

**Teacher Turf Wars:
A Case Study of the Impacts of Intra-School Competition
on Elective Teachers in British Columbia's Public Schools**

by

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored the impacts of heightened intra-school competition between elective teachers in three public secondary schools in British Columbia (BC). This study used semi-structured interview data from seven secondary school elective teachers from three secondary schools within one BC school district to explore how teachers perceive and respond to intra-school competition.

The BC Liberal government introduced neoliberal policies in 2002 in the BC public school system through the School Amendment Act of 2002 (Bill 34) legislation. Changes included giving parents and students the right to choose to attend any school or program beyond their neighborhood catchment area, provided that there is availability, providing public accountability, establishing greater school board autonomy, and allowing for the creation of for-profit school board companies.

The findings show that all of the teachers interviewed felt that they were in competition with their colleagues for student enrolment, regardless of whether or not they chose to actively engage in competitive practices. The majority of the teachers interviewed chose to market their programs to their students. The teachers interviewed did not feel that competition impacted their teaching practices, as they believed that they strived to engage their students due to their own personal motivations rather than through competition. Teachers were keen to protect their specialty area and skeptically viewed new course offerings that may infringe on their area of teaching. Despite the competitive environment, overall teachers did not find that competition for student enrolment impacted their relationships with their colleagues.

This study sheds light on how teachers compete and market their courses to drive their course enrolment in the competitive environment that they experience in their schools. This

study also illustrates how teachers may act out of self-interest to protect their teaching interests, so that they can continue to teach the courses that they believe are of value to their students and society.

Preface

Ethics approval for this study was obtained from the University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Boards. This behavioural study, numbered H13-00965 and titled “Intra-School Competition and Teacher Relationships,” was approved on August 5, 2014, with Dr. Gerald Fallon as the Principal Investigator. This dissertation is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Mariam Pirbhai.

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List of Abbreviations

AP	Advanced Placement
BC	British Columbia
BCME	British Columbia Ministry of Education
BCNDP	British Columbia New Democratic Party
ERA	Education Reform Act
IB	International Baccalaureate
MVSS	Mountain View Secondary School
NVSS	North View Secondary School
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVSS	Ocean View Secondary School
PE	Physical Education
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SSCE	Select Standing Committee on Education
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UBC	University of British Columbia

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Dedication

To the memory of Navaz aunt, Amina aunt, and Ronnie aunt.

To all teachers who strive to make the world a better place through their students.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of Problem and Purpose of the Study

This research thesis is about the competitive practices elective teachers engage in to attract students to their courses in three public secondary schools; micropolitical practices are adopted and competitive relationships are developed when teachers try to boost their course enrolment numbers. Since the introduction of the School Amendment Act of 2002 (Bill 34) by the British Columbia (BC) Liberal government, intra-school competition has been heightened with the opening of school catchment boundaries, the introduction of an enrolment based funding formula, and the initiation of greater local school board autonomy. Schools and teachers must now compete to increase their student enrolment in order to receive funding for their programs to run. Based on data collected through semi-structured interviews, this study will examine how intra-school competition affects teachers' decisions of whether or not to market their courses to students, the nature and features of their marketing strategies, the impact competition has on teachers' personal and professional identities, professional relationships, and which elective courses are offered to students. The purpose of this qualitative study is to better understand the competitive environment as experienced by elective teachers within secondary schools.

1.1.1 Background Information to the British Columbia Education System

In the British Columbian public education system, since the BC Liberal Party elections win in 2001, there has been a move to implement additional neoliberal policies and shift the responsibility and accountability of public education away from the government and towards school districts, schools, teachers, parents, and students. Key educational features of the Liberal Party's 2001 election platform included introducing market forces to the education system with

the opening of traditionally used school catchment boundaries; thus, increasing choice and competition within the public school system. The Liberal Party's education platform focused on providing students with the skills necessary to work in a knowledge-based economy, increasing local school board autonomy and flexibility, providing parents with greater choice in their child's schooling, and introducing financial and academic accountability measures (Fallon & Paquette, 2008). Following the 2001 BC Liberal Party elections win, the Select Standing Committee on Education (SSCE) was created by the Liberal Government in 2001 and given the responsibility to make suggestions to improve access, choice, flexibility, quality, and accountability in the public education system.

In 2002, the BC Liberal government passed the School Amendment Act of 2002 (Bill 34) legislation as a response to the recommendations made in the Select Standing Committee's report on education (Fallon & Paquette, 2008). Changes included giving parents and students the right to choose to attend any school or program beyond their neighborhood catchment area provided that there is availability (Brown, 2004; Fallon & Poole, 2013). Additional features of the School Amendment Act of 2002 followed neoliberal principles, such as providing public accountability, establishing school board autonomy, and allowing for the creation of for-profit school board companies (Fallon & Paquette, 2008).

With the introduction of market forces, choice policies, market-driven funding, and the elimination of school catchment areas, public schools now compete amongst one another for student enrolment, as most of their funding depends on their number of students. School districts have been facing pressure to diversify their educational offerings by offering niche programs, such as sports academies and International Baccalaureate programs to draw students to their schools. In addition to inter-school competition, there is intra-school competition, as teachers

compete for student enrolment in their courses within their schools. Teachers of elective courses are dependent on sufficient student enrolment for their courses to run and face pressure to recruit students to their programs. A teacher is paid a fixed salary regardless of whether 15 students or 30 students register for their class; however, under the current funding formula a school district receives funding per student registered (Beresford & Fussell, 2009). School districts set the staffing levels for the schools within their district and then decisions are made at the school level as to which courses will run; classes with low enrolment often do not run and some courses may be cancelled. Under this system, teachers are expected to and act as self-enterprising agents, using various marketing strategies to entice students to register for their courses so they can have high enrolment numbers.

1.1.2 Impact Policy Changes Have on the Internal School Environment

Neoliberal education policies focus on creating choice for students; however, policy makers fail to consider the effect new policies and competition have on teaching practices, teacher relationships, and inducing teachers to act as self-enterprising individuals (Penney & Evans, 1995). In their work, Penney and Evans (1995) discuss the impact that the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) had on the delivery of Physical Education (PE) and sports programs in schools in the United Kingdom (UK). Similar to Bill 34 introduced by the BC Liberal government, the 1988 ERA introduced school choice policies into the UK education system, allowing parents the right to choose the best school for their children. The ERA also granted local autonomy to school districts and sanctioned the local management of financial controls. Penney and Evans (1995) found that the ERA's policies, including the local management of schools, created an internal market in schools where departments were competing with each other for scarce resources, such as funding and students. Their study

highlights how government policies influence the lives of teachers and how policies have the potential to create inequalities between subjects; in this case the PE department realized decreasing funding and resources, as its perceived low subject status negatively influenced its ability to draw students to the program. Teachers in the PE department had to be flexible and take on other roles in their school; there were also concerns over decreased department staffing numbers. Penney and Evans' (1995) findings indicate that market forces have influence in the education system; economic interests may be taking priority over educational concerns and there is heightened isolation between departments and teachers. Their data suggest that the new reforms of increased choice and local autonomy may lead to conflicts between teachers, thus, creating poor conditions in which to improve the quality of education. Competitive pressures driven by government policies can create increased departmental isolation in schools and hamper teacher collaboration among subject areas (Penney & Evans, 1995). Similar to the UK situation examined by Penney and Evans (1995), in British Columbian secondary schools, elective teachers experience an internal market where they must compete for students.

Schools are exposed to changes imposed by external interests, such as government and university policy reforms (Blase, 1991). External forces often fail to recognize the internal power structure and organization of schools, resulting in external policies heightening the competitive nature of the school environment, impacting teacher relationships and job security (Hargreaves, 1991). For example, when the British Columbia Ministry of Education (BCME) introduced Planning 10 as a graduation requirement for all grade 10 students in 2003, the result was that grade 10 students now take one less elective course. As a result there has been a reduction in the number of elective course teachers needed and heightened competition between grade 10 elective teachers for student enrolment, as courses only run when there is sufficient

enrolment, as it is more economical for schools to run classes with high student enrolment. When Planning 10 was first introduced, teachers had to be flexible and some teachers were reassigned to teach the new course, which covers a range of subjects including health, finance, and careers, although it may have been outside their area of specialization, while other teachers experienced declining enrolment in their courses. Government policy can affect subject status when the government makes certain subjects compulsory and can impact the competitive environment within schools (Adnett & Davies, 2005).

Changes in university requirements also have an impact on elective course enrolment. In 2012, the University of British Columbia (UBC) added Economics 12 to their list of approved secondary school courses applied towards students' admissions average. This policy change led to the increase in the number of students taking Economics 12 in some schools, which resulted in decreased demand for other elective courses. Changes in university admissions requirements can impact high school elective course enrolment and the practices teachers choose to engage in to maintain and protect their course enrolment numbers.

1.1.3 Teachers' Emotions and Educational Change

Hargreaves (2005) stated that emotions are one of the most disregarded aspects of educational change, such as the introduction of new programs. Hargreaves (2005) conducted an empirical case study of innovative grade 7 and 8 teachers in Canada to learn more about teachers' emotions during the educational change process. In his study, Hargreaves found that the teachers' emotional objectives and connections with their students influence how they view and respond to aspects of educational change, such as lesson planning, teaching practices, and school organization. Hargreaves (2005, p. 278) stated that, "emotions are at the heart of teaching," and that "good teaching is charged with positive emotion" (p. 279). Hargreaves

focused on the connection, passion, and joy teachers have to their subject areas and to their students. Hargreaves (2005) found that effective teaching is about creating connections with students rather than simply having knowledge about a subject area or proper teaching techniques. Despite the importance of emotions, Hargreaves (2005) found that emotions are rarely discussed when addressing educational change. Educational change, such as the introduction of new courses, can have an affect on teachers' relationships with their colleagues, students, and parents. Hargreaves' (2005) found that the emotional objectives and connections that the teachers in the study created for their students influenced just about all aspects of the teachers' actions and how they reacted to changes that impacted what they were hoping to achieve.

Teachers' emotions may influence how teachers react to educational changes that promote increased choice and competition. Elective courses are subject to forces of competition and teachers may adopt a protectionist approach to defend their subject areas, such as preventing changes in the curriculum and rejecting the addition of potentially valuable new course offerings that encroach on their subject territory (Hargreaves & Macmillan, 1995). In the public secondary school system there is an unspoken norm not to infringe on another teacher's subject area; teachers have their own territory and one can expect social consequences for imposing on another teacher's area and disturbing the balance (Reed, 2000). Teachers may try to prevent new courses from being offered and often feel threatened when new courses are successfully introduced, as teachers worry about the impact that new courses will have on their course enrolment.

1.1.4 Inter-School, Intra-School Competition, and Student Achievement

Adnett and Davies (2005) found achievement result differences between secondary schools to be small and the variation of student results between courses within the same school to

be much greater, thus, raising the importance of analyzing the effects of providing greater subject choices within schools. Adnett and Davies (2005) discussed how within school competition has the potential to increase teacher efficiency and effectiveness but also how it may incite behaviours rooted in self-interest from teachers. They concluded that to avoid the creation of opportunistic incentives for teachers, it is important to focus on school-wide performance indicators. Decreased collaboration and increased opposition between teachers may negatively affect both academic and non-academic interests (Adnett & Davies, 2005). This study will provide insights about the impacts of intra-school competition, an area where few studies have been conducted, despite the fact that intra-school competition has the potential to impact many aspects of schooling, including student achievement (Borland, Howsen, & Trawick, 2006).

The competitive environment within public secondary schools is complex. Schools are inherently political organizations where teachers personally and professionally identify with the areas in which they teach and may encourage students to pursue their areas of interest. Changes introduced by the BC government through Bill 34 in 2002 have further heightened the competitive environment in schools.

1.2 Research Questions

To explore how the introduction of neoliberal policies, such as the 2002 School Amendment Act's (Bill 34) opening of school catchment areas and the introduction of a per student registered per district enrolment funding mechanism, in the BC school system has heightened intra-school competition between elective teachers and how intra-school competition impacts teachers' decisions to market their courses within their schools, teachers' personal and professional identities, teacher relationships, and new course offerings, I asked the following two questions:

1. How do elective teachers understand the competitive environment within their schools? Has the competitive environment within their school changed over their teaching career and how do they understand reasons for any changes? Do elective teachers market their courses to students within their schools to attract students to their programs? If so, how and why do elective teachers market their courses? How do elective teachers perceive intra-school competition as having an affect on their teaching practices?
2. Do elective teachers perceive their course and block allocations as having an impact on their personal and professional identities, and collegial relationships? Do these perceived identities have an impact on new course offerings and internal collaboration?

1.2.1 Research Design

To inform my research questions and to learn about how and why teachers compete within schools and how teachers identify with their subject areas, I employed a single case study. I collected data through semi-structured interviews with seven elective teachers from three secondary schools within one school district in BC. In this single case study, I sought to understand the complexity of teacher competition and relationships through semi-structured interviews with elective teachers. I drew out word accounts of teachers' perceptions, behaviours, and strategies. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to develop an understanding of the decisions teachers make when competing internally with their peers, how they choose to compete, and the perceived impact their choices have on collegial relationships. This case study looks at whether competition among elective teachers in secondary schools impacts teachers' marketing, and classroom teaching practices, how competition influences teachers' personal and professional identities, and relationships. I also explored teachers' feelings towards new course

offerings and the obstacles experienced when trying to introduce change in the form of new course offerings.

This study takes place within three secondary schools within one urban BC School District. Pseudonyms have been used for the names of the schools and teachers throughout the study. The school district offers a variety of specialized academies to retain within-district students and to recruit out-of-district students to boost school enrolment. The three schools that are part of this study share similar features. Ocean View Secondary School (OVSS), Mountain View Secondary School (MVSS), and North View Secondary School (NVSS) are in a stable fiscal position and the allocation of funds towards introducing greater technological innovation in all of the schools is a priority. MVSS and NVSS were the first to introduce specialized programs and sports academies to provide greater choice for students and to allay concerns regarding declining enrolment. Some teachers at OVSS had resisted changing the school's schedule to accommodate academies due to teachers' negative perceptions around changing the school's timetable to a fixed last block timetable. A fixed block timetable is when a school offers the same course at the same time each day rather than allowing the course to rotate and to be scheduled at different times throughout the school day. Some teachers opposed introducing a fixed last block schedule due to concerns about having to teach the same class of students every day after lunch when they assumed that students would be tired and distracted. The benefit of a fixed last block schedule is that it allows students from all of the schools within the district to participate in the specialized programs offered. OVSS had seen local enrolment decrease and was turning to increasing international student enrolment to fill the school. The decision to switch to a fixed last block schedule to accommodate specialized academies was imposed on the school at the start of the 2013 school year, despite some teachers' apprehensions.

1.3 Personal Motivation and Context

Having left the business world to pursue a teaching career, I assumed that the teaching profession would be free from the competitive pressures and the reckless pursuit of self-interest that I saw entrenched in the business workplace. As a secondary school elective teacher, I quickly learned that schools are highly competitive environments.

In my role as an elective teacher in an academically focused school, I have had to learn to be flexible in terms of the areas that I teach, and the courses that I teach change each year. Student preferences, which may be shaped by the BCME graduation requirements, university admissions requirements, and teacher influence, have a direct impact on the number of elective course blocks that run each year. In my nine-year teaching career I have taught Social Studies 8, English 8, Photography 8 to 12, Entrepreneurship 10 and 12, Tourism 11 and 12, Marketing 11 and 12, Accounting 11 and 12, Information Technology 8 to 12, and Yoga 11 and 12 courses. I often teach mixed grade and skill levels combined together in my classes. Elective teachers often teach combined classes, as there may be insufficient enrolment for a course to run with just one grade level or due to scheduling preferences; it is easier to schedule students when two blocks of combined Accounting 11 and 12 are offered rather than a single block of Accounting 11 and a single block of Accounting 12.

My interest in the competitive environment of schools peaked when, in my effort to introduce yoga as a new course offering, I experienced resistance in the form of teachers voicing their opposition against the new course to school administrators and to department heads. Teachers from the PE department and certain elective course teachers were against the introduction of my proposed course due to the potential negative impact a yoga course may have on their course enrolment. Rather than looking at the merits of offering a yoga course for our

students, my colleagues' concern was that I might syphon students away from their programs; thus, potentially jeopardizing the sustainability of their course offerings. I believed that the yoga practice would be of great benefit to our students and I naively assumed that other teachers would share my excitement. I quickly learned the about the micropolitical nature of school organizations and I began to realize how the actions that I take as an elective teacher are influenced by many factors outside of my control, such as the influence of other teachers, administration, government, and university entrance policies. As I began to reflect on my teaching practice, I became explicitly aware of how my colleagues and I compete amongst ourselves and market our programs to attract students to our programs; we are expected to maintain strong collegial relationships and collaborate with the teachers with whom we compete.

This experience has led me to ask questions regarding how intra-school competition for students affects teachers' promotion of courses, teaching practices, teacher identities, and teacher relationships. During informal conversations around course offerings, my colleagues often complain about teachers who have watered-down their curriculum; some elective teachers have ceased to test students due to beliefs that students prefer to take unchallenging elective courses and that challenging elective classes may be cancelled due to insufficient enrolment.

1.4 Importance of the Study

This study explored the internal competitive teaching environment that exists within the public secondary school system, particularly in terms of how intra-school competition is being experienced by elective teachers. This study contributes to understanding the tensions between teachers and departments as they compete for student enrolment that resulted from external policy decisions involving the market-driven provision of public education, such as choice and open enrolment. It also contributes to understanding about how teachers who work in a

competitive educational environment identify with the subjects that they teach and how teaching can be a personal profession for some teachers. When the BC Liberal government introduced Bill 34 and opened school catchment boundaries resulting in increased competition, teachers' responses were not considered and some teachers were faced with internal conflicts as to whether or not to compete with their colleagues. Further, as many schools follow collaborative leadership frameworks, where department heads meet with administrators to confer and make decisions, such as approving new courses, my study raised questions regarding whether committees can be trusted to make decisions that best serve the interests of entire school communities.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study does not make claims about all teachers or all schools. Rather this single case study provides an opportunity to describe and critically analyze the micropolitical activity that takes place between teachers engaged in providing elective courses within a secondary school setting. My study discusses the activity of selected participants and it has not been designed to be generalized beyond these specific conditions.

1.6 Summary

In the first chapter, I defined the research problem and questions, personal motivation, context, and justified the importance of the study. In the second chapter, I discuss the pertinent literature to my study in the area of neoliberalism and the British Columbian education system, focusing on the areas of intra-school competition, micropolitics in schools, equity, performativity, and teacher identity. In chapter three, I outline the key features and justifications of the research methodology and the research setting. In chapter four, I analyze and critically

discuss the research findings. Finally, in chapter five, I communicate my main conclusions on the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this literature review I discuss how proponents of neoliberal policies came to view the public school system as an institution with economic implications that need to be managed in order for their nation to succeed. The impact that neoliberal policies have had on the British Columbian public education system is analyzed to illustrate how they have impacted teaching. Teachers have had to adapt to changes in their work environment and they may choose to act as self-enterprising agents to compete with their colleagues for student enrolment. The power struggles and micropolitical nature of teaching elective courses is discussed. Teachers often work in environments where there are competing interests and teachers driven by competition, self-preservation, or personal values may experience the impacts of the political nature of schools. The personal connection that teachers have to their work and their personal identities are examined to depict how the teaching practice is not just a professional career for elective teachers but also a personal passion. The heightened competitive work environment created by new policies introduced by the BC Liberal government in 2002 has had impacts on teachers' emotions, identities, and relationships.

2.1 Neoliberalism Defined

Neoliberalism can be defined as an attempt by government to alter individual behaviour and to frame the actions of individuals in an opportunistic self-enterprising manner. In his book, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Harvey (2005) outlines the political and economic history of how neoliberalism originated and came to dominate on a global platform. Harvey (2005) discusses how neoliberalism is changing the everyday life of citizens and how policy makers are working to change the public's beliefs about public education by planting seeds of fear that the education system is failing to meet students' needs; marketization and privatization of the public

education system are believed to provide greater advantages for society. Neoliberal policies are altering the realized experiences of teachers and students in the school system and the emotional impacts new reforms have on teachers are not discussed in the public realm; often teachers are unfamiliar with answers to how and why the policies that influence their work originated.

