

SOCIETY'S CHILD

by

SIMON COLLINS

B.Ed., Simon Fraser University, 1994

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Department of Educational Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 2000

© Simon Collins, 2000



In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of EO. Admin.

The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

Date 3rd Aug 00

## Abstract

I want to challenge T. M. Skrtic's notions of Adhocracy as a viable organizational framework for Special Education in mainstream schools. I want to challenge Skrtic, not so much on the structural aspects of Adhocracy, but on the psychological, physical and emotional demands made of the teacher working in such a system. For while Skrtic's perspective regarding the organizational context of Special Education warrants credit for its perception and providence, it is my belief that Skrtic fails to address the human needs of teachers with the same clarity and brevity that he affords to understanding the needs of the children that are placed in their care. By focussing primarily on the design and implementation of what he considers to be the most effective structural configurations within schools to meet the needs of special education students, Skrtic's organizational paradigms may well create and perpetuate high levels of professional burnout and attrition as a consequence of reaching and maintaining his goal.

In order to levitate Skrtic's ideology, and my experience, of Adhocracy, creating the potential for an initial point of equilibrium, I require a fulcrum, a pivot compiled of research made during my graduate studies, research that has focussed on the causes of stress, burnout and attrition associated with regular and special education teachers, I will make particular reference to the work of Brownell, Smith, McNellis & Lenk (1995) who provide tremendous insight into why people become 'stayers' - special education teachers with more than 5 years of classroom experience - or become 'leavers' - teachers who leave special education (Brownell et al, 1994-95, p. 87).

It is my hope that by counter-weighting adhocracy, thereby giving credence to both its theoretical and practical existence, I hope to have exposed a paradox: that in striving to meet the needs of Special Education Children, Skrtic's application of Adhocracy as a viable organizational structure in regular schools is flawed because of its failure to identify and address the (individual) needs of those held directly responsible for its administration.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Preface .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Part I	The mortality of immortal goals
Part II	Mortal baggage
CHAPTER I .....	7
Part I	A philosophy of education: the pinnacle of practice
Part II	The ice-road to education: a journey through experience
CHAPTER 2 .....	17
Part I	The birth of naive optimism
Part II	Erroneous assumptions upon which we climb
CHAPTER 3 .....	36
Part I	An academic portage
Part II	Reading maps with no legends
CHAPTER 4 .....	54
Part I	Opaque dreams
Part II	Sheer reality
CHAPTER 5 .....	66
Part I	Who's at risk of what?
Part II	A philosophy of leadership
CHAPTER 6 .....	73
Part I	The eminence of informed pessimism
Part II	Success - self mutilation to self propulsion
CHAPTER 7 .....	82
Part I	From riches - a letter to the editors of education
Part II	To rags - letters to and from the purveyors of education
Part III	To adhocatic ruin - epitaphs to education
CHAPTER 8 .....	96
Part I	A poetic post-mortem
Part II	Epilogue
Bibliography .....	102

Appendix I    Application letter to Simon Fraser  
University's Profession Development  
Program . . . . . 108

Appendix II   Overview of LAC Program,  
September, 1996 . . . . . 110

# Preface:

In his *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth spoke of poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.... emotion recollected in tranquillity.” My ambition today is to attempt to recollect emotion, emotion I once associated with teaching, and to capture those powerful feelings, not in a poem but in a thesis: practice recollected in theory. But rather than simply recollecting my own story, I want to take my experience and apply it against the impassivity of contemporary research regarding traditional and emerging perspectives in Special Education. More specifically, I want to challenge T. M. Skrtic’s notions of Adhocracy as a viable organizational framework for Special Education in mainstream schools. I want to challenge Skrtic, not so much on the structural aspects of Adhocracy, but on the psychological, physical and emotional demands made of the teacher working in such a system. For while Skrtic’s perspective regarding the organizational context of Special Education warrants credit for its perception and providence, it is my belief that Skrtic fails to address the human needs of teachers with the same clarity and brevity that he affords to understanding the needs of the children being taught. By focussing primarily on the design and implementation of what he considers to be the most effective structural configurations within schools to meet the needs of special education students, Skrtic’s organizational paradigms may well create and perpetuate high levels of professional attrition as a consequence of reaching and maintaining his goal.

# Introduction:

## Part I: The mortality of immortal goals

Teachers are mortal. They are the mortal embodiment of an immortal ideal, an ideal History has prophetically coined Education. As an ideal, Education exists in a perpetual state of social, political, economic and cultural change, momentarily manifested - out of necessity - by paradigms of cultural convenience, paradigms of economic economy, paradigms of political prophecy, paradigms of social satiation, and in the case of this thesis, paradigms of individual survival. As conveyors of truth and knowledge and understanding in an arena of perpetual change, a teacher's fallibility is almost inevitable.

My own teaching experience has made me feel that the plight of Special Education teachers is particularly problematic. Given the seemingly contradictory matrix of policies, practices, philosophies, guidelines, and manuals, which are animated not only by multidimensional networks of professionals, para-professionals and parents, but by the children themselves, the propensity for Stress - and its pathological siblings (Isolation, Loneliness and Burnout) - to exist seems acute in comparison to 'regular' classrooms. Indeed, for the duration of the five years I have spent in special education, I firmly believed that only social workers, nurses, and police officers with big hearts - other moral professionals - could honestly 'understand' my personal plight. After all, not only were they the professionals I so often found my self working with, these were the roles I found my self assuming before the "teaching" could take place.



Early attempts at self reflection during my first years of teaching manifested in a loose compilation of journal entries, while elementary graduate work elicited a more informed but no less confused interpretation of both my place and purpose as a special education teacher: *"Chaos exists when conflicting ideologies reach a point of equilibrium; not only do neither dominate, to a degree neither exist. Chaos accommodates neither rationality nor irrationality, a state of neither control nor a total loss of control. Time alone exists, and only change can stop that time."*

In fact, for much of my graduate course work, I found that my research induced further self reflective testimonials based on the natural and seemingly necessary existence of chaos. Unfortunately, though often profound, my insight seemed to lack a sense of grounding; it certainly failed to provide a way out. Theory and Practice not only remained aloof to each other, they seemed to draw further and further apart.

And then I came across some who talked about "learning organizations... that configure (themselves) around work that is so ambiguous and uncertain that initially the knowledge and skills for doing it are completely unknown" (Skrtic, 1995, p. 763). Though I recognize that 'learning' and 'education' are not synonymous, and that a 'learning organization' refers as much to knowledge gained as it does to knowledge imparted, I accepted Skrtic's organization, his Adhocracy, as viable, if only for the fact that it openly recognized the ambiguity and uncertainty that existed in my daily encounter with special education, terms that I had simply closeted under Chaos. Needless to say, there is irony to the madness: you see Skrtic and I reached a similar point in our respective interpretations of special education even though the paths we had taken

and the languages we had acquired as we journeyed were very different. Skrtic's whole premise of an adhocratic organization was grounded in theories and paradigms, mine was based on practice and survival.

Unfortunately, despite being aware of a pedagogical, political and paradigmatic mutuality, as well as a renewed sense of professional purpose that such an awareness elicits, I found I could not share Skrtic's euphoria regarding either the benefits or the inherent intent of our mutually held operating systems. In fact, aware that the best laid battle plans remain flimsy pieces of paper to the front line soldier, I found Skrtic's interpretation of my role, my existence, and my experience as a special education teacher in an adhocratic organization, sadly lacking if not non existent. While it is true that we had both come to recognize the necessity for perpetually reinventing one's self, one's team, and one's organization as a means of survival, I found that to create and perpetuate the levels of adaptability and flexibility required to meet the needs of an adhocracy demand more than "theoretical and paradigmatic grounding" (Skrtic, 1995a, p. xiii), it demanded a degree of human attrition. Consequently, a paradox exists: In striving to meet the needs of Special Education Children, Skrtic's application of Adhocracy as a viable organizational structure in regular schools is flawed because of its failure to identify and address the (individual) needs of those held directly responsible for its administration.

## Part II: Mortal baggage

There are, of course, a lot of terms being bantered around, and for each term a contextual definition is warranted. Consequently, my first goal is to deconstruct the baggage each term brings before reconstructing it into existing paradigms including both Skrtic's and my own.

Selfishly, I will begin with my 'Philosophy of Education' which narrates my notions of education, special education, teaching and being a (special) teacher. It is important to note that my 'Philosophy of Education' was written at a time that hindsight will remember as being the zenith of my special education teaching career. Three years into the job and two courses into my graduate work, the composition represents an early attempt at melding practice with theory. A required assignment, it pre-dates my notion of Skrtic by 6 courses.

I will then talk about why I became a Special Education teacher, reflecting on my own education, my prior beliefs and experiences of special education, my assumptions, expectations and understanding (Hass, 1982, p. 14) of special education, as well as my training, my acquired knowledge: ie. I will give definition to my own characteristics.

Next I will introduce Thomas Skrtic and attempt to begin to offset the weight of my experience with his cognizance, his informed ideology, his Adhocracy. However, in order for this to take place, in order to levitate both of our notions of special education to a point of equilibrium, I require a fulcrum. It is here that I will draw upon the research I have made during my graduate studies, research that has focussed on the causes of stress, burnout and attrition associated with special education teachers, research that will provide a focal point. I will make particular reference to the work of Brownell, Smith, McNellis & Lenk (1995) who provide tremendous insight into why people become 'stayers' - special education teachers with more than 5 years of classroom experience - or become 'leavers' - teachers who leave special education (Brownell et al, 1995, p. 87).

I will then attempt to relive my first year of teaching, a year that many researchers attribute as having a direct correlation to the number of years a person remains in teaching. As I describe my first year, I will introduce the seeds of isolation that creep into one's experience - conversations in corridors, staffroom etiquette, and both the natural and unnatural creation of teams. I will also attempt to show the divisiveness that exists between regular education and special education and the challenges I faced having to maintain professional equality in numerous camps.

Following my first year, I will describe how I took control over my practice, how I strived to gain ownership and assert leadership regarding the day to day operation of my classroom within a high school, within an area, within a district, and within a political, economic and cultural community. Through the recollection of narrated experience, I will attempt to provide a vivid image of my practice, showing the natural creation of an Adhocracy.

Finally, having identified a natural progression towards an adhocratic approach to meeting the needs of special children, I will elaborate on the consequences of meeting such needs through an adhocracy. I will address failure, the inevitability of human fallibility, what it looks like, what it feels like, and the potential effects such failure has on children.

# CHAPTER ONE:

## STUDENT'S JOURNAL

“If this is the dummy class, then what the hell am I doing here?”

## Part I: A philosophy of education: the pinnacle of practice

My Philosophy of Education  
Written in Spring 1998

*The more I know, the less I understand, ergo the more I want to learn. The less I know, the more I understand, ergo the more I want to skip class.*

Teaching is Conflict: It is nothing short of combat. It is the heroic will of one against the skepticism of countless, a chivalric campaign for the preservation of truth waged upon the deft ignorance of youth. It is a battle repeatedly won by default in a war of eternal frustration - or at least so it seems.

Teaching is conflict, and so it should be, for were it not, teaching would amount to challenging one's adversary with indisputable fact, or worse still, with continually stating the obvious. A legacy of lesson plans provokes triteness, boredom, and a malevolent yearning on both sides to simply walk away for lack of interest.

Teaching is conflict, and so it should be, for everything that is taught conflicts with what is already known. Far from being the product of sequential doctrine, youth draws knowledge from every nook and cranny, crevice and crater, uncensored. Far from being the vacant vessels that yearn for truth, for certainty, and for knowledge, youth provides its own pressurized 6 pack; uncontainable, uncontrollable, uncouth and unconventional, they are usually well shaken. Only a

fool would dare to start pulling the tabs with the intention of imparting wisdom.  
Only a fool.

Three years ago I pulled the tab and still the hiss and spit of adolescent audacity greets me with a freshness that is as exhilarating as it is overwhelming. The tenacity of youth, the enormity of their small worlds, flung headlong into walls of social conformity, daily defies my wisdom, my knowledge and my experience as an educator. Three years and more froth and foam to come, I am forced into learning, forced into listening to all they have to teach me about the unfairness, the indignity, and the absurdity of youth. I listen, they watch me listen; they watch me learn, and in turn they learn to learn.

Education is the sum total of all that we know to the power of what we might achieve. For rather than being simply a resource from which to draw knowledge, education, born as a paradigm of global sensory reception, evolves into a self-fulfilling cognitive paragon that promotes the acquisition of knowledge as a means of greater self understanding, self awareness, and self achievement. Education is unique, and therefore does not readily lend it self to comparison or evaluation, praise or ridicule. Education is an instrument of our own design. It is the product of time and experience, serving no purpose other than that which we choose. Education occurs both voluntarily and involuntarily, consciously and subconsciously. It is clearly defined, it is also obscure. It is acquired - never memorized.

Outside the formal bounds of curricula, one acquires a greater appreciation for the fable of the horse shoe: a penny for the first nail and twice as much again for each consecutive nail. The nails of education are important: they represent what we learn, what we know. They occur in sequential order. They are easily counted, and, needless to say, it is not difficult to spot when nails are missing. However, the true worth of education is derived from exponentials that are not so easily taught and almost impossible to mark. My experience of exponential values revolves around how children apply what they possess, the charm, the charisma, and the will power, the perseverance and toleration, the ability to surmount the relentless challenges that shape each and every day. These are the exponents of Life.

Though qualified to teach, I, the educator, must be receptive to learning from inexperience, to question self-authority, to fathom naivety. For trust and respect are values of equality, not superiority, and without such values the educatable soul that is within every child and within every adult will remain out of reach, closed, shut-off. Consequently, the first thing is to learn the lessons that have gone before; address each child as if they do know everything there is to know in life, that their ideas are valid, that their concerns are valid, that their imaginations are real. Do not prescribe proverbial pills if they are hungry or scared, angry or sad, sick or simply cold - let them vent. Give them the opportunity to explain their worlds, for though they appear to us as simply "kids" wearing clothes too big for



them, children too often face the injustice and indignity of being expected to shoulder adult lives far too early in life.

And when they have bubbled and burst, and barfed and belly ached, when these children have blamed you for every thing and anything, remember that to have an effect, to make a difference in their lives, to help them change their own lives and in turn to change ours, we, as educators, must openly acknowledge our responsibility to them. We must reach out. We must deliberately but respectfully intrude and become a part of their world, for we serve a purpose, we have a right to belong, we hold a responsibility to belong, and they need to know that. Lessons in Life remain simply lessons if given from a safe place - there are already enough infomercials on television. Consequently, we must admit to the truth of an imperfect world, that imperfect systems and imperfect lives exist. Only then will they truly learn from us. Only then can we even begin to think about teaching.

Survival is a synthesis of experience and learning. From survival we draw intelligence, a virtue derived from the root of knowledge to the power of potential, from the root of understanding to the power of perspective. After all, intelligence is itself a self fulfilling fluid dynamic that, once aroused, will ironically seek conflict as a means of growth and survival. Yes, they will challenge us on what ever we give them, because a lot of what they need to know isn't what they want to know; however, while they may still withdraw, while they may turn their backs

to us, tell us to “fuck off,” it will be from the message and not the proverbial messenger.

## Part II: The ice-road to education: a journey through experience

*There have been two role models in my teaching. Unfortunately for me, both were imaginary. What's worse, in my reality, it's Mr. Keating and not Mr. Kotter who finds himself teaching Vinny Barbarino.*

I never intended to become a special education teacher, I just became one. I was offered a job a month after graduating from teacher's college and I took it. Who wouldn't? It certainly wasn't my first choice in teaching positions, however, I had a family, including two children under the age of 5 and my primary concern was for them. In fact, even the choice of becoming a teacher was more practical than idealistic. In 1992, I was in my early 30's with a college diploma and painfully aware of the limited opportunities available to me. A disillusioned and disgruntled journalist, caught in one of life's unpredictable vocational interludes - selling Inuit and Dene crafts in an art gallery in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, I was a piece of paper away from the financial comforts of territorial government payrolls. In honesty, it was actually my wife who suggested teaching; a Bachelor of Education was concrete, it held potential, it was a solid stepping stone towards...

Towards home, Vancouver, my Canadian home, and towards university and the promise of future stability. My journey from the Arctic Circle to academia is unusual, but no more so than the journey that took me from a 10<sup>th</sup> century village in the South Downs of England to the northern shores of Great Slave Lake. Both stories are relevant to this thesis in that, while they are separate and distinct, one marked by formal education, the other by amorphous experience, they contribute to a whole; discovery taking me North: cognizance bringing me home again.

It has been said that one of the reasons people are drawn to teaching is that it provides “a way to stay in school” (Haas, 1982, p. 7). This, of course, implies that teachers’ experiences of school are positive and hence the desire for perpetuity. Unfortunately, to this day, I make little if any association between my own experience and understanding of school and schooling and the decision to enter teaching as a profession. Nothing about my English country primary school - which catered to no more than 18 students, a 250 year old Grammar school - which required attendance on Saturdays, or a very brief and somewhat skewed encounter with a senior high school in the Fraser Valley - I was only 14, propelled me towards revisiting let alone extending my past. And while the twelve or so years of schooling the majority of us experience has been described as “a powerful apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie 1975, in Pugach, 1992, p. 135), “an intuitive screen” (Goodman, 1986, in Pugach, 1992 p. 135) “a set of norms for the would-be teacher, a veritable scrapbook of memories about how teachers in the past have acted and, therefore, how one might oneself act in a similar situation”(Jackson ,1988, in Pugach, 1992, p. 139), it was in fact the eccentric exuberance generated by Robin Williams playing the role of Mr. Keating in the film *Dead Poet’s Society* that provided the great “yop” for me to risk teaching.

