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ABSTRACTS

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Towards a Professionalism Partnership Curriculum for Teacher Education: Building Bridges Between Teachers' Unions and Teacher Education

A challenge in many teacher education programs is deciding how best to teach professional literacy. Through a collaborative process between the School of Education at St. Francis Xavier University and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, a partnership was initiated whereby the preservice teachers explore various aspects of the work of teachers' unions. Significant points of contact are developed in each of the four semesters of the program that focus on professional ethics, teacher welfare, teachers and the law, and policy change. Andrew Foran and Jeff Orr's article illustrates the changing nature of their work alongside their preservice teachers, as they learn to help their preservice teachers take ownership of their own professional literacy and professional identity development. Implications for the cultivation of professional literacy education in preservice teacher education are identified.

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Teacher Perceptions of High-Stakes Testing

Carolyn Pearson's study explored the perceptions and attitudes of teachers in a high-stakes testing American state on motivation and morale, instructional support, and instructional impact scores across several variables. Data were gathered from the entire state. Statistically significant differences were detected, with the exception of education, and practical significance was found for level of school; elementary teachers or teachers who worked in a school assigned a *D* or *F* had higher instructional support scores, and those who worked in *A* schools had higher motivation and morale scores.

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Constructing Early Childhood Learning: Preschool Policies in the NCLB World

Preschool policy guidelines, created to meet NCLB requirements, were designed to improve early educators teaching and ensure American preschoolers readiness for school. Using document analysis, Julie DellaMattera's study examines four guidelines underlying human-development theories. Findings reveal that guidelines emphasize preschoolers' cognitive development and are internally inconsistent, mixing views of discontinuous and continuous cognitive development theory. Without clear and consistent policies, potential for early educators' attempts to fulfill the guides' mandates may be less than successful.

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Relationships Among School Size, Student Achievement and Teacher Efficacy: Their Relationship to the Saskatchewan Education Context

Todd Gjevre, Larry Steeves and Rod Dolmage examine the literature to address two issues: (a) What are the effects of school size on student academic achievement, teacher efficacy, and economic efficiency? and (b) is the knowledge gained from addressing these questions relevant to the Saskatchewan educational context? The literature is clear: In general, small schools enhance student academic achievement, but especially those students from disadvantaged backgrounds, minorities, and students at risk. The more intimate relationship between students and teachers in small schools appears to be the reason. It's elusive as to what constitutes a *small school*. There appears to be no constant, linear relationship between decreasing school size and increasing achievement and no data to clarify whether the very small schools of the Saskatchewan rural school system show the same benefits of small schools as defined by the research. We conclude that as schools are being consolidated in Saskatchewan, the consolidation should benefit student learning. The extensive research clearly points to the benefits of elementary schools of less than 400 students and high schools between 600 and 900 students.

EDITORIAL

Patrick Lewis and James McNinch

This will be the last issue of *Policy and Practice in Education* in its current format and under this current name. The journal is not ceasing publication; rather it is peeling off the title, which was born in an earlier time possessed with a particular focus and interest. In late 2007 the editorial board of the journal made the decision to move the journal into a digital format. The rationale was “in publishing research the intent is to reach as wide an audience as possible...[and] making knowledge more easily and broadly accessible suggested we look at open access publishing” (Lewis & McNinch, 2007, p. 5).

To that end, from our current .pdf, print-based format, we are continuing to evolve the journal such that the next issue will move more broadly into and across the digital landscape. In doing so, we will build upon and transcend the discussions, ideas and iterations of the past 15 years of the journal. The digital format will enable contributors to share works that travel outside the print-only format of traditional journals to include audio files, video files, images and links.

As we stated in our initial move to the digital format, the journal will continue to address issues, research and practice in the education of teachers. In the new journal, entitled *In Education*, (ineducation.ca) we envision discussions that also utilize the ubiquitous growth of the digital arts and sciences in the everyday practice of living and how that (in)forms both formal and informal education.

So, it is only fitting that this last issue of *Policy and Practice in Education* has several articles exploring issues and concerns specific to teacher education and practice. In “Towards a Professional Partnership Curriculum for Teacher Education,” authors Andrew Foran and Jeff Orr take readers through an innovative partnership program for preservice teachers with teacher unions. It is a partnership that explores professional literacy including the rights, roles, and responsibilities of teachers and teacher unions through “the construction and reconstruction of professional literacy.” But more importantly, the preservice teachers developed a deeper understanding of their professional identity through their perceived concern about external relevance

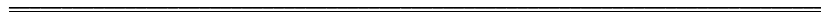
and the willingness of the teacher educators to attend to those concerns. The authors discover that all three groups - preservice teachers, teacher unions, and teacher educators - need to listen to each other and attend to the differing perceptions and needs of each group.

Connected with teaching practice and perception, Carolyn Pearson explores the ramifications of the No Child Left Behind legislation in the United States and the subsequent mandated standardization of curriculum and assessment. In "Teacher Perceptions of High-Stakes Testing" she explores the twists and turns from *high-stakes* to *low-stakes* testing across multiple state jurisdictions and variations of consequences and accountability - from teachers, schools, students and administrators. The author takes up the exploration of how this legislation has influenced the perceptions of classroom teachers and consequently shaped their attitudes and practice. Perhaps the most interesting finding by the author should come as no surprise, the teachers "in this study indicated they did change their curriculum to align with the test, did spend most of their instructional time in preparing for the test, and changed their teaching methods as a result."

The third article has a close association with Pearson's work as it looks at "Constructing Early Childhood Learning." Julie DellaMattera explores how the No Child Left Behind legislation is impacting preschool education. However, she finds that many policies and guidelines in preschools do not align with NCLB standards in moving children toward a "school readiness" as narrowly defined by NCLB. She reminds us that we "must be concerned with the development of the whole child, reflect on individual and shared responsibilities for children, and commit to intentionally investing in young children's futures."

In the final article, Todd Gjevre, Larry Steeves, and Rod Dolmage examine the closing of small schools in many rural communities of the province of Saskatchewan and the subsequent ramifications of school consolidation. The authors note the historical trends of demographic shifts from a rural to a more urban population, which are often cited in "common sense" terms for closing small schools. However, it is not so simple as they demonstrate in a more focused and detailed examination of the data and the politics that seem to fuel the decisions to consolidate schools. Furthermore, they suggest that the real losers from closing small schools regardless of whether they are rural or inner-city schools, are the students. In the end, the authors conclude that

policy and practice should serve one group above all others and that is the children and youth who make up the vast majority of the school communities.



Towards a Professionalism Partnership Curriculum for Teacher Education: Building Bridges Between Teachers' Unions and Teacher Education

Andrew Foran and Jeff Orr

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Introduction

Internal relevancy is the capacity to defend and promote teacher self interest and includes aspects of membership, responsiveness, teacher voice, and recognition of the changing nature of teachers work. External relevancy had been defined by researchers in differing ways: committing to education quality strategic unionism, attuning themselves to the public, and extending the scope and range of union issues ... to include advancing the professions and the cause of education. (Rodrigue, 2000, p. 1)

Bascia (2001) contends that the press, politicians, policy analysts, and teachers themselves, typically view teachers' unions as being obstructive or irrelevant to student learning. This article shows how we shifted our teacher education pedagogy to help our preservice teachers move beyond a view of teachers' unions as places where issues of internal relevancy are dominant, to see the power and possibilities of teacher union work as a way to develop their professional literacy and identity through attention to issues of external relevancy.

This article shows how preservice teachers in our program have become more concerned about issues of external relevance and how, as teacher educators, we became attuned to this concern and placed it at the center of our curriculum to help students construct and reconstruct their professional identities. We explain the impact of our educational partnership with a provincial teachers' union organization and how - by allowing for the construction and reconstruction of professional literacy (Sanacore, 1996) - our preservice teachers cultivated a deeper, more efficacious professional identity and professional attitude (Mitchell, 1950;

Rodgers & Scott, 2008). We discovered this partnership is helping prepare our preservice teachers to be leaders in their professional organizations, committed to issues of external relevancy (Gillis, 2009). After situating this study in the wider body of teachers' union education literature, we outline the professionalism-partnership curriculum we developed and share examples of the preservice teachers' ethical and legal learning as experienced through this partnership curriculum. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications of professionalism partnerships between teachers' unions and teacher education for cultivating teachers' professional identity.

Professionalism Through Partnerships and Research

Typically, teacher education programs provide preservice teachers with limited knowledge about teachers' unions. When union awareness is addressed, it is usually a presentation by teacher union officials or an assigned chapter from a general teacher education text (e.g., Bezeau, 2007; Giles & Proudfoot, 1990; Ungerleider, 2004; Young, Levin & Wallin, 2007). There is little opportunity to situate the work of unions in the context of the preservice teachers' work and often they are left with the impression that union issues are not really relevant to their needs and aspirations.

As part of the restructuring of teacher certification and teacher education in Nova Scotia over the past decade, we have grappled with ways as to how to best teach unionism that lead to awareness of the possibilities of union involvement for advancing public education. Prior to this program initiative, we observed in our preservice teachers an indifference to teachers unions and were troubled because as inservice teachers our experiences with teachers unions had been engaging and impactful. Through a collaborative process between our teacher education faculty and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU), we initiated a partnership whereby our preservice teachers explored various aspects of the work of teachers' unions in each of the four semesters of their program: professional ethics, teacher welfare, teachers and the law, and political activism. Our partnership with NSTU aimed to align the ethical, legal, and organizational issues of the wider teacher profession with the preservice teachers' daily concerns and to allow them to explore their "self and identity formation through a constructive-developmental lens" (Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 739).

How Are Teacher Educators Taking Up Issues of Teacher Unionism?

Essentially, professional associations are designed to perform services that range from the well-being of their membership to the improvement of public education (Lawton, Bedard, & MacLellan, 1999). There is little in the literature on teacher union-faculty of education alliances. Teacher education programs often perpetuate perspectives of schools that are “void of the social, cultural, and political contexts of institutional life” (Solomon & Allen, 2001, p. 219). While a typical practice in teacher education programs is to grant time to develop knowledge about social, cultural, and political contexts through foundations courses, limited time is devoted to helping students see the work of teachers’ unions in these courses. Zeichner (1996) argues there is often little opportunity to situate the professional work of unions in the context of preservice teachers’ work because of the pressure for technical mastery of teaching skills during practice teaching. Teacher education programs prepare preservice teachers to engage with the students in their care, but preparing them in ways whereby they can engage with, influence, and shape their profession is typically left to others such as school boards, union members, researchers in graduate programs, or teacher in-services. Young et al. (2007) observed that teachers have had a decreased influence on policy, which has created considerable teacher discontentment.

Rarely, do teacher education programs use approaches to teach union education to align preservice teachers’ daily concerns with the ethical, legal, and organizational issues of the wider teaching profession. In our experience, typical instructional approaches include teacher educators speaking from their own experiences with unions, or a chapter to read in a text, or a representative from a teachers’ union offering a short presentation. In short, we believe the typical approaches to be a disservice in preparing our preservice teachers to enter the professional-political arena. “For the most part education proceeds with very little political debate”—if it does occur the discussion is over relatively minor concerns (Young et al., 2007, p. 87). Smyth (2001) argues that a new critical politics of teachers work is needed to create wider, deeper opportunities for teachers to deliberate about moral issues. Such professional conversations can create space for preservice teachers to dialogue thoughtfully and creatively about what is right, based on legal awareness and further professional literacy. Our teacher-education team, comprised of faculty members and our NSTU partners, believes that such a focus

as this serves both an immediate and long-range purpose. We aim to cultivate dispositions in our preservice teachers that help them value external relevancy (Rodrigue, 2000) as a way to work to improve the inequities and injustices that they see in public education.

Research does not address how teacher education programs might guide and mentor preservice teachers to use the powers of their teacher associations to improve the conditions of public education (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Thus, our article addresses how teacher educators can educate preservice teachers to become active and contributing members of teachers' associations in their future. The following describes how we provide opportunities for our preservice teachers to become more professionally literate through the construction and reconstruction of their professional identities.

Professional Encounters With Unionism in our Teacher Education Program

Our professional literacy curriculum in teacher education is framed around repeated encounters between NSTU and our preservice teachers at critical junctures in their professional program which provide them opportunities to construct and reconstruct their understanding of professional literacy.

Semester 1, Encounter 1: NSTU issues associated with professional literacy

In preservice teachers' first semester, prior to their first field experiences, we invite NSTU staff members to present a range of ethical and legal case studies to guide our students' exploration of professional and legal cases. These cases – issues of copyright law, the *Nova Scotia School Code of Conduct*, teacher professional conduct outside of school, and homophobia - challenge our preservice teachers to consider that many ethical issues have no formulaic answers, other than good moral professional deliberation. On the other hand, they learn that other professional issues are absolute in what the law expects of teachers, despite what they feel is right. We use a professional literacy framework that shows four competing ethical commitments in public education that challenge professional decision-making: commitments to others – to teachers, to pupils, to authority, and to the wider profession. We help them imagine how these four competing commitments will guide them as

they enter public schools for student teaching. They then go out into the schools for their first 5-week field experience.

Semester 2, Encounter 2: The competing commitments

When preservice teachers return to the university campus from their first 5-week field experience in schools, they are asked to write their own case study (adhering to ethical guidelines of confidentiality). This case is based on personal experiences that help them reconstruct their understanding of the four competing commitments embedded in the Professional Code of Ethics, introduced to them in their first semester. Their cases address the complexity of school realities, professional differences of opinion, pressing concerns to support students, and embedded legal implications that accent the need to better understand educational law. These issues challenge their understanding and application of what it means to be a professional as they wrestle with how best to support pupils, while honoring school board and provincial policies, respecting professional relationships with teacher colleagues, and coming to understand their own shifting identity from a university student to a professional teacher.

Semester 3, Encounter 3: Exploring teacher welfare and collective bargaining

In their third on-campus semester, awareness of contract literacy, teacher wellness, and other teacher welfare issues that relate to internal relevancy are developed through NSTU teacher welfare and wellness staff presentations. These sessions help preservice teachers to understand some of the conditions of employment that teacher unions have bargained for on behalf of teachers and that these conditions have evolved over time, and continue to evolve to reflect a better set of working conditions and support systems for teachers. Preservice teachers are challenged to situate this learning within their own understanding of how these issues will affect their lives. Thus, such matters as maternity leave, signing your first contract, and salaries and benefits for beginning teachers are discussed.

Semester 4, Encounter 4: Bringing union activism to life

A final synthesizing experience that again helps our preservice teachers to reconstruct their professional literacy occurs in their last semester. All our graduating students participate in the development of resolutions, which are presented, debated, and

voted upon as part of a simulated Teachers' Spring Council. This culminating experience involves NSTU staff and their President, alongside our faculty members, as we help our preservice teachers determine ways to use the political process of teachers' organizations to effect change. Experiencing the resolution process provides all preservice teachers with an opportunity to work collaboratively to identify and propose a policy action to address one educational issue of deep concern.

