content. The structures are the classroom, the seating, the lighting, and the face of the teacher and the processes are styles of teaching. What is being taught is not considered. In our culture, youthfulness or the appearance of youth is valued. In some cultures reverence is paid to the elders who represent the wise—wrinkled and grey hairs are earned. In the Western culture where consumerism is valued the emphasis is on youth as the new, vital, life force, our hope for immortality.

History is fables agreed upon. (Voltaire, 1694-1778)

The Cycles of Young and Old

In the crowded schools of the 70's, Barlow (1994) reminds us of the considerable confusion and conflict that existed with the infusion of the new.

By the early 1970's, relative prosperity, increased student enrollment, an aura of optimism and a culture of risk taking began to permeate schools. A sense of new possibilities was brought to classrooms by young and enthusiastic teachers, whose services were suddenly in demand.

Experiments such as open-area schools may have substituted creativity or conviction for good judgement, but above all, these schools were passionate places, committed to the social importance of the work of teaching and learning. Such energy was not surprising; after all the median age of teachers in 1970 was just thirty; twenty-four years later is forty-two (pps. 5-6).

Perhaps ironically, these once young and energetic teachers of the 70's are now preparing for retirement. With the introduction of the '85 factor teachers can retire earlier. The Associate Director says that the '85 factor indicates to teachers that it is time to leave. The rationale given is that opportunity will be created for younger teachers. However, the demand for teachers in smaller boards is small what with declining enrolment.
Seniority clauses in collective agreements make positions for younger teachers temporary. The Student, having had a taste of the younger brand of teacher who only stays awhile, thinks the older teachers should leave and make room for the younger.

Some argue that measures such as the '85 factor, wipe the collective memory of educators clean. The young who are keen to be accepted and approved into the role offer little if any resistance to change. Orwell in his novel *1984* posits "he who controls the past controls the future." Incentives for teachers to join diminish with time as will support systems and the new, lower standards will become established as norms. No one will remember what once was.

**Analysis of the Statement:** 
*Education is the only enterprise in the world where people expect it to stay the same* (Ministry Official).

Participants: education, the educational system (students, teachers, boards of education, ministry of education), the public.

Parts: The systematic development of the mind, capabilities or character (education) 
Through an institution of learning (schools) 
An enterprise (of major importance requiring boldness in practical affairs) 
Affecting the people at large/community 
The expectation that education remain unchanged (a stability narrative) 
Only enterprise with the expectation that it remain the same

Stages: Precondition: Education is an enterprise. 
Beginning: Education as the systematic development of mind, capabilities or character affects the people at large 
Middle: People have expectations that education remain the same 
End: Education remains unchanged 
Final State: It is the only enterprise in the world with this expectation

Causation: **Beginning and middle enable the end**
Education as the systematic development of mind, capabilities or character affects the people at large and people have expectations that education remain the same, therefore education remains unchanged.
Purpose: Goal: Final state—Education is the only enterprise in the world with the expectation of remaining the same.

Plan: Assume the precondition that education is an enterprise. Education as the systematic development of mind, capabilities or character affects the people at large. People have expectations that education remain the same and so education remains unchanged. In the end it is judged as the only enterprise in the world with this expectation.

This statement can be considered true only if education is coherent only if it is in fact the only enterprise in the world that has the expectation to remain unchanged. There are, however, contexts in which stability is warranted. For example, we expect that basic constitutional rights will remain stable and that those elected in Ontario will govern based on the principals of democracy. We expect in the legal system that the concept of justice is a constant and in economics that inflation rates be stable. In a democratic society, the idea of public education as a stable and stabilizing force may make good sense.

Social Equilibrium: The Concept of Public Education

Saul (1997) in Reflections of a Siamese Twin: Canada at the end of the twentieth century provides an historical perspective of the thinking that resulted in the creation of the Canadian public school system. Canada was assessed as an essentially poor country, based on a landscape that is expansive in area, difficult in terrain and rural in occupation. The population made up largely of immigrants (anglophones, francophones and natives) was of a single class, poor farmers. To be successful as a country depended on the creation of artificial threads that tied these diverse and geographically distant elements together. The purpose of public education was to provide that thread, giving the population through the ability to participate in public debate and the democratic process.
Three elements—public education, government intervention in both social and economic structures and transfer payments—built prosperity on the foundation of systematic poverty. These policies created social equilibrium upon which the business sector blossomed.

The stability narrative reflects the idea of equilibrium; things stay the same in term of the outcome, that outcome—to build a foundation of literate public able to participate in the democratic process. To remain unchanged in this respect would appear to be for the public good. Historically this has meant the public has forced decisions to be made for that public good ignoring the drive by the elite for personal prosperity.

In the late 1840’s we were in deep depression brought on by British free-trade policies. With a single unified voice the economic elite of Montreal—that is the dominant economic elite of Canada—called for annexation by the United States as the only road to prosperity. The population of Lower and Upper Canada—anglophone and francophone—ignored them. They seemed to understand—as Harold Innis noted “materialism is the auxiliary doctrine of every tyranny.

(Saul, 1997, p. 137)

If anything, this analysis may remind us to delve deeper in our questioning when change in education is suggested, to ask what are the qualities we wish to remain stable overtime, and what will replace these in this change?
The Principal's Perspective on the Crisis in Education

The Principal pictures the school 'walls falling down'. She comments, "If we could just take the walls down, that is my visual image, so that schools were not this kind of closed shell that people feel they cannot come into." I ask her to expand upon this image.

Walls Falling Down

The teachers go into their classroom and shut the door. They give their curriculum and they teach how they are going to teach. As school councils gain power, as I believe they will, they are going to be in our school so much more and have so much more to say about what is done in the school. They have tentacles out into the community. One of the thrusts, as we are going through this secondary school reform, is that we are trying to build this capacity to change through team building. Never before have we had this major overhaul where everybody has got to make this significant change. The last time we went through reform, only those teachers who are going to teach grade nine needed to worry about the transition years. So there is the internal reaching out from classroom to classroom to share best practices. In a small school like this where you can't necessarily dedicate your science specialist to science courses because there aren't that number of sections, they are going to have to teach history or geography. We will have cross-pollination, which is a good thing—long overdue in secondary schools. It is not a tearing down or a dismantling it is just a more flexible wall.

What Happens When You Change the Building Code?

School as buildings are synonymous with education and the Principal wonders what other configuration could represent education? She contrasts two metaphorical images of schools. In the first image, the 'school as building' represents a structure made of 'bricks and mortar,' a 'closed shell' with 'closed doors' behind which 'teachers teach how they are going to teach.' The second image, the 'school as organic/living,' represents a structure that has 'tentacles out into the community' 'reaching out' 'sharing' and 'cross-pollinating'. Each image is based on the concept of a structure however the characteristics and purposes differ. In the 'school as organic/living' metaphor the content
is in the interior, suggested by the action of reaching out and sharing internally. In the
'school as building’ however the content is in the foundation and outer shell. To continue
the metaphor, these are the building blocks, the walls, brick and mortar are the foundation
and the supports that form the concept of education in schools--designed to withstand
external forces, these have stood for the establishment of a solid education.

A school is not simply a building, or an organizational convenience. It is
not simply a place where teachers come to teach. It teaches in its own
right, and very powerfully. We cannot afford to ignore its political content,
for the reality is that the whole school is a vehicle of political education.
( Osborne quoted by Barlow, 1994)

The Pressure for Change

Historically, educational reform has not been easy. “Schools rarely change
quickly because they were designed not to shift according to each gust of prevailing
political wind” (Barlow, 1994, p. 115). Small incremental changes to individual schools
and classrooms are not difficult but undoing current practices requires detailed
implementation plans. Education policy analyst Doug McCall identifies twenty-three
formal processes through which any educational process must pass before it is adopted in
a school system (Barlow, 1994).

Despite waves of reform washing over schools during the past century—
most borrowed from decade-old American initiatives—schools have
proven frustratingly resilient, rebounding to familiar shapes, styles and
intellectual boundaries as soon as reformers turn their backs. Yet it is the
very resilience that frustrates reformers that has also provided schools with
remarkable durability. Few social inventions of our design remain so
recognizable after a century as the classrooms of the 1890’s and the
1990’s.

(Barlow, 1994, p. 25)

The venture into open concept in the 70’s was meant to challenge the foundations of the
structure, routine and stability by removing walls. However unsuccessful at the time,
open concept represented a movement toward a more organic model of education.
During the last decade, systems experts have claimed that every institution from family to government is essentially organic, if you change one part of the system, all parts of the system change to accommodate.

(Barlow, 1994, p. 115)

In the twentieth century, revolutions in the field of natural sciences broke the rigid patterns of thinking of the nineteenth century in the field of mathematics and physics, with three major scientific revolutions in relativity, quantum theory, and chaos theory. Margaret Wheatley employs the chaos metaphor used in natural science to explain organizational structures. Her work is being used to introduce secondary school reform to teachers.

Chaos theory is concerned with questions of order and disorder in nature. "The discovery that hidden within the unpredictability of disorderly phenomena are deep structures of order is central to chaos theory." (You, citing Hayles, 1991) One of the key conceptual elements of Chaos theory is called sensitive dependence on initial conditions. Often called the Butterfly Effect, it is the notion that a butterfly stirring its wings in Peking can transform storm systems in New York. A small change in state at the beginning can have disproportionately enormous effects in the end.

(Bogus, 1995)

Essentially the message to teachers is one of comfort—with time patterns emerge from the chaos. Trust in the chaos! The Principal is comforted having the means to explain the chaos secondary schools are currently experiencing as the known structures (a five year, advanced, general and basic curriculum) are replaced with the unknown (a four year academic and applied curriculum). The Principal describes secondary school reform as a ‘major overhaul’ and a ‘thrust’ and the implication is one of force. Similar to Decartes idea of tearing down before re-building, secondary school reform appears to be tearing down in order to rebuild. This force, whether natural or not, represents a very different action from the suggestion that parents will mould and shape the school into a more flexible form. Initiatives by parents are more synonymous with a sculpture working a piece of clay or of a deep tissue massage.
How we imagine schools metaphorically represents the times in which we live, our society and its purposes. These two images of the 'school as building' and the 'school as organic/living' fits into the Principal's perspective on the current state of education being static and needing to change to match the new wave of chaos which she imagines like the forces of nature. The idea of 'closing the door' is presented by the Principal as shutting out the community. Closing the door may however be interpreted as providing a sanctuary where teachers can shut out political interference and get on with the business of teaching. The Federation President views this as a means to compartmentalize life. The Associate Director and Board Chair I suspect would like the idea of closed doors thinking that as long as there are doors to close, education can be stabilized.

In Orientation

In education
In open areas schools, in a community school
Open to
Within this community
Coordinate within
Get involved
Bring business in
Money pours in
Instill that in students
Put students into private schools
Out of public schools

Participants use the word 'in' to describe education. Orientational metaphors are rooted in physical and cultural experience—the link is to a common experiential base (Lakoff and Johnson, 1981). Everyone in our culture has the experience of being in school and attending school in a building. Education has become equated to schools and more specifically to school buildings. If you are not in school you either are ‘out of school’ (having graduated) or you have ‘dropped out.’ Up and down orientations are applied with ‘up’ judged as good, representing successful completion and ‘down’ or ‘dropped’ as bad,
meaning failure to complete. The word ‘dropping’ implies movement down, meaning a
drop on the socio-economic scale, for the longer you were in school the more likely you
would move up in terms of your status and your earning potential. The Teacher observes
that the value of education however has ‘dropped.’ Factory workers make as much if not
more money than those with university degrees. The ‘value of money’ is no longer
attached to education instead it is attached to what is practical. School has become
irrelevant to many of those who will or do work in factories. His son, a factory worker,
tells him,

The average guy or woman on the line, they figure they have their job and
their kids will go through school and they don’t care about higher
learning. They don’t need to because they are going to be on the line too.
Education is not important to them, their salary is important to them, their
case of beer, their holidays and their snowmobile is important to them.