In respect to teaching special education, the thought never crossed my mind. My goal was to major in English and History, areas of study I could support with fifteen years of previous work experience, ten of which were as a writer and five of those as a broadcast journalist for national Canadian television. Needless to say I had not, as Pugach (1992) recognizes, spent 12 or more years in special education classrooms: “... although they may have had personal experience with individuals with disabilities” (p. 143). Unfortunately, despite my informed perspective of the multitude of issues that face people with disabilities, such an outlook was

gained from the safety of a newsroom, through the objectivity of a camera lens. My sole attempt to work directly with the disabled had occurred eighteen years earlier and involved pushing a gentleman in a wheelchair uncomfortably around the Pacific National Exhibition. "Prior experience with persons having disabilities" is also identified by Brownell et al (1995, p. 88) as one of several motivating factors identified by 'stayers' and 'leavers' in influencing their decisions to teach special education; altruism, encouragement from others to teach, and having family members in education were the other major factors:

Stayers were twice as likely as leavers to mention altruistic reasons for becoming special education teachers... Although leavers also gave altruistic reasons for becoming special education teachers, they did so with less conviction. .... Altruistic beliefs sustained stayer's commitment to teaching students with disabilities (Brownell et al, 1995, p. 88).

In all honesty, a true sense of altruism, that what I was doing was really worthwhile, did not manifest itself until my third year of teaching. Although the cover letter I sent when applying to Simon Fraser University's Professional Development Program (PDP) in 1994, did portray teaching as a noble profession, it was an impersonal sentiment reflecting the profession rather than the individual:

As a vocation, I see Education as a natural progression from Journalism, for there are numerous similarities between the two professions; not only do they "educate" their respective audiences, but both the Journalist and

the Teacher are accountable for their actions, at work and in society, demanding a level of professional integrity at all times... The importance of Education is unprecedented. As a parent, it is my responsibility to provide my children with the best opportunity for them to learn; as a member of society I also hold a responsibility, to allow other children to have insight and understanding into the world that surrounds them.

Ironically, it was in fact my insight into the world of children gained through experience that would eventually lead to my altruism. I laugh now to think that the person who would eventually teach me, not only the inherent value of education but my purpose in the classroom, was, in 1994, being kicked out of elementary school.

But first I have to explain how I managed to get into a classroom, which takes me back north of the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel. Having committed myself to completing a B. Ed. at SFU, not only did I start consuming correspondence courses, I walked into the local junior high school in Yellowknife to see if I could get volunteer experience. The Principal promptly told me that there was a grade 8 class in the gym without a teacher and if I wanted the experience, well, there it was. Paid. No degree? No problem; all that was required was the will and the stamina to blow a whistle. After substituting approximately four out of five days a week for the remaining year, I was offered a full time position as a Special Education Assistant (SEA). While the pay was significantly less than a Sub's salary, a full time position coupled with my subbing experience gave greater credibility to my application to teacher's college. Now all I had to do was maintain a 4.0 grade point average.

In Yellowknife, I had chosen to work in special education purely as a means to get into University. Other than fulfilling the prerequisite hours of classroom experience, it is unlikely my actual job as an SEA played any significant role in gaining a placement at SFU. After all, I was focussed on turning my love of history and language into a paycheck. However, although fortunate enough to be accepted into Simon Fraser's Professional Development Program (PDP) on my first attempt, the reality was that upon graduating in December 1994, despite my grade point average, and my newly formatted resume, I was not the only fledgling English teacher eager to take off. And yet somehow, weeks later, I was working full time.

As good fortune/ordained fate would have it, during the last stages of teachers' college, I remember giving a presentation describing my northern experience as an SEA, spoke too of my wife's work as the Regional Director of Speech-Language Pathology for the Territories - in fact, I probably spoke more highly and more altruistically about her endeavours than my own, flying from one remote community to another, often for days, while I consumed Byron and Churchill and copious amounts of Costco's coffee shipped at great expense across ice bridges from Edmonton. After updating the class and the invited (and highly influential VSB) guests about my wife's current position in a re-hab. centre, working with head injured adolescents and young adults, I concluded with an unrehearsed, morally laden monologue regarding the necessity of patience and understanding when working with people (I didn't say students) facing physical and cognitive challenges, an unsolicited monologue where one is painfully aware of the deafening silence outside of one's own voice. Fortunately for me, someone in the audience listened which lead to an interview which led to my first official teaching position.

# CHAPTER TWO:

## STUDENT'S JOURNAL

“Like I’m old enough to defend my self, but when my dad hits my younger brother, that’s not fair. He’s only five. That’s not fair is it? Why doesn’t he pick on someone his own size? I can fight like a boy.”

## STUDENT'S JOURNAL

“My mom says I have to earn her love.”



## Part I: The birth of naive optimism

*As far as I'm concerned, what you do is women's work. So you know what you can do with this fucking piece of paper don't you.*

“Special education is the dark side of public education,” states Skrtic, referring himself to the work of Foucault, “an institutional practice that emerged in twentieth-century industrialized democracies to conceal (society’s) failure to educate all citizens for full political, economic, and cultural participation in democracy” (Skrtic, 1995a, p. xv). In the unfamiliar halls of my new school, I was quickly introduced, both formally and informally, to this dark side of education. Needless to say the ‘poetry’ I incurred in the hallway, which continued with unvarying conviction, impressed upon me that the emotion was shared by many and not simply contained to the messenger. The incident, referring to the above quote, was provoked by my attempt to personally distribute updated profiles of special education students to teachers in whose classes these same students were currently enrolled, a procedure stipulated in any number of school based, area based and provincial mandated manuals, addressing the policies and procedures for integration. Vexed though I was, I was more frustrated by the laws governing my response to his comments, and the importance I placed on those laws, than by the comment itself - the significance of which had really not settled. And so, just as we were taught in school, I turned the other cheek and walked away.

Having accepted the duties of a Learning Assistance Class (LAC) teacher in the middle of the school year, my initial goals focussed on trying to maintain some semblance of continuity and order; I wanted to create as smooth a transition as possible for the students, the staff, and,

needless to say, for myself; in the process, I wanted to try and figure out exactly what it was I was supposed to be doing. I had been told that I was taking over “a very good program,” and that was about it.

I tried to take advantage of the generous support provided by my predecessor who spent numerous hours during the first weeks offering pedagogical and political guidance, and sharing through photographs and stories a fragmented collage of her experience. But unfortunately, like holiday snaps of good friends, the images of smiling faces did not begin to convey the inherent meaning or value of the captured moments. As I would inevitably discover for myself five years later, the truth was there was almost nothing, other than some practical tips on day to day and month to month protocols, that could be shared at this time. For though the cupboards were full of resources, and the students' binders were full of handouts, their files full of assessments, something in between the photographs and the documentation had left the room: a sense of purpose, a sense of direction, a sense of identity.

And so, when her visits became less frequent, and the phone calls more formal, I took the pictures that had been left to me out of the photo album and used stickies to paste names under each respective student. And then I applied mental stickies regarding the size and nature of the official documentation that went along with each face. And then I searched through the students' binders, scrutinizing their work, intent upon understanding who these children were and what I could provide for them. However, as I read through the myriad of photocopied worksheets - simplicity in enormity, the antithesis of their files - only one thing seemed to predominate: This was a “good program” that I was taking over, a good program, and that program had just walked

out the door.

The notes, the webs I created from those notes, and the ideas that those webs tried to contain during the first weeks of school were not lost, they just didn't materialize, at least not then. What did emerge were fresh copies of old ideas. For despite all my professional training and my worldly experience, continuity prevailed and binders were replenished. My early approach to teaching was grounded in maintaining the status quo. I had emerged out of teachers college extolling traditional virtues of 'good' teaching, "a repertoire of standard practices grounded in the conventions and customs of the applied science subculture" (Dornbusch & Scott, 1975, in Skrtic, 1995, p. 757): "organization, quality delivery of lessons, rapport, credibility, control, content, discussion and well-designed activities to engage children" (Ramirez-Smith, 1997, p. 4). I was armed and - yes, I was potentially dangerous. For I, like the leavers and the stayers in Brownell et al's study, found myself totally unprepared for the realities of a first year teaching position in special education (1995, p. 91). Furthermore, because I had started in January, I found myself, not only oblivious to the plot, the characters, and the setting of the pedagogical novel I had taken upon my self to continue, I was aware of a profound detached from my audience. They had lost more than a teacher: I was no replacement.

Research by Johnson et al (1981, p. 4) has shown that some of the most significant issues faced by first year teachers are: a) lack of instructional materials; b) getting regular teachers to understand the needs of handicapped children; c) developing sequential, individualized programs for each student; d) lack of time for planning and preparation; and e) misplacement of children in

special education classes. While I would acknowledge the presence and propensity of these issues, they were by no means the most pressing issues that I faced during the first months or even the first year of teaching. On the contrary, hind-sight has shown me that these issues were endemic to special education and existed on a perpetual continuum, being as prevalent in my last year as they were in my first. No, my primary concerns during the first year were philosophical issues, involving definition, direction, purpose, pedagogy and leadership, and socio-political issues, generated by an amoebic *melee* of self interest, including district, area and school administration, teachers - both regular and special - and support staff - including youth and family workers, special education assistants and work experience co-ordinators, social, medical and legal professionals and para-professionals, provincial and municipal government agencies, community health and welfare services, local business groups, post secondary institutions, non-profit organizations, the police, the parents, guardians, extended family members, friends, and even volunteers who would, at any given moment, invade my sanctuary, my privacy, my personal - and BCTF mandated - space! (*You should have hit him Mr. Collins.... you should have.....*) And with each one, an issue, a pressing issue, a problem seeking to be resolved, a perspective to be understood, a voice to be heard, a 'special need' to be fulfilled:

Though the structural frame of reference assumes that the standard practices teachers use in schools derive from *professionalization*, we can think of the source of these standard practices as *acculturation*. That is, upon entry into school organizations, during their student teaching internship and later as employees, teachers are inducted into an existing subculture of practising teachers, a subculture with its own set of norms,

customs and conventions. (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 758)

No my first year was marked by diplomacy. It was not until my third year that diplomacy and stability were usurped by advocacy and the ardent pursuit of chaos.

I approached diplomacy as I had once approach waiting on tables. Not only was the customer always right but so too was the chef. Hence a well-done fillet mignon, which is euphemistically known in the business as a hockey puck, is as much a product of the chef's inability to cook as the customers inability to order, sentiments 'diplomatically' swallowed by any good waiter. But I was no longer in a restaurant, and the word diplomacy - an inherently cunning word implying hidden agendas - was as out of context in a classroom as a tip. Consequently, a more diplomatic synonym for diplomacy was required. In fact, a whole new language was required; 'collaboration' was simply one of the first to be learned:

It is no longer acceptable for teachers to learn collaboration skills on the job, and teachers can no longer get away with a solitary approach to teaching. Pre-service teachers need to develop strong interactional skills that encompass the ability to communicate with peers, parents and students.... Without specific collaborative training with other adults, the quality of education for students with diverse needs will at best be second-rate" (Ramirez-Smith, 1997, p. 3).

Fortunately, the nature of my previous work experiences (as opposed to the round-table navel gazing practised in teacher's college) provided me with the "interactional skills" to take part in a collaborative approach to education. And yet the reality remains that despite one's ability to negotiate while being bounced like a pin ball between parent teacher interviews, teacher - teacher interviews, administrative meetings, department meetings, area consultative committees and district resource conferences, unless I was physically at these meetings, representation of my program was either usurped by a stereotypical image of what an LAC program should be, or projected in a means most beneficial to the interests of those present at the meetings: ie if there was a class size conflict, no one was going to truly advocate for maintaining the numbered student. I was the program, and without my presence, I, it, we, did not really exist.

Furthermore, because so much of my program remained an unresolved juxtaposition of conflicting theoretical and practical ideals, the paint I used to try and portray what the program was all about remained very much in motion rather than set upon a framed canvas . During that first year I was very aware of my limited credibility, and aware of other people's awareness. What I craved for was space, distant, some personal protection, a means to disassociate myself from the program, but I also wanted a means for the program to exist without my presence. Intent upon avoiding what Skrtic would later describe as a "professional means-ends inversion," I wanted this program, my program, to attempt to meet the needs of the students, rather than meeting the needs of the system, a system which, needless to say, included my self. Of course, such sentiment only sealed my perceived naivety.

I began to recognize the need to put myself somewhere concrete, my thoughts, my ideas,

what it was I was doing, not doing, hoped to do and had already done. I needed some boundaries, a definition, contextualization. And so I began, much like a journalist - hashing it out on paper, or as a teacher would suggest to any student, by webbing. My goal began by trying to unravel what it was I was doing that people were paying me for and what I would like to see myself doing. But all I accomplished was a clearer image of uncertainty. My current practice was not of my own creation. A lot of the time I felt as distant to it as I felt to the students. My rationality and intuition drew me towards replicating my northern experience. Unfortunately, a fully integrated approach to special education did not seem possible given the internal culture of the school. And yet the guidelines, the policy statements and the habitual heaps of documentation that either stuffed my mailbox or surreptitiously appeared alongside pre-sliced muffins in any one of a myriad of meetings, all pointed towards creating Inclusive schools.

Inevitably, my innocence/ignorance (I still can't decide which covenant is correct - so I will leave both) prevented me from breaking the mould, prevented me from breaking down imaginary walls for the remainder of that first school year and much of the succeeding year. Consumed by the day to day demands, the incessant telephone calls, the paper work that seemed to simply define and shape but rarely fulfilled a need, the "symbols (IEPs) and ceremonies (Parent-teacher meetings) of political compliance" (Skrtic, 1992), I could neither muster the motivation, nor clearly see a direction in which change should be initiated. Deep down, I was looking to follow someone else's leadership but, with so many bosses and so many hierarchies, commitment to any one team was problematic in that permanent change required that everyone's needs be met. Furthermore, despite numerous attempts to make socio-political allegiances with people who I perceived as having influence, I found myself not only alone but increasingly aware

of other people's isolation in 'the system.'

Two issues exacerbated the situation. At the end of the 1995-96 school year, schools in Vancouver were enduring a morbid metamorphosis. Fraught with congenital budgetary chaos, the district had resorted to fairly predictable methods of neutralizing its deficit by dispatching a proverbial wave of pink slips. Though I missed receiving a pink-slip by four days of seniority, the uncertainty of my future began to seriously undermine any interest in creating long term change. Not that I stopped trying, I just tried with less and less conviction. Furthermore, the whole concept of Special Education was at that time under review; particular attention was being made to the effectiveness of delivery methods, resource allocation, and administrative arrangements. Though at the time I did not fully understand the pedagogical, administrative and political dynamics of the impending change or the need for that change, I could easily sense the social implications of change, the despondency and the lack of initiative that seemed to pervade all levels of special ed; 18 months after being hired I began to recognize that I had boarded a sinking ship.

And that is why it was not until May of 1996, a year later, confidently holding four months seniority over the annual roster of pink slips, that I finally felt in a stable enough position to elicit some control and direction over what I had increasingly come to claim as 'my' program. During the extended operational dormancy brought about by the Student Services Review, I had focussed on internal dynamics; I had sought the means to disassociate myself with all levels of 'government' which I perceived to be either unstable, or in large part, indifferent to what I had



been doing or to what I was about to propose. My professional allegiance was to whoever would support me, a ploy Pugach (1992) might call “self-socialization” (p 137). In some ways, what I was doing was simply an extension of the overall push towards decentralization in special education services in Vancouver, a miniature school based model. However, rather than waiting for it to happen, I was trying to be pro-active. In light of this thesis, a similarity can be drawn between what I did in 1996 and some of the ideas put forward by Mintzberg which Skrtic would later call “decoupling.”

Every organized human activity gives rise to two fundamental and opposing requirements: the *division of labour* into various tasks to be performed and the coordination of those tasks to accomplish the activity” (Mintzberg, 1983, p. 2 in Skrtic, 1995b, p. 745)... As such, the structure of an organization can be defined as ‘the sum total of the ways in which it divides its labour into distinct tasks and then achieves coordination among them’ (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 2 in Skrtic, 1995b, p. 745).

I defined and took ownership of my tasks with a statement, a written document, a profile of the LAC program. It was my *coup d’etat*, my Declaration of Independence.

## Part II: Erroneous assumptions upon which we climb

### LEARNING ASSISTANCE CLASS (LAC)

#### OVERVIEW

The Learning Assistance Program (LAC) at ..... is designed to meet the needs of students who have been identified by the Ministry of Education as having Mild to Moderate learning disabilities. These students will have difficulty in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, memory, reasoning or mathematical skills. The challenges faced by these students are intrinsic to the individual rather than extrinsic. Because each student is unique in their abilities and their learning styles, the goal of the LAC is to create an Individual Education Program (IEP) that will challenge the student to achieve their greatest potential.