Constructing Preservice Teachers' Professional Literacy

When our preservice teachers first encounter the notion of constructing their professional literacy, they have not yet entered schools for student teaching and have been studying teacher education for only 4 weeks. Thus, we gently introduce some of the complexities of professionalism and NSTU presents several case studies based on actual ethical and legal dilemmas. These cases challenge the preservice teachers to begin to reconstruct their identities as professionals as they ask themselves such questions as: What is professionalism? what does it mean to be professional? what does teacher professionalism look like? what are some of the legal aspects of teaching? Such questions help preservice teachers see that, as they become members of a profession, they must also discern what it means to act professionally (Young et al., 2007). Through these case studies, our teachers confront many issues that are not easily resolved ethically and many are bound to statutes that require a legal resolution. These professional issues generate deep discussions around the following typical wonders of a preservice teacher: Am I allowed to express my own beliefs about political and moral issues when I teach? am I free to do as I please in my free time? with whom can I share information about my students and how much information can I share? what should I do if I am in a situation if I am in disagreement with a fellow teacher's practices, behaviors, or actions? what responsibilities do I have to others in authority when I suspect my students are breaking the law or are being abused? what can I do, if anything, if I disagree with the curriculum or other school policies that I am expected to teach or enforce?

As students try to answer these fundamental questions around professionalism, they determine that the NSTU Code of Ethics is only an initial guide when examining the four commitments of teachers to pupils, to other teachers, internal and external school

authority, and the wider community. They learn that when applied to ethical issues, the commitments are often competing. In some instances, they come to realize they are bound by statutes when issues lead them into such areas of the *Criminal Code*, *Child and Family Services Act*, or *The Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Our intention is not to deal with the depth of legal complexities, but to illustrate how we aim to have our preservice teachers debate these four competing commitments and become more aware of the place of educational law as a means to guide them in resolving complex professional issues. They learn that through their professional organizations, teachers have developed and imposed upon themselves basic standards of professional conduct and professional competence so that as a professional educator, one must abide by these ethical codes and legal frameworks that are in place. The teachers struggle with this commitment to authority at this early stage in their teaching identity formation, because they are often constructing their identity as pupil-centered professionals. Most often they seek to dismiss their commitment to authority when perceiving that it clashes with their commitment to pupils.

When preservice teachers return from their first field experience, in the winter semester, initially we spend time together processing their understanding of this first field experience. They are asked to create a response to the *NSTU Code of Ethics* and to identify the main aspects of how to refine their own professional awareness and practice. Invariably, our discussion focuses on the tension between pupils and authority as their main educational priorities, and they always note how a narrow commitment to authority can, at times, get in the way of supporting their pupils. They also find it intriguing and difficult to accept the pressures and restrictions that being a teacher can place on their private lives. In small groups, preservice teachers develop a case study based on professional tensions witnessed in the field that challenged someone in their group to think about the four competing commitments: pupils, colleagues, authority, and the profession. The following section identifies some of the typical competing tensions that surface in their work.

Tensions Between Commitment to Pupils and Authority/Teachers

The following entail some of the typical competing tensions that surface in preservice teachers' work when:

- staffroom conversations dishonor pupils
 - they encounter pupil abuse and neglect
-

-
- they perceive that fellow teachers actions may be emotionally harming their pupils
 - pupils make racist remarks
 - too many pupils seem to be placed on Individual Programs Plans
 - a teacher does not follow the curriculum documents.

Preservice teachers present their cases among the competing and intertwined commitments to NSTU members. Their cases show their earnest desire to apply an understanding of the Code of Ethics and the importance of being aware of the law in their professional lives. They take seriously the challenge of living ethically and can see the ethical dilemmas in the competing commitments. As mentioned earlier, a dominant plot line is their overwhelming tendency to focus on their commitment to pupils as the first priority, often without a full understanding of other, important legal implications of ignoring elements of public school authority. Often, they see their commitment to teachers and to authority as frustrating barriers in achieving their commitment to pupils. Earlier, we indicated ways how we help our preservice teachers construct their understanding of legal issues, framing public education in their program to clarify their commitment to authority. However, for this article we are more interested in explaining how we take up our preservice teachers' frustrations with these ethical tensions by describing the impact of our Spring Council project on the reconstruction of their professional literacy.

Reconstructing Professional Literacy and Developing Political Agency: Council Resolutions

In Year 2 of their program, during the last semester, preservice teachers have the opportunity to revisit some of their professional challenges and commitments as they develop Teacher Spring Council resolutions. All graduating students participate in the development, presentation, debate, and voting on resolutions as part of a simulated Teacher Spring Council. Most preservice teachers present resolutions related to changing and improving curriculum and policies in the province that shows their deep interest in elements of external union relevancy. Typical examples of resolutions follow.

Resolutions for Change That Honor Commitments to Pupils

The following are some typical examples of preservice teacher resolutions.

- making Grade 10 math credits full-year courses
- ensuring 30 minutes of elementary physical education per day
- starting core French in primary
- creating a greater focus on Aboriginal curriculum
- establishing consistent breakfast programs
- English as a Second Language support for students
- making environmental education mandatory
- improving inclusion practices
- rationalizing the high number of outcomes
- changing teacher accountability policies to hold teachers accountable for pupil success.

While a few resolutions examined the advancement of teacher-welfare issues such as allocating start-up dollars for classroom teachers or the creation of wellness facilities, we are intrigued by the high number of pupil-related resolutions. We believe this provides an important message for teachers' unions about the importance that beginning teachers place upon improving education for pupils. Their resolutions reflect a strong desire to effect change in ways that allow them to honor their commitment to pupils, while living well in the tensions this poses for commitments to authority and teacher to teacher. Our preservice teachers have high expectations that their teachers union should be playing a significant role in creating change that improves education so that pupils' lives are improved.

These resolutions presented discount the notion that unions simply serve to obstruct change and focus only on teacher welfare. The nature of the resolutions put forward shows that preservice teachers are calling for a new form of unionism - one that places issues of external relevancy, with a focus on commitment to pupils, at the forefront.

Implications of Professional Literacy for Preservice Teacher Education

As NSTU and other teacher organizations across the country seek to mentor and welcome high numbers of new teachers into their organizations, we believe much can be learned from our preservice teachers' experiences with this partnership. They asked deep and enduring questions about the limitations and challenges of ignorance about legal and professional literacy. The Spring Council process was a way to learn how to influence the political and policy-making process to help make the education system

better, while not ignoring the legal statutes and policies that frame public education. Spring Council was a way to see how their concerns in school might be dealt with by their professional association and also provided an early illustration of one way they might make changes to improve education in their province, beyond the classroom. Moreover, this Spring Council experience demystified a political process and provided valuable insights into an aspect of public education that had hitherto been unclear: It is evident that our preservice teachers are better prepared to make positive advancement in public education due to their raised awareness of the complexity of issues and how teacher unions can work to influence public policy. Experiencing the resolution process helped preservice teachers gain a sense of agency in advancing issues of concern to improve public education. It is interesting to note that as this partnership has unfolded an increased numbers of our graduates are taking part in union activities as beginning teachers.

These results can serve as a challenge to both teacher unions and teacher education institutions to listen to the concerns of preservice teachers so that, as they move from preservice to inservice teaching, they can find ways to support the advancement of such issues as those they have raised. This may help beginning teachers see that they are being heard by their unions and are supported in addressing issues of deep concern to them so that they can, indeed, have political-educational agency. When some of our preservice teachers tell us that such union involvement is perhaps the only way they could effect change in their profession, we are humbled.

Conclusion

This partnership has been a rich learning experience not only for our preservice teachers, but also for us as their professors. We learned to collaborate to provide students with multiple opportunities, across various courses, to construct and reconstruct their professional identities in relation to the place of their teacher organizations in public education. Over the 2-year period, we feel this has helped develop our preservice teachers sense of professional agency as questions of professionalism and teacher welfare continually seeped into their minds and hearts, as well as our faculty.

In this partnership there are many challenges still to be explored. To us the highest concern is the gap between the

understandings of our preservice teachers and the understandings of the teachers' union about the types of concerns that unionism should be addressing. The implications for teacher education are that teacher education programs and the teachers' unions need to spend more time addressing the competing, professional commitments experienced by preservice teachers. Collectively we need to address the tendency for beginning teachers to feel that to be accepted and successful in their early years of teaching, they must "toe the party line" and "not rock the boat" when they see issues of ethical problems harm their pupils. However, we want them to know the importance of responding professionally when legal incidents arise in schools. Despite how welcoming and supportive the public schools have been to our preservice teachers, they still experience a sense of relative powerlessness as guests in schools, with little formal authority. Often, more than silencing them, they begin to question the viability of their professional code of ethics. More work could be done to explore how our program can strive to enable preservice teachers to live well - professionally and legally - in the midst of ethical codes, without sacrificing their commitments to pupils as their first priority. They want support in their ethical ideal that supporting pupils does not have to be washed away by commitment to authority and colleagues. By understanding more about the reasons that many student teachers defer to authority and colleagues with greater status in the school, we may help teacher educators' work to redress the silence and powerlessness that preservice teachers often feel when assisting pupils in situations of marginalization.

Our preservice teachers are deeply interested in advancing issues of external relevancy through educational reform that will make schools better places for children and youth. If they see the potential of professional teacher organizations influencing public education and enabling them to be part of this reform, they will very likely participate more completely in their teacher organizations. Canadian teacher unions have shown interest in supporting this educational reform, but have teachers at all stages of their careers, including many with a strong interest in internal relevancy. We will continue to explore the place of union education in our work in teacher education as part of our ongoing partnership and find ways to continue to promote an understanding of the hope and promise of teachers unions as a way to advance public education.

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Teacher Perceptions of High-Stakes Testing

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High-Stakes Testing

In 2002 testing and accountability were brought to the forefront in American schools with the passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB PL 107-110) law and, with a resulting, dramatic increase in the level of statewide high-stakes testing (Gulek, 2003). High-stakes testing has emerged as a tool for accountability in schools across the United States (US) and nearly all states have state-wide assessment programs (Abrams, Pedulla, & Madaus, 2003; McNeil, 2000). In the 1980s the emphasis in learning was on minimum competency testing and during the 1990s, on higher-order thinking. Now, learning is being tied to standards and accountability at the national level (Sloane & Kelly, 2003). This shift to the national level for accountability partially resulted from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (Schmidt, McKnight, & Raizen, 1997) and from the preexisting state-level testing of student performance that noticeably started with mathematics (NCTM, 1989; Sloane & Kelly, 2003). There is no national test yet, but rather a mandate, in that NCLB national testing legislation leaves the format up to the individual states (Sloane & Kelly).

All 50 states have implemented accountability initiatives related to setting common standards that measure performance and link to student outcomes. Policy-makers are now using the data from large-scale assessments that are linked to standards to make accountability decisions for students, teachers, schools, and school districts. And, teachers should be involved in this process (Proctor & Demerath, 2008). Title I legislation has also done much to increase the frequency of large-scale testing with the mandate that given assessments be aligned with state standards in reading and mathematics in one grade, per grade level (elementary, middle, and high school), and to use the data to track performance and identify critically low-performing schools. Title I has now expanded state

testing to include Grades 3 through to 8 in reading and mathematics by the 2005-2006 school year, and science by 2007-2008. Student performance on these assessments, which are linked to state standards, has become the primary measure of accountability, with the goal of all students meeting state proficiency levels by 2013-2014 (Goertz & Duffy, 2003). As a result, many states tie the assessment results to a guarantee of rewards (e.g., bonuses for teachers or schools) or the threat of sanctions (e.g., transferring to other public schools, converting public schools to charter schools, removing the principal, being taken over by the district or state). Some view such acts as a means to promote quality teaching and higher student achievement, while others view them as a means to limit the scope of classroom instruction and student learning (Stecher & Barron, 1999; Stecher, Barron, Chun, & Ross, 2000).

The Nature of High-Stakes Tests

State-wide tests vary in form - mainly mathematics and reading tests that are a combination of criterion- and norm-referenced tests - and function, with accountability in its most basic form ranging from broad public reporting to specifics such as building district or school-improvement plans (Goertz & Duffy, 2003). The frequency of testing also ranged from once in elementary, middle, or high school to, now, almost every grade. Although some states incorporated open-ended questions and portfolio assessments (Kentucky and Vermont), and many used extended response items in English (written paragraphs), multiple-choice items still dominated (Goertz & Duffy; Gulek, 2003; Quality Counts, 2002).

Regardless of form or function, testing has resulted in varying the *stakes* from *High* to *Low* from state-to-state in terms of the impact on students and individual schools. A *High-stakes* definition is the use of test results to make highly consequential decisions at the school or student level - such as student diagnosis or placement, student promotion, high school graduation, school performance accountability, or providing awards or imposing sanctions (Abrams et al., 2003; Goertz & Duffy, 2003; Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Furthermore, some states hold students accountable for performance and not necessarily their schools (Goertz & Duffy). A *Low-stakes* definition refers to states with testing programs that did not have any known consequences attached to schools or students (Abrams et al., 2003). Most states direct rewards or

sanctions towards the schools by requiring them to develop school improvement plans that address weaknesses and foster change. However, more and more states defined as low-stakes are becoming high-stakes by imposing more accountability for students.

The Improving America's School's Act of 1994 (IASA PL 103-382) called for states to establish at least three levels of student performance (advanced, proficient, basic) and to set student performance goals. Goals varied in terms of the expected level of student performance (e.g., which test cut scores defined the three levels), the percentage of students that had to meet standards, and the length of time the school had to meet its goals. IASA went further in that once the states established performance goals, they had to define how they would measure annual progress that was "substantial and continuous." School progress was usually measured by achieving a performance threshold (absolute target); meeting annual growth, based on the school's past performance and its distance from state goals (relative growth); or reducing the number or percentage of students scoring at the lowest levels (achievement gap). Student progress was usually measured by incorporating test scores into promotion from grade to grade and high school graduation (Goertz & Duffy, 2003).

Even though previous research indicates both positive and negative consequences of high-stakes testing (Abrams et al., 2003; McColskey & McMunn, 2000), it appears it will remain until Congress decides otherwise. Positive consequences include raising academic performance and narrowing the performance gap between White students and students of color (Grissmer & Flanagan, 1998; Grissmer, Flanagan, Kawata, & Williamson, 2000). Well-developed state standards and performance-based accountability systems have also provided a clear focus to districts and schools regarding student outcomes and have created incentives for school improvement (Goertz, 2001; Massell, 2001). It is well-known that the principal of a school has the core responsibility as instructional leader, which requires not only skill but purpose (Mangin, 2007; Reitzug, West, & Angel, 2008; Vanderhaar, Munoz, & Rodosky, 2006). Therefore, the principal is the one to set clear, high expectations for student performance, coordinate the school's curriculum, facilitate school improvement planning by monitoring student assessment and progress, provide professional development, promote a climate for learning, create a supportive work environment, and develop professional learning communities (e.g., Marks & Printy, 2003; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006). Negative consequences include

discrimination against poor and minority students, narrowing of the curriculum, and limiting teacher flexibility and creativity (Grant, 2007; McNeil, 2000). There have also been concerns regarding issues as teacher morale, student motivation and morale, the impact on classroom practices, and the use of a single high-stakes test when making accountability decisions (Abrams et al., 2003; Goertz & Duffy, 2003; Gulek, 2003; Jones, Jones, Hardin, Chapman, Yarbrough, & Davis, 1999; Sloane & Kelly, 2003).

Teacher Attitudes Towards High-Stakes Testing

Although much research has been conducted in the area of high-stakes testing, particularly in terms of positive or negative consequences for students and school-based administrators, teachers themselves need to actively engage in the debate and their attitudes need to be examined. Current research on teachers' perceptions of state testing programs is scant, but is organized around four areas and serves as the conceptual framework for the instrument used in this study, which was validated in a prior study (Pearson, Nichols, Zimmerman & Lombardo, 2006): the impact on classroom instruction in terms of content and delivery, the pressure to prepare students for testing, the impact on teacher and student motivation and morale, and views of accountability (Abrams et al., 2003).

