Refuting humanistic educational theory: towards a critical theory approach to quality of education

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Abstract

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Recent years of educational planning and policy have seen a marked shift towards promoting quality of education. Scholars, policy-makers and practitioners have shown increasing interest in defining and assessing what makes learning relevant to the needs of individual students and wider society as well as effective in teaching enduring competence of literacy, numeracy and other basic skills. Teachers have rarely been included in the process of crafting such frameworks and the literature has largely ignored class analysis, though social class is a significant social division and determinant of educational access, experience and achievement. In this study, principals and teachers working in different class contexts were interviewed about their ideas and experiences of QoE using the Delors Report learning pillars as a guiding framework. Responses showed clear differences in implementation and conceptualization of student potential and needs depending on educators' academic and occupational expectations of social class. Interview data was analyzed using a critical theory perspective, an approach that recognizes and analyzes class conflict and struggle in education. Jean Anyon's work on classed stratification of knowledge is particularly useful in framing this analysis. Critical theory validates and responds to interviewees' articulated goals of education, which were outlined in respondents' humanistic educational perspectives but not meaningfully tackled.

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First I want to pay respect and recognize that the land upon which I took my classes and hid in my office to write this thesis at Concordia University is the traditional territory of First Nations peoples. This land was taken from peoples like the Saint Lawrence Iroquoians and the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) to be paved as a site of learning Western epistemologies. I want to recognize the opportunities I have had at Concordia University but also acknowledge that it sits on occupied land.

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Dedication

This is for Alexander Cherney, my late grandfather and original Cherney lifelong learner (and outdoorsman, artist, volunteer, joker, reader, cocktail maker, social butterfly…). My focus, motivation, interest and love of learning are entirely his legacy. He was the total embodiment of the Renaissance man and I strive to be at least half the learner and teacher he was.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

One of the recent interests to scholars, policy-makers and practitioners in educational theory and practice is quality of education (QoE), or in other words how skills, knowledge, values and attitudes should be conceptualized and expressed in order to reflect society, economy, culture and politics. The literature in the field has not generally included teachers in shaping such frameworks nor has it adequately reflected how social class impacts and experiences society, economy, culture and politics or the education system they have produced.

In this study, principals and teachers working in different class contexts were interviewed about their opinions, ideas, experiences and attitudes regarding QoE, which showed markedly classed differences in implementations and conceptualization of students' potential and needs. This research contributes to the literature by specifically validating a qualitative approach, including educators' own perspectives and recognizing a distinction between QoE in industrialized countries and developing nations.

Approaches to study issues and questions related to QoE have thus far taken quantitative approaches. While quantitative measure outputs such as enrolment rates, retention rates, graduation rates and literacy rates give some indication of accessibility to education, they say little of the quality. Furthermore, such measures fail to reflect the impact education has on social, emotional, moral, and political character of individuals and communities. According to critical and feminist theorists and pedagogues, education should not only aim to equip students with the necessary skills and abilities for the workforce, but also enhance love, power and empowerment, happiness, identity, sustainability, fun and freedom (Apple, 2008; Elenes, 1997; Freire, 1996; Gruenewald, 2003a; hooks, 1994; Noddings, 2003; Shor, 1996; Sobel, 2008)

Secondly, most of the research and theory on QoE has concentrated on developing nation contexts, which cannot meaningfully inform education reform in Canada as industrialized countries have their own standards and expectations of QoE based on their economies, resources, and long standing social legacies and narratives of education. Nonetheless, the global discursive shift to prioritize quality is a well-needed opportunity for Canadians to consider what QoE means to them. In order to meaningfully assess QoE, we are in need of a more localized understanding of what QoE actually entails, including not only educational outcomes but also daily experiences, processes and practices at school.

Third, teachers have not adequately been included in shaping dominant narratives of QoE. Defining QoE necessitates diagnosing key stakeholders and beneficiaries, asking, "QoE for *whom*?" and "*whose* ends should be valued in planning and implementing curricular, pedagogical and evaluative practices and policies?" It is peculiar that teachers have rarely been included in such discussion as they are the main social actors in the dissemination and execution of educational policy and practice. While the private sector, state and family have vested interests in each student's economic and occupational futures, teachers are primarily concerned with the child in his or her own right. In this study, teachers felt that while QoE should anticipate the requisite skills and knowledges students will need in the future, QoE must, above all else, meet the present and existing needs of youth. They did not see this reflected in dominant narratives of QoE. Sir Ken Robinson has laughed, "If you think of it, children starting school this year will be retiring in 2065. Nobody has a clue, despite all the expertise that's been on parade for the past four days, what the world will look like in five years' time. And yet we're meant to be educating them for it" (Robinson, 2006). Nonetheless, the murky future is shaped by political and economic elites whose policies and practices in education aim to preserve their advantage in

power relations of race, gender, class and other social divisions.

It can be difficult for the Canadian public to criticize the education system, protected by the comfortable narratives of Western democracy and meritocracy, but it is important to reflect how QoE is impacted by the glaring neoliberal agenda in the curricula, pedagogies and evaluation schemas of Canadian schools. Like income security programs, health care and other social services once central to the welfare state, public education in Canada has suffered massive budget cuts in order to promote deficit reduction, economic growth and international competitiveness. In the 1990s, when the federal government cut $5 billion from transfer payments to provinces for education, many provinces even created tax credits to encourage families to send children to private school. Public education has largely been privatized or downloaded to communities, yet still rigidly controlled by the government's new public management (Kelly & Caputo, 2011). Any efforts to understand QoE must consider, unpack, and analyze the curricular, pedagogical and evaluative mechanisms and expectations that are normalized as tactics for social control.

In order to meet the needs of students, a sociological imagination is necessary to locate student experiences, attitudes, challenges and strengths in a broader social context. This speaks to another gap in the literature that demands attention. At present, work on QoE shows very little regard for the nuance and politics of power relations in what is and what is not considered QoE. Drawing attention and advocating the theoretical perspectives of critical theorists like Michael Apple, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, Kincheloe (2004) has argued, "the dominant culture's conversation about education simply ignores questions of power and justice in the development of educational policy and classroom practice" (p.99). In particular, the literature on QoE has largely ignored class analysis. This oversight is problematic as socio-economic class remains as

palpably organized, determined and perceived in lived experience as ever. Though criticisms of class analysis have been prolific since the twentieth century, persuasive defenders have argued for the continued relevance and importance of this approach, whether in Neo-Marxist, Neo-Weberian, Neo-Durkheimian or Bourdeusian traditions for example. In order to validate teachers' perspectives on QoE as well as provide a class analysis, I will argue that QoE should be planned and assessed from a critical theory perspective, which better addresses teachers concerns and goals than the humanistic education approach interviewees used to articulate ideas and opinions.

1.1 Roadmap

My introduction presents the research questions, methods and limitations concerning this study of teachers' conceptions of QoE. My literature review will then outline two dominant frameworks for thinking about education and society. The first, the functionalist model, dominates narratives in both policy and public discourse and the second, the humanistic perspective, dominated and guided discussion with my interview participants and, in their view, most of their colleagues. I will show how neither the functionalist model nor the humanistic model provides for students' social, moral and emotional well-being in larger contexts of social justice and human dignity. Instead, an excessive neoliberal fixation on individualization removes youth from their roles in community, nature, history and culture. This inhibits students' ability to identify oppression and act for meaningful social change. In my conceptual framework chapter, I propose a third approach to education and society, an alternative that works towards the emancipation of both individual and community: critical pedagogy. I will argue that while critical pedagogy deviates from interviewees'

stated humanistic orientations, it validates and privileges educators' experiences and ideas because it aims to meet the goals articulated by interviewees. Interviews successfully identify significant problems in the education system but erroneously identify humanistic education as the remedy. In my findings and discussion I show how teachers conceive of education both in practice and as an ideal, identifying some dangers of a humanistic perspective and introducing the strengths of a critical pedagogy approach. Teachers' ideas and feelings about education and students, which guide practice and policy, reproduce cultural, occupational and economic dimensions of social class. I have used the 1996 Delors Report learning pillars (*learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together)* to categorize and describe findings as teachers found these pillars a useful descriptive framework for identifying, planning, and assessing QoE. Noting the lack of class analysis in these learning pillars, which fails to recognize how educational practices and needs differ by social class, I have interpreted data in the context of Jean Anyon's theory of classed stratification of knowledge. In other words, how does what students learn how to *know, do, be* and *live together* reflect social, cultural and political conceptions of social class and reproduce particular inequalities of social class? Finally, reflecting on the data at large, I conclude contemplating interviewees' general conception of QoE, being *relevant* education, in which relevance is dictated by student need in professional and personal life according to social class.

1.2 Research Questions

The chief objective of this study is to determine how educators across different class contexts in Montreal, Quebec define quality of education. To establish such conclusions, other questions that guide this research are:

- What is the purpose of education? What does "good" education, measured in terms of quality (of education), look like?
- In quality education, what constitutes teacher success (input) and student success (output)?
- How are educators' conceptions of quality of education consistent or divergent from the pedagogical, evaluative and curricular philosophies and practices that currently exist in their classrooms and in their schools?
- How are educators' conceptions of quality of education linked to broader social, political, economic and cultural realities of their school's and students' socioeconomic class backgrounds?

1.3 Methods

This study aims to uncover educators' ideas, opinions, perceptions and concerns about QoE in different urban class milieus through semi-structured interviews with educators at a working class, middle class and upper class school in Montreal, Quebec. To preserve anonymity, I assigned pseudonyms to participating teachers, principals and their schools. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews, lasting between 30 and 130 minutes, yielded rich qualitative data. The interactive nature of this synchronous communication of time and place allowed me as the researcher to make deviations from the interview guide not only based on topics brought up by interviewees, but also social cues such as vocal intonation and body language. My interview guide is attached in Appendix A.

1.4 Sample and Recruitment

The sample for the study consists of 13 educators working at 3 different schools. Hereafter, the working class school is known as Mist High School, the middle class school is known as Ray Academy and the affluent class school is known as Ella Hall. Participants included 3 principals, 9 eleventh grade teachers and 1 integration aide worker[1]. I recruited three principals through personal e-mail and telephone correspondence who then agreed to circulate information about my research and encourage teachers to participate. I was put in touch with the first three teachers who indicated interest at each school and met them in their classrooms to conduct the interview.

Grade 11 teachers were selected because their students are nearing graduation, at which time they are formally and informally assessed by teachers as being either successful or unsuccessful in their identities and performances as students. The question is, according to educators, what do such identities and performances entail and exclude as results of QoE? In determining what teachers believe constitute QoE, this study will also investigate how teachers feel about the QoE at their own schools and uncover efforts they make at elevating or compensating for QoE using various pedagogical, curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular and evaluative strategies.

Principals were also interviewed in order to capture the educational philosophy guiding the school's administrative team and school at large. Though teaching philosophies that guide individual classrooms are hugely influential, the power administration has to shape school culture, policy and practices is significant. Many interviewed teachers communicated the

[1] Preliminary data analysis indicated that integration aides are important influences on educational processes and practices at Mist and therefore I also interviewed a Mist integration aide. This position is unique to schools like Mist, where there are disproportionately more "coded" students in need of extra help.

influence they felt their principal has on staff morale, goal setting and organization. The literature confirms that principals have immense influence on how QoE is expressed, articulated and achieved in the school through their influence on teacher efficacy (Clifford, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Fetters, 2012; Walker & Slear, 2011), job satisfaction and retention (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011) as well as student achievement and learning (Clifford et al., 2012; Gregory, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013; Silva, White, & Yoshida, 2011; Soehner & Ryan, 2011). Interviewing principals helped me understand how QoE is conceptualized in the school, but also how this conception may or may not vary between teachers and administration. Finally, the principal of Ray Academy, Mr. Fars, was the principal at Mist High School not too long ago and was able to share with me what he saw as important differences between the education at both schools, which was a huge asset.

I firmly reject the default subject-object distinction made in positivist research methods, which trace rigid boundaries between the knower and the known, situating research participants as an object to be studied *about* rather than a subject to research *with* (Midgley, Danaher, & Baguley, 2013). I saw the interviewees as actively helping me understand and build a narrative – *their* narrative – rather than merely submitting data to be interpreted and analyzed by a higher authority in knowledge, the researcher. One of the major gaps in the literature on QoE is a lack of teachers' input and it is imperative that teachers' experiences and ideas be privileged. My role as a researcher has merely been to record, connect and interpret educators' opinions and insights in order to associate and situate data in larger political, social and economic structures, especially relative to social class[2]. The educators offered thoughtful, complex and political readings of their work with learning materials, students, colleagues and the institution at large. Though some

[2] Class refers to social class, not the classroom

interviewees were initially stressed to meet during the busy exam season, almost every interviewee afterwards expressed that they were pleased to have discovered and reflected on existential, social, and cultural challenges they face because as one respondent told me, "a lot of the questions you're asking me, I can't tell you I already have the answers in my head" (Mr. Lane) and they enjoyed exploring them out loud. They were not accustomed to so consciously and methodically questioning the implications of their work and making their everyday practices such an important subject of inquiry. The interview gave an opportunity to cognitively distance themselves and deliberately reflect on familiar routines, forms of interactions and power relationships. All of the interviews were excited to explore and explain their own perspectives, interpretations and questions about the situations, strategies, processes and relationships involved in secondary education. Following is the complete list of my interviewees:

Mist High School (MHS) (working class)	Ray Academy (RA) (middle class)	Ella Hall (EH) (affluent class)
- Mr. Lane, principal -Mr. Jordan, IB English teacher -Ms. Briant, Core/Immersion English teacher and IT director - Ms. Elias, Core/Immersion English teacher -Mr. Night, Integration Aid - (Mr. Fars), Principal at Mist for 6 years before moving to Ray Academy	- Mr. Fars, principal - Mr. Martin, English teacher, Leadership teacher - Mr. Ryan, Math teacher, Leadership teacher - Mr. Teith, English teacher and Drama	- Ms. Garrity, principal - Ms. Pace, Math teacher - Ms. Everett, IT director - Ms. Morin, history teacher and academic advisor

Class climate of each school was initially determined by annual average income of parents, average maternal educational attainment and social reputation (Boyer & Laberge, 2008). Although household income and educational attainment are well-accepted proxies for indicating class (Cowan et al., 2012), interview data was used to confirm original impressions of each school.

Mist High School is a public school in a very poor Montreal neighborhood. Mist is part of the New Approaches, New Solutions program (NANS), a provincial intervention strategy for schools in underprivileged social and economic conditions, which increase drop-out rates, behavioural problems and problems in academic performance. Mist rates 9/10 on the poverty index scale, one of the poorest across NANS schools, but teachers commented that the biggest obstacle to student success was not their family's poverty, but lack of education. Underfunded and under-resourced, the school struggles to meet the needs of their students, streamed in four programs. A small group of students engage in advanced academics through the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and an even smaller group of between 15 to 20 students are in the Work Orientated Training Pathway (WOTP), where students who fail Grade 7 and 8 core subjects are instead taught basic literacy and numeracy and a semiskilled trade. Most students however are in the English Core program, not expected to write the enriched Ministry French exam before graduating, or the French Immersion program in which students aim to be certified bilingual. The student body has a lot of diversity in race, class, ethnicity and religion. In 2008, the school was ranked 100 out of 126 regional schools, the success rate was 73.2%, the average parental income was $59,610 and the average maternal schooling was 12.6 years (Boyer & Laberge, 2008).

Ray Academy is a public school located in an on-island suburb of Montreal. The neighborhood is largely residential, with middle and professional class residents enjoy the space because they can afford larger houses than downtown, but there is some economic activity in retail, manufacturing and a hospital for example. The principal said he "wouldn't call it a community school for two reasons. One, it has 22 school buses so kids come from all over the place. It's also a magnet school" (Mr. Fars). The school has partial selection of its students as

most are enrolled in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program for which they must write an entrance exam. There is some socioeconomic diversity among students but little racial diversity; most at white. In 2008, Ray Academy was ranked 42 out of 126 regional schools, the success rate was 91.6%, the average parental income was $129,867 and the average maternal schooling was 14 years (Boyer & Laberge, 2008).

Ella Hall is an all-girls private school located in one of the most affluent neighborhoods in not only Montreal, but also Canada (The Huffington Post, 2014). The area is mostly residential, though not far from downtown, and home to many schools and parks as well as a public arena, pool and tennis court. Ella Hall has a junior, middle, and senior school and many students, "lifers" (Ms. Pace), attend from kindergarten to Grade 11. There is very little diversity in the student body. In 2008, Ella Hall was ranked 6 out of 126 regional schools, the success rate was 99.6%, the average parental income $270 693 and the average maternal schooling was 15.3 years (Boyer & Laberge, 2008).

There are clear implications and consequences of the budgetary differences between private and public schools, especially those in poor neighborhoods. At Mist, I heard two teachers discussing the money allocated to photocopy worksheets and stencils. The unit of analysis in this conversation was cents and meanwhile, Ella Hall's substantial budget based on donors and high tuition affords them a 3D printer, robotics lab, recording studio and other such facilities. Both parents and alumni are very generous donors. The principal shared that parents donated $84,000 of a $123,000 budget for professional development. Meanwhile, as one Mist teacher explained, professional development is one of the first things cut from public school budgets. There were other surprising differences, particularly between Mist and Ella. Stepping foot inside the school, Ella Hall smelled like freshly baked cookies. Indeed, kitchen staff makes cookies for students at

recess, whose wonderful smell "right out of the oven" (Ms. Morin) wafted through the hallways. In stark contrast, walking the Mist hallways with Mr. Night, a wandering student refused to reenter class because "sir, it smells like ass!"

1.5 Limitations

A limitation with which researchers must always preoccupy themselves, is their own subjectivity. I have a certain emotional proximity to the schools studied as, born and raised in Montreal, I grew up meeting students who attended these schools and learning particular reputations of these schools for example. I attended Ella Hall for the latter half of high school and thus have my own biases, both positive and negative, about this school. In qualitative research I cannot reduce this subjectivity, but I can identify it and constantly reflect on its impact. In this study, I believe I have amassed, described and interpreted data fairly objectively.

Another discernible limitation of the study is a social desirability bias, considered by Mr. Jordan (MHS) when he reflected, "it's funny I have this weird notion where I hope I don't portray this school in a bad light. That just comes through a point of pride for where I work". Yet, teachers were excited to participate in research about their work and wanted their true feelings to be represented. They were very honest about their criticisms and concerns of the system. Ms. Briant (MHS) wondered, "how am I going to get this message out? I mean, maybe through you!" and Mr. Jordan said "what would be the point of sugar coating things for an academic exercise, then why would I do that?" Another limitation was although Ella Hall teachers felt their thoughts on the topic would not change in a co-ed school, teachers necessarily reflected on QoE based on their experience, which was chiefly in single-sex education. Surely gender was a variable in their answers and it is conceivable that respondents would have interviewed differently had they been teaching boys and girls.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

In recent years educators, policymakers and scholars have become increasingly concerned with QoE. Though discussions of QoE are typically premised on a child's right to education, educational agendas tend to prioritize corporate and state interests rather than the child's. Sayed & Ahmed (2015) locates the journey to define QoE as part of a larger quality movement in Western production and management and, as such, are another step in the commodification of education, which qualifies and measures educational services like any other marketed product or service. UNESCO recently joined the global conversation after disheartening findings revealed in the *2013/14 EFA Global Monitoring Report,* which showed that 250 million children around the world have not learned the basics in literacy, numeracy and essential life-skills despite 130 million of them being in school for at least four years (UNESCO, 2014). Despite ubiquitous discussion of the term, there exists little consensus among policymakers, educators or scholars on how QoE can be defined, operationalized, measured or even identified in schools. In fact, though many have proposed rubrics for assessing QoE, there has been little success in providing a robust evaluative schema. Often lacking is a precision of what elements are to be evaluated and to what standard. Most frameworks of QoE rely on at least one of the definitions for quality proposed by Harvey and Green (1993), who argue that quality can be understood as fitness for purpose, value for money, excellence, reliability/consistency or transformation. Definitions reflect a commitment to a particular theoretical lens and given the same education system to assess, a critical pedagogue or theorist would certainly not interpret practices and processes the same way a functionalist would.

In the 2005 EFA Global Monitoring Report series, UNESCO published "Education For

All: the Quality Imperative" (2004), reviewing QoE from humanist, behaviourist, critical, indigenous and adult education backgrounds. Despite the boasted focus on quality, QoE remains an elusive and slippery term, situated in oscillating frameworks that identify and emphasize different levels and units of analysis like learners, environment, content, processes and outcomes. Although document authors have identified what parts of education are important, they have given no meaningful indication of their function or standards of evaluation. QoE cannot simply be recognized for the very existence of such parts. What is clear however is that these elements can be added in an equation to generate quality. This type of input-output model has been criticized for lacking context and ignoring pedagogy. Such elements should be considered relationally or dimensionally rather than linearly (Alexander, 2008; Sayed & Ahmed, 2015). The nearly 500-page document also fails to reconcile the importance of varied outcomes like cognitive development, emotional development, and societal impact.

It is dangerous to officially prioritize quality as an educational objective without first defining the term and establishing tools to measure progress. Without research or methodological basis, discursive and conceptual frameworks of quality are determined ad-hoc based on the political and ideological currents of state interests, defined and redefined based market demands (Alexander, 2008; Sayed & Ahmed, 2015). In "the Quality Imperative" and later policy texts, UNESCO references the social goals of the EFA Dakar Goals and Millennium Development Goals, which bolster a vision of holistic education, but ultimately settles on a very academic-definition of QoE. Policy texts borrow language and indicators from World Bank research and policy on education, promoting measurability and economic impact above all else. In the Muscat Agreement, outlining post 2015 global education goals, UNESCO commits to "literacy and numeracy" as education goals, discarding the "other basic skills" that had always been included

in previous iterations of this objective. In 1988, UNESCO had confirmed the international, cultural and humanistic importance of education in ‘‘recognition of the fundamental aspirations of every individual and every human community to a solid and secure peace’’ (as cited by de Morentin & Ignacio, 2011, p. 598), discourse has almost entirely shifted to emphasize measurement-driven, outcome-based efforts at QoE. This reflects World Bank literature, which has only ever pointed to literacy and numeracy as important indicators of learning (de Morentin & Ignacio, 2011; Sayed & Ahmed, 2015).

With few modern contributions to the field, the most comprehensive effort at conceptualizing QoE remains the learning pillars outlined in 1996 *The Delors Report*, which was particularly influential in developing the concept of life skills and establishing the importance of learning such skills in school (Tawil & Cougoureux, 2013). The Delors Report outlines four pillars of education:

- *learning to know*, which refers to codified or factual knowledge, literacy and numeracy as well as skills that facilitate learning such as communication and critical thinking
- *learning to do*, which denotes the application of knowledge, especially as vocational and technical skill
- *learning to live together*, which addresses understanding the self, family, society and global community
- *learning to be*, which refers to growing individual potential and fulfillment

QoE is assessed based on the fulfillment of these learning goals (International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, Delors, & Unesco, 1996). These four pillars are a useful framework for considering QoE for the balance they strike of specificity and interpretation. They offer educators an idea of what learning in QoE should aim for but also allow educators the

freedom to determine what content constitutes QoE. These pillars may manifest in one context as QoE but in different social, political, cultural and/or economic circumstances, the same education may be irrelevant and of little value to learners. In order to determine what content looks like in *learning to know, to do, to be* and *to live together*, educators employ different theoretical perspectives and value bases.

Two of the most common theoretical approaches to QoE in the literature, both of which came up in interviews, are the functionalist model and the humanistic model. Interviewees were largely critical of the functionalist model, rejecting the perception of success in quantitative markers and the prioritization of societal needs before the individual's. The literature confirms the dangers of such an approach to individual learners and social justice (Gottlieb, 1989; Lin, 2006; McGregor, 2009; Saunders, 2006; Welch, 1985). Teachers instead advocated humanistic approaches to education, wherein the pedagogical implications of non-cognitive factors like student emotions and needs are also considered. Despite interviewees' enthusiasm for this approach, the literature also indicates how this model undermines individual learning outcomes and wider social justice (Kress, Avilés, Taylor, & Winchell, 2011; Lethbridge, 1986; Pearson & Podeschi, 1999; Shaw & Colimore, 1988). The critiques and limitations of the functionalist and humanistic models presented in this chapter prepare readers for a call for critical pedagogy, which as the underlying theoretical framework of analysis and methodology, is presented in the next chapter.

Barrett and Tikly (2010) contend that in order to assess QoE, the evaluative framework applied needs to be guided by an explicitly stated set of values. As the educational processes, materials and consequences of both learning and teaching are profoundly political, a framework for assessing QoE needs to acknowledge the value base from which it is derived. Building this

framework entails articulating the purpose and sometimes nature of education. Barrett and Tikly's own approach to assessing QoE is underpinned by a critical pedagogy value base, which evaluates QoE on the basis of its potential to empower individuals and groups to realize their human, civil and political rights and expand knowledge and skills. Education must originate from local experiences and worldview. Relying on a set of values makes assessing QoE a less ambiguous task. Barrett and Tikly point out that Africa has been increasingly ushered onto the global stage of trade and communication but social players from the continent have not been integrated to the benefit of the masses. Despite participating in an affluent circle of trade partners and state alliances, extreme poverty has doubled in the past few decades. If the goal of education is to contribute to the financial/economic growth of learners and their communities, one may find compelling arguments that education systems in Africa have seen increased QoE, but assessing QoE with a different value base in mind, such as Barrett and Tikly's for example, tells a different story. The value base on which appraisals of QoE is based may change with historical, social, political, economic, cultural and geographic contexts (Barrett & Tikly, 2010).

In other to appropriately utilize the Delors Report learning pillars as a framework for QoE, it is imperative to establish the values on which conclusions are based. What and how students should *know, do, be* and *live together* will vary depending on its interpretation from different theoretical and value backgrounds. The functionalist approach to education, which has traditionally dominated public narratives of education, teaches for *what must be* and *what will be* based on social consensus while a humanistic perspective approaches education as teaching for *what can be* and *be-ing* for the individual. Recently, there has been a marked rhetorical shift among policymakers and practitioners towards humanistic education (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2000), but the underpinning values are still steered by a functionalist perspective.