The program benefits from having one full time Special Education Assistant who, like myself, is “on call” to meet the needs of our students. The program also benefits from the support of Grade 11 and 12 Peer Tutors who provide assistance both in the Learning Assistance Centre and in Integrated settings. In the past, more than 40 Peer Tutors have been utilized during a school year to provide support. The tutors facilitate learning in a variety of ways, such as scribing, note taking and role modelling. Finally, LAC students benefit from Peer Counsellors. Unlike

the Peer Tutors whose primary focus is in supporting classroom activities, the Peer Counsellors (grade 12's) address more personal issues that face our students - peer pressure, family pressure, alcohol and drug abuse, anger management and crisis intervention. Under the guidance of the school's counselling department, these students (usually 6-8 in a school year) provide a remarkable support network.

Areas of teaching focus on both academic and social growth. This is achieved with a blend of one-on-one and small-group teaching in the LAC, and opportunities to integrate into regular classroom settings. Integration of a Special Needs Student into a regular classroom is made on the recommendation of the LAC teacher. This recommendation is based, not only on potential academic growth, but social growth as well.

Gaining self confidence and independence are two of the most important program objectives. These are measurable, but on an individual basis. Examples of self confidence and independence would include: the ability and desire to participate in a wide range of school activities ( non-academic); the ability and desire to participate in regular academic and elective programs at their optimal level; to take a leadership role both within the LAC program and within the school at large; to recognize their own disabilities and make a commitment to address them; to recognize their strengths over their weaknesses; the ability and desire to make

decisions for themselves; the ability to form opinions and voice them; the ability to travel using public transit without assistance; the ability to manage their personal needs, including money, food and hygiene; the ability and desire to become a responsible citizen, and; knowing that they are able to make a valuable contribution to society.

While each student's program is unique, the LAC program does offer a fundamental framework within which individualized programs can be offered. This framework is not rigid; courses are continually adapted to meet variables such as student interest, changes in social dynamics - both at home and at school, and the availability of new and relevant teaching opportunities such as guest speakers and career fairs.

Evaluation of a student's progress is continuous. While report cards are sent home three times a year, contact with parents/guardians regarding a student's progress is sometimes on a weekly basis, should the need present it self. During the three formal reporting periods, a letter is sent home to each parent updating the student's progress. First term letters are usually quite specific, referring directly to classroom goals and objectives. In the second term, parents are given more of a general over view of performance to date. At the end of the school year, a detail letter regarding a student's progress is made. This final letter will also include recommendations for summer activities as well as setting some tentative

goals for the following year. During each of these reporting periods, space is provided for teacher comments from Integrated classrooms. This allows teachers an opportunity to address issues and concerns as well as successes and commendations, which are not so easily handled using traditional comments on a report card.

Another area within the IEP aims to help prepare the student for life after high-school. LAC students are exempt from the CAPS program; however, they benefit from programs on career awareness, job preparation, resume writing and interview skills. The LAC works closely with Oakridge Student Services who create the opportunity for independent and supervised work experience in the community. These work placements are designed to meet the individual abilities and interests of the student. Time is also taken to visit career fairs, local businesses and government agencies such as Canada Employment Centres. The Students are also taken to local colleges that offer a variety of programs designed specifically to meet their needs.

Because more than half of the LAC students currently enrolled are designated ESL, those students will take ESL classes such as Literature, Writing, Reading, Science, Socials and Drama. ESL classes provide an excellent environment to initiate social development as a means toward increased self awareness, self confidence and independence. Because of

the breadth of the ESL program at ..... - which includes workshops, field trips, and special events such as skating and cultural performances, the LAC student's experience in an ESL setting provides even greater opportunities for social and academic growth. Course selection is made jointly between the two departments and includes the counselling department and administration.

As the LAC teacher, I am responsible for all fifteen students during every period. While some of the students will spend the majority of their class time in integrated settings, I am still responsible for overseeing the implementation of their programs and their respective progress.

Consequently, I am "on-call" from 8:00 am until 3:30 pm each day. I include lunch as well as I strive to motivate my students to participate along side the student body - joining clubs, sitting in hallways with peers, shooting baskets in the gym, becoming an integral part of the school community.

And to support my profile I provided an extensive outline, a grand scheme of grade by grade objectives (see appendix II). Written primarily for my own benefit, the profile and the supporting curriculum, was the product of numerous unsuccessful attempts to control the complex environment around me. "Complex work... requires judgement on the worker's part . Which means it requires that the entire undertaking be done by a single worker who, to make the necessary judgements, must work closely with clients and have a relatively extensive knowledge

base and an associated set of skills” (Mintzberg, 1979, Schein, 1972, in Skrtic, 1995b, p. 747).

It’s idealism was a blend of what already existed and what I hoped to achieve. And in it was all that I knew about special education, the full extent of my knowledge base. And in it were all the “erroneous” assumptions that Skrtic would identify in criticising contemporary organization and operational frameworks, assumptions I inherently knew but had yet to discover:

Table I

Four (erroneous) primary assumptions regarding special education:

1. student disabilities are pathological conditions
2. diagnosis is objective and useful
3. special education is a rationally conceived and coordinated system of services that benefit diagnosed students, and
4. progress in the field is a rational-technical process of incremental improvements in conventional diagnostic and instructional practices (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 756)

Drawing from an extensive assessment of the Regular Education Initiative (REI), a movement begun in the United States in the mid 1980's that strived to combine regular education and special education into one system through extensive main streaming, Skrtic challenges not only the “legitimacy of the models, practices and tools that flow from these assumptions,” (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 756) but the theories that they are grounded in, and the organizational systems being used to implement such programs. Ultimately, Skrtic believes that, not only are these assumptions and the paradigms that they are built upon erroneous, they actually create negative outcomes including the propensity to reconstruct “special populations,” populations that do not fit in to existing operational frameworks.

It is assumed that special education knowledge is grounded in the

theoretical knowledge of an underlying discipline(s) and engineered at an applied science level into the diagnostic procedures and problem solutions for application to the day-to-day problems of practice. Thus, according to the model, special education's theoretically grounded applied knowledge is assumed to yield practical knowledge, which is transmitted to special education practitioners through an extended program of professional education and socializing. Ultimately, the performance of special education professional services to clients is assumed to be based on practical knowledge, which is the end product of a rational system of knowledge production that engineers theoretical knowledge into solutions for the problems of special education practice (Skrtic, 1991, pp. 108-9).

Though caught, perhaps, in a transitional period between being a part of a large, bureaucratic, highly centralized and predominately self serving organization (Student Services) and a decentralized cohort of area-based child-centred services, the idea of being at the tail end of a rational system of knowledge production eluded me. Instead, I saw myself as a self proclaimed island with my own mandate. Indeed, I worked hard to create a degree of isolation for my program from the larger environments and intun to make myself an indispensable component of that program. When speaking to area, district or school based staff/administration, I continually talked of my role within all of the jurisdictions, reinforcing my multiple allegiances while concurring with the disparity of interests that existed between the various groups. In so doing I created a breach between myself and any one group, a breach that not only afforded some semblance of stability through immunity, it provided me with enough room to take full



ownership, to take control, and to initiate change.

One final note before turning to Skrtic's notions of reform in special education; while my program profile was based on assumptions and guidelines not unlike the those identified by Skrtic as being detrimental to the inclusion of special children into their schools, all around me was documentation advocating Inclusive schools through Integration. At the time I held my northern experience of a fully integrated high school as a light house of what I considered good and worthwhile education for children with special needs. Ironically, one might say my goal was to return to the North, at least in practice. I accepted Inclusion and its pathological sibling Integration without question and strived for their implementation without thought. No longer would students march on mass to a special ed. cooking class, they would meld in to grade appropriate classes - and not only in foods. Indeed, they would find themselves going into previously unexplored reaches of the school. Thirty two teachers, one third of the school's staff, would have LAC students on their attendance forms, up from perhaps five or six in previous years. Immediately I pushed for maximum levels of Integration, basing my decisions on what I perceived to be sound philosophy and sound practice. How it would materialize or how I would administer such a program, I was, in large part, leaving up to fate. All I knew was that in September, a new approach was to begin and a new organizational structure was about to take off.

In order to ensure that change would take place, I began by-passing traditional protocols, beginning with course selection. Consequently, as the hamburgers were literally being bar-b-queued for the staff year-ender, I began to hand place students onto SIS, with the assistance and

support of the school's administration, in what I deemed to be appropriate classrooms. Taking particular care to avoid class size conflicts and teacher-student incompatibility, I pursued maximum exposure for my students to their school. Ironically, since taking over the LAC program, the school's counsellors had eagerly handed off many of the shared responsibilities for my students, including course selection, with statements such as: "well, you know them so much better than we do, why don't you decide what's best." And now I was doing just that.

In closing my somewhat extended first year of teaching, my SEA at the time questioned my intentions for the following school year, questioned my motivation, and questioned my ability to see things through: "Well, you know this isn't going to work, don't you. But I think I'll just let you figure that out by yourself." By Christmas, 1996 she was gone, and a whole new set of challenges began to materialize, as I spent the next three years facing the futility of gaining any further support in the classroom.

# CHAPTER THREE:

## STUDENT'S JOURNAL

My mother won't speak to me anymore. She's angry because I knew my dad was seeing someone else. He made me promise not to tell.

## STUDENT'S JOURNAL

I had to move 'cause my foster brother got shot.

## STUDENT'S JOURNAL

I want to go on the field trip, but my dad says he doesn't have \$12.

## Part I: An academic portage

Like defence, health, and consumer goods, education is a social goal that is shaped by the medium of an organization. Society wants *education*, but what it gets is a particular kind of *schooling*, one that is shaped by the nature and needs of the organizations that are used to provide it. (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 731)

From the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, conventional approaches to addressing special education communities within public education have been contained within segregated classrooms; however, during the 1960's, social and political opposition to this and other forms of "social segregation" of minority groups, including African Americans, not only gained momentum, they gained increasing levels of legal legitimacy. Consequently, through what Skrtic refers to as "practical criticism - moral, political, and legal arguments (made primarily by parents, advocates, and special educators) against the special classroom model and its associated practices," rather than "theoretical or metatheoretical criticism of assumptions in which the (segregation) model and its practices were grounded," (Skrtic, 1991, pp. 110-11) Special Education shifted from segregation to a more inclusionary approach.

But because changes came about through effective advocacy and court action rather than educational leadership (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 55), implementation of such legal reforms as Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975; the regular education initiative (REI) in 1985, and; Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990, were achieved based on unchallenged pedagogical assumptions, creating and perpetuating a precedence for new ideas to be grounded upon old foundations. Not surprisingly,

during the 1980's, criticism of special education practices within the Regular Education Initiative (REI) also focussed on the "ethics and efficacy of special education diagnostic and instructional practices without explicitly recognizing and questioning their grounding assumptions" (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 55).

This division, between Society's need for a particular form of schooling to address issues of human and social rights, and the ability of schools to provide particular types of education that meet the needs of Society, continues today. It is the issue of equity vs excellence in education. It is an issue that Skrtic feels can not be resolved within current operating models of Inclusion: "Equity and Excellence are in a zero sum equation. They are two sides of the same coin. They can not be achieved at the same time" (Skrtic, 1992). This incompatibility between ideals coupled with the division between societal and educational leadership may well explain why the program I inherited in 1995, twenty years after the passing of PL 94-142, was in large part a living vestige of a bygone era; sustained by copious amounts of equally outdated worksheets stacked ceiling high in the classroom, it was a novelty to ignore. For despite the commensurate amount of paper work in my office professing the benefits and necessity of a more Inclusive approach to education, the status quo presided. *"It's a good program your taking over, a good program."*

Of course now, "recollected in academic tranquillity," the obvious distinctions between *what is* and *what should be* and the root social, political and legal - rather than educational - causes for those distinctions are apparent. But at the time, in the midst of my naive chaos, the circles of influence that competed for my attention overlapped like rivalling life-rings.

Understanding these and other incongruities and contradictions, especially those that exist between theory, policy and practice, became a recurrent theme throughout my graduate studies. But in my practice, I had to focus out of necessity on the deconstruction and reconstruction of organizational frameworks. I state ‘out of necessity’ intentionally, for it provided me with the only avenue to elicit concrete change. Without the advantage of a higher perspective, I had to deal with issues as they presented themselves. Consequently, like Skrtic, but for different reasons, I focussed on the curse and the cure simultaneously by addressing reform in “the system.”.

At this point, however, I have to leave my practice to avoid creating a “see-saw” effect, offsetting Skrtic’s ideology with my practice. Instead, I would like to elaborate upon Skrtic’s ideology, before creating a fulcrum upon which Skrtic’s Adhocracy and my experience of an adhocratic approach to education, will be offset. I will begin by addressing the flaws and limitations that Skrtic identifies in current school systems.

Skrtic, who draws a great deal of his ideas from Mintzberg (1979, 1983), states that organizations configure themselves as machine bureaucracies (e.g. mass production, assembly lines) when their work is *simple* - “when it is comprehensible or certain enough to be task-analysed into a series of separate, relatively routine sub-tasks, each of which can be completely pre-specified and done by a different worker.” Organizations configure themselves as professional bureaucracies when their work is *complex* - “when it is too uncertain to be rationalized and thus formalized” (Mintzberg, 1979, 1983 in Skrtic, 1995b, pp. 746-47). For the most part schools reflect a blend of both bureaucracies, with the professional bureaucracy

residing within but decoupled from the machine bureaucracy. For example, while today's IRP's determine what is to be taught during certain stages of a child's education, teacher's are provided a substantial amount of discretionary power in deciding how a subject should be taught exemplifying the professionalism in teaching; and yet standardization of professional skills is maintained by ensuring that English teachers teach English and not Math, which is symbolic of the machine bureaucracy. (Special education teachers teach everything to who ever comes into their rooms). Of course, while the breadth of the IRP's and the extent of a teachers skills allows for a broad service delivery model to exist, there will be at any given time, in any school, students whose "needs" do not match these standardized programs. This situation creates an organizational need, a need for change.

Skrtic refers to two types of change: Incidental change, where an organization is required to do something additional, and; fundamental change, where professionals are asked to do something different. In mechanistic bureaucracies, change is accommodated through a further division of labour which requires the reorganization, re-rationalization, and reformulation of policy. In professional bureaucracies change is more complex:

Professional bureaucracies are non-adaptable at the level of the professional because they use professionalization to coordinate their work.

In schools this creates a situation in which a teacher's knowledge and skills can be thought of as a finite repertoire of standard instructional practices that are matched to a finite set of predetermined contingencies or presumed student needs (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 757).

Where change is unavoidable, a professional bureaucracy tends to shift from fundamental to incidental change by returning briefly to a mechanistic model; here, through the division of labour, a new “unit” is added, which in turn is then “decoupled,” and re-professionalized.

How this manifests in schools is that students whose needs can not be met through traditional service delivery models are either forced into remaining where they are, or forced out into alternative programs such as special education classes. If special classes do not exist in a school, those students are, once again, either forced to remain in the classes that do exist, or they are removed from one school to another school where a ‘suitable’ program does exist. In my time, I have met numerous students who have spent a large part of their education moving from one program to another. While the creation of new standardized programs designed to meet anomalies within the system may ensure stability, stability is met by meeting the needs of an organization rather than the needs of the child.

Given the inevitability of human diversity, a professional bureaucracy can do nothing but create students who do not fit the system... Students are subjected to, and subjugated by, homogeneous grouping practices in public education because, given their structural and cultural contingencies , traditional school organizations can not accommodate diversity and so must screen it out by first containing it and then decoupling it from their basic operation. (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 773)

There is another dynamic to this problem which has to do with service delivery. As I have said, teachers are provided a large degree of discretionary power in their approaches to



educating students. However, when students whose “needs” do not match a particular teacher’s “repertoire” of skills remain in a classroom, those “needs” often preempt a teacher’s practice by forcing the teacher to change his/her teaching to accommodate a particular child. This in turn imposes restrictions on the teacher’s “discretionary space” (Skrtic, 1992) and stands to reduce the perceived level of professionalism a teacher might hold.

While a special education teacher’s repertoire of service delivery models may be expected to be much broader than a regular classroom teachers, this does mean that the special education teacher is more of an educational professional than a regular teacher. In fact, some would say the situation is quite the opposite. According to Haas, service delivery in special education is premised on a medical model, with “guiding theories of human pathology and organization rationality” providing a “diagnostic-prescriptive” approach to instruction (Haas, 1982. Abstract).

The preference in special education has been for the task analysis approach (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1981 in Skrtic, 1991, p 105), which is based on the application of behaviouristic theory to instruction in specific knowledge and skills. Relatively complex instructional goals are selected from the hierarchical general education curriculum and are task-analysed further into sub-skills, which are taught using an even more systematic application of behavioural procedures for skill acquisition (White & Haring, 1976 in Skrtic, 1991, pp. 105-6).

As a consequence, the role of the special education, according to both Haas and Skrtic, is “conceptualized as a technician” even more than the general education teacher:

(The Education for All Handicapped Children Act) did not adequately address the differences between general and special educators in expectations, training, or assumptions about the functions of schooling and the role of the teacher..... It is clear that ultimate implementation of the law, and achievement of the law's goals, depend on teachers as implementing agents (Haas, 1982, pp. 1-2).