Results indicate that teachers give greater attention to tested content areas and give lesser attention to, or neglected, untested subject areas (Grant, 2007; Koretz, Barron, Mitchell, & Stecher, 1996). The impact on instructional strategies was less clear - there tended to be a greater impact on the content and pace of instruction, rather than on the mode of instruction (McMillan, Myran, & Workman, 1999). Teachers also spend more classroom time specifically preparing students for the high-stakes tests because of pressure to improve student performance (Grant; Koretz, Mitchell, Barron, & Keith, 1996). The most common activities included training students to mark answer sheets correctly, providing test-taking tips and test-taking skills, reviewing or teaching for the test, and using commercial test-preparation materials and prior tests for practice (Hoffman, Assaf, & Paris, 2001).

Although intended to motivate, high-stakes tests have had detrimental effects such as reducing instruction to test preparation and, as a result, have limited the range of educational experiences

for students and reduced the skills teachers need to bring to their profession (McNeil, 2000; Proctor & Demerath, 2008). Studies indicate that high-stakes tests have increased stress and decreased morale to the point that many have chosen to leave the profession (Hoffman et al., 2002). Similar impacts have been found regarding students who also reported higher levels of test-induced anxiety, stress, and fatigue, although it is not clear if anxiety was due to the tests themselves, or inadequate preparation for learning (Sloane & Kelly, 2003). Of greater concern in terms of students was that external motivating forces or rewards or sanctions may have a minimal effect (Kellaghan, Madaus, & Raczek, 1996) and for those who viewed passing the test as beyond their means may have given up and dropped out of school (Haney, 2000; Reardon, 1996).

Some studies have examined teacher views of testing for accountability. Many teachers believe accountability programs would not improve the quality of education in their state (Jones et al., 1999); however, the perceptions of stakes attached to the test results varied among teachers in the same state (Firestone, Mayrowetz, & Fairman, 1998). Few teachers questioned the need for high standards and the linkage to student progress, but did question the sanctions attached to test results and whether additional indicators should be used for accountability (Linn, 2000).

As stated earlier, even though nearly all states have statewide assessment programs grounded in educational reform, little research has explored the impact that testing has on teacher attitudes and perceptions. Although indicated earlier that the principal is the instructional leader with ultimate responsibility for improved learning (Mangin, 2007; Reitzug et al., 2008; Vanderhaar et al., 2006), teachers also directly influence whether external reform initiatives are implemented in the classroom, which impacts the instructional process and student achievement. If educational reform is to be successful, then teachers' views should be more closely examined because they also have responsibility for this reform (McNeil, 2000; Proctor & Demerath, 2008). Much research has been done within the various states that involves teacher attitudes and perceptions regarding high-stakes testing, yet many of these studies are limited to specific types of teachers or examined data collected from regional samples that are not necessarily generalizable (Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Grant, 2007; Proctor & Demerath; Wright & Choi, 2006). Also stated earlier was that state standards and accountability systems have provided a clear focus to districts and schools regarding student outcomes and school

improvement (Goertz, 2001; Massell, 2001), yet measuring teachers' perceptions could aid principals in their role as instructional leader yet not limit teacher flexibility and creativity (Grant; McNeil), but impact classroom practice in a positive way (Abrams et al., 2003).

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions and attitudes of teachers in a state designated as a high-stakes testing state. Florida was selected because of a history of implementing accountability initiatives and the early development of a state-mandated test. Such teacher perception and attitudes include motivation and morale, instructional support, and instructional impact scores by gender, years of teaching experience, level of school taught in (elementary, middle, high), level of education, size of school, method used to obtain teacher certification (traditional or alternative certification); and of most interest, the letter grade assigned to the school (*A, B, C, D, F*). The intent in conducting this exploratory study was to identify specific teacher characteristics and variable relationships that may prove useful when examining reform initiatives, because it's partly the teacher who implements any initiative yet, presently, teachers almost seem considered as an indirect effect, because most of the research has focused on the link between reform initiatives and student achievement.

Method

Participants and Procedure

At the time of this study there were 146,853 teachers listed in the state of Florida, many of which were eliminated because many certifications did not have a direct instructional link to FCAT (e.g., guidance counselors, occupational specialists, music, art, etc.). The state database was refined to obtain a representative sample of 95,670 teachers for the purpose of the survey, and from this number a simple random sample of 10,000 teachers was selected (10.5%).

The survey was mailed to 5,000 teachers prior to and after the week of FCAT testing, respectively, to counterbalance any order effect. Responses were obtained from 2,363 teachers (24%). Of the 2,363 respondents, the majority of teachers were predominately female (80%), had taught more than 11 years (57%), represented all instructional levels (46% were elementary; 26%, middle; 27%, high school; 1%, other), were mainly urban (72%), held a bachelors degree (54%), taught in a large school (49%), were certified and teaching in-field (96%), were teaching in a school assigned a grade of A (47%), and had obtained their certification via traditional

training (82%) (i.e., a teacher certification program from a university that included student teaching).

Instrumentation

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) was designed to assess student achievement in reading and mathematics (Grades 3-10), science (Grades 5, 8, and 10) and writing (Grades 4, 8, and 10) (<http://fcat.fldoe.org/>). FCAT had two basic components: (a) a criterion-referenced test, which measured these areas according to the Sunshine State Standards, and (b) a norm-referenced test, which measured students' performance against national norms. In 1999, the Florida legislature mandated that schools would be assigned a performance grade of *A* (making excellent progress) to *F* (failing to make adequate progress), based partly on FCAT scores. Schools that received a grade of *A*, or had improved at least two performance-grade categories, had greater autonomy, which included authority over the school's budget (FL Statutes Ch. 99.398, p. 36). In addition, these schools were eligible for the Florida School Recognition Program, designed to provide financial awards that the school staff and advisory council could determine usage of (e.g., merit bonuses for teachers and administrators). Schools designated as performance grade category *D* or *F* were eligible to receive assistance and intervention in an effort to improve performance (FL Statutes Ch. 99.398, p. 28); however, action could be taken if the school did not improve. Students in any of the schools that received a grade of *F* for 2 consecutive years were eligible for a state voucher (opportunity grant), which allowed them to attend a higher performing school in the same district, an adjoining district, or a private school. Consequences were also directly tied to the students: Starting in 2002-03 a regular high school diploma would not be awarded to those who did not pass the FCAT in Grade 10.

Teacher High-Stakes Testing Scale (THSTS)

To adequately describe the sample, demographic variables of interest were included on the cover sheet of the Teacher High-Stakes Testing Scale (THSTS). THSTS was developed in a prior study (28 items) which was designed to measure teachers' perceptions concerning several of the instructional and attitudinal aspects of high-stakes testing and yielded reliable and valid scores

for motivation and morale, instructional support, and instructional impact (Pearson et al., 2006). Current research revealed that teachers' perceptions of state testing programs were organized around four areas: (a) the impact on classroom instruction, (b) the pressure to prepare students, (c) the impact on motivation and morale, and (d) accountability (Abrams et al., 2003); however, it was argued that the pressure to prepare students for testing is actually one aspect of motivation and morale. As indicated earlier, these four areas provided the conceptual framework that was used in a prior validation study for the logical derivation of the THSTS subscales and 17 of the items inquired into several motivational and morale aspects and included incentives, morale, teacher motivation, and satisfaction (scores ranged from 17 to 68). Eight of the items inquired into instructional support aspects and included staff development, school instructional impact, and administrative support (scores ranged from 8 to 32). The remaining three items inquired into instructional impact including curriculum impact and classroom instructional impact (scores ranged from 3 to 12). A 4-point Likert-type scale was used and ranged from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*) and items were stated positively to reflect high scores on the attributes.

Internal consistency reliability of the THSTS subscales was determined using the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient and was $\alpha = .90$ for the motivation and morale scores; $\alpha = .76$ for the instructional support scores; and $\alpha = .79$ for the instructional impact scores. It is often accepted that $\alpha = .80$ is adequate for general research purposes (Loo, 2001), and although reliability of the instructional support and impact scores was below this standard, these scores contained fewer items and were above the exploratory standard for instrument development ($\alpha = .70$) (Nunnally, as cited in Henson, 2001). Corrected item-total correlations are provided in Table 1.

Data Analysis

Statistical assumptions (e.g., normality, homogeneity of variance/covariance matrices, univariate and multivariate outliers) pertinent to multivariate analysis of variance were examined. Multivariate analyses of variance were conducted using a composite score formed from the three scales of the THSTS as a dependent variable, and the aforementioned variables as independent variables (i.e., gender, years of teaching experience, level of school, level of education, size of school, certification method, letter grade

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations, and Corrected Item-Total Correlations

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>
<i>Motivation and Morale</i>			
FCAT testing has given me a new, positive purpose for teaching.	1.61	0.72	.67
FCAT testing is a highly motivating function of my job as a teacher.	1.76	0.76	.65
FCAT testing has motivated me to do a better job as a teacher.	2.01	0.81	.66
The FCAT enhances student achievement.	1.89	0.74	.66
The FCAT enhances students' motivation to learn.	1.72	0.72	.62
FCAT testing has made teaching more attractive to me as a long term career.	1.37	0.59	.58
I feel valued and respected when my students do well on the FCAT.	2.52	0.81	.58
FCAT testing has resulted in more accurate program placement.	2.13	0.73	.56
Schools should receive bonuses/incentives for increased student achievement on the FCAT.	2.37	1.07	.56
My students' performance on the FCAT is a good indicator of my teaching ability.	1.77	0.79	.54
Schools should be penalized if students do not achieve on the FCAT.	1.44	0.62	.48
Teachers should receive bonuses/incentives for increased student achievement on the FCAT.	2.23	1.06	.53
As a result of FCAT testing, teachers are more able to communicate the SSS to others.	2.30	0.71	.52
Teachers should be penalized if students do not achieve on the FCAT.	1.36	0.56	.46
FCAT testing is a true measure of "everything students have learned."	1.43	0.65	.46
I use the results of the FCAT to improve my instruction.	2.52	0.80	.48
I am confident that my students will succeed on the FCAT because of my abilities as a teacher.	2.60	0.82	.43
<i>Instructional Support</i>			
At my school, the administration provides support concerning the FCAT (e.g., instructional materials, professional development, and environment conducive to testing).	3.32	0.66	.55
At my school, the administration notifies me in a timely manner as to when the test is going to be given.	3.56	0.59	.46

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>r</i>
There has been increased staff development in my school/district on identifying effective strategies to increase student achievement.	3.18	0.72	.54
There has been increased staff development in my school/district on the Sunshine State Standards.	2.91	0.77	.49
My school provides remediation for students who score below grade level on the FCAT.	3.46	0.65	.41
There has been <i>sufficient</i> formal training on FCAT test administration in my school/district.	3.07	0.75	.40
I receive support from the district office for the FCAT.	2.70	0.83	.43
My school celebrates success on the FCAT.	3.07	0.72	.37
<i>Instructional Impact</i>			
As a result of the FCAT, I have had to change my curriculum to align with the FCAT test.	2.94	0.81	.69
I spend most of my instructional time in preparing for the FCAT.	2.62	0.89	.59
I have had to change my teaching methods as a result of the FCAT (e.g., test-taking strategies, textbook alignment to the standards).	3.02	0.79	.61

assigned to school) in order to examine teachers' perceptions of state-wide testing. Effect sizes were interpreted using Cohen's criteria ($\eta^2 = .01, .06, \text{ and } .14$ for small, medium, and large, respectively (Stevens, 2002). No significant differences were expected in the scores based on gender, years of teaching experience and level of education, nonetheless, they were examined to possibly eliminate them from future research.

However, significant differences were expected in the scores based on level of school, size of school, method of certification, and letter grade assigned to the school. For level of school, it was hypothesized that elementary teachers (because almost every elementary grade in Florida is tested) would perceive a greater need to change their instruction to align with the test. Also hypothesized was that teachers who worked in smaller schools and obtained traditional certification (i.e., a teacher education program that included student teaching) would have significantly higher instructional impact scores, the reasoning was that being in an elementary school with lower student-teacher ratios, with perhaps a stronger commitment to teaching because it was an initial career (as opposed to those who choose an alternate route and entered the profession later with alternative certification, such as a degree in a

particular subject area). An additional hypothesis, and of particular interest to the author, was that teachers who work in a school that was assigned a higher grade would have significantly higher motivation scores than teachers who work in a school that was assigned a low grade, because Florida often provided merit bonuses to teachers in schools assigned an *A*.

Results

Statistical assumptions examined included normality of the scores and the homogeneity of the variance/covariance matrices. Normality was examined via Shapiro-Wilk and the assumption was violated for all of the scores; yet examinations of the box and whisker plots revealed that very little visual skewness was present in the data and the violations were probably due to the large sample size. Homogeneity of the variance/covariance matrices via Box's *M* across several of the demographics indicated that the equal variance assumption was also met; there were no univariate or multivariate outliers.

A composite score was formed from the three scores to serve as the dependent variable with gender, years of teaching experience (0-1, 2-5, 6-10, 11+); level of school (elementary, middle, high); level of education (bachelors, masters, specialist or doctorate); size of school (small < 500 students; medium, 500-1000 students; large > 1000 students); method of certification (traditional teacher education program or alternative route); and the letter grade assigned to the school (*A*, *B*, *C*, *D* or *F*) as independent variables. The range of raw scores possible was 17 to 68 for motivation/morale; 8 to 32 for instructional support; and 3 to 12 for instructional impact. As stated earlier, no significant differences were expected in the scores based on gender, years of teaching experience, and level of education, but significant differences were expected in the scores based on level and size of school, method of certification, and letter grade assigned to the school.

Statistically significant differences were observed for gender, years of teaching experience, level and size of school, certification method, and assigned school grade, but not level of education for the omnibus multivariate tests [$F(3,2329) = 21.05, p < .001$; $F(9,5712) = 6.23, p < .001$; $F(6,4634) = 34.97, p < .001$; $F(6,4666) = 13.03, p < .001$; $F(3, 2314) = 9.03, p < .001$; $F(9, 5530) = 4.56, p < .001$, $F(6,4318) = 0.84, p > .05$; respectively]. Follow-up analyses were conducted for each variable on the composite score that was

created by first standardizing the three scores (using each grand mean and pooled standard deviation), and then weighting the standardized scores by the standardized discriminant function weights (obtained via descriptive discriminant analysis). The resulting composite was then examined via univariate analysis of variance with pairwise contrasts, since the omnibus multivariate test was of interest and so that the composite score would be consistent across the variables examined (Enders, 2003).

The follow-up analysis for gender revealed a statistically significant difference on the composite score [$F(1,2331) = 63.20, p < .001$], yet the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .03$) (see Table 2). An examination of the structure coefficients indicated that the higher centroid for the females was associated with higher scores on the composite, particularly the instructional impact component. For years of teaching experience, the follow-up analysis revealed a statistically significant difference on the composite score [$F(3,2349) = 17.90, p < .001$], and pairwise contrasts indicated a statistically significant difference between teachers who taught 0-1 years and those who taught 6-10 and 11+ years, teachers who taught 2-5 years and those who taught 6-10 and 11+ years, and teachers who taught 6-10 and 11+ years, and again the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .02$). An examination of the structure coefficients indicated that the higher centroid for those who had the fewest years of teaching experience was associated with higher scores on the motivation and morale component and lower scores on the instructional support component of the composite score.