2.2 The functionalist perspective

A functionalist approach to education, such as that argued by Durkheim (1925/1961) and Parsons (1964), is based on a consensus perspective. School reinforces the dispositions and skills necessary to maintain equilibrium in society by teaching social solidarity, core social values, skills necessary for work and role allocation. Socializing values of achievement, competition and meritocracy and teaching curriculum of literacy, numeracy and IT are equally important parts of schooling. This is the perspective adopted by the World Bank and its associated researchers and writers (Barrett, 2011a, 2011b; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991; World Bank, 2003) as well as by federal, provincial and municipal government bodies, albeit its disguise in public marketing. If quality in this paradigm is conceptualized as "fitness for purpose" (Harvey & Green, 1993), functionalists present the purpose of education as economic growth (e.g. earnings and productivity) and social development (e.g. improved child health and nutrition, reduced fertility and "attitudinal modernity") (Hanushek & Wobmann, n.d.; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991, p. 5).

Functionalist scholars and writers conflate quality with effectiveness, which is then reduced to efficiency or value-for-money (Harvey & Green, 1993). Crombag (1978) argued that QoE refers to the effectiveness of particular teaching methods in producing particular learning outcomes and as such should be explicitly renamed "efficiency of education" (p.389). Functionalists have also spearheaded the school effectiveness movement (Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991), an approach to education reform criticized for painting overly mechanistic views of education and bolstering neoliberal policies and practices (Slee, Weiner, & Tomlinson, 1998; J. Wilson, 2000; Wrigley, 2004). In this paradigm, "failing schools" are blamed for their shortcomings, such as weak administrative leadership for example, rather than structural inequalities that hamper student success (Elliott, 1996). In general, recommendations and

proposals for improving education are linked to measures of institutional cost-efficiency and successful performance on standardized tests. Since the 1990s, responding to criticism, the World Bank has significantly shed school effectiveness theory from its literature and, lacking their support, the movement at large has stalled. Today, the World Bank focuses on QoE as learning outcomes rather than educational inputs and outputs. Moreover, responding to wider criticism after the publication of the Lockheed and Verspoor report (1991), the World Bank has added social goals to their mandate, including increasing accessibility and QoE to disadvantaged groups (Nielsen, 2006). Still, these goals are instrumentalized for wider economic objectives in the popular argument that increasing women's human capital benefits the economy (Tembon & Fort, 2008).

Though functionalist theory influences dominant discourse on education in society, it has been sharply criticized. Conflict theorists have long argued that the education system serves social reproduction through linguistic, economic and cultural means (Bernstein, 1960; Bourdieu, 1973; Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Willis, 1977). Subaltern communities are not represented in either socialization or curriculum promoted by schools. Teaching and normalizing certain ideas, actions and values in school, both in curriculum and hidden curriculum, is a process through which ruling class elite preserve power relations (Anyon, 1980; Apple, 2004; Bourdieu, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 2002; Giroux & Penna, 1979; Lareau & Weininger, 2003; Tzanakis, 2011). Secondly, students who fail to conform to functionalist understandings of success and achievement feel isolated and alienated from society. They form subcultures or force assimilation to cope, having learned notions of belonging and community as intrinsically tied to the values and attitudes taught in school (Lehmann, 2014; Raby, 2012; Willis, 1977). Especially true for working class pupils, Basil Bernstein, among others, has dedicated his life work to "preventing the wastage

of working class educational potential" (Sadovnik, 2001, p. 687). Research also shows that role allocation is not a meritocratic social process and that social divisions such as class, race and gender facilitate and discourage opportunity just as much as skill (Goldthorpe, 2003; Jaeger, 2009; McNamee & Miller, 2009; Sullivan, 2002). Finally, functonalism misinterprets and misrepresents QoE as proponents and officials in policy, accountability and funding rarely include practitioners or students (Alexander, 2008; Carpenter, Weber, & Schugurensky, 2012).

2.3 The humanistic perspective

If the functionalist approach to education teaches children what role they should play in society, then the humanistic approach helps children learn who they are and can become before they choose a role in society. Despite the concept of choice and personal fulfillment, there is still an insisted focus on the roles we assume in society based on a shared sense of social values and human nature. Despite interviewees' insistent rejection of functionalist educational theory, humanistic education borrows from and is rooted in functionalism rather than conflict theory for example, in which critical pedagogy finds its roots. Human motivation is based on human purpose, meaning goals are motivated by efforts to satisfy one's need for shelter, need for friendship, etc. Maslow himself wrote that his theory was partly inspired by functionalist traditions like those of John Dewey and William James (Maslow, 1943). Humanistic theory borrows a language of progress and evolution to study the steps of human flourishing and dismisses moral relativism, discouraging those who agitate, deviate or disrupt social order by following a different path. Harman (1983) argues that humanistic psychology boils down to a functionalist framework of ethics, judging human behaviour on its potential and achievement of self-actualization. He takes issue with a morality derived from a humanistic perspective because normative ethical judgments are based on a person's ability to demonstrate purpose. Just as a

"good" butter knife is one that cuts and spreads, a "good" person is one who meets his or her needs as per Maslow's hierarchy, eventually finding self-actualization (Harman, 1983). What of those who cannot meet these needs? What of those who perceive their needs as differing from Maslow's model and who define "flourishing" in other terms? Harman (1983) notes that in the humanistic framework, driven by functionalist logic, actions are not driven by "the agent's actual current concerns" but those he or she "ought to have if the agent is to flourish" (p.320).

Humanistic theory is a collage of input from psychology, sociology and education backgrounds. Carl Rogers is credited with explicitly adapting Maslow's theory to the field of education but John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and Maria Montessori are also significant proponents and contributors of constructivist educational frameworks that underlie humanistic education. The student, once considered passively receiving informational input from teachers in order to memorize and regurgitate official knowledge, is recast as an active and dynamic role. They engage in educational meaning-making and the construction of knowledge, largely based on lived experience (Barrett & Tikly, 2010; Ultanir, 2012). This educational approach assumes the essential good of human nature, fundamental autonomy of human behaviour, equality and individuality of each human and social construction of social life by each individual. Accordingly, there can only be relativist interpretations of QoE. Still, QoE refers to conditions that situates the teacher as facilitator of knowledge and learner as meaning-maker; commits to steady feedback and evaluation from the teacher, peers and self in order to reflect, develop and deepen knowledge; and embraces individual learning styles and needs, rejecting standardized curricula and evaluation (UNESCO, 2004).

One of the chief criticisms of humanistic education is its complete focus on the individual and inattention to community needs. Curiously, this has not always been true of proposed

models, especially in the literature on QoE. In C.E Beeby's landmark text, *The Quality of Education in Developing Countries* (1966), the primacy of human capital theorists' statistical analyses are rejected and Beeby proposed a three-tier qualitative framework analyzing hard-outcomes of classroom dynamics, economic consequence on the labour market and consistency with the goals of wider society. While there is not yet anything significant in this criteria about the learner's personal development, emotions or circumstances, Beeby was preoccupied with constructivist approaches to education and associated the highest level of QoE with problem solving, creativity, student-centered learning, positive discipline and consideration of not only the intellectual but also emotional and aesthetic life (Barrett, Chawla-Duggan, Lowe, Nikel & Ukpo, 2006; Guthrie, 1980). This text was a major influence on *Questions of Quality* (1990), in which Hugh Hawes and David Stephens more explicitly shifted focus to context and agency, which is so central in a humanistic perspective (Hawes & Stephens, 1990). For Hawes and Stephens, education should aim to contribute to the community's social and economic needs as well as promote "the exploration of new ideas, the pursuit of excellence and the encouragement of creativity" in the individual learner (Stephens, 1990, p. 144). This model shows hints of critical theory, promoting respect for learners' rights as citizens, teaching for positive change in society and inclusion of marginalized learners (Stephens, 2003). Critical theorists go further however, not only focused on the accessibility of education to marginalized learners but the inclusion of their voices and stories in education in general (Sayed & Ahmed, 2015). In other words, it is not enough to ensure girls can attend school. Curriculum and pedagogy must reflect the female's experience and epistemology. Beeby and Hawes and Stephens' are nonetheless more radical than today's popular model of humanistic education, which relies almost exclusively on Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers inspired traditions. While scholars like Beeby,

Hawes and Stephens advocated equally for the importance of societal goals and relevance as they did personal development and growth, this has been disregarded in popular humanistic models today.

In its inception, humanistic education was radical in its departure from functionalist pedagogical traditions and religious roots of education. It challenged the assumption that learners cannot make meaning for themselves, thus rejecting the authoritative position of the teacher and didactic pedagogies. Though many have touted the resounding success of democratic and participative education, Marxist and postmodern scholars have problematized humanistic educational approaches, questioning the implications of student-centered learning as process and self-actualization as product. In short, "while giving rise to radical-sounding change strategies, [humanistic education] can thus be seen to be covertly conservative" (Sashkin, 1977).

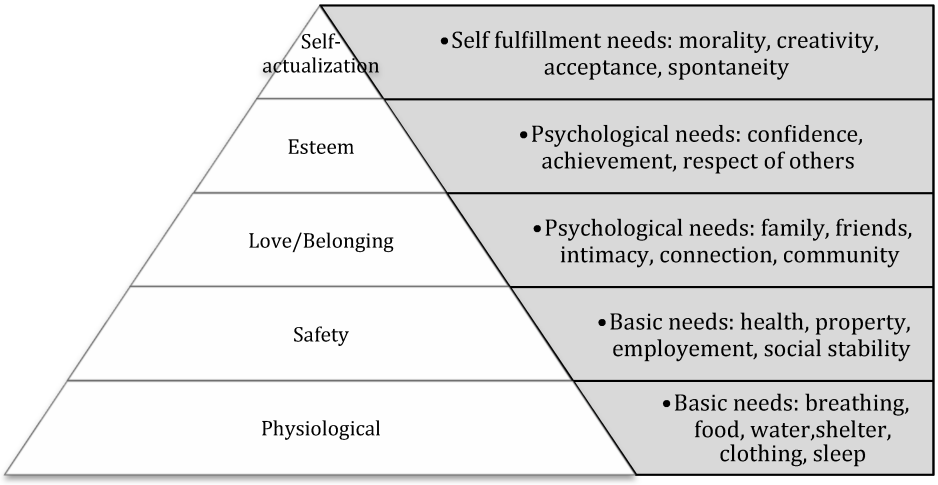
Critics of student-centered learning in humanistic education applaud the championship of human emotion and need in education. However, they identify cognitive and embodied outcomes in the child that reproduce existing power relations that subordinate student to teacher and youth to adult. The same dynamic underlies the oppression to which learners are subjected in their identities of race, sexuality, gender, religion, class and other social divisions. Some scholars have questioned whether in fact student-centered learning sheds its propensity of legitimation by some few privileged knowers, and expands accessibility of knowledge, as it claims to do. First, perspectives will only be vocalized if they are represented in the classroom, in which often the most marginalized communities are not. Second, learner-centered learning narrows the act of knowing to specific social locations in truth claims such as "as a man…" and "as a Canadian…", which erect solid borders around identity and selfhood. Asserting one's voice from the confines of very specific metaphysical boundaries runs the risk of demarcating students entirely from the

community of learners, severing knower's ability to speak for and with the group (Harold, 1972; Masouleh & Jooneghani, 2012; Maton, 2000). Or, encouraged to learn and act on "a value system derived from his specific circumstances" (Harold, 1972, p.50), they may not even empathize, recognize or want to advocate for others. Furthermore, the promotion of one's own voice as expert in its distinction and lived experience can act to invalidate other voices regardless of educational value or harm (Masouleh & Jooneghani, 2012; Maton, 2000). Some argue that students are too young to identify and declare such identities, which can shackle or confuse them. There is pressure put on students to find out "who they are" in order to validate their ideas and thoughts (Harold, 1972). Finally, student-centered approach to learning can entirely fragment pedagogic discourse. Learners are not equipped to construct meaning using different disciplinary toolkits, articulating knowledge for example in frameworks of sociology versus history or social psychology. Though individual perspectives are helpful, learner-centered learning relinquishes the social in favour of the autobiographical. Student-centered teaching can also damage learning outcomes (Maton, 2000; Mckenna, 2013).

Student-centered learning in humanistic education does not challenge social conditions and relations unless the student brings such questions and concerns into the classroom. A student that has only known privilege will situate their learning in experiences of privilege and reproduce such conditions. A student that has known subordination and has internationalized oppression will situate their learning in self-hate and obedient conformity. A student will never know the perspective of learners outside the classroom, such as the Aboriginal child educated in reserve schools. In critical pedagogy, teaching is student-centered but learning is actively encouraged through the eyes of the disenfranchised and disempowered. Humanistic educators argue that school should provide holistic education to promote sound judgment, noble character and general

knowledge. Teachers locate human dignity, happiness and potential in the individual and human agency is considered the solution to human suffering. Humanistic education fails to evaluate how social structures, systems and institutions limit agential capacity and performance. Anthropocentrism assumes that, with humanity as the central element and orchestrator of existence, humans have the same experience of the world. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (see fig. 1) not only assumes the environment of an individualistic culture rather than a collectivist culture, but assumes that needs are universal although it is well documented that individuals experience need differently based on gender, race or class for example. A person's identities and communities to which they belong determine how they experience need (Buss, 1979; Lethbridge, 1986; Pearson & Podeschi, 1999; Shaw & Colimore, 1988).

Fig. 1: *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*



Humanistic education has been criticized as teaching youth excessive individualism. It is certainly positive that students are encouraged to identify their own needs, especially in the expanding global capitalism that encourages prioritizing materialism over subsistence. However, the exaggerated focus on the individual fails to recognize the limits of structure on agency

Moreover, promoting an excessively individualistic society, which in the first place disintegrated communities and families that once cared for one another, alienates and isolates the individual from support systems and allies (Nord, 1977). Buss (1979), who analyzes humanistic theory as liberal ideology, wrote "a theory that predisposes one to focus more on individual freedom and development rather than the larger social reality works in favour of that reality" (p.47). To focus unwaveringly on self-actualization as the primary goal of human existence may ignore the consequences that that achievement may bring to others. The human is to be self-actualized like a resource is to be developed, both with its consequences on the self, others and natural world. The humanistic approach appears to assume that development and improvement for one serves the development and improvement for all, dismissing the inherent domination and exploitation of some that benefit others. Similarly, from postmodern critique, Foucault has argued that the illusion of an essential self or inner human nature is a practice of power, shackling the individual to the expected actions, ideas and attitudes of certain *types* or *kinds* of people. Foucault agrees of course that people change, but rejects notions of progress and growth that classify and hierarchize states and identities of being (Lethbridge, 1986; Pearson & Podeschi, 1999).

Maslow's theory has been compared to a romanticized social Darwinism, an elitist crutch in the illusion of meritocracy, wherein the privileged and powerful are seen as deserving for successfully enacting individual sense of responsibility and agency while those who fail to "self-actualize" have no one to blame but themselves in the ontological framework of exaggerated Maslownian individualism. In Maslow's theory, performances of human potential are literally ranked and depicted in a pyramid. And does the pyramid not infer there is not enough room at the top for everyone? (Buss, 1979). Given the critiques of both functionalist and humanistic theories of education, it is necessary to look outside these popular theories in order to attend to

learners' individual needs while maintaining a focus on social justice, advocacy and activism. To do so, I will argue the importance of a class analysis of QoE. Despite recognition that assessments of QoE should be localized and despite extensive research on the impact of class as one of the greatest economic and cultural partitions between communities, the literature on QoE does little to recognize the influence of class.

Chapter 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In both its impact as economic relations and socio-cultural community, social class is significant in constructing ideas and experiences of education. Without a meaningful incorporation of class, theoretical frameworks of QoE are severely deficient and it is imperative to propose a new theoretical framework within which to understand, plan and assess QoE. The social, economic and political roots and ramifications of class have profound implications for educational experiences and outcomes. Interview data uncovered that teachers saw economic and cultural dimensions of class as important underpinnings of student potential, achievement and limitations as well as school resources and reputation. Given that the goal of this study was to facilitate the creation of a theory for QoE by and for educators, I am going to incorporate class analysis into the investigation of prevailing themes, ideas and opinions articulated by educators themselves. The humanistic approach to education adopted by most teachers in the study perpetuates the very system they criticized. A critical theory approach is better suited to work towards goals of both personal empowerment and social justice.

3.1 Class analysis: confronting the critics

Though once popular in analyzing social relationships, actions and institutions, class has become a contested lens through which to study society. Scholars have agreed at a near consensus on the limitations of classic Marxism in contemporary analysis but its demise has catalyzed heated debates on the fading relevance all traditions of class analysis. Many sociologists have renounced class as an organizing identity in contemporary society, contending it no longer bears political significance in the prediction and analysis of social behaviour, conflict and development (Clark, Lipset, & Rempel, 1993; Davis, 1982; Kingston, 2000; Nisbet, 1959). Some point to growing diversity within class to explain a decreasing significance of class

itself while others contend that an overall higher standard of living has diverted attention from economic to social and cultural divisions (Weakliem & Heath, 1999). The arguments of such works have been well summarized by Nisbet, who wrote, "social class is by now useful in historical sociology, in comparative or folk sociology, but that it is nearly valueless for the clarification of the data of wealth, power, and social status in contemporary United States and much of Western society in general" (1959, p.11). Criticisms from Beck and Giddens' high modernist theories argue that excessive individualization has isolated community members from class culture and identity, rendering social class as an organizing theoretical framework irrelevant. Post-modern and post-structuralist sociologists recognize the total decomposition of a class society and identify individual struggles as supplanting traditional community issues like class. This argument is forcibly clear in the title of Pakulski & Water's *The Death of Class* (1996), which has been often cited the most damning postmodern criticism. Finally, influential critiques have also come from feminist thinkers, beginning in the second wave, who take issue with the analytic prominence assigned to class. Unlike modern, post-modern and post-structuralist scholars, thinkers in this camp do not tend to argue an erosion of class but rather that its centrality in analysis fails to account for other major political, social and economic inequalities, particularly in sex and gender.

One camp of criticisms come from theories of late modernity, especially Giddens' reflexive project of the self and Beck's individualization thesis, that disavow class as no longer foundational to individual identity (Atkinson, 2007a, 2007b). Writers on modernity recognize the disparities inherent in socio-economic status (SES) but reject any notion of social class itself. Social class, like ethnicity or religion, is a social identity and culture based on learned social, mental and physical behaviours and attitudes. On the other hand, SES refers to indicators like

education, income, occupation and even neighborhood, markers of what one *has* rather than who one *is*. Modernists totally uncouple class culture from class location. Certainly, Beck maintains, "the end of social classes is not the end of social inequality, but the beginning of radicalized inequalities" (p.680). According to Beck, class society has been eroded through three stages in late modernity. Processes of individualization, which value individual autonomy over social interconnection and community, alienate the individual from traditional support systems and ties, compelling them discover and decide their own social identities rather than adopt them from their larger communities. As social groups lose their solidarities, they have waning political and cultural influence on how individuals understand both themselves and others. Without such a reference point, inequality is reconceptualized as the personal failures and problems of the individual, rather than outcomes of structures like class. Finally, to cope with such problems, individuals build temporary, contingent socio-political alliances that are created and disbanded based on precise issues and situations. Class analysis is largely irrelevant in studying society as individuals have abandoned "the thinking behind the traditional categories of large group societies – which is to say, classes, estates, and social stratification" (Beck, 1992, p. 88).

Yet, empirical data shows the continued relevance of class consciousness and class formation in party choice, political loyalty, engagement and campaign discourse in industrialized countries (Evans, 2000; van der Waal, Achterberg, & Houtman, 2007). Where class is decoupled from political behaviour, it is still a significant determinant in its consequences. Often, capitalist ideology distracts voters from class-interests and most make decisions based on political beliefs rather than experiences, including economic concerns. For example, working-class voters often believe the government has no right to levy income taxes even though taxes go to helping families like theirs (Lewin, 1991; Schlozman & Verba, 1979). This certainly disrupts class-

caused politics, but the consequences of said politics remain hugely classed. Day (2001) provides another convincing criticism of modernists' work on class, especially in cultural studies where a recent shift from analyses of production to consumption neglects to situate mass culture, media, work and other objects of study in appropriate class context. Day (2001) argues that many modern media scholars research mass culture and meaning-making processes in consumption without confronting the political and ideological conditions of inequality, exploitation and oppression that shape how consumers of different social class backgrounds produce meaning. Savage (1995) identifies this is this is not an oversight, but a deliberate decoupling of consumption practices and class. While this new orientation certainly draws upon class, it largely rejects its traditional centrality in analysis. It is worth noting that these critics identify Theodor Adorno's work in modernity as the exception, masterfully recognizing consumption as a mechanism of social classification and reflection of class (Day, 2001).

Post-modernists and post-structuralists argue that individuals today identify and interact with each other based on moral imperatives and ideological principles called "subject positions", rather than social class (Foley, 1990, p. 9). Contemporary issues cross class boundaries, such as nuclear disarmament, ecological destruction and animal protection. Communities form based on shared subjectivities (Baudrillard, 1993; Derrida, 2002; Featherstone, 2000; Foley, 1990). In postmodern theory, class is considered a relic "inherited if not from the nineteenth, at least from the first half of the twentieth century" and while social identity and community is still a significant analytical interest, as Derrida expressed, "I'm not sure that the concept of class as it's been inherited is the best instrument for those activities" (Derrida, 2002, p. 169). Brittan and Maynard (1984) argue that economistic theory cannot explain patterns of oppression based on nationalism, misogyny or white supremacy and "in no country can a class or economic argument

explain the power of whiteness, the strength of feeling with which it is expressed and the extent to which populations are prepared to go in order for it to be upheld" (p. 50). These authors find social, cultural and political narratives of whiteness, Americanism and patriarchy of particular importance because, after all, capital is managed by specific groups in particular social conditions and relations of power (Brittan & Maynard, 1984). In class analysis, conflicts internal to class are often dismissed and reduced to false consciousness or secondary social subordinations that will be resolved when class conflict has been (Foley 1990). Postmodernist analysis studies social phenomena only in its most localized, specific social conditions, acknowledging its fluidity, subjectivity and constant change. Postmodernists criticize class as an inadequate analytical category because it is static, measuring rigid boundaries of economic capital and allowing little permeability.

However, these arguments address only Marxist operational definitions of class, nominal classifications. They fail to acknowledge how other definitions have extended traditional indicators of class to include cultural and social capital, occupation, education, and social and political power for example. Neo-Marxist, neo-Weberian, neo-Durkheimian, Bourdieusian and other orientations of class analysis provide persuasive arguments on the material, discursive, psychological and behavioural predispositions and dispositions of class and class formation, which have larger implications for social movements, inequality, conflict and politics (Wright, 2005). Moreover, extensive research shows that class communities experience modern global problems such as global warming or animal oppression very differently, though postmodernist critics identify them as crossing class boundaries (Brainard, Jones, & Purvis, 2009; Callinicos, 1990; Hurley, 1995; Sanbonmatsu, 2011; Taylor & Signal, 2011). At the state level, Wallerstein has proposed the world-systems theory in order to specifically expound class in international

relations, arguing that internationally, the relationship between core and periphery states replicates that between the local bourgeoisie and proletarians (Wallerstein, 2002).

Feminist scholars have shown how classical class analysis does not accurately reflect how women experience social class differently than men (Carroll, 2008; Cuneo, 2008; Folbre, 1982; Folbre & Hartmann, 1988; Collins, 2000; Prakash, 1995). Folbre (1982, 1993) has written at length about Marx's failure to bring his model of exploitation and labour into the home. The call for social-political-economic change, or what Engels later calls scientific socialism, is only modeled on the interests of working class men. Smith (1975) contends that the dominant group is much narrower than that which Marx and Engels proposed given that "the class basis of ideology is articulated yet further to a sex basis" (p. 357). Yet, for a long time, Marx and Engels' class theory shaped the conceptions of social relations on which sociologists and other social scientists based their work. In essays collected in *The German Ideology* (1932), Marx and Engels argue that the ruling class preserve power relations through stabilizing ideology that justifies and normalizes them, akin to Gramsci's notion of hegemony or Foucault's discourse, but Smith points out that traditional class analysis contributed to ideology itself in the particular frames and categories of thought, knowledge and analysis it creates. Marx and Engels fail to acknowledge that "mental production" (Smith, 1975, p.355) is distinctly male, with "men who control what enters the discourse by occupying the positions which do the work of gatekeeping and the positions from which people and their 'mental products' are evaluated" (Smith, 1975, p.355).

Becker (1965) has been hailed as one of the first to include such feminist challenges in mainstream economic theory. Incorporating critiques from feminist thinkers, class analysis since the 1980s has more strongly encompassed influence from intersectionality paradigms in its theoretical orientations (Collins, 2000; Langford, 2013; Scott & Siltanen, 2012, 2012). Feminists

also inspired interpretative analysis of class, introducing micro-struggles in traditional macrosociological class analysis like classical Marxism (Day, 2001). Feminist theory does not deny the relevance of class analysis but simply dismisses the analytical primacy it has traditionally been assigned. Instead, class is interconnected with experiences of oppression, disadvantage and discrimination in other social categories like race and gender, which are inseparably enmeshed and interlocked (Collins, 1993; Crenshaw, 1991).

Neo-Marxists extending and amending traditional Marxist theory have emerged from various camps attempting to salvage the importance of class analysis in the social sciences. Downplaying the traditional importance of economic relations in Marxist work, Neo-Marxism aims to regenerate an interest in class analysis by identifying social and cultural mechanisms and forces central to class struggle and reproduction. Significant influence has come from Frankfurt School scholars such as Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno; semiological studies like that of Jean Baudrillard; cultural theorists including Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams; and the theory of cultural hegemony and subsequent neo-Gramscian scholars. Scholars have employed such theories to rise to the defense of the enduring importance of class analysis (Day, 2001; Grusky & Weeden, 2001; Langford, 2013; Manley, 1983; Petras, 1978; Porter, 1968; Sorenson, 2000; Spector, 1995; Wright, 1996, 2005).