Once again, this form of service delivery may well exist due to an absence of educational ideology in the grounding framework.

To compensate for a loss in discretionary power, special education teachers tend to "rationalize" their instruction, which, according to Blase, becomes "more and more traditional and less creative over the course of their careers" (Blase, 1985, 1986, in Pugach, 1992, p. 139). This rationalization is, I think, reflected in the LAC grade level overviews I created. However, Blase also notes that, in contrast to the more rigid approach to instruction, teacher behaviour became "increasingly humanized by their ongoing interactions with students." Blase concludes that "teacher socialization is a bi-directional phenomenon; perspectives on classroom instruction contract over time, while perspectives on relationships with and commitments to students expand" (Blase, 1985, 1986 in Pugach, 1992, p. 139).

Skrtic takes the situation one stage further. He believes that programs designed to meet the needs of students ultimately become 'needs' oriented and are, as a consequence, increasingly more defined.

The convergent thinking and deductive reasoning of professionals tends to create a means-ends inversion in these organizations, a situation in which, working alone, professionals confuse the needs of their clients with the skills they have to offer them (Mintzberg, 1979; Perrow, 1970; Segal, 1974, in Skrtic, 1995a, p. 250)....

Professionals are rarely conscious of the confusion (around the reversal of means-ends) because their commitment to the prevailing paradigm of practice tends to distort negative information about its validity, turning anomalies of practice into client pathologies, thus preserving the legitimacy of the professional culture (Skrtic, 1995a, p. 250).

The shift towards rationalization of service delivery in my program had taken place within a year and a half of starting the job; the shift towards a more humanized approach to students was about to begin. Needless to say, the inevitability of reaching my own means-ends inversion, at least according to research, was only a matter of time.

Having already elaborated on the presence of prevailing - and unchallenged - paradigms of practice, and the fact that these paradigms were designed by social rather than educational architects, the basis for Skrtic's argument is that student disability, rather than being either a pathological condition or an objective distinction, "is an organizational pathology, a matter of not fitting the standard practices of the prevailing paradigm of a professional culture, the legitimacy of which is maintained and reinforced by the objectification of school failure as student disability through the institutional practice of special education" (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 760).

To address the limitations of such traditional educational systems, Skrtic calls for an “adhocratic” organizational structure, a structure which is “premised on the invention and re-invention of novel practices around the unique and changing needs of the students.” (Skrtic, 1992) The metaphor that Skrtic likes to draw upon to describe his Adhocracy is NASA’s Apollo missions to the Moon during the 1960’s. With Man boldly going where no man had gone before, traditional means of getting there were limited both technologically and organizationally. “Invention,” according to Skrtic, “requires bringing existing knowledge together to produce new knowledge.” Because there were no previously established practices to achieve such ambitious goals, NASA had to “invent these practices on an *ad hoc* basis.” (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 764)

Although the Apollo project employed professional workers, it could not use specialization and professionalization to divide and coordinate its work because no professional specializations had developed the knowledge and perfected the practices for doing the type of work assumed to be required. Thus, division of labour and coordination of work within the Apollo project was premised on *collaboration* and *mutual adjustment*, respectively (Skrtic, 1995, p. 764).

Under these structural contingencies, division of labour is achieved by deploying professionals from various specializations on multi disciplinary project teams, a situation in which team members work collaboratively on the team’s project and assume joint responsibility for its completion. Under mutual adjustment, coordination is achieved through informal communication among team teachers as they invent (and reinvent) novel problem solutions on an *ad hoc*

basis, a process requiring them to adapt, adjust, and revise their conventional theories and practices relative to those of their colleagues and the team's progress on the task at hand (Chandler & Sayles, 1971; Mintzberg, 1979 in Skrtic, 1995b, p. 764). Together, the structural contingencies of collaboration and mutual adjustment give rise to a discursive coupling arrangement premised on reflective problem solving through communication, and thus on the unification of theory and practice in the team of workers (Burns & Stalker, 1966 in Skrtic, 1995b, p. 764).

“(Accountability in the Adhocracy is achieved through) a presumed community of interests, a sense among the workers of a shared interest in a common goal.... a professional-political mode of accountability (where) work is controlled by experts who, although they act with discretion, are subject to sanctions that emerge within a political discourse among professionals and between them and client constituencies (Burns & Stalker, 1966; Chandler & Sayles, 1971; Romzek & Dubnick, 1987 in Skrtic, 1995b, p. 765).

Table II

Structural differences: Professional Bureaucracy vs. Adhocracy

	Professional Bureaucracy	Adhocracy
Nature of work	COMPLEX	AMBIGUOUS
Division of Labour	SPECIALIZATION	COLLABORATION
Coordination	PROFESSIONALIZATION	MUTUAL ADJUSTMENT
Interdependence	LOOSE COUPLING	DISCURSIVE COUPLING
Type of Organization	PERFORMANCE	PROBLEM SOLVING
Goal of Organization	PERFECTION	INNOVATION
Output of Organization	STANDARD SERVICES	NOVEL SERVICES
Environment	STABLE	DYNAMIC

An Adhocracy, therefore, is an organization premised on invention rather than production. Because of the dynamic complexity of the environment within which such organizations are designed to exist, a division of labour based on professional standards is almost impossible. Instead, duties are divided through collaboration, while coordination of services is provided through mutual adjustment, a process that allows the knowledge and skills held by team members to be utilized with greatest efficiency. No longer seeking the provision of standard products and services, the Adhocracy seeks novel solutions to novel ideas. Indeed, the Adhocracy seeks out the negative aspects of an organization including ambiguity, “an unresolvable anomaly in the prevailing paradigm,” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 171) and, professional means-ends inversions. While the former is taken almost as a given in any dynamic organization, the later is reduced by ‘personalization through innovation through collaboration’ where ‘personalization’ represents the inclusion of the consumer within the team. In schools, this means

the student.

Adhocracy is also premised, according to Skrtic, on a new set of assumptions regarding disabilities and special education:

TABLE III

Assumptions Regarding Disabilities and Special Education.

1. disabilities are organizational pathologies;
2. diagnosis is subjective and harmful;
3. Special education is a nonrational system that serves school organizations;
4. Progress is a revolutionary process of fundamental changes in school organizations.

To keep schools adhocratic we need anomalies. We need instructional problems. We need students who do not learn by conventional practices. The most valuable asset is children. We need student diversity just like professional diversity... Adhocracy is Excellence (Skrtic, 1992).

## Part II: Reading maps with no legends

Of course ambiguity is not limited to organic beings, it exists and flourishes in inorganic structures as well, one of which held residence in my office. High enough on a shelf to avoid annual cleaning rituals for summer school, a plastic-wrapped copy of the "Special Education Services Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines" stood like a lighthouse above a sea of "how to" literature. Fortunately, due to more pressing issues, I had left having to contend with the plastic wrap - which I might add, has a tendency to cling to one's fingers and the garbage can with equal tenacity - for several years. In hindsight, perhaps it was a wise decision, for if I had

read the manual back then, in my first years, fighting in the trenches, my perspective today might have been dramatically different. I may not have been teaching at all, for marvelling at its apparent newness, like so many of Vancouver's condominiums at the time, I would have misinterpreted the need for a plastic sheath.

But in the relative safety of an academic course, I tore into the document with purpose and conviction violating its newness, scrutinizing each word, looking for answers to questions I had not clearly formed:

“A policy,” according to Edelman (1998), “is a set of shifting, diverse, and contradictory responses to a spectrum of political interests”(p. 19) - to this I would add, “...within the confines of contemporary law.” As a policy ‘text,’ the Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Manual is but one facet of a multidimensional entity, for as Taylor concludes, the word Policy is to be interpreted as, “the production of the text, the text itself, ongoing modifications to the text and processes of implementation into practice... (Taylor, 1997, p. 25) It is, consequently, “both text and action, words and deeds... what is enacted as well as what is intended.”

Supporting this compound definition, Anderson (1975, in Taylor, 1997 p. 32) suggests that, “Policy is being made as it is being administered and administered as it is being made.” Therefore, in accepting such broad interpretations of the term policy, to subsequently divest the policy text of its meaning, the policies within the manual must be viewed as enigmatic snap shots of accepted opinion at a given time regarding an “ongoing and dynamic” (Taylor, 1997, p. 24) process,



rather than as definitive statements. However, to do so implies and even justifies the fact that incongruities and contradictions that exist between policy and practice are simply distortions of the truth due to time and environmental evolution.

(Taken directly from an essay for EAST 577, 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 1999, a matter of weeks before engaging Skrtic for the first time).

Ambiguity prevailed, for embedded within the policy were what I would coin as vogue social foundation words - such as "Inclusion" and "Integration"- that are not only multifaceted in meaning and application, they maintain a high measure of linguistic authority. And, like the philosophies they stand to represent, they are so often utilized with little or no criticism or accountability. The authored boundaries of these words are, like the philosophies that guide their creation, penned by prevailing political and socio-economic climates:

The manual states that an 'Individual Education Plan' (IEP) is: "a written plan developed for a student with special needs which describes the educational program modifications and/or adaptations for the student, and the services that are to be provided." An IEP is concrete both in policy and in practice and is, therefore, a readily definable term. However, the term 'Inclusion' is described as: "a value system which holds that all students are entitled to equitable access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education." Creating a definition for value is problematic, for such a definition necessitates contextualization. It is salient to note that the potential for multiple interpretations grows

exponentially whenever value laden words are embedded within definitions of equally value laden terms. Furthermore, not only are such terms necessarily subject to scrutiny, any further terms associated with such value laden definitions become equally suspect.

(Taken directly from an essay for EAST 577, 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 1999)

My Journal: 6<sup>th</sup> October, 98

The days are too full to be reflected upon in their entirety. I am taunted with momentary glimpses of expressions - Kodak moments. But like broken dishes, the pieces come together but are never whole again. Never to serve a true purpose. Shattered.

Could I throw this manual away? could I ignore its presence or its impotence? No, I could not. And so I put it back, violated, but whole.

# CHAPTER FOUR:

## QUOTE FROM A STUDENT:

“Some bitch and her friends are waiting for me at lunch. They’re going to try and force me to kneel down and kiss her fucking feet. Well I got my friends too, and if they want a fight, then let them bring it on.”

## STUDENT JOURNAL:

I’m sick of not fitting in. Now I’ve started fixing my tests, so I don’t get perfect scores.

## Part I: Opaque dreams

Armed with my program profile and a full slate of fully integrated classes for my students, I marched into September 1996 with a sense of direction, with a sense of purpose, and with a clear understanding of who my students were and what was best for them. Having said good bye to the previous year's graduating students, I began the process of introducing new students to the class, to the school, and to their teacher. The three new students were similar to the rest of the class in that they provided little in the way of establishing a common denominator to the program, other than the fact that their files amply filled the void left by their graduating peers. Aware that the change from elementary to high school often exacerbates, or placates, an individual's social characteristics, I took their respective silence/boisterousness in stride.

Fuelled by good intentions, and destined towards Inclusion, I had successfully launched myself and my payload into the new school year encountering little or no turbulence; being particular to avoid class size grievances and teacher student incompatibilities, I had, in large part, achieved my primary goals within the first weeks. NASA would have been proud. All lines of communication remained open, and I mean "all" lines for there were many. The fact that little or no information was being required or being sent at the time only reinforced, at least in my own mind, that I had achieved what I had set out to do. I had achieved my goals. I had taken off and no one had noticed. To me this reflected an intuitive understanding of the system which allowed change within the status quo - Professionalism within a mechanistic bureaucracy.

But in early November my program ground to a halt. I don't remember what prompted

the incident, but I have never been able to forget its consequences. It was a packed class so it was probably English, being the one area of study I preferred to have full control over. The topic of discussion was inconsequential, other than for the fact that it had stopped. The afternoon's dazed stare swept over the class as they waited for me to think of something new to say. And then, out of nowhere came one of those unrehearsed and unsolicited monologues, except this time, it wasn't from me: "What the hell are you all doing here. For Christ's sake, why doesn't anyone say something. You guys just sit there like fucking dummies. Doesn't anyone know why we're in this stupid class? Anyone?"

"The two essential elements in school organization change," says Skrtic, "are *anomalies* that cause the paradigm to deconstruct, and *values* according to which the pieces are reconstructed. (Skrtic, 1991, p. 208) I already knew that special needs students are themselves anomalies in the larger system, but now I was face to face with an anomaly within my own class. In one moment, one outburst of frustration after two months of silence, my whole program was deconstructed by a grade eight student, and I found myself struggling to find a value laden statement with which to form a rebuttal. But I couldn't answer this seemingly simple question, and so joined the masses in dumfounded silence. I might have said something profoundly stupid: "well, I'm paid to be here - ha, ha.... hmm" but fortunately, no one was listening to me. Someone else, it seemed, was currently teaching the class.

"Regardless of its *causes* and its *extent*, student diversity is not a liability in a problem-solving organization. It is an asset, an enduring uncertainty, and thus a viable source of innovation" (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 774). And so, from that day on, my program began an internal

metamorphosis driven by fifteen students and a teacher. Although the changes I had initiated over the past two years had helped push us further into the school, the greatest change began to take place within each one of us as we all began to find an answer to the question: what the hell are we doing here?

This internal glitch, this robust verbal outburst, was not predicted: *"Don't just sit there, say something."* This challenge, not to my authority, but to my existence, was not foreseen, as we hurtled away from the complexity of the school world into the ambiguity of the LAC program itself. Devoid of something so concrete as a moon to focus on, I decided the best approach was to communicate with those immediately around me, and that meant I had to shut up and listen.

## Part II: Sheer reality

"He started it."

"No I didn't"

"Yes, you did. I saw you."

"Yeah, I saw you too."

"Shut up and stay out of it."

"Gonna make me ass-hole?"

People who hate Monday mornings are typically those that turn their alarm clocks off on Sunday, which is a positive analogy for accepting the fact that my spares were always shared

with at least two or three students - hence no break. In previous years the mandated spare<sup>1</sup> was afforded by marching all the students to a special education cooking class - a poor example of Inclusion. But now they blended in with regular classes - well some of them blended in. For most it remained a prime example of a truly Canadian tossed salad. As fate would have it, the period immediately after my so called spare, all 15 students were scheduled to descend upon me for English (I felt it was inappropriate to push students out when I felt I could meet their needs in Language and Literature) Today's English class, needless to say, had little to do with grammar and revolved instead around a culinary knife which had only fifteen minutes before, revolved in an unculinary manner around a cooking class. Despite the bell to end one period, a five minute interlude, and another bell to mark that a clear passage of time and place had occurred, the issue broiled on. Desperately I waded through the dialogue, a multitude of storylines layered linearly one upon another, upon another, upon another, each vying to be heard:

"You should have seen it Mr C."

"Seen what?"

"I'm not talking to you - You should have seen it, Mr C. Mr C?."

"Be quiet, it was no big f -in' deal"

"Yes it was, yes it was, you should have seen it Mr C"

"Seen what? What are they talking about?"

"Would you shut up."

"Gonna make me."

---

1

Although BCTF guidelines stipulate that full-time teachers be provided with a spare, funding to cover one period every rotation was not provided: ie even though I was a district program, the school had to provide staffing to cover for me.

“You and who else?”

“Ms. B was sure pissed.”

“So?”

“So...”

“So what?”

Of course little did they know or appreciate the extraordinary measures I had taken to get them into Ms. B’s class, and other classes, the politicking, the paper work, the professionalism, the patience and even the personal persuading. A degree of volatility was expected, but knife wielding? And then the proverbial phone call which was immediately answered, lines of communication being perpetually open, followed by an innovative pursuit of collaboration and mutual adjustment through discursive coupling with Ms. B, and Ms. P and Mr. D and Mr. E, F, and G and nurse H, and administrator I, J, and K and social worker L and.... and all the time that the problem-solving was taking place, restoring stability in the school, my disgruntled payload continued to wield knives, if only verbally.

Skrtic talks about the way that students affect one another with their “commitment to achievement” and their “expectations for, and valuing of, learning” (Skrtic, 1991, p. 206). While Students may well open each others pedagogical doors, they are also inclined to push down each others walls, to dissolve limitations and to open up new linear avenues to Life. Once one voice is heard, the roll calls of others wait for that opportune (or inopportune) moment, sounding out the ills of school, sounding out the ills of society, sounding out those special thoughts and feelings.

“How was your weekend?”



“The usual... Oh except this dumb bitch went and gave me “the stare” so I said wha’cha lookin’ at bitch and she said it wasn’t my problem and I said you dumb ho and she fucked around with me so these guys that was with this bitch started gettin’ into it so I call my cousin and he comes down with his friends and they start going at it and it was really cool.” She smiles.

“You know you really shouldn’t fight. That’s no way to solve a problem.”

“So what do you suggest Mr. C.”

“Well, there are a number of things you could...”

“Yeah, I know, like call the police.”

“Yes, that’s right.”

“Have you ever tried calling the police Mr. C? Oh, right! Call the Police... like they’re going to believe some dumb shit kid like me.”

“Language...”