When education no longer appears to serve the public, the public turns against it.
Workers’ security rests in money and not in education. What happens if suddenly the
value of money drops leaving workers little alternative? In the meantime, one wonders
how the sons and daughters of CEOs and presidents view education, what education are
they getting and who is providing for them?

In or Out?

Life in schools is insular, according to the Principal and the Teacher, the real
world exists outside the walls of the school. They both talk about the need to be in touch
with what’s happening out there. The Principal cites the election results as an indication
that what people want is not in line with what educators’ think. It has been suggested to
her that schools run by business people create relevance because they are in touch with
the real world. The Principal quotes an individual’s view of educators as living in “their
ivory towers” with “their hooded gowns and academe” they “don’t relate and don’t
connect with the real world.” The Principal thinks this is the publics’ viewpoint. In response she walks away, turns inward. This turning in is a problem, rather than acting pro-actively or assertively, she seeks the security that exists behind closed doors.

A number of the participants in this research challenge the orientational metaphor of education as schools. The Principal imagines a time when schools will not be buildings and students are, as they once were in the past, schooled in homes, this time wired to computers.

In his book, *Being Digital*, Nicholas Negroponte points out the untapped sources of knowledge that already exist in our communities--our elders--who will be increasingly wired into the Internet. Learners will not be locked in a completely artificial setting of one instructor and twenty-five homogeneous, mentally and chronologically equivalent students. A setting that only promotes “socialization” of peers with each other that will never again be replicated in the real world after they leave school.

(Bogus, 1995)

This concept of schools disturbs others (the Student, Parent, Associate Director, Board Chair) who value the interaction between teacher and student and social aspects of learning in schools. The Parent comments however that ‘closing the door’ seems an odd way of solving a problem. Discussing this with a secondary school teacher who works in a particularly difficult school filled with racial tensions and subsequent discipline problems she tells me that she thinks the building is important. The students complain about the condition of the building, its lack of resources and treat it with disrespect (graffiti, garbage). She claims ‘the walls speak’. They define private spaces and create groupings for particular purposes, provide security, structure and routine for students from troubled families. Some suggest that structures of school contrast too much to the world outside the classroom, while others suggest this is just what is needed. What are the structures that define a school or an education? A Catholic friend tells me of a recently built church in his neighbourhood with a modern sanctuary, the altar in the
centre and the congregation seated around the outside. It is not a church as far as he is concerned, this space does not ‘speak’ of reverence or reflection—religion he tells me is not meant to be modern. Local communities rally to save the small school located in the centre of the neighbourhood. Is their motivation merely self-interest or something more? What is there about the house or the neighbourhood in which we live that defines who we are and how we live? In changing the buildings what structures are we tearing down? For those interested in implementing change, buildings represents rigid thinking, closed minds, ingrained habits, beliefs and values that are weigh us down from riding the wave of the future. For parents and community members they mean their children are educated close to home, they represent stability and security, a foundation that can be relied on when things around them seem uncertain. For teachers these structures represent privacy, professional control, routines and procedures.

The surface is the outer shell and foundation, which define an interior of a building. But in the building metaphor, unlike the container metaphor, the content is not in the interior; instead the foundation and the outer shell constitute the content. We can see this in examples like; “The foundation of your argument does not have enough content to support your claims” and “The framework of your argument does not have enough substance to withstand criticism.”

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1981, p.100)

If like the metaphor for argument, the building represents the structure of the educators’ argument for public education what do we stand to gain or lose when our foundation has been torn down? Will the tearing down of walls destroy the foundation and framework of educator’s arguments?
The Associate Director's Perspective on the Crisis in Education

"How do we deal with a government that has tackled absolutely every part of the process." The Associate Director tells me "there are forces in play that expect from grade 3 children what we would normally expect from a grade 5". When I asked what drives the crisis he replies that "people will only accept so much spending in the red before they will take sides with a government."

Bully Tactics

Certainly there is a lot of aggressive imagery and I think that is the way that I view our situation in Ontario--a very aggressive government. They know the outcome they want but they don't worry too much about the ends that the means will achieve. I think a good example is the recent political announcement that we need to assess teachers on a regular basis. Other professions have requirements. If you are an accountant you have to sit for exams on a regular basis. If you are an engineer you have to prove that you have mastered new technologies and that you understand new legislation and so forth. There may be some merit of teachers being able to verify that they are keeping up and that they are seeking professional development or new training on a regular basis. I know there are people in education in the states for whom that is the only way that they maintain their salary or their certification. But the idea is trotted out as testing as opposed to a requirement that teachers be up to date or to maintain their level of skill or knowledge. The college of teachers talked about that a while ago. The testing I think is just a mind game.

What Happens When You Fire at Particular Targets?

The Associate Director uses the metaphor 'government as bully' and 'bullying tactics' or 'mind games' as the actions of an aggressive government who doesn't worry about the ends their means will achieve. The term bully depicts a cowardly person who terrorizes weaker people (Funk and Wagnall, 1974). The Associate Director gives the example of the Current Government's announcement that teachers will be tested as implying that the standard of teachers' performance needs to be measured as opposed to teachers will have to meet certain requirements to maintain certification. In the first scenario the 'government as enforcer' ensures that negligent teachers are found out. In
the second scenario, the ‘government as employer’ mandates requirements. The content
of the messages is the same—teachers will have to meet particular standards. The
structure and presentation however differs. The Associate Director views this as a tactical
ploy by the government against teachers who are in weaker positions. Casting ‘educators
as weaker’ and requiring tighter controls indicates a regressive narrative, one that the
government can turn into a progressive narrative with the support of the public tax payer
who sympathize ironically with the enforcers’ plight.

**Authoritarian Movements**

While most of the characters in this story were opposed to the Current
Government, the Federation President and the Student defer to the idea of a participating
public in a democratic process. The student opposes the idea of blaming the government
for problems because in a democracy the government represents the people.

**Analysis of the statement:** You can’t blame the government. We are in a
democratic country and the government is doing what the people want (Student).

Participants: the people (taxpayers and voters), the government, a democratic
process, speaker is a student (a non taxpayer and first time voter).

Parts: We live in a democratic society
The people elected representatives
Representatives act on behalf of the people
Representatives act in line with what the people want
The government is acting as an agent of the people
People cannot blame the government for doing what the people have
commissioned them to do

Stages: Precondition: We live in a democratic society with the right to elect a
government
Beginning: The people elect representatives
Middle: Representatives form the government
End: The government acts on what the people want
Final State: The people get what they want

**Causation:** Beginning and middle enable the end
The people elect representatives and the representatives form the
government means the government acts on what the people want.
Middle and end cause the final state
Representatives form the government means the government acts on what the people want and the people get what they want

Purpose: Goal: Final state—The people get what they want

Plan: Assume the precondition (we live in a democratic society with the right to elect a Government). The people elect representatives and the representatives form the government, the government then acts on what the people want and people get what they want.

The definition of democracy is the pivotal point in the argument put forward by this statement. Canadian politics is based on a representative democracy. Unlike a pure democracy where the public would voice opinion on particular issues, the Canadian public votes for representatives who in turn represent their constituents. These representatives may or may not know what the public actually thinks on a particular issue and knowing what the public thinks it is impossible to represent all of the people, it is only ever possible to represent some of the people. A mass can be heard and single voices disregarded. A single voice can be heard and a mass disregarded. "Tyranny of the minority" the Critic calls this. Representatives must vote along party lines and so their vote may not reflect even their individual thoughts. These points demonstrate that decisions that governments make only reflect what some of the people want and that is the best they can hope for. In today's political arena voters are influenced through media campaigns on television and newspaper and through flyers delivered to the home. The information provided represents a party perspective and not the entire story. Most often the information the public is given is only suggestive. When reforms are brought in there are often huge gaps between what was imagined and what was delivered. Amalgamation of school boards promised a reduction in educational administrative spending. For the boards that were already reduced, amalgamation was an expense; more money spent with
less space the result. Never mind the disruption to productivity through loss of key staff members, transitions in facilities, new job descriptions and poorer working conditions. Small boards that had been frugal in their spending expected to benefit from the richer boards when money was more evenly distributed and were surprised when they found they actually had less than before. Taxpayers were surprised when the promise to reduce education taxes actually turned out to be an increase.

According to Lapham (1996) democracy is never easy to define since “the meaning of the word changes with time, place and circumstance” (Littleton, 1996, p. 138). What remains more or less constant across context is a “habit of mind”.

The disillusionment with the democratic premise follows from the failure to appreciate its character as an improvisation—as a habit of mind rather than a matched set of moral virtues or a house in Palm Beach. Democracy proceeds on the assumption that nobody knows enough, that nothing is final, that the faith in human reason offers neither comfort nor immortality. To the extent that democracy gives it citizens the chance to come to their own conclusions and chase their own dreams, it gives itself the chance not only of discovering its multiple glories and triumphs but also of surviving its multiple follies and crimes. Too often we forget the proofs of our courage.

(Littleton, 1996, p. 138)

Following the election, the results served as an indicator of where the public stood with regard to education and an indication to educators that they need to be more responsive to the demands of the Current Government. With freedom of thought comes the news that society is in trouble. According to Lapham (1996) that doesn’t cause the public to perish “but the fear of thought and from the paralysis of mind that accompanies the worship of celebrity and the wish to make time stand still.” (p. 139). Exactly what did the public vote for?
Hijacking a Culture

Barlow (1994) in *Class Warfare* describes in a chapter titled “Hijacking a Culture” how international free trade agreements, and NAFTA specifically, have allowed business agendas to infiltrate education systems and the move towards a universal system of education controlled by corporations rather than governments for economic purposes. She suggests that technology is the vehicle for providing education through the Internet from corporations in other countries. According to Free Trade agreement, Canadian educational services must be negotiated through three levels provincial, federal and with the United States and Mexico to be exempt from NAFTA challenge. The pressure is on for privatization (Barlow, 1994). Quoting from NAFTA, she writes,

Recently, the governments of Mexico and the United States have been meeting to discuss ways to co-ordinate their primary and secondary education programs. They are focusing on shared curriculum reforms, teacher exchanges and redesigning teacher education. These meetings signal negotiations under another provision of NAFTA that is of concern. The agreement establishes a process of harmonization of professional standards of teachers across the continent. It calls for the “development of mutually acceptable professional standards and criteria” including “conduct and ethics, professional development and re-certification and scope of practice.” The Canadian institutes responsible for teacher standards must provide recommendations to a commission set up under the agreement; it will review these recommendations and those from other countries, and develop for adoption common standards “with a mutually agreed period” (pps. 109-110).

The notion of education as well as educators as tradable commodities appears to be what we are heading towards—a North American system of education with common educational standards.