In his book, Harvey (2005, p. 2) stated that,

Neoliberalism is the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.

In British Columbia, the introduction of neoliberal policies in the education system has been associated with greater choice and competition in the school system, evidenced through an increase in the user-fee programs offered to students since 2001, thus adding a private, entrepreneurial element to the public school system (Poole, 2007). There has also been greater competition for student enrolment between school districts, schools within districts, and teachers within schools.

Davies and Bansel (2007) examined how neoliberal policies are affecting the Australian and New Zealand school systems; neoliberal policies have been introduced to the school system intensively in both countries. Davies and Bansel (2007) discuss the shift of responsibility from the government to the individual and the decline of union dominance in Australia and New Zealand. They suggest that individuals have experienced increased freedoms of choice and action accompanied by the transference of risk and responsibility from the government to the individual, often at a substantial expense to the individual (Davies & Bansel, 2007). The

changes introduced to the BC public school system by the BC Liberal Party are similar to the ones initiated in the Australian and New Zealand school systems, and responsibility is shifted to individuals; in BC public schools, neoliberal policies have been introduced that increase competition and accountability. Following the neoliberal belief that consumer sovereignty will allow individuals to act in accordance with their self-interests, in the education sector there has been a move to introduce greater local autonomy and to facilitate a devolved system by introducing new forms of school management (Gordon & Whitty, 1997).

Neoliberal educational reforms have introduced greater competition in the education system in an attempt to increase efficiency, accountability, and control (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Olssen & Peters (2005) studied the influence neoliberal policies have had on universities and higher education institutions with the introduction of new accountability measures. They found that due to the focus on a new purpose of education, where both secondary and post-secondary schools are preparing students for employment in a global economy, schools are developing partnerships with private companies and are working to encourage students to develop entrepreneurial skills. These changes have had a disrupting impact on the professional nature of teachers' work; the work teachers do is now connected to measurable performance outputs rather than being valued on the basis of promoting inquiry and independent thought (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

Educational reforms have been evidenced through the implementation of user-fees, increased privatization of public education services, and greater accountability through the introduction of performance measures and incentive funding schemes (Robertson, 2011). Robertson (2011) critiques the World Bank Group for expanding its neoliberal policies rather than declining them, as they failed to counteract the current economic crisis. Robertson uses the

1999 and 2020 World Bank's education sector strategy reports to develop her critique; the reports are forward looking documents that guide the World Bank's investment in education. The World Bank's reports support the private sector's involvement in public education, highlighting the potential benefits of increasing efficiency in the provision of education. Robertson (2011) raises the issue of the purpose of education, stating that education is a basic human right rather than a tool to be used to enhance the economic wealth of countries.

Similar to the issues raised by Olssen and Peters (2005) and Robertson (2011), in the BC public school system, as schools compete for student enrolment, there has been an increase in the number of choices offered by public schools to students to meet students' interests and draw students to specialized programs that may be away from their neighbourhood schools. Some of the new programs introduced have a user-fee component, such as sports academies, while other new programs offer strong connections to industry and they are training students to be prepared for specific jobs upon graduation.

2.2 Neoliberalism and Classical Liberalism

Prior to the BC Liberal Party elections win in 2001, the BC New Democratic Party (BCNDP) was in control for almost ten years from 1991 to 2001. The BCNDP followed a platform characterized by large outflows of capital towards public services and strong connections and support for labour unions. The shift from the BCNDP to the Liberal Party resulted in the introduction of heightened neoliberal perspectives and policies in the delivery and management of the BC public education system (Poole, 2007). The change in policy that was reflected by the change in elected government from the BCNDP to Liberal Party policy is similar to the United States of America's (USA), twentieth century government transference from classical liberalism to Keynesian policy and later to neoliberal policy.

As neoliberalism is based on the central tenants of classical economic liberalism, it is important to understand the differences between the two perspectives in order to understand the policy directions and transformations of public education occurring in different parts of the world and in BC. Classical liberalism is associated with earlier liberals such as John Locke, Adam Smith, and Friedrich von Hayek (Thorsen, 2010). Classical liberalism is related to the conviction that the role of the state should be insignificant in all facets of life, other than those related to maintaining civil order, such as defense and law enforcement (Thorsen, 2010). Classical liberalism favours laissez-faire economic policies and allows for unregulated interactions between citizens, organizations, and corporations (Thorsen, 2010). Conversely, modern liberalism allows for the state to play a role in controlling the economy, with the belief that more state control will allow for the liberal goals of freedom and democracy to be realized (Thorsen, 2010).

Neoliberalism emerged as a response to counter Keynesian economic policy and the advance of federal economic and social intervention programs that were introduced following World War II, to avoid the reoccurrence of a national depression (Harvey, 2005). Keynesian policies were characterized by promoting the power of the state over the free-market order by utilizing state authority when necessary to ensure the well-being of its citizens, high levels of employment, and economic progress (Harvey, 2005). Under Keynesian policy, governments funded extensive public schemes in education and drove economic development.

In the 1970s, with high unemployment levels, inflation, and the weakening of the American economy, neoliberal policies, whose roots can be tied to the Chicago School of Economics and the works of Milton Friedman and Gary Becker, were seen by the American government to be the solution to these problems; it was believed that the private sector would be

more efficient than the public sector to effectively counter economic problems (Baltodano, 2012). Neoliberal policies were viewed as an economic model to be used by the state to reduce its involvement in the economy; thereby, increasing the importance of privatization, accountability, and markets, and decreasing the state's responsibility to public welfare (Harvey, 2005). American neoliberalism, advanced economic principles beyond the conventional economic domain and into the social domain (Baez, 2005); in the United States, neoliberalism progressed from the jurisdiction of economic policies to other domains, providing economic analysis to areas such as public education, that were previously disregarded and assumed to be "non-economic" (Foucault, 2000, p. 219; Baltodano, 2012).

As projects were introduced in the 1980's, key features included reducing protectionist policies, introducing privatization, and creating competitive policies in the public sector to drive efficiency; policies were also introduced to increase the movement of labour and finance beyond national borders (Robertson, 2011). Labour unions and public schools were viewed to be a large hindrance to realizing free market goals (Baltodano, 2012); thus, new methods of government control were introduced in schools and public services (Davies & Bansel, 2007).

Federal and parental anxiety over what was perceived to be deteriorating performance in schools and concerns over the future economic opportunities available to children led to the introduction of neoliberal policies, which now influence the education system in the USA (Apple, 2006). The need to reform the education system was outlined in economic terms, specifically the need to prepare students to compete in a global marketplace (Levin, 1998). In BC, one of the educational aims of the 2002 Liberal government was to use education to increase economic wealth rather than simply to have an educated population (Poole, 2007).

In the BC public school system, since the 2001 shift to introduce neoliberal perspectives on education, provincial reforms around education have been introduced that view parents and students as consumers of education and schools and teachers are viewed as suppliers of education. While the government has focused on the consumer side of education with a focus on meeting the perceived needs of parents and students, little attention has been placed on the impact reforms have on the providers of education, specifically on teachers. This shift in focus has had a significant impact on teachers, as teachers may adopt self-enterprising behaviours and are expected to be flexible to meet changing consumer needs.

2.3 The British Columbian Scene in Neoliberal times

The conditions for school choice in BC was set by the Social Credit government in the 1970's through its policy to provide partial funding for independent schools (Gaskell, 1999). When the BCNDP came into power from 1991 to 2001 they maintained the school choice structure that was in place believing the existing framework to be an appropriate amount of choice; the BCNDP government continued to partially fund private schools and to allow local districts to decide the level of choice they would like to provide in the form of alternative programs (Gaskell, 1999).

In May 2001, British Columbians elected the BC Liberal Party into office, displacing the BCNDP. The Liberal government came into power with a majority, winning 77 out of the 79 available seats (Fleming, 2011). The Liberal government's platform, *A New Era for British Columbia: A Vision for Hope and Prosperity for the Decade and Beyond*, highlighted what they believed to be the principles for prosperity, emphasizing the importance of providing a progressive education system that will ensure global economic competitiveness (Fallon & Paquette, 2008). The BC Liberal Party criticized the education structure that was in place prior

to 2001 as being ineffective for preparing a future workforce to compete in a global market economy (Fallon & Paquette, 2008). The key education features of the platform included introducing market forces to the education system, providing students with the skills necessary to work in a knowledge-based economy, increasing local school board autonomy and flexibility, and introducing financial and academic accountability measures (Fallon & Paquette, 2008).

The Select Standing Committee on Education (SSCE) was created by the Liberal Government in 2001 and given the responsibility to make suggestions to improve access, choice, flexibility, quality, and accountability in the public education system. In their report, *A Future for Learners: A Vision for Renewal of Education in British Columbia* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002), the SSCE made many recommendations that were in line with neoliberal beliefs, including the suggestion to provide students with educational opportunities aligned with the needs of the economy, to extend more autonomy and control to school boards, to provide parents with greater choice in their child's schooling, and to ensure greater accountability (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2002).

2.4 Neoliberal Policies in the Education System

The neoliberal policies introduced by the BC Liberal government, following the recommendations made by the SSCE in 2001, adhere to Carter and O'Neill's (1995, p. 9) "the new orthodoxy;" "a shift is taking place in the relationship between politics, government, and education in post-industrialized countries at least." There has been a shift away from publicly funded collective decision making to public-private-partnerships and individual choice in the school system (Ball, 1993). Carter and O'Neill (1995) outlined the five main elements common to contemporary education policies in the Western world, which are consistent with the features

of the BC Liberal government's education reforms. Carter and O'Neill's (1995, p. 9) five main common elements are:

1. Improving national economics by tightening a connection between schooling, employment, productivity, and trade
2. Enhancing student outcomes in employment related skills and competencies
3. Attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment
4. Reducing the costs to government of education
5. Increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision-making and pressure of market choice

Each one of these education policies is discussed in further detail below.

2.4.1 Policy Number 1: Improving National Economics by Tightening a Connection Between Schooling, Employment, Productivity, and Trade

Neoliberal evaluations raised concerns over the Western education system's ability to educate children to compete in the global economy (Apple, 2006; Baltodano, 2012). In the United States, the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* outlined that a mediocre education system puts "Our Nation...at risk...the educational foundations of society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 7). For neoliberals, this report linked the importance of the public school system in advancing the nation's global economic goals and provided a justification that the regulation of schools is essential to compete in a global economy (Baez, 2005).

It was believed the interests of the nation would be served through the introduction of markets and competition into the field of education and would allow nations to compete internationally and create knowledge-based economies (Robertson, 2011). Olssen and Peters (2005) discuss how neoliberalism and globalization gave rise to the narrative of a knowledge-based economy, in which governments view higher education as one of the keys to economic

success. Their discussion of the role higher education plays in the knowledge-based economy runs parallel to neoliberal views of the public education system where public secondary schools are also considered to be of great importance to national success in a global economy. Through the regulation of schools and the introduction of reforms in the education system, it was believed that countries would be able to advance in the competitive global market (Carter & O’Neill, 1995).

In BC, the Liberal party has adopted the neoliberal view that the role of education is to boost economic productivity and enhance global competition. Changes introduced to BC educational policies through Bill 34 were the result of criticism of the education system’s ability to prepare students to be competitive in a flexible global economy (Fallon & Paquette, 2008).

Underlying all this is the debate about the role of public schooling in society. There are conflicting views about the purpose of public education (Fallon & Paquette, 2008). Historically, the purpose of the public education system was that it is “deemed necessary for the transmission of cultural heritage, the furtherance of social and economic policies, and the maintenance of social order” (Baez, 2005, p. 3). Schools were viewed as important political mechanisms to influence individual and collective behaviour, rather than being tied to global economic growth (Baez, 2005).

2.4.2 Policy Number 2: Enhance Student Outcomes in Employment Related Skills and Competencies

Under neoliberal perspectives, schools that had previously been viewed as fundamental to public welfare, in order to create a functional democratic society, have been reimaged to create students who will act as enterprising risk-takers. The private sector has been allowed to participate in education by offering industry training, introducing new technology, and providing

private educational opportunities to students (Robertson, 2011; Davies & Bansel, 2007). Under a neoliberal framework, there is a greater emphasis on the connection between education and employment; schools are primarily seen as institutions used to prepare students to maximize their future contributions to the global economy (Apple, 2006). Schools are to match their outcomes with those desired by industry; schools are encouraged to establish connections between education and employment skills and to increase the level of youth employment (Carter & O'Neill, 1995).

The BCME has shown interest in changing school curriculum to represent the needs of the market, such as through the introduction of the 21st Century Learning Plan (“BCME”, n.d.). The 21st Century Learning Plan highlights the skills that will be needed by a future workforce (“BCME, n.d.). Public schools in BC are introducing new programs and courses to appeal to students’ interests that are tied to employment skills; thus, increasing the competitive environment of schooling in BC.

2.4.3 Policy Number 3: Attaining More Direct Control Over Curriculum Content and Assessment

To allow for the realization of the neoliberal goal of creating an education system in which schools, teachers, and students act as innovative self-enterprising agents, the role of the state is to introduce techniques, such as accounting and management policies to facilitate this (Olssen & Peters, 2005). These new techniques are required in order to meet the needs of the economy and to shift accountability to individuals rather than the state. Increased competition has been introduced with the intention of increasing the rate of innovation and flexibility in schools, as well as to improve accountability (Olssen & Peters, 2005). Neoliberal policies, such as choice and competition, have transformed the relationship between school districts and

schools; in schools, policies have been introduced to increase competition, accountability, and performance goals (Davies & Bansel, 2007).

There has been a shift from an emphasis on intellectual inquiry to a focus on performativity, with attention being concentrated on measured outputs and performance indicators (Olssen & Peters, 2005). In BC, Bill 34 was seen as a solution to allow school districts to adapt swiftly to local concerns and to create greater accountability in the education system (Fallon & Paquette, 2008).

2.4.4 Policy Number 4: Reducing the Costs to Government of Education

Prior to the introduction of neoliberal policies in education there was discontent with the perceived negative performance of schools and their inability to provide a better product based on the amount of funding allocated to schooling (Carter & O'Neill, 1995). In education, neoliberal policies are characterized by a focus on market considerations and economic interests are intertwined with educational concerns (Penney & Evans, 1995; Davies & Bansel, 2007); there is now a greater focus on finance and resources rather than on building the education platform of schools (Ball, 1993a). Management may be concerned with production and budgets rather than on student welfare; school principals may largely focus on financial planning and promoting their schools, rather than on managing educational programs, to the detriment of student learning (Ball, 1993a; Ball, 1993b); educational programming is becoming an economic decision (Ball, 1993b). In schools, principals may decide on which programs to introduce based on financial considerations, rather than on the value the courses may have on student learning. For example, academy and specialized programs with a user-fee component are being introduced in schools to generate income for school districts (Poole, 2007). Educational reforms that have

been introduced through neoliberal policies have not been associated with significant increases in government funding to schools (Levin, 1998).

The 2001 BC Liberal Party's focus on the neoliberal policies of accountability, deregulation, and market-driven programming resulted in the 2002 BC Liberal government change of the public school funding formula. The public school funding formula changed from a program and cost based model to a student enrolment funding system (Beresford & Fussell, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2013). The BC Liberal government has shown a preference towards entrepreneurship in guiding public education funding (Fallon & Poole, 2013). Declining enrolment has created shortfalls as certain education expenses are fixed irrespective of the number of students enrolled in classes (Beresford & Fussell, 2009). For some schools, their future existence depends on their ability to maintain and expand student enrolment (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004); thus, the opening of school district boundaries and the change in the education funding formula has heightened competition between schools and districts.

In BC, school districts also compete to attract fee-paying international students to their schools as an extra source of revenue (Beresford & Fussell, 2009). Some school districts are able to generate more revenue from international students than others based on their favourable geographic location and successful marketing strategies (Beresford & Fussell, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2013). The 2002 School Amendment Act also enabled school districts to establish companies that could operate to generate revenue and supplement their education programs (Fallon & Poole, 2013). However, the government failed to account for the fact that school districts may lack the business know-how to establish profitable enterprises (Fallon & Poole, 2013). There is some concern that the increase of entrepreneurialism in schools may cause attention to be placed on marketing decisions and programs introduced may be based on

financial considerations rather than on educational values (Fallon & Poole, 2013). In schools, international students fill up spots that would otherwise be left empty, providing school districts not only with increased funding but also allowing courses that may have otherwise been cancelled to run.

2.4.5 Policy Number 5: Increasing Community Input to Education by More Direct Involvement in School Decision-Making and Pressure of Market Choice

In the USA and Canada, individual schools and parents have been given more power in managing schools (Levin, 1998). There has been a move away from providing uniform education experiences for all students to a focus on tailoring programs to meet the diverse individual interests of students (Brown, 2004). By allowing for school choice, a “safe haven” for students who do not do well in standard public schools can also be created and students who may have been forgotten in the standard public system can be provided with flexible and relevant learning options (Gaskell, 1999, p. 22). Arts and sports academies may provide opportunities for students who are not strong at the traditional academic courses to excel. However, the benefits may not be equally realized as often specialization programs are provided for elite students and students who require greater assistance may not be well suited for such programs.

Friedman (2002) contended that there is a need for choice and diversity in education rather than conformity and nationalization. According to Friedman (2002) individual choice is more important than the collective; individuals should be accountable for their own costs and likewise they should fully reap their own rewards. Market limitations should not prevent individuals from realizing their full potential when they are keen to assume the associated costs (Friedman, 2002). Following neoliberal perspective the individual is of greatest important and

becomes a “homo economicus”; every facet of life is to be viewed through a cost-benefit lens (Baltodano, 2012, p. 493).

Advocates for school choice discuss how choice empowers students and parents; as educational consumers, parents are given the responsibility to make decisions that best serve their educational goals for their children (Fallon & Paquette, 2008; Davies & Aurini, 2011). One of the goals of choice programs is to provide students with programs that meets their individual needs and parents take responsibility for the education choices made for their children (Bosetti, 2001). Proponents for school choice also state that increased competition through choice can help improve schools (Davies & Aurini, 2011). Competition for clients is assumed to motivate schools to innovate their programs and improve the quality of the public education programs offered (Davies & Aurini, 2011).

Policy-makers in BC reasoned that by allowing for choice, school districts would engage in competitive practices, foster innovation, and generate opportunities for public schools to provide enhanced educational programs at the local level (Fallon & Paquette, 2008; Fallon & Poole, 2013). Resulting from Bill 34, school districts began to experience greater competition as students began to cross over previously impervious school boundaries and select schools based on their interests in the programs offered. To compete in open markets, many BC schools have focused on specialization and have developed unique programs to match student interests and to attract students to their schools. In order to compete and maintain or increase student enrolment, school districts began to introduce niche and elite programs within the standard school timetable. Some examples of programs and locally developed course offerings delivered by school districts include: International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) programs, sports and Fine Arts academies, French immersion, trades programs, and agriculture programs. Advocates

for school choice believed that school choice in BC would enhance academic outcomes (Fallon & Poole, 2013).

While neoliberal policies are created to provide choices for students that lead to the best economic decisions, student choices within schools are actually tightly controlled, despite the fact that students are led to believe that they have the freedom of choice (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Students may feel that they have choice over the school subjects they can take; however, the options they have to choose from are choices that are believed to be important for the economy. This is evidenced, as students are required to meet the graduation prerequisites developed by the BCME and university admission requirements, thus limiting students' realized choice.

2.5 Impacts of Neoliberal Educational Policies on Equity

Those who hold neoliberal perspectives favourably, believe that markets operate based on effort and virtue; students who are able and work hard are assured to be rewarded with promising results (Apple, 2001). Although market forces are influenced by class and education priorities, often only positive results are discussed about the impacts of market forces in performance reports (Ball, 1993b); thus, incorrectly indicating that universal benefits are experienced (Ball, 1993a).

In BC, many of the specialized programs offered have a user-fee component to them and target elite students. AP and IB programs target strong academic students, and sports and arts academies target students who excel in these areas; thus, all students may not universally realize the benefits of choice. Students from families with greater social-economic-status (SES) may have more opportunities to participate in schools that offer specialized programs.