“Look if I’m in trouble, the last thing I’m going to do is phone the f-ing police. I have my cousins if I need help. I page them and they’re there.”

“But that only make’s matters worse. When you bring in a gang...”

“Look, why don’t you phone the god damn police. You might learn something.”

“I’m not sure what you mean?”

“Phone Mr C, do your self a favour and just phone. Let me give you an Ed - u - cation.”

I did phone, and they didn’t show up. On three occasions I tried to bring a police officer to the class to talk with the students, but there was always an excuse, usually something more

important going on. When I showed a police sponsored video about gangs, gang violence and how kids in schools are inducted into gangs, I was told that most of the video was all wrong, that the video was from an “outsiders” point of view, that the police just didn’t understand. I knew I didn’t understand. But what I did understand quite clearly was that my perspective of traditional avenues of society and of education were being altered.

Most of the children in my class came with social workers. A few came with social workers and at least one parent, others with both parents though not necessarily their own. In fact, it is almost impossible for special education students, and their families, to avoid having some contact with Ministry officials. Though money deferred the need for certain avenues of support, the meetings were unavoidable, as was the stigma associated with such meetings. The impact of having a child with special needs is far reaching.

“What do you mean you can’t find her file?”

“I’m sorry, but unless we have the child’s mother’s maiden name, we can’t reopen the file. We have to open a new file.”

But we’ve been at this for three years now. Three years, and now school is over for the week in ten minutes and this kids got nowhere to go. Can’t you contact her other social worker, the one before you?”

“That wouldn’t help.” Turning away from me to the student, “Now can I have the correct spelling of your mother’s maiden name.”

“I think its \_ \_ \_ \_ but I’m not sure, we had to change our names many times to get into this country. I don’t remember. Anyway, you have to ask me what my

real name is first. All the other social workers did.”

The endless stream of new faces, most of them fresh from social work school, defied logic. The product of an archaic bureaucracy riddled with attrition, my students often guided the recent grads through the interview process, elaborating when necessary to make up for unasked questions. I have many images of social workers, but one I like to remember the most is of one of the rare veterans of the system, who having performed his duties as an in-take worker was handing off the file. I recall my last conversation with him:

“She’s run away again.”

“From home?”

“Yes”

“How long has she been gone?”

“Four days.”

“Do you know where she is?”

“Yes, she’s here with me, doing Math. Been here all week.”

“Parents?”

“Well, I didn’t know she was awol until this morning. When I phoned Mum it was just the usual response. I explained that she’d been staying with a friend.

The friend’s mum was a little concerned but OK. There’s the weekend though.

I’ll get both mums to try and talk. But she needs some clean clothes right away.”

“Is Dad back in town?”

“You guessed it. Look, can anyone get her some clothes? All she wants is to get

into the house to get some clothes”

“Do you have a car?”

The following day, during my spare, I waited uncomfortably outside a student's house as she raided her own home. I was to meet with the new social worker later that afternoon to discuss placement in an emergency shelter. The first social worker - the one on the phone - was gone, figuratively and literally, heading South on a much needed holiday, his calloused soul striding a 1949 Indian Motorcycle. In social work, it seems, good will alone doesn't begin to take you down the highway of some children's lives..

One of my greatest frustrations with working with the Ministry involved the subservient role I was made to feel and the consequences of that role. Spending up to seven hours a day, five days a week with students gives one a great deal of insight into their worlds and into their individualities. “You hit it on the nail,” said one mother after reading the IEP, “described him to a tee. Hell, you know my son better than I do.” And yet such knowledge provides no privileges. Constantly caught in a one way dialogue, I would provide copious amounts of information, repeating myself to ad nauseam if necessary, trying to ensure the welfare of each student. But then there was silence. The social workers would leave, and that would be it. Further meetings may well have been held, counselling services provided, or, in worse case scenarios, files might even be closed. But I would never hear of it. Nothing. Dealing with the school with its multi-levelled labyrinth was problematic enough, however, I was rarely completely shut out of the conversation. But with the Ministry, lack of dialogue was symbolic of the mechanistic framework upon which its professionals were hung. The exceptions, once again, lay in

individuals, the seasoned riders, who, unfortunately but understandably were few and far between. Replicated and reinforced by a seemingly endless stream of new and very fresh faces, toting their policy and procedures manuals and plastic wrapped note pads, the statutory silence of privacy prevailed. Adhocracy failed.

When faced with any given problem, suggests Minzberg (1979), the adhocracy, “engages in creative effort to find a novel solution, (while the professional bureaucracy)“pigeonholes it into a known contingency to which it can apply a standard (practice).... One engages in divergent thinking aimed at innovation; the other in convergent thinking aimed at perfection” (Minzberg, 1979, in Skrtic, 1995b, p. 765). Innovation in organizations requires collaboration, mutual adjustment, and discursive coupling, to “break through the boundaries of conventional specialization,” creating a situation in which “professionals must amalgamate their efforts... (by joining) forces in multi disciplinary teams, each formed around a specific project of innovation” (Mintzberg, 1979, in Skrtic, 1995a, p. 249) This is a great idea; unfortunately, in most incidences the multi disciplinary teams consisted of my self, the student, perhaps a parent/guardian but usually not, a district or area staff member, if time and schedules permitted, and, well, there was the SEA when I had one, the peer tutors, the other kids in the class, my wife - who listened and listens still as I rehash all of this.

The problems that required innovation were not only “ambiguous” in very “dynamic environments,” they were problems that pervaded every facet of life rather than simply containing themselves to education. As such, the simple enormity made them difficult to come to terms with, let alone manage or even contain into pre-scheduled school-based meetings. And

when meetings were scheduled, the agendas were so often preconceived; after all, these were the “same old problems, the same old unsolvable problems,” for which solutions, innovative or not, were short term at best.

The only exception to this rule that I was aware of was when a parent became politically involved. Let’s just say that in this case, it wasn’t the size of the issue that mattered, it was how far the issue was taken, by a parent. I remember sitting in a classroom for a meeting with 18 people in attendance including the Area Superintendent, district administration, school and area administration, the chief medical officer, school nurse, no teachers other than myself, but three levels of ministry employees. And the reason we were there was because a parent, a single parent, refused to give up on the rights of her child to an education. Would I consider this an Adhocracy? At the time, of course, I didn’t know of such a term. And now, well, for the most part the ambiguity that brought us remained when we left, and as for professional mean-ends inversions, they too seemed untarnished by the experience. But what was adhocratic was the discussion, the “reflective, dialogical discourse,” the process of “paradigm construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction (Skrtic 1991; Skrtic and Ware, 1992 in Skrtic, 1995a, p. 250). There we sat, not as equals, but competitors, adversarial allies, a consortium of interdisciplinary teams, each with their own agenda conspiracies, each with their own hidden allegiances that reached across the obligatory circle like translucent webs, momentarily caught in the light of reason; and yet there we were, and there I was, grounded in a school desk, holding my cards in front of me. In the end it came down to one’s ability to express one self.

But these moments are rare. For the most part, adhocracies, if they existed, were very

small. The larger they became, the more likelihood for a regression to traditional forms of bureaucratic management; pre-scheduled and pre-conceived, the meetings simply fulfilled political and legal mandates.

And as for the bigger questions, questions such as “What are we doing here?”, no one, not even those people directly involved in the multiple layers of special education seemed to have the time or the energy to talk about guiding philosophies, why we did what we did - we just did it. Professional days only seemed to illicit false hope. A momentary shot of adrenalin which so often was mislaid - like notes scratched on the back of the obligatory schedule of events. What I sensed was that many of my peers really didn’t care; this is not a reflection of the level of commitment to their work and certainly not a reflection of their commitment to children, it is, perhaps, a reflection of the level of their experience, the intuitive acceptance of what is *is* what is. No one really wanted to talk about the corrupt foundations upon which we stood, the fact that there was no educational basis for Inclusion. No one wanted to admit to having put their own needs first. Everyone seemed preoccupied with.... with the rest of their lives. And in turn, after the final bell of the day, I too did not want to get into discussions. To initiate further discussion. Exhausted by the days events, I would look forward to battling traffic, for it forced me, mentally and physically, to put an end to the day.

There was one exception, one time that I did talk to a staff member openly and honestly about special ed., about IEP’s, about cognitive deficits, about the philosophy of inclusion and exclusion, about the difficulties of dealing with parents and the difficulties parents had dealing with teachers; but the conversation existed only because it was her daughter that had recently

been diagnosed. We spoke to each other in the staff room during our respective spares and continued our conversation about acceptable goals into the lunch break; continued on as people began to sit around us, careful not to disclose who was being spoken of; continued on until, well, until we were asked to leave, not only the table we sat at - that this was "*his*" table - but the staff room itself: "This is not the time or the place to talk about all of that stuff, so if you want to continue, take it outside."

While I can acknowledge now that I did little in the way of changing a malingered malevolence towards special education, it was not due to inexperience, ignorance, incompetence or even a lack of initiative; it was due to a lack of influence, a lack of presence in certain circles, for I too, like the children I taught, remained in large part, segregated from the system. For like the degrees of 'proximity' that exist between children with and without special needs in an integrated classroom, inherent distinctions and divisions exist throughout a school, for proximity is a measure of closeness, and not congruency.



## CHAPTER FIVE:

QUOTE BY A STUDENT (repeated)

“I’m stupid.”

QUOTE BY A STUDENT

“You want to know how to order a stabbing?”

STUDENT JOURNAL

My mum she didn’t mean to hit me.

## Part I

## Who's at risk of what?

Students are at risk when 43% of special education teachers leave the classroom within the first 5 years (Singer, 1993 in Brownell et al, 1995, p. 84)

I have already spoken of the preponderance of *chaos* in my research and my practice; out of this practical and philosophical chaos emerged the term "at-risk." A euphemistic umbrella for society's failures, the term "at-risk" has enjoyed extensive employment in literature addressing the state of education in North America since the early 1990's . And yet despite of and because of its enthusiastic use, no single definition for the term has predominated. It has, however, become synonymous with the potential for failure. While Frymier et al. (1992, p. 3) consider risk as "an aspect of every person's life and being," they raise the issue that, while the majority learn to understand and deal with risk in ways that "minimize pain and maximize possibilities," an increasing number of people are unable to cope.

"At-risk," as it is applied to education, was borrowed from the field of epidemiology (Richardson, Casanova, Placier, and Guilfoyle, 1989, cited in Tompkins & Deloney, 1994), a branch of medical science that addresses the incidence, distribution, and control of disease in a population (Webster, 1975). The term was previously taken from the insurance industry, which had used it in relation to "mathematical determinations of liabilities and insurance premium costs" (Baizerman, 1991, cited in Tompkins & Deloney, 1994). In both medical and insurance terms, at-risk is "identified by defining and measuring probabilistic outcomes, and is defined in relation to a specific event (e.g., at risk of contracting a specific disease or of being involved in an automobile accident)" (Tompkins & Deloney, 1994).

Finding myself unable to let go of the term, I spent hours and hours of graduate study deliberating over two variables: "Who?"- *who was at risk?* and, *at-risk of* "What?" Indeed, the term provided a focal point for the majority of my graduate work; from research methodology to curriculum studies, from policy studies to administration simulation, addressing the term at-risk provided the primary bond between my research and my practice and in so doing, provided both academic and vocational stability. Unfortunately, yet inevitably, I began to understand the term far too well. In fact, at one point, it was all I could see. The more I knew the more I was aware of the consequences of being at-risk: poor performance, alienation, low self esteem, helplessness (Duckenfield & Lorilei, 1992), 'self' discipline problems, lower participation in school activities (Costello, 1996), and social exclusion (Evans, 1996). The more I knew, the more I recognized an undeniable similarity between myself and the students I was attempting to teach. But rather than simply accepting my own means-ends inversion, I began looking for a way out. Optimistically, I started by writing my own IEP, outlining my strengths and my goals, showing how well I could be integrated into regular teaching; this document I left with my Principal: optimistically, I started by writing a new philosophy, a philosophy of leadership. Although by this time, I was now the Department Head for Special Education, I kept this document to myself, at least until now. No longer advocating for the program I had created and maintained for four years, I was writing for my own well being. I was now one course away from Skrtic.

## Part II

## A philosophy of leadership

Philosophy of Leadership: Summer 1998

“All the logic in the world will fall short of its inherent value if it is presented in a manner that counteracts the ideology it purports to represent.”

I'm reminded of eh-awe in Winnie the Poo with his “Oh, bother-me” voice, and his pinned on tail that sways perpetually from one conformity to another in listless time. Leadership cries for charisma. We long for the custody of those bigger than ourselves. We live for the shadows of tall men and women, who, like stepping stones, provide brief moments of reprieve and renewal from the intellectual and moral enormity of responsibility that underlie our notions of leadership. We are both seekers and providers of shade. We follow and are followed. We lead and are led. We are alone yet never separated. We live within and without bounds, creators and destroyers of definitions, global, yet sensitive to the needs of each child.

Leadership is a privilege, not a right. Consequently, true leaders will not talk of leadership purely in terms of self-achievement, for leadership is contingent on an environment that seeks direction and purpose. Self achievement, while noble, stands to undermine the intent and inherent value of leadership, for it is a virtue to be inherited and transformed as life itself is transforming.

Those who lead stand before advancing societies, for none of us remain still

unless confined. In all that we do and all that we set out to achieve, as leaders we must recognize that time is not the only progressive factor, that the culture within which we exist and purport to serve has its own evolutionary chronology. Driven by a gamut of emotion, our culture and the society it creates defies the existence of utopian organizations. Consequently, progress must be understood, not controlled. As leaders we must administer knowledge that accepts perpetual social and societal change. We must emphasize the importance of pro-active and progressive process formulation, for while problems are too often cyclical, their solutions are invariably related to time and circumstance and therefore immune to posthumous panaceas.

As leaders we must reach to the future for others. We must use our privilege to be beyond the context and cognizance of our own environment; the familiarity of our lives must be akin to the unfamiliarity of others. We must go where we would choose not to take others, for society inevitably challenges itself, and we must therefore create limits that are safe, limits that will accommodate conflict without risk of self-destruction.

Inevitably, leadership is alienating, at times even asocial. For imbedded within leadership is the responsibility for others, a responsibility that necessitates an informed and objective perspective of the society to which we are deemed custodian, a perspective that is impossible to attain if you are immersed within that society. Consequently, one must balance time spent within the crowd with

time spent at a point of vantage. Of course, as a leader it is important to choose how high or how far one needs to be to see society as a whole, to appreciate the context in which that society exists, and to determine in which direction - as a single unit - it is moving. In doing so, one must be careful not to allow ambition to determine an optimal height or distance, for while leadership is legitimately self directed, valued leadership never loses sight of the sea of differentiated faces that exists. For far from being amorphous, each face craves your undivided attention for fear of anonymity, each face craves its own space for fear of losing independence, and each face craves knowledge, knowledge of what is and knowledge of what will be.

Though not alone, out of necessity we shall be few in number. To our peers, therefore, we will look for partnership and cooperation, for understanding, compassion and guidance, sharing in our beliefs and experiences without judgement or preference. For though as leaders we are privileged, we are no more or less immune to the fallibility of being human. We too fear anonymity, the loss of independence, the loss of identity, the loss of control over the future. We are simply the people we deem to serve, distinguished only by our degrees of acquired knowledge - formally or informally gained, and distinguished by the will to stand in front of our peers, not morally or intellectually superior, but confident in our abilities to lead and to support, to nurture and to direct. Endowed with the trust and respect of those we deem to serve, we have an obligation to use our knowledge for the betterment of all. We have become, as leaders, society's

judicious parent.

*I walked through the gates of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and met a child I never knew existed. The child smiled and pointed to a brightly coloured sign that I could not read. "We must all reach higher goals," my new found friend informed me.*

*"Please sit down." And so I sat, and on my desk was a very thick text book, with only three chapters: Chapter One - The Beginning; Chapter Two - The Middle; Chapter Three - The End. And after The End was a test, a long test. I looked at the child that I had never known existed, and said, "I'm sorry, I left my lessons in the staff room." "That's O.K.," came the reply. "I don't need them. I have you."*

# CHAPTER SIX:

## STUDENT JOURNAL:

I'm hungry, Mr. Collins.

## QUOTE BY A STUDENT:

"I'm hungry..."



## Part I: The eminence of informed pessimism

The British people are like children: in addition they have the limitless patience of sheep (Paul Joseph Goebbels, Ministry of Propaganda, Third Reich).

The organizational framework of this essay has, in large part, been drawn from the work of Brownell et al whose studies have focussed on the personal, educational, and workplace variables surrounding special education teachers, and the interactions of these variables that “somehow, in an elaborate connectedness,” affect those teachers’ career decisions (Billingsley, 1993; Brownell & Smith, 1992 in Brownell et al, 1995, p. 84) As stated earlier, my goal was to use their findings to create a fulcrum upon which my own experience and the conclusions I have drawn from my vocation and education could be off-set with Skrtic’s notions of Adhocracy as a viable organizational framework for special education.