Such Neo-Marxist frameworks have been particularly influential in the sociology of education, where research has located class conflict at the root of educational processes, experiences and outcomes. Particularly influential works proving schools as institutions that organize and reproduce power, prestige and influence include Anyon, (1980), Bernstein (1964), Bourdieu (1990) Bowles & Gintis (2002), Freire (1996) and Willis (1977). Especially influential on my study, is Anyon's work on classed stratification of knowledge. Until Jean Anyon, critical

theorists had concentrated mostly on overt ideological content of curriculum e.g. textbooks but in the 1980s, Anyon investigated curriculum-in-use, meaning the political, social and economic consequences of hidden curriculum and application of curriculum. Even in schools with standardized curriculum, and so supposedly identical opportunities for learning, Anyon found that social and political judgments teachers made about students in different class contexts had profound implications for social stratification of knowledge. Teachers in working-class schools felt that students only needed basic skills in reading, writing and math. These were taught in rote exercises of memorization like copying teachers' notes and answering textbook questions and students felt that knowledge was found only from "expert" sources like their teachers and books. This attitude was largely shared by students in middle class schools, who identified "studying" and the "brain" as sources of knowledge (1981, p.15), but their teachers presented more conceptual exercises and hoped students would go on to post-secondary studies. In upper class schools, Anyon found that teachers encouraged students to explore individual interests, expression and creativity in order to investigate, question and create knowledge. Students were more inclined to locate knowledge within their own control and production such as "figuring out stuff" and "mak[ing] it up in your brain" (1981, p.21). Anyon found that even when schools use the same curriculum, there are qualitative differences in education as teachers in different class contexts approach earning differently depending on their expectations of students' academic and occupational success, concluding,

> the "hidden curriculum" of schoolwork is tacit preparation for relating to the process of production in a particular way. Differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thus contribute to the development in the children of certain potential relationships to physical and symbolic capital, to authority, and to the process of work (1980).

Some of the biggest contemporary debates in educational policy, such as school choice and tracking/streaming, are still deeply rooted in class struggle and both these topics came up in interviews (Davies & Bansel, 2007; S. Davies & Quirke, 2005; Henig, 1994; Lehmann & Taylor, 2003; Musset, 2012). These discussions are especially pertinent in my research as both of the public schools I studied offer International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, a popular draw for families deciding where their children should attend school. Many parents who send their children to private schools, like the one in this study, actually do not perceive private schools as offering enhanced QoE relative to public schools. Major appeals are social and cultural capital benefits from socialization with higher SES peers and extra resources not typically funded in the public system. Canada is only one of three OECD countries in the world in which, controlling for SES, students attending private school do better in standardized reading tests (Musset, 2012).

3.2 Towards critical educational theory (critical pedagogy)

The foundational text in critical pedagogy is typically considered Paulo Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* originally published in 1968. Based on a Marxist class analysis, Freire suggests new pedagogical relationships between teacher, pupil and society that aim to emancipate learners from the oppression of their colonizers by reaching *conscientization*, a critical consciousness of social and political power relations around and including us. Critical pedagogy embraces students as co-creators of knowledge, rather than *tabula rasa*, and encourages *praxis,* which goes beyond critical dialogue and into action and change (Freire, 1996). Contemporary critical pedagogues such as Apple, (2004), Kincheloe, (2008), Giroux (Giroux & Penna, 1979), hooks (1994), Shor (1996) and McLaren (1995) have expanded and developed the Marxist roots of Freire's work to include feminist and anarchist theory. My work aims to begin addressing the void of class analysis in studies and theories of QoE by proposing a

shift from interviewees' humanistic perspective of education towards critical pedagogy. Humanistic educational approaches commendably focus on an individual's personal life over their capitalist value but the theory falls short of animating formal education for social reconstructivism and reform. Critical pedagogy erases binaries typically created by other theoretical framework and is a constant dialectic between such forces: agency and structure, power and powerlessness, the public and the private, the personal and the political.

While the purpose of education for humanistic educators is self-actualization, critical pedagogues situate personal growth and development in larger social, political, cultural and economic structures. Both critical pedagogy and humanistic education work towards the child's autonomy and self-determination but in critical pedagogy the goal is conceptualized as emancipation, rather than self-actualization. Self-actualization for humanistic educators is an exciting and romanticized personal journey for a child. It implies progress and the realization of potential according to essential characteristics and human nature, both of which are based on the "human" of "humanistic" as white, heterosexual and male (Plummer, 2001). Self-actualization corresponds to specific characteristics that students are able to achieve if they make wise decisions (Nemiroff, 1992).

For critical pedagogues, self-actualization, or emancipation as is more appropriate in this paradigm, is a painful and political struggle and, unlike the journey in humanistic education, it is a zero sum game. Unlike humanistic educators who assume the potential and good of every individual's self-actualization, critical pedagogues enlighten students that gaining freedom may have consequences, whether negative or positive, on others. In other words, the goal is not freedom in its own spectacular right, but freedom *from* particular bodies and structures of oppression (Plummer, 2001). Students learn to recognize what structures are actively and

deliberately hindering their emancipation (Noonan, 2008). Students learn to recognize their own privilege and understand they will never be entirely removed from power, as they are themselves implicated in its relations of race, gender, class, sexuality and other social divisions. However, through education they learn to identify, question and disrupt such dynamics of domination and subordination (Santos, 2009). In curricular practice, this means that students are exposed to the canon of Western literature, glorified by humanistic educators and criticized by critical pedagogues, but asked to politicize its contents and implications (Lerman, 1999). It also means questioning "the null curriculum" (Eisner, 2002), what is absent in curriculum just as much as what is included. For critical pedagogues, "liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (Freire, 60), thus activism is central to the goals of education. Life is the test and a youth's actions for change and justice demonstrate how much he or she have learned. Youth not only identify the personal and social mechanisms of domination and oppression in their communities but take action against them (Santos, 2009).

Teaching is still learner-centered but the principles that guide the approach are different. Critical pedagogy shifts its perspective from the individual child to reposition through the eyes of the dispossessed. Those who have traditionally been silenced, or are not in fact represented at all in the learning space, are recognized and their stories told. Humanistic education values the lived experiences and perspectives of the child but fails to locate them in broader structural context or develop activism and engagement from their standpoint. In critical pedagogy, schools are reimagined to serve collective human needs, rather than individual ones. In critical theory, education is a political act and students are not only learning for the self but for the impact they will have on their communities and others. Unlike humanistic approaches, where youth are seen at different stages of fulfilling the same hierarchy of needs, critical theory perceives youth

relationally, situated in a larger society of domination and subordination, whose effects motivate youth differently. Teachers do not commit to each individual child's journey to self-actualization but instead to active care and concern for and about other people, public activity and affairs and social awareness and activism. They are involved intellectuals and mentors who seek to illuminate the sociological imagination in the child and encourage them to use this knowledge for social justice and change (Nemiroff, 1992; Stanley, 2013). They have been called organic intellectual by Gramsi, (Levinson, 2001), public sociologist by Buraway (Burawoy, 2005) and public intellectual by Jacoby (Jacoby, 2009). Just like students, teachers are situated in larger communities and it is imperative in critical pedagogy that teachers build trust and work together (Nemiroff, 1992).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION I:

class as a factor in *learning to know* and *learning to do*

Before analyzing *learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together,* I will discuss how interviewees and I arrived at the Delors Report pillars as a framework for assessing QoE and in what framework they discussed learning. Overwhelmingly, teachers were discouraged by what they perceived as dominant discourse on student success, teacher success and quality of education. They felt that students, parents, policymakers, employers and other educators identified success only in its most rigidly academic expression of test scores and grades. Interviewees expressed that grades fail to reflect student interest and engagement, which they saw as crucial elements of achievement, and are actually poor indication of a student's actual cognitive and academic skill. In other words, grades were not only inappropriate but inaccurate reflections of success and their responses on the topic aimed to dispel what they saw as myths of value and significance of grades and test scores. Teachers showed great enthusiasm for using the 1996 Delors Report pillars of education as a framework for assessing QoE. At the end of each interview, I asked what teachers thought of this model and several commented something like, "in my weird, inadvertent way I did kind of touch on some of these things. I wasn't as eloquent" (Ms. Briant, MHS). Though the pillars were helpful in guiding philosophy of education, they did not demand customization, which ultimately teachers thought was central to QoE. In other words, *what* are students learning to know and do and *how* are students learning to be and live together? Nevertheless, the four pillars appealed to the teachers as an elementary framework for conceptualizing, discussing, planning and assessing QoE.

Interviewees discussed their ideas, attitudes and opinions in the theoretical framework of humanistic education, calling for self-actualization and personal growth as the purpose of education rather than achieving particular work and income. Teachers saw their perspectives as radical compared to dominant functionalist understandings of education for occupation. They were visibly pleased with themselves at the prospect of rejecting dominant discourse in favour of holistic, humanistic education. While certain aspects of a humanistic approach to QoE are as commendably progressive as teachers thought, it ultimately falls short of "radical" and still serves to perpetuate existing power relations. A critical theory approach would better serve objectives of social justice and human rights. While teachers did not articulate educational goals in these terms, social justice and human rights are necessary underpinning conditions of a society that grants students the opportunities teachers desire for their students such as self-esteem and confidence, enjoyable and fair-paying work, safe and happy families, and belonging and love in community.

Interviewees' reflections and interpretations of the Delors Report pillars at school were telling of larger class relations and inequalities. In this chapter I discuss how interview data reflected *learning to know* and *learning to be* as components of QoE. Teachers reported that *knowing* and *doing* in the classroom was heavily derived from student class background. What students should or are expected to *know* and *do* was shaped by dominant understandings of class like expected occupations, culture and lifestyle.

4.1 Debunking dominant discourse on assessing QoE

> *Almost half of the students for this school board fail grade ten math. It's a huge issue. Right? So if a student has a 50 in grade ten I'm not sure what it really represents. Does it represent a math curriculum that's too hard? Does it represent gaps in the curriculum at the elementary level? Or at the Cycle 1 level? It doesn't necessary represent a student's aptitude all the time. So numbers are difficult* (Mr. Jordan, MHS).

> *Most people know it's a human business. I think most people feel that they want kids to like coming to their class and like who they are in their class first and then test scores follow* (Mr. Ryan, RA).

Though dominant discursive claims and norms recognize grades as representative of educational achievement and QoE, interviewees did not feel that grades were an appropriate reflection of student success, their own success as educators or QoE itself. According to teachers, actors who perpetuate this conviction include students, media, parents, educators, school boards, the Ministry of Education as well as national and international educational organizations such as the Fraser Institute and UNESCO. Many felt they were presented with success rates from the school board, "heavy into success rates [especially] in Ministry classes" (Ms. Elias, MHS), in order to pressure improvement and competition, which was magnified when success rates were published and "you have the parents that are putting pressure and the school putting pressure because like, we're going to be ranked on that Fraser Institute or whatever and we don't want to be number ten" (Ms. Morin, EH). Success rates are also used in rankings across the city and province in league tables such as the Fraser Institute's annual School Report Card, a process that assumes meritocracy and equal opportunity. Most interviewees were able to separate their success rates from personal feelings about success in the classroom but a few worried that students are "forming ideas about themselves and their self worth and their intelligence and like…really negative things from school. Their success on scores" (Mr. Ryan, RA). Interviewees predominantly dismissed hard number grades and success rates as poor indicators of success because they felt that these numbers did not reflect the diversity among schools and students, truly capture ability or aptly operationalize success.

Unfair Comparisons

Teachers felt it was unfair to "map it out like that" (Ms. Elias, MHS) because QoE should not be compared between schools with such different resources, student bodies and community environments. Mr. Ryan (RA) felt that standardized learning materials and expectations led to "a very assembly line approach to teaching", removing schooling from community contexts. Mr. Jordan (MHS) could not understand why "those numbers mean something to them, right? Even though the schools are so diverse, a lot of weight is put behind those numbers" and Mr. Night (MHS) explained "Mist is an inner-city school but [the school board] doesn't recognize it as one and they expect us to churn out students like at a MacDonald's but that's not going to happen". These feelings are redolent of Ritzer's *The McDonaldization of Society*, in which Ritzer argues that modern social institutions and life are reorganized by rationalization and scientific management. Teachers said it was difficult to adhere to fast-food industry-like processes and expectations of control, predictability, efficiency and calculability with such a high number of "coded" students, diagnosed with a range of impairments or disorders. Mist is allocated special funding for integration aides like Mr. Night but is still brutally understaffed and under-resourced. Mr. Night "shadow[s] kids all over class and school, floating, like I'm ten aides or something". Ms. Briant (MHS) estimated that "close to 60% of the population here has a learning disability, has an IEP, has a very heavy coded either behavioural, autism…everybody seems to have some sort of need". This is a reality that teachers do not have to confront at either Ella Hall or Ray Academy, where most if not all students are selected by entrance exam and/or interview. These teachers expressed relief because while they supported integration, they felt that without adequate support, total integration diminishes QoE for all students. In increasingly large classes, teachers cannot help both special needs students and others. Ms. Briant pointed out that

integration, "open classrooms" (Mr. Night), is hard to manage at Mist because not only are there so many "coded" students but also because most of those who are not "coded" are still very much in need of additional help:

> Within the working class families we have those who are I would say semi-literate so as a result we have a generation of students with reading skills that are 3-4 years behind the average reading level. Like for example this year in my class alone I have 24 kids. 23 of them have IEPs, individual education programs. And this is not a closed classroom. This is not special needs but it becomes this way […] 24 very needy kids who could totally use a 1 to 1 kind of dynamic (Mr. Briant).

A few teachers expressed need to "adjust expectations to a certain degree" (Mr. Martin, RA) and expect students to perform only "to the best of their ability" (Mr. Teith, RA) when working with marginalized groups, especially the poor and working-class. Mr. Fars and Ms. Elias both resented the school board for judging Mist solely on academic performance and Ms. Briant was disappointed that many educators did so as well:

> We all hate the Fraser report…they actually say "the ten best schools", they actually say that! And coming from a school that was right down here [low], I thought for the community we were in and what we were doing, we were like the best school you could find, you know? And we were really kind of doing as best as we could (Mr. Fars, RA).

> Mist's a hidden gem. We have a very negative reputation. We're not seen as a very good school. I don't really know why. I never understood that. We have some really amazing teachers and we have brilliant kids. I wish that the school board and others would recognize our positive aspects and helped us that way. The school board really only cares about success rates. They don't really care about much else. (Ms. Elias, MHS)

> I sometimes think people think its just marks and they don't look at the other part of the child, that they just think…he's just dumb, he just can't read so let's just dismiss him. Well maybe he can't read and he didn't do his homework but he had nothing to eat for the last week. There's just a huge part of that context that can't be dismissed because that's the whole child's life that we are dismissing and if we focus just on marks and how he performs on a test…no (Ms. Briant, MHS).

Generally, interviewees felt that most schools in Montreal were good schools based on the resources available and students they were working with. They would "never compare them"

(Mr. Fars, RA). Mr. Lane (MHS) specified, "I try to make this school the most vibrant school. I never talk about *make the best school* because you know, what's the concept of best? I think certain schools are fitted to certain students". League tables like those created by the Fraser Report have a huge impact on the resources and status assigned to schools, which helps elite schools preserve their advantage, resulting in "Brébeuf has been first for like two hundred years now" (Ms. Morin, EH). Mr. Ryan (RA) saw how this affected his own school:

> This school is an illusion. It sounds bad. This school is an illusion in the sense that it's good because people believe it's good. Parents send their kids [to Ray Academy] because we have the reputation of being a good school. The kids love this school because we say that we love the school. And in this very strange roundabout way we've actually become a good school because all the good kids end up coming here because that's where good kids go. People love this school because it's a school worth loving and then we do stuff that kind of perpetuates that. Whereas if you took out all of the teachers from here and sent us to [another school], and brought the teachers from [another school] here…

Teachers identified the Fraser Report, and rankings like it, as a mechanism by which elite schools preserve their reputation and power. Schools that perform well, continue to do so while schools that perform poorly, have little chance of increasing their ranking. In other words, "you get bad numbers and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy" (Mr. Fars, RA), "of course the elite schools are going to perform so well on these rankings but education is much more than that, you know" (Ms. Morin, EH). A few teachers noted that because public schools are increasingly able to select students using entrance exams and interviews, schools like Mist because a repository for the neediest students, who perform poorly on standardized tests and the cycle continues. Those who do perform well, "they'll kind of go, oh, "let's take your ten kids that can actually read their name and put them into a charter school". That's kind of bad for the system" (Mr. Fars).

Poor Face Validity

Another reason teachers showed disdain for success rates was what they perceived as poor face validity. Many felt that grades do not actually always reflect ability, but rather effort and skill at performing ability. Mr. Jordan (MHS), Ms. Briant (MHS) and Mr. Martin (RA) all argued that while students should always try their hardest, final grades should only reflect a student at his or her most productive. For these teachers, while the student is responsible for some initiative and effort, lack of student engagement also reflected their own failure to motivate students, whom should not be penalized for their teacher's inability to inspire. Many articulated something like "any time a student has failed in my class I see it as a personal failure for myself" (Mr. Martin, RA). Mr. Jordan specified, "I think if they don't do the assignments it's because [assignments] weren't engaging. Maybe I haven't asked them to really think" and,

> I have an obligation to my students to make sure that my grades are representative of their level of ability. I never want my grade to represent who didn't hand in the most assignments. When that happens, I feel terrible. Because I want that number to represent their aptitude in English language arts. …in this imperfect system, that's what a grade should be. Your grade shouldn't represent your abseentism, the assignments you didn't want to do. It should represent your aptitude. That ability that you've been able to produce. That's what I want my numbers to represent (Mr. Jordan).

Interviewees also felt that conventional forms of testing and evaluation were not accessible to all students and such tests were another mechanism by which knowledge is named and reproduced by the elite. They were especially critical of traditionally limited evaluative mechanisms that inhibited those with poor literacy skills from expressing or demonstrating ability. At Mist, voice-to-text "apps on the computer now can meet their needs" (Ms. Briant):

> I've had students who cannot put pen to paper or couldn't even, if you can believe it, can't put fingers to keyboard. They will not produce. And it's crazy but if you ask them orally, they'll produce everything verbally. But there's voice to text, it's in Google docs. The student can just, with your earphone, just speak into a mic so they're not disruptive to everybody. The child tells me everything he understands. Whereas before I would give him a 32, which is the lowest mark I could give them, I'm actually giving them 70%

> because I'm assessing their comprehension. Whereas before the route to comprehension was written because it had to go through the route of writing…when you do oral assessment, the child speaks into it and the whole thing types out perfectly. So the speech to text recognition is beyond…especially for the student and for the teacher because I would be paying to give him 0 when I knew he could do the stuff. But now there's proof on paper to anyone who's auditing to say "look this child actually understands!" (Ms. Briant)
>
> Part of moving towards these Chromebooks wasn't simply that laptops are cool but the fact that a student's literacy will improve if we take away the challenge of handwriting. Students who have dysgraphia. Students who really just take a long time to produce by hand. So we're trying to improve literacy that way. (Mr. Jordan)

Not only were interviewees doubtful that low grades accurately represent comprehension, but they were also skeptical that high grades accurately reflect skill. Mr. Ryan (RA) wondered, "but whether I'm making someone a better mathematician, you know? It's always at the end of the year, not totally sure. Did I make them a better physicist? I don't know. Did I make them a better leader, if I'm teaching leadership? I don't know". A few teachers gave examples of how students from higher income families and/or parents with jobs in the creative class were better at performing on exams, a well-accepted and proven theory stemming from Bourdieu's work on cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1990). Mr. Fars (RA) gave an insightful example:

> I really differentiate between getting good marks in French and speaking French. Living in Quebec and being able to speak French. Kids at Mist High School, you know, I'd be mad at them and I'd say, "That's it! You know, this is too embarrassing, you're telling your mom, I'm not telling [her you did so poorly]". I used that trick all the time. I'd dial up and give him the phone and then he starts talking to his mom in French. I'm not even listening anymore, I'm just like, "You're French!? You're flunking French. You've always flunked French. And you're French." Whereas at Ray Academy, these kids are just really good students. They do exactly what they have to do but I'll come to French class sometime just for something and the French teacher will engage me a little bit and I'll ask one of the kids something and they don't speak French. They don't speak French. They're just good at going to school in French. Right? So it's really the difference…is being good at school that much of a sign of how intelligent and how capable you are?

In this example, though Ray students show higher grades, the students at Mist have better and more applicable skill. The students from Ray Academy are better at "jumping through hoops"

(Mr. Fars) and their grades give the impression of proficiency. Teachers gave many reasons why students from lower socio-economic backgrounds tend not to "jump through hoops", none of which were surprisingly given the extensive literature on the subject (Raby, 2012; Willis, 1977). Teachers recognized that youth at Mist formed anti-school subculture, whose values and philosophy were as much obstacles to academic performance as ability, and that students from lower class backgrounds were less likely to search for their teacher's approval or find validation in good grades than students from middle and upper class backgrounds:

> A lot of kids from different neighborhoods [at Mist] don't necessarily have parents that passed high school and they figure they're doing okay. They don't need that validation as much. It's amazing how much our kids [at Ray] like when their teachers like them. You know? And what is there to show that someone likes you than marks? (Mr. Fars).

> It wouldn't shock me if in my class I am not spending as much time speaking to a kid who is coming from a less advantaged socioeconomic status. That kid I think traditionally has developed their own guards and shelters and I subconsciously have my own….am sensitive to that as well.…I mean along socio-economic lines, kids that are less advantaged don't ask or demand academic help as readily as kids that are used to getting stuff more frequently (Mr. Ryan).

Mist and Ray teachers talked about how children from lower SES backgrounds tend to receive relatively little attention at home, which translates into their classroom behaviour. Ms. Briant's (MHS) students "are focusing on drama because they need that attention because they don't have attention at home. They don't have that normal attention so they're going to gravitate to crazy stuff ". Teachers felt that many working class and poor students are "lost" (Mr. Jordan, MHS); they "learn to stop asking" (Mr. Ryan, RA) and "don't really want to bug you" (Mr. Jordan) because too many attempts for attention, both in and out of school, have gone unrewarded.

Teachers saw grades not only reflecting the work students have done but also suggesting the work they are conceivably capable of, indicating to other schools and employers the student's

potential. Reflecting on previous students whom interviewees now considered successful in life, many remembered that they had not done exceptionally well in high school and "we have an impact on a student but we don't see that impact right away" (Mr. Lane, MHS). Grades were a poor indicator of real student potential. For some, high school did not offer enough opportunity, motivation or challenge so many students "don't bloom until they're out there, in the bigger forest. And that's when we see them skyrocket. You see them realize "this is what I was meant to do. This is what I need to know". And you see the success only then" (Ms. Everett, EH). Others felt that if a student struggles, they learn the work ethic and focus needed to do well in later studies. Mr. Lane admitted that graduation rates sometimes "demoralized" him and his staff because despite every effort, "we work with some of the students that are at-risk…we don't quite get to them in time and you find them dropping out of high school or at least not completing". However, he reminds himself that for many students, "you don't see the impact you had on them until a year or maybe eight months…maybe they're out of the school but then everything that you've said to them, it just starts to resonate. And then that kind of gets them back on the path of either completing their high school diploma or going into vocational".

Poor operationalization of success

Not only did teachers feel grades did not accurately reflect what they purport to measure but they did not agree with the very operationalization of success. Grades do little to reflect student engagement, a quality that teachers identified as a strong component of success. High grades may indicate academic performance but they do not necessarily reflect interest, critical thinking or curiosity, qualities that teachers are hoping to encourage in students' conception of success. Instead, teachers rely on qualitative markers of success like "who gets the most excited

about the Syrian conflict or we talk about any issue that is actually happening" (Ms. Morin, EH) and "who's really been more successful in that goal towards becoming a more complete and full person" (Mr. Martin, RA). Current evaluative norms ignore the inherent value of effort and enthusiasm in learning and fails to reward students for showing such energy. Many interviewees also expressed that by rewarding a student who "goofs off and doesn't do anything and gets [high marks]" (Mr. Martin), they are not preparing them for the work ethic and attitude necessary for post-secondary studies, at which point they "got totally lost in the crowd" (Ms. Morin).

Ultimately, teachers resented that educators and departments are judged on their success rates. Many said that low success rates did not reflect poor QoE and said more about a school's resources and student body. They also felt uncomfortable taking credit when success rates were high:

> I know of people who believe that the success of a department in any given school is sometimes dictated by those numbers, which means that we're great in English. That doesn't mean anything. I've been given a class of students that are highly literate and highly motivated and so 95% may pass their final exam, 100% can pass. That doesn't make me the greatest teacher. It makes me a teacher who didn't mess up a group of students who are ready and motivated to learn. If I took that to mean that I'm the greatest then I might be a narcissist. (Mr. Jordan, MHS)

> We're bound to giving the kids a mark and is a mark a true reflection of their success? Or my success as a teacher? How do I know that? If someone is achieving 100%, did I have anything to do with it or are do they just kind of know it? Or maybe the class is so easy that really I've taught them nothing. (Ms. Briant, MHS)

> We hear it as math teachers for sure, if the kid did really well last year and struggling this year, it's not simple but, reasonable, to say like, "that teacher was really good and what's going on with you?" and the flip of it is like "those tests maybe were really easy" (Mr. Ryan, RA).

> To me it doesn't mean you're a good teacher because your kids are getting 90 on the Quebec history ministry exam. To me, that exam is just a rite of passage. You have to take it. It's not the most exciting course to teach. It's not the most exciting course to take. So I wouldn't kind of evaluate myself on the results, you know? (Ms. Morin, EH)

Alternative valuations

Rejecting the standardized tests of the functionalist paradigm, teachers were more interested in judging their success as educators using qualitative assessments as is evident in the following sampling of quotes from teachers from all three schools:

> It's putting in an honest day and as long as students are doing okay and they're safe and you're not having crises all the time… It's like, I try and treat people well, as opposed to you know, if you're a salesmen saying like, 'here's my sales target' and I met and that was a successful sales year or whatever it is. It's a little more qualitative I hope (Mr. Ryan, RA).

> I get regular feedback from my students. Sometimes formally, sometimes informally. Just saying to kids: What have you learned in this class? What do you need to learn in this class? What have you not learned and gaps we need to fill in? (Mr. Martin, RA)

> To me, it's kind of informal the way you know. The parents are telling you. The students are telling you. But it's always informal. There's no way of knowing if you're doing a good job apart from that (Ms. Morin, EH)

> In my classroom, the feel. First of all. That's the first thing. At the end of every class, I walk out of the class and I know if I was successful that class or not by the feel, of what happened in the class (Ms. Pace, EH).

> Your ability to connect with a student or students is how I measure my success. So whether that's them e-mailing you over the summer to say "hi, how are you?", like, "I'm thinking about you" or "this is what's happening to me". Or a former graduate coming in contact with you and wanting to tell you what's up with them. Or even a yearbook shout out. I find that the personal relationship that you develop with these kids is how I measure my success. If they feel comfortable enough to talk to me then I know I've done something right (Ms. Elias, MHS).