Adversaries of school choice view choice policies as an obstacle to the equitable delivery of schooling (Davies & Aurini, 2011). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines equity through two attributes, fairness and inclusion. Fairness means that regardless of circumstance a child has the opportunity to reach their academic potential, and inclusion means that all children have access to a basic minimum level of education (OECD, 2008). Following Bourdieu's (1980) theory of habitus, where habitus is defined as human dispositions that are produced and reproduced, neoliberal reforms, such as choice in education, may be viewed as a "class strategy which has one of its major effect the reproduction of relative social class (and ethnic) advantages and disadvantages" (Ball, 1993a, p. 4). According to Ball (1993a), markets and choice are a means for the middle-class to "reassert their reproduction advantages in education, which had been threatened by the increasing social democratic de-differentiation of schools, the cultural reform of the curriculum" (p. 16). Hence, given the open market structure of the choice driven education system, a child's social upbringing is a key determinant of their educational success (Merrett, 2006).

Through neoliberal policies, such as the opening of school catchment areas in BC, responsibilities for inequalities in schooling access and achievement have been transferred from the government to the individual (Apple, 2001). Advantages of school choice benefit children from higher SES families, as middle-class parents are well trained to use knowledge regarding market conditions to their children's benefit (Gerwitz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995). The disadvantages of choice are felt greater by students from lower SES families, as parents from lower SES backgrounds may not have the skills or resources required to make informed school choices (Davies, Telhaj, Hutton, Adnett, & Coe, 2009; Merrett, 2006). Parents who have stronger financial assets and knowledge may choose to have their children attend a school outside of their

own catchment area, creating an elitist group (Gaskell, 1999). Choice may also result in the siphoning of involved parents from the weaker schools in the public school system, which can result in the further weakening of these schools (Davies & Aurini, 2011).

2.6 Intra-School Competition

Adnett and Davies (2005) discussed how student achievement levels may be impacted by providing greater choices within schools and how teachers may be better able to tailor their course offerings to their students' interests and abilities; however, they failed to address the impact on teachers when they stressed the benefits of providing increased subject choices. Changes created by new policies have resulted in the need for increased teacher flexibility and teachers must teach classes where there is demand; non-specialist teachers are increasingly teaching students and the quality of teaching may be inferior (Penney & Evans, 1995). As a teacher who has taught in unspecialized areas, I agree with Penney and Evans' (1995) statement that teacher quality in non-specialized areas initially may be weaker, as I initially lacked intimate familiarity with the subject area; however, Penney and Evans fail to account for increased teacher workloads that result from teaching in non-specialized areas. As a new teacher keen to hold a place in my school district, I contributed my personal time to become an expert in the areas that I taught, even though it was my non-specialized area. With student choice and preferences changing from year to year, teachers are progressively becoming more flexible and they are teaching in unspecialized areas in order to retain their positions within their school districts.

Secondary school courses compete against each other for student enrolment; however, it is an inequitable competition (Penney & Evans, 1995). Academic subjects are given a higher-status in schools and receive greater resources. It is obligatory that all students take academic

courses, whereas, lower-status vocational subjects are optional courses of study (Siskin, 1994). It is important to consider how all subjects contribute to a complete educational experience; the unequal allocation of time and resources to certain courses increases competition and feelings of distrust among subject teachers (Penney & Evans, 1995). The BCME defines secondary school elective credits as courses which students take to supplement their educational, professional, or individual interests (“BCME”, n.d.). Inherent in the BCME’s definition of elective courses is their supplementary value to students’ educational, professional, and individual interests rather than the independent value of each course. External institutions have the power to legitimize or delegitimize courses and teacher status, which in turn influences student choice (Ball, 1987).

Departments at secondary schools create communities and boundaries where they compete with other departments for resources, students, and space (Siskin, 1994). The prosperities of teachers are linked to their subjects and teachers’ careers are intertwined with the growth of their subjects (Ball, 1987). As school district funding is allocated based on the number of students registered in the school district and school districts make staffing allocations to schools based on their enrolment numbers, enrolment is a key to funding. A teacher must be paid regardless of whether there are 20 or 30 students registered in their class, so courses only run when there is sufficient enrolment in the course for the upcoming academic year (BC Ministry of Education Policy Document K-12 Funding, 2014; Beresford & Fussell, 2009). Each year teachers have to market their courses to a new group of students and encourage their current students to take their advanced courses the following year, in order to preserve their current teaching position. School districts have an incentive to register each student for as many classes as possible. To maximize funding, schools may have policies that do not allow students to have spare blocks and school districts may come up with creative solutions to maximize their per

student funding. At some BC secondary schools, students are allowed to register for an academic tutorial block under the supervision of a teacher; this block may have been devised to contain students and receive ministry funding rather than losing funding and having to decrease teaching positions by allowing students to have unsupervised unregistered spare blocks.

Ball (1987) accurately reported that organizational change creates new divisions and results in new partnerships. As a business teacher, I worked hard to develop my Accounting 11 and 12 courses; however, when UBC began to accept Economics 12 as a course counted towards students' admissions averages, I had to accept the fact that my Accounting course enrolment might decrease in the future regardless of how I teach the subject. As Economics 12 has experienced significant growth in numbers, whether due to the dedication of the subject teacher or the change in university policy, a different department has discussed offering the course through its department. Secondary school departments are micro-political stadiums where internal alliances, status hierarchies, and competing interests are played out (Siskin, 1994).

Proponents for the market-driven provision of education believe that market forces are required to improve teacher performance (Apple, 2006). Teachers are regarded as inputs used to create outputs; they are pieces to be regulated rather than included in educational policy discussions. Viewed through a neoliberal lens, the actions teachers take are rooted in self-interest rather than in the interests of their students (Ball, 1993a). Teachers have to manage between bifurcated values, with the introduction of market forces to the education system (Ball, 1993b). Teachers are required to form new relationships with their managers and colleagues; relationships are being altered and disarrayed and the teacher is "both scapegoat and a victim" in the neoliberal education system (Ball, 1993b, p. 120). As a result of increased competition, teachers are faced with increased demands and responsibility that affect both their physical and

emotional well-being (Apple, 2001). Teachers must adopt measures to endure in the competitive marketplace; however, very little is known about the behaviour and emotions of teachers in the current market setting (Ball, 1993a).

Adnett and Davies (2005) stated that teacher proficiency can be increased by intra-school competition because competition for students forces teachers to increase their effectiveness; however, their market oriented statement failed to acknowledge that teachers may strive to maximize their effectiveness for the benefit of their students regardless of whether they face competition. As teachers compete to increase student enrolment in their course offerings, competition may give rise to unprincipled behaviours, such as cream-skimming (Adnett & Davies, 2005). Cream-skimming is a practice where teachers appeal to highly skilled students to take their courses over students who are having difficulties at school (Adnett & Davies, 2005). Further, in order to attract students to their courses, teachers may choose to make their lessons less challenging and include amusing non-educational activities that do not serve the educational needs of their students (Adnett & Davies, 2005).

The voice of the teacher is missing in current neoliberalism education reform (Ball, 1993b). Teachers have not been given an opportunity to share their expertise and intimate knowledge of the education system and managers outside the school who hold more power have dictated policy changes that directly impact teachers. Teachers are influenced by the new values that have emerged through neoliberal policies, where image is more important than educational practice and control has moved away from teachers to parents and students who are viewed as consumers (Ball, 1993b). New policy initiatives may be ignored or challenged by teachers and may not be implemented as intended. Teachers are often hesitant to adopt new policy initiatives as they may lack the time and resources necessary to implement the new initiative or they may

be skeptical about whether the new initiative may represent a long term change or whether it will be soon replaced by another well-intended policy, hence, choosing to wait-out policies.

The introduction of neoliberal policies in schools leads to teachers having to navigate between divergent value systems, such as choosing between spending more time on lesson planning or on creating and implementing a marketing strategy, or making their courses more amusing rather than educational for their students. Teachers' choices may place making sound educational decisions directly in contrast with maximizing enrolment (Ball, 1993b). Teachers who challenge these new values of increasing enrolment may negatively impact their reputation, as teachers are responsible to their departments and they may be responsible for a decline in enrolment if they fail to maintain or increase their course enrolment numbers. Neoliberal market forces set dissident teachers against their colleagues instead of against the neoliberal policies that are guiding their actions (Ball, 1993b). New values may put self-interest and competition ahead of increasing educational outcomes for all students (Ball, 1993b).

With the growth of intra-school choice, teachers are increasingly spending time on marketing activities to attract students to their courses rather than on teaching (Gerwitz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995). Resulting from additional marketing activities, teachers may have less time to put towards creating engaging lessons for their students, thus decreasing teacher effectiveness. Teachers have to balance their time between attracting new students to their programs and teaching their current students (Penney & Evans, 1995). Research focusing on teachers' beliefs around marketing in schools has shown that teachers do not believe that marketing is well-suited for education; teachers consider schools to be a place of learning rather than a business to promote (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004). Teachers found marketing activities to be

incongruent with their values and assumed that marketing was associated with providing misleading messages (Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown, 2004).

Neoliberal policies have created conditions where teachers, subjects, and schools compete for students and resources. Increased competition has resulted in schools, teachers, and subject areas working against each other to serve their own interests rather than those of their students. There is a need to explore how government policies are perceived at the school level, as mandated educational reforms are often not implemented as intended due to the failure of external agencies to consider intra-school micropolitics and the impact policy changes have on teacher relationships and collaborative leadership (Penney & Evans, 1995; Blase, 2005). It is important to recognize both the advantages of providing increased choice to students to meet students' interests and the disadvantages resulting from the introduction of neoliberal policies in education, rather than solely shifting the responsibility of failure to schools and teachers (Merrett, 2006).

2.7 Micropolitics in Schools

Neoliberal policies focus on creating choice for students; however, they fail to consider whether the new policies are the correct ones to meet the needs of all the members in the school system. New policies may be successfully implemented or sabotaged due to the micropolitics that arise from the competitive environment in schools (Penney & Evans, 1995). Micropolitics focus on the apparent and concealed methods used by members of a group to gain power to advance and defend their own interests (Malen, 1994; Blase & Anderson, 1995). Teachers experience the realities of micropolitics in schools every day (Blase & Anderson, 1995). Micropolitics influence the distribution of resources and how much collaboration occurs in a school including the sharing of resources between teachers.

Micropolitics guide the daily interactions among teachers based on the relative status and influence teachers have over their colleagues, superordinates, and subordinates (Corbett, 1991; Reed, 2000). Interactions amongst teachers may differ depending on their years of experience, and their level of seniority. Teachers who are known to be more vocal and demanding may be appeased quickly, and teachers who are perceived to be friendlier with administration may be perceived to receive more favourable teaching conditions. It is essential to pay attention to the constant struggles that takes place within schools, as teachers have the power to control which reforms are enacted or rejected (Reed, 2000). During times of change, such as when schools are experiencing declining enrolment and need to restructure, the micropolitical actions of teachers tend to be heightened and become more defensive in both the formal and informal processes of school management (Blase, 2005). Political analyses in the educational setting have been viewed as an inappropriate activity and the topic of micropolitics in schools has been evaded rather than addressed (Malen, 1994). Schools are inherently political systems and are faced with multiple demands for the allocation of scarce resources (Malen, 1994).

Teachers and administrators with power in schools can be seen as having the ability to change the behaviour of others either by restricting the actions of others or by freeing others to do what may have previously been controlled (Corbett, 1991). The impact that neoliberal policies have on teachers is the ability to influence teachers to spend more time on marketing, student recruitment, and image management rather than on teaching. In schools, power differentials surface through a variety of avenues. Individual teachers have distinct backgrounds, motivations, experiences, and political influences arising from their positions (Reed, 2000). Power also advances through social relationships (Corbett, 1991); there are a variety of systems in place in schools including committees, staff meetings, and teacher interactions in the staff

room, hallways, and classrooms where teachers negotiate and compete amongst themselves to advance their interests (Reed, 2000). When I have discussions with my colleagues, I am always keen to share my passion for yoga and my strong beliefs for how the practice will benefit our students. Every interaction is treated as an opportunity to forward my cause through the use of informal power tactics. Conversations can have a strong influence and are a form of political influence (Malen, 1994). Power can move both up and down an organization; teachers are able to influence their colleagues and superordinates through informal means (Corbett, 1991).

Micropolitical practices driven by the power and self-interest of teachers influence teacher behaviour in schools and how teachers react to proposed changes (Ball, 1987; Siskin & Little, 1995). Teachers may use their influence to resist change; however, change is an inherent element in all organizations regardless of how stable they appear (Reed, 2000). In schools, change involves hiring new employees, fluctuating student populations, altering student interests, innovative curriculum requirements, and unpredictable resource allocation (Reed, 2000). The micropolitical actions taken by teachers have been shown to encumber school restructuring (Blase, 2005). Teachers' micropolitical behaviours negatively impact school reform, as teachers try to protect their own territory by insulating themselves from external interferences. Teachers have the power to disconnect themselves by keeping their classroom doors closed and teaching in any manner they please, rather than following policies that have been imposed on them (Corbett, 1991). The protectionist strategies in which teachers engage include choosing not to share resources and using power, such as influence gained from distributed leadership, to enhance their own self-interests (Blase, 2005).

Unequal power relations often surface when there is conflict (Reed, 2000). Latent power relations exist in the school environment and there is always the potential for conflict; some

conflicts do not materialize while others may under the right circumstances (Reed, 2000). As a secondary school elective teacher, I did not realize how little power I had until I tried to initiate change. Resulting from my strong sense of efficacy combined with my inexperience dealing with those who opposed my proposed change, I soon found myself caught in a web of power dynamics. School norms regarding proper teacher interactions can minimize overt conflict and secure conventional means of power (Malen, 1994). To some extent all teachers experience the impact of micropolitics in their workplace; some teachers understand that they will be ostracized if they are too opinionated and others know that they do not have any influence over important decisions (Anderson, 1991). As teachers are competing for scarce resources, such as student enrolment, there are winners and losers; some courses will run while other courses will be cancelled.

Competitive pressures create increased departmental isolation in schools and hamper teacher collaboration among subject areas (Penney & Evans, 1995). As resources are distributed to departments based on student enrolment, the open market environment creates incentives for teachers to increase student registration to further advance their school authority (Davies et al., 2009). Moreover, some departments inherently receive greater discretionary resources and have a high status while other departments have trouble managing the restrictive budgets associated with their low positioning (Siskin, 1994). Decisions regarding which courses will run, who they will be taught by, the time of day when the class will be taught, and the room in which the class will be taught are all micropolitical decisions that will be made by teachers within departments or by school administrators (Siskin, 1994). Some departments equally share the workload with all members while other departments may have a chain of seniority or other internal methods for distributing courses and resources (Siskin, 1994). The job security and working conditions of

teachers are tied to the courses that they teach and over time some courses gain and lose popularity; hence, teachers' job stability and subject status tends to be volatile, temporary, and part of the greater political activity of schools (Siskin, 1994). Decreased collaboration and increased opposition between teachers may negatively affect both academic and non-academic interests (Adnett & Davies, 2005). Blase and Anderson (1995) discovered that the political motivations of teachers often focused on personal rather than group interests.

Principals have the power to influence the climate of micropolitics in their schools. Principals have discretion over supplementary funds, teaching assignments, and evaluations, giving them strong power over teachers' realized working conditions (Malen, 1994). At times principals may appear to exercise favoritism in the allocation of resources and teaching assignments with some teachers receiving more desirable workloads and schedules than others (Malen, 1994). Teachers may overtly conform to the wishes of their principals due to the consequences of noncompliance; however, teachers may use informal power tactics to sabotage or undermine the authority of the principal (Malen, 1994). The type of leadership in the school influences the micropolitics that takes place in the school (Blase & Anderson, 1995). Teachers who face challenges initiating change, such as introducing new courses, from their colleagues and department heads may be able to draw support from their principal to overcome obstacles.

It is important to learn how teachers use power from their own perspectives as the successful implementation of reform policies hinges on the acceptance of teachers (Reed, 2000). Power relations impact all interactions in school life; however, very little is understood regarding the motivations of teachers' actions and how teachers try to insulate themselves from perceived threats (Reed, 2000). Barth (2006) noted that the relationships among teachers and administration have the greatest impact on student achievement and school quality. The reason

why many curriculum development projects fail in schools is due to poor relationships between teachers (Hargreaves, 1991). It is important to recognize that whether favourable or detrimental, politics in schools is a force to be comprehended (Malen, 1994).

2.8 Performativity

Ball (2000) defined performativity as, “a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation, or a system of 'terror' in Lyotard's words, that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as means of control, attrition and change” (p. 1). Teachers may put their individual philosophies on hold and their personal teaching values are confronted in order to compete and act as enterprising agents to maintain stable course enrolment numbers. There has been an emphasis on improving teacher accountability and performance in schools; however, there is uncertainty regarding which measures to use to evaluate teaching (Corbett, 1991). Greater visibility of the performance of teachers allows others to evaluate their performance and visibility can be a dominant control technique (Corbett, 1991). Given the opaque nature of teaching, in secondary schools it can be argued that the most visible direct assessment of the classroom performance of teachers is their course enrolment numbers for the following year. Enrolment numbers deliver a means for providing information that can be used for “comparison and commodification” as part of performativity in the education market (Ball, 2000, p. 10). Successful teachers have many blocks to teach in their area of specialization, whereas, unsuccessful teachers may lose their courses altogether if an insufficient number of students register. Performativity allows for an economic evaluation of performance and successful individuals can be distinguished from unsuccessful individuals (Gillies, 2011); performativity introduces a culture of accountability and reporting into the teaching practice and teachers are valued for their productivity, which may

be measured by how many courses that they are able to offer in their area of specialization (Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

Performativity impacts how teachers are governed and how they teach in their classrooms; teachers may teach based on a personal philosophy that guides their pedagogical practice or they may modify their teaching practice to make their courses more enticing to students, such as by making their assessment or courses easier (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). This new system makes teachers responsible for their own performance and the performance of their colleagues (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). For example, when I first started teaching, I was anxious about whether I was engaging my students and I feared that I could negatively impact my department's enrolment numbers for the following year. I worried all year and I only felt reassured when my department's course numbers were reported to remain the same. My account may represent the burden of the constant obligation to perform experienced by secondary school elective teachers. The factors that drive student enrolment are unknown and teachers may take credit or blame for enrolment numbers when students may choose courses based on what their friends are taking or because they are viewed to be easy, rather than for the quality of the teaching. There is a sense of uncertainty and teachers do not know the answers to questions such as, "Are we doing enough? Are we doing the right things?" until months later when course enrolment numbers are released (Ball, 2000, p. 3). In BC school districts, often there does not exist any formal methods for evaluating the quality and teaching ability of continuing teachers; the only annual feedback and validation teachers receive is through their block allocations; their course numbers may reflect whether students enjoyed or found their course to be of value, or whether students prefer to spend their time in a different course. Teachers are dependent on validation from their superordinates and colleagues, as the teaching profession lacks a set of

guiding codes to validate teacher actions; teachers are vulnerable to criticism and their self-esteem is connected to social recognition (Nias, 1996).

The behaviour and actions of teachers can be influenced by methods of ideological control used in schools; teachers can be controlled through the meanings that are placed on their course enrolment numbers (Anderson, 1991). Viewed through a performativity lens, it can be concluded that teachers who experienced declining enrolment in their courses did not effectively perform their duties and they are seen as irresponsible (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Ball and Olmedo (2013) reflected on performativity and the blame and judgment that arise in the school system; they declared that “it is precisely at this level where people criticize instances of power which are the closest to them, those which exercise their actions on individuals they do not look for the ‘chief enemy’ but for the immediate enemy” (p. 90). Ball and Olmedo (2013) advocated for the “re-imaging of power” (p. 92) where teachers are to hold a place in the political sphere and critically examine the policies that affect them. Following performativity principles, teachers are required to increase their performance and outputs rather than focus on the meaningfulness of the practice and the pedagogical value of their work (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Every year enrolment numbers signal successful and ineffective departments and it is important for teachers to make sense of the results rather than to make quick judgments about their own or their colleagues’ performance. Changes in enrolment may occur due to external reforms or changing student interests and may not be an accurate reflection of teaching ability. Two value systems are seen to be in opposition, one that favours accountability and measurability against one that esteems pedagogy and relationships (Ball & Olmedo, 2013).

Teachers now educate in an environment characterized by performance targets, competition, and comparisons (Ball, 2000). Driven by neoliberal choice policies, teacher

performance in secondary schools can be assessed based on their enrolment numbers.