Before continuing, however, I would like to clarify for continuity that I did not come across the research of Brownell et al until well into my thesis research. This holds relevance because it distinguishes my teaching experience and the conclusions drawn from that experience from my own research and the conclusions of others. Consequently, when I found that Brownell et al believed that Stayers, those teachers who remain in special education for five years or more, stay “because of the children... (because) the children need them” (Brownell et al, 1995, p. 93) the term “need” in this context reminded me of - and prompted me to unearth - my ‘Philosophy of Leadership,’ a document I wrote almost a year earlier. And yet having said this, having acknowledge a characteristic affinity with stayers, the fact is I did not remain in special education. Indeed, my shift from being a stayer to a leaver was very quick.

Differences between “stayers” and “leavers” were found to exist across two broad domains: Teacher Characteristics and Working Conditions (Brownell et al, 1995, p 87). The teacher characteristics domain includes: initial commitment to teach in special education, personal teaching efficacy and teacher preparation, all of which I have already addressed. Those areas not addressed so far include: views of student success, and coping strategies. The working conditions domain includes: integration into the workplace, building-level and district support, and decision-making power, which again I have already addressed. The one remaining area, professional growth opportunities, is dealt with through the process of graduate study, culminating in the completion of this thesis.

Although Brownell et al never make mention of Adhocracy, let alone Skrtic, their research does isolate several key characteristics “distinctive differences,” (Brownell et al, 1995, p. 93) between stayers and leavers, that I believe are not unlike the characteristics associated with an adhocratic team member, including: a commitment to work with students with disabilities; an ability to persevere, and an ability to adapt to stressful environments. Had I read Brownell et al back then, when I began to write my way out of special education, it is unlikely that their findings would have shifted my perspective, let alone convinced me to stay, to persevere. No, by the time I wrote my own IEP, I was burnt out, defused. Reading Skrtic, especially after nine courses of deliberation over the term at-risk, provided a painful window of opportunity to see my own practice for what it really was. How one reaches such a pathetic point in one’s professional practice is, needless to say, the focus of this penultimate chapter.

Stress is defined as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand... the pressure

exerted by the environment on an individual (Moracco, 1981, p. 3) Stress is not, by itself, burnout; (Presley, 1982, p. 2), unfortunately, it does tend to be a primary predisposition. Burnout is synonymous with people who have literally given up the struggle out of sheer frustration and fatigue (Dixon et al, 1980, p. 36) a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in work situations that are emotionally demanding (Brownell et al, 1995, p. 93) a syndrome of emotional (and physical) exhaustion that frequently occurs among human services professionals (ie child care workers, social workers, teachers) characterized by negative cynical attitudes toward clients (or students), feelings of unhappiness regarding accomplishments on the job, and absenteeism (Maslach & Jackson in Johnson et al, 1981, p. 3). Burnout is the impairment or the destruction of the motivation to work (Presley, 1982, p. 2). The process of burning out may be so gradual that the person is unaware of it. A primary warning signal is the worker expending increasing effort with lessened results. A state of emotional exhaustion, fatigue and/or cynicism:

Burnout... may result from individuals placing excessive demands upon themselves (Maslach and Pines, 1977). It has been found to occur most often in people oriented occupations and those who are most idealistic. Freudenburger (1975) confirms that it is the dedicated worker who is most prone to stress and burnout. Teague, Retish, Rosenthal and West (1981) found that these dedicated workers are prone to burnout regardless of one's occupation. Furthermore the affects of a burned out employee are detrimental to a place of employment regardless of what business or service is delivered (Retish, 1986, p. 267).

Being burned out is to be no longer "At-Risk."

## Part II: Success - self mutilation to self propulsion

Success is something that we dare children to aspire to without fully comprehending, even for our selves, what it is we are actually asking them to achieve, or giving them the means to recognize when they have reached it. If success is a goal, then we must create moons to land on; if success is an aim, then we must pack prolific provisions, for the journey to success is life-long. Of course a child's journey, though personal, is not a solitary experience. It is shared. In fact, rather than being shared, a large degree of their lives is actually dictated by others. A child's perspective of success, consequently, is associated with the perspective of those who wield the greatest influence upon them; success, as an attainable goal, is reduced to a means to fulfil others people's needs: my mum will be disappointed if I don't get an A, my Dad wants me to go to University, my mother in law (to be) wants grand children, my boy friend likes me to go to bars, my cousin says I must traffic. Success as an aim in life is too ambiguous for most teenagers: "I'm stupid, Mr C... You just don't understand. I'm stupid, and nothin's gonna change."

And so I found myself spending a great deal of time (everything, in the end, seems to have taken up a great deal of time) educating the "powers that be." Parents, needless to say, make the worst students. Harboured the best of intentions to compensate for the worst of broken dreams, they create holograms of their sons, of their daughters, holograms of themselves, and holograms of their lives. And I, the writer of wrongs, must, a metamorphosis, make, painfully injecting reality: "He is lazy. He is a lazy boy. You make him work harder Mr. Collins. He's just lazy. He's a good boy. He's just lazy right now. Maybe he stay one more year, then UBC?"

The expectations placed on students by parents are as unrealistic as the expectations parents place on schools. Regardless, such expectations, whether aimed at the child or the child's school are routinely routed through the teacher: "How come you can't fix my child?" This over-extension of expectations is most apparent with the transition from elementary school to high school, where a new opportunity to share old stories is provided

My Journal, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1998

I had a parent vent in my classroom today for one and a half hours. Vent is a polite term; it is an umbrella term that can harbour hysteria, a politically correct term that can accommodate unimaginable guilt and anger and frustration and disappointment and sadness and despair. To vent means to share the profound loneliness that a mother feels, an enduring burden like a perpetually unborn child, the other child, the real child, the perfect child, still trapped inside; a mother's guilt: a father's denial, his marked absence; the great barriers to success. One hour and thirty minutes, at which point she was struck down, to the floor, by her child.

Success and time are mutually ambiguous; the ninety minutes it took for that mother to express herself represents only a fraction of her life experience as a parent, and yet that same ninety minutes may well devour her child's memory of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Ninety minutes, just over one period, and five years to go.

Stayers delighted when the students graduated, became successfully employed, or just stayed out of jail. (Brownell et al, 1995, p 89)(11e)

According to Brownell, such successes reflect the “more realistic expectations” of stayers, more realistic, that is, than leavers. Such successes however, may not fulfill the emotionally driven expectations of parents. They may also not fulfill what Skrtic has already described as political/legal symbols of compliance - the student’s IEP. For to register such expectations, that a student’s learning revolve around developing pre-employment skills in school rather than in jail, is a difficult concept to put in words without offending, a difficult concept to sell to parent without destroying some semblance of hope, and a demoralizing expectation for youth, despite its occasional proximity to truth.

Yes, I had several students who openly stroked the legal boundaries of society with feathers, toyed, defied and lied their way in and around social delinquency, wheeling and dealing in adult games when they should have been in class; and no, I did not enforce strict attendance or structure or any other forms of discipline in my class, for striving to such depersonalized goals as a means to ensure that curfews in abusive homes will not be broken is illogical; and yes, I did feel success when they weren’t arrested, but that success was born of the ability to solve problems, their own problems, to stay alive, not in the living breathing sense, but to maintain some degree of personal dignity through adversity:

A frothing grade 8 girl emptied her weekend purse onto my desk:

“I wanted to punch the shit out of her, I was ready to and... and... and, god damn it Mr. Collins, I kept hearing your voice going, ‘fighting won’t solve your problems’ over and over and over. I hate you, I really hate you Mr.

Collins. I've never walked away from a fight before, Never!. Ooooh, I could kill you!!!"

Perhaps that is why some of my students continued to show up for English despite having run away from home; and perhaps that is why, after 11 foster homes and eight schools, a student's tardiness is to be ignored.

But what of adhocracy. It existed, but not entirely as Skrtic described or even perhaps ever imagined. The most predominate form of adhocracy in my experience had its origins within the classroom. Adhocracy was born the day a student dared to question, not only what I was doing, but what everyone was doing in the classroom. Skrtic states that, "people think and act like problem solvers because someone or some group tightened up an ambiguous setting with adhocratic values. (Skrtic, 1991, p. 207). When I began teaching, my classroom was full of ambiguity; however, uncommitted to traditional approaches to education and with few outside professional loyalties, I approached teaching as a joint venture with the students and those adults who dared to keep up with children in a leadership role. Rarely was I the only one trying to "tighten up" the setting. In a way it was difficult not to create an internal adhocracy, for children are very receptive to the acquisition of power, for given the importance placed on "their" role in IEP formulation, decision making, and participating in any number of formal and informal meetings, it is of no surprise to find that their acquired prestige would continue long after the adults had left the room.

The more they knew, the more they understood, the more animated they became, the more confident and forth right and opinionated and perseverant and, in the end, success, individual success. And in large part their success became my success. And to perpetuate that success I became a teacher in the global sense, providing all the roles that such umbrella terms shelter, for when it rained there were no limits. I was part of an adhocratic dynamo that sought out problems and, for sake of formality, labelled them "lesson plans." I was no longer alone; for though my first SEA had left, as had the second - having come with more needs than all the children combined, as had the third who had discussed the pro's of prostitution, as had the fourth whose social habits were not to be role modelled, I was not alone, I had the students. We were a team, we were an adhocracy, and we were very successful. So successful that more and more people seemed aware of, and would participate in, our adhocratic process. I would get phone calls, from other special educators, asking for advice, for guidance, for a receptive ear. And the students began their own process of success which I can best describe as unsolicited reverse integration. Regular students would come and hang out in our room at lunch; first there were three or four, then 10 then 15 or more, regulars, regular regulars, bringing lunches and pop and movies and music, the hallway spilled into 'our' room and by that alone we considered ourselves successful. Kids would skip class and show up in the room because it was somewhere where asking for help was not embarrassing - this is not a reflection of the teachers in the school, but its hard for kids to admit to not understanding in regular classroom settings. In our room we learned by making mistakes. And when I was needed I was there, and when I was not needed, I was close enough just in case.



# CHAPTER SEVEN:

## STUDENT'S JOURNAL:

“Before my father died, he used to pick me up by my balls and swing me around.

I would scream out, but no one heard.”

## Part I: From riches - a letter to the editors of education

As the program emerged from it's classroom and became increasingly apart of the school, other changes were also occurring that helped pave the way for success. Timing, of course, is everything, and with the new area-based child-centred services model well into its inaugural year, a more natural partnership was created than previous working relationships. Informality and mutuality preempted conformity and duty. The best way I can describe what I mean is to share a letter I wrote on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, 1998, a letter addressed to an area administrator, with a cc to the school administrator and a cc to a school trustee:

Dear Sir:

As the program coordinator for the High Incident Learning Assistance Class at (school) I would like to take this opportunity to respond in writing to the recent changes in the provision of services to programs designed to meet the needs of Special Education students in Vancouver as they relate to my program. I am prompted, not so much by any particular event or person, but by an overwhelming appreciation for the work and effort of the (area) team in providing support, guidance, resources and, most importantly, a sense of "humanness" in our joint efforts to educate our student population.

It goes without saying that, in meeting the diverse needs of 15 grade 8 - 12 students, additional support from outside the classroom is not so much a benefit to

both the student and the teacher, but an absolute necessity. This is due, in part, to the diverse approach required of teachers in providing the “child-centred” education that our student population requires and that parents increasingly demand. Recent studies continue to support the need for teachers to address far reaching socio-economic dynamics such as child welfare, cultural isolation, and poverty, as part of their educational philosophy; ignoring these broader issues severely undermines the validity and merit of any teaching model.

My approach to education has always included parents and the community at large; this has traditionally meant maintaining an open and continuous dialogue with the parents regarding a child’s needs, progress and evaluation, it has meant establishing work experience opportunities with local businesses, and it has meant making direct contact with colleges and alternative education programs in order to facilitate transition. However, over the past two years, I have found that the needs of my student population have multiplied and diversified almost exponentially, making conventional ideologies appear limited if not naive.

During the 1996-97 school year, I was called upon to request intervention by the Ministry for Child and Family Services on 3 separate occasions; one case continues today, while two more have been initiated. I was called upon to make several home visits, arrange for food subsidy programs, find funding for eye wear, arrange for two students to attend an eating disorder clinic - including driving them there, as well as meeting numerous other demands/needs in order to

“stabilize” the students. Throughout the year, I continually found myself at arms length or totally detached from support. While I did receive recognition and commendation for all the work I was doing, direct intervention either from the school or from the district was minimal, at times non-existent.

During the 1997-98 school year, a very different situation has manifested - hence the need for this letter. While the students and their individual needs remain fluid, dynamic and challengingly complex, the breadth and depth of educational services now available to them has evolved to meet that challenge.

To this point I realize I have made generalized statements, consequently, I would now like to address and commend the work of several individuals: S has provided an immeasurable amount of support, resourcefulness, and most of all time, in striving to provide safety and well-being for our students. Together, we have advocated for the rights of two children child caught in abusive family situations, to the point in one case of being sequester to appear in court on behalf of the Ministry. While S has provided professional mediation between the school, the family and the child, she has also provided a sounding board for my own ideas, especially in setting realistic boundaries as to what is possible and what is not. In many circumstances we find ourselves driven by emotion, trying to solve all the problems that children face. S’s experience and willingness to share that experience, has made me a better educator, a stronger advocate for children, and a more knowledgeable and informed resource to which children can turn for help.

V, whose experience and resourcefulness with our ESL population is usurped only by her matter of fact approach to what works and what will not work, has not just listened to the difficulties I face trying to teach students a second language when their first language is questionable, but has provided both short term and long term answers to both the global issues and the concrete realities of cross-cultural education. D, who offered to cover my class for me so I could attend a work shop concerning "At-Risk" children presented by the Ministry - even though she wasn't sure she was allowed, she would find a way. D, who is in our school almost everyday, looking for ways to help, talking to teachers, acknowledging their concerns but also trying to find solutions for those concerns. To a large degree, D ensures the successful integration of services offered by (area) into our school. Finally, S, who, ironically, I phoned because I didn't know who else to phone when a 12 year old confides to his teacher that plans are being made for him to be abducted from his home. S, once again, listens. She allows you to say, "I'm not sure what I am doing," without judgement; conversely, when I do have something to say and I know irrevocably that, "Thing's need to change!!!" she has listened as an equal, with mutual interest, enthusiasm and understanding. S's role is key in maintaining the fluidity and the stability of the program I operate at (school). She is an advocate for children and those who work with children; as she likes to put it, she is the "guard at my door."

I sincerely hope that in writing this letter I can convey my appreciation for the changes that have occurred, and my appreciation to the people who have allowed

those changes to occur. Selfishly, I say so for myself, but mostly it is on behalf of the students and their families who, often unwittingly, have benefited the most. I know what I set out to do each day is not easy; however, at least now I know I am not alone, which to me is everything.

Thank-You.

No I wasn't alone, and because of the internal and external support I perceived around me, much of the stress related to my position was transformed into challenges by adjusting my "expectations and teaching style to fit the realities of the situation" (Brownell et al, 1995, p. 93). In fact, the day to day chaos made "ideal," ideal for an adhocracy to flourish.

## Part II: To rags - letters to and from the purveyors of education

Unfortunately, one of the major problems with an adhocracy is not so much the need for ambiguity to exist, but the fact that "ideal" means of addressing ambiguity are almost counterproductive. You see, at this time I had acquired two levels of adhocracy, two levels that provided me the motivation and the tools to pursue success, for myself and for my students. Good things, needless to say, are difficult to let go willingly, and are destructive when taken away forcibly:

"Mum says we have to move again."

“Again, you’ve moved three times already this year. Have you found an apartment yet?”

“Yes, but this time it’s in Toronto.”

“But you can’t leave, not now, you can’t.”

“Try telling her that.”

It wasn’t only the students who left with little or no forewarning, by the time my letter had reached its destination, the “team” I spoke of was no more. The players were still there, but not the team; the need for this particular combination no longer existed. The student and the ambiguities this student represented were gone. And although I was guaranteed another student to soon assume the empty seat - for the demands for such programs are great - the void that was left would remain. One more photograph for the album.

And so you moved on, waiting patiently for chaos to re-emerge, psyched for what ever combination of social ills would present it self, the deficiencies, the struggles, the challenges, that would walk through my door, knowing that the team, or more correctly, a team, would manifest itself, ER - Educational Response. The kid wouldn’t know what hit it. Promising the best and sincerely trying to provide it..... I was destined to burnout.

In reality, the team wasn’t always there, for there were other children, more needy children in more needy programs. In some cases the team existed only when a teachers needs could no longer be met - when a teacher could no longer make it, alone. In a way, a triangle was created between the needs of the student, a teachers ability to meet those needs, and the rest of

the team and their coordinated efforts to help meet a particular child's needs be met by providing assistance to the teacher. As long as one ( the teacher) could cope, one remained somewhat alone. When one couldn't cope, when the needs of the child usurped a teacher's ability to meet those needs, the instinct is to create teams, designating responsibility where it is best suited. However, the nature of the created team, and by team I mean anyone involved directly or indirectly with a particular child's case, was in large part created and administered by myself; being case manager. It was, therefore, my perception of a child's need, my interpretation of the student, and my interpretation of the system for which I was a key representative, that, together, generated the level of service I deemed to be required. Simply put, if I hadn't have cared, I could have simply shut my door and photocopied my students into academic subservience. My personal understanding of Education and its symbiotic relationship with Teaching and with Schools, which I have tried to capture in my philosophy, forced me to open my door, and every other door in the school, and every other door in each child's life. Nobel, perhaps, altruistic, perhaps, naive, definitely.