Standards for educators vary widely on the continent and reflect the cultural and societal values of each country. Their harmonization, particularly if driven by an economic agenda, would seriously invade the countries political and educational sovereignty, as the new process which Canada is legally obliged to enter, will ultimately give a tri-national commission more power over professional standards than the federal government has been given in our Constitution (pps. 110-111).
Barlow (1994) concludes that this is the means through which a culture is hijacked. Through controlling ‘education as a public service’ one controls the history, values and culture of a nation. For it is through ‘education as a public service’ that we reach our needs and teach our own culture and social commitments. Without education as a public service it is impossible to remodel a society or touch the hearts and minds of the young.
The Board Chair's Perspective on the Crisis in Education

Words like "targeting", "operating under", "manipulating", "hitting a hot spot", "effect", "devastating effect", "tightening up", "demoralizing", "causing rifts" and "dumping on" are used by the Board Chair to describe the crisis in education. I ask to describe what these words mean to her.

**Hot Spots: Media Manipulation**

It is all media-relations. It is all about knowing what your audience it is and knowing what message you want to send your audience and how to best get it to them. The government is taking aim and the recipient is the general public that doesn't have any direct connections with schools--they are voters. The government knows exactly who they want to appeal to. I think they are masters at it--all the media stuff. We have never seen so much money spent on advertising. And it is clear to me that they have been given some very good advice as to how to deliver their message because they will make an announcement one day and it will be on TV ads the next day. I don't think they work quite that fast. I think they have a lot of the groundwork laid before. They are working through focus groups, I think, and just seeing what buttons to push.

**What Happens When You Push Buttons?**

The Board Chair employs the metaphor of 'media as strategy' using tactical war words she conjures up an image of a simulation designed to get attention and produce an effect. 'Media as strategy' is comprehended in war terms. The terms 'target', 'hitting a hot spot' and 'devastating effect' define the game. "Conflict, generalization, stereotype and snappy narratives" are how Canadian journalist Ron Graham defines the stories the media produces. However, "unlike the narratives of fiction or mythology, there are few resolutions and almost no healing processes in this narrative" (Littleton, 1996, p. 165)

**Monitoring Systems and Strategic Planning**

The media becomes the perfect vehicle for war-like strategies. Like the movie "Wage the Dog" surreal images are created to sway the public's impression of reality to be what those in power want it to be, rather than to convey reality. Lapham in an essay
"Journalism and Politics in the 1990's" (Littleton, 1996) speaks to the responsibility of journalists to tell the truth simply because democracy depends on it. The very fact that he proposes this suggests that media stories do not... always.

The post-modern imagination is a product of the mass media, but as a means of perception it is more accurately described as post-Christian. The vocabulary is necessarily primitive, reducing argument to gossip and history to fairy tales. The average American household now watches television for roughly seven hours a day, and soap opera stars receive as many as 100,000 letters a week, in which their devotees confess secrets of the heart that they dare not tell their wives, their husbands or their mothers. Like old pagan systems of belief, the mass media grant the primacy of the personal over the impersonal. The ancient Greeks assigned trace elements of the divine to trees and winds and stones. A river god sulked, and the child drowned; a sky god smiled, and the corn ripened. Modern Americans assigned similar powers not only to whales and spotted owls but also to individuals blessed with the aura of celebrity. Whether in Washington hearing rooms or Hollywood restaurants, names take precedence over things, the actor over the act.

(Lapham, 1993, p. 133)

In a society were the news is controlled by syndicates, celebrities equal royalty, where people are more loyal to a company than a country and anti-democratic bias dictates the structures that regulate international trade, democracy is exorcised! In a society where the people of a nation want to be taken care of and believe that their government will do the best by them, media manipulates! McLuhan (1962) predicted that media would exert a compelling influence on humankind so much so that the medium would be the message. Whereas prehistoric or tribal man perceived the world through hearing, smell, touch, sight and taste, technology has altered this sensory balance which in turn has shaped society. The flooding of the tactile sense through emotional charged images and sounds of TV satisfies the urge to act and pacifies the nation. McLuhan (1963) predicted that “At the speed of light, policies and political parties yield place to charismatic images.”

The greater images of celebrity posed on the front covers of our magazines impart a sense of stability and calm to a world dissolved in chaos. The newspaper headlines bring word of violent change—war in Bosnia, near
anarchy in Moscow, famine in Somalia, moral collapse in Washington—but on the smooth surface of the magazines the faces look vacant and imperturbable as they have looked for twenty years, as steady in their courses as fixed stars, as serene as the bronze Buddha in the courtyard at Kamakura. There they all are—Liz and Elvis, Madonna and the Kennedys—indifferent to the turmoil of the news, bestowing on the confusion of events the smiles of infinite bliss. Like minor deities or a little crowd of unpainted idols in a roadside shrine, they ease the pain of doubt and hold at bay the fear of change.

(Lapham, 1996, p. 134)

In the land of myth and mythologies, the war is a war of words and whoever names wins the game. The traditional gatekeepers who shape and defend the system are silenced (Barlow, 1994). “Casting schools as the villain and competition as the hero appeals to the human need to keep things simple” (Barlow, 1994). Politicians recognize that simple solutions gather a following. When words are put to public anxieties, carefully orchestrated and often repeated, myths becomes facts and followers become believers. Barlow (1994) comments that Margaret Thatcher is said to have observed that middle-class intellectuals see everyone else’s perspective but have none of their own. “Multiple points of view, however intellectually honourable are politically suicidal.” (Barlow, 1994, p. 20). The very fact that business has expressed an interest in education should give us cause to pause and wonder for rarely does a corporation plot a take-over of a company that is without value and worth (Barlow, 1994).

It is naive to believe that anything as emotionally charged as education can be freed from the shadow cast by myths. What is new however, it that the creation and perpetuation of the myths have been incorporated into the agenda of the economic and political Right (p. 44)

Conspiracy Theories and Victim Psychology

Conspiracy theories and victim psychology are the names we give our fears, for once named they can be dismissed. The Principal calls it “stinking thinking”—the whining of the less motivated—the Critic calls this the thinking of the front line. The Ministry
Official comments that laying blame (on the government) positions one as “victim” casting us into the “role of the oppressed.” She describes the result as “laying down,” “paralysis,” “done in” and ultimately “death.” Instead she supports looking for the positive, the tooting of horns and a public relations campaign.
The Opposition Critic’s Perspective on the Crisis in Education

Language associated with war like “threatened” “frontline” “control” and “fighting the fight” are used by the Critic to describe the battle for public education. I asked her to tell me about more about this war-like image.

Waging War

I do feel as if it is a fight against the incursion of the right wing agenda. What has happened in education in the last 30 years has been wrong headed--determined to take us back to the mythical good old days when we taught just the basics and everyone had the grey book of studies and knew exactly what page the students would be on. Fifty percent didn’t go to high school in comparison to the students who finish high school now. There was a fertile field for those messages that once upon a time in the good old days every child learned, and we just need to get back to the basics and away from these frills and this child-centred, muddled philosophy that has taken over schools. Clearly that agenda gets popular support and it does take a real fight now, not to just get the government but to get people to understand what we have in public education, what is at risk. I don’t think that means being confrontational with our neighbours but I do think it means a real fight for what we do value and being very pro-active and very vocal that we do care about this. When it comes to government that means fighting.

What Happens When You Engage in Military Operations?

This war that the Critic speaks of is figurative. The clues lies in the Critic’s comment in the second last sentence “I don’t think that means being confrontational” but “being very pro-active (suggests strategies) and very vocal.” The Critic is talking about a ‘war of words.’ The field that she as a character plays in is the House of Commons, where the ‘war of words’ is normal procedure and the expected protocol. She comments that this war is not waged through confrontation with neighbours. This comment may be telling. When we discussed the Premier and his personal history, she commented that he was also from the north, (her neighbour) had served as a trustee before entering provincial politics (as did she). When I press for comment on slanderous rumours, she retreats saying that his interest has always been political. When we discuss allegations
that there is a master plan to de-skill the public population, she re-frames this, suggesting the Current Government's actions are misguided or wrong-headed rather than intentional.

This information supports the idea that the Critics' relationship with the Premier and the Current Government is adversarial in a figurative sense. While politicians may take delight in discrediting one another in public forums and gaining points in public opinion polls as part of tactic war games, she maintains a professional respect that she will not compromise. This quote was taken from a Parliamentary Session held On Nov. 24, 1997, it was Opposition day and the speaker is the Critic. It provides a sense of the type of war she is engaged in.

This government has launched an attack on one of our most dearly held values. The concern will not go away, as the government hopes, when they ram through Bill 160 because people across the province are aroused. They are not just going to express concern; they are going to do everything in their power to fight back. They will not go away. They will do everything they can, as we will to defend public education in this province.

Lakoff and Johnson (1981) detail the characteristics of the 'argument as war' metaphor.

The sense of being embattled comes from experiencing yourself as being in a warlike situation even through it is not actual combat...you experience the other (participant) as an adversary, you attack his position, your try to defend your own, and you do what you can to make him give in (p. 79).

✓ You have an opinion that matters to you (having a position)
✓ The other participant does not agree with your opinion (has a different position)
✓ It matters to one or both of you that the other give up his opinion (surrender) and accepts yours (victory) (he is your adversary)
✓ The difference of opinions becomes a conflict of opinions (conflict)
✓ You think of how you can best convince him of your view (plan strategy) and consider what evidence you can bring to bear on the issue (marshal forces)
✓ Considering what you perceive as the weaknesses of his position, you ask questions and raise objections designed to force him ultimately to give up his position and adopt yours (attack)
✓ You try to change the premises of the conversation so that you will be in a stronger position (maneuvering)
In response to his questions and objections, you try to maintain your own position (defense)

As the argument progresses, maintaining your general view may require some revision (retreat)

You may raise new questions and objections (counterattack)

Either you will get tired and decide to quit arguing (truce), or neither of you can convince the other (stalemate), or one of you gives in (surrender)

(Lakoff and Johnson, 1981, p.80)

The coherence of this list is derived from its correspondence to the concept of war.

Lakoff and Johnson analyse 'conversation as an argument' (p. 80-81).

Participants: People or groups of people. They play the role of adversaries.

Parts: The two positions
Planning strategy
Attack
Defense
Retreat
Maneuvering
Counterattack
Stalemate
Truce
Surrender/Victory

Stages: Initial Conditions: Participants have different positions. One or both wants the other to surrender. Each participant assumes he can defend his position.

Beginning: One adversary attacks
Middle: Combinations of defense
- manoeuvring
- retreat
- counterattack

End: Either truce or stalemate or surrender/victory
Final State: Peace, victor has dominance over loser

Linear sequence: Retreat after attack
Defense after attack
Counterattack after attack

Causation: Attack results in defense or counterattack or retreat or end.

Purpose: Victory
In the Waging War image the references to myth and mythology are intriguing. The Critic uses the phrase “mythical good old days” and “once upon a time in the good old days every child learned” combined with “fertile fields” reminds us of the chivalrous days of yore when honour was defended on battlefields of green through contests or games. The Critic counterattack employs the terms ‘mythical’ and ‘once upon a time’ suggesting that bygone days only exist in one’s imagination (in other words the argument to return to them by the Current Government/back-to-basics movement is whimsical and lacking substantive evidence). These terms set the tone of the ideological battle that is being waged.

In the war metaphor, the Critic positions Teachers as the ‘front-line’ as the people who ‘clearly express their concerns’ and are ‘concerned with practical implementation’ the administrators or bureaucrats who are ‘prepared to makes things work, put a good face on it.’ She comments about ‘the power behind the people in power.’ Our cultural orientation puts forward and front as normal and therefore valued. What takes place behind the front-line is uncertain. From her comments about the bureaucrats making it work by putting a good face on it, one has to wonder if there is any real support system. Given this strategy there may be many causalities on the front line.