Administration and secondary school department members may view teachers who have increased the number of students registered in their courses favourably and those who have decreased their course enrolment may be viewed adversely. Often overlooked is the public nature of teacher humiliation and the feelings and emotions evoked by performativity policy (Nias, 1996). Teachers experience feelings of guilt, shame, anger, doubt, blame, and envy and the individual and communal impacts of performativity are often disregarded (Ball, 2000).

2.9 Intra-School Competition and Teachers' Emotions and Identity

The personal and professional identities held by teachers are often connected as teachers dedicate their selves into their profession (Nias, 1996). The culture of the school and the relationships formed within the school influence teachers' professional identities. Teachers' identities are constructed in part by the courses that they teach and changes to the value and status of subjects in schools can have positive or negative impacts on teacher identity (Day, Kington, Stobard, & Sammons, 2006).

The identities adopted by teachers are unstable and context driven; professional identity is affected by the micropolitical environment in schools and by changes introduced through government reforms (Day et al., 2006). Relationships within schools also have an important impact on teacher identity. Negative impacts on teacher identity occur when teachers feel that their colleagues devalue the subjects that they teach; whereas, cooperation between teachers has a positive impact on teachers' perceptions of their professional identity (Day et al., 2006). Government reforms impact teachers' identities and elicit cognitive and emotive responses from teachers.

The self-esteem of teachers and their passion for teaching are connected with how they identify with their courses, relationships, and responsibilities (Day et al., 2006). Teacher identity has often been overlooked in research regarding educational reform; teachers' emotions should be accounted for as they are transformed by contextual conditions and have profound effects on those involved in the education system (Nias, 1996; Hargreaves, 2005). Teachers may experience feelings of shame and inadequacy resulting from their work.

2.10 The Care of Self and the Enterprising Self

In a school system guided by accountability measures, such as enrolment numbers and course block allocations for teachers, Foucault's concept of the "care of the self" can be viewed as how teachers make decisions to best serve their own needs (Gillies, 2011, p. 213). While neoliberalism defines the parameters for the care of the self, it simultaneously creates new arenas for struggle and defiance (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Teachers are exposed to judgments and criticisms that may lead them to change their behaviour to protect themselves and their feelings of self-worth (Nias, 1996). As the identities of teachers are often tied to the subjects that they teach and teachers are emotionally invested in their work, teachers experience negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and guilt when they feel like they are losing control (Nias, 1996). Teachers often suppress these negative feelings, as they are believed to be private, individual insecurities; feelings of anxiety are not shared or addressed in a community setting (Ball, 2003). Teachers also experience strong positive feelings from their work with students and this leads them to adopt territoriality and protectionist practices to ensure that they continue to experience job satisfaction (Nias, 1996). Teachers are aware that their occupational success is bound to their course offerings and they must build their domain and protect themselves from the intrusion of new courses (Ball, 1987). As members of an education system guided by neoliberal policies,

such as choice and accountability, teachers begin to frame their goals, dreams, and worries as individual entrepreneurs who are responsible for their own success and failure (Davies & Bansel, 2007).

In order to succeed and thrive in a school environment characterized by neoliberal policies and maintain positive emotions, following Foucault's notion of the care of self, teachers act as marketable, entrepreneurial selves (Gillies, 2011). Foucault (1984 p. 84) stated that:

Whereas formerly ethics implied a close connection between power over oneself and power over others, and therefore had to refer to an aesthetics of life that accorded with one's status, the new rules of the political game made it more difficult to define the relations between what one was, what one could do, and what one was expected to accomplish. The formation of oneself as the ethical subject of one's own actions became more problematic.

In the educational setting, Foucault's statement and theory of the care of the self can be related to how teachers in a neoliberal setting have to adapt their personal teaching practices to meet the needs of administration and policy makers and teachers may modify their practices to advance their own self-interests. Guided by neoliberal values, teachers now have become the homo economicus, "enterprising subjects who live their lives as an enterprise of the self" (Ball, 2000, p. 17). Teachers are to view themselves as individuals focused on increasing their own value and productivity (Ball, 2000). Teachers become "agile" enterprising agents who act out of what is best for their individual self-interests, allowing themselves to survive rather than considering the needs of the entire community (Gillies, 2011, p. 207). New ethics based on performance incentives that focus on differentiating teachers and placing some teachers in a higher standing

than others replace previous ones that focused on collaboration and teacher expertise (Ball, 2003).

Teachers, wishing to protect their historical curriculum interests, will act out of self-interest and engage in enterprising activities to protect themselves from the hurt and shame felt from declining course enrolment and negative judgments about their teaching practice (Nias, 1996). Nias (1996) stated that for teachers “the more profound and personal their commitment to particular ideals, goals, or priorities, the more extreme their reaction when these are threatened or contested” (p. 305). In this statement Nias is referring to the fact that the more connected teachers are to their courses and students the more intense their response will be when they feel that their course is being threatened. As enterprising-selves, teachers view their colleagues as competition; teachers compete for students and recognition and they may yearn for the failure of their colleagues as much as they wish for their own success (Barth, 2006). While some teachers are successful as enterprising individuals, others may choose to resist the pressure to become enterprising agents due to inner conflict stemming from not wanting to change their personal beliefs and self-definitions to compete with their colleagues (Ball, 2003).

By investing in the care of the self and acting as entrepreneurs, teachers are managed by others and they are concurrently governors of themselves (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Teachers may invest in neoliberal practices and effectively work with market forces to compete and grow their own courses; thus, teachers are able to benefit from their self-investment in enterprising practices (Gillies, 2011). The work teachers do is often overlooked as it can be challenging to know what transpires inside classrooms. Teachers may worry that the positive practices that they engage in may not be accounted for and they are also anxious that the pressures to increase enrolment may change their practice (Ball, 2003). Teachers may try to increase their visibility to be noticed

outside of their classrooms through the production of events or exhibitions (Ball, 2000).

Whether it is a marketing class organizing a pep rally or a dance class performing at a local shopping mall, teachers may choose to differentiate their programs and their contributions in the public sphere (Ball, 2000). With many school districts adopting technology initiatives, incessant efforts to market education now include social media; administrators and teachers maintain blogs and use Twitter to communicate about their programs and activities. Teachers may share their lessons and ideas online with their professional network rather than with their colleagues in the same building, as social media profiles are considered self-promoting, whereas, in school sharing goes unmeasured and can be perceived as sharing resources with their direct competitors.

Teachers learn how to work with the goals established by neoliberal policies and recognize that greater importance is placed on what appears to be accomplished rather than what actually has been done (Ball, 2000).

The ways in which teachers adopt strategies of self-care and create their own identity can have either positive or negative effects for students (Day et al., 2006). Positive impacts for students may be that teachers may try to be more innovative in their teaching practice and make lessons more relevant and engaging for students. Negative impacts for students may emerge when teachers, who are faced with the challenge to compete and preserve their self-esteem and job security, may engage in misrepresentation or deceitful actions to perform in a competitively intensified teaching environment (Ball, 2003). Teachers who are in a weak position to compete may take any actions necessary to survive (Ball, 2003); teachers may choose to offer easier course loads or encourage highly capable students to take their courses, although they may not be improving the educational levels of their students (Adnett & Davies, 2005). This is evidenced in the school system where teachers may choose activities that are amusing rather than educational

in which their students partake. As job security is based on seniority in the school system, new teachers start in a weak position; they are often assigned the most undesirable course loads and they are expected to take on many additional extracurricular activities. To make their work visible, teachers new to the system often find themselves volunteering or taking initiative to create events that will draw attention to their contributions.

In order to successfully compete, teachers may have to continuously reinvent themselves to endure in a constantly changing market driven education system. Teachers have to be on constant alert for new opportunities, as change offers a chance to grow, as well as, pressures in the form of added competition (Gillies, 2011). The principle of the care of the self creates conditions for greater teacher performativity; performativity thrives when teachers' desires are aligned with neoliberal ideals and teachers want what is expected from them (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). To care for the self in an education system grounded in neoliberal values, teachers engage in practices to promote their classes, compete, and maintain a stable self-identity.

2.11 Summary

The introduction of neoliberal policies in the education setting has created power struggles between and within schools with the intensifying of micropolitics and the personal need for self-preservation by teachers; thus, impacting teachers' professional and personal emotions, identities, and actions within a competitive environment (Nias, 1996). It is important to consider the impact neoliberal policies have on teachers; the benefits realized from introducing market forces to the education system may be associated with weakened conditions for teachers (Siskin & Little, 1995). With the introduction of heightened competition and unproven accountability measures, teachers' work is becoming progressively politicized. Nias (1996) contended that, "passion in teaching is political, precisely because it is also personal" (p.

295). There are conflicting values in the education system; in schools, teacher cooperation and collaboration is in direct conflict with the requirement for teachers to act as agents of their selves to compete and protect their territory (Blase & Anderson, 1995).

Chapter 3: Method

3.1 Chapter Overview

The public secondary school elective teaching environment in British Columbia is highly competitive, as more elective course choices are being offered in schools where levels of student enrolment may be stable or declining. In this case study, I sought to understand the complexity of how teachers experience competition within their teaching environment through semi-structured interviews with seven secondary school elective teachers from three secondary schools to draw out descriptions of teachers' feelings and emotions. Contextual conditions impact teachers' actions and in-depth semi-structured interviews allowed for an understanding of the decisions teachers make to compete internally with their peers, why they make such decisions, and the perceived impact their choices have on their identity as well as on collegial relationships. This case study illustrates how competition amongst elective teachers in secondary schools impacts teachers and how new programs are implemented or fail to be adopted in schools, resulting from teachers' beliefs around change. This chapter discusses the methods used in this study, stating the research objectives, describing the case study design, specifying the procedures used, outlining the data analysis techniques applied, stating the researcher's positionality, and discussing the ethical issues that were addressed.

3.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives for the study were to answer the following two questions:

1. How do elective teachers understand the competitive environment within their schools? Has the competitive environment within their school changed over their teaching career and how do they understand reasons for any changes? Do elective teachers market their courses to students within their schools to attract students to their programs? If so, how

and why do elective teachers market their courses? How do elective teachers perceive intra-school competition as having an affect on their teaching practices?

2. Do elective teachers perceive their course and block allocations as having an impact on their personal and professional identities, and collegial relationships? Do these perceived identities have an impact on new course offerings and internal collaboration?

3.3 Case Study Design

The study used a case study design to understand the actions taken and identities adopted by elective teachers who may choose to act as enterprising agents in response to the neoliberal policies of increasing choice and accountability in public secondary schools. In this qualitative study, I employed a single case study in which I used teacher interviews to inform my research questions. I believe that a case study was best suited for understanding such complex issues, as the research questions examined were explanatory in nature, seeking to explain and understand how teachers adapt their practice to account for internal competition and how competition affects teachers' personal and professional identities, and relationships (Yin, 2003). This is a case study of the impacts of intra-school competition on high school elective teachers in BC.

While the study is not generalizable to other peoples and settings, the sample will give insights about schools as political organizations that characterize the competitive environments in which teachers work. The time period for data collection for this study was from August 5th to October 2014. Part of this study took place during a time of labour strife in BC; BC public school teachers were on strike for five weeks from June 2014 to September 2014. The strike could have had an impact on the teachers who chose to participate in the study and on their answers to my interview questions; however, I do not think that the labour situation impacted the study participants' responses. I do not have evidence that the labour situation negatively

impacted my study in terms of my research outcomes. The participant and school names used throughout the research study are pseudonyms to protect the identities of the participants.

3.4 Procedures

The procedures adopted in this study included selecting a school district in which to conduct the study, selecting the participants from the chosen school district to participate in the study, conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the chosen participants, analyzing the data generated from the study, and forming conclusions.

This study takes place within three secondary schools in one urban BC School District. The school district was an ideal choice, as three of the schools within the district exhibited numerous characteristics desirable for the study. Ocean View Secondary School (OVSS) in the district was experiencing declining enrolment after many years of experiencing full enrolment, while the two other secondary schools in the district, Mountain View Secondary School (MVSS) and North View Secondary School (NVSS), had seen their enrolment increase, possibly attributable to the introduction of academy programs in recent years. Previously, out-of-district students wishing to attend OVSS were placed on waitlists, whereas, now there is excess capacity. In recent years, administrators and teachers at OVSS have found themselves having to initiate change to stem the flow of students choosing to attend the other secondary schools within the district, and outside of district, and to attract students from within and outside the district to the school. The schools in the district offer diverse programs including International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, Advanced Placement (AP) programs, and specialized sports, arts, and trades programs. This school district was a good choice as it has continually been implementing new programs and there has been a growing district emphasis on choice, technology, and collaboration without attention being placed on the impact change has on teachers. There are

many elective courses offered at OVSS; however, due to declining enrolment, elective teachers may be assigned to teach fewer blocks in their specialized area and they may have to teach courses in other departments. At MVSS and NVSS, schools with full enrolment, elective teachers still experience competition and the introduction of new courses and programs are diluting the enrolment of their existing programs. The chosen school district allowed for the understanding of how teachers may choose to act as enterprising agents to market their courses and the impacts on teacher identity and relationships when there is heightened competition, due to increasing pressure to compete with changing enrolment numbers and new program offerings. The letter of request to conduct research in the school district is included in appendix A.

Following the selection of the school district, a purposeful sampling strategy was used to select the teacher participants from three secondary schools within the school district. The sampling frame included all elective teachers from the three secondary schools as potential research participants and two selection criteria were used. Elective teachers were selected to participate in this study based on two criteria: (1) teachers who have successfully introduced a new elective course within the past two years; (2) teachers who have offered the same courses for many years and have not attempted to introduce a new elective course in the past two years. Priority in selecting participants was given to teachers who were also current or previous members of their school's Curriculum Council, the body where department heads and administration confer regarding school based activities and initiatives. Teachers who wish to introduce a new course must first present their proposal to their school's Curriculum Council, where it is discussed and feedback is provided to the school administration about the impact the proposed course may have on other departments. These two criteria were necessary because I believed that teachers who have tried to implement change understand and have experienced the

nature of intra-school competition and teachers who have not introduced change may have their own insights to share. A sample size of seven elective teachers was chosen, as it was large enough to uncover a variety of teacher perceptions and it was a feasible number of interviews to conduct. Potential participants were contacted through email and provided with information about the study and a copy of the consent form. The participant consent form is included in appendix B. Teachers who wished to participate in the study replied their assent by email and an interview was then scheduled.

3.4.1 Data Collection Strategies: Semi-Structured Interviews

One face-to-face, semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the seven study participants during the months of September and October 2014. The semi-structured interviews were organized following a prepared interview schedule that listed the issues that I wished to cover to answer the research questions. The interview protocol is included in appendix C. I had a prepared list of issues to address and the use of semi-structured interviews provided me with the liberty to focus on certain issues that came up or to develop ideas that I wished to learn more about, as I was not tied to a fixed interview schedule (Thomas, 2011). Additional questions were asked to clarify the information shared by participants. The flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allowed me to have dynamic interviews where if an interviewee provided a response to my second question when addressing my first question, I could follow-up immediately and not have to repeat the question later on (Thomas, 2011). My interview protocol set the structure and theme for my interview; however, it did not restrict me from making deviations when I deemed necessary. The semi-structured interviews varied from 30 to 75 minutes in length and they were conducted at locations selected by the participants, such as at a local coffee shop.

Semi-structured interviews were useful in providing rich detailed descriptions; it was important to understand the teachers' experiences from their own perspectives (Nias, 1996). Semi-structured interviews allowed teachers to describe the meaning that they attached to their experiences and how they interpreted situations (Kvale, 1996). I believe that semi-structured interviews provided teachers with the opportunity to share and reflect on their experiences; thus, allowing them to understand their situations in a comprehensive fashion (Nias, 1996). Semi-structured interviews also provided teachers with the chance to analyze the political elements of schools and teaching and to understand and communicate how they respond to neoliberal policies (Ball & Olmedo, 2013). Each interview was audio-recorded using two instruments, Voice Memos an audio recording application on the iPhone and Voice Record an audio-recording application on the iPad. Using Voice Record, the audio-recordings were played back using a slow speed and transcribed. To ensure construct validity, the seven teachers interviewed were presented with their transcribed interviews to review and modify (Yin, 2003).

3.4.2 Data Analysis, Coding, Analysis, and Inferences

The semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative method. The constant comparative method involves repeatedly looking through data and comparing each component, phrase, and sentence with all of the other components, phrases, and sentences to come up with codes to use to describe the essential features of the data; though this process codes are grouped and themes emerge that encapsulate the data (Thomas, 2011).

Following the transcription of the audio-recorded interviews, I read and re-read all of the semi-structured interview transcripts and developed a set of codes. Next, I employed data reduction techniques to eliminate data that did not assist in answering the research questions. After this, I used NVivo qualitative data analysis software to code and analyze my interview

data. Once the data was coded, it was examined and themes emerged. For a code to be developed into a theme, it had to appear several times and be mentioned by most of the interview participants. For example, all of the teachers interviewed discussed how due to the nature of the courses that they teach they work in isolation, so isolation emerged as a theme. The themes were grouped to illustrate their interconnections and quotations were used to illustrate the themes (Thomas, 2011). Table 3.1 provides definitions and examples of the codes that I used in analyzing the interview data.

Table 3.1 Definitions and Examples of Codes

Categories/Concepts	Definition	Examples
Neoliberal Policies	Neoliberal policies shift the responsibility and accountability of public education away from the government and towards school districts, schools, teachers, parents, and students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open school catchment boundaries have increased competition between schools - Per student funding per course increased competition within schools
Self-Enterprising Teachers/Marketing Strategies	Strategies used by teachers to encourage students to take their individual courses, rather than courses taught by their colleagues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judgments about marketing, it is necessary or should it not be part of the teaching profession - Reasons for marketing (drive enrolment, reduce workload) - Marketing strategies used (posters, presentations, performances) - Resources/Skills (time, strategies) - Student type (hardworking, interested students)
Intra-School Competition	Competition for student enrolment between teachers within a school. Adding more choice programs in schools can heighten the competitive environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drivers of intra-school competition include diverse course offerings, academies, and specialized programs
Enrolment	Number of students who register for each class.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers have concerns about their course numbers - Uncertainty regarding what drives student enrolment - Teachers take personal credit or blame if their enrolment

Categories/Concepts	Definition	Examples
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> numbers change - Perceptions of other teachers with high course enrolment numbers
Relationships	How teachers interact and connect with their colleagues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working in isolation - Having someone to turn to for support - Having a department or colleague with whom to collaborate - Sharing resources and lesson ideas
Course Value	How others in society and within the school view the contribution of the course offered to students and society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the course viewed as valuable in society? - Is the course viewed as valuable within the school? - Teachers identify with the value of the courses that they teach
New Courses	Courses that are introduced into schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reasons teachers introduce new courses - Concerns teachers have regarding the introduction of new courses
Curriculum Council	The decision making body that first screens new courses, and confers with the school administration regarding change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members of Curriculum Council may act in the best interest for the school or act in their own self-interests - Curriculum Council may be an obstacle for the introduction of new courses
Program Offerings	The choice programs that are offered to students, including a variety of elective courses, academies, and specialized programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choice may be beneficial to students, as they have more options to chose from - Schools may lack long-term vision regarding the direction the school is heading in terms of program offerings
Teaching Practice	The practices that teachers engage in within their classrooms to educate their students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional and innovative teaching practices that teachers adopt to be relevant and engage their students

After connecting my themes, I interpreted the findings. I referred to my research questions and looked for information in my data analysis to answer my research questions.

3.5 Positionality

As an experienced secondary school elective teacher, I was drawn to study the topics of micropolitics, teachers as enterprising agents, and competition in schools after a new yoga course that I proposed to offer to students in my school was initially rejected. Rather than being commended for taking initiative, I felt that I had been reprimanded for trying to invade another department's territory. Having worked at the same school for the past nine years, teaching a variety of subjects, this incident made me realize how naive I was to the way the system actually worked. I began to realize that I am not alone in my annual concerns for my course and block numbers and feeling the pressure to perform.