### Part III: To adhocratic ruin - epitaphs to education

And suddenly I felt a profound pathos. My cognizance had created a new isolation, an isolation that pre-empted not only my graduate work, but that invaded my own home. Ironically, I remember having had numerous conversations with my wife regarding socio-political isolation that can invaded ones place of employment, extolling the virtues of simply focussing on the work at hand, focussing on the needs of the clients. But I couldn't do it anymore, I couldn't practice what I had preached. I didn't want ambiguity, I wanted stability and familiarity, and I wanted to



be happy and to shared that happiness and transpose happiness into success. I wanted everyone to be happy and that sounds ridiculous because it is ridiculous but it is all I wanted - and that's all half the kids in my room wanted. And I didn't want it to be my room anymore, I wanted other people to walk in and take responsibility for it. But most of all, I didn't want anyone new. I could not face anyone new. I couldn't.

In successful and adaptable schools, interaction about teaching is consciously and steadily focussed on practice, on what teachers do, with what aims, in what situations, with what materials, and with what apparent results..... When a school is directed towards practice, the temptation towards isolation is lessened, simply because it becomes acceptable to talk about one's failures as part of a school's norm of continuous enquiry and improvement, informed by a shared body of professional knowledge ( Little, 1982, in Pugach, 1992, p. 143).

And despite Little's optimism about sharing one's failures, I would have none of it. I didn't want to make the phone calls anymore, for even though I knew the phone numbers off-by-heart, and knew the faces answering those phones, the strengths and weaknesses of each individual, as they once knew mine, my own needs were starting to preempt the needs of the students.

My Journal, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1998

There is no beginning to Life - it is merely a continuum... a merry-go-round upon which we awake already spinning. Profuse and prophetic, the world remains a blur... forever distanced from those we follow and those who follow us.

My wife recounted to me the story of a man walking along a beach awash with hundreds, if not thousands, of baby turtles, struggling against the breaking surf, their instinct driving them towards an uncertain destiny. The man stoops to turn an up-ended turtle off its back, its immature fins invisibly damaged, fluttering, flailing against the sand that should be sea. An observer approaches the man to ask: "Why do you bother, why do you bother to throw this turtle back into the ocean? There are so many, what difference can it make?" "Because," said the man, "it matters to this one." The turtle is hurled over the surf. "And it matters to this one.," said the man, picking up another turtle.

By my fourth year, my "realistic expectations," both for myself and for my students, had begun to veer off course. No longer continuing down the beach, I found myself drifting into the tide; pulled by a perseverant undertow, my attention consumed now by a handful of well-known and now thoroughly domesticated turtles:

My Journal: 6<sup>th</sup> October, 98

I wonder where you are tonight. I wonder in years to come, when this page is simply a window into my own memory, will I remember who you are. Will you be there to remember.... My mind imagines the streets that

you walk. Youth's naive exuberance leading you far, leading you astray.

Where are you walking tonight, for you are surely not at home for want of  
a place to call your own.

Fortunately, in large part due to my own perseverance in researching the term "at-risk," I began to recognize and understand my own proximity to failure. I began to fathom the interdependency that had been created in my attempt to create independence. Aware of my professional isolation, I began to hear the lies, the deceit, the immaturity, the blatant rudeness, the verbal abuse, that filled my classroom, as if for the first time, and in a brief moment of self realization, my hope, a parent's hope, surrogate though it may have been, evaded me.

Within a month I 'kicked out' my first student, I let her go. I wrote a simple contract, a contract too simple for her to fail, too simple for her not to try and fail, and she was gone. Two months later, intolerant to need-driven privileges, a second student was gone after I was physically attacked.

My Journal: 6<sup>th</sup> October, 98

The silence of my voice castrates my meaning, my purpose, my effect. I  
have saved no one. I have simply delayed the inevitable.

And those that remained, I encouraged to leave. I threw my familiar faces into the great unknown, knowing full well that it was for the last time. For the thought of new faces in my

room made me nauseous, the thought of once again prying open the wounds of dysfunctional lives made me hate myself. Meeting optimistic eyes with pessimism incensed me. And so, with little formality, I also threw myself out in to the hiring pool.

So what? So what that I should go. An anomaly to the system, the system prevails, even the adhocratic system:

“He was too emotional about his job.”

“He always said the kids came first - how naive.”

“I knew he wouldn’t last.”

“Did you know he wasn’t even a special education teacher... he should never have become Department Head.”

Through this long and chaotic self-justification of experience that attempts to contain and convey the turbulence of my teaching, my goal was not solely to understand my own story, it was to draw awareness to other practitioners, awareness to the potential of misinterpreting one’s personal misgivings and misfortunes regarding being a special education teacher as selfishly personal failures. Many of the issues identified by contemporary research, issues associated with teachers choosing to leave special education, are associated with a multitude of personal, educational, and workplace variables surrounding special education teachers, variables which, according to Billingsley (1993), Brownell, and Smith (1992) interact “somehow, in an elaborate connectedness” (p. 84). Without the benefit (and relative safety) of an informed perspective, such as that gained from graduate research, the propensity for a special education teachers to assume personal responsibility for failure in the school system, is great.

Needless to say, teachers are individuals and as such, a teacher's ability to address such factors as work load, paper work, lack of decision making power, poor resources, and other mitigating factors identified as causes of stress and eventual burnout, is dependent on the 'personal characteristics' of the teacher as well as the particular characteristics of the school setting in question. Someone else in my position may have lasted longer, or instead, they may have simply accepted the status quo and told the student who once spoke out in my class to sit down and be quiet.

What then of Adhocracy? Presented as a systemic catalyst for organizational problem solving, it is perhaps more closely associated with a burnout barbiturate, for unlike a true catalyst that remains unaffected by a reaction, the affects on teachers are profound and not easily ignored, especially over time. The propensity for teacher attrition as a consequence of maintaining high levels of creativity and commitment as a means to continually circumvent "the mind-numbing bureaucracy that characterizes many mature organizations" (Wendel), especially schools, is an area of study that I believe is totally ignored by one of the strongest advocates for adhocracies in schools. Attrition exists in Adhocracy; those teachers who remain in special education, out of necessity, succumb to the segregating hand of bureaucracy, conditioned into complacency.

Ironically, Adhocracy, is itself disabled; ideal as an operating structure to address the fluid dynamics associated with special education students, it is incapable of making significant long term changes to contemporary school structures by its dependency on temporary structures, informality, and change. Indeed, as Jarvis (1998) state, "an Adhocracy may waver on decisions to long term programmes which require the commitment of resources." Instead, the emphasis is

directed towards an organization's ability to adapt to individual need; this in itself defies long term planning due to the propensity and speed of change associated with students with special needs. In the case of teachers, the prevention of attrition becoming an unstated norm in an adhocratic approach to special education would inevitably require changes in the bureaucratic structure governing our schools, which, if I'm not wrong, is a organizational oxymoron. Consequently, for an adhocracy to work, it must gain legitimacy, not only as a problem solver, but as a strategic planner, a trend setter in schooling and not just education.

# CHAPTER EIGHT:

## MY JOURNAL

“Knowledge... Emotion’s Emissary.”

## Part I: A poetic post-mortem

T S Eliot refutes Wordsworth's notion that poetry "takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." Referring to it as an "inexact formula," Eliot concludes that:

(Poetry) is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not 'recollected,' and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is 'tranquil' only in that it is a passive attending upon the event."

True recollection, an ability to successfully reunite with one's experience, is confused by our inherent inability to fully comprehend either the setting or the significance of events as they take place, an event being significant or insignificant for virtue of what has passed and/or for what has yet to come. It is, perhaps, only by the degree of emotion that we experience, the degree of emotion that we associate with such events, that both the potential and the inability for future recollection is created, just as it is only through our previous knowledge, our previous experience, our previous life, and the lives of others, that the potential for emotion to exist is both conceived and destroyed. Though life presents numerous emotional experiences, it is those that remain somehow unresolved that are most wanting of our recollection; unfortunately, those unresolved emotions are so often the hardest to reach. Though knowledge may well be emotions emissary, to truly revisit the significance of a specific event is inevitably an attempt to recapture an emotion for the first time.



I was drawn to this area of study by emotion, it's pursuit taken from the safety and tranquillity of academia, and yet what I have presented is simply a series of experiences connected through an elaborate framework of conscious deliberation. Only my philosophies, of teaching and of leadership, elicit and reflect true emotion, which is why they are presented as distinguished moments in time rather than passages within a linear progression of thought. They are at once valid and invalid.

Drawn by emotion, both through this essay and through five years of teaching; "five summers, with the length/ Of five long winters!" (Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*), I grasped at words like knots on a climbing rope, like knots on a profusion of climbing ropes. I grasped at new language, I grasped at vogue social foundation covenants, such as Inclusion and Integration and even Special Education, trying to understand my environment, my school, my classroom, my students, and finally myself. And then, born from a cursory comment, a side bar to a professor's concluding criticisms, an aside to my final essay for my last course, I was referred to Skrtic, a person who had "new" and somewhat "unique" ideas about Special Education, a person who spoke of "learning organizations... that configure (themselves) around work that is so ambiguous and uncertain that initially the knowledge and skills for doing it are completely unknown" (Skrtic, 1995b, p. 763), and thus I grasped, at last, to the rope of Adhocracy with all its many knots.

Adhocracy may well provide an ideal working framework upon which to address the special needs of children in inclusive schools, and the special needs of schools that pursue excellence and equity in Education through inclusion. For as I have tried to show, my experience

reflects an involuntary pursuit of adhocratic practice and philosophy, the creation of informal, problem-solving teams, even within the confines of the classroom, a mandate directed towards the elimination of formal and informal conflict between ministry numbered school children and their schools, and the pursuit of equity and excellence, in the classroom, in the school, in homes, in law courts and in the community at large; it is an experience that legitimizes Skrtic's philosophical premise of creating optimal organizations.

My personal encounter with Adhocracy, however, has left me feeling emotionally exhausted, isolated, and expendable. This state of being, right up until this concluding exercise, this thesis, was never properly understood, never properly defined, and never properly dealt with. But even now, having tried to offset my experience with theory, to recollect emotion in tranquillity, I find that, despite being able to 'clarify' much of my experience, both in substantiating what has passed and in seeing more clearly, from a more informed perspective, what has transpired, as a teacher, as a teacher of children with special needs, my research has left me feeling intellectually neglected.

Skrtic describes special education as a "conglomeration of several sub-fields," each with its own "unique knowledge base and associated set of skills that reflect the presumed differences among various categories of disability," Skrtic suggests that behind these "surface differences" is a "basic foundation of communal knowledge.... This underlying knowledge tradition, which I will refer to simply as special education knowledge.... is complicated by the fact that special educators cannot be expected to provide an adequate exposition of it; it is so basic to them that they take it for granted. (Skrtic, 1991, p. 101)

In my mind this is a preposterous statement. To acknowledge diversity in programming and yet ignore or even deny diversity is those who administer the same programming is *oxymoronic* (which isn't a word but should be). Yes, we may all share a high degree of empathy for children with disabilities, yes our intentions may well be noble, and yes, we may fulfil many of the prerequisite characteristics of Brownell et al's "stayers;" however, we, like the children whose needs we tend to, are individuals. Pre-empting diagnostic tests, pre-empting job descriptions, we are individuals.

Skrtic appears to be uncomfortable with the existence of Individuality. In Professional organizations, it is quashed by knowledge traditions: "The essence of being a professional means making and operating under a commitment to a particular knowledge tradition. (Skrtic, 1991, p. 101); while in Adhocracies, individuality is controlled by group consensus, by collaboration, by mutual adjustment, and by discursive coupling. Not only am I opposed to the idea of a 'uniform' knowledge tradition, but that I should not be expected to, or even be able to, explain myself is ludicrous.

Furthermore, the fact that I, a teacher of children whose needs clearly exceed the defined limits of convention, should have needs that also reach beyond convention, appears in practice and in theory to be a a mute point of serious discussion. Although Hass (1982) does acknowledge differences between regular education and general education, stating that the work of general educators is "predicated on an 'industrial production' model, emphasizing strict time schedules, classroom autonomy, and crowd control, (while) Special educators are trained on a medical model with a focus on attention to personal needs" (p 6), research shows the propensity

for stress and burnout to exist in teaching is equal in both professional camps.

What I suggest instead is that, in light of Haas's differentiation, both models contain inverse variables within which a clear delineation exists. Just as the emphasis of strict guidelines, classroom autonomy and crowd control theoretically benefits students and teachers alike, the attention to personal needs in the medical model is not restricted simply to the needs of children. Understanding the personal needs of teachers of children with special needs is crucial. This is because there is a subtle though potentially profound difference between 'personal needs' - needs so often embedded deep within each child/teacher, and 'special needs' - needs that are derived from professional/organizational diagnosis. Skrtic focuses on the special needs of the children and the special needs of the organization while ignoring the personal needs of, certainly the teachers, and by this I mean both special education teachers and regular teachers in whose classes ministry numbered children are placed, but to a degree, even the children, for not all children want to be in regular classes; recognizing their own disabilities, they actively seek out alternatives.

Maintaining a balance between the special and personal needs of both students and teachers has been a major principal that has evolved through my practice and been contextualized through the creation of this paper. In the Professional bureaucracy within which I worked, my personal needs were simply pre-empted by a "knowledge tradition," a tradition of acceptance and emulation, a tradition which, in large part, I conscientiously chose to avoid. This created isolation. In the Adhocracy that evolved around me, my personal needs were so often dictated by the limits to which I could provide for others. *"I need more help. I need an SEA. We can't leave*

*kids unattended. Isn't there any more emergency funding.*" From an outsiders perspective - a bureaucratic perspective, my needs may well have been seen, associated with, and dealt with, as a case of "professional means-ends inversion." This too many have contributed to a sense of isolation.

But to prevent this essay from being merely an extension of my isolation, my personal needs, I have attempted to prove the adverse effects of an Adhocratic approach to meeting the needs of all special children and their schools by showing how many of the prerequisite parameters for the inclusion of staff in an Adhocracy overlap the parameters identified as creators of stress and burnout. Even the language is shared. Yes, eustress is a motivator, a challenge to one's practice that necessitates change; unfortunately so many of the issues that are faced are cloaked in ambiguity. Yes, Adhocracies seek to divulge and dispel ambiguity, but the enormity of some/most of the issues children face, and their encompassing ambiguities, are prohibitive in size and nature to allow concrete change. For although teaching, unlike journalism, provides legitimate access to the lives of children, teachers are denied the power of social influence enjoyed by journalists, even within the education system itself.

With the shared belief - Skrtic's and my own - that the ambiguities created by children are perpetual rather than isolated, warranting the creation of problem solving organizations rather than emergency response teams, the propensity for stress (eustress) to evolve into burnout (distress), based purely on time, let alone the multiple variables held within such broad domains as "teacher characteristics" and "working conditions," is undeniable. Ultimately, I believe it is Skrtic's failure to identify teachers as individuals, his failure to address the dynamics of

individuality, his failure to acknowledge the existence of emotion in one's work and its preeminent role, that inevitably creates a point of critical disintegration.

\* \* \*

## Part II: Epilogue

Oh, would to Heaven that the inclusive verge

Of golden metal that must round my brow

Were red-hot steel, to sear me to the brain!

Shakespeare (1597)

King Richard III, Act IV, Scene I

In an attempt to show the significance of an endless array of insignificant events in my own experience, I may have inadvertently reflected an insignificance in the significant events within the lives of children, for which I am sorry.

My Journal: 6<sup>th</sup> October, 98

Please be safe: a pathetic cry considering the enormity of Life.

- End -

## Bibliography

- Anderson, J.E. (1975) Public policy making. London: Nelson.
- Baizerman, M. (1990). At-risk students: A review of some basic issues. Unpublished manuscript, prepared for the Texas Education Agency, Austin.
- Billingsley, B.S. (1993). Teacher retention and attrition in special and general education: A critical review of the literature. Journal of Special Education, 27, 137-174.
- Blase, J.J. (1985). The socialization of teachers: An ethnographic study of factors contributing to the rationalization of the teacher's instructional perspectives. Urban Education, 20, 235-256.
- (1986). Socialization as humanization: One side of becoming a teacher. Sociology of Education, 5, 100-113.
- Brownell, M.T., & Smith, S.W. (1992). Attrition/retention of special education teachers: Critique of current research and recommendations for retention efforts. Teacher Education and Special Education, 15, 229-248.
- Brownell, M.T., Smith, S.W., McNellis, J. & Lenk, L. (1995) Career decisions in special education: Current and former teachers' personal views. Exceptionality, v5 n2. 83-102
- Burns T., & Stalker, G.M. (1966), The management of innovation. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Tavistock.
- Chandler, M.D. & Sayles, L.R. (1971). Managing large systems. New York: Harper and Row.
- Costello, M.A., (1996). Providing effective schooling for students at risk. North Central



Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), [info@ncrel.org](mailto:info@ncrel.org).