> You start to see it not just in context of the test scores but you start to see it in the conversations and in the spare time. You start to see it in the way that girls are thinking about the talent that they have and how they can share that or make something easier for someone else who's struggling with it….for me it's not just being able to see those outcomes but not just in test scores. To see them in how lives are lived, how friendships are made. What is the quality of the community that the school is living in? And how much or…if you see in a schoolyard or in a corridor, girls talk…what is that body language? Are they talking about big ideas? Are they talking about things that they are passionate about? Or are they talking about people and celebrities and what we need to look like and what we need to buy? You know. So moving from a consumer to a creator. If you see that happening then you have a quality of education that I think is worthwhile (Ms. Everett, EH).

Ms. Everett's insight reflects critical pedagogy. For her, learning does add only add to a child's archive of knowledge but fundamentally transforms the self and social relationships. She identifies learning as a means to discovering individual talents but these are used to help others and "make something easier for someone else who's struggling with it", as well as resist oppressive dominant cultures and knowledge about beauty and presentation for example, "celebrities and what we need to look like and what we need to buy".

Some teachers felt that grading rubrics were helpful because "instead of giving a mark, you're really looking at qualities" (Ms. Morin, EH) but that, again, competencies were reduced to a single grade. Many interviewees proposed that improvement rates would more accurately reflect success of both learning and teaching, clarifying that the goal was personal improvement, and not excellence. Teachers made comments like, "whether a student has improved from 50 to 70 in the course of a year or an 80 to a 95…If I've seen improvement in that student then I think hopefully I've done a good job" (Mr. Jordan, MHS) and "student success: if they can improve their grade. Like it's not necessarily always getting a 90 all the time but if it's understanding, even if they make little mistakes, but understanding, getting back a test and being able to understand their mistakes. Just improving their grade and just learning. Learning something new everyday" (Ms. Pace, EH). Again though, as some identified, this approach "it's hard. It would be interesting if there were a system in place so we could document the improvement a student has made within a year. But how do you do that without numbers?" (Mr. Jordan, MHS). While they felt this was a progressive evaluation style, they felt defeated not being able to escape idea of the grade.

Furthermore, teachers struggled to negotiate both form and content of reform, echoing critical pedagogues' concerns that educators and policymakers place greater importance on the

form of schooling than the substance of knowledge (Weis, 1990). Interviewees admitted that their alternative evaluation schemes do nothing to address concerns about curriculum and they insisted there needed to be more conversation about the relevance and personalization of curriculum. In other words, if a student is evaluated on his or her improvement in what the teacher and/or student perceives as irrelevant or unimportant curriculum, changes to evaluative mechanisms have not been significant solutions to the teachers' main concerns about the education system. Ultimately, most teachers concluded that the best reflection of success for themselves was "ability to connect with a student or students" (Ms. Elias), examples of which included "you have a kid come back or write back to you and say like…"your class made a difference"" (Mr. Ryan), "a gigantic box of letters of kids after they've graduated and left…this is why you're the best" (Mr. Martin), "when someone says, "I want my kid to go to that school. So-and-so's there" (Mr. Fars), and "kids come to class with smiles on their faces Are they engaged in our conversations, in our discussions in class?" (Mr. Jordan). At Mist, all interviewees gave at least one example like, "if they feel comfortable enough to talk to me" (Ms. Elias).

4.2 Educators' humanistic education framework

Teachers articulated their ideas using a humanistic educational framework, one of the most common and obvious references being Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a fundamental theory of human psychology and motivation in the humanistic tradition (Maslow, 1943). For many, the purpose of education was to help students achieve the physical, emotional and self-actualization needs outlined by Maslow. In fact, the Ella Hall website explicitly assures that the school helps develop "the self-awareness that lets each student choose her own route to self-actualization", Maslow's teleological conclusion of human needs. Ms. Everett (EH) drew upon "a Mohawk

expression, these sacred concentric circles" rather than Western psychological traditions to illustrate the same ends of education as Maslow's model. Rather than concentrate on fulfillment of different spheres however, she stressed the importance of prioritization and balance. In other words, because her students will most likely find satisfaction in all the domains, they do not have to focus on linearly achieving them but rather emotionally prioritizing them equally and simultaneously.

Teachers from both public schools explicitly referenced Maslow's hierarchy of needs as a general theory of education's purpose and process. Teachers at Ray admitted that meeting needs at all levels of Maslow's hierarchy is difficult for those who experience obstacles to meeting basic needs but they generally strived to promote self-actualization in their students. Mist teachers, on the other hand, were aiming to help students meet physiological, safety, belonging, and esteem needs, skeptical that many of their students would achieve self-actualization. These positions are captured in comments from Mr. Martin and Ms. Briant:

> I kind of look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the different levels of it. And the goal of education should be to teach students how to obtain all of those needs, like beyond just your basic needs, up to your social needs and kind of your more like spiritual needs and even your … one of the highest needs, self-actualization. You know, of like saying, this is the purpose of education is… basic needs, how do you obtain those, how do you get those? Social needs, how do you be a functioning, contributing member of society and what does that society look like? And then yourself as a person, what is your reason for being here, what is your sense of accomplishment, what do you need to do to be complete as a person. So like I think the goal of a school should be to equip students to be able to tackle all of those different levels. … It's hard to jump right to self-actualization when you haven't even obtained the skills necessary to work and sustain yourself and everything. But as a more holistic view, that would be my purpose of education (Mr. Martin, RA)

> You know, success now is different for me than it used to be at the beginning. Success used to be whether they completed their homework and whether they did it accurately and did it the way I wanted them to do it, whether they followed the standards set up by [the school board]. I think baseline, that's a measure of success. But I think now, my measure of success is how were they in class today? Did they all get along today? Did

> they speak to each other respectfully? Did they speak to me respectfully? Sometimes that just falls out the window because I have to say, these kids, I don't want it to be a sob story, but really these kids, they don't come to us fed. They don't come to us having slept, having bathed. It is amazing that they come anywhere. Because this is probably the safest place they'll ever have during the week. Because really talk about Maslow's hierarchy of needs, their basic needs are just not met (Ms. Briant, MHS)

According to teachers, while education should aim to meet Maslow's hierarchy of needs, not every student will have the opportunity or even potential to meet all of their needs and reach self-actualization. The higher class a student's background, the more likely it was he or she will learn how to identify and meet his or her needs given social, cultural and economic capital. Teachers felt that education must recognize a student's class context because expectations should be adjusted for students from working-class and poor backgrounds. Most teachers made a comment at one point or another that the academic and economic goals of education are not realistic or even beneficial if basic needs are not met. Meeting basic needs was often linked to survival and even specifically analogized to coping with trauma:

> [The counsellor] calls them trauma babies and they are. They grow up in a milieu of trauma. Very stressed out and when you're stressed out you cant think. And a lot of their brains, we feel, we do studies, stress babies, their brain is not as malleable so don't take in information…Of course, it has to be a physical quality that has to be met as well, they need to have homes which are stable and that because their lives are stable, then they can be able to receive a proper education. Because right now, they are not getting one, their basic needs are not met so academic quality and their whole being, it can 't be the best textbooks or the best...like we have Chrome books, la-de-dah...If that child can't go home tonight because his father is going to beat him…as a teacher, I don't think I have done anything, by giving him a great Chrome book. What's the quality of education there? Like, it means nothing to him? He needs safety (Ms. Briant, MHS).

> Where did it go off the rails for them? You talk about those classes and there's no breakfast. There is no reason in a wealthy country like ours that we're not feeding those kids so that the teachers can worry about the literacy (Ms. Garrity, EH).

> We talk about the academic part of it but our school has a mandate to socialize them as well and it's important…I would measure student success as, I guess, how they have perceived their experience …if every child that enters the building leaves this building with a sort of bright hope in the future in terms of future direction, whether it be to go to

> work or vocational or to continue college…work towards being completely self-sufficient (Mr. Lane, MHS)
>
> We never give up on a student but at the same time, some students come in in need of such support of how to speak to peers, speak to adults, function in a classroom, before they can even necessarily put themselves in a position to get a quality education. So then where does something like life skills factor? We teach those. We have to (Mr. Jordan, MHS).
>
> I guess a real exaggerated example is, if you look at poverty and poverty can be interpreted as trauma. And the first thing you do is, in trauma, is look to your basic needs, your survival needs. And figuring out how to pass a math exam is just too, too far down there [on the list of survival needs] (Mr. Fars, RA).

Interviewees framed their discussion of *learning to know*, *learning to do, learning to be* and *learning to live together* in the conceptual parameters of Maslow's hierarchy of needs or other similar humanistic models. Teachers' interpretations and responses to the four pillars were actively shaped by their ideas, attitudes, opinions and expectations of need. Though, teachers made connections between education, need and social class, which reflected a critical theory analysis in its link between the individual and the larger structural communities to which they belong, teachers did not make connections to other divisions of structural inequality like gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity or religion. Failing to do so, teachers cannot help shape a new generation to resist and subvert the hierarchies of social categories like these and dominant discourse responsibilizing failure likely prevails.

My analysis of responses takes into consideration aforementioned critiques of humanistic educational theory, especially the indictment that educators help perpetuate an unjust system with individualistic reactions designed to resist this same system. Buss (1979) neatly summarized this criticism when he wrote, "excessive individualism contained in the doctrine of self-actualization serves to mask the larger social questions surrounding society's structures…and working in favour of maintain that social reality" (p.46). Humanistic educational

theory contains a distinctly neoliberal fixation on the individual, isolated and at the expensive of the community, but disguised in narratives of empowerment and individuality. In sum, "it's a dog eat dog, it's an every man for himself…right from the start, fighting amongst ourselves for the few decent wages left" (Ray, as cited in Ayto, 2010, p.97).

4.3 *Learning to know*

Though *learning to know* was the top priority at each school, interpretation and implementation was classed. Interviewees' reflections were not unlike the conclusions drawn by Anyon about classed stratification of knowledge (Anyon, 1980, 1981, 1997). Although literacy and numeracy are important proficiencies for daily living, including leisure activities and parenting for example, the emphasis placed on *learning to know* in school was geared towards preparing youth for the workforce, of which teachers were critical. This pillar is based on knowledge and skills that have been determined as needed to function in the world, without acknowledging that people need different knowledge and skills to adopt the roles expected of and by them, especially based on class, race and gender. Bourdieu (1990) famously argued that cultural capital is necessary to gain access and navigate upper class political, social and occupational circles. To "function in the world", a professional may actually need to know things like English literature, table manners and fine wines and indeed Lehmann (2013) found that at school and work, students from working class backgrounds had to activate particular cultural knowledge and dispositions that were learned and rehearsed, not instinctual.

Though *learning to know* overwhelmed curricular, pedagogical and evaluative design at all three schools, the implications of its implementation were markedly different at Mist High School, where *learning to know* consisted primarily of rote exercises, even after provincial reform encouraging analysis and creativity in education. Conversely, Ray and Ella teachers

described *learning to know* activities as creative and exploratory and perhaps better articulated as *learning to learn*.

Expectations of *knowing*

Though interviewees identified curricular rigidity and exam preparations as inhibitive to *learning to do, learning to live together* and *learning to be*, teachers at all three schools also felt substantial pressure from parents to primarily concentrate on official knowledge. The most common example of a "good" career was medicine. At Ella, parents expected youth to choose careers that would maximize prestige and income, which they felt was most likely in the sciences, and Mist parents wanted their child "to do better" (Ms. Briant) than they did, which they also saw the most potential for in the sciences. Ms. Pace (EH) felt the aspirations parents imposed on their children were detrimental to self-esteem and happiness. At Ray, where children came from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, there were parents from both camps:

> Certainly in a traditionally academic school the *learning to know* is more than the *learning to do*…the *learning to do*, it's a funny one, and again it's along socio-economic lines as well of like the *learning to do* is like, we need people to do…different things but if you quickly sample the parents it's like they want them to be on a *learning to know* track. The dad's an auto mechanic and they want their kid not to go to auto mechanic school. That's like more *learning to do* type of thing (Mr. Ryan, RA).

> I guess in terms of prioritizing them all that's where our parents would say, "that's nice, just make sure our kid gets the numbers they need to go where they have to go and…they can *learn to be* later" (laughs)…All those things are great but if they're going to be prioritized, you want to be successful academically (Mr. Fars, RA).

While some students at Ella, Ray and the Mist IB program came to school "because you have to" teachers mostly felt that students themselves were concentrated on what skills and credentials would facilitate further studies and career advancement. Teachers guessed that

students were more interested in *learning to know* than other aspects of education based on pressure from their parents, teachers, peers and media:

> The kids, even though they're kids and they try to you know fool around and not be good, for the most part they drink the Kool-Aid and they want it. They want to go to Cegep. They want to go to university…to be successful in life (Mr. Fars, RA).
>
> Student success…to them they think it's marks. I'll be honest with you. They are not going to see it the way I see it. Like, "oh you behaved well in class today. You were respectful and maybe you stood up for yourself?". They don't see that as success, no. To them its marks, marks, marks….it's been slow brainwashing from this culture and maybe from their parents who may not even have that much investment in education but they will say, "come back with an A. I want to see that 90%" and they just kind of think that equals success (Ms. Briant, MHS).
>
> Because of their age partly right, they're not really thinking of those abstract terms, sort of philosophical, what is education? And certainly the lens is "I'm going to high school to go to Cegep to go to university to get a job". It's totally utilitarian…it's totally the students have a pragmatic sense (Mr. Ryan, RA).
>
> Like in this school in particular, I think if you asked them they would probably say like preparation for the future. They wouldn't see a holistic kind of filling yourself out as a person type thing. I think primarily in this school you'd get the answer of like it's to get ready for Cegep, Cegep is to get ready for university, university is to get ready for a job (Mr. Martin, RA).
>
> They go to school because…I think there is a very deep understanding in our culture that you will do better in life if you have more school. So that's why…a lot of them have heard their parents say, "you have to do this" to get a job (Ms. Garrity, MHS).
>
> You know, "I need to get the education for more of a bargaining purpose in terms of like I need to get the grades in order to get accepted to Cegep because my parents are telling me because I have to be a doctor or I want to be a doctor or this is what I want to do with my life and I need to find a job and therefore I need to do this."… you've got the "I've got to prep myself because I want to go to an American university so I need to perform on the SATS so therefore I to blah blah blah and then they have their list in their head (Ms. Morin, MHS).

At Mist, this attitude was more evident in the IB program, where a lot of the students "have a lot going on academically" (Mr. Jordan) and "of the 25 kids in that class, 24 of them have a goal. They've identified a goal after high school that they want to work towards", including studies at

Cegep and different trades. A few teachers pinpointed that a problem in the Core and Immersion programs was that students did not have enough confidence to articulate or even think of academic goals after high school. They felt it was important to encourage students to think about possibilities. For Ms. Elias, this meant pushing her students to work towards jobs that would challenge them and she said, "I tell them all the time how important continuing on with their education is and how a job at McDonald's or Wal-Mart is unacceptable". For the principal however, this was specifically narrowed to *learning to know* tracks, even when a student professed interest in a challenging and well-paid job, perpetuating the constructed hierarchy of *knowing* over *doing*. Mr. Lane recalled, "[this kid] had said, "Well sir, I want to become a mechanic" and I said, "Well ya, that's good but why a mechanic? Why not a mechanical engineer?" and then he goes, "Well..." and I said, "Well I think you have what it takes to become a mechanical engineer".

The grades that were conceptualized and encouraged as student success were different at each school. Allusions to "good" grades resembled "getting a 90% all the time" or "100% on their tests" (Ms. Pace) at Ella Hall, "getting 80s or like now it's 85s" (Mr. Ryan) at Ray Academy and "just get[ting] the numbers. Just do what you have to do to go on" (Mr. Fars) at Mist High School. Mr. Fars felt that "that's kind of the difference" between Mist and other schools where, when students do well, they should be "really trying to broaden your definition of success…trying to get them to expand what their definition of being knowledgeable is". Teachers at Ella Hall were aware that their expectations for students were higher than at other schools and acknowledged, "the students are always stressed and it's very competitive" (Ms. Pace). Students considered weak at this school would not be classified as such at either Ray or Mist and "someone [who] is not succeeding in terms of marks", would meet with administration

and/or parents if "let's say, this person has an average of 72, is at risk of failing" (Ms. Morin). These students would be success stories at Mist and Ms. Pace even admitted, "at another school it would be… if he has a 75% on his test he's happy". After Mist teachers shared their expectations for students and students' expectations for themselves, they quickly clarified that while many students do not aim for top marks, their academic goals are still very impressive. Many, they shared, "don't want to follow in their parents' footsteps. They want to be the first ones in their family to get a high school diploma" (Ms. Elias), which is a "noble" (Mr. Jordan) goal. They shared that other schools have been known for grade inflation because they frightened of losing donors or enrollment rates but at Mist, with initially so few resources and reputation, they were free to mark fairly. Teachers secretively shared that it is more likely a student's grade is deliberately lowered than it is raised because students are ineligible for WOTP if they have passed any of their core subjects in Grade 7 or 8. Ms. Briant explained, "you're not trying to write him off but you kind of sense that you have to give him another option because if we don't, we're doing him a huge disservice. We're closing a huge avenue right off and only because we want to see the cute 60 on his report card". At the end of the year teachers meet and discuss students who have poor grades, deciding how to proceed. Some students' grades are tweaked higher so that they are eligible for summer school and others' are lowered so they are eligible for WOTP. Grades are often inflated for higher class students in elite schools, in order to strengthen their candidacy for competitive programs and careers, while lower class students in poorer schools find their grades adjusted lower so as to keep them on track for working class jobs.

Ella teachers specifically emphasized the importance of well-rounded and diversified *knowing*. While these teachers spoke kindly of public schools, they believed Ella Hall offered superior QoE. Ms. Pace said, "the main thing that I see different in this school than other schools

is that every single subject is a priority. It's not like math is a priority so they study more on math than they would for history…everything is important" but later admitted that, just like at any other school, students were pressured to focus on science and math after graduating. Though Ms. Morin stressed, "our girls are singers, musicians, artists. They're doing a lot and great athletes as well while other schools are only pushing in one direction", all the public school teachers named several similar activities at Ray Academy and Mist High School.

Critical thinking in *knowing*

Though *learning to know* manifested and was measured differently in curriculum, interviewees all included elements of it in their conceptions of student success. One of the greatest differences between conceptions of *knowing* involved the importance of critical thinking, which teachers at all three schools identified as a tenet of progressive and quality education. Interviewees referred to critical thinking as a reflective and independent mode of thinking seeking to establish logic and proof. Though generally referring to epistemic sufficiency, meaning the ability to construct, question and identify arguments, many teachers used the expression "critical thinking" to refer more generally to any soft skills they wanted to cultivate in their students, such as learning for learning's sake for example. Many teachers wanted to promote learning for the sake of knowledge and culture, rather than occupation and income, and as a cerebral and intellectual activity, saw such sensibilities connected to critical thinking. Teachers saw themselves as deviating from dominant functionalist discourse of education and demonstrated significant pride in their loyalty to such a staple philosophy of humanistic education and saw themselves as deviating from dominant functionalist discourse of education. Only one however referred to critical thinking in the tradition of critical theory, the

definition of which is more about problematizing than problem solving. Rather than celebrate a scientific method or logic to establish truth claims, critical thinking in critical pedagogy acknowledges that such procedures of inquiry are rooted in traditions of particular structures and systems of power and inequality in society. Critical thinking is instead about identifying how knowledge has been produced and legitimated, connecting to systems and structures of oppression and related to "who loses" and "who benefits" in society (Burbules & Berk, 1999; Rahimi & Sajed, 2014).

My interviewees at Ray and Ella felt that student success was strongly tied to the ability to integrate and apply knowledge from different subjects or, in their words, "they're problem solving and coming up with these ideas based on their experiences and it had nothing to do with that particular context but they saw its relevance in the new context" (Mr. Teith, RA) and "being capable of taking what you've learned in class outside of the classroom environment… capable of using the knowledge I have learned" (Ms. Morin, EH). Mr. Teith proudly gave the example of students in his Drama class who had written a scene using an archetypal trickster character as a narrator, a literary device they had learned about in their English class. For Ms. Morin, science fair was a good example of a time when students can use the knowledge they learned in class to inventively question, apply and create knowledge. Conversely, Mist teachers were looking for most students to master basic competencies. Using survivalist language, Ms. Elias described *learning to know* as important "in my opinion because you cannot survive without simple literacy, numeracy and critical thinking" and Ms. Briant said that she lets students read any book for class because, "just like, when you're a parent, when they say just feed your kid anything that they would like because you know, either that or they'll starve. You have to give them

something. So I'm not going to be picky. If it's not at the high level that I want them to have and I'm just happy that they're reading".

Spending most of their energy covering material needed to pass Ministry exams, Mist teachers felt that they were not spending enough time developing critical thinking. Mr. Jordan reflected general sentiments of Mist interviewees when he said, "I worry that the critical thinking skills get [pushed to the side] for content knowledge stuff. I can't say that that's unfair. It's a teacher's reality". With these students, there is simply too much work to be done to introduce skills like critical thinking, on which they will not be explicitly evaluated in final exams. Teachers sensed this neglect would be damaging to students' education in the long-run. Ms. Briant expressed, "if we are always trying to get them to pass a test and rehearse a test, we inadvertently take away that very powerful skill of critically thinking, reasoning, guessing, figuring things out" and Mr. Jordan was concerned how often students asked him to provide a thesis statement or topic for their essay, either too anxious or uninterested to think of one themselves, at which point he has to remind them, "but I really want you to think!".

Curiously, in interviews not a single Ray teacher commented on critical thinking. Mr. Ryan did bring up creativity and imagination in learning, which he saw as being threatened in an increasingly competitive education system in which, sadly, "you get no marks for your curiosity directly, or your enthusiasm directly. You get marks for being right". He was concerned that as early as kindergarten, students are dissuaded from thinking outside the box. Ms. Everett (EH) had wondered about the same thing, "as human beings we're all born curious and then my question to myself and my fellow educators is, how do we kill that off by grade three?...and how do we bring it back again?". Ms. Everett and Ms. Garrity (EH) both concluded that, ultimately, reform will come from the students who are inspired by a particular pedagogical experience and

begin to demand more of their teachers and mentors. Ms. Everett explained, "if you've had that experience in grade 3 and then you move to like the same fabulous experience in grade 4, and then you run into a test-and-teach teacher in grade 5, the organism and engine itself will complain. It will start to suggest, well could we maybe not do it this [another] way?" and Ms. Garrity felt, "schools are on their last legs. They better be. They're a disaster. And you know who's going to bring it down, are the kids! The clients are not happy". Mr. Ryan felt differently, that it has been engrained in students not to explore or question learning processes. He was ashamed that "the students have a pragmatic sense… we've made them do it". He desperately wanted to counter this attitude but he found it difficult to encourage dissent and creativity in the classroom because of standardized evaluation schemas and the school's culture, which he saw as being "a high academic school and so the goal is really to do well and that traditional path". He added that it was particularly difficult to do "teaching math and physics. And how much room is there…I mean we talk about divergent solution paths and things like that but there's still a cap on it". At Ella Hall however, teachers pointed to critical thinking as one of the most important focuses in school. Not only did they feel that students crave and ask for this content, but these interviewees also felt that skills like problem-solving, creativity and inquiry were foundational to the seemingly teeniest or unrelated example of their teaching philosophy. For example, of teaching students to use their laptops, Ms. Everett said, "K to 8 is how to do these things. And then 9 to 11 [is] when to, why to, critically…What for what audience, what search engine for what data you're trying to find [or] question you're trying to answer".

Teachers conceptualized *learning to know* very differently depending on where and who they taught. At Ella Hall, this pillar was largely interpreted as *learning to learn*. This involves learning how to find, question and create information, arguments and ideas. At Ray however,

learning to know was contextualized in applied occupations and life skills and at Mist, *learning to know* was simply a process of memorizing content from textbooks and worksheets. These classed positions prepare students to enter work and society in ways that reproduce their social and economic backgrounds and experiences.

Reform to *knowing*

In what Mr. Fars (RA) identified as "a paradigm shift", recent changes in the provincial education program have attempted to reconfigure curriculum and learning goals to promote *learning to learn*. Most teachers felt that, as Mr. Martin (RA) said, "the reform, the actual ideas behind that were actually fantastic. They wanted to shift away from an emphasis on rote knowledge, jamming kids' brains with facts and information, so they kind of moved away from that". The reform reflected changes in the local and global economy, officially repurposing education to produce workers for the knowledge-economy and citizens for a pluralistic world. In order to encourage "involved citizens and competent workers" (Ministère de l'éducation Québec, 2004, p.4), new curriculum promotes group work, cross-curricular learning, applicability in real world scenarios and evaluations that test analytic more than the traditional descriptive skills. For example, the traditional book report assignment is replaced with a book review and in history, students do not have to memorize historical dates but, given those dates, must be able to discuss the relationship between events at different points of time or in different parts of the world. The reform was meant to stretch the parameters of traditional classroom learning and assessment in an age where information is more accessible than ever.

The most popular example was changes to the history program and several interviewees described the old history curriculum and evaluation in eerily similar terms, like solving a simple

equation. Ms. Everett (EH) described the history exam as "you memorize all the content. They ask you about all the dates and bits. You tell them about what happened in the war of such and such and you know history and you get 100% and it's all-great" and by Mr. Fars as being, "all content. You had to know the dates. You had to know everybody. You had to memorize it and if you did you got a really good mark". There was mixed feelings however about the new history program. Teachers at Ella applauded this shift, especially given the accessibility and circulation of information today:

> the process of school has changed and that content being ubiquitous and if you have a little cell phone you have the life cycle of a butterfly in 30 seconds. So therein lies the challenge for schools, which is: how do we train learners who have excellent processes of learning? As opposed to how do we just stuff them full of content like cabbage rolls and send them out into the world so they can forget all the history they've ever learned in a test …no application to who they might vote for [for example] (Ms. Everett).

These teachers felt that students do not necessarily need to firmly learn information, but rather know how to access, process and apply it. Some of Ms. Everett's comments recall critical pedagogy, like when she laughed that the reform made "heads explode…because no one had ever thought about well, what does it mean?… How do you now access the content that you learned in bigger categories that have to do with power, gender, all the bigger issues in life".