**Oppressive and Oppositional Forces**

The Critic views public education as a value, one that needs to be recognized and restored in the mind of the public. She imagines this will happen through a concerted effort to celebrate the goals and achievements of public education. The Teacher thinks that public education is one of the tenets of national unity. From a historical perspective, Saul (1997) would concur.
Analysis of the Statement: Health care, public education and the CBC are the threads that hold the country together (Teacher).

Participants: public education, health care, the CBC and Canada as a country, speaker is the Teacher.

Parts: In the country of Canada we have public services
Canadian public services include health, education and the CBC
Canada is a country with a particular character
These services hold the country together

Stages: Precondition: Canada is a country
Beginning: Public services are education, health care and the CBC
Middle: These service the people at large
End: As threads they join people together
Final State: Public services hold the country together

Causation: Beginning and middle enable the end
Public services are education, health care and the CBC. These service the people at large. As threads they join people together.

Middle and end cause the final state
These service the people at large. As threads they join people together. Public services hold the country together.

Purpose: Goal: Final state—Public services hold the country together.

Plan: Assume the precondition (Canada is a country) and that public services are education, health care and the CBC. These service the people at large and as threads they join people together. Public services hold the country together.

This statement is true in the sense that these public services are shared across the country, the public is dependent on them and on the government responsible for them. “We are only as strong as our weakest link,” remarks the Teacher. Should these services not serve the public need, we as a country are weakened, should these services be weakened or eliminated, we all lose. This line of thinking is very different from the thinking that strength is built on competition and a movement away from public funded to private enterprise. The first line of thinking is the thinking of the characters in education, the
second of business and current government most clearly presented in the economics
graph.

The Critic sees the infiltration of particular groups as the enemy forces. The
Current Government she tells me has consulted almost exclusively the back-to-basics
movement and the Fraser Institute. The back-to-basics group lobbies for a return to the
fundamentals of education, a move the Critic says will take us back to “mythical good old
days when every child learned” and “the drop out rates of the 50’s.

I saw the way in which the radical back to basics movement (because that
is where is really began) people who wanted to take us back to where
education was in the mythical good old days of the 50’s…saw the way in
which that agenda took hold and became irresistibly political.
(Opposition Critic)

The idea of the back-to-basics movement as having any real effect is denied by educators
such as the Ministry Official as not probable given the complexities of the times, the
amount of information and our knowledge of teaching and learning. The public hopes for
simple solutions; this ideology provides it.

While the public has been generally unaware of the political context of
education, a vocal minority has become obsessed with the classroom as a
vehicle for ideology. Many fundamental Christians believe the
contemporary classroom is the tool of Satan.
(Barlow, 1994, p.132)

Underlying the ‘religious right’ way of thinking is an ideology of revealed truth rather
than constructed meaning. Fundamentalists take exception to the contemporary ways of
thinking about learning. In the science vernacular constructed meaning or ‘knowing as a
verb’ is soft whereas ‘the known or to know as a noun’ is hard. The soft is always
changing and insecure while the hard is unchanging and secure. The notion of conveying
prescribed knowledge is one that gains political ground with the public while at the same
time serves a political means to convey political truth. The politicians of the time do not
have to agree with whatever lobby group they may respond to but the means must serve their ends. Business, fundamentalists, and the current government work together to destabilize education because doing so serves each of their agendas. The greatest asset to this alliance is that “so few realize what is going on and why” (Barlow, 1994, p. 137).

Piecing the Puzzle Together

The Elephant Analogy

I think it is an elephant and we have all grabbed onto a different part. We are all blindfolded and none of us see the whole picture. I am the first to admit that. I certainly don’t see the whole picture, from my perspective. This is what I feel, this is what I sense, and I am not pretending to know all the ins and outs. The other people that you have spoken to are probably every bit as convinced that this is the perspective, but I am probably holding onto the tail and someone else is holding onto the leg and someone has the trunk.

(Parent)

Each of the characters in this educational story had difficulty seeing beyond their own point of view to imagine the crisis creature. Each of the perspectives, however, possesses a piece to the puzzle that when fitted together with the rest will render a larger picture. In the next section the pieces are presented alongside each other so that their fit in terms of linguistic and narrative structure can be examined. Understanding the form, the function and purpose becomes clearer. In this first exercise the conception of education in terms its content, structure, process and context is examined.
Table 13.

Seeking Metaphorical Coherence in the Concept of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Issues</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gruel</td>
<td>Ingredients or elements (Substance)</td>
<td>Recipe or formula, Order and sequence</td>
<td>What happens when you add elements in this way</td>
<td>Economic deficit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical</td>
<td>Average test scores (Numerical)</td>
<td>Contrastive analysis (Mathematical)</td>
<td>What happens when you contrast scores in this way</td>
<td>Global competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murky Waters</td>
<td>Lowland (Place)</td>
<td>Saturate or overburden</td>
<td>What happens when you add elements in this way</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey</td>
<td>An uncharted tunnel with tracks &amp; grooves with limited vision</td>
<td>Travelling from one point to another</td>
<td>What happens when you travel under these conditions</td>
<td>Limited resources and uncertainties about the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging</td>
<td>Books falling apart, Faded paper, Few bright spots, Familiar exercises</td>
<td>The effect of time on the appearance or properties of things</td>
<td>What happens when you leave things unattended</td>
<td>Strong unions and seniority clauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Foundation Structure Supports Bricks and Mortar Closed Doors</td>
<td>Construction for safety and security</td>
<td>What happens when you change the standards and code</td>
<td>Pressure for accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target</td>
<td>An object presenting a surface that may be used as a mark (hot spot)</td>
<td>Getting ready, taking aim and firing</td>
<td>What happens when you fire at particular targets</td>
<td>Anti-authoritarian movements, Victim psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Button to Push</td>
<td>A protrusion that drives or operates something else</td>
<td>Exact or precisely producing an effect</td>
<td>What happens when you push buttons</td>
<td>Monitoring systems and strategic planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason to Wage War</td>
<td>Strategic plan, Tactics, Weapons, Arsenal</td>
<td>The science or art of military operations</td>
<td>What happens when you engage in military operations</td>
<td>Oppressive and oppositional forces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alternate metaphors suggested by images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organic</strong></td>
<td>Fundamental structure of nature</td>
<td>Free flowing</td>
<td>What happens when you let things take their</td>
<td>Chaos theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evolving Natural</td>
<td>natural course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value</strong></td>
<td>Desirability or worth of a thing; intrinsic</td>
<td>Worth being bestowed upon</td>
<td>What happens when you de-value worth</td>
<td>Law of supply and demand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>worth; utility</td>
<td>it</td>
<td></td>
<td>Survival of the fittest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youthful</strong></td>
<td>Newly formed</td>
<td>Radical or progressive in</td>
<td>What happens when you value youth</td>
<td>Mass media delivery and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>terms of social and</td>
<td></td>
<td>influences</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>political aims</td>
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The context in which the current concept of education is defined is telling, for these are the social-economic-political and cultural conditions in which the crisis in education exists. I list these conditions as causes and likely effects.

- economic deficit.................................................rationing
- global competition.................................................positioning
- accountability......................................................convincing the public
- limited resources and uncertainties about the future...........certain outcomes
- strong unions and seniority clauses............................stability as directive
- anti-authoritarian movements....................................rebellion
- and victim psychology.............................................casualties
- monitoring systems and strategic planning........................attack
- oppressive and oppositional forces................................confinement

These are the wartime conditions. We recall the stories told to us by grandparents of rationing and making do during the Second World War. They lived out their lives with attitudes of wasting nothing and taking nothing for granted. The names of the enemy 'Hitler' or 'Communism' were not to be spoken. Patriotism to democracy and an unquestioning trust in the government and its allies were the basis of their faith. These are the attitudes, values and beliefs created in wartime and these same conditions are described here in the metaphors that the characters use to describe the crisis in education.
War is a natural state for humankind, "a cruel fact to be realized that killing is a precondition to all life" (Campbell, 1972). From his study of world mythology Campbell concludes "plainly and simply: it has been the nations, tribes, and peoples bred to mythologies of war that have survived to communicate their life-supporting mythic lore to descendents" (p. 169). Those that survive in what Darwin identified as the universal struggle for existence, are those that perpetuate war. And the mental attitude necessary for war is perpetuated through the young. Campbell (1972) writes of a legend revived amongst the Navaho people during the Second World War to initiate young Navahos who were being drafted into the United States Army into the spirit of war. "It told of a journey of two young men to the home of their sun their father to procure from him the magic and weapons with which to eliminate the monsters that were at the time at large in the world" (p. 171). The basic idea behind every war mythology is that the enemy is a monster and protection of one's people is through killing him. Even in farming communities, the planting and harvesting seasons were marked by bloody sacrifices to ensure plentiful harvest. The root is the belief that there is no such thing as death, only temporal bodies and rebirth. "To activate life one kills!" (Campbell, 1972, p. 172). From the Old Testament comes the concept of an enemy as subhuman not a 'thou' but an 'it'. In biblical times, the ideal was to massacre every living thing in a captured town or city as a sacrifice to Yahweh. In the eighth century B.C. the Assyrian Tiglath Pilesar III notes that when everyone in a conquered region was slain there is no one left to enslave. A strategy of war appears--the idea of transferring populations from one region to another as a means of creating slaves without insurrection. From the Sun Tzu's The Art of War comes this advice,

War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly
studied. Therefore, appraise it in terms of the five fundamental factors and make comparisons of the seven elements later named. So you may assess its essentials.

(Campbell, 1972, p.193)

_The Book of the Lord Shang_ (China) proposes that poetry and history, rites and music, virtue and cultivation, benevolence and integrity, sophistry and intelligence be banned so that a ruler can employ the people towards defense and warfare. In order to gain the upperhand, “if there are things done that the enemy would be ashamed to do there is an advantage” (p.196). The _Bhagavad Gita_ (India) presents the ideology that “might is right and that right proceeds from might” and that right in itself has no authority (p. 196). Campbell (1972) concludes that from earliest times, the idea that war of one kind or another is not only inevitable and good but also normal--the most exhilarating mode of social action of civilized mankind. There is a basic belief that “the creator and governor of the universe is absolutely and always on the side of a chosen community and its wars consequently are holy wars” (p. 198).

In the political world where public opinion counts, outright warfare or annihilation over educational issues would be interpreted as overkill. Our Canadian cultural mythology is that we are a peaceful nation and war is reserved for humanitarian reasons--we no longer fight enemies we intervene and provide humanitarian aid! As I write this NATO forces have bombed Belgrade Yugoslavia relentlessly for 32 days to stop the evil Malosovic from purging his state of the Algerian people. Or so the story goes. A strategic plan of action in ‘the war on education’ is suggested when the content, structure and process of these metaphors are employed (tangible examples are provided from the lists created from Table 14)

1. Understand the context and use it to reinforce the image of crisis one wants to create
   (i.e. economic deficit, global competition, accountability, limited resources and
uncertainties about the future, strong unions and seniority clauses, rising standards, anti-authoritarian movements, victim psychology, monitoring systems and strategic planning, and oppressive and oppositional forces).

2. Highlight the content as the target (i.e. elements of society, contrastive analysis of test scores, overburden the lower levels, the uncharted nature of the journey, the effect of time and lack of change, and the construction for the purposes of safety and security).

3. Study the structure as the strategic plan (i.e. the recipes and formulas, contrastive mathematical analysis, effects of overburdening, the paths of travel, the effect of time on properties, construction for security, taking aim and firing, producing effects, and the science of military operations)

4. Apply the process, many hits to many targets in rapid fire (i.e. what happens when elements are added, scores are contrasted, conditions of travel are changed, things are left unattended, standards are changed, particular targets are fired at, buttons are pushed, and military operations are engaged).