For level of school, the follow-up analysis revealed a statistically significant difference on the composite score [$F(2,2319) = 98.71, p < .001$], and pairwise contrasts indicated a statistically significant difference between all the levels of school, with a medium effect size ($\eta^2 = .08$). An examination of the structure coefficients indicated that the higher centroid for elementary teachers was associated with higher scores on the instructional impact component of the composite score. For size of school, the follow-up analysis revealed a statistically significant difference on the composite score [$F(2, 2335) = 39.42, p < .001$], and pairwise contrasts indicated a statistically significant difference between teachers who taught in either a small or medium sized school and teachers who taught in a large school, but again the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .03$). An examination of the structure coefficients indicated that the higher centroids for

Table 2

Composite Variable Centroids and LDF Weights for Motivation/Morale, Instructional Support, and Instructional Impact Scores by Gender, Years of Teaching Experience, Level of school, Size of School, Method of Certification, and Assigned School Grade

Effect	Structure <i>r</i>	Std. Weight		Centroid
Gender				
Motivation/Morale	.06	-.02	Male	-.33
Instructional Support	.41	.37	Female	.08
Instructional Impact	.93	.92		
Years of Teaching Experience				
Motivation/Morale	.62	.86	0-1	.30
Instructional Support	-.56	-.81	2-5	.22
Instructional Impact	-.17	-.10	6-10	.05
			11+	-.12
Level of School				
Motivation/Morale	.13	.11	Elementary	.31
Instructional Support	.26	.19	Middle	-.14
Instructional Impact	.97	.97	High	-.36
Size of School				
Motivation/Morale	.01	-.01	Small	.17
Instructional Support	.17	.12	Medium	.18
Instructional Impact	.99	.99	Large	-.19
Method of Certification				
Motivation/Morale	-.47	-.54	Traditional	.05
Instructional Support	.20	.31	Alternate	-.23
Instructional Impact	.84	.81		

Table 2 (continued)

Effect	Structure r	Std. Weight		Centroid
Assigned School Grade				
Motivation/Morale	-.75	-.56	<i>A</i>	-.12
Instructional Support	-.79	-.65	<i>B</i>	.05
Instructional Impact	.26	.27	<i>C</i>	.14
			<i>D or F</i>	.16

teachers in the small- or medium-sized schools were associated with higher scores on the instructional impact component of the composite score.

For method of certification, the follow-up analysis revealed a statistically significant difference on the composite score [$F(1, 2316) = 27.12, p < .001$], but again the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .01$). An examination of the structure coefficients indicated that the higher centroid for teachers who obtained traditional certification was associated with higher scores on the instructional impact component and lower scores on the motivation and morale component of the composite score. For assigned school grade, the follow-up analysis revealed a statistically significant difference on the composite score [$F(3, 2274) = 9.85, p < .001$], and pairwise contrasts indicated a statistically significant difference between schools assigned a grade of *A* and all other grades, and the effect size was small ($\eta^2 = .01$). An examination of the structure coefficients indicated that the higher centroid for those who taught in a school that was assigned a grade of *D* or *F* was associated with lower scores on the instructional support and the motivation/morale component of the composite score.

Examination of the means and standard deviations from Table 3 revealed that females had higher scores on all three subscales. Teachers who had fewer years of teaching experience had higher motivation and morale scores, but the most experienced teachers had the highest instructional support and instructional impact scores. Middle school teachers had the highest motivation and morale scores, but elementary teachers, the highest instructional

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Motivation/Morale, Instructional Support, and Instructional Impact Scores by Gender, Years of Teaching Experience, Level of School, Size of School, Method of Certification, and Assigned School Grade

Independent Variable	n	Motivation/Morale		Instructional Support		Instructional Impact	
		M ^a	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gender							
Female	1873	33.15	7.94	25.42	3.41	8.76	2.05
Male	460	32.88	8.37	24.85	3.62	7.94	2.09
Years of Teaching Experience							
0-1 ^a	129	34.76	7.81	24.70	3.96	8.54	1.85
2-5 ^b	447	34.38	7.61	24.95	3.48	8.59	2.12
6-10 ^c	438	33.37	8.40	25.24	3.41	8.46	1.97
11+	1339	32.43	7.98	25.51	3.41	8.65	2.19
Level of School							
Elementary	1061	33.19	7.80	25.58	3.40	9.18	1.98
Middle	593	34.04	8.52	25.24	3.53	8.27	2.00
High	668	32.06	7.81	24.92	3.47	7.92	2.06
Level of Education							
Bachelors	1265	33.31	7.95	25.27	3.50	8.66	2.07
Masters	959	32.54	8.11	25.24	3.44	8.50	2.10
Specialist or Doctorate	117	34.37	8.80	25.78	3.51	8.42	2.20
Size of School							
Small (<500)	228	32.98	7.63	25.32	3.57	8.93	2.10
Medium (500-1000)	969	33.06	7.97	25.39	3.44	8.95	2.00
Large (> 1000) ^d	1141	33.05	8.27	25.16	3.51	8.19	2.10

Table 3 (continued)

Independent Variable	<i>n</i>	Motivation/ Morale		Instructional Support		Instructional Impact	
		<i>M</i> ^a	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Method of Certification							
Traditional	1905	32.87	8.03	25.31	3.46	8.68	2.07
Alternate	413	33.94	8.29	25.12	3.58	8.19	2.10
Assigned School Grade							
<i>A</i> ^e	1074	33.83	8.14	25.61	3.35	8.57	2.09
<i>B</i>	549	32.58	7.92	25.15	3.40	8.57	2.09
<i>C</i>	502	32.08	7.97	24.97	3.68	8.53	2.01
<i>D or F</i>	153	33.09	7.18	24.85	3.51	9.06	2.03

Note. All independent variable differences are based on composite score.

^asignificantly different from 6-10 and 11+

^bsignificantly different from 6-10 and 11+

^csignificantly different from 11+

^dsignificantly different from small and medium

^esignificantly different from all other grades.

support and instructional impact scores. There were no differences in the scores based on level of education and teachers who were in small or medium schools or who obtained traditional certification via a teacher education program that included student teaching had slightly higher instructional support and instructional impact scores.

Also, teachers who taught in a school that was assigned a grade of *A* had the highest motivation and morale and instructional support scores, but those who taught in a school assigned a *D* or *F* had the highest instructional impact scores. Even though statistically significant differences were found on the composite score by gender, years of teaching experience, level and size of school, certification method, and assigned school grade, the effect sizes were generally small with the exception of level of school, which had a medium effect size.

Conclusions

Reliability of the total THSTS scale scores was adequate for general research purposes, and all of the three subscale score reliability coefficients were above the standard for instrument development. The lowest reliability coefficient was associated with the instructional support scores, yet it was interesting that the scores with the fewest items - instructional impact - had a higher internal consistency coefficient. Results of this study also indicate variability in the responses across the items, which may indicate that the participants did react to each item separately and gave careful consideration to their responses. It was not surprising, however, that the items with the lowest means were those that related to motivation and morale, particularly the unfavorable attitudes towards penalization or staying in the teaching profession. It was an encouraging finding, however, that the highest means were associated with favorable attitudes towards the administration, staff development, and changing teaching methods. This may indicate that FCAT is having a positive impact on attitudes relating to administrative support and instructional change.

Multivariate analysis of variance was performed using several independent variables and a composite score formed from the scores of the THSTS as a dependent variable. Of particular interest were gender, years of teaching experience, level and size of school, level of education, certification method, and the letter grade assigned to the school. Although some differences in THSTS scores were not expected, it was determined that female teachers had slightly higher scores overall than males, particularly instructional impact scores. Also, younger teachers had higher motivation and morale, but lower instructional support scores than more experienced teachers. The hypothesis was supported that there would be no difference in the scores based on education.

It was hypothesized that elementary teachers would perceive a greater need to change their instruction to align with the standardized test, and this hypothesis was supported because elementary teachers did have higher instructional impact scores, with practical significance as evidenced by the medium effect size. Teachers who worked in smaller schools with traditional certification also had higher instructional impact scores. It was also hypothesized that teachers who worked in a school that was assigned a higher grade would have higher motivation scores than teachers who worked in a school that was assigned a lower grade.

This hypothesis was supported because those teachers who worked in a school assigned a grade of *A* did have higher motivation and morale scores than the other groups. It was interesting to note that those teachers who worked in a school assigned a grade of *D* or *F* had higher instructional impact scores, which may provide evidence that these teachers have responded by making changes at the classroom level in order to impact their students' performance on the test.

Discussion and Implications

Foremost, this study did contribute to the knowledge base examining teachers' attitudes towards high-stakes testing, as the current literature did provide a solid framework for the instrument used (Abrams et al., 2003). The results of this study support the previous findings in that teachers give greater attention to tested content areas and deemphasize or neglect untested subject areas, as evidenced by the items that measured instructional impact having the highest mean scores (Grant, 2007; Koretz et al., 1996). The teachers in this study indicated they did change their curriculum to align with the test, did spend most of their instructional time in preparing for the test, and changed their teaching methods as a result.

Also supported in this study is the notion that high-stakes tests have detrimental effects on teachers' attitudes, such as decreasing morale to the point that many chose to leave the profession (Hoffman et al., 2001), as evidenced by the items that measured teacher motivation and perceiving teaching as being more attractive as a long-term career. The motivation and morale scores could aid principals in developing interventions for those who have had their motivation and morale decreased to the point that they may soon leave the profession; thus, preventing the loss of a considerable investment in terms of recruitment and retention. Principals could use the instructional support, instructional impact, and motivation and morale scores to aid in leadership activities, respectively (e.g., Marks & Printy, 2003; Mitchell & Sackney, 2006) (i.e., setting expectations for student performance, coordinating the curriculum, managing school improvement planning, monitoring student assessment and progress, providing professional development, promoting a climate for learning, creating a supportive work environment, and developing professional learning communities).

One of the negative consequences of testing has been the limitation of teacher flexibility and creativity (Grant, 2007; McNeil, 2000). The instructional impact and support scores may provide principals insight as to how to impact classroom practice in a positive way and still maintain focus on state standards and accountability (Goertz, 2001; Massell, 2001). The results of this study provide support that whether teachers believe that accountability programs improve education or not may be irrelevant (Jones et al., 1999), but they do perceive that sanctions attached to the test results are linked to accountability (Linn, 2000).

One limitation of this study was that the sample size obtained yielded statistical significance, rather than practical significance, on many of the composite mean differences observed. However, the THSTS was able to demonstrate use in detecting group differences even though the differences were small. Future research will also examine the reliability and stability of the subscales after expanding the instructional support and impact subscales, and confirmatory factor analysis will be used to determine if the three domains represented and derived from the literature continue to provide a solid conceptual framework for further study. The major strength of this study was that a simple random sample of teachers throughout Florida was obtained; thus, the results of this study may be truly representative and generalizable to the inferred population of all teachers in the state.

Future research will also include exploration of these subscales within the context of expanding school reform and statewide standardized testing initiatives. One study that is planned will examine the perceptions of teacher autonomy as it relates to attitudes towards high-stakes or low-stakes statewide testing, since autonomy has also been linked to the success of reform initiatives and whether or not a teacher will stay in the profession (Pearson & Hall, 1993; Pearson & Moomaw, 2006). Finally, it is important to note that although there are few specific instruments created to investigate various groups' perceptions of high-stakes testing, this study did use a literature-based teacher perception instrument that could be used in future research because it is teachers themselves who directly influence whether external reform initiatives are actually implemented at the classroom level.

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Constructing Early Childhood Learning: Preschool Policies in the NCLB World

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Children's lives are lived through childhoods constructed for them by adult understandings of childhood and what children are and should be. (Mayall, 1996, p. 1)

Context of the Study

For preschoolers, early learning experiences influence future school and societal success (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2000; Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, 2000; NICHD, 2005; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 1999; Torlov & Debbink, 2008). However, current research assessing preschool programs in the United States (US) indicates that American preschoolers are *not* receiving the quality early educational experiences needed to lay this critical foundation (Bardige, 2005; Bowman et al.; Day & Yarbrough, 1998; Kauerz, 2001; NICHD; Zill et al., 2001). These studies suggest that preschoolers across the US are entering kindergarten without the skills essential for success. Despite efforts targeted at increasing the quality of early education in America, Bowman et al. report that only 37% of kindergarteners know that print goes from left to right, can show where to go next when a line of print ends, and can point to the end of a story; 18% can do none of the three. Further, while 94% of kindergarteners can recognize and count numbers to 10, merely 20% can read two-digit numbers or sequence numbers, and only 4% can add or subtract.

This issue of school-readiness is especially significant in the current US educational environment. With the signing into law of The No Child Left Behind Act [NCLB] of 2001 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003), President Bush ushered in a new era of educational accountability and marked a national paradigmatic shift from traditional practice in education to one based on evidence. The underlying premise of the NCLB standards

movement is that children's development and learning, at all levels, can be advanced by clearly articulating essential educational content and defining expected child outcomes.

In an effort to ensure that preschoolers enter kindergarten with the skills needed to succeed in schools operating under NCLB guidelines, the federal Good Start, Grow Smart [GSGS] initiative of 2002 was created. This initiative dictated that, in return for federal monies, states must create preschool policy guidelines that align with their state's K-12 NCLB education standards (Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2003; The White House, n.d.). These federally mandated preschool policy guidelines provide content standards intended to influence early educators' teaching practices and hold early educators - many of whom require no more than a high school diploma (Barnett, Hustedt, Friedman, Boyd, & Ainsworth, 2007; Blau, 2007; LeMoine, 2004) - accountable for educational outcomes. The current guidelines for each state are based on current early learning research, grounded in contemporary theory regarding best practice, and compiled by either a task force or steering committee whose membership is often comprised of early childhood experts from across the state.

For early education in the US, a mostly privatized industry, this concentration on school-readiness and the barrage of recent preschool policy guidelines designed to ensure that preschoolers are indeed ready to succeed in school, is all quite new. Few, if any, studies have examined the actual preschool policy guidelines in an effort to uncover the underlying philosophies of human development intended to guide the practices of early educators. This study examines these underlying philosophies of human development embedded in state preschool policy guidelines.

Research Design and Method

This study analyzed four preschool policy guidelines currently used in the New England region of the US, created by individual states to meet NCLB and GSGS requirements. These include Maine's Early Childhood Learning Guidelines [ECLG] (Maine Department of Education, 2005); Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences [GPLE] (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2003); The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards [RIELS] (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2003); and Vermont Early Learning Standards [VELS] (Vermont Department of Education, 2003).

Text from the preschool policy guidelines was coded using Nvivo - a program designed to assist in qualitative analysis - then analyzed using document-analysis methodology. The data were analyzed using a multilevel deductive coding process that started by coding text from the four preschool policy guidelines into three broad categories in the domain of human development - biosocial development, psychosocial development, and cognitive development (see Figure 1).

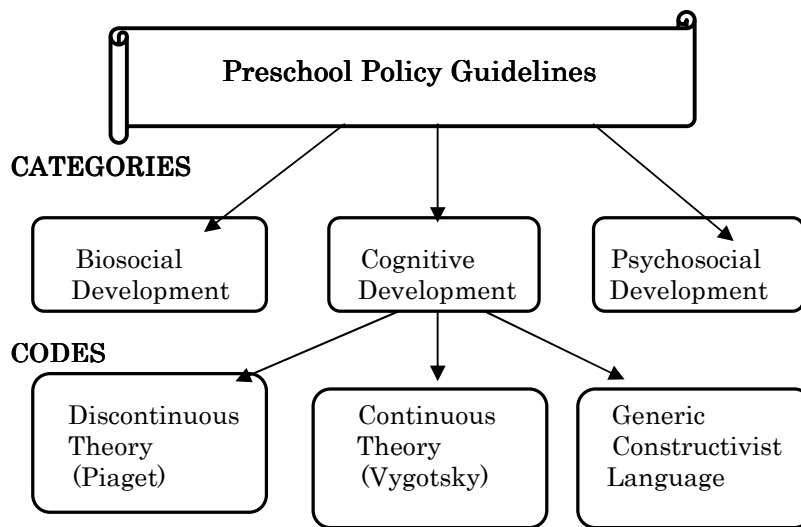


Figure 1. Coding levels used for preschool policy guidelines.