Having left a business career to pursue teaching, I have come to realize how despite the mandate to account for the welfare of students, schools operate similar to for-profit enterprises with a focus placed on increasing revenue and efficiencies. Despite the politics and insecurities, I love teaching at my school and being part of my school district; I am friendly, keen, and enthusiastic about my work. I believe that my position as an elective teacher and a researcher was a benefit, as my research participants felt comfortable sharing their opinions with someone who is knowledgeable about their working environment, and it allowed me to delve deeper into the issues being studied. I felt that it was important for me to connect with my participants and to try to understand the topic from their perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds; I recognize that my participants' experiences and realities may be different than my personal understanding.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

All of the research participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity. The participants' names were changed and pseudonyms were used. Participants had the option of opting-in to participate in the study; they were offered an invitation to participate through email,

they were provided with consent forms detailing the study (please refer to appendix B), they were provided with transcripts from their interviews to review and modify, and they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and data transcripts have been kept secure in password-protected files.

3.7 Summary

In this case study, I sought to understand the complexity of teacher relationships through the interviews of seven secondary school elective teachers from three secondary school within one BC school district to draw out descriptions of teachers' practices, feelings and emotions. Contextual conditions impact teacher actions and in-depth case study semi-structured interviews allowed for an understanding of the decisions teachers make to compete internally with their peers, why they make such decisions, and the perceived impact their choices have on their identity, as well as on collegial relationships. This case study illustrates how competition amongst elective teachers in secondary schools impacts teachers and how new programs are implemented or fail to be adopted in schools resulting from teachers' beliefs around change.

Chapter 4: Findings, Discussion, and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the interview data is discussed and analyzed to help inform my research questions that looked at the competitive practices, micropolitical behaviors, and competitive relationships developed by elective teachers as they compete with their colleagues for student enrollment in their respective courses. More specifically, my research questions looked at whether teachers were aware of the neoliberal policies that impact their work, how teachers may choose to act as self-enterprising agents to market their courses to their students, how teachers perceived the impacts of intra-school competition on their course enrolment, relationships, and teaching practices. The research questions also looked at how change in the form of new courses is introduced in schools and how teachers perceive and respond to the introduction of new course offerings.

4.2 Participants

Seven public school elective teachers from three secondary schools within one BC school district were interviewed. The teachers' years of teaching experience ranged from less than 5 years to over 30 years and their expertise ranged over many subject areas such as, Fine Arts, Humanities, and Applied Skills. Each teacher participated in one semi-structured interview that ranged between 30 minutes to 75 minutes in length.

4.3 Factors That Heightened the Competitive Environment in Public Schools

All seven teachers had a general understanding of the factors that led to the heightened competitive environment in public secondary schools; however, they could not attribute any changes to any specific government policy or bill enactment. All of the seven teachers interviewed answered “no” to the question that asked if teachers were familiar with the policies

affecting education such as the School Amendment Act of 2002 (Bill 34). Teachers were unfamiliar with regards to the details of Bill 34, the bill which introduced greater autonomy, accountability and fiscal responsibility to school districts, and granted parents greater choice; thus, heightening competition in the BC public school system.

Landis was unfamiliar with specific policies, she stated, “No. Maybe if you describe what those were then I would know what it is. I don’t really know what Bill 34 or 35, or whatever, is so, no.” However, when asked whether she understood the reasons why schools are competing with each other, Landis understood how the policies generated from Bill 34 were having an impact in the context of her own school setting, stating that,

In our school there’s a lot of competition within our school and within the other schools because the district is really small, and so basically the pool of the population is very small, so we are taking from each other.

All seven teachers interviewed understood the competitive environment faced by public schools in the province in terms of the fact that schools need to drive enrollment due to the opening of catchment boundaries, in order to keep their teaching staff employed and in order to run their programs. Doug connected all of the competitive elements together stating,

I suppose what it is, is you've got private schools versus public schools. You’ve got private schools that need to have the kids in order for them to survive, they steal from us and so therefore we start up new programs to try to keep kids here. And even within the district, that MVSS does something, so OVSS has to do something, but that has to be different from what NVSS is doing. And so we keep fishing around for new programs to attract students because otherwise we'll lose our enrolments. If we lose our enrolments,

we lose teaching staff, because we don't have enough students to pay the bills. And it's just the way it has been structured by the government.

Five of the seven teachers made the connection between how increasing student enrolment is connected to the market-driven requirements introduced by the government. Teachers understood the commercial aspect that is driving competition between schools. Frederick stated, “they need to have people in their schools and there’s a business aspect to it...it effects the bottom line for each school district.” Annabel echoed similar sentiments, she stated,

I understand it from a business perspective, so I understand that numbers dictate funding and that it is run similarly to a business, so you want to have as many students as possible because that equates to funding per student.

Doug summarized the situation by stating, “You have to have your boots on the ground or kids in the seats to get your funding” and Jennie affirmed, “I believe because schools get funding per student, and so schools want as many students as possible to get the most amount of funding possible.” These findings illustrate that the teachers interviewed understand how opening the school district boundaries and the change in the education funding formula have heightened competition between schools and districts. These teachers’ statements support Penny and Evans’ (1995) statement that market considerations and economic interests are intertwined with educational concerns.

Within their own schools, teachers commented on experiencing heightened levels of competition. Newer teacher Annabel commented that while she has not noticed an increase in competition in her school over her short teaching career, she had immediately felt the competitive nature in her school, she stated, “I noticed that [the competitive environment] right away, so I haven't seen any kind of dip or change, that's what I came into.” Veteran teacher

Doug stated,

Seeing [the competition] at the coordinator level in the last two or three years that I've done, I was a bit surprised in some sense that we were actually working out competition between [secondary school name] and [secondary school name]. I hadn't realized that was there, but it obviously had been there and I just hadn't been aware of it.

These teachers' statements follow Oplatka and Hemsley-Brown's (2004) reasoning that for some schools their future existence depends on their competitive ability to maintain and expand student enrolment.

4.4 Marketing Courses

4.4.1 Personal Beliefs About Marketing Courses

Five of the seven teachers interviewed employ a variety of strategies to market their courses to their students. Veteran teachers Doug, Frederick, and Randi all held negative judgements towards the marketing of courses to students. Doug opposed marketing his courses for a variety of reasons, including not wanting to put pressure on students to take his course and not wanting to impact his relationships with other teachers. Doug stated, "I mean perhaps I should be marketing that and putting pressure on kids but I don't like putting pressure on kids. It's up to them," and "I hesitate at it and I hesitate at it because when you start marketing your course, you're starting to step on other people's toes and I don't think we need that." Doug also referred back to earlier in his career when conflict arose due to other teachers' efforts to market their course to students. Doug stated,

I've been around long enough to see that it did cause some troubles a while back and I'm talking maybe 15-20 years ago, because I remember the...coordinator at that point was quite concerned about the fact that some individuals were trying to market their courses

to other kids.

Frederick clearly outlined his position on the issue of marketing stating, “I don’t think teachers should market their course.” Frederick went on to say that, “I think if we are, as a school, funded correctly there should be enough kids that should be taking electives.” Randi experienced internal conflict in that he disliked the idea of marketing yet he felt the need to engage in marketing to boost his course numbers. Randi stated,

Marketing is something I find distasteful. I don't like it. I've been in schools where my competition has been really overt about marketing and they put up posters, take [course name], take [course name], or they give candies and pop and you know, show movies and things like that and they're so overt about marketing that I can't. I find it inconsistent with my principles sort of thing. But I also have to do a little bit of marketing myself.

These teachers' views are consistent with Oplatka & Hemsley-Brown's (2004) research that illustrated that teachers found marketing activities to be incongruent with their values and that teachers assumed that marketing was associated with providing misleading messages; teachers consider schools to be a place of learning rather than a business to promote.

Four of the teachers held neutral or positive views around marketing. For Landis, the popularity of the subject that she teaches meant that she did not need to market in the past, as she felt that the subject area in which she teaches is appealing to students; however, as her school is experiencing declining enrolment and increased competition through the introduction of new courses she feels the need to start marketing. Landis stated, “Well, when they market their courses, I feel that we should be doing the same thing because we don’t really want to lose our numbers, and it kind of puts pressure on us.” Todd was comfortable with marketing and he attributed his comfort level to his previous experience, stating, “I don't have a problem with it

[marketing] and maybe that's because my background is [business related]...and I'm comfortable with a competitive environment cause I know the quality of my programs.”

All of the five teachers who employed marketing strategies did so for the reason of increasing their course enrolment numbers and to inform students about their courses so they do not get lost in the vast sea of elective offerings. At Annabel's school, administration advises teachers who have low enrolment around course selection time, so that teachers can try to encourage students to take their courses. Annabel stated, “Around course selection time admin will come to us and let us know if our program's a little bit at risk, so when that happens I talk to my students directly.” Annabel stated that the need to inform her students was because, “If I don't talk about it and if my students don't talk about it, students don't know it's available, bottom line. There are so many electives offered, that they don't know all the elective choices.”

As a new teacher, Jennie was encouraged by her department to market her courses and her department told her that if there was low enrolment for the department's courses it would be reflected in her employment status the following year. Jennie stated that,

It was just simply explained that if not enough kids signed up for my program or for what I was teaching, that it would be reflected in the status of my job. If it was full time or not, just depended on how many kids signed up.

In addition to marketing to keep her job, Jennie felt that her department took their course enrolment numbers seriously and she stated that, “I felt responsible to my department because again I think my colleagues took it very seriously, the number of students that we had, and so I took it to heart.”

Todd explained that he engaged in marketing, “To keep the number of preps I have to a reasonable level.” The number of preps elective teachers have varies based on the number of

subjects that they teach. It is favourable for elective teachers to have high enrolment numbers so that they can teach multiple blocks of the same course and have a smaller number of courses for which to prepare. For example, if a teacher teaches four blocks of Yoga 11 and three blocks of Accounting 12, they only have two courses to prepare. Whereas, if a teacher teaches two blocks of combined Information Technology 9 to 12, one block of Entrepreneurship 10, two blocks of Accounting 11 and 12, and two blocks of Information Technology 8, they have eight courses to prepare; thus, significantly increasing their workload. Todd discussed the impacts of having many preps by stating,

When I first started...there was one year when I had five or six preps, which was nuts. It was all I was doing the entire year...I would work from the moment I got up till basically I'd sleep at night, and then get up do it again on Sunday, and then go back to school.

Todd went on to explain that the workload almost made him leave the teaching profession, "Originally I was going to quit, because the stress was just too much." Therefore, Todd stated that he now engages in marketing because,

I know that in order to bump it up to the two blocks, I need to be, my voice needs to be out there because there's so much noise in the school, in terms of different programs, different opportunities, and I have to be able to jump above that.

Todd's statements validate Ball's (1987) assertion that the prosperities of teachers are linked to their subjects and those teachers' careers are intertwined with the growth of their subjects.

4.4.2 Job Security

Only two of the seven teachers interviewed felt that their job security was connected to their enrolment numbers; many of the teachers had a second area of specialization that they could fall back on and teachers who held seniority within the union knew they would be

guaranteed another teaching position. Teachers discussed how they preferred to teach in their elective area and they were motivated to boost their numbers in order to avoid having to teach a different subject area. Annabel did not feel that her job was threatened due to her ability to teach many different subjects. She stated that,

I have a really diverse background and because I have two specialty subjects and the ability to relearn and be flexible with my life experience. I don't feel like if I don't teach that [subject] elective my career will be at risk.

Landis who taught in a specific area realized that her employment was tied to her course enrolment, but due to the high demands for teachers in her area of specialization in the province she was confident that she could find a job in another school if necessary. Landis stated that,

Because I am very specific, I can really only teach [subject area] and if the kids are not taking those classes then obviously I won't have a job. But I find that because a lot of kids really like those areas, the demand within the province is really high, that I can always, if I don't get enough blocks here, I can get half a block at another school.

Randi and Todd both raised concerns about having to shift from the area that they teach if their enrolment numbers decline, which motivated them to increase their course enrolment.

Randi stated that,

I think that as a member of the union, I think I've kind of got job security if the [subject area] program dropped to half-time legally by the contract they would find other teaching blocks for me to take. But my pride and my objectives, my mission is to build this program, is to make this program you know as strong as it can be and so I would, if it shrinks below an acceptable level I would look to other assignments kind of thing. But I don't think my job security is tied to my success.

Todd stated that he has marketed himself as someone who can teach in a second area. Todd stated,

It would cause a definite shift in terms of what I've, I've made myself. I've marketed myself as somebody who can also teach [subject name], so I know I have a backup, I know I have a shift, like I can shift. So if I didn't end up with enough blocks of enrolment in [subject name], I would be shifted into the [subject name] department more heavily and be teaching [subject name].

Todd goes on to add that he would prefer not to teach in another subject area and stated that, "So I have a heavily vested interest to maintain high enrolment numbers to keep myself away from that program."

Doug who previously taught four blocks of his favourite course has over the years seen a decline in enrolment to the point now where the course does not run anymore. Doug stated, "I've kind of resisted the fact [marketing] and maybe I'm paying the price for it, as I said I don't have my [course name] course." These comments support Penney and Evans' (1995) findings that change has resulted in the need for increased teacher flexibility and teachers must teach classes where there is demand. One of the reasons why teachers market their courses is so that they can teach in their area of specialization rather than having to teach many different courses in areas where they may not be as specialized. These teachers' perspectives support Siskin's (1994) statement that the job security and working conditions of teachers are tied to the courses that they teach and over time some courses gain and lose popularity; hence, teachers' job stability tends to be volatile and part of the greater political activity of schools.

4.4.3 Marketing Strategies Used

All seven of the teachers interviewed engage in strategies to inform students of their

courses, ranging from what can be considered to be informational to more active marketing strategies. Doug informs his students about the options that are available to them through a PowerPoint presentation that has been prepared by his department that provides information to students about all the courses offered by the department. Federick shares information on his website, stating that, “On my website they [students] have access to the courses in terms of how you’re evaluated, assessment, what type of topics we investigate and through there they have the information to make choices.”

Annabel tries to be “as visual as possible” by attending events and allowing her students to perform in public settings, so that students become aware of her course. Annabel believes in the importance of informing students about her courses and she stated that, “When it comes time to encouraging students to explore electives, I offer them the ability to ask any questions they want or come and observe a performance if we are performing.” Annabel’s comments support Ball’s (2000) findings that teachers may try to increase their visibility to be noticed outside of their classrooms through the production of events or exhibitions; teachers may choose to differentiate their programs and their contributions in the public sphere.

Jennie tries to inform her students about the courses in her department and she also tries to excite her students about future coursework by sharing some of the senior students’ work and putting up displays of student work in prominent areas around the school. Jennie stated,

I would show the students what they could expect in the following years, so show them kind of the exciting projects that the older grades were working on so that they would feel enthusiastic or at least were aware of what their options were in the future years.

Landis would have her class put on a show and have displays of students work. She would like to engage in more marketing activities but she is unsure of what to do to market her courses.

Landis states that, “Once in a while I would just kind of bring up the other courses and what they do and that’s it. Just kind of slip it in, nothing else. I don’t really know how else to do it.”

Despite finding marketing “distasteful,” Randi engages in many marketing activities. Randi’s marketing strategies include a branding campaign. Randi enlisted the help of a family member, who is talented in design, to help with his marketing campaign and to design posters and brochures. Randi pointed to a poster and stated, “For example, you can see this big poster right here, the first thing they see when they come in.” Further, Randi stated that, “I have a brochure by sitting on the door, so it’s [school name, subject name] course offerings, and I have a stack sitting in the counsellor’s area.” Randi also stated that he does “countless emails” to inform parents of upcoming events and has a slogan for his course as well. He said that the marketing strategy he has created involves, “lots of subliminal messaging to kids.”

Todd’s primary method of marketing involves taking his students on educational field trips. He explained that,

We do a number of different field trips in the year and that helps to create a marketing of the program because the kids tell their friends about the experiences they are having and I know it creates a buzz.

Todd also has a “personal selling technique.” He explained how, “I sometimes identify students in the younger grades that I teach who might have an interest in [subject name] and explain what the program is and what it isn’t and why they might want to consider taking it.” Todd also goes around to different classes to explain his courses to students who he may not see regularly. Todd stated, “I will also do a broad-based class sell where I will go around to Math classes or Social Studies classes just to explain as well on a broad level what [subject name] is to get students to sign up.” Todd also has a “30 second elevator pitch” ready to share with students. He explained

that, “I always have ready to go a 30-second elevator pitch and I can tie [subject name] to pretty any curricular direction a student is taking.” As these teachers are spending time and resources on marketing, it may be taking away from their time for lesson planning or teaching; thus, supporting Ball’s (1993b) statement that teachers may be making choices that place educational decisions in contrast with maximizing enrolment.

4.4.4 Grade 8 Rotation

Frederick, Jennie, and Randi discussed the importance of being part of the grade 8 rotation. The grade 8 rotation is where grade 8 students have one block for a Fine Arts course and one block for an Applied Skills course and they rotate through approximately four or five Fine Arts courses (e.g. art, photography, drama, music) and four or five Applied Skills courses (e.g. woodworking, information technology, textiles, foods) during the respective block for their grade 8 year. The benefits of having courses in the grade 8 rotation is that elective teachers are guaranteed to teach two blocks of the subject area each year (depending on how many grade 8 students are enrolled in the school), and it is an opportunity for teachers to directly market their courses to their students. There are no criteria for which courses are included as part of the grade 8 rotation and teachers lobbying administration to be included in the rotation may have an impact.

Frederick explained how he is able to explain future opportunities in his subject area to the grade 8 students who are part of his rotation course. Frederick explained that,

Because we’re on a rotation-based classes, I see all the grade 8s in one full year, so at the end of each of those rotations I explain to the kids what avenues, options they have with [course name]. What are the different things that we do throughout the whole gamut from grade 9 to 12.

Jennie discussed the responsibility and pressures of teaching in the grade 8 rotation and how it impacts the future enrolment for her department. Jennie stated,

I taught the younger grades so essentially if the kids didn't like the younger grades they wouldn't move on to the next teacher... I felt that pressure because my colleagues had all been working for the most part significantly longer than I had been but they were are also teaching the older grades. So if I messed up the numbers then I messed up their jobs. So I think I felt pressure for them and I didn't like it.

Randi shared his experience in lobbying to have his course added to the grade 8 rotation. He stated that, "After four years of lobbying, this year for the first time we've got the Fine Arts 8...so that's fantastic." Randi's statements support Malen's (1994) assertion that micropolitics are used by members of a group to gain power to advance and defend their own interests. Randi was successful in having his course added to the grade 8 rotation by lobbying his school administration; he recognized how his program would benefit if his course was included in the grade 8 rotation.

4.4.5 Student Type

All seven of the teachers interviewed stated that they did not market their courses specifically to any sort of student and that all students who show interest in their subject area are welcome to enrol in their classes. Annabel welcomes all students to her classes, and she stated,

The benefit of teaching a [subject area] class is that anyone of any ability can come in and participate in any way they can. So when I am looking to inform students, every single student is available as an option, everyone.

Landis shared how the structure of her courses attracted more students with special needs, she stated, "A lot of the special needs kids join...at least my class just because it's very routine...the

kids with special needs need this routine, and that's what they like and it makes life easier and school easier for them." Randi shared, "I'm definitely not selective, if they want to take [course name] they're in."

Doug and Todd, who believed in the rigor of their courses, stated that any hardworking student would be welcome to their classes with Doug stating, "If you sign-up and you come and you like the course, you're welcome to stay. Do a good job, work hard that's basically it." Todd echoed, "What I want is people that are interested in the program. If you're interested in [subject name] you'll be successful because you'll want to work hard." Jennie added that through marketing she hoped to only attract students who were interested in her subject area, she stated, "I didn't want to have students who didn't want to be there so I hope that the kids who are interested would sign up again and the ones who weren't didn't."

These statements counter Adnett & Davies (2005) assertion that as teachers compete to increase enrolment in their course offerings, competition may give rise to unprincipled behaviours such as cream-skimming. Cream-skimming is where teachers appeal to highly skilled students to take their courses over students who are having difficulties at school (Adnett & Davies, 2005). All of the teachers stated that they would welcome any student regardless of ability provided that they were interested in the subject area and were willing to put in the effort required to learn the subject material.