5. Remember the purpose is to distract and demolish not destroy.

Each metaphor describes an aspect of the concept education. No metaphor is sufficient to give a complete, consistent, and comprehensive understanding of all the qualities of a concept. Together they provide a more coherent and comprehensive understanding. Metaphoric entailment is the conceptual overlap between metaphors, what Lakoff and Johnson (1988) define as the internal systematically of the metaphor that makes coherent all the examples that fall under that metaphor. The following diagram represents the entailment provided for the metaphor education.
Figure 4. Metaphoric entailments that emerge from the crisis images.

Education is

```
gruel
\downarrow
formula of different ingredients
\downarrow
contrastive analysis
\downarrow
quantifiable/measurable
\downarrow
variable
```

```
statistical
\downarrow
bricks and mortar

building

quantifiable/measurable
```

```
lowland
\downarrow
uncharted journey
\downarrow
aging
\downarrow
saturating
\downarrow
traveling from one point to another
\downarrow
effect of time

map
\downarrow
timetable

quantifiable/measurable
\downarrow
predictable
```

From this analysis emerges a conception of education as a formula consisting of ingredients that can be quantified and measured and altered depending on the effect one wishes to produce. This conception of education is puzzling, in light of the Parent's lack of certainty and direction. The analysis suggests the educational course is measurable and
quantifiable. Is the Parent's uncertainty parental doubt and skepticism or has the government been holding out? Does uncertainty create the climate necessary for education reform through crisis management?

Lakoff (1999) discusses the quantification of qualitative elements as a strategy employed in the metaphor when the state as rational actor considers actions as transactions and engages in maximizing gains and minimizing costs

1. State as a person
2. Qualitative effects on human beings as quantifiable costs and gains (political action as economics)
3. Rationality as profit making

War games are competitive, with winners or losers. Elements of the game include strategic thinking, teamwork, preparedness, spectators, glory of winning and shame of
defeat (military training to win). Victory is well defined and when achieved, the story or
game is over. The state as person hides the internal structure of the state (class structure,
ethnic, religious, political, military, corporations). The state's interest—defined by
politicians and policy makers (economic health and military strength) may not be the
interest of many ordinary citizens, groups and institutions. The costs in such a game are
social, political, moral and qualitative.
Table 14.

**Metaphorical Role Casting in the Crisis Images**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Society</th>
<th>Politician</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Parent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boiling Pot</td>
<td>Pot</td>
<td>Stirring the pot</td>
<td>Gruel</td>
<td>Doling it out</td>
<td>Waiting</td>
<td>An ingredient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics Graph</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Assessing</td>
<td>Negative scores</td>
<td>Worker</td>
<td>Product Profit or loss</td>
<td>The Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alligators in the swamp</td>
<td>Swamp</td>
<td>Alligator snapping</td>
<td>Murky waters</td>
<td>Running up a tree</td>
<td>Live Bait</td>
<td>An Alligator-in-training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traversing the Tunnel</td>
<td>Tunnel</td>
<td>Charging toll</td>
<td>Journey: Tracks &amp; Grooves</td>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>Traveller</td>
<td>The Guardian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging Facilities; Aging Faculties</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Saving money</td>
<td>Old not modern</td>
<td>Faded spot</td>
<td>Young and modern</td>
<td>The Cheerleader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walls falling down</td>
<td>Nature Organic</td>
<td>Overhauling</td>
<td>Building</td>
<td>Closing the door</td>
<td>Building materials</td>
<td>The tentacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bully Tactics</td>
<td>Witnesses</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Bystander</td>
<td>A Bystander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot Spot: Media Manipulation</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Targeting</td>
<td>Button to Push</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>A Voter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waging War</td>
<td>Fertile Field</td>
<td>Attacking</td>
<td>Reason to wage war</td>
<td>Front line</td>
<td>Casualty</td>
<td>A Voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Corresponding Functions and Parts of Speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>State of Being</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Abstract Noun</td>
<td>Verb</td>
<td>Subject Noun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chart presents the casting of the character as portrayed by the various images.
Reading the chart column by column the function that each serves became apparent (e.g. society is represented as a pot, statistics, swamp, tunnel, nature, witnesses, audience, fertile field representing places or nouns.) Categorizing these into parts of speech (grammar) assists in understanding not only the characteristics of each and the function each serves in speech.

Nouns (person, place or thing).

The crisis is an idea. An abstract noun, it names mental constructs. It is not tangible or actual.

Society is a thing or place, a categorization not a specific referent.

Education is a thing, although referred to as concrete tangibles it represents intangible concepts (e.g. building--keeping some things in and other things out).

The Student is a thing, the subject of the sentence.

The Parent is a person or a thing.

Verbs (actions or state of being).

The Politician is an action, a verbs more accurately classified as the present participle in a phrase.

The Teacher is a state of being. Some of the words that describe the teacher (such as target, front line or victim) are actually nouns. In these cases the Teacher has been named and action may or may not be implied.

Figure 5. Sentence analysis
Using the structure of a sentence, the action of the politician causes the Teacher's state of and the affect on the Student, is plotted for each of the images to confirm and clarify these relationships.

**Boiling Pot**: Pre-measuring the gruel reduces the time needed for doling it out to those waiting.

**Economics Graph**: Assessing negative scores stimulates workers to produce a more profitable product.

**Alligators in the Swamp**: Snapping alligators in murky waters causes runners to take cover up a tree leaving behind live bait.

**Traversing the Tunnel**: Paying the fee at tollbooths requires some engineering for travellers.

**Walls Falling Down**: Overhauling walls causes the closing of doors to avoid falling bricks and mortar.

**Aging Facilities, Aging Faculties**: Saving money, the old and fading is used to educate the young and modern.

**Bully Tactics**: Bullying victims, bystanders wait for their turn.

**Media Manipulation**: Aiming at hot spots one eventually hits the target.

**Waging War**: Attacking the front line causes casualties.

These sentences are declarative, they make a statement rather than asking a question or making a demand. They tend to be interpreted as objective and non-argumentative. This was the Teacher's take on the Current Government's position—non-argumentative and sugar coated. The Parent and the Critic called it spin!

**Prepositions**

The prepositions before the nouns representing Education create a phrase that modifies the crisis image.

gruel *in* the boiling pot (Teacher)

negative scores *on* the economics graph (Federation President)
murky waters in the swamp (Ministry Official)

journey through the tunnel (Parent)

old not modern through aging facilities and aging facilities (Student)

walls of the building (Principal)

tactics towards a target (Associate Director)

button to push (Board Chair)

reason to wage war (Critic)

Exploring the relationship between education (an object) and the image (idea) the action is either contained (in), directed towards (to), applied (on), or containing (through).

'Contained' suggests the ability to alter or control the effect (Teacher and Ministry Official). 'Directed towards' suggests being under siege an indication of having to take an offensive position (Associate Director, Board Chair and Critic). 'Application' suggests a façade, an interpretation perhaps illusion (Federation President). 'Containing' implies being subjected to or controlled by (Student and Parent).

The use of prepositions before the noun, that represents the Parent, modifies the actions of the subject, the Politician.

an ingredient

the source

an alligator in training

the guardian

the cheer leader

the tentacles

the bystander

the voter
The use of the articles 'a, an, the' qualifies the noun as definite (the) or indefinite (a, an). These indicate the significance to some degree. Is the parent one of many or does the parent stand-alone? The Teacher, Ministry Official, Associate Director, and the Critic view the Parent's relationship to the crisis as indefinite—one of a host of many. The Parent, the Federation President, the Student, the Board Chair and the Principal see them as definites, playing key roles.

Boiling Pot: Pre-measuring (an ingredient in) the gruel (in the boiling pot) reduces the time needed for doling it out to those waiting.

Economics Graph: Assessing (the source of) negative scores (on the economics graph) stimulate workers to produce a more profitable product.

Alligators in the Swamp: Snapping alligators in murky waters (in the swamp) (an alligator in training) causes runners to take cover in a tree leaving behind live bait.

Traversing the Tunnel: The paying at tollbooths (for the journey through the tunnel) requires some engineering (from the guardian) for travellers.

Walls Falling Down: Overhauling walls (of the building) causes the closing of doors to avoid the falling bricks and mortar.

Aging Facilities, Aging Faculties: Saving money (through aging facilities and aging faculties) the old and fading is used to educate the young and modern (for whom the cheerleader cheers).

Bully Tactics: Bullying victims (a tactic towards a target) the bystanders wait for their turn.

Media Manipulation: Aiming at hot spots (a button to push) (the voters) one eventually hits the target.

Waging War: Attacking the front line (the reason to wage war) causes casualties (a voice).

This exercise illustrates the relationships of the characters, their intentions and thus their relationships to the plots. The positioning of words in a sentence creates a plot and the story just seems to unfolds from it.
Figure 6. Plot line analysis of the characters' crisis in education perspectives.

Political Cartoon: Boiling Pot

Stability to regressive

The Teacher experiences education as stable although not particularly progressive. Life in school goes on. The stability narrative is important from a school perspective in developing long term relationships with parent and the community. The regressive slope is identified with the onset of the crisis. If the plotline continues downward the story would become a tragedy.

Economics Graph: Profits and Loses

Progressive to regressive

The Federation President views education as progressive, a reflection of the increasing skills of a diverse society. The economics graph shows a dip below the standard set by business. A regressive narrative is interpreted because not all students have achieved to
the standard. Should the slide continue downward the story she thinks will be a tragedy for some students and for society in general, the benefactor of all kinds of contributions.

Alligators in the Swamp

![Graph](image)

**Progressive to regressive to progressive**

The Ministry Official views education as generally progressive in nature although at times the political interference causes a slight dip. With support and new skills the curve will incline. Essentially a progressive narrative this represents growth and change and the ability of education to overcome challenges and obstacles.

Traversing the Tunnel

![Graph](image)

**Steady progressive to regressive**

The Parent views education as having provided measures of success and security. She sees the resources in schools as diminishing, declining at a time when the demands of the future are increasing. The crisis has exacerbated the problems. In contrast to the past the
current narrative is regressive. She does not predict a happy ending but a tragedy for students and their futures.

Walls Falling Down

Steadily progressive

The Principal views education on a steady incline. The crisis is just one point an evolutionary progressive narrative. Although the nature of schools may change form, education in whatever form, will continue to progress.

Bully Tactics

Stability with slight dip (regressive) back to stability

The Associate Director views the system of education as stable and the changes as not directly influencing students. The bully tactics of the government have diminished the confidence of the educators.
Media Manipulation

Stability impacted by a series of hits

The Board Chair views education as a stability narrative. She hopes that students continue to get the same education. She views the crisis as a series of hits targeting specific players in the system—teachers, students, and trustees.

Waging War

Progressive to regressive

The Critic views education as a progressive narrative up until the Current Government took power. She is afraid that this government is going to take education back to where it once was. That would certainly be a tragedy.
Aging Facilities

The Student views education as a regressive in comparison to the education her older brother and sister received. It attempts to remain essentially the same under worsening conditions. A few new teachers create some bright spots but they don’t stay long.