Biosocial development is the part of human development that encompasses all aspects of physical growth and development of the body and brain, as well as the changes and social influences that affect them. *Psychosocial development* includes emotions, personality, relationships, and social skills. Finally, *cognitive development* includes all the mental processes used in thinking, learning, deciding, and communicating in an effort to acquire knowledge and/or become aware of the environment (Berger, 2008; Pressley & McCormick, 2007; Thornton, 2008).

The second level of analysis focused only on the text that had been assigned to cognitive development. Text within the cognitive-development category was placed into one of three codes using a continuum of cognitive development theories - discontinuous theory

at one end, continuous theory at the other, and generic constructivist language in the middle (see Table 1).

Table 1

Indicators of Discontinuous or Continuous Cognitive Development

	Discontinuous Development precedes learning	Continuous Learning precedes development
Influences on cognitive development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hereditary or inborn factors that follow a predictable set sequence • age of child or stage of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social context is critical • community, culture, and family values and beliefs
Role of the early educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited direct teaching, facilitator • support child's process of self-discovery • encourage child's self initiated problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • actively involved in teaching • offers assistance and instruction ~ scaffolding • presents challenges and tasks to further learning
Daily activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spontaneous play • child-directed exploration • individual or small group chosen by child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher organized and directed to encourage child's learning • group supported learning • discussion with others

Discontinuous theory, often-called *stage theory*, influenced Piaget who posits that development precedes learning. Discontinuous theory focuses on inborn hereditary factors, individual maturation, and self-directed interaction with materials in the environment. It assumes that all children progress through a series of predictable, unchanging stages of development bound by individual maturation and hereditary traits (Isaacs, 1961; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Wood, 1998).

In contrast, and at the other end of the continuum, Vygotsky was influenced by continuous theory. He believes that learning precedes development. Continuous theories of development presume that

development occurs in a smooth progression, facilitated by experiences provided by adults and other experts in the environment. It emphasizes the importance of environmental influences, including ideas about culture, values, and beliefs, with emphasis on language development and social identity. Vygotsky held that children learn best when engaged in social interactions with peers and adults at varying levels of competence, working toward a common goal (Kozulin, Gindis, Vladimir, & Miller, 2003; Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986).

Generic constructivist language refers to all the text found in the category of cognitive development that was not specific enough to be placed in either discontinuous or continuous theory. Generic constructivist language encompasses things that would be seen or expected in any quality early education classroom operating on constructivist theory (e.g. "Toys are interesting to children," and "Materials are organized and accessible throughout the day") and would be considered middle ground along the continuum of cognitive development theories.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

All four of the New England preschool policy guidelines - ECLG, GPLE, RIELS, and VELs - have a greater focus on cognitive development than on biosocial or psychosocial development. On average, 68% of the guidelines focus on cognitive development, providing evidence that New England policy makers deem cognitive development as important for school-readiness (See Table 2).

Additionally, during the second level of coding it was discovered that while all of the New England preschool policy guidelines consistently employed 60% to 75% generic constructivist language, all of the guidelines mixed inconsistent views of discontinuous and continuous cognitive development (see Table 3). Further, among the New England guidelines, the policies vary widely in their views of cognitive development and in the degree to which they draw from continuous and discontinuous theory. The ECLG and GPLE focus more on continuous theory, and the RIELS and VELs, discontinuous theory. The RIELS was the most internally consistent, with only a 2.9% focus on the discordant view of continuous theory.

Table 2

Instances of Cognitive, Biosocial, & Psychosocial Development

	Maine (ECLG)	Massachusetts (MGPLE)	Rhode Island (RIELS)	Vermont (VELS)
Biosocial Development	8%	18%	12%	10%
Psychosocial Development	19%	14%	22%	24%
Cognitive Development	73%	68%	66%	66%

Table 3

Views of Discontinuous and Continuous Theory

	Maine (ECLG)	Massachusetts (MGPLE)	Rhode Island (RIELS)	Vermont (VELS)
Discontinuous Theory	12.9%	14.8%	22.0%	19.1%
Continuous Theory	19.2%	24.4%	2.9%	12.4%
Generic Constructivist Language	67.9%	60.8%	75.1%	68.5%

From these findings, two major conclusions emerged: (a) New England preschool policy guidelines created to satisfy NCLB and GSGS requirements focus on cognitive development, and (b) all New England preschool policy guidelines have internal inconsistencies that may send mixed messages to early educators, thus making curriculum implementation problematic and disadvantaging the young children they are intended to support.

The Focus on Cognitive Development

New England preschool policy guidelines concentrate on preschoolers' cognitive development and spend little time focusing on biosocial and psychosocial development. This suggests that the accountability movement generated by NCLB is filtering down to affect preschool education. Additionally, it suggests that New England-level policy makers currently view cognitive development as the most important area of focus in the domain of human development in preparing preschoolers for school.

One problem in focusing on a single aspect of human development is that areas within the domain of human development are not separate; emphasizing one may detrimentally affect preschoolers' development (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC & NAECS/SDE], 2002; Pressley & McCormick, 2007). Research supports the idea that young children's construction of knowledge is heavily dependent on personal experiences and interactions with their physical environment and social relationships (Berger, 2008; Bredekamp, Knuth, Kunesh, & Shulman, 1992; Pressley & McCormick; Scott-Little et al., 2003; Thornton, 2008). Growth in biosocial and psychosocial skills will support, and even advance, learning in more cognitive areas such as math, science, social studies, and language arts. Thus, an early education program that emphasizes music, arts, exploration, group play, and physical activities not only shapes the values of young children, it pedagogically supports a more holistic approach to child development (Copple & Bredekamp 2009; Hyun, 2000).

Furthermore, state-level focus on preschoolers' cognitive development is likely to disadvantage certain populations. As evidenced by current research, creating specific academic expectations for preschoolers is difficult because children's development varies greatly depending upon family relations, environment, and experience (Christenson, 1999; Hawley, 2000; Landy, 2002; Moore, 2007; Pellino, 2006; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). The present preschool population is the most culturally diverse age group in our country and includes an increasing number of children with developmental delays and disabilities (Odom & Diamond, 1998; Sleeter, 2001; Smith & Luckasson, 1992; Washington & Andrews, 1998). Attempting to create very specific cognitive expectations for preschoolers may produce unintended negative academic consequences for this diverse preschool population. Young children who can not meet the cognitive expectations outlined in the

preschool policy guidelines maybe labeled as educational failures before they even enter the K-12 school system (Hatch, 2002).

Internal Inconsistencies: Creating Confusion?

The second conclusion that emerged from the analysis is that all the New England preschool policy guidelines mixed discontinuous and continuous theory, and are, therefore, to some extent, internally inconsistent, underscoring the complexities of child development and early learning. Although the text sorted into the categories of continuous and discontinuous development constitutes as little as 25%, at most 40%, of the documents, this juxtaposition of differing developmental theories supports the premise that a one-size-fits-all curriculum may be nearly impossible to create, making consistent and effective implementation challenging.

Piaget's interpretation of discontinuous theory states that development precedes learning. Children must be developmentally ready before new learning can occur (Berger, 2008; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969; Wood, 1998). In an early education classroom operating on Piaget's discontinuous theory, the teacher waits for a child to become developmentally ready to advance to a new level and acts in a supporting role to facilitate children's discovery, with limited direct teaching.

Polemically, Vygotsky's view of continuous theory states that learning pushes development. Vygotsky believes that children can be taught new skills just beyond their current level of mastery and, in so learning, their development progresses (Kozulin et al., 2003; Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986). In an early education classroom operating on Vygotsky's continuous theory, the teacher carefully observes children and introduces new skills early, encouraging the learner to move to a new skill level. The early educator is actively involved in the teaching process and offers assistance and plans instruction to further learning.

These two theories are at nearly opposite ends of the cognitive development continuum. Trying to mix and implement both theories in an early education classroom may be problematic for early educators because the two theories offer differing pedagogical ideas about how to best support children's learning (e.g., the discontinuous theory prescribes wait; the continuous theory, push forward). Each viewpoint influences how a classroom is set up and how early educators interact with children. Having both views embedded in preschool policy guidelines creates a complex, ambiguous teaching situation whereby effective and consistent

implementation of educational standards could be difficult for early educators, especially those who have little knowledge of child development or understanding of appropriate teaching strategies.

Implications

Preschool policy guidelines, as intended by NCLB and GSGS, influence early educators' teaching practices and thus influence preschoolers' experiences. The results of this study, therefore, have important implications for early educators, for those who prepare early educators, and for policy makers.

Implications for Early Educators

There are several significant implications from this study for early educators. First, the New England state's emphasis on cognitive development may increase the pressure that early educators are feeling from kindergarten teachers to focus more on academics or cognitive development, and less on biosocial and psychosocial development (Olfman, 2003; Wesley & Buysee, 2003). "Higher and tougher standards of learning for all populations of students are focusing on a narrow view of learning" (Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002, p. 1).

The current quest to promote school readiness for young children is creating a shift from a focus on all domains of development to a narrower focus on cognitive development, promoting a greater emphasis on literacy, language, and numeracy. This shift is contrary to current research that posits developmental domains are intertwined and that growth in all domains is needed for optimum early learning (Berger, 2008; Copple & Bredekamp 2009; Pressley & McCormick, 2007; Scott-Little et al., 2003; Thornton, 2008).

A second implication for early educators is the internal inconsistencies created by mixing the discordant views of discontinuous and continuous cognitive development. Many early educators have difficulty distinguishing between curriculum and pedagogy (Kagan & Kauerz, 2006). These policies that mix pedagogical views on how best to educate preschoolers may, therefore, unnecessarily burden early educators as they try to design and implement curriculum. Without consistent, clear directions in policy guidelines, there is a potential that early educators' attempts to fulfil the guidelines' mandate may be less than successful. Early educators may become frustrated, give up, or struggle and experience burnout, increasing the already high job-

turnover rates (Gerencher, 2005; Herzenberger, Price, & Bradley, 2005; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003).

The findings of this study point to the complexity of child development and learning and underscore the importance for today's early educators to possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable an educator to "engage students in rigorous, meaningful activities that foster academic learning" (National Research Council, 2001, p. 22). Along with K-12 teachers, early educators are being held to a higher standard; however, unlike K-12 teachers, early educators often do not have the educational preparation, salaries, resources, or support to enable them to meet the new standards being set for them (Bowman et al., 2000; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006-07b).

Implications for Those Who Prepare Early Educators

With cognitive-based standards a reality for preschoolers, early educators need to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities that allow them to engage preschoolers in appropriate and meaningful activities that encourage learning. For those who prepare early educators, this means designing a comprehensive plan that will support early educators along their educational and professional path. It also means that at every available opportunity, early education teacher educators should endeavor to help early educators better understand how to appropriately incorporate all domains of human development into and across the curriculum.

Implications for Policy Makers

Policies are textual interventions into practice that privilege the policy makers' reality (Ball, 1994). Preschool policy guidelines that focus on cognitive development send a message from policy makers to early educators that certain things hold more value in today's society. Policy makers would, perhaps, argue that the focus on cognitive development was not intended to limit or leave out biosocial and psychosocial development, pointing out its inclusion as a portion of the standards. However, policy makers cannot predict or assume to know how these preschool policy guidelines will be enacted in every situation or in every setting (Ball, 2008; Stone, 2001).

Further, by creating policies that are internally inconsistent, policy makers have, in essence, created conflicting policies. Policies that detail and expect two differing views of how to best support preschoolers' cognitive development could increase the odds of

failure on the part of the early educators trying to implement them and could interfere with efforts for school readiness. Unless the language of standards is clear, standards cannot be effectively used to communicate what is expected from early educators as they endeavor to support preschoolers' school-readiness (Kagan & Kauerz, 2006; Kendall, 2003).

Finally, there is evidence that the best-designed standards will have negligible benefits when there is minimal financial investment in professional development and program resources (Elmore, 2002; Gronlund, 2006; NICHD, 2002). Education, opportunity for reflection on practice, and materials are needed to appropriately implement curriculum and effective teaching strategies that support early educators' school-readiness efforts. Standards within preschool policy guidelines cannot have positive effects without concentrated attention to coordination, communication, consensus building, and financing (Brown, 2008; NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2002; Seefeldt, 2005).

Conclusion

The intent of NCLB is to have states create educational standards that clearly articulate essential educational content and define expected child outcomes to advance children's development. This study highlights certain inconsistencies in preschool policy guidelines, demonstrating the need for further investigation and consideration of how preschool policy guidelines are constructed if they are to meet NCLB goals. If the underlying philosophies embedded in preschool policy guidelines used to create standards were clearer and unambiguous, then the policies would more likely be used, and used appropriately. It is evident that in spite of the increased awareness about accountability and standards for preschoolers, disagreement continues about what will best support preschoolers' early cognitive learning.

To make significant change in the field of early education in America and to assure school-readiness for all preschoolers' early education practitioners, those who prepare early educators, the policy makers, and the nation as a whole, must be concerned with the development of the whole child, reflect on individual and shared responsibilities for children, and commit to intentional investment in the future of young children.

Furthermore, until there is consensus on how to support preschoolers' cognitive development, the creation of discordant

policies may continue, thus affecting preschoolers. Preschool policy guidelines should be reevaluated with an eye to defining what is important that preschool age children know and learn across all domains of human development. Only then can preschool policy guidelines be created that inspire early educators to plan learning experiences that influence future school and societal success for all preschoolers.

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Relationships Among School Size, Student Achievement and Teacher Efficacy: Their Relationship to the Saskatchewan Education Context

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The Problem

Historical Perspective of School Consolidation in North America

The debate over school consolidation is not new. In North America, school consolidation has been an ongoing process since the middle of the 19th century. In both the United States (US) and Canada, the closure of small schools, with concurrent creation of larger facilities, can be related to rural depopulation. Bard, Gardener, and Wieland (2006) explained that the evolution of the agricultural economy has led to a population migration from rural to urban centers. In the United States, between 1930 and 1970, 30 million people moved from farms to cities. Rural depopulation meant smaller enrollments in rural schools, resulting in school closure and consolidation. As rural economies changed, people moved to the cities to find jobs, which increased urban school size and forced rural school systems to consolidate in an attempt to decrease costs.

This trend was mirrored in Canada. Since the 1930s the population of Canada has shifted from rural to urban, due in large part to the decrease in the farming population. As Table 1 indicates, the Canadian farming population has continued to decline, as has the number of farms while, logically, the average size of farms has increased.

That trend would be similar in both Canada and the US. Improvements in technology common to both countries (e.g., the introduction of affordable automobiles and the development of new transportation infrastructure) were primary contributors to the decrease in the farming population (Bard et al., 2006). As farms consolidated, population decreased and rural communities became

less viable, as did their schools. This trend has continued to the present time.