Though they recognized the reform as a positive step towards creative and critical interaction with knowledge, teachers at Ray and Mist were less enthusiastic. First, there were criticisms of reform content, namely that, as Mr. Fars said about history, "you don't need to know one friggin' thing. Right? They just kind of gave you the whole thing and all you had to do was learn how to know. It was all there". Mr. Lane (MHS) expressed similar skepticism as to the effect the reform has had on what students actually know and retain about mathematics:

> when we were young you had to know your times tables and right now we've gone away from memory-based education…and the inquiry model is still great but you need a little base so you can use that base knowledge. Inquiry doesn't happen in a vacuum. There

> needs to be a paradigm shift in terms of what we do. Because we have been blown away by the technology so much that we've been investing in the technology, making the technology better, better, better, better as to service of the children but I don't think we've spent enough time developing the child's cognitive aspect to use the technology.

Again, the tension between form and content emerged when Ms. Morin (EH) said she appreciated the competencies the history program tried to promote but felt it was poorly organized because "one year you do things chronologically and the next year you do things thematically, like power, economy, etc. But then you're just repeating things and girls just want to shoot themselves in the head and I get it". Other interviewees had problems with both form and content. The language of reform itself has been criticized by Foucault (1975), critical educational theorists like Apple (2010) and prison abolitionists like Davis (2011) because while reform is often temporarily advantageous to beneficiaries of the institution, it serves to perpetuate the institution itself. By aiming to repair the existing system, the language and practices of reform firmly legitimize it. Some teachers criticized ongoing reforms to the system in favour of "play[ing] this game with a few of my teacher friends like, "blow it up and build it up". Like what would it look like?" (Mr. Martin, RA) and picturing "it would be much better to have unschooling" (Ms. Briant, MHS). The Reform was developed in reaction to troubling dropout rates, especially among boys, but teachers were not convinced the Reform has helped curb these rates. Some thought it instead serves already succeeding students by preparing them for a globally competitive knowledge economy and that it too can be identified as a mechanism by which the ruling elite preserve power through education. Mr. Fars (RA) argued that not all students have the same skills or opportunities to develop the competencies necessary to succeed in these new assessments and the reform has largely failed to mediate inequality. He recognized it was a "little more of a level playing field" because though knowledge used to privilege those with books, information is now readily accessible online for any curious learner. Nonetheless,

many students at Mist do not have computers or even Internet at home so, he sighed, "Is it changed at all? Is the new knowledge kind of how to get information? Like, learning how to learn? Well then I guess it's going to come down to the same as before. Certain kids are going to know how to know better". Mist teachers echoed these concerns. They felt like they had to teach to the test in order to help students, struggling with the very basics in so many subjects and skill sets, pass exams and so could not focus on *learning to learn* as the reform intended. Ms. Briant (MHS) lamented:

> Focusing on things like reasoning, estimation and guessing and hypothesizing, we don't tend to do that here and that lowers the quality of education. Because I think a lot of our, me included, we are so stuck to the exam because we have to pass this test so we're going to drill them and rehearse them but what we've done is, effectively, we've taken away their ability to think on their own. So when, let's say, they're given a test that doesn't have to do with anything that we have rehearsed, "Miss! I don't know what I'm doing!!". They're completely stuck and we have facilitated that because we allowed them to think that if you just do x, y and z, you will pass but that isn't it. There's other things that are involved in passing a test. Trying out things. Our kids sometimes don't know how to try out. They don't… they give up. They have learned helplessness. "Oh I can't do it" but a child who's developed in those soft skills, they get it. They will just figure it out. Our kids don't just figure it out.

<u>*Knowing* in IB</u>

Mr. Jordan (MHS) has more freedom than most of his colleagues to incorporate critical thinking skills into his classes because IB program classes are skill-based, meaning he organizes lesson plans around developing skills like writing and analysis. Mr. Jordan knew that some colleagues resented him for being assigned to the IB classes because teachers of Core and Immersion classes have to teach content-based courses in order to properly prepare students for exit exams, which constrains their creativity and freedom in teaching:

> On a daily basis they have a Ministry curriculum where they have to teach this many history chapters, this much science content and you hear the people who are teaching content based courses talk about how there aren't enough days. There are a certain number of chapters that they must complete. I'm not sure you get the opportunity to

> really differentiate assignments like I do because they have to teach this content (Mr. Jordan).

Both Mr. Lane and Ms. Briant (MHS) felt that, at the very least, the personal interdisciplinary project that IB students are required to complete for graduation should be assigned to all students as it encourages critical thinking, creativity and personal discovery. This past year, IB personal projects included science experiments, short story collections and woodworking projects. The IB stream is markedly more academic and more creative in other ways too like, for example, the IB students have a creative writing component on their final English exam, whereas the other students do not. The students are even separated for physical education, wherein IB students have an essay requirement that other students do not. IB students are the only ones Mist teachers felt were very likely to continue to Cegep. However, Mr. Jordan wanted to dismiss what he saw as a myth that IB students are doing more work than students in the Core and Immersion programs, giving an example:

> They have to do Shakespeare. The grade 11 IBs are the only one who read Hamlet this year… but at the same time, the students in the other classes in grade 11 are doing things that are challenging to them. So have my students demonstrated greater learning? No. They've demonstrated different learning that hopefully was more geared towards their level but a student in the core class who's demonstrated a great improvement in their ability this year and never read Hamlet, their education is just as impressive.

As the IB program at Mist is used as an instrument to deliberately stream students into a separate category of academic experiences and expectations, it also creates different social tracks. There are obvious cultural cleavages as well given IB students tend to be from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Even within Mist, the relatively higher-class students are given opportunities to engage in more critical, personalized and creative work, with better chances to continue academic studies than students in other streams. The classed stratification of knowledge *within* the school mirrors that *between* schools. In other words, learning appears to be most

academic, exploratory, creative and critical at Ella Hall, followed by IB at Ray, followed by the rest of Ray, followed by IB at Mist, followed by the rest of Mist.

The IB program at Ray is also utilized as an enrichment program, though, as Mr. Fars admits, "IB is not supposed to be an enriched program. To follow the philosophy of the program strictly…you can integrate kids in it but in our school board and for sure our school, it's an enriched program". While the IB program at Mist is used to track a minority of high-achieving students into a higher level, it is used at Ray in advertising, "promoting the school, being able to say to people "we are maintaining academic rigours"" (Mr. Ryan). Mr. Martin admitted, "we don't really do it. We fake it hardcore. It's the International Baccalaureate program. There are extra things that we're supposed to do. We do some of them. Some of them we fake it". Nevertheless, projecting the IB program as an enriched stream is a useful marketing tool. Not only is the program reputed to be stimulating, but its globally set standards are also appealing in an era of global capitalism.

4.4 *Learning to do*

Interviewees made strong links between *learning to know* and *learning to do,* interpreting the latter based on their expectations of work for their students. These pillars were unambiguously distinct at Mist, where teachers anticipated students' occupational *doing* would not be very cerebral, but largely conflated at Ray and Ella, where teachers anticipated students would enter fairly intellectual fields. Unlike Ray however, Ella teachers insisted on innovative and creative thinking as *doing*.

Learning to do for the knowledge economy

The blended conceptualization of *learning to do* and *learning to know* at Ella Hall reflected the deep connection teachers made between students' education and their eventual contribution to the knowledge economy, in which workers "think for a living" and utilize a combination of convergent, divergent and creative thinking in order to produce problem-solving ideas, knowledge and information. This occupational path was well reflected in teachers' expectations and hopes for students, like Ms. Everett who said, "when we say girls are underrepresented in engineering; they're also underrepresented in politics. So I want to see that change...Girls out there in bioinformatics. They're out there in engineering. They're out there in 3D [printing] and they're out there in politics" (Ms. Everett). *Learning to do* at Ella Hall was related to cerebral and IT-related activities, including "learning to write a paper" (Ms. Morin), "a lot of IT" (Ms. Garrity) and "doing presentations and like their study skills" (Ms. Pace).

Starting in grade 9, students at Ella Hall have personal laptops with which they learn to "us[e] technology to imagine, research, analyze, synthesize, represent, report, present, and to communicate in their creation and sharing of new knowledge" (school website). Students develop mature digital skills in sound recording, robotics, coding, website design, sophisticated photo editing, 3D printing and other complex technologies. Ms. Everett felt that part of quality education in the 21st century was that "technology is just being used like breathing. It's not even thought about…then I know that it's successful. It's saturated. That's how you would see it. You would see it everywhere". Indeed, they were the first school in the city to hire a full-time IT director and the only school to have a separate IT position managing curriculum versus mechanics, meaning "we're also the first school to acknowledge that we're not dropping technology into subjects anymore. It's in the bloodstream of learners. So it's full on curriculum,

it's not a matter of a little dose" (Ms. Everett). Like Ms. Everett, Ms. Morin and Ms. Pace both happily articulated that *learning to do* at Ella Hall strongly reflected the values stated by both the school and themselves.

With expectations of *learning to do* tangled in technology the way they are, clearly Ella Hall teachers anticipate that their students will enter knowledge intensive careers, which require digital competence to access, consume and integrate information; manage, examine and appraise collective information; and produce, disseminate and express information with digital tools. Ms. Everett's articulated philosophy of education was "the purpose of school is to solve problems that we haven't identified yet and for girls to go on and work in jobs whose titles are not yet created and they will create them based on mixing music and engineering and software design…to become bioinformatics, [for example]", which eerily reminds of Florida's job description for creative professionals such as health professionals, business managers, lawyers, scientists or professors. Like other creative class, such as a poet or artist, creative professionals work to create new content in thought, technology and culture but creative professionals are additionally tasked with forming new approaches to problems (Florida, 2003). Ms. Everett uses herself as an example to show the possibilities, "the purpose of school is to know who you are, to know what your talents are and to be able to go out into the world and mix and match and what's hilarious is I have a job as the director of IT. I had that job when it didn't exist and still doesn't". Ms. Pace's interview yielded similar parallels to Florida's work, especially in the importance she placed on the school's vision statement, "that this is a pre-university school" (Ms. Pace). Confirming the assumption students will pursue post-secondary education, Ms. Everett discussed how newly redesigned curriculum took into account "that the elevens are going to have to articulate themselves as learners to universities and universities use that kind of language so it's

good to be able to articulate yourself". University helps students obtain fulfilling careers in well-respected and well-paid fields and Ms. Pace made an important distinction between a job and a career when she said that while at most schools, the purpose of education is "to get a job. To make money, to be able to make money", schooling at Ella Hall was "definitely for a career". She went on, "in another school it would be more about making money, like being able to support themselves, so like staying away from poverty, in another school. Here it's more about being successful, having a successful career". Students are well supported in academic and career advising from grade eight, when students begin the school's Post-Graduate Preparatory Programme (PGP2) which, the school website claims, "provides girls with directed research and opportunities to help them map their future academic and career pathways" through class seminars, individual consultations and at least one meeting a year with families.

At Ray Academy, *doing* was tightly bound to *knowing* but there did not exist the same emphasis on creation and innovation as there did at Ella Hall. Mr. Fars (RA) talked about "different maths, we have different sciences", streamed by what students will be supposedly be *doing* with their *knowing* in the future. The traditional language of higher and lower level math has been replaced by that of context. Allegedly, the "science option" math class prepares students for pure math and science studies, the "technical and scientific option" prepares students for work in both manual and intellectual technical fields and the "cultural, social and technical option" (CST) teaches students only what is required by provincial exams. The CST class, from which students either continue studies in arts, humanities or social sciences or immediately start working, is not formally considered a lower level math class, only different, but CST is worth fewer credits. There are similar changes in the science curriculum, where "we used to just have like, "science" and now we have general and applied. Applied is really for kids to work their

hands" (Ms. Fars). Despite such *doing* in class, Mr. Martin felt that *learning to do* was only associated with the other pillars in "leadership class. Actually doing something and seeing what you get out of doing something for someone else", but even then, it was only "tou[ched] on a little bit more". Otherwise, *doing* took on an entirely occupational connotation, which Mr. Martin felt was a shame. *Doing* at Ray was also linked to life skills and responsibilities in "financial literacy courses which is actually, you know, here's how much money you get and here's your mortgage, you want to buy a car…" (Mr. Fars).

Given interviewees' interpretations and reactions to *learning to do* at Ray, it is clear these students are expected to go into professional work that earns the prestige and income of the middle or upper class. *Doing* was especially linked to math and science, whose achievement teachers thought predicts post-secondary education, skilled labour and impressive salaries. Ray students are not however, like Ella Hall students, necessarily expected or encouraged to pursue creative professional careers, whose incomes and prestige are another step higher. Mist teachers did not make connections between *doing* and the knowledge economy, and instead predicted *doing* for their students as unskilled wage-labour or trades.

<u>*Learning to do* for trades and vocations</u>

At Mist High School, teachers predominantly connected *learning to know* to *learning to do* in so far as that modern society necessitates a certain level of literacy, numeracy and critical thinking to work, parent, leisure and navigate everyday errands like shopping and commuting. Mist teachers conceptualized *learning to do* as hands-on and life skills because they did not anticipate that their students would participate in creative class or creative professional careers, let alone many of them continue studies after high school. Ms. Elias explained, "for many of our

students, having a job at McDonald's or Wal-Mart is perfectly okay, collecting welfare is perfectly acceptable" and Ms. Briant corroborated that most students "will not get to an academic pathway. A lot them will get to a vocational path and that is a success to us, that you are a gainfully employed citizen to this world and that's awesome, that you're not on welfare and a lot of them do that route too".

As for technology, a staple skill for *learning to do* in the knowledge economy, teachers did not make an association to work not associated with work and only expected students to use IT skills for social communication, leisure and basic digitalized tasks because "it's 2016" (Mr. Jordan). In this "e-economy", the most prestigious and high-paying jobs are linked to digital infrastructure and skills and youth who lack requisite digital skills may only be suited for blue-collar, deskilled white-collar or service work. Unlike Ella Hall staff, Mist High School teachers identified technology as a key tool in engaging students only in *learning to know* activities, not *learning to do*, which indicates a clear digital divide. Knowledge itself is a primary good and technology is a crucial tool for producing, consuming and disseminating it, and thus deeply located in socio-cultural status, change and inequality (Iskandarani, 2008; van Dijk, 2005; Wessels, 2013). Technology at Mist is predominantly used to engage students in the basics of literacy and numeracy and is especially useful in differentiating educational programs for students with learning disabilities. Students with difficulty handwriting use sophisticated computer apps for voice-to-text writing but most did not use computers for many other tasks. Though happy with the impact the computers have so far had on individualized learning, Ms. Briant indicated that students were not very digitally proficient and most students "haven't mastered the idea of taking notes off the board through typing…I don't think they've learned that skill yet. They don't even know how to type. They think they do but they just know how to text

on a phone, which is really different than a keyboard right? So it's a real mess". This digital divide is not based on inherent talents but limited access and control of technology. Compared to Ella Hall's sophisticated and well-established laptop program, Mist only introduced such an initiative last year. Students receive a laptop to use through his or her five years in high school, although they are not permitted to take them home as laptops are provided at no cost to students. One teacher noted that it was sometimes difficult for students to complete assignments and projects because they did not have a computer, or even Internet, at home. Moreover, borrowed laptops may not give students the sense of ownership, control and freedom of expression in their learning that such tools can provide (Song, 2014). There is not much support to improve this situation at Mist as there is no single designated expert like Ms. Everett (EH). Ms. Briant's teaching duties have been reduced by half so that she can take on a similar role but without the expertise or time Ms. Everett has to dedicate to this work, she struggled with the position, "not only manage[ing] giving the devices into the hands of the teachers but also kind of a pedagogical component…was a big learning curve…it could be a full time job. It's a huge amount of work". The digital divide points to lesser academic and creative expectations for Mist students, whose inadequate IT skills inhibits progress in many modern fields.

Teachers noted that for many Mist students, student success did not necessarily mean being awarded a high school diploma but just that they "walk across the stage and just fulfill their five years at Mist, versus fulfilling the credits" (Ms. Briant). Ms Briant continued,

> We're honouring that day on convocation, which is awesome, which is odd for some schools. Some schools they're like, "no you don't deserve it. You don't get to cross the stage" but you know, for these kids, some of these kids will never get the opportunity to walk across any stage. So lets just give it to them and we have a hug party because this is probably the best thing they'll ever get. And it's sad to say but this is what's going to happen. So you need to honour them. "You toughed it out!" "You didn't drop out. Good for you!" Talk about student success! There you go!.

Accordingly, *learning to do* for many of the teachers was best represented by WOTP, a program "if you're not going to get your high school degree, you can take Math CST4 ten years in a row, it's just not gong to happen" (Mr. Fars). It is fairly unique to Mist as "our school isn't [fully academic] because of the clientele we have and we have to feed to those needs" (Ms. Briant). Neither Mr. Fars (RA) nor Ms. Garrity (EH) felt that WOTP could work at their schools because they sensed higher expectations for students in higher socio-economic neighborhoods. Ms. Garrity felt WOTP was an impressive example of *learning to do* because "if we move these 14 year olds here, they'll have a bit more success cause what was the point of keeping them in school where they weren't having any success?" but concluded it would never be implemented at Ella Hall because parents, students and educators in this class context would not likely accept that "they go off to a technical program and they don't get their diploma" (Mr. Garrity). While some trade and vocational paths can be financially rewarding, as Ms. Pace said, students at Ella Hall are expected to go into careers that hold prestige, not just big salaries. Nonetheless, there are students who are uninterested in pursuing academic paths and Ms. Garrity was surprised when girls complained that the annual Career Day represented only careers in science and none in trades. Ms. Garrity's reaction had been, "do girls go into trades here?", questioning the relevance of speakers in trades at the Ella Hall Career Day. Mr. Fars also advocated for the program but was adamant that "not Ray Academy, please. We don't send anybody there, [to WOTP]".

Teachers at Mist accept WOTP because pursuing a semiskilled trade does not significantly deviate from the path they expect most students will take in the service industry, whether in food or retail, or vocational paths like beauty care or carpentry. Another example of *learning to do* at Mist reflected these expectations. Students help run a school café, "a student run entrepreneurship café where kids learn how to use money, cash and stuff like that" (Ms.

Briant). While youth in WOTP often find themselves in less skilled and lower-income jobs, "when they leave they actually have skills because if we force them to go through the academic route, then they have nothing. So this at least they'll be employed" (Mr. Briant). Nevertheless, there are criticisms of *learning to do* in WOTP. First, it contributes to the social reproduction of class and cyclical poverty. Many of the students who find themselves in this program are from low-income households whose poor social and economic support was a factor in initial academic failings. These students will not likely find social mobility through WOTP. Ms. Garrity noted, "the most vulnerable ones get shuffled [around]" and Mr. Fars felt "it's tough because they're still kids [when we] throw in the towel" on 14 year old students. He was also skeptical that WOTP was actually created to empower students but rather to "get them off your books and so then they're not called drop-outs if they don't pass…What I was always afraid of, just because we're all so competitive and we all want crazy high success rates, is if you get anyone who's like borderline, you kind of figure "uhh…listen, you're gonna go over there" [to WOTP]". While for some students, with severe special needs, "it's obviously really the right thing to do" (Mr. Fars), others just do not have the proper social and academic support, which they are then punished for at only 14 years old. He noted that class differences in social and academic support were particularly strong. Many students are dropping out or failing high school "in high-poverty areas" because they cannot pass the required math program, which Mr. Fars felt could so easily be made more accessible to students. He shared, "the only thing about math is it's kind of a puzzle. You're going to come up to something (smacks fist to hand like a wall)" and while students in elite schools find the proper support and resources for help, students in poorer schools more easily give up, "it's just like, "I…I….I'm not doing this".

Ms. Pace echoed such disappointment and identified that small class sizes at Ella allowed for more personalized instruction. Explaining, "it's the student is cared for. Even if the student is failing, she might have very high quality education", she laughed that one year there was only one student in the grade ten CST class, which amounts to personal tutoring. Mist and Ray teachers felt guilty that in large classes they could not always provide much attention to individual students. Mr. Lane (MHS) sighed, "education is like raising a child…What might work for one won't work with another. So, as an educator, that is what you are faced with but not 2 or 3 kids, like in a family; you may have to deal with 100 different kids". The reality at Mist is that many students progress without understanding entire math units, making it nearly impossible to succeed in subsequent years. Mr. Jordan guessed that at least 40% of Mist students fail math. Despite the "math crisis", Mr. Lane did not blame the students because "kids struggle in math because we have weak math teachers". A few interviewees agreed that "we should have specialists teaching our students at the elementary level, when they are developing those basic scores and love" (Mr. Lane) because ""if you've got a kid who's struggling in kindergarten, the kid will most likely not be in school anymore in grade 10" (Ms. Morin, EH). Mr. Lane cited Finland's system, in which every high school teacher has a master's degree and success rates are high, as inspiration. Skills beget skills and opportunity begets opportunity. Many Mist students do not have the skills to navigate the system because they have not had certain opportunities but, without acquiring new skills, they are not equipped to find opportunity. Mr. Lane analogized, "if somebody for instance tells you, "Here's the key to a car. If you can drive the car around then the car is yours" but if you never learned how to drive….then you can't". Without the skills or opportunities, the most vulnerable students are sent to WOTP, where they are trained for jobs like bricklaying and custodial work. Though the program is promoted as "Career Planning and

Entrepreneurship", there is little potential mobility or innovation and students from working class and poor households find themselves reproducing such conditions.

Interviewees expressed that their brightest students were also "forgotten". Teachers saw that students performing above level needed to be challenged and, as teachers often ignore them to help struggling students, these students easily lose interest and motivation. Mr. Jordan (MHS) advocates for more resources to engage such students but is usually denied, seen as holding "an elitist position", especially in a school with so much need. Though Ella's resources and class sizes allow teachers to give students more attention, Ms. Garritty admitted, "no one's done anything on giftedness in this school". She believed that teachers need professional development to inspire ideas about how to work with these students because, having only been taught to deliver standardized curriculum to a generically at-level student, teachers have few ideas to engage "gifted" students, even if given the resources. Ms. Garrity pointed to the trend of flourishing private and independent schools like Blythe Academies to show that "it's people saying "we took our kids out of the public system because it's isn't answering our needs" and that's for all kinds of kids really. Bright kids, struggling kids, disabled kids".

This was only one example of why so many Interviewees felt that "people's attitudes" (Ms. Briant, MHS) and "mindset…politics and constraints… ideology" (Mr. Lane, MHS) were the biggest barriers to quality of education. Mr. Lane shared, "I am Haitian so I come from a country where there is a clear demarcation between the haves and the have-nots and I have seen a lot of people with so much less resources do so much better than our students". When asked about what factors facilitate QoE, many respondents insisted something like "there's like one single direction…in sync" (Ms. Morin, EH) or "common goals" (Mr. Jordan, MHS) set and encouraged by administration. Despite accurately diagnosing that "mindset" is one of the biggest

barriers to improving the education system, teachers struggled with finding an appropriate remedy. The humanistic framework they adopted in order to demarcate themselves from the functionalist paradigm they found so harmful to students did not in fact bring about significant change in teaching practices, policy or even larger ideology. Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, firmly rejects the excessive neoliberal individualization on which both functionalist and humanistic paradigms are fixated.

Doing and *knowing* at a cost

Despite the variety of course options, teachers at Ray and Ella felt that students were pressured to pursue math and science, despite personal interests and strengths, and that hegemonic hierarchies of *learning to know* and *learning to do* were detrimental to students' *learning to be:*

> I ask a lot of them, "what are you doing next year?" and one of the most popular answer is like, "I'm going into science". I'm like, "cool" and I asked them, "who here likes science?" and half the hands go down. And like…student success? We chalk up that idea of student success like, "that kid got into honours science! Amazing!". But they hate their life! Cool. Cool beans. That's great. That's a win. That's sarcasm… (Mr. Martin, RA).

> I feel very sorry when I hear, "well I chose engineering because I can make a lot of money" and if you ask that person, "well do you like engineering?", well, "not particularly but it'll get me a lot of money". Well, okay that's a choice you can make, that's your privilege but that makes me a little sad (Ms. Everett, EH).

> *Learning to be* is where we really have to help the kids out. They're too involved in *learning to know* and *learning to do* and they forget *learning to be*… (Ms. Pace, EH).

At Mist, this type of pressure did not appear to be problem coming from teachers, whose main concern was simply keeping students interested in any subject at all. Ms. Briant did see pressure from parents but, rather than worry about the anxiety this may cause students, like

teachers at Ray and Ella Hall did, Ms. Briant struggled to help parents understand the academic limitations that inhibit such ambitions:

> And it's sometimes really hard to tell the parent, you know, "well I don't think your child will ever graduate". And you have parents who agree which is not often but most of the kids you have parents who are holding out that the kid will become a doctor one day. Well, he can't even read…and he's 15. Like, no one's trying to make fun here. I don't know how much reading recovery you can possibly do to meet the dream of the mother. Do you know what I mean? The kid probably doesn't have any interest in this but…you know…it's hard. It hurts (Ms. Briant).

Though Ray and Mist teachers expressed regret that *doing* was not connected to more sophisticated and cerebral activities for their students, Ella Hall students complained that *doing* did not include more manual work and life skills. I was told that in the fall of 2015, one of the main complaints from an alumni focus group was not having learned financial literacy skills in high school despite the school's strong rhetoric of female empowerment and agency. They felt that given the school's marketing campaigns, the girls should learn the skills necessary to make financially responsible decisions about how they want to live, work and interact with others. Despite such feedback, these skills have yet to be integrated into curriculum. In a focus group of current students, girls reported they wanted to be more self-sufficient in household management and personal care. Ms. Garrity was surprised when girls told her, "we want to learn how to cook and learn how to wash our clothes" and her immediate reaction was, "don't you have a washing machine at home?". The school established a home economics club where students learn knitting, cooking and other such skills. Demands for such learning speaks to students' willingness and interest in autonomy but also the lack of such responsibility and instruction from parents at home. While such skills did not come up in other interviews, Ms. Elias had commented, "I love these kids. They're real. They're not spoiled. They don't know what spoiled is", and that because so many lived in unstructured or unstable households, they were "mini-

adults" (Mr. Night, MHS), impressively self-sufficient and mature in self-care when given the necessary resources. In the end, Mr. Lane's goal for Mist students is to ensure "becom[ing] autonomous and work[ing] towards being completely self-sufficient". Though autonomy and citizenship meant different things for interviews, teachers shared Mr. Lane's humanistic educational approach. The goal of education was overwhelmingly described as variations of "seeing what you're made of, as a person": self-actualization. The only response that reflected critical pedagogy was Ms. Everett's, who said, felt that education "should be about who you are, giving you the processes, also giving you the character skills enabling you to live in a community in a healthy way such that you are a functioning member of that community and neither dismissed nor someone who treads upon". Whereas most responses were solely focused on the impact of education on the soul and self, Ms. Everett clarified that personal development and growth should never be at the cost of another's opportunity and potential for the same. In fact, she identified that particular modes of *doing* and *knowing* oppress and marginalize others, such as the strict patenting and price inflation of drugs that leave so many sick and untreated. She also saw how sometimes *knowing* and *doing* are accomplished only at the exploitation, subordination and deprivation of others, such as the expanding sweatshop labour in the Third World that has permitted expanding business in the West. Ms. Everett felt that *doing* and *knowing* are increasingly motivated by profit rather than happiness, justice, or self-sufficiency and that schools needs to appropriately respond with character education that teach students to honour social justice and human rights.