Narrative plots might be classified in the following way. Those that maintain education (the Associate Director and the Board Chair) tell stability tales. Those that make it happen (the Federation President, the Teacher, Ministry Official, the Principal) tell progressive narratives. Those that it happens to (the Parent and Student) tell regressive narratives. The Current Government utilizes the regressive narrative to incite action. As we move down the hierarchy from the board to school to parent the story changes. Boards stabilize the messages from the Government. Principals and tell progress narratives to justify their work in schools (perhaps as a way to deal with the incongruities). Parents and Students tell regressive narratives to explain their experience and to allay their fears. The Government employs this same regressive narrative to incite change for political means.
Revisiting the elephant story, each of the blind men felt they understood the elephant. Feeling the tail one thinks it is a snake, another feeling the ear thinks it is a leaf and yet another feeling the leg thinks it is a tree trunk. Each vantagepoint provides a particular perspective. With multiple perspectives we gain a sense of the entire body of the animal or in the case of this research of a more complete story on the crisis. Theme provides perspective on the relationship between plot and characters, highlighting the relationship between what is being looked at and from where it is being seen. In story there are four main vantagepoints: the main character's, the obstacle character's, the perspective of the subjective story and the objective story. To understand the story concern or problem the reader has to be able to see if from each of these different points of view.
Each perspective is contained within a particular framework. From studying the study of the archetypal characters it became apparent that perspective was influenced by things such as past experience, current role, orientation in time, orientation toward problem solving and position in relation to power. Certainly plot, role and power come into play as the characters positioned themselves relative to the plot as an active participant or passive recipient. For the moment, I draw the reader's attention to the position of the Teacher as main character and the Current Government as obstacle character. Based on the analysis of the parts of speech they represent, the Government’s perspective is ‘one of taking action’ and the Teacher’s perspective is ‘a state of mind or a state of being’. The Objective Story focuses on the crisis as ‘a situation’ and the Subjective Story focuses on the ‘manner of thinking’ that each of the characters is engaged in. Adding these elements to the diagram the perspectives are represented and the story outlined (in synopsis form) for each line of thinking.
Objective Story Domain (A Situation): The Mything Link concerns itself with the current crisis in education, a conflict between the Current Government and characters in education. Set in local, provincial and global contexts the specific focus is on public education and public schools. The Current Government claims that the resolution of this situation represents progress. The objective story is concerned with how things are going and asks do the actions of the Government truly represent educational progress? What is being threatened? What remains secure? Threats lie in fantasy and security in facts. With an understanding of what has gone before, the research aims to understand what is happening now and predict where this might lead in the future.

Subjective Story Domain (A Manner of Thinking): The Current Government manipulates the public into believing through media campaigns and clever language strategies that their purposes are shared and that the Government’s actions serve the best interests of children. The subjective story focuses on the Current Government as a being (having purposes, motivation, methodology and means for evaluating results) and asks the
question, can this character be trusted? To understand the being that is represented by the
Current Government the subjective story assesses the images that each of the characters
have of this character and tries piece together an understanding of the character. What is
this character’s true ability and what is his desire? His ability lies in knowledge and
desire in thought. Language patterns reveal ways of thinking. By examining the images,
metaphors and myths that conceptualize the Current Government’s perspective on
education the pieces of the puzzle begin to become clearer.

Main Character Domain (State of Mind, State of Being): The Teacher lives in the insular
world of the classroom, a world that reflects the society that surrounds it. Subjected to its
problems, his attitude is one of trying to make a difference by representing and serving its
diversity. The Teacher is defined by instinctual reactions to the actions of the Current
Government either of fight or flight. With all of the changes happening so quickly, he
does not have time to question or plan, only react. What should he worry about? On what
does he base his confidence? His confidence lies in value and his worry is over worth.
The Teacher recalls what motivates him to become a teacher. He determines that he will
not back away from the challenge and that he will take up the protest for the sake of the
younger teachers that will follow him.

Obstacle Character Domain (Action): The Current Government identified the crisis in
education and began to take measures to remedy this situation. This characters focus is on
doing, asking the question what happens when? He manipulates the variables as quickly
as possible to create certain effects. What strategies can be employed to get the desired
outcomes? What does experience suggest? Strategies lie in wisdom and experience in
enlightenment. War tactics are the areas where the government is most skilled and most
experienced. The Government has a great deal of history in quashing upstart groups but
has never applied these directly to education before. One advantage it has is it knows that the Teacher groups do not have this same experience and are very bound to stabilizing possible disruptive situations.

**Figure 10.** The Story Problem.

The problem for the research as the domain of the objective story is one of actuality (the facts nothing but the facts) whereas the problem for the mythology as the domain of the subjective story domain is one of perception. The problem for the teacher as main character is one of cause and the current government as obstacle character is one of effect. These problems correspond to the problems identified for the characters in Chapter 4: Gathering the Allies.

**Genre**

Genre might be defined as the facial cast of the story, the expression that the story wears for its audience. As such this casting defines the relationships between characters the ways in which they can and will relate to each other (e.g. whether they take one
another seriously or not) and the direct impact upon the emotion of the audience—causing them to laugh, cry, cheer or suffer. Genre then is a deep structure that underlies stories yet represents the way the audience looks at the story as a finished product.

What is the purpose of the crisis story? While the purpose of the research story is to convey information through deciphering and decoding the language that defines the situation, the purpose of the Current Government appears to be one of diversion with the ultimate goal of changing course. Hilarious comedy, great tragedy, contemporary drama or classical romance—how does one interpret this educational story? It depends who you ask, for within the story different characters play different roles and have different points of view. Those who are affected (the Student, Parent and Teacher) name this story as a tragedy. Those who make it happen (the Ministry Official and the Federation President) call it a classical romance. Those who attempt to maintain its stability call it a drama. I wonder is anyone left laughing?

The Objective Story (Entertainment) situates the story in public schools where something is a miss. The announcement by the Current Government of a crisis overshadows distracts the every day activities of teachers as they worry and wonder about how they should respond. In this setting we find the serious yet reflective Teacher as Main Character (Action Drama) who turns political activist in order to save the school.

In contrast humourous antics of the Current Government (Comedy of Errors) who inadvertently leaks the crisis comment to the press then covers by stating that if there is not a crisis he will create one. Later announcements make changes to things that are already in place. Finally the Subjective Story (Information) attempts to find out what it all means, defining and describing how the Main Character and Obstacle Characters' thinking collides.
What this mixed arrangement lacks in consistency it gains in variety. This is the kind of story one might like to read if one were not involved in it. Although the nature of story demands that each of the perspectives or throughlines be consistent throughout the story, the story itself may appear at the start to be one genre and eventually wind its way into something else. In this regard we really cannot define the story until we know how it ends. What I find interesting about this exercise is the realization that the Current Government and the Teacher have positioned relative to each other in such away that they can never really communicate. The Current Government by casting itself in a comedic role appears harmless to the bystander who is too busy laughing to realize that this character may have serious intents. Should the Teacher call the Current Government on threatening public education, the public responds by thinking the Teacher is taking this all too seriously and any feelings of threat are interpreted to mean he has too much control. The public turns their attention toward the teacher, looking suspiciously at him. The fact that we live in an age when entertainment is where it is at, means that the Current Government's position is very popular. And while the public is busy being entertained—anything can happen!
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS: HARD TIMES

Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, and everything was fact between the lying-in hospital and the cemetery, and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen.

(Dickens, Hard Times, 1907)

Cast into a postmodern setting, amid innumerable choices of realities, we are experiencing hard times! In this research, characters report these cause and effects—all characteristics of wartime conditions.

- economic deficit ................................................ rationing
- global competition ............................................ positioning
- accountability .................................................. convincing the public
- limited resources and uncertainties about the future ........ certain outcomes
- strong unions and seniority clauses ......................... stability as directive
- anti-authoritarian movements ................................. rebellion
- and victim psychology ..................................... casualties
- monitoring systems and strategic planning ................ attack
- oppressive and oppositional forces .......................... confinement

This crisis in education, presented as a plausible story, is in fact all plot. Power, production and experience have been enlisted in the service of 'a just war' against low standards. Through cost-benefit analysis the 'facts' are employed to justify the regulatory actions of politicians and government. In this live drama, characters are subjugated and cast into restrictive roles. The 'state as person' uses 'society as its resource' to produce 'students as its products'. Employing the production model, Castells (1996) credits education with differentiating two kinds of products: those who have the capacity to reprogram themselves towards the endless changing tasks of the production process and those with no reprogramming capability. The latter, what he calls "human terminals,"
perform replicable tasks and are expendable replaced by machines or by other bodies in other places depending on business decisions. In a world of global economy and capitalism there is uneven development, the result is higher production and growth in some areas and the consolidation of black holes of human misery in others. The risk for the individual is being irrelevant!

**Not Just A Bunch of Interesting Stories: A Glimpse of the Underlying Plot**

The grand narrative, an overriding plot into which we, the characters, are cast, defines and restricts our roles. Lakoff and Johnson's (1981) methods of seeking coherence are extremely useful in understanding the language patterns used by participants and in coming to understand the elements and interrelations of the metaphors characters use to describe their experience of these current hard times. The language patterns of post-modern thinking mirrors and mimics the very characteristics of narrative and the story mind. Media portrayals are accepted as reality. What has been created in the mind becomes our reality. Readily we believe in new mythologies: in a make-believe world where economics, business and government like returning saviours will surely care for all of the people. The public accepts the tough love discipline strategies being exorcised by a government, who acts as parent. Even more frightening perhaps is what has been created in our reality becomes our mind. Play on words makes brutal acts appear as harmless games. Willing to pay the price for long term benefits, we fail to recognize the price we have already paid and what it will continue to cost us. Is it any wonder that we accept and live out our lives as fiction, more interested in the surreal images portrayed on the scene than the drama of everyday life? We compensate for the apparent lack in our lives through fantasy and fantasizing the life of others. While we demand and acknowledge our individuality, we deny any personal and individual power. We simply
fail to act. At some level, we consent to this manufactured reality. One of the surprises in this research was that the vast potentialities of the post-modern era have created such uncertainty that we are prepared to accept such simple answers to complex problems.

The Quantification of Qualitative Elements: The Missing Questions

Sought are formulas and recipes, toward a prescription for education. The underlying intent, based on a political agenda is to control through restraint. The question asked is how can we control the elements? This question stems from operational and behavioural sciences where the subtle shift is towards emphasizing the evidence and away from the deeper underlying principles and abstract structures. "It is as if natural science were to be designated 'the science of meter readings' (Chomsky, 1968, p.1). In the context of education, it is as if education were designated 'the art of standardization.' What would we expect of education in a culture that was satisfied to accept this designation for its activities? This research suggests a society that accepts the premises that define hard times; most importantly a society that will endure rationing. A more appropriate question Chomsky (1968) suggests, is what are the elements? This inquiry would further our understanding of education and ultimately lead to knowledge of what potential education has. Addressing this question, however, demands both time and commitment.

Lakoff (1991) Professor of Linguistics at the University of California expresses his alarm at the justifications that are currently made based on the metaphor 'war as politics' and 'politics as business' and he cites the Gulf War as an example. A 'cost-benefit analysis' is used to weigh the political costs and benefits of engaging in war. Only when the political gains fall short of the acceptable costs does the war cease. Lakoff (1991) breaks down the elements of this metaphor into 'causal transfer,' 'exchange for
value,' well being as wealth,' risk as gambles' and 'rationality as maximization of
profit.'

1. Causal Transfer—an effect is an object transferred from a cause to
an affected party (e.g. sanctions give Iraq economic difficulties)
2. Exchange Metaphor for Value—the value of something is what
you are willing to exchange for it (e.g. well being as wealth)
3. Well Being is Wealth—things of value constitute wealth
4. Risks as gambles—gains, stakes, lose, showing of cards
(mathematics probability theory, decision theory, game theory)
5. Rationality as Profit Maximization—rationally acting in own self-
interest (maximizing gains and minimizing losses)

Politics is business. Efficient political management is viewed as efficient business
management, its prime directive to keep careful tally of costs and gains by defining
objectives, tallying costs and determining if objectives are worth the costs. Whether the
cost benefits analysis metaphor is appropriate is not questioned. The only question that
matters is-- what does it cost?