Table 1

Farm Population, Number of Farms, Average Farm Size, Various Years, Canada

Year	Farm Population	Year	N^a Farms	Year	Average Size Km²
1941	3,116,922	1981	318,361	1981	2.07
1951	2,833,871	1986	293,089	1986	2.31
1961	2,072,785	1991	280,043	1991	2.42
1971	1,419,795	1996	276,548	1996	2.46
		2001	246,923	2001	2.73

Source: Statistics Canada (Tables: No. 075-0012; No. 153-0039)

^aNumber

Historical Perspective of School Consolidation in Saskatchewan

The history of school consolidation in Saskatchewan parallels that of the rest of North America. Toombs (1962) explained that European settlers first moved to Saskatchewan to make a living via agriculture. This meant a large rural population base in the newly settled province. Census figures provided by Statistics Canada (2008) show Saskatchewan's population had risen to 921,785 by 1931. Although this number has remained relatively unchanged ($\pm 10\%$), the distribution of that population has not. In 1931, 68% of the population was rural and 32% was urban; by 1986, those percentages were reversed (*Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, 2006). The migration of people from rural to urban centers in Saskatchewan had many causes. Scharf (1974) explained that people left rural areas in response to below average incomes, an increase in income instability, high indebtedness, and the need for high initial equity. These difficulties, coupled with mechanization and the relative decrease in commodities prices, promoted the consolidation of farms. Recent statistics (see Table 2) show the growing trend in farm consolidation in Saskatchewan.

Steeves (1992) noted that school enrolment patterns paralleled rural depopulation. The decline of agriculture income, coupled with the decline in average family size, led to fewer children and thus the need for fewer schools. After the enrolment surge created by the "baby boomers" in the 1950s and 1960s, school closures became a

Table 2

Various Years, Number of Farms, Average Farm Size in Acres, Saskatchewan

Year	N^a Farms	Average Farm Size in Acres
1941	138,713	432
1951	112,018	551
1961	93,924	686
1971	76,970	845
1981	67,318	952
1991	60,840	1,092
2001	50,598	1,283

Source: Statistics Canada (Table No. 153-0039)

^aNumber

reality in rural and urban Saskatchewan (see Table 3). Since 1970, when enrolments peaked at 247,183 students, both rural and urban school populations have continued to drop. This has resulted in 239 school closures between 1970 and 2006.

Table 3

Various years, Numbers of Schools in Saskatchewan

Year	N^a of Schools in Saskatchewan
1940	3,461 ^b
1950	3,090 ^b
1960	1,838 ^b
1970	986 ^c
1980	927 ^c
1990	863 ^c
2000	789 ^c
2003	767 ^d
2004	756 ^d
2005	753 ^d
2006	747 ^d

Source: Saskatchewan Department of Education: Saskatchewan Learning.

^aNumber

^bNumber of schools offering Grade 8 or higher

^cNumber of active schools

^dNumber of active schools (online information)

Clearly, a generally declining rural population and ever-increasing size of farms in Saskatchewan was paralleled by a declining number of schools. The impact of demographic and economic changes seems inexorable, at least within the context of the Saskatchewan experience.

One inevitable result of school consolidation is an overall increase in school size. This change begs the question as to whether school size can be related to significant school effects. Interestingly, parents who are threatened with the potential closure of their local schools champion the belief that smaller schools are “better” schools. Whether this belief can be supported by research has, until recently, not been investigated, particularly in the Saskatchewan context.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this paper is to examine the literature to address two issues: (a) What are the effects of school size on such outcomes as student academic achievement, teacher efficacy, and economic efficiency? and (b) is the knowledge gained from addressing these questions relevant to the Saskatchewan educational context?

School Size and Outcomes: What the Literature Tells Us

Defining School Size

The research on the effects of school size is extensive; overwhelmingly, it suggests there are benefits to smaller schools. That said, a clear definition of what constitutes a small school is more elusive. North American schools range in size from very small (consider, for example, the case of a single home-schooled child) to comprehensive high schools with enrolments in the thousands. An extensive literature review found no agreed upon numbers that absolutely determine what constitutes the enrolment of a small or large school (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Gardner, Ritblatt, & Beatty, 2000; Howley & Bickel, 2000; Slate & Jones, 2005). Nonetheless, the research does indicate, in general terms, what is considered to be small and large enrolments for elementary, middle, and high schools.

Most researchers, when looking at the effects of school size, consider an elementary school with an enrolment under 400 to be small. Fine and Somerville (1998) define a small elementary school as having an upper limit of 350 students. Coldarci (2006) suggests that elementary schools should be no larger than 42 students per

grade, thus creating a Kindergarten to Grade 8 enrolment of 378 students. Howley and Bickel (2000) believe that a small elementary school would have an enrolment less than 350. Although these enrolment statistics do not exactly define what constitutes a small elementary school, in most cases, an enrolment of fewer than 400 would be considered small.

Middle school research regarding the effects of school size is less extensive. Middle school configurations are diverse, but typically include grades between 6 and 9. Bowen, Bowen, and Richman (2000) suggest that middle schools should be no larger than 800 students. They further indicate that middle schools larger than 800 encouraged a negative social environment that appeared to be related to lower academic achievement.

Studies investigating the effects of enrolment size in high schools are also varied. An often-cited study by Lee and Smith (1997) suggests that high schools should be between 600 and 900 students. This study is particularly noteworthy because it is one of the few that suggest a lower limit for school enrolment. Williams (1990) suggests that if students were to benefit from the positive effects of small schools, a high school should be no larger than 800 students. Slate and Jones (2005) argue that to maximize economic efficiency, high schools should have 1000 students. Tangentially, they also maintain that, for academic efficiency, only 500 students were needed to create the desired specialization of curricula. They conclude that optimal high school size would range somewhere between these two enrolment numbers. Howley and Bickel (2000) argue that high schools of less than 900 students would be considered small. In general, the literature suggests that for students to benefit from the advantages of a small high school, enrolments should range between 500 and 900 students.

Some of the research in this area discussed school size more generally. Darling-Hammond (1997) states that a school should be between 300 and 600, if students are to benefit from the advantages of small schools. A study by Gardener et al. (2000) concerning the effects of school size and parental involvement, defines a small school enrolment as ranging from 200 to 600 students.

What researchers consider to be a small school may differ from what the Saskatchewan public regards as a small school. There are currently 747 schools in Saskatchewan of which 664 have less than 400 students, and 204 of these schools have less than 100 students (Saskatchewan Learning, 2003-2006). Saskatchewan educators, and the general public, would view a school of 400 students as large.

This does not mean that research related to small schools and its effects on students and teachers is invalid for the Saskatchewan context, only that research regarding very small schools, which are numerous in the province, is limited.

In summary, the literature suggests no exact numbers to help determine what may be considered a small school. Nonetheless, we could say that a K-8 school of less than 400 students and a high school with fewer than 900 students would be considered small by those studying the effects of school size on variables such as academic achievement and teacher efficacy.

School Size and Its Effects on Student Achievement

The positive effect of small schools on student achievement is one of the most consistently proven findings in education (Cotton, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Gardener, Ritblatt, & Beatty, 2000; Howley & Bickel, 2000; Slate & Jones, 2005). As Cotton states “a large body of research in the affective and social realms overwhelmingly affirms the superiority of small schools” (p. 1). The literature clearly reports that small schools have a beneficial effect on student achievement in math and language skills. The more interesting question is, however, why? Lee and Smith (1997) suggest that the relationship between school size and increased student achievement is indirect. Lee and Smith’s study is of particular significance because it is one of the few that describe the “u”-shaped relationship between school size and academic achievement in high schools. They maintain that high schools between 600 and 900 students were optimal for academic achievement, and that achievement declined in schools with enrolments of either less than 600 or greater than 900. This relationship has not been studied at the elementary school level. Researchers generally recommend that elementary schools be less than 400 students; but, interestingly, available research does not suggest that achievement continues to improve as schools size declines, only that schools with fewer than 400 students do better academically than elementary schools of more than 400 students.

Several organizational factors seem to promote enhanced student achievement in small schools. Four of these are: (a) constrained curriculum choice, (b) a tighter bond between the student and the school, (c) an environment that fosters teacher effectiveness, and (d) the encouragement of greater parental involvement.

Small schools tend to have fewer curriculum choices. Lee and Bryk (1988) state that a constrained curriculum increased academic achievement and created achievement gains that were widespread across all socioeconomic groups. Lee and Loeb (2000) argue that the gains in achievement created by a constrained curriculum occur because small schools direct their resources towards core programs. A narrower curriculum creates equity of programming because students are forced to enrol in similar academic programs. Lee, Smerdon, Alfeld-Liro, and Brown (2000) conclude that increased specialization of courses that larger schools (larger than 900) offer sounds attractive, but in practice provided little benefit. They also point out that students did not possess the expertise to pick the most beneficial courses. This problem was compounded because teaching staff in large high schools generally believe that learning is the responsibility of the student and the parent. The school was there to provide options, but the student and parent had to make the necessary choices. These researchers argue that the potential benefit of an expanded curriculum in large high schools was negated by the students' inability to choose their courses wisely. Lee and Smith (1997) concluded that students in large high schools showed poorer achievement in math and language skills. This may have occurred because of an overspecialized curricula which enabled students to graduate from high school with few purely academic courses.

Small schools also tend to encourage a tighter bond between students and their school. Stiefel, Berne, Iatarola, and Fruchter (2000) indicate that small schools increase achievement because they encourage a close relationship between the student and teacher. Students experienced greater support which led to a desire for increased performance. Bryk, Holland, and Lee (1993) suggest that the close relationship between students and teachers encouraged a sense of community that provided the basis for the positive relationship needed to foster learning.

Small schools also created an environment that fostered teacher effectiveness. Stiefel et al. (2000) explain there is greater accountability for teachers in small schools which, in turn, leads to increased self-assessment. This process enhanced teacher effectiveness and increased student achievement. Klonsky (1995) explains that because students in small schools tend to achieve at a higher level, teachers feel satisfied with their work and are, therefore, willing to expend greater effort. Stiefel et al. add that increased student-teacher interaction was fundamental in

increasing student achievement. In essence, the increased teacher-student contact fosters academic success which, in turn, leads to greater effort on the part of both teachers and students.

Finally, small schools encouraged greater parental involvement. Stiefel et al. (2000) argue that small schools tend to have parents who are more involved with their children's learning. This increased involvement is fostered by the sense of community that seems inherent in small schools. Parents felt more involved in the school and, therefore, took more responsibility for their children's academic achievement.

School Size and Its Effects on Low Socioeconomic Status and Minority Students

Few correlates to academic achievement are as powerful as socioeconomic status. Research in this area has shown consistently that as economic status increases, so does academic achievement. Small schools have demonstrated an ameliorating effect on decreased achievement, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For the purposes of this paper, studies focussing on both minority students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are addressed concurrently. Crosnoe, Kirkpatrick Johnson, and Elder (2004) state that although students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are more negatively effected by large schools than are minority students, minority students are often linked to low socioeconomic circumstances. In general, the literature suggests that small schools benefit both groups in similar ways.

Put simply, small schools increase academic achievement for low socioeconomic-status students. This statement has been corroborated many times in research investigating the effects of school size and academic achievement (Coldarci, 2006; Crosnoe et al., 2004; Howley & Bickel, 2000; Johnson, 2006; Lee & Smith, 1997; Slate & Jones, 2005).

Coldarci (2006) assigned a "power rating" to the negative effects of poverty on student achievement. His study shows that small schools decreased this rating, empirically proving the power of small schools to negate the negative academic effects of poverty. Lee and Smith (1997) show that this positive effect occurred in high schools with enrolments between 600 and 900. Their study also shows that in high schools with enrolments outside this range, academic achievement for students from disadvantaged backgrounds decreased. Johnson (2006) corroborates this

conclusion, especially for students attending large high schools. He shows that as school size increased, the gap in achievement between students from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds widened.

The evidence supporting the benefits of small schools for minorities is comparable to that of low socioeconomic-status students. The research repeatedly suggests that small schools benefit minority students (Klonsky, 1995; Lee & Smith, 1997). Notably, most of the research in this area occurred in the US and refers to the minority African American and Latino communities. Low socioeconomic status is the factor most closely linked to poor student achievement and, unfortunately, minorities are more likely to be included in this group. This has relevance to the First Nations community in Saskatchewan. Although little research exists regarding school size and First Nations students, it is reasonable to assume that those First Nations students from disadvantaged backgrounds would benefit from small schools, in the same way that disadvantaged students from other cultures have been shown to benefit/

Why small schools benefit students from impoverished backgrounds seems to be related to how students feel about their school. As discussed earlier, students who feel more connected to their school achieve at a higher level. This is an important finding because these students are at a greater risk of dropping out of school; therefore we can assume that because small schools make students feel more connected to their education, students are more likely to both stay in school and achieve at a higher level.

School Size and Its Effects on At Risk Students

Exactly who constitutes a student *at risk* differs among researchers. Manning (1996) states that research in the area of at risk students began in the late 1980s and, depending on the specific study, included topics such as eating disorders, substance abuse, pregnancy, AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, depression, crime, and poverty. Slavin (1989) defines *at risk students* as those at risk of dropping out. Slavin's definition has been adopted in this discussion.

Researchers have determined many reasons why students do not complete high school. Howley and Bickel (2000) state that students are most at risk for dropping out in Grades 9 or 10. Wylie (1992) argues that students who are *average* often receive little attention in school and it is the high-achieving students and students with

discipline problems who receive the bulk of teacher and administrator time. This can encourage low self-esteem among average students, placing them at risk. Manning and Baruth (1996) state that students who do not pass through age-appropriate cognitive or physical developmental stages have trouble fitting in. This can lead to depression, place them at risk of dropping out, and cause students to engage in risky behaviours that may lead to academic and social problems. Metz (1992) describes the problem that being “white and wealthy” can cause. Students who seem to ‘have it all’ often suffer from stress, anxiety, and boredom, which can foster risky behaviours such as substance abuse, sexual risk taking, depression, or suicide. Manning and Baruth also describe how poverty can put students at risk. Poverty has been linked to lack of ambition, poor health, poor academic achievement, and low self-esteem. Scott (2005) explains that many poor students feel their teachers do not care about them, which leads to feelings of disenchantment with the school and staff, and eventually a sense of “not belonging.” These feelings are all precursors to students choosing to drop out of school.

Lynch, Hurford, and Cole (2002) studied the effects of parents who enable their children. The premise of their argument was that it was better for students to have an internal, rather than an external, locus of control. Parents who exhibit either too much or too little external control do not allow their children take age-appropriate responsibility and encourage dependence on an external locus of control, and this can be linked to at risk academic status. They explain that this conclusion has been supported in a number of studies (Lefcourt, 1982; Oswald, Walker, Krajewski, & Reilly, 1994; Parrott & Strongman, 1984; Rawson, 1992; Weisz, 1986).

The positive effects that small schools have in combating student dropout rates are well documented. Gardner, Ritblatt, and Beatty (2000) studied dropout rates in small high schools (200-600 students) and large high schools (enrolments over 2000) in California. They found that dropout rates were lower, proportionally, in small high schools. They also note that this conclusion has been affirmed many times (Fetler, 1989; Howley & Bickel, 2000; Klonsky, 1995; Pittman & Haughwout, 1987; Schoggen & Schoggen, 1988; Slate & Jones, 2005; Toenjes, 1989).

Gardner et al. (2000) explain that small high schools succeed in keeping at risk students in school for the following reasons: (a) students developed a sense of belonging—they felt they were known

by teachers and administrators; (b) students were meaningfully involved in the social atmosphere of the school; and (c) parents tended to be more involved in small schools, and this parental involvement resulted in a carry over effect on the student. Howley and Bickle (1999) also found that small schools benefit students in poorer communities.¹

In simpler terms, students in small schools feel more engaged in the school and with its staff. This connection binds the student to the school, encouraging him or her to remain until graduation.