4.4.6 Marketing Resources and Skills

Teachers had mixed feeling about whether they had the resources and skills required to market their courses. Todd was the only teacher who felt confident that he had the resources required and Annabel and Frederick did not feel that they needed any special resources for their word of mouth marketing strategies. Doug who does not engage in marketing shared that, "Well

first of all I don't know what resources I would need" and Landis who would like to engage in more marketing echoed Doug's sentiments stating, "Well, no cause I just, we don't know how to [engage in marketing]." Both Jennie and Randi raised concerns about not having enough time to market their courses. Jennie stated that, "I think like anything in teaching, if I wanted to market my course then that would be something I would do on my own time." Randi took the discussion further and raised the issue that the time he spends on marketing activities takes away from the time that he could be devoting to lesson preparation. Randi stated,

No, I don't have the time and resources. Already it takes up time from doing my job, right. I think that the more teachers are constant focus on learning the better they do and the more they're thinking about non-teaching tasks, then you know it just takes them off the road, kind of thing. And you know, I'm sitting here trying figure out art designs and pictures and all that kind of stuff, the more time I spend on marketing the more harm it does. So I don't have the time and resources.

Randi's comments support Ball's (1993b) argument that teachers are placed in a position where making sound educational decisions is directly in contrast with maximizing student enrolment. His comments also support Gerwitz, Ball, and Bowe's (1995) statements that with the growth of intra-school choice, teachers are increasingly spending time on marketing activities to attract students to their courses rather than on teaching.

4.5 Intra-School Competition

All seven elective teachers interviewed felt that they compete with their colleagues in their schools for student enrolment, regardless of whether or not they choose to actively engage in competitive practices. Annabel stated, "I think as an electives teacher there's always a competition for numbers because there are so many electives offered but I choose to stay away

from that element of it.” Doug also added that, “Yes, there’s always that competition. But it’s not for me. I’m not actively competing, it’s laissez-faire for me okay, what happens, happens.” Annabel and Doug’s statements run consistent to Ball (1993b), who said that while some teachers are successful as enterprising individuals, others might choose to resist the pressure to become enterprising agents due to inner conflicts stemming from not wanting to compete with their colleagues.

Frederick stated, “All elective courses compete with each other, it doesn’t matter which one it is,” and Randi added, “Of course I do [compete with other courses]. But that’s the definition of what an elective is.” Todd and Landis both stated how they actively compete with the teachers around them. Todd stated, “I’m sure I’m competing for other spots. Some students say they’re...considering [another teacher’s course name] and I’ll say that’s great have you considered [Todd’s course name] as well. And I will try to sell, but I’m...comfortable with competition.” These comments support Penney and Evans’ (1995) findings that in the UK the local management of schools created an internal market in schools where departments were competing with each other for scarce resources, such as funding and students. They also are aligned with Barth (2006) who found that teachers viewed their colleagues as competition.

Landis discussed how she felt like she has to compete with teachers in her school, as well as teachers within her own department for student enrolment. Landis stated,

I think there’s especially in electives, we’re always competing for the students, there’s only a certain pool of them and they can only take certain classes and so we need the numbers. And it’s not just with the other electives, it’s also within our department as well. I know that sounds bad because we’re all working as one, but basically I feel that I’m lucky teaching both but if I was only teaching [subject name] I would feel like I’m

competing against the [subject name] people too, because I need those kids to be in my class in order for me to have a job, right.

Landis' statement supports Siskin's (1994) assertion that secondary school departments are micro-political stadiums where competing interests are played out. Teachers compete within their own departments as well as with other departments in the school. None of the research participants' statements supported Barth's (2006) assertion that in competing for students and recognition, teachers may yearn for the failure of their colleagues as much as they wish for their own success. The teachers interviewed were more concerned about their own situations and did not mention wishing their colleagues any ill will. All of these teachers' statements support Davies and Bansel's (2007) findings that neoliberal policies have introduced market forces to the school system and have increased competition within schools.

4.6 Impact of Diversity of Course Offerings on Teachers' Enrolment Numbers

All seven of the teachers interviewed felt that the number of courses offered in their schools provided students with a large range of elective choices and that these course offerings have a direct impact on their course enrolment numbers. Annabel referred to the variety of course offerings, stating, "They are plentiful, yeah, there are a lot" and connects it to her contentment with her enrolment numbers,

There are so many options to choose from, so the more options, the more saturated the numbers. That's why I'm very content with the numbers I have, I'm proud of the numbers I have, I'm not pushing for more, and I think that choice is really key.

Doug on the other hand attributed the increase in course offerings to the extinction of his favourite course to teach. Doug stated, "In my particular case, my favourite course actually is [course name], love the course, but my numbers have died down so over the last three years I

haven't had a course." Doug's goes on to question why students are being attracted to new courses, he stated,

If I take a look at our own school and I don't really want to mention names but there are courses that have come on in the last seven or eight years that are up to 5, 6, 7 blocks within a certain division, and so why is that? Why are the kids being attracted there?

Doug was interested in learning about how students select their elective courses and he wanted to see data developed around the number of new courses that have been introduced over the past few years so he could draw connections regarding the impact new courses might have on existing course enrolment numbers.

Frederick raised concerns about the impact courses with similar objectives may have on his course enrolment, he stated, "There are so many different elective courses, I think over the years some of those courses are probably redundant to each other in terms of how they overlap," and he added, "I think there's too many electives. I think some of them can probably be refined, some of them can be dropped." Even Landis and Jennie, who experienced full enrolment, voiced concerns over the impact new course offerings may have on their subject area. Landis stated that, "The school's offering more, different programs. It's drawing other students to those programs and taking away from our own classes." Jennie hypothesized the impact new courses may have stating, "If there had been ten more course offerings then I would've had whatever two hundred or something fewer students to come into my courses if those ones are being filled." Randi was not pleased with the introduction of new courses stating that, "Unfortunately in the [number] years now that I've been here, I think that more competition has been introduced and I don't like it," and that the impact of new courses is that "The problem is that you're taking away from other people's ability to function."

4.6.1 Positive Views on the Diversity of Course Offerings

Despite the impact that offering a diverse range of courses may have on their course enrolment numbers, three of the teachers interviewed mentioned the benefits of offering a diverse selection of elective courses to students; they believed that students benefited from increased choice, as they had the opportunity to pursue their interests in high school.

Annabel stated that, “I think students deserve to have choice and it’s not about, I think teachers need to be careful that it’s not about popularity, but it’s about the student and about their choice.” Jennie stated that, “I mean there does seem to be a fairly broad selection, which I think is great.” Landis had mixed feelings between the benefits of providing students with more choices and the impact the choices may have on the competitive environment of the school.

Landis stated that,

I think mixed feelings. I think it’s a great idea to have all these different courses, expand the horizon [of students], because our school’s very academically based. I think they need to be aware that there’s more to life than just Math, Science, and English.

These positive statements of choice reflect the assertions made by Davies and Aurini (2011) that by giving students choice, they can make decisions that best serve their educational goals by allowing them to pursue their area of interest. However, Landis also stated that, “I think maybe right now we have even too much [choice]” and explained her reasoning to be due to the impact on enrolment, “Just because the more courses you have the smaller the classes will be, less students in it, which could mean that, your course might not be offered the next year or that year.”

4.7 Vision

Senior teachers Doug and Randi both discussed how they felt that their schools lacked

vision in terms of how their schools should be positioned. They felt that their schools were offering as many programs as possible in hopes of attracting as many students as possible, without developing a long-term vision about the direction in which their schools should be heading. Doug stated,

I have to frame up, where is the school going? If we add that particular program or that particular course, what does it do for the overall vision of the school? Is it a distractor, does it help us achieve something or are we just kind of out there flailing, lets try this, or lets try this, or lets try that one. So there's different ways that you can look at it but again I don't know whether our vision of what we want to be is strong enough.

Randi shared similar sentiments, stating,

So I think that a school has to have, if I was the leader of a school, if I was the principal, I would try and develop a personality of our, you know some traditions in our school right, and try and maintain that. Not so that we don't constantly change direction based on you know, what the flavour of the week is.

These statements support Ball's (1993a) assertion that there is now a greater focus on finance and resources rather than on building the education platforms of schools. School management may largely focus on financial planning and promoting their schools rather than managing educational programs and planning the future direction of the school (Ball, 1993a).

4.8 Academies

Teachers held a range of opinions regarding offering specialized academy programs in the public school system, due to the impact these programs have on their course enrolment numbers, as well as because of their user-fee aspect. Academies are user-fee programs where parents pay for their children to participate in specialized programs within the public school

system.

Frederick, Jennie, and Randi questioned whether the academy programs were moving public schools to the direction of privatizing public education. Frederick stated that, “I think it’s a slow wave towards privatization.” Jennie added,

That’s heading in the direction of private school in the public domain, which I have a bit of a problem with. I feel like a public school is there to serve the whole public and the sports academies are there for the families that can afford it. It provides a bit of segregation at the school then.

Randi added that the type of student who takes the academy program might not be the most talented but rather comes from a family that can afford it and goes on to question the district’s motivation for offering academy programs. Randi stated that,

My impression is that they’re often not the super achievers, they’re just the kids that are prepared to pay the extra money to be in the, like the golf academy or stuff like that. My perception was that it isn’t necessarily the top performers that are in the academies and... it’s motivated by bringing money into the district, not about providing a better education system for anybody.

Randi raised concerns about the impact academies and specialized programs have on his understanding of equity. Randi stated,

It’s a violation...my understanding of education, is providing equitable education to everybody...to me the public education is supposed to provide equity across the province and we’re all supposed to be equal. And I’m so tired, exhausted of competing with my colleagues right, and so I think it’s got a very negative impact on education.

Both Annabel and Randi also brought up the issue that the academies might create an elitist

attitude in their schools. Annabel stated that, “There are some areas of improvement I think with regard to the students and their sense of entitlement, which I think just comes maybe naturally from being involved in such a specialized program.” Randi added that, “It [academies] creates an elitist attitude.”

Randi’s comments may support Davies et al.’s (2009) findings that the benefits experienced from school choice are not universal; advantages of school choice may benefit children from higher SES families and students from lower SES families may feel the disadvantages of greater choice. Randi’s statements are also connected to Gaskell (1999) who discussed how parents who have stronger financial assets and knowledge might choose to attend a school outside of their own catchment area, creating an elitist group. The academy programs have been designed to draw students within and outside the district to pursue their interests; however, only students who can afford to pay for the programs are able to participate.

4.9 Enrolment Concerns

The general rule of enrolment for courses to run is explained by Doug to be, “So the rule has been kind of set at the enrolment time, you need to have 20 people enrolled, what happens after that is of course enrolment sometimes declines.” The number of students required for a course to run is often decided at the school level by administration. In my personal experience and in Doug’s experience the number of students required for a course to run is assumed to be 20. Therefore if 40 students have chosen to take a particular course, generally a teacher will be given two blocks of the course to teach, where as, if only 35 students register for the course, the teacher will be given one block and the remaining students will be placed in a different course. Teachers are usually assigned their blocks for the following school year in the Spring time of the

previous school year and once the blocks are set they are usually guaranteed, regardless of how many students choose to drop out of the courses in September.

Three of the seven teachers interviewed said that they had concerns about their enrolment numbers. Annabel and Doug voiced their concerns about having enough students to fill a second block of their course. Annabel stated that, “They are always at risk. I have a strong one course base but the second course is always a little touch and go...but it's always, it's worked out” and that she felt “uncertainty around course selection time.” Doug said that, “I always worry about the second block.”

Due to the performance nature of Randi’s courses he needs to maintain high enrolment numbers not just during enrolment time for his courses to run but also throughout the year to be able to perform. Randi shared that, “You know I’m totally at the whim of the kids and kids act in sort of herd mentality and suddenly, you know I’ll lose four of my top [performing students] all-in-one move.”

Jennie and Landis did not have concerns about their enrolment numbers because their courses have always been full and had waitlists, partially attributed to the nature of the subjects they teach, as they tend to be appealing to students. Despite having strong enrolment, Jennie still did not like having discussions about enrolment numbers, stating, “I hated discussing it with my department, I never looked forward to discussing class numbers because...there was that competition.” These teachers’ views reflect Ball’s (2000, p. 3) finding that teachers experience a sense of uncertainty and they do not know the answers to questions such as, “Are we doing enough? Are we doing the right things” until months later when course enrolment numbers are released.

Only Frederick and Todd did not have concerns about their course enrolment numbers for

different reasons. Frederick did not have any concerns about his enrolment numbers and he was happy to teach the students who chose to take his course. He stated, “No, I don’t worry about that. I think if kids...are taking my class for other reasons not because they like it, then they shouldn’t be in my class,” highlighting the importance of student interest and reducing the responsibility for the teacher to use marketing strategies to fill their classes. Todd stated that he did not worry about his course enrolment because his courses, “they’re all packed.” Todd’s strong enrolment numbers may be connected to his comprehensive marketing campaign.

4.10 Enrolment Drivers and Personal Responsibility

A few of the teachers interviewed discussed how little is known about what drives student enrolment, whether it is connected to teacher ability, teacher personality, marketing strategy, or student interest; however, teachers may still view their course enrolment numbers as a reflection of their teaching ability. Five of the seven teachers interviewed currently feel personally responsible if their course numbers increase or decrease. In the past, Doug blamed himself if his numbers decreased; however, over the years he has changed his attitude. Doug stated, “I’m very introspective, so when I don’t get the [course name] at least the first year I was thinking, ‘geez what did I do wrong.’ I gave up on that now, it doesn’t do me any good.” Frederick believed that changing student interests and demographics was the main factor for changing enrolment numbers in his courses and he stated that, “I think that you choose your student interest over the year or just the demographics you have for those certain years.”

Jennie took her course enrolment numbers personally as a reflection of her teaching ability and also felt a responsibility to her department. Jennie stated,

Yeah I took it personally. I think, or if mainly if I felt like my colleagues were disappointed. In [subject name] in particular that was a hard sell and I felt the pressure

for sure that if my numbers weren't up from the junior years then I was ruining the seniors whatever, I felt that.

Jennie also viewed her course enrolment numbers as a reflection of her ability to connect with her students' interests, stating, "I think you take that hard personally though, if you lose your classes because the kids don't enjoy it, I don't know, it's a tough one." Landis also shared a similar opinion stating that,

I personally kind of blame myself. I know that the rest of the department does not blame each other, but it's just the way I am. I do feel that I blame myself, just cause maybe I didn't do a great job, or I didn't try hard enough to appeal to the kids or whatever.

Todd also took personal blame for a decrease in his course enrolment numbers stating, "Yes, if people aren't signing up, I question why" and Randi similarly took credit and blame for an increase or decrease in his course numbers stating, "Yup, both. But it's a very competitive world right," meaning that while Randi took personal responsibility there were also other factors that were affecting his course enrolment numbers. Even Annabel who has less than five years of teaching experience came to view her enrolment as a reflection of her teaching, stating, "Yes, I think it's a fair reflection of what one can do in their first [number] years of teaching without wanting to infringe on other electives," and "I would take credit if they increase."

These five teachers' views show that they perceive that their course enrolment numbers reflect their personal performance. This is in line with Ball's (2000) discussion of performativity where enrolment numbers can provide information that can be used to compare and commodify performance in the education market. These teachers' accounts support Ball and Olmedo's (2013) findings that performance, as made visible through enrolment, has created a culture of accountability and reporting into the teaching practice; teachers value their productivity as

evidenced through their enrolment numbers, although the actual quality of the teaching that may be driving their enrolment numbers may be unknown. These findings also support Davies and Bansel's (2007) statement that as members of a neoliberal system, teachers begin to frame their goals, dreams, and worries as individual entrepreneurs who are responsible for their own success and failure. It also follows Ball's (2000) statement that teachers are to view themselves as individuals focused on increasing their own value and productivity, as teachers take credit for increasing their course enrolment numbers.

It is important to consider teachers' feelings and emotions evoked by performance policy, as the teachers interviewed experienced feelings of blame, doubt, and guilt, which may be overlooked when viewed through a performativity lens. These findings are consistent with Nias (1996) who stated that as the identities of teachers are often tied to the subjects that they teach and teachers are emotionally invested in their work, teachers experience negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and guilt when they feel like they are losing control.

Despite the fact that many of the teachers interviewed take personal credit when their numbers increase and personal blame when their numbers decrease, the teachers shared that they were uncertain about what was actually driving their course enrolment numbers. Doug simply stated, "I don't know if it's a factor of teaching ability." Landis and Todd felt that marketing and teaching ability both had an impact, with Landis stating, "I think marketing has a really big impact but like I said we don't do very much of that, so we do a lot more personal appeal and try to get to know the students a lot better." Todd added that a marketing strategy could be effective if students perceive the value of the course that he is promoting. Todd stated, "I can get one class probably for sure but the other two are, the other half of that is the marketing, but I think marketing is only successful if they can perceive value in the product."

Frederick, Randi, and Jennie believed that a combination of factors influenced student enrolment. Frederick stated that,

They'll take a course a lot of the time because maybe it's a certain teacher, because it's elective, they choose it, right. Other times they say, 'well I hear this is a pretty easy course so I'll take it,' other times it's personal interest, they don't care what it is, they're just interested in that topic.

Jennie thought that a combination of factors drive course enrolment numbers, Jennie stated, "I would say it's a combination of marketing, teaching skills, and general interest, [subject area] is of interest to people and I don't have to do much to sell it." Randi added that, "I hope that students recognize teaching ability as part of the attraction but probably I realize that they don't, that they look at how fun it's going to be, and what they're friends are taking..."

4.11 Perceptions of Teachers with High Course Enrolment Numbers

Teachers held mixed views about their colleagues who had high enrolment numbers. Some teachers gave credit to the teachers believing that the teachers were doing something right in order for students to select their courses; where as, other teachers interviewed questioned whether their colleagues were actually engaging their students or if they were providing their students with amusing rather than educational activities to attract students to their courses. Annabel gave credit to the teacher stating that, "So I would say that from just a [number] year teaching perspective that the teacher is doing something right for sure." Jennie felt that high course enrolment numbers were a reflection of the teacher's reputation stating, "It's almost like a sign of popularity, I think. The kids clearly like the teachers a lot, and the course as well." Randi also gave credit to the teachers stating that,

That they found the balance of being able to attract kids and provide them with what they

want and most kids are perceptive enough to sign up for quality courses. So I think that people with high enrolment have something, are providing what the kids want, and probably what the parents want, and probably what the kids need. I think that they're doing well.

Landis and Todd held mixed feelings about whether high enrolment numbers were due to teacher quality or due to the ease of the course. Landis stated, "I see them as doing a great job, either marketing or developing a course;" however, she went on to reflect on what she actually sees when she visits the classrooms of teachers with high enrolment numbers. Landis stated,

When I actually go and see those courses with the high numbers, I, not often, but sometimes, I find that those classes are considered, kids are taking it because it's a very easy course...they're just using the computers the whole time, looking at YouTube videos or they're just kind of doing group projects and they just get to do whatever they want during the whole class, so just kind of an easy class...I feel, very kind of angry and frustrated, because I feel like I'm doing a great job and trying really hard to appeal to the kids' interests but at the end of the day the kids just want a good mark and not do very much.

Todd credited high enrolment numbers to the success of the teacher, as he believes that students can tell whether teachers are providing them with a valuable learning experience or wasting their time. Todd stated,

I figure they must be doing something right...Students can tell from a very young age whether you're selling garbage, whether you're pandering to them, or whether there's something tangible that you are bringing, that they want to buy what you are selling.

Todd added the need for academic rigor in elective courses stating, "But I think there should be

some academic rigor, if the only requirement for passing the course is that you can show up and fog a mirror, maybe the standards need to be set a little higher.”

Doug countered Todd’s comments, believing that students selected courses that required the least amount of work. Doug, who holds high standards of academic rigor in his elective classes, questioned whether the subjects with high enrolment numbers were too easy. Doug stated,

What are they doing that I’m not doing? How come their course is so easy? Because my sense is that students, I mean I was a student for a long time, and they somehow have a tendency to take the easy road if we can. ‘I have enough to graduate now what can I do that’s easy for me so I don’t have to stretch my mind too much.’ And so it’s easy for me to make that judgement, I’m not sure if it’s a fair judgement.

Landis and Doug’s observations supports Adnett and Davies (2005) findings that in order to attract students to their courses, teachers may choose to make their lessons less challenging and include amusing non-educational activities that do not serve the educational needs of their students.