In this research, characters told us that the costs are great. We hear this from the
Critic, the Teacher, the Parent, the Student and the Federation President. At stake is the
value they call 'public education' defined as the right of education for all. Not for a
rationed or even adequate education, but an education that factors in the individual and
responds to the individual; an education that is primarily concerned with furthering the
cause of the individual in society. These characters recognize that the world is becoming
increasingly more competitive and more demanding. They are not satisfied with an
educational system that is cutting back at a time, when if the interests and needs of
students were the prime consideration, we would be infusing the system with the very
best we have to offer. Our advancements in our knowledge and our know-how are great.
“Why are we educating our future as if it were our past?” wonders the Ministry Official.
The Power of Metaphor: Mind Altering

In this research the power of metaphor to define reality is striking. This is a culture of real virtuality "in which reality itself (that is, people’s material symbolic existence) is fully immersed in a virtual image setting, in a world of make believe, in which symbols are not just metaphors, but comprise the actual experience (Castell, 1998, p. 350). Acquiesce, to metaphor, is based on familiarity not on understanding. We identify the independent terms but not the conditions created when concepts come together. Without the tools to decipher and decode metaphor, we do not recognize what is hidden or what the underlying implications are. The cost-benefit analysis of the metaphor regulates our thinking about war, denying the atrocities of altering human lives by bombing homes and services and killing human beings. In education, it hides the fact that education is a multi-tiered system and that public education is oriented toward creating an expendable working class.

The economics metaphors are common place, its terms define our educational reality! In interviews with participants, I was amazed at how frequently the business terms creep into conversations about education. We spoke of students as ‘clients’ and ‘products’, of the ‘benefits and costs’ of schools, of the need to involve ‘stakeholders,’ and the need to create partnerships with ‘business and industry’ to shore up the declining financial resources available to schools. We are engaged, in a very real sense, in a financial battle just to keep the system going--a battle we are losing, perhaps one already lost. The simple answer appears to be business alliances. Communities open their doors to business funding educational endeavours in exchange for advertising. What harm can it do, children are exposed to advertising everywhere and besides we need the money for computers or playground equipment? Never mind that once the societal expectation was
that business would fund education through tax dollars, without direct return. Given that
the Canadian response to systematic poverty was universal public education we can
anticipate greater discrepancies in standards of living and increasing poverty. Business
demands, we accede. Change the language and business now intervenes to save us from
our current state of hard times.

The State as Ruler

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the
speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring
every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was
helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows
for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellaring in two dark caves,
overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's
mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard set. The emphasis was helped by
the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The
emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of
his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface,
all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had
scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside.

The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square
shoulders- nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with
an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was- all helped the
emphasis. 'In this life, we want nothing but Facts, sir; nothing but Facts!'
(Dickens, Hard Times, 1907)

Lakoff (1991) sheds light on how metaphors are used to create reality. The 'state as
person' is an example of a personification in which the state has a home (the province)
neighbours (other provinces) and is judged as either responsible or irresponsible (based
on economic growth), industrious or lazy (based on hard line policies on public social
services). The 'ruler as state' personification grants the Premier, a Minister of Education
or the Prime Minister the powers of statehood. Metaphorically, their face becomes the
symbol of the state. This strategy has proven to be particularly useful with governments
in the justification war against an evil menace, the face and name of which becomes the
head of state. People's emotion, positive or negative, are focused on the face (Lakoff, 1991). In this research as I describe the archetypal character of the Current Government, the image of the face emerges, a face that changes according to the waves of public emotion generated towards it. In economic terms, the 'well being' of the state as person is 'wealth' and 'strength is industrialization' (Lakoff, 1991). 'Maturity is industrialization' and 'unindustrialized nations are underdeveloped.' Third world countries, judged as backward and needing to be developed, are disciplined if they get out of line. In a similar way, 'education' is positioned in the public mind 'as underdeveloped' when the Current Government announces low scores, justifying the taking of disciplinary actions. Children and teachers will be tested and the standards will be raised. Boards of education were viewed as self-serving, so money is cut out of administration and redistributed to the classrooms. Since 'morality is a matter of accounting' and morality is maintained by keeping the books balanced, those who do wrong must pay a debt. The needless spending on education with little result is the debt that society and schools are being asked to pay. The Associate Director tells us, "people will accept only so much spending in the red." Odd that in the 70's, according to the Teacher, spending was the thing to do. Somehow now in the 90's we are wiser, realizing that we have to pay for the debts we incurred.

Castells (1996) defines the role of the state as critical to understanding the relationship between society and production (defined as technology),

The role of the state, by either stalling, unleashing, or learning (technological innovation), is a decisive factor in the overall process, as it expresses and organized the social and cultural forces that dominate in a given time and space (p. 13)

Emerging in the twentieth century is a new social structure the triad of state, society and economy, structured on historically determined relationships of power, production and experience (Castells, 1996). Power, the arsenal of the state, based on production and
experience “imposes the will of some subjects upon others by the potential or actual use of violence, physical or symbolic.”

The symbolic communication between humans and the relationships between humans and nature (with its complement, consumption), experience, and power, crystallize over history in special territories, thus generating cultures and collective identities (p. 15).

This power is founded upon the state and its institutionalized monopoly of violence, although what Foucault labels the microphysics of power, embodied in institutions and organizations, diffuses throughout the entire society, from work places to hospitals, enclosing subjects in tight frameworks of formal duties and informal aggressions (p. 15).

Production is a socially complex process, because each of its elements are internally differentiated. Thus, humankind as collective producer includes both labour and the organizers of production, and labour is highly differentiated and stratified according to the role each worker in the production process (p. 15).

Shifting Sands: Switching Metaphors

Are the metaphors that define the student, teacher and the process of teaching and learning, so present in the images of the crisis in education, indicators and/or determinates of the nature of education past, present and future?

The children in a classroom described here by Dickens (1854) presents the metaphor of ‘child as empty vessel’

The speaker, and the schoolmaster, and the third grown person present, all backed a little, and swept with their eyes the inclined plane of little vessels then and there arranged in order, ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim.

(Dickens, *Hard Times*, 1907)

The ‘empty vessel’ and the ‘conduit’ metaphor for teaching have been popular with those who are subject oriented, focused on conveying fact and information. The metaphor of the ‘child as a living thing’ is part of our agricultural heritage, popular with those of us who grew up in small towns or in rural areas in Ontario and child development theorists, whose focus has been the facilitation of growth. The ‘brain as hardware,’ a recent
metaphor, describes the brain and its functions as a computer terminal. The focus is designing software. Each of these metaphors is reflective of the three modes of development of society: pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial/informational (Castells, 1996). Key to understanding these is their relative perspective on the relationship between labour, matter and production/work. In the agrarian mode of development (pre-industrial) production results from quantitative increases of labour on natural resources (acknowledging the natural endowment of these resources). In the industrial mode of development the main source of productivity lies in the introduction of new energy sources and in the ability to decentralize the use of energy sources throughout the production and circulation processes. In the present day informational mode of development, the source of productivity lies in the technology of knowledge generation, information processing and symbol communication, specifically the action of knowledge on knowledge. While industrialism is oriented toward economic growth (maximizing output), informationalism is oriented toward technological development (accumulation of knowledge towards higher and higher levels of complexity).

We experience a shift of locus of control as we travel along the continuum of time through the pre-industrial, industrial and informational from the internally exposed to the externally imposed to the internally imposed. In the agrarian society, the student is viewed as a natural resource and the task of the teacher was to facilitate growth by creating conditions that are conducive. In the industrial revolution, the focus shifts to efficient use of external energy applied for maximum result. In the technological society, the shift is back to the internal however the difference is that the external forces now have direct input. The Parent and the Student recognize this shift. Language indicators suggest they are passive recipients—of what they do not know. They tell us they have no map of
this territory—they tell us education is what happens to them. Yet, Castells (1998) posits that education is the key, determining who will be informational producers and who will be the replaceable generic labourers. The new producers of informational capitalism are those knowledge generators and information processors whose contribution is most valuable to the firm, the region and the national economy. These new producers, he envisions as a collective of managers, professionals and technicians. Most other workers are generic labour, with replicable skills that are replaceable. The social cleavages of the post-modern age include this division of labour, the social exclusion of discarded and irrelevant individuals, and the separation of the global market and the human experience of workers’ lives (Castells, 1998).

**Constructing a Plausible Story**

The core processes of knowledge generation, economic productivity, political/military power and media communication are already deeply transformed by the informational paradigm and are connected to global networks of wealth power and symbols working under such a logic.

(Challenges, 1996, p. 21)

The criteria for a plausible story is believability constructed by connecting or combining elements based on cause-effect relationships and coherence along a plot-line. A plausible story, however, doesn’t necessarily represent truth, it may in fact, lead us astray. Lakoff (1991) outlines the conditions through which war becomes a just war. Parallels can be drawn in terms of the conditions necessary for the construction of ‘crisis in education’ as a just cause. A just war requires a cast of characters—villain, victim, and hero. We understand without explanation the villain as evil and unreasonable, the hero as good and reasonable, and the victim as helpless. Lakoff (1991) outlines the plot.

A crime is committed by the villain against an innocent victim, resulting in an imbalance of power—creating a moral imbalance. The hero gathers helpers, makes sacrifices and undergoes difficulties usually through an arduous heroic journey across treacherous terrain. The villain is inherently
evil and therefore reasoning with him is out of the question. As a result, there is no choice but to engage in battle. The hero defeats the villain and rescues the victim and the moral balance is restored. A victory is achieved. The sacrifice is deemed as worthwhile. The hero receives acclaim, along with gratitude of the victim and the community (p. 3-4).

Substituting the characters and events in the crisis of education it might read like this,

The crime of over-spending and under producing is committed by the villain Educators against an innocent victim the Taxpayer. The monopoly formed by the Boards of Education, the Teachers, and the Teacher’s Unions results in an imbalance of power—they hold all the power while the Taxpayer holds none. This creates a moral imbalance that the Current Government judges as being wrong. The Minister of Education, the hero, gathers helpers (Parents, Special Interest Groups), makes sacrifices (removal from the education portfolio) and undergoes difficulties usually through an arduous heroic journey across treacherous terrain (schools and public meetings). The villain Educators are inherently evil and therefore reasoning with them is out of the question. The hero Minister refuses to talk with them about their unreasonable demands and has little choice but to engage in battle. The newly appointed Minister hero defeats the Educator villains and rescues the Taxpayer victim and moral balance is restored. A victory is achieved. The sacrifice is deemed as worthwhile—Taxes will be reduced. The hero receives acclaim (the Current Government is reinstated) along with gratitude of the victim and the community.

So what are the elements of coherence that make this story plausible? Taxpayers feel the pinch of heavy taxation. Recent analysis of the average middle-class persons wages inform us that over the last 5-10 years the wages of the middle class have actually decreased relative to the increasing costs of living. Media stories inform us of the frivolous spending by civil servants of taxpayers’ money. Boards of Education have (had) money and the ability to raise taxes. The government reports that students are not achieving and that Ontario spending in education is higher than any other province in the country. Education is no longer seen as a ticket to employment and a better life. Students with master’s degrees are unemployed and factory workers make as much, if not more, money than people with university degrees. All of these elements combine to create conditions in which the Current Government can save the day, by focusing on saving
money, and reprimanding the public servant, Education, who has gone astray. The story is believed! What with the promise of a tax break, the Conservative Party earns a second term as a majority government.