School Size and Its Effects on Teacher Efficacy

Although little research directly links school size and teacher efficacy in a simple cause-effect relationship, a compelling argument can be made that a relationship exists between small schools and increased teacher efficacy.

Teacher efficacy appears to be a professional subset of the broader idea of personal self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) states that self-efficacy is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute a course of action required to produce a given attainment” (p. 211). Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk-Hoy (2000) add that feeling we have control over our lives makes us feel better about ourselves. They also explain that when teachers believe they have a positive effect on their students’ learning, they feel better about their jobs. Many studies have shown the positive relationship between teacher efficacy and increased student achievement (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Goddard, Hoy & Woolfolk-Hoy, 1990; Meijer & Foster, 1988).

Individual teacher efficacy is important for increased student achievement, but an even more powerful force is the collective efficacy of an entire school staff. Goddard et al. (2000) argue that if collective teacher efficacy is high in a given school, individual teachers will believe they make a difference which, in turn, relates to helping students overcome negative external influences. This is particularly important because, as Luyten (2003) explains, teachers have a greater effect on student learning than does school size. In schools with strong collective efficacy, student achievement was enhanced. This effect was strong enough to overcome negative factors, such as low socioeconomic status, that generally impair

¹Interestingly, their research results also suggest that larger schools benefit students from more affluent communities. We speculate that this relates to the broader spectrum of course offering available to students who come to the school with significant cultural capital.

learning. In essence, (Hoy, Tarter & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2006) explained that if teachers feel they can make a difference, they did.

Given teacher efficacy is important to increased student achievement, we must ask if higher levels of teacher efficacy are more likely to occur in a small school or in a large school. Weber (1947) explains that as organizations grow, interactions between workers became more formal. Bryk and Driscoll (1988) add that large organizational structures inhibit communal organization. Conversely, Lee and Smith (1997) maintain that small schools improved social relations between teachers and teachers and teachers and administrators. It seems logical, therefore, to conclude that small schools are more likely to develop a positive school culture.

Lee and Loeb (2000) show that in smaller schools (in this study, schools with enrolments under 400), teachers assumed more responsibility for student learning. In this study, this translated into higher math achievement scores. Lee and Loeb maintain this positive effect was created by the more intimate relationship between students and teachers provided by small schools. Teachers were more directly concerned with student learning and were, therefore, more willing to help students work towards higher achievement. The quality and character of the student-teacher relationship had a direct effect on student success.

So, although little research directly links school size and teacher efficacy, small school size can be linked to increased student achievement and to positive relationships between both teachers and students and teachers and other teachers, and have been directly related to teacher efficacy. What is difficult to determine is the direction of the relationship. One may legitimately ask whether small schools naturally foster more intimate student-teacher relationships, thereby enhancing academic achievement which, in turn, helps make teachers feel better about what they do, or if the less formal structure of a smaller organization promotes collective efficacy, which makes teachers believe they can make a difference in student success, thereby enhancing student achievement. Put simply, do small schools enhance student achievement and thereby enhance teacher efficacy? Or do small schools enhance teacher efficacy and thereby increase student achievement? Either way, research suggests a correlation among school size, teacher efficacy, and student achievement.

School Size and Its Effects on Economic Efficiency

One of the major arguments in favour of creating larger schools is that they are more economically efficient. Conant in his influential 1959 book, *The American High School Today*, and in related studies, promoted the idea of the modern comprehensive high school. He claimed that savings due to economies of scale could be translated into more student resources and an expanded curriculum. This idea was borrowed from the business world and, on the surface, seemed logical. If businesses benefited from size, so should schools. However, this premise was not tested until much later. Recent research suggests that large schools may not be more economically efficient.

Research into the economic efficiency of small and large high schools has shown that the economies of scale actually follow a “u” shaped pattern. Meier (1996) claimed that per unit costs for schools decreased as enrolments grew, but only to a certain point, and then increased again. Meier also found that having more than 20 teachers in a group caused loss of attention and lack of participation in governance. Slate and Jones (2005) argue that even in the business world this relationship holds true and that economies of scale are more relevant to businesses engaged in industrial manufacturing. By comparison, businesses that rely on predominantly human effort do not necessarily benefit from economies of scale, due to the additional administration costs necessary to manage large numbers of people.

Slate and Jones (2005) argue that schools reach their peak economic efficiency at an enrolment of 1000. They add that the academic efficiency of high schools is reached in schools of approximately 500 students. Therefore, the economies of scale, coupled with academic proficiency, suggest that schools should be between these two enrolment figures. Stiefel et al. (2000) suggest that even though small schools may seem less economically efficient, this was not necessarily the case. They explain that although small schools may have increased financial inputs on a per pupil basis, their higher rates of graduation result in higher output measures. Conversely, larger schools have decreased inputs, to a certain point, but lower rates of graduation. Although quantifying the societal costs of nongraduating students is difficult, many researchers suggest these costs should be considered when determining the economies of scale of a given school (Klonsky, 1995; Raywid, 1999; Stiefel et al., 2000). In essence, even though small and large high schools may be less economically efficient on a per

pupil basis, small schools may be a better financial choice than large schools because of their ability to graduate students at a higher rate, thereby decreasing the overall societal cost.

School Size and Its Relationship to School Transitions, Grade Configuration and Class Size

School size often is often directly related to how a given school jurisdiction determines the class size and grade configuration of its schools. If school divisions have relatively high pupil-teacher ratios and few school transitions (*transitions* in this case refers to students moving from one school to another; that is, moving from elementary to high school), then it is logical to assume these schools will be relatively large.

Alspaugh (1998) states that transitioning from one school to another decreases achievement and increases dropout rates; that is, adjusting to a new environment decreases performance. However, this decrease in performance was regained during the years that followed the transition year. Brown and Sackney (2000) determined that, based on school transition research, one transition was best for students and this transition should occur at the Grade 8 level. They recommend that schools in a given jurisdiction should be of a K-8 and 9-12 configuration. They add that this configuration was particularly beneficial for jurisdictions with rural characteristics, disadvantaged students, students with low socioeconomic status, and *at risk* students.. Similarly, Franklin and Glascock (1996) suggest that rural K-12 schools often have small enrolments and, therefore, exhibit many of the benefits found in small schools.

If school jurisdictions were to follow the recommendations of school transition research, then they would have only two types of schools, K-8 and 9-12. If systems did not already have this configuration, consolidation of schools would be necessary, thereby creating schools with larger enrolments and potentially larger class sizes. Policy makers could benefit from research on the effects of class size and student achievement.

Glass and Smith (1980) undertook a meta-analysis of 59 studies that revealed, "Favourable teacher effects (workload, morale, attitudes towards students) are associated with smaller classes as are favourable effects on students (self concept, interest in school, participation). Smaller classes are associated with greater attempts to individualize instruction and better classroom climate" (p. 419).

These results complement those of a previous meta-analysis that showed positive effects of class size on achievement. In a Tennessee

study that compared classes with enrolment ranges from 13 to 17 to classes with enrolment ranges from 22 and 26, Finn and Achilles (1999) found that classes of between 13 and 17 were better for meeting the needs of minority students, improving academic achievement in all subjects, and engaging all of the students. They added that these benefits tended to carry over when students moved to higher grades.

Finn and Achilles (1999) explained that the gains in academic achievement in smaller classes could be attributed to increased student teacher contact and increased instruction time created because teachers could spend more time on instruction and less on classroom management. There was also an increased pressure on students to participate.

Although this review does not focus on transitions or class size, developing school facilities that have one transition and class enrolments under 20 seems consistent with what the literature suggests concerning optimum configurations. If these guidelines are coupled with the research on school size, a clear picture emerges. School systems should have one transition between elementary and high school, K-8 elementary schools that are no larger than 400 students, and high schools with enrolments between 600 and 900. These schools should then be staffed at a rate that allows for class sizes with less than 20 students.

The above configuration of schools may be the ideal, but where this is not currently the case, the cost of transforming a given system could be prohibitive. A more reasonable approach would be to employ the research on school size when decisions need to be made regarding school closure or school construction.

The Saskatchewan Context

A Climate Resistant to School Closure

Saskatchewan communities have been facing the spectre of school closure since the 1930s. Although this has been a constant, school closures have always met with resistance. The closing of a school has often been seen as the death knell for a rural community and, more generally, as an assault on the rural way of life. Those espousing the close-knit, traditional values of rural communities, typically see the closure of the community's school as one of the most vivid examples of a disappearing culture. Given these feelings, the closure of the local school has often been vehemently opposed by the community concerned.

The demographics of Saskatchewan illustrate the challenges facing educational policy makers. Saskatchewan is a province of approximately one million people – population 1,006,644 as of January 2008 (Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Approximately 90% of that population lives in medium urban, small urban, and urban shadow communities (i.e., communities within commuting distance of centers of at least 10,000 people) (Beckstead & Brown, 2005). According to Statistics Canada, the population of Saskatchewan is also comprised of many ethnic groups. Statistics Canada 2006 figures show First Nations peoples (self-identified) as forming about 15% of Saskatchewan’s total population.

As of September 30th, 2006, Saskatchewan had 747 schools with a variety of school configurations including K-5, K-8, K-12, junior high schools (most, but not all, are comprised of Grades 7-9) and high schools (most, but not all, of Grades 9-12). Obviously trying to apply the data re the effects of school size is difficult. However, regardless of their grade configuration, 89% or 664 of the province’s 747 schools have fewer than 400 students (see Table 4). According to the research on school size, almost 90% of Saskatchewan’s schools are small when compared to the examples of small schools in the literature.

Table 4

Saskatchewan School Size by Enrolment, September 2006

E^a	1/ 99	100/ 199	200/ 299	300/ 399	400/ 499	500/ 599	600/ 699	700/ 799	800/ 899	900/ 999	1000/ 1099	1100/ 1400	2000 +
N^b	204 *	223	159	78	36	14	9	5	2	6	5	5	1

Source: Saskatchewan Learning, 2006.

* includes 61 schools attended by students from the Hutterian Brethren

^aEnrollment

^bNumber

In 1931, when Saskatchewan reached its approximate present-day population, almost 70% of the population was rural. By 1986 this number was almost reversed. The number of farmers decreased, which led to a corresponding increase in farm size; fewer families farming which, coupled with a decrease in the average family size, meant fewer students in school. Although urban centres have continued to grow, school enrolments in cities have also

declined. School enrolment in Saskatchewan reached its peak in the early 1970s and since that time has steadily declined in both rural and urban schools.

Urban centres have had to deal with the added problem of shifting populations. Inner-city areas have depopulated while the suburbs have grown, which has created the paradox of the need for new schools, while having to deal with declining enrolments. A recent example of this conundrum occurred in Regina. In 2005, although Regina's overall population continued to rise, the Regina Public School Board proposed the closure of 10 schools in response to declining and shifting enrolments. This led to extensive community resistance and the decision was reversed, at least temporarily. More recently, the Regina Public School Board announced the closure of two elementary schools and one high school (Regina Public Schools, 2008). Future closures are anticipated.

Although the issue of school closure has been more closely linked to Saskatchewan rural school closures, in reality it continues to be a controversial issue in both rural and urban settings. In 1937 there were 3,662 schools in Saskatchewan that provided at least a Grade 8 education; in 2006 there were 747 schools. Interestingly, although the process of school consolidation has been present in Saskatchewan for the past 75 years, educational policy makers have rarely availed themselves of the research concerning school size and its effects.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Implications

Conclusions

The literature is clear: Small schools have a positive effect on student achievement. Small schools enhance academic achievement for students, in general, and, more particularly, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, minorities, and for students at risk (Klonsky 1995; Lee & Smith 1997). The overriding reason for this positive effect appears to be the more intimate relationship that students and teachers develop in small schools. Teachers have a greater influence on student achievement than school size, but it is school size that nurtures the student/teacher relationship. Students who feel engaged in the school and connected to its teachers will achieve greater academic success, are less likely to drop out, and will experience fewer social and emotional difficulties.

Small schools also appear to promote teacher efficacy. Teachers who feel they have a positive effect on student learning may feel better about their profession. In small schools, teachers can have a closer relationship with their students, which may encourage them to take greater responsibility for student learning and, by extension, enhance student academic achievement and teacher efficacy. In large schools where the student-teacher relationship is more distant, teachers often feel that education is the responsibility of the student and parent. This encourages a less intimate relationship between student and teacher, reducing both student academic achievement and teacher efficacy.

A primary rationale behind increasing school size has been to take advantage of economies of scale. Researchers have determined that the economies of scale only work for schools of a certain size. Small schools are expensive to run, but so are large schools. Small schools cannot take advantage of the economies of scale, and large schools have added costs because of the need for extra administration.

A number of other factors have influenced the relationship between school size and student achievement. Students undergoing only one school transition experience fewer negative effects inherent in changing schools. Another key to student success was class size. Students in classes of less than 20 tended to achieve more success academically.

There is no reason to believe that these findings could not be applied to the Saskatchewan context. Saskatchewan differs little from most jurisdictions in North America, other than having smaller overall school size, a large middle class, and a significant First Nations population. Research regarding the effects of school size and minorities was conducted predominantly in the US where *minority* referred primarily to African American and Hispanic students. The Saskatchewan First Nations community shares the issues of poverty and associated disadvantage with American minority communities; the effects of socioeconomic status are more strongly connected to student achievement than is race or ethnicity.

Another critical factor to consider is the definition used in referring to small schools. Most schools in Saskatchewan would be considered very small by researchers working in the area of school size and its effects on student achievement. If high school enrolments of 600 to 900 are considered optimal, most rural Saskatchewan high schools would be too small to promote increased student achievement. They are simply not large enough to create

the specialization of curriculum required to maximize student success.

The issue of very small rural elementary schools also presents a challenge. Although research suggests that elementary schools should be no larger than 400 students, there is no reason to believe there is a constant, linear relationship between decreasing school size and increasing achievement. As schools become smaller, they become increasingly expensive to run and possess fewer resources. Multigrade classrooms may present obstacles to student achievement, particularly in relation to specialized subjects such as core French. This suggests that very small schools are not optimal in regards to student achievement. This complexity makes it difficult to reach a clear conclusion regarding elementary schools. The reality of the Saskatchewan context is that research on the effects of very small schools is not available.² There are no data available to clarify whether the very small schools that comprise a large part of the Saskatchewan rural school system show the same benefits of small schools as defined by the research.

Recommendations

Although the research is clear about the relationship of school size and student achievement, the current configuration of Saskatchewan schools suggests that the ideal school sizes recommended in the literature would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement. The lack of Saskatchewan research, specifically concerning the effects of school size and academic achievement, suggests it would be prudent to study the effects of school size on student achievement within the Saskatchewan educational setting. Although it is reasonable to assume that Saskatchewan would not be significantly different than other school jurisdictions in North America, local research would help determine if there were differences between Saskatchewan and other educational settings. This is of particular significance for decisions concerning the future of First Nations education. The Saskatchewan school system will be increasingly comprised of First Nations students, and little is currently known about the effects of school size and academic achievement of First Nations children.

If school size/student achievement research does not suggest the need for a minimum number of students in an elementary school,

²The *Saskatchewan Education Indicator's Report* (2008) does not disaggregate student achievement data by school size.

then closing very small elementary schools cannot be justified on the basis of student academic success. Thus, the closure of these schools defaults predominantly to the issue of financial viability. Very small schools tend to be expensive to run and few people advocate the increase in taxation that maintaining numerous, small schools would entail. If increased public funding is not a realistic option, as is likely the case, then school closures will continue. If schools must be closed, these decisions should be reached with due consideration to what is known about school size and its relationship to student learning. It is important to remind ourselves that, in the midst of all the arguments, student learning is the primary, if not the only, justification for the existence of public schools.