Frederick may be one of the teachers that Landis, Doug, and Todd are referring to as he stated that he made his course easier for his students through his assessment strategy. Frederick stated,

See things I’ve changed over the years is assessment. Students that go to elective programs are looking for a class that allows them to fulfill their creativity but also to make sure that they don’t have to work especially hard to attain that high GPA they need. Frederick goes on to explain that, “So over the years we’ve refined those assessment practices to make it easier for the kids to attain, allows maybe a longer duration for the project to allow the

kids to meet those expectations.”

These teachers’ accounts support Ball’s (2000) work, in that some of the teachers learn to work with the goals established through neoliberal policies, such as increased enrolment, and recognize that greater importance is placed on what appears to be accomplished rather than what actually has been done in their classrooms. Thus, the teachers who have high enrolment numbers may appear to be doing things right; however, whether they reduced the levels of academic rigour in their classrooms is unknown. Teachers, who have made their courses easier to boost their enrolment numbers, contradict Davies and Aurini (2011) who believe that competition for clients motivates schools to improve the quality of public education.

4.12 Relationships

Despite the competitive environment and intra-school competition experienced by teachers, five of the seven teachers interviewed did not feel that competition impacted their relationships with their colleagues. All of the teachers, except for Randi, felt that they had colleagues who they could turn to for support, either within their own departments or within their school. Annabel stated, “I would say in the [subject area] department, like I said, there is a camaraderie. I can see in other areas there is a competition for sure.” However, as a newer teacher, Annabel also raised concerns about the social consequences that may result if she should choose to introduce a new course. Annabel stated,

I’m hesitant because there are so many electives available and there is a secure course load in place, I’m hesitant to introduce something else...I don’t know what that would mean for me socially at the school and I don’t know what that would mean for me in terms of longevity at the school.

Annabel’s statement is consistent with Anderson’s (1991) findings that to some extent all

teachers experience the impact of micropolitics in their workplace; some teachers understand that they will be ostracized if they are too opinionated and others know that they do not have any influence over important decisions. Annabel recognizes her position as a newer teacher and she is hesitant to introduce change due to the potential social consequences that she may face.

Randi and Todd both discussed how they felt that competition impacted their relationships. Randi stated,

Our [department members] are fairly cold because everyone is in competition with each other...and anything that benefits one will, it's sort of that zero-sum game. And so though we are civil, we are not a team. I think it's more like we're in competition with each other than all on the same team.

Todd goes on to add that due to the nature of his course where his students miss other teachers' courses to attend his educational field trips, other teachers have complained and questioned the educational value of his field trips. Todd stated,

I know I have maybe a negative reputation because I'm always asking for students to be taken out of class. They're [field trips] all very curricular based but they allowed the students to see the area of instruction in practice...And some pretty harsh words [were spoken] in terms of how they can decide what field trips are valid or not.

Randi and Todd may have experienced strained relationships because they both had tried to initiate change that was opposed by other teachers in their schools.

4.12.1 Isolated Working Conditions and Supportive Relationships

All of the teachers interviewed felt that they worked in isolation primarily because they were the only teacher in the school who taught the specific grade and subject area. Frederick stated, "I'm the only person that teaches [course name]." Landis added, "I also feel like we also

work in isolation as well because there are within department three different areas and so people, everyone works on their own, unless you really need the help.” Randi echoed, “We all work in isolation. I think that it’s just so busy just maintaining. The to do list is always so full. I’m just fully involved with a life within these four walls.” These statements are consistent with Corbett (1991) who found that teachers have the power to disconnect themselves and work in isolation by keeping their classroom doors closed and teaching in any manner they please.

Despite feeling like they worked in isolation, all of the teachers, except for Randi, felt that they had colleagues who they could turn to within the school for support. Annabel felt that she had a supportive department, she stated, “Very supportive, a very supportive department.” Jennie also felt that she had a supportive department stating that, “On a more personal level our department was quite close and I could get help or talk to people if I wanted to.” Landis stated that while her department was supportive, her colleagues did not have time to help her initiate new ideas, she stated, “Yes, they were very supportive and really excited with the new ideas. But I also felt that they didn’t, they liked the idea, they just didn’t want to help me with it, you know.” Similarly, while Todd felt that he had colleagues in his school who he could turn to for support, he did not feel that the relationships would lead to anything more, such as collaboration or a professional learning community. Todd stated,

And I know I can find support if I need it, like if I’ve got a specific question there's a lot of excellent teachers at my school and I can go to them with those questions. But I don't think I have anybody that we're going, hey let's do a professional learning community or let's collaborate on this idea or whatever.

Conversely, Randi felt that he worked in isolation and also that he did not have a supportive department or school. Randi stated, “So there’s very little support in the department or from the

staff in general.”

4.12.2 Collaboration and Resource Sharing

The teachers interviewed did not feel like they engaged in meaningful collaboration with their colleagues primarily due to a lack of time rather than due to the competitive nature of their work. Randi stated that, “So the lack of collaboration I think is caused more by shortage of time and energy than the competition. I don’t think that gets in the way of it too much.” Jennie added that, “I don't know if it was out of competitive reasons but we didn't collaborate very much with other departments. I collaborated with the members of my own department, and other elective teachers kind of did their own thing.”

The teachers interviewed were willing to share their resources with their peers; however, some of the teachers stated that they were not willing to share what they believed to be their competitive advantage with their colleagues. As a newer teacher Annabel was hesitant to give away too much information to her colleagues. Annabel stated that,

I'm willing to share my insight but there is always a hesitancy of discussing too much of the year’s plan or what have you. You want to keep it special and you want to keep it unique but at the same time you don't want to give away too much because there is a fear that your program will die because it's an elective...there's always a fear that someone's going to come in and take over and offer a similar course, present a similar course and have that be approved. So yes, there is a sense of competition and fear I think when discussing your plans.

Landis shared similar views as Annabel stating that,

I always felt when I first started that it was they were also my competitors as well because I still needed a contract to make sure that I was going to get a job...I didn’t want

anyone to steal my ideas or take credit for it. I just kind of you know kept it to myself kind of thing.

Todd stated that, “I am protective of my field trips,” which he believes are a big draw for his programs. It would be valuable to carry out future research in this area to see if these findings are connected to Adnett and Davies (2005) findings that decreased collaboration and increased opposition between teachers may negatively affect both academic and non-academic interests. As increased competition has been introduced to provide students with increased choice, it will be valuable to know whether choice is impacting students’ academic interests due to a lack of meaningful collaboration between teachers.

Conversely, Frederick did not feel that anyone withheld resources and stated that, “It’s never been an issue in our school. In our school there’s one thing that we do is if you ask for something you’ll get it. There’s never been anything that’s divided us.” Frederick’s feelings about having strong relationships with his colleagues and the open sharing of resources may be tied to the fact that his colleagues may not view him as a threat, as he has not introduced any change in his school. On the other hand, Randi’s feelings of a lack of support from his colleagues may be connected to the fact that he introduced changes that may have been viewed unfavourably by his colleagues, and he may be viewed as a threat. These teachers’ experiences support Reed (2000) who stated that latent power relations exist in the school environment and there is always the potential for conflict, some conflicts may materialize under the right circumstances, such as when Randi introduced change.

4.13 Course Value in Society

Four of the seven teachers interviewed shared their thoughts on the value that their subject area has for the greater society and they believed that it was important for students to

have the opportunity to experience their course offerings in high school. Two of the teachers, Annabel and Randi, who taught Fine Arts courses strongly believed in the value of their courses and the need for students to be advocates for the Arts after they graduate. Annabel passionately explained that,

You take society and for its first things to be cut in a budget are funding for the opera, funding for the local ballet company, and I think that in schools we need to push to maintain our Fine Arts electives, whatever they are, whatever they can be, because culturally I see the arts losing support. And we have these beautiful students going into the world and they will be the advocates for the arts in their community and if they don't experience the arts in high school, they may not feel a drive to push for them in their after postsecondary life.

Randi explained that,

Because I believe that every kid should have the opportunity to have been in a [program name] and to experience [course name], like I'm a pretty evangelical about this. I think that [course name] gives the kids a chance, it requires them to work as a team.

Annabel and Randi's comments support Siskin's (1994) findings that academic subjects are given a higher status in schools and receive greater resources. It is obligatory that all students take academic courses, where as, lower-status vocational subjects are optional courses of study.

Doug strongly believed that his course was important for the benefit of society, he stated, "I believe that if you're going to do anything for the good of the society you had better have your head screwed on right in terms of where you come from and where the society is going." Doug experienced "ambivalence" in trying to decide which subjects were more important than others, recognizing the value that many subjects have in society. Todd, on the other hand, strongly

believes that practical courses hold greater value than studying the past. Todd stated that, “I think I'm lucky in that I teach courses where I can really see tangible benefits for them [students] going forward in their lives,” rather than teaching in an area that he viewed to be not as practical. Todd stated,

Whereas if I was teaching something like History, yeah History's great, it's interesting, it was probably one of my favourite courses, it was my favourite course when I was in high school because of the teacher. But in terms of practicality, other than going, well here we go again in another cycle of war etc., it doesn't really impact my life on a daily basis to the same extent as understanding how to...[connection to Todd's course benefits].

Todd's statements support Apple's (2006) statements that in the neoliberal framework there is a greater emphasis on the connection between education and employment; schools are primarily seen as institutions used to prepare students to maximize their future contributions to the global economy. Todd does not consider a course such as History to be important for preparing students to enter the workforce. Todd's views may be consistent with Carter and O'Neill's (1995) statement that schools are designed to match their outcomes with those desired by industry and they are encouraged to establish connections between employment skills and youth employment.

4.14 Course Value in School

Several of the teachers interviewed voiced concerns over the perceived low status of their courses in their schools, whether due to the impact of being excluded by universities in considering student averages or by not being highly valued in society. Annabel stated that, “In electives, the arts electives, I think in a way can stand alone. I think they struggle always to maintain recognition and to maintain their standing in a school.”

Randi spoke of the impact the lack of university recognition had on his course stating that, “Until fairly recently the universities generally looked at elective courses as well as the academic courses for acceptance into their programs but I've heard in the last year or so that that's increasingly not the case,” and this has resulted in, “. . . the status has been diminished in the counsellors eyes because of possible changes at the university levels or government levels. So I don't think we have the status of the academic courses anymore.”

Todd, on the other hand, benefited as universities recognize the subjects he teaches. Of the perceived status of the courses he teaches, Todd stated,

They're high. I think [course name], certainly the grade level helps. Like so it's [course name] 12, it's not like [course name] 9, so it's a senior academic course. It's accepted at UBC, and a number of universities as one of the marks for average.

Randi and Todd's statements illustrate that university policy changes have significant impacts on elective course teachers and are consistent with Ball's (1987) work that looked at how external institutions have the power to legitimize or delegitimize courses and teacher status, which in turn influences student choice.

Jennie and Landis spoke about the perceived low status of their courses. Jennie shared how no one knew what went on in her classroom and how people assumed that her course was insignificant. Jennie stated, “I think people thought it was a joke. . . I don't think anyone really knew what was going on in my classroom, no one knew, that's what I think.” Landis added that, “I think the status is really low. Like obviously academics are the main focus in our school and that's acceptable and even within the electives I feel like we're still one of the bottom of just the electives,” with her reason being that, “Just because people value certain skills more than others.”

Government policy changes do have the power to impact teachers' course enrolment numbers. For example, when Planning 10 was introduced as a mandatory course for all grade 10 students in 2003, the result was that students in grade 10 had one less elective course to take.

Randi discussed the impact Planning 10 had on elective teachers. He stated,

It was a huge setback for [course name] programs, probably all elective programs, when it was decreed that every grade 10 student would only have one elective instead of two, right. The Planning would have to be one of their two elective choices for grade 10s, so the [course name] program grows and grows from grade 8s and 9s and then grade 10s we always lose a large number of kids because they only have one elective left and they desperately want to take something else.

Randi's comments support Adnett and Davies' (2005) findings that government policy can affect subject status when the government makes certain subjects compulsory and policy changes can impact the competitive environment of the school.

For a teacher who entered the school system after the introduction of Planning 10, Landis was unaware of the impact that the course had on the elective area stating that, "I think Planning 10 is a mandatory [course] so it's not really competitive to my area besides the curriculum content." Therefore, for a teacher like Landis who entered the teaching profession after the new policy enactment, she did not even realize or question the impact that a previous change may have had on her teaching area.

4.15 Teacher Specialization and Personally Identifying with Courses

All of the teachers interviewed have specialized in at least one of the areas in which they teach and personally identify with the courses that they teach. When asked if she identified with her course area, Annabel stated, "Very much so, very much so, on all levels actually," and "Yeah

it's all very passionate, very personal." Frederick stated, "Oh, I love the course that I teach, I think it suits me well." Jennie added, "Yes. I personally identified with my [subject name] courses very much," "I would say having fallen into teaching [subject name] which is what I'm passionate about and what a lot of kids seem to be passionate about." Todd has a family connection to his area of teaching, Todd stated, "Yeah, in [subject area], my family comes from a [subject area] background and so I've always had a strong tie to [subject area]." Regarding Doug's teaching area he stated, "My passion, yes it is." Doug went on to add,

So for me I can get wound up very easily in a passionate way about things that I am teaching. And so my lectures sometimes I get fairly animated and intense in them and there's I suppose an emotional element to it.

Landis and Randi went on to connect how their personalities were connected to the lessons that they develop. Landis stated, "Mainly because it is my area of interest, and I think with a lot of teaching at least in my area it does reflect your personality through the choices of projects." Randi explained his personal connection to his subject area,

We interpret the curriculum in our own way, right. We find what really speaks to us in the curriculum and I think that in the arts we have the freedom to follow that path a certain amount. I can follow my own passion in the delivery of instruction, so it's really I think it's really is an extension of who I am.

These statements support Nias' (1996) findings that the personal and professional identities held by teachers are often connected, as teachers dedicate their selves to their profession. These statements also support Hargreaves (2005) who found that teachers planned lessons around their own areas of passion and chose topics that they believed were important for their students to experience.

4.16 Reasons for Introducing New Courses

Teachers had different reasons for wanting to introduce new courses, for some teachers it was to create a job for themselves and for others it was to teach in an area of their passion. Todd introduced a new course as means of creating job security for himself. Todd stated, “I implemented it [new course] in my first year teaching, so that was basically trying to create a job for myself for the next year and it worked.” Landis who was previously a member of her school’s Curriculum Council, the decision making body where the school’s department heads and administration meet monthly to confer on decisions, noticed that new courses were being proposed to create blocks for certain departments. Landis stated that,

I think being in Curriculum Council, hearing about classes like there’s going to be less English classes or less Science classes. I find that in order to fill their blocks they come up with these amazing new courses that might attract the kids, so they would get their extra blocks so they’re full time again.

Todd spoke about the support he received from his school district when trying to introduce a new course and how introducing new courses allows for increased student choice and allows teachers to teach in their area of passion. Todd stated that,

The district is quite supportive of new ideas to enhance student learning, to personalize learning so we’ve seen a number of different academies pop up and I think it gives students choice. It enhances the way people view our district, the way they view our teachers, and I think it ultimately makes us better because we're teaching in an area of our own personal passion.

Teachers have mixed feelings about the introduction of new program offerings in their schools. Some teachers believe that it is positive to increase choice and program offerings for

students and allow teachers to introduce courses in their own area of passion. Other teachers are concerned about how the new courses may impact their course enrolment numbers. Annabel felt that new courses benefit both students and teachers, as they provide students with increased choices and provide teachers with a bit of motivation to stay innovative and to compete with the new courses. Annabel stated,

I think they provide a little bit of initiative to other teachers to continue to engage their own students, to improve their practice. I think it also allows for innovation, teachers bringing in something new. Teachers bringing in a new passion that students may have to wait until university to experience but maybe someone has this new idea and they want to bring it in and teach it at a high school level. I think introducing new courses is a brilliant way to keep teachers engaged in their own classroom but also to keep them a little bit on their toes in a positive way.

Annabel's statements support Adnett and Davies (2005) findings that within school competition has the potential to increase teacher efficiency but it may also incite self-interested behaviours from teachers. Jennie discussed both the benefits and concerns raised by the introduction of new courses. Jennie stated that,

I always thought it was great, like yeah I think that's the best, when you have someone, a teacher, who's really passionate about a subject and wanting to offer something new. I think it's great but I also understood the concern of it taking away from pre-existing teachers, from pre-existing courses.

4.17 Teachers' Concerns About the Introduction of New Courses

Teachers viewed the introduction of new courses with concern if they felt that the new courses would infringe on the enrolment of their existing courses. Doug, who has a non-

competitive nature and chooses not to market his courses, stated that he would fight against courses that he believed would overlap with his courses. Doug stated that he views new courses, "...usually with a good deal of concern. I have fought against several over the last seven or eight years. Other ones I see the value in and so I would support them." Jennie added that, "If someone was going to innovate something new and I would no longer have half of my blocks, I mean no, I wouldn't be thrilled about it."

Todd who was comfortable with competition was critical of the department that was trying to obstruct the introduction of his new course due to their belief that his new course would draw from their students. Todd stated, "So the [subject area] department for the [new] program, not supportive, they saw it as a direct attack on their students and I didn't. But again it's because I perceive the competitive nature of it." However, Todd also spoke of how he would defend his courses against new competition. Todd stated that,

I'd be lying if I said that I am still not concerned when new courses come into being, in that, I know that there will be an impact. Especially as a new course offering because it's untested waters. Is it going to end up with gutting everybody and every program, like if something sounds fantastic. Like we're going to do the cupcake course and all we'll do is make cupcakes everyday. Well I'd sign up for that too, but I think what it does is make sure it helps spark in me the entrepreneurial marketing side, going okay how do I, I don't want to use the word fight but I guess that's what it is. How do I fight this or how do I make sure that students or start to gauge how many people are going to be signing up for what I'm selling.

These statements support Hargreaves & Macmillan's (1995) findings that elective courses are subject to forces of competition and teachers may adopt a protectionist approach to their subject

areas, such as preventing changes in the curriculum and rejecting the addition of potentially valuable new course offerings that encroach on their subject territory. The statements also support Ball's (1987) findings that teachers are aware that their occupational success is bound to their course offerings and they must build their domain and protect themselves from the intrusion of new courses. As teachers also experience strong positive feelings from their work with students, this leads teachers to adopt territoriality and protectionist practices to ensure that they continue to experience job satisfaction (Nias, 1996). Todd and Doug's choice to fight courses that may be disruptive to their programs support Nias' (1996) statement that the more connected teachers are to the courses and students, the more intense their response will be when they feel that their course is being threatened. During times of change, such as when schools are experiencing declining enrolment, the micropolitical actions of teachers tend to be heightened and become more defensive (Blase, 2005).

Randi and Todd had very different experiences with respect to the support they received from their school administration when introducing a new course. Randi felt that he did not receive any support from his school community and he stated that, "I found opposition from colleagues and from administration frankly because status quo is you know everyone wants to keep things the same as they are...everyone tends to protect that, so no I had very little support."

Randi added that, "Introducing a new course is full on marketing and it's a challenge, like climbing a mountain." Randi's comments support Ball's (1987) findings that resulting from weak relationships between teachers, changes, such as offering a new course, are seen as politically motivated and career threatening. Randi did find that he was more successful in dealing directly with his school administration, as he felt that as a senior teacher he had some influence. Randi stated,

I find more often, with this last one I was more successful dealing straight with administration, right. And they said you've got to discuss with your department, your department has to support that decision. I said they're not going to support that decision because that's saying they're going to take two blocks away from so and so and they just can't do that right. And so the way I did it was sort of through...[lobbying administration].

Todd also stated that with the support of his school administration he was able to introduce a new course successfully. Todd stated, "So I went through the process and admin were very supportive in terms of making it, helping make it happen for me in terms of making sure I jumped through all the correct hoops and it was...approved pretty quickly." Randi and Todd's statements support Malen's (1994) findings that principals have the power to influence the climate of micropolitics in their schools. Principals have discretion over teaching assignments which gives them power over teachers' realized working conditions.