Pedagogical applications of *learning to do*

Interviews also connected *learning to know* with *learning to do* in project-based and hands-on learning, which they recognized was more fun for students and helped students retain more than do lectures, worksheets and other traditional approaches to learning. Some teachers were particularly excited about the benefits of incorporating technology:

> I push that agenda of creating things. When you get the kids to create through a project, it's huge. [Teachers] are like, "oh I don't have enough time. My content is very, very loaded". You don't understand! If you gave them one hour of coding, they'll learn the Cartesian plane within a second. They don't need worksheets and worksheets of the x, y axis. They just kind of do it. They'll know it (Ms. Briant, MHS)

> I watched [two students] do stats because they were checking all the websites for this hockey players' stats and they found mistakes in the stats and discrepancies between the websites. They had a giant chart; they were doing math way beyond their level! (Ms. Everett, EH)

Ms. Briant felt that while administration was receptive to teachers' ideas and concerns, they were not keen on investing in this approach. Indeed, Mr. Lane felt that project-based learning could "turn it all around" at inner-city schools like Mist but that technology was not always a valuable investment because "what cognitive faculty are we relinquishing by using these devices? ...They have these graphic calculators…and they say, "Oh, sir you're old school. We're lucky we have the technology to think for us"". He preferred to invest in teachers rather than technology. This position reflects common consequences of the digital divide, namely that while high SES students are often able to manipulate modern technology for learning and work purposes, lower SES students tend to "merely submit to them" for gaming or texting enjoyment (Karsenti & Fievez, 2013, p. 4). As a result, upper class schools use technology to help produce scholars and other knowledge workers, while poorer schools use technology to reinforce basic academic competencies and prepare youth for the labour force (van Dijk, 2005).

With integrating comparatively less technology, Mr. Lane still wanted to introduce personal projects for every student to help them actively explore and narrow their interests in order to pinpoint aspirations for the future. He felt this was important because "students that have no idea what they're going to do have a tendency to drift here and there but students who know what they want to do stay on task" (Mr. Lane). Conversely, teachers at Ella Hall and Ray tried to encourage students to diversify their interests, activities and ambitions because they trusted students would eventually find their passion and pursue work in that field. Ms. Pace (EH) commented that her students stay on task because, while they may not have yet identified their passion, their parents have communicated and encouraged certain plans for the future. Many have already submitted to classed social pressure to commit to certain academic routes. Middle and upper class students tend to "drink the Kool-Aid", as Mr. Fars put it. These students are encouraged to explore different activities, interests and fields because teachers assume their occupational futures will be bright, while lower class students are more nervously steered and micromanaged. Mist teachers gave several reasons why so many of their students do not focus on end goals including, "no expectations are put on the student for the very reason the parents had no expectations themselves", "it's hard to motivate a child to go to school when you haven't done it yourself. These parents are ill equipped to find the proper argument" (Mr. Lane) and "the families don't want their kids to be better than them…they feel insecure" (Mr. Briant). Teachers' attitudes about student interest in school were very influenced by their perceptions of student class, especially as class relates to education and occupation of parents.

At Ella Hall, teachers credited small class sizes and plentiful resources as facilitating opportunities for individualized and project-based work for all students. For example, Grade 11 students can take an independent study to explore any interest. Girls have used the recording

studio and equipment to write and produce music but projects have been less conventional, such as one student who decided to study textiles, specifically creating her own chain mail. The impact of personalized, project-based learning that Ms. Briant hoped to create at Mist was evident at Ella Hall:

> Real learning changes everything! Instead of the little learning about the test and the exam… the girls begin, they choose a topic, and I have parents calling me saying "they can't stop learning. They're like obsessed! They've spent the last four, five weekends and that's all they want to do". And I'm like, "is that so terrible?" You know? Great! So they've become obsessed with sleep and the brain or 3D printing…(Ms. Everett)

While Ms. Garrity and Ms. Everett talked about how students "across the school, not just in pockets" (Ms. Garrity) had this type of opportunity in both independent study classes and integrated into standard curriculum, teachers at both Mist and Ray felt it was easier to incorporate creative project-based and hands-on learning only "in pockets", the IB programs. IB curriculum facilitates such dynamism and students were confident, curious and capable enough to engage in such work. There is a little more project-based learning at Ray in mainstream classes because the students perform well in basic academic competencies and have the time to expand and demonstrate knowledge through creative and dynamic assignments. Still, teachers felt it was difficult to coordinate. In almost every interview, large class sizes were identified as a major barrier to QoE. They felt that the fewer students they had to teach, the easier it was to coax both enthusiasm and academic performance. However, neither public school principal agreed with this perspective. Both referenced John Hattie's famous research on "visible learning", which found that reducing class size had a small effect on student achievement compared to other strategies, most of which were actually less expensive to implement. Both were disappointed that dominant discourse on teaching practices overwhelmed the actual research on the subject. Though some teachers did indeed identify personal "ideology", "mindset" and

"politics" as barriers to QoE, it was evident in most conclusions that material resources were of greater daily concern.

Despite the popular opinion that access and use of material resources and capital were some of the most important determinants of QoE, it was the teacher's pedagogical and philosophical approach to curricula that appeared to be the most influential factor in learning. Teachers shared that even when overwhelmed by particularly large class sizes, when they had adopted alternative pedagogical and curricular practices, learning outcomes and enthusiasm had improved. Nonetheless, deeply entrenched attitudes and expectations of *doing* and *knowing* by social class guided teaching practices.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION II:
class as a factor in *learning to be* and *learning to live together*

We want to know who we are. We want to know what we have to give. And what others have to give us and we don't know how to do it. We are really born really bad at that (Ms. Everett).

While dominant functionalist discourse on education is primarily concerned with the occupational and economic outcomes of the student, interviews were more interested in how students are socialized in school to build self-confidence, autonomy, kindness, communication, passion, friendships and creativity as well as how they introduce these qualities into their lives as citizens and community members. Though interviews were equally enthusiastic proponents of *learning to be* and *learning to live together*, their definitions and motivations were strongly influenced by the class backgrounds of their students and their associated academic and occupational expectations for them.

5.1 *Learning to Be*

Interviews had similar reactions to the concept of *learning to be*. In their experience, from a humanistic perspective, it was the most important aspect of schooling but, unfortunately, the least emphasized. As interviews did not feel that standard curriculum allowed for much *learning to be*, many made concerted efforts to introduce social and moral learning into class in many ways. Teachers felt that school did not encourage students to develop personality, self-esteem, autonomy and other aspects of identity and self because "the school board really only cares about success rates. They don't really care about much else" (Ms. Elias, MHS). Curriculum was focused on learning the official knowledge of isolated disciplines like math, English and history, and not as opportunities for self-discovery or growth, which teachers thought they should be. Teachers working in different class contexts took different approaches to implementing, defining and justifying *learning to be*. The implementation and relative focus of

learning to be stemmed from classed geographic, social, and cultural disparities and the reasons teachers gave for its importance were explicitly linked to socio-economic class or occupation, the incomes and prestige of which have strong class implications. *Learning to be* was predominantly integrated into after-school Mist life but not as readily accessible in Ray extracurricular activities. Ray teachers felt *learning to be* was instead apparent in the classroom but no one gave examples. Ella Hall teachers felt that *learning to be* was apparent in both curricular and extracurricular content, albeit less so than *learning to know*, *do* or *live together*.

How students *learn to be*

Most teachers tried to incorporate aspects of *learning to be* into lesson plans whenever they could. At Mist and Ray, this pillar was immediately connected to the IB program whereas Ella teachers saw this pillar represented in all their classes. Teachers saw IB curricular requirements like creative writing, poetry and personal projects as allowing students to explore their own interests, strengths and weaknesses in class and teachers found it difficult to promote creativity and autonomy in the mainstream curriculum because, as Mr. Jordan (MHS) said, "the teachers are frazzled to get through all of the content". The difference between skill-based and content-based courses was again a factor. Ms. Briant (MHS) insisted that replacing content-courses with innovative skill-based curriculum would not only promote *learning to be* but also *learning to know,* serving the very agenda teachers had cited as inhibiting their ability to promote *learning to be* in class. Ms. Briant was enthusiastic about the rising popularity of coding and robotics across North America. This type of work actually helps students focus and learn in the more traditional disciplines because "suddenly, they're troubleshooting. Suddenly, they are trying out things that they never did before and that skill will transfer to the exam". Ms. Briant was adamant that

teaching to the test has not proved a winning strategy because "unless you cheat and steal an exam from [the school board]….just you teach the test, that's never going to happen. They're always going to have a problem that they've never seen before or said in a different way". In her opinion, teaching students "reasoning, estimation and guessing and hypothesizing" was really important. She was frustrated with teachers who would not try new pedagogical and curricular approaches and even more so with teachers who claimed that they were, but in her opinion, were not. She said, "you can give the kids the same worksheet over and over again and they're doing it but they haven't solved anything. They haven't actually figured out a way to get to a solution that is not your solution, that's not your formulaic solution". Ms. Everett agreed, observing that educators and administers were not willing to try new approaches or actively reject traditional ones because they were either nervous or more traditional than they espoused:

> I think [my colleagues] all share the notion that learning is personal. How you engineer an environment in which that happens, I'm not so sure. We live our lives based on not what we think but based on what we believe to be true. So sometimes there's what we say and then what we live. What we live will always be based on what we believe. So I think for some of them, they do say that's what they believe but can't quite give up the exam. Can't quite give up the 12 quizzes for any other way of doing it because thy just don't feel secure. They don't feel that it's safe, which is why one of the other most important thing for teachers is not just that they make learning real but that they know how to assess it. They know how to assess how real this learning is to this student.

They felt that this teaching was cultivating a "fill in the blanks generation" (Ms. Briant), the very words Ritzer himself used to critique the rationalization of educational evaluations (2013, Ritzer, p.61). She felt that students were always searching for a single answer, which of course never exists. Though she felt that *learning to be* would help students in *learning to know,* she recognized that her students had a hard time developing critical and divergent thinking skills without an already strong sense of *learning to be*. She was torn:

> I feel like wearing a t-shirt that says "figure it out!". "Well, Miss I don't know how to do this!", "Figure it out!" and you know what, you can do it. and it's a sense of confidence

> that they don't ever seem to have becomes it comes one way, that quality. I…we all have to own up and stop that (Ms. Briant, Mist High School).

After suggesting various curricular and pedagogical approaches including having parents sit in on classes, using technology as creative outlets, more project-based learning and increased community engagement, she said excitedly, "our success rates are low. So at this point, my philosophy is, what do we got to lose? What do we have to hang onto that is so amazing? Look at our success rates. It's not great so why don't we try something new? And it could actually bring in a huge change".

However, other interviews felt that, compared to IB students, those in the Core and Immersion programs were less likely to take advantage of class activities in order to learn about themselves and the world around them because, as Ms. Elias said, "I don't think it's cool to be called a good reader or a good writer anymore. Not at Mist. It's cool to be on a team. It's cool to be in a club, like the dance crew". A few Mist teachers pointed out that although kids are not very encouraged *to be* in class, at least extracurricular activities in arts and athletics encouraged "a bit more personal discovery" (Ms. Elias) with their focus on teamwork, health, movement and self-expression. Students at Mist are very active in such activities and many take part in several different clubs and sports. For some youth, those whose household dynamics are characterized by neglectful or abusive family, the very choice to stay after school is in itself an act of self-care. These kids, avoiding emotional and social damage to *being* and self, find safety, community and recreation at school, "one of the only positive things in that community" (Ms. Elias).

Conversely, there is little extracurricular participation at Ray. Teachers worried that while it may appear like an active student life, it is mostly the same students "engaged up the wazoo…the ones that are getting involved in everything, it's like the "in" crowd are the ones" (Mr. Fars). The kids who were not involved were perhaps those that need it the most and so,

according to Mr. Fars, "your mandate really has to be how many other kids are you getting in there and I don't think you're getting enough of them". Several teachers felt the school needed to invest in more diverse activities to engage different types of students. Mr. Teith specifically identified broadening the sports program, where activities like cross-country running and yoga will most likely engage students who are not already involved in more popular sports like football. Mr. Fars had similar sentiments but identified two other reasons for low participation rates. First, unlike Mist, "it's a traditional school…it's like maybe that's all they need the school for. For the most part, everybody comes from fairly stable families and they're good with not having the school be such a community school. So it's like not an essential part of all the kids' lives". He also identified that because "kids come from all over the place. 2:30pm the buses come. Boom! They're gone", it is very inconvenient for students to stay after school for activities. Many middle class families move to this area because they can afford nicer houses in the suburbs than downtown, but sadly this means that even students from the neighborhood "live far away" (Mr. Fars).

At Ella Hall, on the other hand, extracurricular activities and trips were paramount to the student profile. Several teachers felt it was imperative not only for its intrinsic value of fun and learning but also for "our mission of educating girls for the 21st century" work and society. The girls are constantly involved in extracurricular activities, trips and guest lectures and workshops at the school. This was a reoccurring theme in interviews with Ella Hall teachers, who emphasized the intensity and variety of activities, clubs, volunteering opportunities and sports teams offered through school. Ms. Everett provided a particularly colourful image when she said "this school is unique. It's eclectic. It runs at a very high pace. It's like it runs on diesel, not on regular gasoline". The school has very competitive team sports but Ms. Garrity confessed they

are “really focused on athletics here and we’re not focused on physical activity and fitness, like lifelong skills”. She wants to promote more personal fitness in the coming years in order to encourage both mental and physical wellness. Currently, there is an outdoor education elective for tenth grade students, which exposes them to skating, skiing, hiking and other outdoor exercise, but the physical education teacher is also introducing activities like rowing and curling to the required physical education class next year. The school has also instated mindfulness programs for staff and students, which is supposedly going to expand in extracurricular and curricular formats in the coming years. The culture and politics of the body is deeply classed and these students are being taught to demonstrate certain cultural and corporeal performances of physical and mental health and leisure through sport and exercise (Warde, 2006; T. C. Wilson, 2002). While these students are not yachting or attending polo matches, posh cultural markers of yesteryear’s elite, their activities certainly demand a certain capital, equipment, time and taste. Lifelong fitness skills are not considered jogging around the park and instead necessitate buying expensive skiing gear and tickets or memberships to curling clubs for example.

Unlike Mist teachers, who felt they had to manipulate curriculum to coax *learning to be,* Ella Hall teachers felt their curriculum was already disposed to do so. Again, this is because teachers at Mist felt they have to teach to the test while teachers at Ella Hall, because of the students’ academic level, feel they are able to get more imaginative and playful with curriculum in ways that grant students more autonomy and creativity. Similarly, the resources and culture at Ella Hall allow teachers to encourage a more developed sense of *learning to be* than is promoted at Mist or even Ray.

What students *learn to be*

Coming from socially and economically stable homes, Ella Hall students have already achieved facets of *learning to be* that Mist teachers are still looking to encourage in their students. As Lethbridge (1986) wrote in a critique of humanistic education, "what real individuals, living in what real societies, working at what real jobs, and earning what real income have any chance at all of becoming self actualized?" (p.90). Ms. Garrity felt that it was important for girls to critically reflect on "all the emotions of dealing with the content, learning skills". Like Ms. Briant, Ms. Everett also identified critical thinking as a bridge between *learning to know* and *learning to be,* arguing that students need a strong basis in critical thinking and ethics in order to appropriately make sense of the world around them. She made a strong case that *learning to know* is a vehicle for *learning to be:*

> I mean I know my joke that isn't a joke that I tell the girls about doing your homework, is that if you do your homework and you do it with your whole heart then you find out who you are and you end up in the right program afterwards and that means you actually meet people that you actually like and love who can actually like and love and understand you, you make the right marriage, you make the right children or whatever you want and then you die happy. Whereas if you don't do your homework, you don't know who you are, you choose the wrong program, you marry the wrong man, you have the wrong children, you hate them and they hate you, you die either underweight or overweight depending on how you handle stress and your life was a disaster. So you should do your homework (laughs).

In order to personalize pedagogy to better promote *learning to be* in everyday *learning to know*, Ella Hall has invested in professional development and redesigned the school's strategy plan, mission statement and vision. Interviews repeatedly brought up how the school is shifting towards more empirically based pedagogy, grounded in new research on education and the teenage brain. Students will be assessed using the Myers–Briggs Type Indicator[3] and teaching

[3] This self-reported questionnaire was invented to indicate the psychological typologies of individual decision-making and patterns of perception, which can establish individual learning styles based on cognitive dispositions (extraversion/introversion, feeling/thinking, sensing/intuition and judging/ perceiving) (Bayne, 1995).

will be tailored based on students' individual learning styles. This new approach aims to help students not only do well in school, but do so in ways that meaningfully reflect their learning styles, personalities and ambitions. *Learning to be* was, for Ella Hall teachers, a process of self-actualization. This year, the administration has really started emphasizing the importance for

> everybody to succeed in their own way, their own style of learning. They're saying that we have to guide them in their own path the way they want to learn. So they're trying to have different ways to teach kids and they're trying to expand in that way. So that there would be individualized more. Like talking to kids about what they want to do and where they want to go (Ms. Pace, EH).

Meanwhile, the connection between *learning to know* and *learning to do* was less sophisticated at Mist, where teachers talked about their students' sense of self and being like they did math and reading levels: stunted. Ms. Elias compared emotional need to elementary levels when she said "they're so needy, they come up to you and they run and hug you, which is unusual at high school. You usually see this in elementary but it's because you see the need in here and you feel it". Mist teachers' chief objective was helping students pass classes and subsequent goals related to what they saw as basic socialization. There was no discussion of the type of complete moral, social and economic self-actualization that Ella Hall teachers had examined, but rather an objective of basic emotional stability and security. Ms. Briant reflected on a lesson she taught about purpose in life, "sometimes I think they just kind of think they're kind of useless. I said, "you know, you're not an accident in this world. You're here for a reason" and they're all like staring at me …because they've actually never considered that you're really important in this world". While *learning to be* was officially a secondary priority, Mist interviews felt that *learning to be* was actually a prerequisite for other pillars of education. Mist interviews all articulated something about how without emotional stability or confidence,

students had trouble concentrating on the task at hand, trusting others for help, staying determined and believing in themselves:

> You say, "how is it that a kid can't remember that 2+2=4? How is it possible? My three year old understood that right away. And a 14 year old still has to think about it?" It's because they're so stressed out. Nothing gets retained anymore. And this is what's happening. If we can create an environment that destresses them and makes them feel safe and routine plays a huge part too. Like they understand what happens every single day in my class. In the first ten minutes you do this, the next ten minutes you do that. You see a whole level, brings them right down. And they are more able to focus than if you didn't do that…Being, you know, met with an emotional, stable kind of environment such as school, if we can give them that, where life is a routine, where school is not unpredictable and not too much stress, just enough to motivate them then that helps with the quality of their education… if you pour your energy, and know if you give them stability and love, like you just have to love these kids and know you're going to be there every single day…That little ounce of stability will help them focus on their work. And I just pray that that happens. More often than not. It's sad but it's true. (Ms. Briant, MHS).

They felt that teachers can and should provide a safe space for students to explore their interests, passions, weaknesses and talents but ultimately, it was the students who taught themselves how *to be*. Unlike Ray and Ella Hall teachers, who spoke of how they helped instill *learning to be*, teachers at Mist believed that *learning to be* was something students did entirely by themselves, for themselves:

> That's what success is, you can actually overcome all your challenges. I mean, oh my goodness. I can't give you anything. You have done it yourself. And that's amazing. So ya, there's baseline marks but then there's something else here... How I feel successful as a teacher? Well if I can instill… if I can inspire them, encourage that good behaviour in class… Success for me would be that they were able to do what I required but on top of that they did it well, they were resilient, they came in with a great attitude despite everything that has been thrown at them (Ms. Briant).

Creating a safe and secure place for Mist students to explore *learning to be* was not an easy task. Three of the Mist interviews commented on their complex identity as a teacher, elaborating that at Mist they had responsibilities and roles beyond academics, not unlike a social worker or parent:

> I think any teacher here would agree with me when they say that you're kind of a life coach, a mentor, a role model because a lot of them come with not a lot so they need a little bit of guidance…I have a lot of friends who teach in public schools with affluent families and they say you know, it's different because there they don't need you. You're just a teacher. And I think well, just a teacher, is a pretty great vocation but there's something about this place a bit different. They need you for something other than academics. (Ms. Briant, MHS)

> Sometimes I'll take off the principal hat and I'll go play basketball with them and I'll come down a little bit to their level and we joke around because I think that that helps to build those relationships…One [former student], he always introduces me to his friends, I found out later, "Ya, this is the closest I ever had as a father" and that in itself is revealing to me. I'm godfather to one of his sons. I remember, and my vice-principal told me, "I am convinced that you saved this kid's life." (Mr. Lane, MHS)

> So, you have to step it up. You are not just their teacher. You are their role model. You are their coach. You are their psychologist. You are everything. You're their mother. I feed the kids. I have kids come out to me, tell me things you would never tell your teacher like ever, ever, ever, ever. (Ms. Elias, MHS)

Teachers at Ray and Ella made no such commitment. Teaching was mostly, if not purely, an academic endeavor. Indeed, two teachers at Ray explicitly commented on the difficulties of providing social and emotional support to students, which they felt was not part of their job because "*learning to live together* and *learning to be* are about feeling loved and being able to share that love…trying to give somebody some learning to themselves and learning to love others, as *not* a parent-guardian or family member is a big ask. You know, kids coming in that are still struggling and still trying to figure out the world and angry" (Mr. Ryan, RA). Mist teachers recognized that their role was tied to the unique economic and educational background of their students. Teachers felt that Mist was very different from other schools with low-income student bodies where,

> success rates are higher because they're in demographics where education is more of a priority. Our area is not just working class. They're uneducated. They're Irish immigrants. Education was never a priority. I'm sure over half of our parents are illiterate. There is no help with homework because they're can't be and kids often can't do their homework because there's no Internet at home or there's no pen or pencil. It's

very difficult (Ms. Elias).

At Mist, the teachers felt they were always on duty. For example, many of Ms. Elias' students have her phone number in case of emergency. Most teachers invite students to eat with them at lunch because, as Ms. Briant said, "I feel that they need me here…we don't even have to talk. Just be. Just sitting here". Mr. Lane said, "I like to break bread with them, you learn so much about a person when you eat with them. By feeding teenagers, you show them the love. So, "when do you want to eat pizza?", you have a conversation with them and they see you totally differently after". They felt there was a special connectivity with students when they ate and shared food together. Mr. Lane also opens Mist every Saturday of the school year to tutor students, after which he usually plays basketball with them and lets them use the gymnasium. He laughed, "although I'm the principal, people forget tend to forget that before I was a principal I was a teacher and the teacher in me likes to stay in touch and be able to provide help and assistance whenever possible". Mr. Night thought it was especially important to many students that their principal was black, like so many of them are, and that this facilitated students' trust and respect for administration. Mist staff felt,

> it's hard to sort of set boundaries at what the task of a principal is supposed to be. I think its really based on the individual. I'm result driven so whatever means necessary to achieve my goal, I will do it. So I do think outside of the box… in *milieu défavorisé* environment, it is recommended that the principal have a hands-on approach with the student (Mr. Lane).

These teachers did recognize "burn-out" in new teachers and even administration but "pour your energy…if you're willing to do that then the return is high I got to say you'll notice that the turnover here is not high...they want to stay" (Mr. Briant). Though Mist teachers felt they saw less *learning to be* for their students at Mist, their own jobs reflected more *learning to be* and *learning to live together* than did the traditional job description of a teacher at Ray and Ella.

Mist teachers expressed high job satisfaction and said they would never want to work anywhere else. Mr. Night laughed that the passion and dedication he saw at Mist was "all very *Dangerous Minds* (a 1995 film)". Though such work was time and energy consuming, Mist teachers were very satisfied because they felt helpful and closer to their students:

> I love this school. I love this community because ultimately, I would rather work with a student who needs my help than "it's okay Mr. Lane, I can do this without you"… So this is why I love what I do, because we shape lives. We have influence. (Mr. Lane)

> And [the students] are the cutest. They're so great. My boyfriend, for example, screwed up Valentine's Day. So what do I do? I tell them. I don't call him by his name, I just call him Boyfriend. And what happened the next day? I showed up to school and there's a big gift on my desk full of chocolate and hearts and flowers that my class got together and did for me because Boyfriend screwed up Valentine's Day. Like, the kids threw me a surprise birthday party. Like I tell them, "it's my birthday, it's my birthday" not because I want anything but like they threw me a surprise birthday party. It's great. And like I said to Mr. Jordan, who would ever do this? At another school, you'd give your teacher a birthday party? They're so sweet. They are. (Ms. Elias)

The streams at Mist are "class-oriented" (Mr. Lane) and it is telling that the only Mist teacher not to comment on an expanded educator role was Mr. Jordan. Teaching the IB program, "typically, the IB classes come from Lasalle, which is a little bit more of a step up from the rest of the school…." (Ms. Elias) and these students tend to need less social support from teachers because "the IB students…are very well kept. You can see at home there are parents who are looking out for them, who are setting expectations" (Mr. Lane). Interviewees had different expectations for their students' social and emotional development based on class backgrounds, especially as they relate to social and economic stability and support at home. With different expectations for what students *learn to be*, teachers also had different motivations for encouraging *learning to be*.