In the end, our recommendation is simple: In Saskatchewan, as in many places in North America, schools are being consolidated; therefore, it makes sense to consolidate schools in ways that most benefit student learning. The research is extensive and clearly points to the benefits of elementary schools of less than 400 students and high schools between 600 and 900 students.

Implications

If educational policy makers in Saskatchewan were to strictly apply the research findings about small schools and student achievement, the educational system in this province would have to be drastically reconfigured. Specifically, most rural high schools would be closed to create a much smaller number of high schools, with enrolments between 600 and 900 students. In addition, if the ideal configuration were to include a maximum of one transition between schools, the present system that includes a wide array of grade configurations, predominantly in rural areas, would have to be realigned. Fiscal constraints make this an unrealistic goal. This research does suggest a clear direction regarding the development of future school infrastructure. It also provides guidelines to school divisions grappling with declining enrolments in outdated school facilities.

Saskatchewan is entering a crucial period in its educational history. Policy makers are facing the problems of what to do about declining enrolments, school closures, and the need for infrastructure renewal. Although this task seems daunting, it also provides an opportunity to implement significant improvements in Saskatchewan's educational infrastructure. We argue that it would be foolish to reach school closure decisions in ignorance of or, even

worse, to deliberately ignore the evidence presented in the literature. Consolidating the schools of Saskatchewan in ways that are congruent with the research relating to school size and student achievement would benefit all the partners in education and, ultimately, Saskatchewan society.

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Gifted to Learn

Gloria Mehlmann

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Reading Gloria Mehlmann's memoir *Gifted to Learn*, I recalled an assignment in a feminist theory course to write an introduction to a woman writer's autobiography. If I had I had known then what I know now, I could have done greater justice to my subject Emily Carr, whose memoirs remind me of this book. The author's stated purpose is to tell the story of her life as a teacher by tracing the development of her practice, her ideas about education, her observations of social changes and, notably, her appreciation for the lessons she learned from students. She includes reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of teacher education, as well as a very traditional meditation on the life of the mind. Artfully written, at the heart of the book is the story of an intellectual apprenticeship of a strong-willed woman.

The memoir is comprised of first-person accounts of personal experiences, stories of specific children, and of letters to and from the author's friend Goldie. Of all the relationships in the book, the reader learns most about the friendship with Goldie, whose choice of profession and decision to leave Regina creates the opportunity for the two friends to become life-long correspondents. Goldie serves as foil, but has greater significance than simply being a literary device. Goldie's witty, sardonic and incisive responses to Gloria's letters provide a counterpoint to the author's struggle to make sense of her life and her desires. When Gloria writes with despair and longing, of her frustrations and her considerable joys and achievements, Goldie is present to assist in the difficult act of making meaning. Those fortunate enough to have a friend like Goldie already know what a comfort an audience provided by such a friend can be.

Another important aspect of this memoir is her experience as a First Nations woman teaching in public school Regina in the 1960s. This is not a familiar story. Through her particular lens, the reader

is offered a personal account of the author's home community, Cowessess First Nation Reserve, of white-settler colonization, and of First Nations and Métis education in Saskatchewan. She uses stories to illuminate the limitations of curriculum and educational institutions. Sexism and racism permeate the narrative. For example,

My fellow teachers were expected to teach the history of Canada, and 'naturally' the textbook on Indians. The idea of writing this down even for Goldie depressed me. For one thing, I wasn't at all sure how my background figured into my value as a teacher.
(p. 25)

The author follows this observation with a story of a seasoned colleague who compliments a younger teacher's jacket, to which the younger woman replies, "I saw a dirty Indian woman wearing exactly the same jacket in Fort Qu'Appelle on Saturday. I'm never wearing it again." The experienced teacher responds with, "I don't blame you." There are many layers in this version of events and many similar incidents throughout the book. Initially, I wanted her to say more, to be more overtly political. Instead, she takes Tom King's advice: "Just tell a story, and don't preach."

The intended audience of this memoir is broadly based. Those interested in mid-century teacher education will gain a perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of teacher preparation in Mehlmann's Normal School tales. The memoir is also the story of a woman whose mind and body are disciplined by male-dominated institutions. The stories of clothing and appearance represent, to this reader at least, a feminist perspective. It is not clear to me how else the patronizing principals and school policies littered throughout the stories could be read. Local history buffs will enjoy the references to events and landmarks specific to Saskatchewan. The history of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, with Dr. Oliver Brass as a character, is told. She also alludes to the knowledge of her family. Jo-ann Archibland's (2007) suggestion that, "Educators and storytellers from Indigenous communities might work together to bring back to life particular stories that have been put to 'sleep,' lost from people's memories, or taken from them through colonization" (p. 147) appears to be taken up by Mehlmann. An antioppressive education treatise is imbedded in the genteel accounts of individual students' lives. Mehlmann's refined sensibility masks an appetite for subversive stories.

On the surface, the book appears to be inspired by the author's reminiscences and illustrated with individual children's stories. Sufficient detail is provided to suggest that the stories are true and not simply an amalgamation of similar memories. Nevertheless, the text is painted through memory, the darkest glass of all. Whether or not the stories are true is irrelevant because the stories create the author's truth. Archibald (2007) writes:

The strength of stories challenges me to think, to examine my emotional reactions in relation to plot and characters, to question and reflect on my behaviours and future actions, and to appreciate a story's connection to my spiritual nature. (p. 85)

I think this notion captures the process Gloria Mehlman followed to arrange the content of her memoir, the story of her teaching life.

A major theme of the book is the social history of integration of Indian and Métis perspectives in curriculum and schools, a process that continues to this day. Because the story is anchored in a real person's mind and experience, the story of is not an abstraction. A critique of the residential school experience and policy permeates the author's personal history. Although she is confident that her desire to understand the Eurocentric world will be achieved through formal study and reading, it is through writing her stories that a more complete knowledge is created. She uses her knowledge of the residential schools to cultivate empathy for all the children, of every background, who suffer at the hands of teachers, other students, their parents, institutions and the wider community. The story of the transient student Myra broke my heart. Brilliant in math and science, Myra is taken away by her family before her triumph at the science fair, and possibly the teacher's secret longing, is acknowledged publicly. Myra leaves class with her crayons, an artist's tools. In telling the painful stories of children, she is not seduced by sentimentality. Nor does Mehlmann revert to a conventional plot in retelling her life. Sometimes conflict is resolved, but often as not, she and the reader are wondering "what if?"

The landscape of Cowessess First Nation Reserve is a geography that I know personally. I grew up in a nearby white-settler community. The author's brief story of white townspeople "arriving in trucks to pick all the berries" in the valley made me cringe. I know the people in the trucks that she describes. How would I react today if strangers arrived in my yard to yank the carrots from the garden, to pick the raspberries that I cultivate? With a good deal

more self-righteous indignation than the author does. I could probably call the police, secure in the knowledge that my distress would result in lawful intervention on my behalf.

Gloria Mehlmann's voice is of another generation, and her voice needs to be protected and heard. She is more than able to fulfill her stated objectives. She possesses a prodigious memory, humility, a fine mind, an ear for language, and great strength of purpose. I appreciated the recursive nature of the writing that permitted the author to return to points, to particular stories, in order to reiterate ideas and to emphasize how knowledge, and particularly how wisdom is achieved over the course of a life. *Gifted to Learn* is a worthwhile read for the intended audience. It is probably too gentle for contemporary education students who wish to be told how more than they wish to witness the lengthy process of learning why. I hope I'm underestimating the patience of today's teacher candidates.

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Queer Youth in the Province of the “Severely Normal”

Gloria Filax

REVIEWED BY *Jana Wlock* (*James McNinch*, cowriter)
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Queering Straight Teachers: Discourse and Identity in Education

Nelson Rodriguez and W. F. Pinar

REVIEWED BY *Ashley Stark* (*James McNinch*, cowriter)
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Becoming Subjects: Sexualities and Secondary Schooling

Mary Rasmussen

REVIEWED BY *Nykea Behiel* (*James McNinch*, cowriter)
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As part of a postinternship class, three young heterosexual female preservice teachers in the Secondary English Language Arts program in the Faculty of Education, at the University of Regina, chose to review books relevant to their emerging practice, books they attest they “could have used” before their previous 4-month internship experience. The topic of sexual identities is more than ever in the forefront of school and classroom experience. Each of the books reviewed makes a contribution to our understanding of teacher responsibility in light of the reality of sexual and gender diversity. Perspectives are international: Rasmussen teaches at the University of Monash in Australia; Filax is a Canadian teaching at Athabasca University; Rodriguez is American and teaches in New Jersey. Pinar, from the American South, is a Canada Research

Chair in Education at the University of British Columbia. Reappropriation over the past decade of the word *queer*, once used to disparage and condemn difference, is having an influence on pedagogical practice and inclusive education. For the sake of brevity and to avoid duplication, I have edited these three “book reports” into one review, but the critical perspectives are from the three pre-service teachers, Ashley Stark, Jana Wlock, and Nykea Behiel.

Ashley Stark, who reviewed the Rodriguez and Pinar collection, writes that meeting the needs of all students and ensuring a safe and positive learning environment are two essential goals that educators would not dispute. However, teachers have not always met these goals, especially in regards to sexual minorities. The purpose of *Queering Straight Teachers: Discourse and Identity in Education* (2007), an edited collection of 10 articles, is not to appeal to the reader’s emotions through accounts of LGBTQ youths’ traumatic experiences in education. Rather, it is to turn the gaze from the sexual minority “other” towards “what it might mean, in theory and in practice to queer straight teachers, and the implications this has for challenging institutionalized heteronormativity in education” (preface).

Teachers beginning the process of “becoming queer” will find chapters that give practical advice to assist them in meeting the needs of LGBTQ students and creating a safe and productive learning environment. For example, John E Petrovic and Jerry Rosiek write about “Listening to LGBTQ Students: What Teachers Must (Not) Do” (p. 207). For teachers who already consider themselves to be “queered” a number of more problematic issues are discussed such as constructivist and essentialist arguments and binaries surrounding sexual and gender identity. The complications and nuances of identity politics are explored in another chapter entitled “Queerly Fundamental: Surviving Straightness in a Rural Southern High School” by Reta Whitlock, a self-described “Southern fundamental Christian with[in] Southern fundamentalist Christian patriarchal structures” who also identifies as a “low-to middle-class, educated white lesbian feminist from the country (whew!)” (p. 70).

Pinar and Rodriguez have included authors who are finding ways to address both the overt harm faced by LGBTQ students, as well as the systematic silencing inherent in the educational system. As a glossary of terms is not provided, readers without a background in queer theory or LGBTQ social and political activism may benefit from becoming familiar with basic terminology before reading this text. Readers would also benefit from seeking further

information on constructing an inclusive curriculum, as this is not discussed in depth, but is described as an essential, truly the “never-ending goal” (p. 210) in meeting the needs of sexual minority students.

In her chapter Elizabeth Meyer explains that “Schools need to begin to challenge and disrupt traditional ways of knowing and encourage students to questions and ‘trouble’ all that is passively assumed and taken for granted in society” (p. 28).

This book recognizes this need, and also recognizes that this work must start with each individual teacher in order to address a widespread injustice in education that will no longer be ignored, silenced, or perpetuated.

Nykea Behiel reviewed Mary L. Rasmussen’s *Becoming Subjects: Sexualities and Secondary Schooling* (2006) and writes that, while using the acronym LGBTQ is a convenience, the author does not consider any of these labels as ‘frozen’ or constant – we are always ‘becoming.’ The book is influenced by feminist, queer and poststructural theories, and considers different ways to view educational philosophies. *Becoming Subjects* addresses three main questions which Rasmussen revisits through the text and restates in the conclusion:

- (1.) What are key discourses relating to sexualities and secondary schooling?
 - (2.) How are these discourses manifested and why do they manifest in particular ways?
 - (3.) What are some potential alternative directions for the production of theories and practices related to sexualities and schooling?
- (p. 219)

Rasmussen’s ideology and terminology will be informative to any educator. Behiel comments that the discussions surrounding heteronormativity are particular useful, and aided her in seeing the prejudices and stereotypes she subconsciously placed upon students. Rasmussen discusses the harm in constructing homo/heterosexuality as oppositional binaries. She notes that perhaps society makes people fit into preexisting language rather than enabling them to be whoever they might be, sexually or otherwise. For example, why must one be fully “in” or “out” of the sexual closet? Rasmussen also considers how educators might influence the sexual orientation of students and to consider repercussions of their assumptions of heteronormativity. Teachers should not talk exclusively about LGBTQ youth as victims because this may perpetuate discrimination and pity rather than foster

compassion and understanding. LGBTQ youth also experience happiness and pleasure and need affirmation and celebration.

Rasmussen's book serves to remind us how almost all aspects of schooling omit and avoid discussion of pleasure, especially sexual pleasure. Rasmussen usefully provides ways to sensitively facilitate this discussion of pleasure in a secondary classroom and provides anecdotes and comments on what worked, what didn't, and why. Because of Rasmussen, teachers will be more conscious of their role in perpetuating heteronormativity and make an effort to stop marginalizing youth and LGBTQ youth in particular.

Jana Wlock reviewed *Queer Youth in the Province of the "Severely Normal"* (2006) by Canadian academic Gloria Filax. The book aims to show "how the various dominant discourses about gender, sexuality, and youth that circulated in expert, legal, and popular forms were negotiated by queer youth living in Alberta in the 1990's" (p. xvii).

From her position as queer researcher, Filax disrupts notions of heteronormativity and heterosexuality to show how sexual minorities are (mis)represented within society. Although not explicitly about schooling, this book has several educational implications which make it an important resource for school teachers, administrators, and counsellors.

Filax emphasizes that schools are contested spaces for queer youth. Homophobia and heteronormativity are deeply engrained in school policies and curricula, and GLBTQ students are often labelled as perpetrators when acts of bullying occur. By presenting the stories of queer youth and their negative schooling experiences, Filax brings these issues to the surface and implicitly points to the roles of teachers and administrators in bringing positive change to their schools. Filax also disrupts dominant social discourses and notions of mainstream youth studies in order to emphasize the lack of discourse surrounding GLBTQ identities.

Sharing the stories of queer youth to "break the silence," she creates a GLBTQ discourse and proves that bodies, behaviour, desire, and sexual practices align in any number of different combinations. The "severely normal" (Ralph Klein's phrase for conservative fundamentalist Christians) are thus repositioned by queer discourse as an extreme minority and as *abnormal* as queer youth. Filax presents the voices of queer youth to emphasize how different and unique each individual is from one another, even though they have faced common difficulties in their lives.

Queer Youth is an excellent source of information to help broaden one's knowledge of GLBTQ issues. It encourages educators to examine and challenge dominant social discourses, as well as their own assumptions regarding gender and sexuality.

While this review focuses on three texts that will advance our understanding of sexual minority students, it also speaks volumes about the three young preservice teachers who acted as reviewers. *Queer pedagogy, Gay-Straight Alliances, same-sex dating, "out" teachers, transgendered youth.* These are realities in today's schools.

At the start of their careers as English Language Arts teachers, these young educators represent a new generation of school teachers engaging in this "unsilenced" discourse and deepening their understanding of complex issues by reading themselves into these texts. They are better prepared than any previous group of preservice teachers to connect and to celebrate every student in their class, including young people who have been labelled or self-identify with the notion of *queer*.

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Peter Lang

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