4.18 Curriculum Council Decision Making Body

Teachers held mixed views about whether Curriculum Council, the decision making body where department heads meet with school administration to confer and make decisions, made decisions that best served the interests of the entire school community. Teachers who wish to introduce a new course must first share their course with the department that would be impacted and then share their new course proposal with their school's Curriculum Council. At the Curriculum Council level, the department heads and school administration make decisions about the need for the new course and the possible impacts the new course may have on existing courses. Some of the teachers interviewed were part of their school's Curriculum Council, either currently or in the past, and teachers who were not members of the council shared their

judgements about how they thought their school's Curriculum Council functioned. Some of the teachers interviewed felt that members of their school's Curriculum Council made decisions that served their own self-interests, while other teachers believed that members of Curriculum Council did the best that they could in a challenging situation. Doug who was a member of Curriculum Council stated,

I think in general we [Curriculum Council] do the best we can given our own insights into where we're at, where the school's at, and where we would like it to go. And maybe there's a better process that we could use but we work with what we have.

Jennie who was previously a member of Curriculum Council stated that, "I think we're conscious of the school community, all different ideas and people's own opinions. But yeah generally speaking they were trying to serve the school community, as best you can."

Landis who also previously served on Curriculum Council stated that council members do have good intentions and they try to consider the entire school community when making decisions; however, their own self-interests may outweigh their good intentions. Landis stated, "I think people try to have the best interests of the school, but I think a lot of people tend to be more self-serving." Landis went on to add,

I feel like in our school, in our Curriculum Council, the members are quite open with new ideas but also I find that they are also looking out for themselves as well. Before we approve anything I'm sure what comes across each member's mind is how's that going to impact my course.

Landis' comments support Gillies (2011) findings that teachers become "agile" enterprising agents who act out of what is best for their individual self interests, allowing themselves to survive rather than considering the needs of the entire community (p. 207).

Randi who tried to initiate several changes found his school's Curriculum Council to be an obstacle to his proposed new course. Randi stated,

And nobody would speak on my side because the dynamics of it. You would have to turn to the person beside you and say okay let's take away your two blocks and give them to [Randi]. So by design, you know these are people who are in competition with each other and so in order to make decisions that involve vision they're not it because they have their personal stakes that define their decisions.

Randi went on to add, "I think that they make decisions that suit their own priorities, their own objectives." These statements support Blase's (2005) findings that teachers may use power gained through distributed leadership as a protectionist strategy to enhance their own self-interests. They also support Ball's (1987) findings that micropolitical practices driven by the power and self-interest of teachers have the potential to influence teacher behaviour in schools and how teachers react to proposed changes. Randi's comments support Reed's (2000) findings that in the public secondary school system there is an unspoken norm not to infringe on another teacher's subject area and teachers can expect social consequences for disturbing the balance. Randi's earlier comments about not having anyone to turn to for support in his school may be linked to his initiative to disrupt the status quo.

Todd also felt that the Curriculum Council was an obstacle; however, he added that the support he received from his school administration assisted in allowing for his program to be implemented. Todd stated that, "It [Curriculum Council] plays a big role, but that was like the first hurdle...but it's heavily controlled by admin." Todd's experience supports Malen's (1994) statement that at times principals may appear to exercise favouritism in the allocation of resources and teaching assignments with some teachers receiving more desirable workloads than

others.

4.19 Teaching Practice

The teachers interviewed did not feel that competition impacted their teaching practice. The teachers felt that they were innovative in their practice because of their personal beliefs to engage and keep their courses relevant for their students. The teachers felt that due to the nature of the elective courses that they teach, it is important for them to keep up to date with changes in their field.

Annabel felt that she did not have to change her teaching practice due to competitive reasons; however, it was important for her to be innovative. Annabel stated that, “I haven't needed to change who I am to bring in numbers. I hope that doesn't change.” Innovation for Annabel meant,

Innovation to me means staying on top of what is popular for [subject area], keeping myself up-to-date...So innovation is bringing back every September and every year something new and keeping it fresh for the students. It's huge; I think for any elective, innovation, it's big.

Frederick did not feel that competition impacted his teaching style and he noted the importance of being innovative in his subject area to motivate his students. Frederick stated,

Over the years there are many different things that have come up that we try to... put some fire into the bellies of some students so they can be more motivated to study and to get things going...A lot of teachers that are dynamic teachers seem to have a propensity to attract those kids because a lot of the times it's not the topic, it's more so the instructor.

Doug felt that his teaching practice involved developing a personal connection and that competition did not impact his teaching practice. Doug stated that, “There's that kind of that

personal connection is what kind of drives my teaching style in those two courses and the kids I think appreciate the fact that usually I know what I'm talking about, usually.”

Todd discussed how his personal beliefs around education guide his teaching practice rather than competition and he spoke of the need to be current in order to attract students. Todd stated,

My epistemological stance on instruction is that if you can actually get your hands into the material you're going to learn it infinitely more than if we just talk about it, if we do a lecture on it, if we ask a few questions.

Todd added, “At least in the elective area because again if you're not current, if you're stale your courses will die, cause people will go where it's fresh, where it's new, where it's interesting.”

These teachers' statements counter Adnett and Davies (2005) who stated that teacher proficiency can be increased by intra-school competition because competition for students forces teachers to increase their effectiveness; however, their market oriented statement failed to acknowledge that most teachers strive to maximize their effectiveness for the benefit of their students regardless of the competition they face. These teachers' statements support Hargreaves (2005) who found that teachers' connections with their students motivated them to be innovative. The teachers interviewed were driven to be innovative and maintain strong teaching practices to engage their students, rather than due to competitive reasons.

Landis did not feel that competition impacted her teaching practice, as she felt that she was innovative to keep her courses exciting for her students; however, she discussed the importance of her personal interactions with her students to maintain her enrolment numbers. Landis stated,

Like I was saying before, the key part of keeping students and getting kids to be in your

courses is to be nice to them, right. Sometimes I feel like I have to be extremely nice to them, so I don't lose them for the following year.

Randi discussed how competition was impacting his teaching practice in terms of trying to be more innovative and relevant for his students; however, this competition was adding to his personal stress levels. Randi stated,

I think the more electives you're competing with, I think it has a positive effect in that I'm striving to do better stuff, like I've got to hang on to these kids. So it does improve my teaching in that way but it also increases my stress, right. Because suddenly now I could be here till 10 o'clock at night saying, I've got to get [new activity] for that [course] because they're not enjoying that [activity] all right. And I don't think teachers used to have to do that. I think that everybody is trying to innovate all over the place to make their courses seem more appealing to their kids.

Randi's statements are consistent with Apple's (2001) findings that teachers are faced with increased demands and responsibility that affect both their physical and emotional well-being. Randi's comments also support Gillies' (2011) statement that in order to successfully compete, teachers will have to continuously reinvent themselves to endure in a constantly changing market driven education system. Teachers have to be on constant alert for new opportunities, as change offers a chance to grow, as well as increased pressures in the form of heightened competition.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Summary

In this study, I used in-depth semi-structured interviews to gain an understanding of the decisions teachers make to compete internally with their peers, how they engage in competition and market their courses to their students, and the impact their connection to their courses has on their personal identity and on their collegial relationships. This case study illustrates how teachers understand their competitive environment and modify their behaviours to compete in their schools. It also depicts how new programs are implemented or fail to be adopted in schools, resulting from teachers' beliefs around the competitive enhancing nature of the introduction of new courses.

5.2 Findings and Recommendations

The issue of understanding the tensions between teachers and departments as they compete for student enrolment is of central importance to understanding how the introduction of additional neoliberal choice policies in the public school system has impacted elective course teachers. When the BC Liberal government introduced Bill 34 and opened school catchment boundaries, the impact that a heightened competitive environment would have on elective teachers may not have been considered. Teachers are faced with internal conflicts about whether or not to compete with their colleagues, how to market their courses within their schools, and how to deal with changing enrolment numbers in their own courses; teachers have not been provided with additional resources or training to allow them to adapt and act as self-enterprising agents.

Despite this, little attention has been placed on understanding how teachers respond to a heightened competitive environment, how teachers identify with the subjects that they teach, and

how teaching can be a personal profession for teachers. Often the voice of the teacher is missing when external or internal change is introduced and teachers may not be willing, prepared, or trained to accommodate for change, or teachers may not perceive any potential benefits for their students. Teachers can use their own personal agency to resist changes introduced through new policy reforms and they have the power to interpret reforms differently from their original intent.

School administrators also have the agency to assist teachers in circumventing the micropolitics in their schools to allow them to attain their desired outcomes.

In my research, I set out to listen to the voice of the teacher to better understand how elective teachers understand the reasons for the heightened levels of competition in their school district and schools, how they respond and market their courses to preserve their enrolment numbers, how they identify with their course area, how competition may impact their relationships with their colleagues, and how they view the introduction of new programs in their schools.

5.2.1 Research Findings #1

While teachers may be unfamiliar with specific government policies and changes, such as Bill 34, the teachers interviewed had a general understanding of the factors, such as open district catchment areas and per student funding formulas that increased the competitive environment in their schools.

5.2.2 Research Finding #2

The majority of the teachers interviewed chose to market their programs to the students in their schools. Teachers' reasons for marketing included attempting to maintain their program enrolment, trying ease their workloads by having enough student enrolment to teach two blocks of the same course, and trying to inform students that their course exists, due to concerns that

their courses may not be noticed amongst the other course offerings. The two teachers who chose not to market their courses did not believe that marketing was an appropriate action in which to engage. The teachers employed a variety of marketing strategies to appeal to their students including performances, displays, field trips, posters, brochures, and information sessions. Teachers felt that they lacked training and time to participate in marketing activities; the issue that marketing was taking away from educational planning was addressed.

All of the teachers felt that they were in competition with their peers, regardless of whether or not they actively engaged in competitive practices. While some of the teachers felt that allowing students to have a broad range of courses to choose from was beneficial to students, all of the teachers felt that the choices offered in their schools were plentiful. The teachers interviewed felt that the increase in course offerings, in their schools and school district, was affecting their course enrolment numbers.

The teachers interviewed did not feel that competition impacted their teaching practices, as they believed that they strived to engage their students due to their own personal motivations rather than for competitive reasons. The teachers did raise the point that it was important for them to keep their courses relevant and interesting for their students, as there was little room for error in terms of low student engagement, given the heightened competitive environment.

5.2.3 Research Finding #3

All of the teachers interviewed strongly believe in the value that their courses have in providing their students with a balanced educational experience. The teachers all personally identify with and are passionate about the courses that they teach, with one teacher saying, “it really is an extension of who I am” (Randi). The teachers interviewed were keen to protect their teaching area and skeptically viewed new course offerings that may infringe on their area of

teaching. Despite the competitive environment, overall teachers did not find that competition impacted their relationships with their colleagues. While teachers felt that they worked in isolation, they also felt that they had colleagues in their schools that they could turn to for support. Teachers held mixed views about the motivations of their school's Curriculum Council; some teachers felt that their Curriculum Council did their best to make decisions that accounted for all the different areas in the school, while others believed that members of their Curriculum Council worked to serve their own self-interests.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Further work needs to address school visioning and how BC public schools and districts aim to position themselves in the competitive educational marketplace. Do schools have a vision statement to guide their program offerings or do they simply offer as many programs as possible in hopes of attracting as many students as possible?

It would be interesting to learn about the factors that impact student choice both at the school and course level. Do students select easier elective courses, as cited by some of the interview participants, do they choose to pursue their area of interest, or do they simply follow their friends?

Another area for further research would be to look at teacher workloads. Do teachers in schools have similar workloads or do their workloads vary based on their teaching assignments? As many of the teachers mentioned the importance of keeping their workloads manageable, it would be valuable to understand and compare teachers' workloads.

5.4 Implications for Policy and Practice

This study contributes to understanding the tensions between teachers as they compete for student enrolment resulting from external policy decisions, such as the opening of school

catchment areas that have intensified the market-driven provision of public education. It also contributes to understanding about how teachers identify with the subjects that they teach and how teaching can be a personal profession for teachers. Often the voice of the teacher is missing when internal or external change is introduced and teachers may not be prepared, trained, or willing to accommodate for the change. For education reforms to be successfully integrated, it is necessary to understand the effects policy changes may have on teachers and the micropolitical climate of schools, and account for the extra burden that may be placed on teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A Letter of Request to Conduct Research

Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education,
University of British Columbia

June 6, 2014

[Name]
Superintendent of Schools
[Address]

Dear [Name]:

Re: Permission to conduct research

I am a teacher at [School Name] Secondary School and I am working on my Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership at the University of British Columbia. I am about to conduct research that will explore how and why teachers market their educational programs to students within schools and the impact intra-school competition has on teacher identity and relationships. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to identify: (1) as enterprising agents, how do elective teachers market courses to students within schools to attract students to their programs, (2) how do elective teachers perceive intra-school competition as having an affect on their teaching practices, (3) how do elective teachers perceive their courses and block allocations as having an impact on their personal, professional, and collegial identities, and (4) how do these perceived identities impact new course offerings, internal collaboration and external policy initiatives. This study will extend the understanding of how teachers act as enterprising agents in an increasingly competitive educational environment and the impact intra-school competition has on teacher identities, relationships, and collaboration. The policy study is entitled: *Intra-school competition and teacher relationships*.

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to conduct research in your school district and contact high school principals in your school district to get their consent to contact their teachers as potential research participants to participate in the research study. Each participant will receive a cover letter explaining the purpose of the interview and a copy of the consent form. The interview is voluntary in nature and participants may withdraw their participation at any time without penalty. I have attached a certificate of ethics approval from UBC's Behavioural Research Ethics Board. If there are any concerns regarding ethical issues, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at [phone number] or if long distance e-mail to [email address] or toll free [phone number].

Permission to contact teachers in your school district for a potential interview may be indicated by email to [email address] or [email address] or by phone at [number] or in writing to

Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by phone or by e-mail. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mariam Pirbhai

Appendix B Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study entitled: *Intra-school competition and teacher relationships*. If you decide that you are interested in participating, please sign the bottom of the form to indicate your interest. Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask any questions you might have. Please return to us the signed form by email.

Researcher: Mariam Pirbhai at the University of British Columbia / Dr. Gerald Fallon at the University of British Columbia. Contact information: [phone number], or by email: [email address], or [email address].

Purpose and Procedure: The main focus of this research project is to explore how and why teachers market their educational programs to students within schools and the impact intra-school competition has on teacher identity and relationships. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to identify: (1) as enterprising agents, how do elective teachers market courses to students within schools to attract students to their programs, (2) how do elective teachers perceive intra-school competition as having an affect on their teaching practices, (3) how do elective teachers perceive their courses and block allocations as having an impact on their personal, professional, and collegial identities, and (4) how do these perceived identities impact new course offerings, internal collaboration and external policy initiatives. This study will extend understanding of how teachers act as enterprising agents in an increasingly competitive educational environment and the impact intra-school competition has on teacher identities, relationships, and collaboration. The researchers will collect data by administering an interview with selected research participants.

Potential Risks: There is minimal anticipated risk associated with participation in this study. Participants have been sampled from a small group and therefore may be identifiable to others on the basis of what the participants have said. Participation in this study is voluntary and the anonymity of those who choose to participate in the study is assured in the presentation of results. Pseudonyms will be used to represent the school division and participant's names. Participants may withdraw from the study for any reason and at any point without penalty. There is no deception intended in this study.

There is no expectation for you to feel obliged to participate in the study since participation is voluntary. No penalty will accrue as the result of not participating in our study. No information will be used in the study that will identify a particular research participant. We will restate this ethical promise at the beginning of the interview.

Potential Benefits: The benefits of this study will call attention to future studies on issues of teachers acting as enterprising agents to market their programs in schools and the impact this may have on teacher identity, relationships, and collaboration in public school districts in British Columbia and in other sites in the world.

Storage of Data: All data will be locked and retained by Dr. Gerald Fallon for a period of five years in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the University of British Columbia. Research

participants and their home institutions will be given by mail an executive summary of the research results and a copy of the project upon request. In addition, the results may be presented at workshops and prepared for possible publication. There will be public access to the completed project at the Department of Educational Studies of the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia.

Confidentiality: The privacy of the participant will be protected in two ways. First, Mariam Pirbhai and Dr. Gerald Fallon (lead-researchers) will have direct contact with the participants. The research participants shall remain anonymous in the presentation of the results of the study. Although direct quotations from the interviews may be used, participants will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information will be removed from the report. Secondly, to further provide anonymity of the participants, data collected will be aggregated prior to reporting results and will be securely stored by the lead-researchers. The content of the interviews will not be shared with anyone.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study (notification by e-mail, letter or phone) for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. The participant may withdraw without loss of any entitlements. If you withdraw from the study at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request.

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the study, please feel free to ask us at any point; you are also free to contact the lead-researchers at the numbers provided above if you have questions at a later time. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at [phone number] or if long distance e-mail to [email address] or toll free [phone number]. The Superintendent of Schools will be given by mail an executive summary of the research results and a copy of the project upon request. There will be public access to the completed project in the Department of Educational Studies of the Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, if participants wish to view the results of the research.

Transcript Review: Participants will be given the opportunity to review the final transcript and add, delete, or alter in any fashion any of the transcript's information. Once the transcript is written, it will be sent out by email to the participants.

Consent to Participate: I have read and understand the description provided above. I have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered satisfactorily. I consent to participate in the study understanding that I may withdraw this consent at any time. A copy of this consent form has been given to me for my records.

*Prior to the interview the consent form will be reread to you to ensure your interest in participating. Your consent form will be stored separately from the interview data.

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of Participant)

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of Researcher)

Mariam Pirbhai
Phone: [number]

_____ Date: _____
(Signature of Researcher)

Dr. Gerald Fallon
Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
University of British Columbia
Phone: [number]

Appendix C Interview Protocol

Sample Interview Questions and Protocols:

One 60-minute semi-structured interview with each elective teacher who volunteered to participate in the study will be conducted. Up to seven elective teachers may volunteer to be interviewed.

Sample questions that will be asked during the semi-structured interview:

Issue/Topic	Possible Questions
Introductory Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long have you been teaching? • How many years have you been with this district? School? • Describe your current teaching assignment (grade and subjects taught) • Are you currently teaching in the area in which you are specialized? • Are you familiar with policies affecting education such as the School Amendment Act of 2002 (Bill 34)? • Over your teaching career have you seen a change in the competitive environment of public education programs? In your school district? In your school? Explain. • How do you view changes introduced by the Ministry of Education? The 21st century learning plan and new curricula? • What impact do policy changes have on your teaching practice?
1. a) As enterprising agents, how do elective teachers market courses to students within schools to attract students to their programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you engage in any specific practices to encourage students to take your courses? Explain. • Do you try to attract a specific type of student to your courses? • How do you advise students who ask you for information about your courses and those taught by other teachers? • Do you feel the need to market your courses? Why? How do you feel when other teachers do? • Do you feel that you are prepared and have the resources necessary to market your courses?
1. b) How do elective teachers perceive intra-school competition as having an affect on their teaching practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel that you compete with other courses or teachers for student enrolment (or that they compete with you)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does this impact the way you teach? Does this impact your relationships with other teachers? Does this impact collaboration and how much you are willing to share with other teachers? • Do you feel that competition drives innovation in your school? Do you feel the need to be innovative in your teaching practice to compete in your school?
2. a) How do elective teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you personally identify with the courses that your teach?

Issue/Topic	Possible Questions
<p>perceive their courses and block allocations as having an impact on their personal, professional, and collegial identities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about your course enrolment numbers? (do you have any concerns or uncertainty?) • Do you feel that the number of blocks you have next year is a reflection of your teaching ability? • Do you take credit/blame when your course enrolment increases/decreases? • Do you feel that your career is connected to the courses that you teach? • How do you perceive the subject status of the courses you offer to be in your school? • Do you feel that competition has an impact on your relationship with your colleagues? • How do you perceive teachers who have high course enrolment numbers?
<p>2. b) How do these perceived identities impact new course offerings, internal collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you tried to initiate change? Describe the experience. • Do you feel that you receive support from your department/colleagues to try new things and introduce new courses? • What motivated you to offer a new course? • How do you view new course offerings? The current course offerings at your school? Do you feel they will have an impact on the enrolment of the courses you teach? • How do you view the academies and specialized programs being introduced and the teachers assigned to teach them? Do you feel they will have an impact on the courses you teach? • Do you share ideas and resources with your colleagues? • Do you have a supportive department? Or do you work in isolation? • Do you feel that Curriculum Council makes decisions that best serve the interests of the entire school community?