Why students *learn to be*

Teachers gave classed reasons for the achievement and importance of *learning to know* and at each school, *learning to know* dictated the teachers' focus on *learning to be*. At Ella Hall, it is assumed that students will thrive academically and therefore this acts as a baseline from which notions of student success are founded and not aimed. At Ray Academy, it appears that students are expected to work hard in academics and that social and moral improvement can be afterwards expanded. At Mist, teachers expressed that for many of their students, the curriculum was not going to be helpful for likely scenarios after high school and that they would prefer to concentrate on teaching social skills and self-esteem.

Many Mist teachers saw *learning to be* and *learning to live together* as more important than that which was written in textbooks and lesson plans because they felt cultivating such skills was more relevant to their students' lives. They used curriculum as a vehicle to teach students more about *learning to be* and *learning to live together* than *learning to know,* despite official school and school board learning goals:

> I've gone beyond using…I'm not teaching English lit for English lit sake anymore. I'm using it as an excuse to teach life lessons. I'm using the themes in here to say like, you know, don't bully each other or you know, I'm kind of sliding it in there and to them it's like, "oh really??". No, I'm being facetious but really I do honestly use my content as a way, a vehicle to teach them about life …More and more as you hang on in this profession… I think [colleagues] share my philosophy ….Sometimes we think, it is too bad that we have to have school…I'm talking about our clientele. Maybe a clientele that's more stable and can study and will maybe go on to study medicine and law and…ya give them that marks if they need that. But we're talking about a whole new ballgame here. Mist is, it's just its own world. So if that's the case, why can't we have a situation where people are just building and thinking, that building to learn type of thing. Where no marks are handed out but that sense of pride, that "wow, I did this" and the community comes and says "wow! You did this?". Now that's success. Does that measure in terms of any marks? No. But then what's the buy-in? The buy-in is very low. The parents will say, "no I think I need textbooks and marks". It's very hard to buy into that philosophy but I know a lot of teachers who would absolutely feel that we would be giving more to our students if

> we went that route, to our students, these students who are reading 4 or 5 years behind their grade level (Ms. Briant, MHS)
>
> If we don't teach common values, respect and social skills then what are we doing? Mist is a community. It's a small one. It's a community of 400 or 440 or whatever we are this year but if you can learn at this level how to properly evaluate and communicate other with other people, then well that's important… It's about bettering yourself. It's whether you're 17 or 37 educating yourself. Making yourself less ignorant about the world that you live in, about interacting who are around you, about expressing yourself. My personal passion about teaching English is that. If I'm helping these students better express themselves well then that's going to help them in all aspects of their lives. At the end of the day, if they're not quite sure how to use a semi colon at the end of high school, it's not going to ruin their futures. It's a semi colon. But if they've learned through a variety of ways to better express themselves, to reflect on who they are, their personal identities, their goals…that's kind of why I'm here. That's what motivates me (Mr. Jordan, MHS).
>
> [Student success], it's academic, athletic or artistic. Okay? But it's in, like, in school… They've found something that they're proud of, that they can show up. They need pride. I'm going to get emotional. I'm a basket case. I cry over this…. For me, high school is not just about academic, athletic and artistic components its also the social aspect of it. If I had to put athletic, academic and artistic in one box, I would put social in another box and they would be even. I think that they are equally as important. It's important to learn to share. Get together with friends. To be able to talk to somebody. What about your feelings? Relationships. (Ms. Elias, MHS).

Mr. Lane felt that such an approach "made up my core fabric as an educator and that's immovable. Doesn't matter where I go" but most were convinced that they would be a very different teacher elsewhere. Ms. Briant and Ms. Elias, for example, both said that in another socio-economic class context, they might utilize but not entirely appropriate the English program to teach larger life lessons about personal growth, identity and relationships. That being said, considering the similarities between Ms. Everett and Mist teachers' concerns, these problems and the need to address them cross class boundaries.

Most interviews felt that *learning to be* is more important than ever. A few teachers brought up mental health in interviews and were excited that it was a more common topic of conversation with colleagues and students. Still, none provided any concrete plans to help

students cope with rising rates of anxiety and depression. In fact, they testified that in public schools, the first budget cuts typically affect support staff like learning coaches and guidance counselors. At least, teachers reported happily, there has been progress in the diversity tolerated and promoted in school communities, which has encouraged traditionally marginalized groups to find representation, pride and peer support in the community. Ray Academy has a very active LGBT club, Mist is starting its own in the fall and at least one teacher at both these schools mentioned transgender students finding support in the school community in the past few years. There is no LGBT presence or pride at Ella Hall and interviewees made no comment on difference or diversity. The same was true for race as it was sexuality. Ms. Morin (EH) pointed out "there's two black kids in the whole school, which is not representative of the city of Montreal…and I think that that's part of the reason the girls are in their…bubble". After mentioning the black students, she went on, "and that's because their father…I think their father is a university professor at McGill", as if justifying their attendance, despite their race, by the prestige of their father's occupation and by association, class. Ms. Morin acknowledged, "we don't have [socioeconomic diversity] here because of tuitions. They are so high….to have more socioeconomic diversity, that would actually bring more of an ethnic diversity". Besides Ms. Morin, not one Ella Hall interviewee problematized or referenced diversity, the omission of which helps normalize the student body's class and race.

Many sensed that young people's self-esteem is under increasing threat from intensified bullying and harassment facilitated by swift technological change in ICT. Ms. Garrity (EH) was shocked to be "dealing with a nine-year-old who's got an eating disorder because of her perception of herself" and Ms. Everett (EH) reminded, "now you've got little ones…I mean you see this, suiciding [sic]". Both Ms. Everett and Ms. Briant (MHS) elaborated on how social

media platforms and texting have extended bullying beyond the confines of school walls and that curriculum must respond according. Though counseling was proposed as one solution, both teachers suggested "psycho-social education" to confront the emotional and social challenges of modern adolescence, including cyber-bullying. Teachers felt that students were increasingly imitating and learning inappropriate behaviours, language and attitudes from popular culture that increasingly consumes and engulfs society. Ms. Everett said, "it's all over the place" and Ms. Briant, "kids don't see any borders". Teachers were adamant that while youth have always been influenced by popular culture and media, the impact was growing. As Ms. Everett said, "we're so bombarded now with so much information and so much social media that carving any kind of a sane path through it requires much more skill than we used to have and much steadier moral compass than we used to need".

"Psycho-social education" for teachers at Mist and Ella involved promoting and using technology, rather than altogether rejecting it for the negative role it has played in identity formation, self-esteem and social relationships. Ms. Briant insisted on a "digital citizenship aspect" and Ms. Everett explained "developing a psycho-social program is no longer little workshops about drugs and alcohol. That will not cut it… curriculum in its nature is changing. It has to be about *being*, how to be and what to do with what you learn in order to actually live your life". She felt that critical media literacy empowers students to make meaning and decisions from thoughtful and critical analysis of media, technology and popular culture, restoring "morality, anything of private interior, self" and discouraging the judgement and denigration of self and others. While teachers at Ray also mentioned the negative influence of media on students, including "role models they're getting. So much of it is related to sexualization and negative

body images" (Mr. Ryan, RA), there were no proposed solutions. Again, *learning to be* was acknowledged but not prioritized at Ray while at Mist and Ella, it was a focused concern.

At Ray Academy, teachers were disappointed that *learning to be* was not considered more important, but gave no examples of how they tried to compensate for its absence. Mr. Fars explained that this focus was derived from the neighborhood culture and values:

> Where the school is located is a really suburban middle class area where people have pretty traditional ideas about what they want. They definitely want their kid to learn tolerance and they want them to get a really broad education including athletics and the arts. But they also are thinking, down the road, that they want to make sure they go to Cegep. They want to make sure they go to university. They want to make sure they get a good job out of it. Maybe changing a little bit. But for the most part that's what the parents want.

While this was perhaps the general feeling of most parents in Montreal, he sensed alternative schools "would not fly in [these suburbs]". The only alternative schools are for what educators identify as behaviourally challenged children. In the city however, "the [other school board] has all kinds. The kids are really good students but they can't fit the traditional educational model", giving the example of a fine arts school downtown. Mr. Fars felt this would not appeal to parents in his neighborhood. When describing the school, almost every Ray teacher began with something like, "it's a high academic achieving school" (Mr. Ryan). Ella Hall teachers tended to describe the variety and intensity of both activities and subjects at school while Mist teachers tended to begin with something about the diversity of the student body or neighborhood. Mr. Fars (RA) expanded on how their commitment to academics is perhaps more serious than at other schools. He explained:

> Every school says, "we prioritize academics", like, what are we doing, of course everyone does that but we don't have field trips where kids miss class, we just don't. I think about the schools that have ski trips, forget about it… our New York trip, they go over the Easter long weekend. Europe trip? Most schools I know go during school. I mean you kind of stick it on Easter or March Break. No, no, no. End of exams. It's like, it

> says it ["we prioritize academics"] and it's staff council and people who have been at that school their whole careers...a lot of people been at that school their whole careers, who are really kind of keepers of the code. I know that's just an example how when we're planning for something we really make sure there's very little instructional time wasted.

Mr. Fars felt that field trips, guest speakers and other such events were positive educational and social experiences for students and he was disappointed that Ray did not encourage more of them. Though Ray has the resources, neither the school nor the neighborhood has the cultural instincts to promote such events like, for example, Ella Hall does. At Mist, Ms. Briant said that such experiences were paramount to student success. Like other teachers, when asked about what resources or circumstances would make a big difference to the QoE, she replied "a lot of money" but while others cited smaller class sizes as a main concern, she wanted funding for more field trips and other mediums of "Exposure. Experience" because "my students, in particular, are so scared. I take them to New York every year. They've never….we cross the Champlain Bridge and they're like, "Miss are we in the US?". They've never left [the neighborhood]. They've never eaten out. They've never stayed at a hotel".

5.2 *Learning to live together*

Living together at school

According to interviews, one of the main differences between schools, especially in the public sector, is *learning to live together*. Ray teachers all expressed that public schools are very similar, except for the "fit" (Mr. Ryan), meaning a general vibe of accepting and belonging to the community. As Mr. Teith said, "the dynamic of the classroom, it's going to be what it's going to be… a competent teacher is going to be a competent teacher wherever they are but in the hallways there is a lot more at play. The dynamic involves a lot more people and I just find that the standard to which kids are held here is high".

The way teachers and students interacted with one another differed between schools. At both Ella and Ray, teachers held a traditionally superior social rank to students, with clear boundaries between them. The most important part of their job, in their opinion, is engaging students in exciting and useful learning. In almost every interview with interviews at Mist, on the other hand, teaching was compared to child-rearing. These teachers felt that building relationships and establishing trust with students was the most important part of their work. First, as Ms. Elias pointed out, "once you are able to develop this relationship with these students then they'll listen to your actual curriculum". Second, teachers found that sharing their personal lives with students helped demystify and make connections between their lives, at which point students felt less alienated from teachers and were more likely to ask for help in both school and personal life. Many students at Mist come from unconventional family structures and Mr. Jordan shared how "I lost my father at an early age…but opening up those elements of my life to the kids helps me build relationships with kids who've also lost a parent", whether to death, divorce or prison. Third, even if students do not reach out, being open with students helps build self-esteem and confidence. Ms. Elias stressed, "I talk to them like they're my peer. I'll swear. I'll leave everything out because they want to be trusted. So the phone's out, the purse is out. They need to know that you trust them and then they will trust you". Leaving her personal belongings out to show trust makes students feel like they are not "bad kids", like so many people in their lives perceive them to be and make them feel.

Discussing *learning to do,* Mist students had been seen as "mini-adults" (Mr. Night) in their self-sufficiency and self-care while Ella Hall students had been seen as highly dependent on their family and hired help. Discussing *learning to be* and *learning to live together* however, Mist teachers saw their students as more child-like and in need of protection than Ray and Ella

Hall teachers saw their students, whose eloquent language and finely kept presentation implied maturity. These conceptualizations determined how students were included in decision-making and discipline. Ms. Everett (EH) described how she discussed punishment and consequences with students this year when "we sat down in a circle and said okay let's talk about it, what's going on?" while Mr. Lane (MHS) felt that "you sometimes should be able to say "no because I said so" without having to provide explanation because sometimes you may not be able to find the proper argument so you need to be able to have, as an adult and as a person in charge, the ability to decide for them". At Ray, Mr. Teith made a similar remark, rolling his eyes that many students misbehave at school because they do not care about academics. Yet, he felt that students' decisions and priorities were not for him to meddle with. While teachers at Ella Hall saw youth as curious and inquisitive in their youth, Ray and Mist only saw the "good" students this way, like IB students. In one comment, Ms. Everett explains how she encourages curiosity and determination in students who are not generally considered "good" students, actively rejecting traditional educational perspectives and never trying to coax a student into subjects they have identified as irrelevant or uninteresting in their lives:

> When a little one tells me "I hate history" I say, "good for you! It's good to know what you hate and what you love. In the meantime, you're now forced to do history so how will you…what's your strategy for surviving that?" So the more we can teach psychological reality, the saner and smarter and more strategic children are. So in that one little conversation, you've kind of said "good for you, good to know what you hate. You're forced to take it because you're a minor. How are you going to navigate that? What are you going to do? What are your choices for survival? How can you figure out how to get something out of it"? Now you've got to goal set. You know. Which is a very different way of approaching curriculum than just well it's going to be on the test so you have to study it.

She knows she cannot change the education system overnight, but in the meantime, she finds ways of resisting the system while still encouraging students to succeed in school.

Ms. Everett (EH) explicitly identified that power relations between teachers and administration mirror the traditional power relations between student and teacher that discredit one voice in order to validate another. She was frustrated with "these top down hierarchical structures… it's almost like a patriarchal, or like adult-child relationship. Forget that. That does not work". She was very aware of her own role in social relations of domination and subordination, recognizing that having recently been promoted, "if you ask me, what has increased is my servant hood. I was already a large servant and now I'll be an even bigger servant. I'm just serving more and differently". She was unsure that reconfiguring power relations in decision-making and educational planning would be an easy process, not only because of resistance from administration but also anxiety from teachers themselves. Like Freire himself, who argued, "the oppressed are afraid to embrace freedom" (Freire, 1996, p.28), she sensed,

> You know, we're all in this together…we have some ideas, do you have ideas? For a while, you're going to find that it's like Chinese foot binding. You unbind the feet and it's not naturally happy immediately. It's very threatening. It's very painful. You start to think, "Will I get clobbered if I start to say anything?" but once people start to feels safe enough and realize that we're going to do this as a team (Ms. Everett, EH).

Ms. Everett showed heightened attention to the relationships promoted in critical pedagogy but otherwise, teachers made no comments on their power as a teacher relative to students or other teachers. In a typically humanistic approach, many commented on individual relationships they had with others, such as one particularly clever student or a certain staff member that annoyed them.

Learning to live together as citizenship

The concept of global citizenry came up in interviews at all three schools as one of the primary purposes of education. The concept was characteristic of the IB program, instated at both Ray and Mist, and was the main concern of Ella Hall's school motto. Teachers at all three schools mentioned global citizenship as an admirable goal of modern education with comments like "to become a conscientious global citizen" (Mr. Ryan, RA), "global citizenship... to make the world a better place" (Mr. Fars, RA) and "we see ourselves as part of a world community" (Mr. Teith, RA) but none expanded on it or ever even alluded to it again.

Despite the recurring theme in interviews of global citizenry as the ultimate purpose of education, students are not evaluated on their dispositions and skills working and living with others. Though students are sometimes evaluated on cooperation with others in teamwork, it reflects managerial frameworks used to assess productivity and relationships in the workplace rather than compassion, empathy or collaboration. Indeed, Ms. Morin (EH) said it was important to assess cooperation and teamwork because it was relevant to so many careers, failing to mention the inherent value of social relationships themselves. Besides, *learning to live together* is equally about how students treat each other on a daily basis as it is how work is divided, delegated and collaborated in class work. Mr. Martin (RA) did criticize "that we just have one very narrow of [success]" because he resented that,

> there's this kid who's wonderful and amazing but just not very good at school and we spend all this time telling them they're a failure even though they're kind, they're nice, they're warm-hearted but like they're just not good in the classroom. Then there's this kid who's not all that nice of a person, not all that caring or warm or any of those things, right, but gets good grades and therefore we tell them all the time, "you're the best, you're amazing"".

This issue was confronted by teachers at Mist, who typically see overt problems in daily interactions between students like hitting and swearing, but not by teachers at Ella Hall or Ray

Academy. Not a single respondent addressed less visible threats to *learning to live together* such as white privilege, cisgender priviledge, ableism, patriarchy, ethnocentrism or other such forms of structural domination.

The dominant understanding of *learning to live together* was based on the humanistic approach. Teachers saw human interaction as important for students in creating stable friendships, families and communities. Teachers made no attempt to analyze the effects such relationships and alliances have on other individuals or communities, except for Ms. Everett (EH) who did insist students learn to be "neither dismissed nor someone who treads upon". Some teachers talked about encouraging students to volunteer, but all framed the argument in the pride and happiness one feels after helping others rather than inherent value and obligation to help others, especially when one is in a position of privilege.

Curricular and extra-curricular *learning to live together*

The public school teachers saw *learning to be* and *learning to live together* as taught separately from *learning to know* and *learning to do* or incorporated very superficially into curriculum. Mr. Martin (RA) commented:

> I find we touch on it in token ways. Like I find like we'll have guiding questions for a few minutes and stuff. Like, "how do we live together?" and then we'll make them write a reflection on it. I find it's nice but…even if it's emphasized it's still very token. It's not like let's *do* something where we learn to live together. It's "let's write a reflection about living together".

Mr. Martin (RA) felt strongly that it was difficult to incorporate *learning to live together* in the traditional classroom structure and to truly do so, it was necessary to constantly be "increasing the breadth of education". He sighed:

> I look at these government institutions that are so separated and it's like, why is it? I'm going to sound crazy but like, why isn't the SPCA, why isn't that building built into a

> school? It's like part of the school curriculum is caring for….you wouldn't write a reflection on caring, you would…care. And why can't we? Think of kids going in and volunteering and helping out and running and being part of like a retirement community or the palliative care center. Like, learn empathy. Out of here. In the real world.

Mr. Teith (RA) also felt that *learning to live together* was most successfully taught and practiced outside the classroom. He enthusiastically shared that Ray had recently reintroduced its extracurricular play in the drama program and "one of the biggest benefits that comes out of that for these kids based on what they say is the fact that they are mixing intergenerationally…I think we learn from not only our peers and our teachers but from older kids and that I think that that's greatly missing in a lot of what we do". There are few activities in which students from different grades meet and work together and "by providing those types of opportunities, providing opportunities for kids to connect, all these different areas, there's a sense of belonging".

Unlike Ray and Mist teachers, interviews at Ella Hall felt that *learning to live together* was successfully integrated into *learning to know* and *learning to do* in the classroom. Ms. Morin's favourite eleventh grade project is the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI), which asks students to prepare a presentation on a grassroots charity and, funded by a non-profit, 5000$ is awarded to the winning team's charity. A project like this intertwines all the pillars. Ms. Morin (EH) commented that projects like these are even better than traditional classroom work not only because they develop awareness and contribute to the community, having "made [students] realize there were needs not just in Africa but four kilometers away from where they live" but also because students work on "communication skills, interviewing skills, doing something for others, getting involved". Ms. Morin felt that "this is the perfect type of project because this is what you are going to do when you're going to be on the workforce". Another project, Global Girl, promotes *learning to live together* through the eighth grade French program. This year, students went to "a pretty kind of poor community" (Ms. Morin) in Montreal's east end where

most of them, Ms. Morin explained, have never been or seen places like it. In an east end high school, "they went there and they organized activities for the kids all day *en français*". Ms. Morin felt it was important that the school organize more of these projects "so that even though we're that elite school, we're being realistic with…we're not the regular kind of Montrealers". Ms. Everett was particularly hopeful that *learning to live together* was becoming more ethical in a new age of technology in which consumers are increasingly producers and creators themselves, engaged with the social, ethical, political, economic and cultural consequences of their production and consumption patterns:

> I would like to think that eventually you would have consumers who are also creators who would say "I'm not going to buy a car from a company that would do that [references Ford Pinto case], I don't care how good the quality of the car might be now. That's unethical behaviour". So if you can create the character and the creator mentality that then consumes then possibly we can see a change in that.

While YPI and Global Girls show impressive integration of *learning to live together* into traditional curriculum and evaluation, it is important to point out how markedly different it is from such efforts at Mist High School or even Ray Academy. At Ella Hall, *learning to live together* is interpreted as helping the needy. In a culture superficially celebrating altruism as well as increasingly relying on unpaid positions as work experience, Students from elite schools quickly learn to fill their resumes with volunteering and charity work. Once students recognize their relative economic position in society, there are inadvertent implications of social and moral superiority as well. Moreover, from helping serve food at a shelter to walking dogs at the SPCA, these students learn that *others* need help and social justice, a worldview that erodes any sense of how social structures cause them suffering. For example, many young women identify the feminist movement as liberating and successful, pointing to the right to vote and reproductive rights as proof and failing to recognize the inherent inequalities and oppressions of daily gender

relations in the home, workplace, school and streets. At Ella Hall, female empowerment is equated with doing well in school, contributing to the community and cultivating skills in sports and arts. In critical theory however, empowerment is identified in larger structural victories of dismantling patriarchy. For critical theorists, as long as inequalities and oppressions like the wage gap, the second shift, the glass ceiling and rape culture exist, women are not empowered, or to use their terms, emancipated (Collins, 2000; Gore, 1992).

Certainly, during projects like Global Girls and YPI, the students engage with a community outside their own and recognize local need and problems. Moreover, Ms. Morin (EH) commented that in general, "I would say the girls are not snobs. And that is very cool, I would say…I think that they're not looking down on people because they're not as rich as they are". However, while the exposure to different socioeconomic enclaves of Montreal is important for these girls, it is not likely that they understand the full extent of disparities and inequalities. They certainly are not engaged in conversations about the causes and institutions that perpetuate structural inequalities and the experience resembles a local voluntourism. *Learning to live together* is clearly presented to the students at Ella Hall as an endeavor of helping "the other" in need, rather than living to change structures and relationships that produce such inequality, especially in their own behaviours, attitudes and consumption patterns. Students in lower income areas of Montreal are presented to the girls as individuals who are less fortunate then they are, using language of luck and opportunity. They are not introduced as examples of communities that are systematically disadvantaged and marginalized by the same system that has so lavishly privileged Ella Hall girls. Upon returning from the East End, "the girls, they came back and were like, "wow, you know, it was so nice but it was so different from what we're used to" (Ms. Morin). The girls recognize their own privilege only in so far as their luck and not its relational

or embodied effects on themselves or others, namely that the deprivation and marginalization of others provide for and sustain their privilege. Despite good will, the interviews with Ella Hall teachers yielded little evidence that the girls significantly change behaviours or actions to address such inequalities, either locally or globally. Ms. Morin admitted that despite such projects, "they take things for granted. Again, I'm just thinking of how much money they spent last weekend on grad and that would have paid for so much school furniture for kids in Point St. Charles".

Helping others and helping "the other" is very different. There was little emphasis on *learning to live together* amongst each other. Though Ms. Pace (EH) commented that teachers make sure that girls meet different people in teams and groups in both class and clubs, teachers did not discuss how girls should approach and treat each other's different personalities, traditions, cultures and identities. It did not seem relevant considering the "elite type of environment" in which Ms. Morin pointed out there was little socioeconomic or cultural diversity. This attitude ignores other differences with which students struggle in high school such as sexuality, gender identity, and any personal characteristics, identities or behaviours that incite bullying, which Ms. Pace acknowledged is sometimes a problem. Ms. Morin thought that the new International Students program introduced "more of an ethnic diversity now but not as much" in the student body and taught the girls about other cultures and places, like for example when the students from China "do perform at arts festival, they do traditional Chinese music and dances. It's very neat". Such performances are tokenistic educational moments. The international students themselves appear to know little about the diversity and inequality in their own countries. Lacking enrollment, the school recently began recruiting girls from affluent families in Iran, India and China, introducing ethnic and cultural, but not socioeconomic, diversity. It is not

likely that Ella Hall students learn about the environmental, social, political and economic problems and inequalities in other countries from international students as they themselves have not experienced them and indeed are wealthy enough to leave them behind. The International Students program, arguably a "cash cow" for Ella Hall, was not the only example of educational commodification. Other examples are arts programs being cut from the public schools, Ella Hall's very privatization, and the language teachers borrowed from business terminology, like "clientele" to refer to students.

The public school teachers could not identify projects that promote *learning to live together* in curriculum of *learning to know* and *learning to do* like those at Ella Hall. Instead, they incorporated what they felt were important lessons about identity and community in traditional curriculum. In the classroom, "we try to treat everybody the same and they get treated so differently at home" (Mr. Fars, RA). Most Mist students, teachers indicated, were coming from unstable or "unstructured" lives at home with family whose "priority is anything but education. Drugs, alcohol, sex…" (Ms. Elias, MHS) and who "are nice enough people but I don't think they're really supportive of the school, supportive of the teachers, of their kids" (Mr. Fars). Some teachers felt that it was very important to include parents in the schooling process and try to promote the value of education at home but Mr. Fars felt "you have to be careful with that". Recalling a parents information night that Mist used to host, Mr. Fars felt that this approach was "really paternalistic. It was kind of like, "and here's how you should parent". It was kind of grimacing. Maybe they're not great at parenting for school but they're probably really good, loving parents". Mr. Fars also saw, in his experience, "if you're going to open it up and try to include people more, the ones that are going to be involved are the ones that are going to be involved anyways". With or without the parents' support, "regardless we're going to serve it up

for the kids. We're doing to do right for them" (Mr. Fars). All the Mist teachers echoed these sentiments that "you have to step it up" (Ms. Elias).

Teachers at Ray expressed that on a regular day, they do not expect to "run into trouble" (Mr. Teith) or have significant "behavioural issues and classroom management issues" (Mr. Ryan), but they recognized that this was a daily occurrence at other schools like Mist, where teachers were concerned about instilling in students basic social norms and behaviours that keep peace and safety. For Mist High School teachers, *learning to live together* was about very basic etiquette, respect and self-esteem:

> It has got be able to interact with each other in a pleasant , respectful way, which sometimes they have a hard time doing…I don't think they recognize what good behaviour is. Like, thank you for raising your hand. Thank you for waiting patiently. And when you say that, they're like "oh…" and it just kind of builds in their brain and they're like, "oh I guess that's the way it's done here". So that to me is successful. And of course if you can do well in your assignments, that's good too. So as I said, my focus has shifted. I'm not looking at English as content anymore. I'm looking for it as an excuse only… Student success would be that they get through the day feeling good about themselves. …because these kids, they feel broken. They don't feel included. They are always trying to hurt each other because that's just the way they know how to survive and I think student success would be that they didn't feel that they had to do that. That they would feel so supported that they would know to focus on their work (Ms. Briant, MHS).