The Persuasive Curriculum

With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to.

(Dickens, Hard Times, 1907)

Analysis of the entailments of metaphors used by characters to describe education reveals a single perspective on curriculum—a quantifiable resource that can be measured and proportioned. This is particularly clear in the images presented by the Teacher where learning is the gruel and by the Federation President with scores dipping down below an accepted standard. In the Parent, Teacher, and Student's mind this resource is being rationed. The Ministry Official and the Principal view the current changes in education (i.e. the Secondary school reform), however, as providing better than before. They view learning as fluid and responsive to the evolutionary changes. They view the school as fluid and the curriculum as responsive to change, and teachers as able to traverse subject areas.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) outline rules for unlocking and extracting meaning from the maze of curriculum literature.

1. View articles and speeches as prescriptive.
2. Determine whether it is a theory or practice emphasis.
3. Classify by main topic.
4. Identify the target.
5. Identify the point of view.
6. Determine desired outcome.
7. Determine rationale.
8. Critique prescriptions.
According to these rules, *The Ontario Curriculum 1-8* (Ministry of Education and Training, 1997) is both persuasive and prescriptive. The persuasive quality is the appeal to the kind of life students will be able to lead, “knowledge and skills that will help them compete in a global economy and allow them to lead lives of integrity and satisfaction, both as citizens and individuals (p. 1). The prescriptive nature lies in the curriculum itself, the recipe to follow in order for students to be successful. “The Ontario Curriculum 1-8 outlines the knowledge, skills and high standards of learning required to meet these goals” (p. 1). The content is rule-oriented and practical in nature, listing the tasks that students will do by grade. The language includes reference to the key terms ‘basic skills’ ‘mastery’ and ‘clear writing’. As a provincial document, its intention is to prescribe practices that teachers at particular grades must adopt in order to achieve provincial wide consistency. The target is specific subject matter and the audience is teachers at particular grade levels, teaching particular subjects. The nature of the document is specific and the publisher of the document is the Ministry of Education (no specific reference is made to actual authors). The desired outcome is an expectation. The rationale is that the subject matter and the mastery of basic skills are the most important elements in the curriculum. The teacher is required to focus on the tasks of the curriculum for the purpose of application, the student is required to focus and master the basic skills and the parent is to assist and monitor student progress. Will this prescriptive formula lead students to be competitive in a highly competitive global economy?

Information is not provided on how the knowledge and skills contained in this document could produce values of ‘integrity’ and feelings of ‘satisfaction’. The only other value statements addressed in the documents are the ‘patience’ and ‘perseverance’ of teacher, the ‘hard’ work that student should do and the ‘responsibility’ students should
take for their own progress, no matter 'how hard their life is'. Not addressed in the curriculum is the holistic nature of language learning. The presentation of skills by grade level does not address the developmental level of students or the diversity of skill levels in a class or the diverse methods employed by teachers in schools. The document presupposes students learn through levels and should be subject to the same grade expectations. The underlying assumption in the presentation by subject and grade, that the best way to teach is by subject area and by grade rather than by division.

Without theory or reason to support its claims this document lacks foundation and thus credibility. Without reference to authors no clues are given as to whether the writer’s knowledge is theoretically, practically or personally based. My experience informs me that such a proposition has no basis—theoretical, practical or personal. The Current Government promised this new curriculum would provide a rigorous, challenging, curriculum emphasizing basic and specific skills, to achieve high standards of learning and province wide consistency. Parents’ role is that ey should be involved, supporting their child, providing encouragement to complete assignments, reading the curriculum, becoming aware of what happens in the following grades, interpreting reports, communicating and asking questions of teachers about their child’s progress, as well as, participating in parent councils. Teachers’ and students’ roles are complementary. Both need to focus. The teachers need to focus on being enthusiastic and persevering, sensitive and patient, and employing a variety of methods and strategies that ensure sound learning. Student need to focus on paying attention, working hard and taking responsibility for their learning no matter how hard their lives are. Is this sound pedagogy or political rhetoric? Is its purpose to advance the learning of students to globally competitive levels or simply to control?
The Limitations of Characters

This study revealed time and time again that the casting of characters within the educational story imposes limitations. If there are heroes there are likely to be villains, if there are heroes and villains there are likely to be victims. Re-examining roles in the context of story affords a different perspective on these castings and the relationships of one character to another as a method for determining whether these castings serve. To simply assume the scripted role is to act unconsciously. A striking example is presented in the character of the Teacher, who in the crisis story, is cast at times as villain. In the images of the crisis the politician is all action and the teacher is reactive, sidestepping issues by closing the door, running up a tree, passing out the gruel, or leaving the child as victim exposed. Some will debate the closing of the door as protection of the child, others may claim the doling out of the gruel is feeding the child. Regardless, the teacher through his own story presents himself as the political activist and Campbell (1949) would define his role as hero, for after his series of trials he comes home to give of himself. The Teacher comes to terms with his past and utilizes his experience as a call into action as a union representative and a political activist, furthering the cause of future teachers. He takes on the role of his economics professor in the march for freedom, he calls, “Come join us,” to the new teachers looking on.

Beware, where there are heroes there may be villains lurking nearby, and those of us who cast ourselves as heroes must be aware, we may be creating parts we are not prepared to play! A good story has a variety of roles; certain characters are dependent, some adversaries and others are companions. While great to read, these roles can be troublesome in life. In the context of the interviews, the teacher struggled with whether or not he should support the teacher union. The union was the focus for the publics’ lack of
confidence in teachers and he worried that unions had been given too much power. The federation’s dependency on the Teacher and the Teacher on the federation can create tensions when the power relationships are not equal or when the individual does not support the system. Within dependent relationships the question of voice is difficult and silencing is typical. When the opposition party becomes dependent on votes of teachers what gets silenced? The election results were interesting to say the least in light of the characters’ lack of support of the Critic’s position. Only the Teacher clearly supported the ideas presented by the opposition party. The others, the Board Chair, Principal, Associate Director, Ministry Official, and Parent either ignored or disagreed with the position of the opposition. Disappointing for the teacher may be the idea that he stands alone in his thinking about education and in his vote for a government. He may also be disappointed to find that those he works with have a very different perspective on what is happening and should be happening in education. The Student in this story draws my empathy, for she appears as subject to the ebb and flows of educational reform with very little opportunity to voice an opinion and the very most to lose. While characters looked for the local issues they did not read them in her presentation and yet she is literally affected by the actions of politicians and the failure of others to respond. She should be the raison d’etre for education. Is she not?

Certain types of stories or perspectives seemed more accepted than others in the culture of education and lines are drawn between those who prefer stability narratives and those who prefer progressive narratives and those who prefer regressive narratives. The Parent’s perspective, if labelled as conspiracy theory, allows us to classify and put it off without examining it. These may be the tidy tales we tell ourselves, when we pretend that it isn’t so (LeGuin, 1989).
Learning the Ropes

So where am I in this story? Right smack in the middle, as a principal in a small town school. As principal of school slated for closure, this has been a year of learning the ropes. I have learned about accommodation reviews, funding formulas, and angry parents. I have dealt with election promises, ministry textbook and science orders, collective agreements and negotiations, and announcements calling for the testing of teachers, participated in sessions on secondary school reform and new curriculum, suspended students, and had suspensions challenged and appealed by disgruntled parents.

The aim of a mass movement is to infect the people with a malady, and then offer the movement as a cure.

(Hoffer, 1951)

Some will read this dissertation hoping to find answers to current educational dilemmas, hoping to find the happily ever after ending in the narratives of educational characters. They are not here and the tragedy in this story would be to find them. My purpose has been to inquire, to understand and to report on what is—to gain an objective perspective on what appears as a subjective reality.
Appendix A
Letter of Information

The Mything Link

My name is Sharon Speir and I am a Ph.D. student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. I am conducting research into the “current crisis in education” as a story and interviewing the different characters who have a role to play in this story to gain an understanding of the different perspectives. I would like to invite you to participate in this research.

The aim of this research is to investigate the potentiality that lies in using story structures as tools for gaining an objective perspective on subjective experience.

The goal is to have a representative from each of the following roles: a teacher, principal, parent, student, trustee, board representative, local politician, and ministry representative. Information for this research will be collected from a series of three interviews, each approximately one and a half hour(s) in length. Each of the eight participants will meet individually with the researcher to tell and discuss their version of the “crisis in education” story. These interviews will be audio taped with permission from participants.

In the first interview participants will tell their story. In the second interview, the story will be reviewed and clarified. Following the collection of these stories, I will write a “fictionalized” story that blends each of the participants’ perspectives. In the third interview, I will share my characterization of the story from the research perspective and provide an opportunity for each participant to read and respond to it. Participants will be asked to respond to the research questions: Can I, as a character in an educational story, decipher and decode my own personal story, as well, as the larger socio-political story I act within? Have I gained an objective perspective of my subjective experience?

Anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor specific information that could identify you will be used. The tapes and notes will be secured in safe storage. After three years all tapes and notes will be destroyed.

Participants who choose to participate in this research may withdraw at any time and may decline to answer any questions.

Any additional question may be directed to:

Sharon B. Speir
214-48 Brunswick Street,
Stratford, Ont. N5A 3L8
519-271-6733
I have read and understand the Letter of Information relating to the above titled project and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without incurring a penalty of any kind, that I may decline to answer any specific questions should I choose to do so, and that the information collected is for research purposes only.

I consent to participate in this study.

Name (please print)

__________________________   ____________________
Signature                      Date
Appendix C: Letter of Information re: The Mything Link
District School Board

Dear Executive Committee,

My name is Sharon Speir and I am a Ph.D. student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto in the department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. I am conducting research into the “current crisis in education” as a story and interviewing the different characters who have a role to play in this story to gain an understanding of the different perspectives. I would like your approval to locate this study in this district.

The aim of this research is to investigate the potentiality that lies in using story structures as tools for gaining an objective perspective on subjective experience.

The local situation will provide the setting and context for the research. Artifacts such as flyers, surveys prepared and distributed by parent groups, board minutes and board reports, local newspaper reports and letters to the editor, as well as knowledge gleaned through personal observations and conversations, will be considered sources of data for creating the background information on the particular “crisis” to be studied.

Information for this research will be collected from a series of three interviews of approximately, each approximately one and a half hours in length, in which participants will meet with the researcher individually and describe their perspective on the “crisis in education” story. The goal is to have a representative from each of the following roles: a teacher, principal, parent, student, trustee, board representative, local politician, and ministry representative. These interviews will be audio taped with permission from participants.

In the first interview, participants will tell their story. In the second interview, the story will be reviewed and clarified. Following the collection of these stories, I will write a “fictionalized” story that blends each of the participants’ perspectives. In the third interview, I will share my characterization of this story from the research perspective and provide an opportunity for each of the participants to read and respond to it. Participants will be asked to respond to the research question: Can I, as a character in an educational story, decipher and decode my own personal story, as well as the larger socio-political story I act within? Have I gained an objective perspective of my subjective experience?

Anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved. The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither names nor specific information that could identify participants will be used. The tapes and notes will be secured in safe storage. After three years all tapes and notes will be destroyed.

Participants who choose to participate in this research may withdraw at any time and may decline to answer any questions.
Any additional question may be directed to: Sharon B. Speir
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