Ms. Elias (MHS) also argued that because so many students had very little exposure to different experiences, people and places, l*earning to live together* was also about exploring different ideas, cultures and histories. She shared that initially she did not tell anyone she was Jewish. She "totally hid it" because she knew they had "never met a Jew before. They had no idea. They never heard of the Holocaust, like they thought it was a Jewish holiday. They had no idea", she chuckled (Ms. Elias). Yet, they were eager to learn when she started sharing traditional Jewish food, history and traditions at holidays. She laughed when she told me, "when we went to New York we took the kids to go see Fiddler on the Roof and they got it! They nailed

it. They understand everything. They loved it and I cried the whole way. Like, I had a whole bunch of black kids on my bus singing "To life, to life!"…Like, it was really great".

Most of the behaviours and attitudes Mist teachers try to teach their students are automatic in students at Ray and Ella Hall, where for the most part, students arrive in the morning focused on school and what Mr. Ryan (RA) calls "learning-ready". He expanded, "they have the support at home. They're coming with meals and able to come and learn and be really successful in school". For this reason, Mr. Ryan felt that Ray Academy "runs like a big private school", distancing Ray from whatever he felt the public school image entails and connecting bad behaviour and lower learning potential to lower class students. He seemed to conceive of only two class contexts, which he differentiated as those students who come to school without breakfast and those who do. At one point, he talked about "in the rest of the world, the education is opportunities to totally transform kids' lives that didn't go to high school or didn't get to go", failing to acknowledge a class of students in Montreal who are systematically disadvantaged in the education system and tend not to finish high school or, even if they do, see education as "opportunities to totally transform" their life. Instead, Mr. Ryan seemed to assume meritocratic educational opportunity for students in Montreal because "in Canada, especially in our socio-economic class where like you're expected to go to high school, and lots of kids are expected to go to Cegep and even expected to go to university". For Mr. Ryan, class was not economic, but social and cultural. Though he had previously taught at a private school of mostly affluent students, not unlike Ella Hall, he made no distinction between a middle-class context like Ray and an upper-class context, both of which he saw were markedly different than lower class schools like Mist. He felt that schools in poorer areas should be held to a different standard considering the social and economic barriers so many of the students face. Comparing QoE and

success rates between schools, "there's a context where you can and a context where you shouldn't" (Mr. Ryan, RA). On the other hand, the other Ray teachers acknowledged that while "the population at Ray Academy is largely white" (Mr. Teith), socioeconomic diversity was not only apparent between schools but also "within a classroom" (Mr. Martin). Different teachers had different perspectives and awareness of the social and economic backgrounds of their students.

At Ray Academy, *learning to live together* was about respect, communication and community. Like Mist teachers, Mr. Teith felt that it was very important to get to know as many students as possible, including those he did not teach because "it's all part of that belonging, having a sense of belonging". Interviews also stressed how important it was to feel pride in one's school, peers and community, and the impact this had not only on morale but behaviour:

> Behaviourally, you're not going to misbehave when you are known in a community because it's your community. You don't smash the windows in your apartment building. (laughs) You do it do someone else's…If I have a run-in with a kid in the hallway I'm always going to be able to say to that kid "have I ever treated you with disrespect?", to which I know the answer is no. Then I'm able to come back and say, "so why is it that you think that you have the right to speak to me or to behave in this manner with me?" and of course the answer is, "I don't" and then it's resolved very quickly (Mr. Teith, RA).

<u>*Learning to live together* as social reproduction</u>

Many interviews sensed that at every school there were common dispositions, taught and normalized as habits and etiquette, that were taught but few identified that this served to preserve power relations. Besides Mr. Lane (MHS) and Ms. Everett (EH), teachers did not recognize the role they played in this socialization, which as an 1869 report on Upper Canada education stated, "an army of Schoolmasters is found to be better than an army of Soldiers" (Ontario Department of Education, 1894). This insight is recognized as positive in functionalist theory and negative in conflict theory. Most teachers perceived the process of socializing youth to conform to their roles

in the workplace, household and society at large as a "a big constraint" (Ms. Everett) to QoE and *learning to live together* specifically:

> Formal education, school in particular, is the driver of tomorrow but, at the same time, it is also a social institution that reinforces the values of the status quo. So it is kind of double-edged. So learning to live together is to say these are the laws that we have put in place, to regulate what we do. And I think it is important for students to understand that (Mr. Lane).

> Am I going to use the word? Maybe I will. Capitalism. I think that what happens is that there's a certain amount of elite resource and this happens whether you're talking pharmaceutical or you're talking about big corporations, whose vested interest it is to keep education feeding the trench (Ms. Everett).

These teachers emphasized how important it was to teach students to resist dominant understandings of action, self, and relationships that prioritize money to the detriment of the social and ecological. Their words echoed arguments to resist a capitalism of "profit over people" (Chomsky, 1999) and "enemy to nature" (Kovel, 2008). This was of paramount importance to Ms. Everett and while the links Mr. Lane made between social justice and education were subtle and secondary to the rest of his arguments, they were nonetheless suggestive of critical pedagogy, wherein QoE is considered education that illuminates students' social oppression and inequality (Leonardo, 2004). To demonstrate the importance of such an approach to *learning to live together*, they gave both moral arguments and practical examples like "when they are mature and grown up then they can make the right decisions to make sure when we start losing our faculties, that they can look out for us". Ms. Everett made a similar argument, reminiscent of Sobel's work on place-based education, which maintains "if we want children to flourish we need to give them time to connect with nature and love the Earth before we ask them to save it." (Sobel, 1998). She argued,

> In education, if there's character education, then you can raise up human beings that believed in truth and wouldn't compromise that for any reason because in the end they failed the test, the test of life, their own life. And if you could raise up children who cared

> about the environment and cared about one another and would not lie … so if there is in fact a breakthrough…apple cider can cure pancreatic cancer and all you would need is two teaspoons a day, it wouldn't be hidden because we have jobs that cost a lot of money and make us very wealthy. Or, if you find a car that you go to the meeting where it's decided that it would cost us less to allow the flaw to stand and pay off a few suits where people die…when one life is more important than a car, reputation…or the economics, like the profit margin or that company [referring to the Ford Pinto].

Though Ms. Everett identified pedagogical influences on children's character, none of the interviews identified how certain notions of *learning to be* and *learning to live together* are normalized in curricula in order to reproduce particular power relations. For example, math curriculum, a seemingly neutral subject based on numbers and equations, has been effective in normalizing capitalism and cultural norms damaging to social, cultural and environmental differences and traditions. When interviewees spoke about the reform in mathematics, they explained how a lot of curricula had been rewritten using word problems. The only criticism was about the form, not content. Mr. Fars (RA) and Mr. Lane (MHS) both realized this reform disadvantaged students with poor literacy skills that otherwise could excel in mathematics but not a single respondent questioned the repeating themes and content of those word problems using a critical pedagogue's approach. Leafing through the eleventh grade math textbooks, most of the word problems made troubling assumptions about race, sexuality, environment, class and other issues that present to students certain attitudes and actions as normal or matter-of-fact. Homework examples were about calculating interest on a loan, most profitable stocks in which to invest, cement needed in cubic feet to pave a pool deck, budget needed to tour Paris for a day, nutrients in a lavish brunch and a budget for an extravagant wedding. This type of material ensures that children *learn to be* capitalist mass consumers. Mr. Night had told me "they say to teach kids to save but there's nothing to save. They're not getting allowance. [One student], I know he worked all summer and got an $100 honorarium and an hour later his mom had taken it

to buy groceries". These math problems not only assume the glamour of qualifying for a loan, investing money, building a pool and travelling to Paris but also normalize the status of other social divisions like race and sexuality. In the wedding example, the happy couple was unsurprisingly heterosexual and every example featured typically white names like Mary and Jack. Anecdotes Mist teachers told me mostly featured students with names from black or Muslim backgrounds. Such subtle and normalized ideological influences are integral to preserving hegemony, especially in the West. As Chomsky said, "propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state and that's wise and good because again the common interests elude the bewildered herd, they can't figure them out"(Chomsky, 1992).

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Despite striking class differences in the motivations, applications, and implications of particular knowledge and skills in the Montreal high schools studied, all teachers agreed that "that kids feel it's relevant" was fundamental to learning. Teachers often questioned if material they covered in class was actually pertinent to what and how youth should *know, do, be* and *live together*. There was a general consensus that QoE was necessarily relevant education, which was determined by the student's relationship to need as per Maslow's hierarchy. Accordingly, there does not exist a single definition of QoE but rather a working definition whose fluidity reflects the context and content of each student's needs. Teachers identified that socioeconomic class largely shapes the conditions of a student's personal and professional life. They suggested that learning reflect and speak to localized cultural, economic and social differences, resulting in attentive and compassionate overtures like helping feed hungry students for example. Other times however, this philosophy produced systematic disadvantageous teaching practices that help reproduce the student's social and economic conditions, like for example the drastically different implementations of technology that prepare students for different stratum of the workforce. Nearly four decades ago, Anyon wrote, "in advanced industrial societies such as Canada and the U.S., where the class structure is relatively fluid, students of different social class backgrounds are still likely to be exposed to qualitatively different types of educational knowledge" but her findings still ring as true (1981, p.3). As the results of my research demonstrate, curriculum-in use is still producing a classed stratification of knowledge wherein students are conceptualized in different social and moral spheres based on social class and accordingly prepared for different cultural and economic sectors. For example, higher class youth are expected to learn, express and enjoy diversified and complex subjects while teachers anticipate, and therefore teach as if,

working class students will begrudge and struggle with learning. In this process, technology is seen as a staple part of upper class lifestyle, leisure and occupation but a marginal influence on working class life. Higher-class students are prepared for creative professional careers, middle-class students are prepared for other knowledge economy jobs, and working class students are not prepared with the skills to enter anything but unskilled or semiskilled work. Upper class youth are taught to relate to others from economically, socially and morally higher planes as popular narratives of meritocracy and perpetual ignorance of structural oppression blind them to structural inequalities as well as the impact their own privilege has on others, like the youth at Mist and their communities.

Indeed, if Ray, Ella and Mist used popular expressions as honest school slogans we might see "reach for the stars" capturing Ella Hall's spirit, "keep your eye on the prize" to represent Ray Academy and "down-and-out" or "by the skin of your teeth" epitomizing Mist High School. As I have explained, the seemingly positive connotations of such philosophies at Ella and Ray actually have harmful effects on both individual students and marginalized groups. It appears students are learning only the skills and knowledge necessary to embody these attitudes. Economies and cultures of class community are reproduced based on how teachers conceptualize, anticipate and teach *knowing*, *doing, be-ing* and *living together* according to social class. Though teachers articulated various concerns about the education system, they felt teachers have little power to affect change despite being chiefly responsible for students' education.

6.1 *Quality* of education (QoE) is *relevant* education

Teachers at each school identified that the most important factor in QoE is relevance. Relevance was understood as applicability to both professional and personal life, the latter teachers felt was being ignored in the education system today. Teachers felt that if students can connect class material to their everyday moral, civic and social lives, students would be more interested, retain more and perform better. Moreover, when learning can be applied to daily relationships and behaviours, teachers can easily integrate character education, or *learning to be* and *learning to live together*. Many teachers questioned the relevance of the current curriculum and several admitted sympathizing with students who were bored or unengaged in class, recognizing that "material is not always relevant…in a lot of academic areas [students] don't really understand why they're doing most of what they're doing". Most criticisms were aimed at history and math curricula. Teachers argued that program content does not always actually help students in personal and/or professional life, especially considering the differences between how students from different class backgrounds experience personal and professional life. In a critical theory lens, these curricula do not always help inform and empower students to recognize and/or resist oppressive social relationships, structures and systems in those social and professional lives.

Teachers argued that provincial history curriculum is repetitive, Eurocentric and often fails to connect historical events and people to problems in present day politics, economy and society. For example, studying First Peoples of Canada, students learn more about the differences between tribes' lodging, rituals and family structures than about the settler processes of colonization and cultural genocide that effectively gave birth to modern Canadian life. None expanded using explicitly a critical lens but their complaints do echo the concerns of critical

pedagogues. One consequence is that students conceptualize Canadian Aboriginals as only historical peoples, wearing feather hats and living in teepees, rather than recognize Aboriginals as a modern community, ever-present in Canadian society. Another consequence is an inability to connect historical events to the problems confronting Aboriginals today who, disempowered and isolated from social and political processes, struggle with poorer health, cyclical poverty, high rates of suicide and addiction and high rates of incarceration, among other things. Mr. Night said, "it's more about longhouses than residential schools and things that matter more to how we got here". The math curricula was another concerns of teachers. Some felt content was unreasonably difficult given the skills with which students are equipped in elementary school. The program sets unrealistic expectations for students, most of whom will never apply this knowledge, but it is justified by educators and policy-makers seeking to prepare a marginal few to "be highly competitive on the world market" (Mr. Teith). Many teachers argued there is "a structural problem in our math program" when students are failing at such alarming rates or passing only with the help of tutors and study groups. They connected the math program's influence to market forces but none, as I have mentioned, commented on curriculum's role in reinforcing social norms and attitudes towards class, race, gender, and sexuality.

For education to be relevant, teachers felt that curricular, pedagogical and evaluative approaches to learning must be deeply localized. Interviews generally felt that education should serve students' physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem and self-actualization needs and should aim to meet them in this order, as Maslow proposed. The level at which students have met such needs differs depending on available resources and every teacher argued that what is relevant to one student is not necessarily relevant to another. Flexibility and adaptability were emphasized as central to working definitions of QoE and many teachers praised IEPs as the best

approach to education for all students, whether "coded" or not. At Ray and Mist, one of the biggest motivations for personalized curriculum is students' cultural and academic dispositions, which teachers see vary by social class. They connected students' individual learning needs to differences emanating from social and economic background, "the context [the students] are coming from" (Ms. Briant), like parents' education and occupation. Ella teachers also recognized that students learn differently and teachers should shape teaching accordingly, but framed their argument in a discussion of biological and cognitive differences. Ella Hall teachers often referred to the school's new pedagogical dedication to research-based pedagogy, citing speakers and articles from which they had learned about the developing teenage brain. This information is useful for teachers to personalize learning, it does not tell the whole story. However, Ella students come from relatively similar, privileged backgrounds and Ella teachers are less exposed educational impacts of socioeconomic subordination compared to public school counterparts. Differences between upper class students are explained by answers found in books and graphs, while teachers exposed to a greater socioeconomic diversity of students recognize differences as products of socially constructed hierarchies. If interviews were drafting their own research projects, the public school teachers, especially from Mist, would be the ethnographers, the phenomenologists, the observers, the interviewers. Ella teachers would be the armchair theorists.

A call for personalized curriculum echoes critical pedagogy's rejection of the Western canon, the body of work accepted as essential to Western learning. The necessity and sanctity of works like Shakespeare and Aristotle has been normalized as seminal by what Bourdieu calls the "cultural arbitrary" (Bourdieu, 1990) but teachers were more concerned with discussing themes of such work and the pedagogy involved in its instruction rather than the particular content. One of the obstacles to resisting the canon and the "cultural arbitrary", and encouraging students to do

the same, is the way teachers have been taught to teach. Interviews had critical reflections on the teaching methods and perspectives they were taught and identified alternative approaches they would prefer, many reflecting critical pedagogies like place-based education (Gruenewald, 2003b), ethics of care (Noddings, 2013) and inquiry education (Postman & Weingartner, 1987).

6.2 Learning to teach

Despite working in different class contexts and demonstrating different approaches to learning, teachers are all educated in the same programs and had similar complaints about their training. In the same way they found high schools are steered by market values and demands, teachers felt that universities "were a money making venue", admitting and graduating too many in their teacher certifications programs. Most were frustrated that education has become an "easy" program, resulting in "crappy teachers out there". They were also frustrated that their training had not properly prepared them for the realities a teacher faces in the classroom. Teachers working in expensive private schools are given the same training as teachers working in inner-city schools, acting not only as teachers but also social workers, parents and role models for the students. The problem was well summarized by Mr. Jordan, appalled that teaching programs are,

> only ever teaching us the ideal situation but the ideal doesn't exist. Like, the notion that in this one class, let's play out this scenario where there's this student who has autism. But there's a student who has autism and there's a student who has a severe behavioural disorder and there's a student who hates your class because they don't like your subject and there's a student who's distracted because they've recently started to develop an eating disorder. Like that all exists in the same room and those realities…we spent too much time studying what the ideal situation would be and in the current context of education, with class size and funding and what not, I don't think the ideal situation exists in a lot of schools.

Teachers felt their own learning at teacher's college reflected the same inadequacies represented in high school, namely that teachers are rigorously trained in educational theory and disciplines *(learning to know*), but poorly trained in *learning to do* e.g. creating lesson plans or grading rubrics, *learning to be* e.g. identifying personal weaknesses as a teacher, and *learning to live together* e.g. being taught how to work with students who were gifted, disabled or mentally ill students. Several teachers argued it was problematic that they were taught to teach subjects isolated from one another. They were trained to think of themselves as history or math teachers, rather than children's teachers. When Ms. Everett (EH) hears someone say, "I teach history", she answers, "well, no you don't, you teach children…and history is just the mode of thought, the medium that you have to connect on this deeper reality with them".

Interview data showed that while recognizing educational theory and subjects is important, it is of greater use to help teachers understand who they are and want to be as mentor in the classroom because most teachers felt "as an educator, you measure your success in the same terms as like, am I being a good…am I a successful person?" (Mr. Ryan). There was a feeling that teaching was more of an instinctive "art", than a learned and rehearsed "science". In other words, as Mr. Lane put it, "people are cut out to be educators… you don't need all the theories…[and] there are people who shouldn't be teachers". When training did apply this approach, it was superficial, "too much time in a teacher education program telling me I need to love the kids because that should have been decided before we walked in the door". Teachers pointed out that people who do not like children do not go into teaching. Therefore, the instruction on passive interactions with students, to "love" all children, is useless compared to learning how to intervene and play active roles as mentors and role models in these children's lives. Specifically, teachers wanted to have learned more about classroom management skills,

one of their biggest challenges, as well as how to properly prepare, deliver and assess material. Mr. Jordan summarized well that teacher training was missing "how to prepare materials, how to be a critical pedagogue, how to properly assess and evaluate work…and how to properly evaluate and assess yourself as a teacher". Interviews agreed that new teachers were unprepared for these facets of teaching because "there's this notion that still exists that you're going to learn on the job, that you're going to learn how to fully lesson-plan on the job". Teaching is seen and respected in public as "just" a trade. Thus, teachers felt that constant opportunity for professional development is crucial. Sadly, professional development has been increasing cut from public schools' budget in recent years. Meanwhile, alumni and parent donations generously fund professional development at Ella Hall, which gives teachers opportunities to attend workshops and conferences across North America.

Interviews making these observations were themselves doing relatively little to change the system. This is not a criticism, but rather an observation of the constraints teachers and administrators perceive to be shackling them regardless of innovative, progressive and critical ideas for change. Though they were able to identify problems and concerns in the education system, they were unable to translate their disappointment into active subversive teaching practices. Many felt it would be easier if teachers had a well-organized venue to communicate and collaborate with other teachers and suggested "teachers belong in expert network of teams and we should be making those decisions to get together" (Ms. Everett) and "we should have an Order of teachers, like the engineers or doctors" (Mr. Lane). Teachers felt little power to change either the system or even the approach they took to their own role within the system. They were adamant that teachers need more power and "flexibility" because, after all, "they know the curriculum. They know the kids. They're the ones on the front lines". Instead, as Mr. Fars

remarked about efforts at change, "it's really Sisyphean" and the result is often that "teachers who have been here forever, they were like amazing and now they just gave up, they know it doesn't change and they just checked out" (Mr. Night). Though teachers at Ella Hall felt comparatively powerless in the institution of education, their daily experiences in the classroom were encouraging and positive because their students, for the most part, learn quickly, engage and participate well in class and pursue post-secondary education. Therefore, these teachers are more satisfied in their day-to-day life. As I have discussed however, in a long-term capacity, if they do not first "burn-out", teachers at Mist felt that their jobs were more rewarding because of the social influence they have on children's lives. Yet, neither the academic influence teachers carried at Ella Hall, nor the social influence teachers wielded at Mist, were expansively utilized to promote critical pedagogy, helping students change conditions of oppression in their lives.

6.3 Final remarks

Teachers wanted their students to be happy, safe, healthy and stimulated, conditions that they felt the existing functionalist education system did not always facilitate. In order to recognize these needs and help students "be their best" and reach self-actualization, teachers applied humanistic philosophy and practices of education. Despite their pride in this approach, their students are not likely going to find happiness, safety, health and stimulation in this world unless wider structural relations and institutions are dismantled. Or, if they do find these things, it is surely at the cost of others.

Reaching humanistic goals is inhibited by systematic oppression, exclusion and subordination of those who do not conform to the identity politics of privilege, meaning the white, Christian, abled, heterosexual cisgender male. Success is not impossible for those outside this identity framework, but it is extremely difficult and its achievement actually strengthens the

oppressive system by bolstering boasted public narratives of meritocracy (Sullivan, 2002). Not only did most teachers fail to problematize structural inequalities like class, most failed to even identify them. At Ella Hall, only one teacher even mentioned class, none of them seeing the affluence or privilege as an anomaly. At Mist, whose students arguably come from some of the most disadvantaged backgrounds in the city, teachers for the most part failed to identify structural inequalities that perpetuated cycles of poverty, low levels of education, drugs and violence in this community. Instead, people were responsibilized for these things. Teachers at Mist resented parents whose "their priorities are so out of depth" and were frustrated that so many were involved in drugs and alcohol and "they're not educated". Referring to relatively low success rates at Mist, teachers said things like, "not everybody is an academic and some people are better than others", without identifying that Mist students are not likely less academically inclined than students at other schools, but were not given the opportunities to thrive in the same way. Most teachers recognized the difficulties their students faced outside of school, but felt that there was surely *something* they could do to help them succeed. For example, discussing low success rates, Ms. Briant said, "there is something we're not doing right here. If you look at other schools, they're doing something right". This attitude is reminiscent of the effective schools movement wherein problems are traced back to external characteristics like strong leadership, high set expectations and consistent evaluations, rather than existing or input circumstances, like the students' social, economic, and cultural realities. In fact, all of the teachers felt that QoE necessitated strong administrative leadership to raise morale and keep order and organization. At Mist, Mr. Night appeared to be alone in the sentiment that "sometimes I don't know what you can do with some of these kids, it's too late. You had to get to them earlier and they just have the deck stacked too high against them", though teachers at other schools showed this same

inclination. He tries to challenge students in other ways, dedicating most of his energy to motivating students in sports teams and other social activities that make their lives more interesting and pleasant.

Without infusing critical pedagogy and teaching students how to identify, question and dismantle structural inequalities, students will not find the happiness, safety, health and stimulation teachers hope for them. Teachers I interviewed showed unbelievable passion and compassion for their work and their students. Their hopes for them were sincere and the extra time and energy their dedicated to their jobs to help students was remarkable. However, as I have argued, their goals are better met using a different approach. To assess and plan QoE, educators must be constantly asking themselves the questions Apple (2010) has posed in his summary of the critical pedagogue's approach to education:

> Rather than simply asking whether students have mastered a particular subject matter and have done well on our all-too-common tests, we should ask a different set of questions: Whose knowledge is this? How did it become "official"? What is the relationship between this knowledge and the ways in which it is taught and evaluated, and who has cultural, social, and economic capital in this society? Who benefits from these definitions of legitimate knowledge and from the ways schooling and this society are organized, and who does not? How do what are usually seen as "reforms" actually work? What can we do as critical educators, researchers, and activists to change existing educational and social inequalities and to create curricula and teaching that are more socially just? (p.152)

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. First of all, can you tell me about your position here at _____ School, in what capacity you interact with the grade 11 students and how long you have been in this role?

2. Can you tell me a bit about this school in your own words?
3. Can you tell me about the school's mission or vision statement? And, in the same spirit, can you tell me a bit about the management and educational success agreement goals the school signed with the school board?
4. Is the school's mission statement or the success agreement goals ever revised or reimagined? How is the school's mission statement constructed? Who participates in the process and has input?

5. In your opinion, why do students go to school? What is education for?
6. Do you think students share this conceptualization? Why or why not? What do you perceive students believe is the purpose of education?

7. How do you know as a teacher if you are successful?
8. How do you know as a school, if you are successful?
9. In your opinion, what is student success?
10. Who is responsible for student success? Why? How?
11. Do you think this definition of student success is true for all your students? In other words, does it encompass your expectations and/or hopes for all of your students in different groups of (gender), race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, language, class, etc?
    - ECS: Is your conceptualization of student success at all shaped by your position working and interacting with students at a single-sex school?
12. Do you think this definition of student success applies to all students in grade 11 in general (in this school and others)? Why or why not?
13. Do you think your colleagues have similar definitions of these things? Why or why not?

14. Considering your answers, how would you define quality of education?
15. What are the components of quality of education?

16. How would you measure or assess quality of education?
17. In your opinion, who is responsible for quality of education?
18. What are barriers to quality of education?
19. What factors facilitate quality of education?
20. How do you perceive the quality of education here at this school? In your opinion, what can be done to improve quality of education in this school?

21. In 1996, the Canadian Council of Learning established four pillars of lifelong learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. First, do you agree these are important components of the learning process and second, if we take these pillars of learning as instrumental to quality of education, how do you see these applied in your school?
    - *Learning to Know* involves the development of knowledge and skills that are needed to function in the world. These skills include literacy, numeracy and critical thinking.
    - *Learning to Do* involves the acquisition of skills that are often linked to occupational success, such as computer training, managerial training and apprenticeships.
    - *Learning to Live Together* involves the development of social skills and values such as respect and concern for others, social and inter-personal skills and an appreciation of the diversity of Canadians.
    - *Learning to Be* involves activities that foster personal development (body, mind and spirit) and contribute to creativity, personal discovery and an appreciation of the inherent value provided by these pursuits.

On the subject of student success and quality of education, if there is anything I have not addressed, please feel free to share that with me now. Is there anything else you can think of that you would like to share?