Dixon, B., Shaw, S.F., & Bensky, J.M. (1980) Administrator's role in fostering the mental health of special services personnel. Exceptional Children, v47 n 1. 30-36.

Dornbusch, S.M., & Scott, W.R. (1975). Evaluation and the exercise of authority: A theory of control applied to diverse organizations. San Francisco, Josse-Bass.

Duckenfield, M., and Swanson, L. (1992). Service learning: Meeting the needs of youth at risk. A dropout prevention research report. National Dropout Prevention Centre, Clemson, SC.

Edelman, Murray. (1998). The Construction and uses of social problems. Constructing the Political Spectacle. 12-36. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Eliot, T.S. (1920) Tradition and the individual talent. The American Tradition in Literature, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds. Perkins, G., Bradley, S., Beatty, R., & Long, E., New York: McGraw-Hill.

Evans, P. (1996). Co-ordinating services for children at risk. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Observer. No. 202, 26-29.

Frymier, J., Barber, L., Carriedo, R., Denton, W., Gansnerder, B., Johnson-Lewis, S., & Robertson, N. (1992). Growing up is risky business, and schools are not to blame. Bloomington, Ind: Phi Delta Kappa, 3-14, ERIC. ED 357 105 & 106.

Freudenberger, H. (1975). The staff burnout syndrome. Washington, DC: Drug Abuse Council.

Goodman, J. (1988). Constructing a practical Philosophy of Teaching. A Study of Pre-service, in Pugach, M. C., 1992 Teachers' perspectives. Teaching and Teacher Education, 4(2), 121-137.

Haas, T. J. (1982). A convergence of two cultures in the implementation of P.L. 94-142. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association (New York, NY, March 19-

23, 1982) ERIC, 1982. ED 238 193.

Jarvis, C. (1998). Strategy-making and the adhocracy. Business Open Learning Archive (BOLA) (<http://sol.brunel.ac.uk/~jarvis/bola/mintzberg/adhocracy.html>).

Jackson, P.W. (1986). The Practice of Teaching. New York, Teachers College Press.

Johnson, A.B. Gold, V., Williams, E., & Fiscus, E. (1981) Special education teacher burnout. A three part investigation. Paper presented at the annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (New York). ERIC. ED209825.

Little, J.W. (1982). Norms of collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success. American Educational Research Journal, 19, 325-340.

Lortie, D.C. (1975) Schoolteacher: A sociological study. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Maslach, C. & Jackson, S. The measurement of experienced burnout. Unpublished document, no date.

Maslach, S. & Pines, A. (1979). Burnout: The loss of human caring. In Pines A. & Maslach C. (Eds.), Experiencing social psychology. New York: A. A. Knopf.

Mintzberg, H. (1979). The structuring of organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice Hall.

--- (1983). Structure in fives: Designing effective organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice Hall.

Mintzberg, H. and Quinn J. (1988). The strategy process: Concepts, contexts and cases. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Prentice Hall.

Moracco, J.C., et al. (1981). Stress in teaching: A comparison of perceived stress between special education and regular teachers. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the

Eastern Educational Research Association, Philadelphia, PA. ERIC. ED 202 828.

Perrow, C. (1970). Organizational analysis: A sociological review. Belmont, CA. Wadsworth.

Presley, P. H. (1982) Teacher burnout in special education - myth or reality? Paper presented at the annual International Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children, Houston Texas. ERIC. ED 218 909.

Pugach, M.C. (1992) Uncharted territory: Research on the socialization of special education teachers. Teacher Education and Special Education. Vol. 15, No 2 pp 133-147.

Ramirez-Smith, C. (1997). Isolation to interaction: Implications for preparing pre-service educators. ERIC, ED 414 258.

Retisch, P. (1986). Burnout and stress among special educators and others. B.C. Journal of Special Education, Vol 10, No. 3.

Retisch, P., Lueder, B., Teague, M. Rosenthal, D., West, J., & Keith, T. (1985). Perceptions of work environments, job satisfaction, and burnout among special education personnel. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Richardson, V., Casanova, U., Placier, P., and Guilfoyle, K. (1989). School children at-Risk. New York: The Falmer Press.

Romzek, B. S., & Dubnick, M.J. (1987). Accountability in the public sector: Lessons from the Challenger tragedy. Public Administration Review, 47(3), 227-238.

Salvia, J. & Ysseldyke, J.E. (1981). Assessment in special and remedial education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Schein, E. H. (1972). Professional education. New York: McGraw-Hill

Segal, M. (1974). Organization and environment: A typology of adaptability and

structure. Public Administration Review, 34(3), 212-220.

Shakespeare, W. King Richard III, The plays of William Shakespeare. Eds. Cowden Clarke, C. & Cowden Clarke, M. (1890) London: Cassel & Co.

Singer, J. D. (1993). Are special educators' career paths special? Exceptional Children, 59, 262-279.

Skrtic, T.M. (1991) Behind Special Education. Denver, Love Publishing Co.

--- (1992) Merging special and regular education: Accountability in the restructured system. Videocassette of lecture presented at the University of Calgary.

--- (1995a). Disability and democracy: Reconstructing (special) education for postmodernity. New York: Teachers College Press.

--- (1995b). The organizational context of special education and school reform. Special Education & Student Disability 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds Meyen, E. L. and Skrtic, T. M. New York: Love Publishing Company

Skrtic, T.M., & Ware, L.P. (1992). Reflective teaching and the problem of school organization. In E. W. Ross, J.W. Cornett, & G. McCutcheon (Eds.), Teacher personal theorizing: Connecting curriculum practice, theory and research (pp. 207-218, 298-303). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Taylor, S., Rizvi, F., Lingard, B., & Henry, M. (1997). What is policy? Educational policy and the policy of change (pp.22-35, 176-188). New York: Routledge.

Teague, M., Rosenthal, D., Retish, P. & West, J. (1981). Professional burnout and the work environment: A summary report of the 1980 IPRA burnout survey. Journal of Iowa Park and Recreation.

Tompkins, R., and Deloney, P. (1994). Rural students at risk in Arkansas, Louisiana,

New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), [www.sedl.org](http://www.sedl.org).

White, O. R. & Haring, N. G. (1976). Exceptional teaching: A multimedia training package. Columbus, Oh: Charles E. Merrill.

Wordsworth, W. (1798). Lines, composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey. The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds Abrams et al, (1986). London: W.W. Norton & Company.

Wordsworth, W. (1802). Preface to Lyrical Ballads. The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds Abrams et al, (1986). London: W.W. Norton & Company

## Appendix I

May 1st, 1993

P.D.P. Admissions  
Faculty of Education  
Simon Fraser University  
Burnaby, B.C.  
V5A 1S6

Dear Admissions Committee:

This application for the Spring 1994 Professional Development Program represents five years of accumulated course work and practical work experience, and fifteen years of professional employment. My decision to apply to this particular program is based not only on the outstanding reputation it has gained across the country, but also due to the positive feedback I have received from both teachers and administrators in Vancouver, who have themselves been directly involved with students in the program. I have worked diligently to meet all the requirements stipulated by PDP, both academically and professionally, and submit this letter of introduction for your consideration.

I am thirty-four years old, married, and have two children. My wife and I have owned a house in North Vancouver for three years; however, from 1989 to 1991 we lived in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. It was in the N.W.T. that I made the decision to leave Journalism and become a teacher. Being familiar with the requirements for a Bachelor of Education at Simon Fraser, I decided not only to begin taking correspondence courses, but to give up full time employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories to gain the required practical experience.

I began by substitute teaching at the Junior and the Senior High Schools in Yellowknife. In 1990, I was asked to join the staff of William McDonald Junior High as a full time Special Needs Assistant (SNA). I worked with students challenged by visual and cognitive impairments as well as behaviour difficulties. During my employment with the Yellowknife School District, I participated in Professional Development Days and was fortunate enough to represent the School at the Focus '91 Conference, in Victoria: *Integration - A Shared Belief*.

My experience in the classroom has provided me with a realistic attitude towards Education, while my previous work experience has allowed me to approach school with a businesslike work ethic. This combination has allowed me to meet course requirements while maintaining my responsibilities as a husband and father. My personal strengths include being organized, self disciplined, motivated and a strong team leader and participant. Personal weaknesses may reflect the overly high expectations that I set for myself, however I have learned to continually reassess my goals to meet the challenges in a more realistic manner.

As a vocation, I see Education as a natural progression from Journalism, for there are numerous similarities between the two professions; not only do they "educate" their respective audiences, but both the Journalist and the Teacher are accountable for their actions, at work and in society, demanding a level of professional integrity at all times. Journalism teaches you invaluable skills that can be applied to a classroom: working independently within a team framework; being resourceful, responsive and adaptable to meet changing situations; developing coping skills to survive the inevitable difficulties and the setbacks; practising effective time management necessary for meeting deadlines, and; exceptional interpersonal communication skills.

I believe that experience gained is never wasted; consequently, I am an advocate of "life" being a continuous learning experience, as well as a primary resource when teaching others. My work as a Journalist, coupled with the time I spent living in northern Canada and my travels around the world, have provided me with a tremendous resource. While substitute teaching, I used that resource to initiate open discussions on contemporary social issues - such as "Oka," and created hands-on workshops to address Media Literacy itself. As an SNA I encouraged students to use alternative communication methods (i.e. magazine pictures) when they found it hard to express themselves verbally, and used a radio to introduce a blind girl to a much larger world than she had previously known. These previous teaching experiences have enabled me to enjoy the excitement and rewards of a positive learning environment; however, they have also made me fully aware of the tremendous challenges and frustrations that exist when teaching an adolescent population.

The importance of Education is unprecedented. As a parent, it is my responsibility to provide my children with the best opportunity for them to learn; as a member of society I also hold a responsibility, to allow other children to have insight and understanding into the world that surrounds them. To become a teacher, therefore, I owe it to myself to also seek the best professional training available. Consequently I am applying to your program to attain the goal I have set for my self - to become a qualified teacher. If I am accepted into the PDP, I guarantee I will work as conscientiously towards upholding your high standards, as I have done in trying to meet the requirements for entering your program.

Sincerely,

Simon Collins

## Appendix II

Following is a brief overview of all of the LAC programs, September, 1996.

### GRADE 8 OVERVIEW

In Grade 8, LAC students will take LAC Life Skills (or Primary Life Skills), LAC Math, LAC English, LAC Socials/Science, LAC Foods, PE and two regular electives, usually Fine Arts and Applied Skills. This allows us the maximum opportunity to understand each student's needs and abilities. Exceptions are made when the student's best interests are served by not attending a segregated setting.

#### PRIMARY LIFE SKILLS (*When appropriate - not all students require this level*)

Taking care of one's basic needs:

- Keys
- Wallet
- Binder
- Locker
- Classroom
- Clothing
- Personal Hygiene
- Getting to class on time
- Coming prepared to class
- Homework
- Neatness
- Following Instructions/Directions & Staying on Task
- Answering the phone
- Fundamental Safety Issues
- Anger Management - Savings

#### LIFE SKILLS 8

Introduction to High School

- Fire and Earthquake rules
- Class/School Rules
- Headings on a page.
- Using an Assignment Calendar and Agenda
- Self Evaluation. Face diagrams - emotions
- Gaining Independence - Bus Travel, Planning Trips, Schedules, Routes, Safety Issues.
- Clubs and how to join them

Communication

Developing Skills through instruction, discussion, role playing and games

Money

- Using Bank Services
- Using a chequing account



- Credit and Interest
- Visiting a bank
- Planning a budget
- Paying Bills
- Being a smart shopper

#### Rights and Responsibilities of students at school, at home and in the community

- Video "Talk 16"
- Our first year - radio documentary
- Rights of Parents vs Rights of Child
- Being a teenager - "The Changing Years"
- Changing roles
- Anger Management - Savings Account
- Positive and Negative consequences
- Coping with difficulties
- Problem Solving
- Gaining Self Confidence

#### Preparing for the Integrated Classroom

- Skills Development - Reading a text book and other related classroom skills
- Looking at academic texts: Grade 8 Socials, Math, Science
- Looking at non-academic courses
- Grade 8 Self Evaluation
- Setting New Goals

#### LAC SOCIALS/SCIENCE GRADE 8

##### Geography of the School

- Giving directions in class
- Giving directions around the school

##### History of the School

- Trivia hunt

##### Vancouver - a place to visit

- Recognizing places around the city
- What do we know already?
- Picture identification
- Giving directions

Travel Video

What things would people like to see, what do they need, how do they get around?

Public Safety

Selling Vancouver. Create your own advertisement for Vancouver (Poster)

Being a tourist (Visit a tourist information booth) Field trips

Create a holiday weekend in Vancouver.

Vancouver - a place to live and work

Tourist vs Resident

Venn diagram to show similarities and differences

Harbour Tour of Vancouver (October)

Poster, City Poems, Short Stories etc

British Columbia & Canada.

Identification of Vancouver on a map of Canada

Identification of major towns, cities, provinces and territories, large bodies of water

"Canada - The Land"

Memorization of Capital Cities and Provinces/Territories

Visual collage of Canadian cities

"Canada - The People, The Culture."

Videos on Immigrants "The Canadian Series" Choose related ethnic backgrounds

Becoming a Canadian Citizen - Passing the Citizenship test

Citizenship

First Canadians

Early Settlers

Canada's International Role

Economy - Resources and Trade

Government of Canada

Elections

Passing a Law

Rights of Citizenship

Responsibilities of Citizenship

Basic freedoms

LAC APPLIED MATH (*Low level*)

Money (All applications)

Time

Distance

Weights and Measures

Writing Numbers

Writing money values

Fundamental word problems

## LAC MATH

- Skill Drills
- Self correction using calculators
- Individual programs based on appropriate grade level texts
- Creating math questions on their own
- Venn Diagrams
- Math in games
- Word problems
- Favourite questions
- Gladiator Math and other games
- Describing familiar shapes to a Martian
- Weights and Measures

## LAC FOODS (*All grade levels*)

Emphasis is placed on practical food preparation, health and safety issues, buying and storing food, and being able to take care of one's own needs at home - making breakfast and lunch and helping with dinner.

## PE

Barring physical restrictions or advice from parents/doctor, all students take regular PE classes

## GRADES 9 & 10 OVERVIEW

During these two years, emphasis is placed on Integration into regular classrooms (see Integration). Integrated courses include: Math 8, 9A, 10A, Socials 8, 9, Science 8, 9, Drama 8, 9, 10, Keyboarding 9, 10, Home Ec 9, 10, Art 9, 10, Music 9, 10, Band 9, 10, Chorus 9, 10, Woodwork 9, 10, Foods and Nutrition 10. A student will continue in an LAC program - ie. LAC Math, LAC Socials - if there is a concern that Integration would create undue stress or an inevitable sense of failure. LAC programs are then designed to meet the students' academic and social needs with a goal of re-integration at a later date.

## GRADES 11 & 12 OVERVIEW

During the last two years of high school, more emphasis is placed on career awareness ( See Work Experience and Post Secondary Education) Integrated course selection is designed to complement areas of career interest: Courses include Photography, Television, Hospitality and Tourism, Business Management, Data Processing, Clothing & Textiles, Social Psychology, Library Skills, Spanish, Peer Tutoring, Communications, Drawing & Painting.

## LAC CBI (*Grades 11 & 12*)

The LAC Community Based Instruction (CBI ) Course is designed to develop the student's awareness of employment opportunities, to improve their chances of getting an interview, and to provide them with some fundamental skills that will assist them in getting and holding onto a job. Areas addressed included:

- Setting Goals
- Researching Career Choices
- Personal Career Profile Poster
- "Why work?"
- Resume writing
- Interview Skills - role playing and video self assessment
- Appropriate dress
- Career Prep Workshops with Student Services
- Work Experience
- Visits to Colleges, Career Fairs & Canada Employment Centres
- Independent Bus Travel
- Newspaper job searches
- Filling out application forms
- Creating a job related resource binder of skills in a work related area.

#### LAC ENGLISH (*All students*)

As all LAC students are required to take English, this course acts as a Home room as well as academic/social class. Students will complete an informal assessment of their English language skills, and from this assessment, programs will be developed to address their various levels. Currently, LAC students have Vocabulary/Comprehension levels from Kindergarten to Grade 7. A variety of teaching methods and resources are used to engage students development in English to reach the following goals:

- To improve the students ability to choose books that they may like to read.
  - To increase the amount of pleasure reading by assigning books for homework and providing silent reading time.
  - To improve the students reading rate by monitoring and charting their progress.
  - To improve the students understanding of the novel by:
    - Finding books of interest by looking at their covers
    - Predicting what will happen in a story
    - Book Reports (written and oral presentation)
    - Comparison between the student's prediction about the story and the actual story.
    - Choosing books to read based on other people's book reports.
    - Clarifying parts of a novel/short story: Plot, Character, Setting
    - Identify areas of interest (Horror, Mystery, Love)(To be done in Library with Librarian)
  - To be reflective about their lives by writing a journal.
  - To identify individual areas of weakness by evaluating the students journals for grammatical errors.
  - To improve English Grammar skills by examining (as a class) common areas of weakness as identified in the students' journals.
  - To improve speech by having the students repeat corrections orally
  - To improve Vocabulary and Comprehension by reviewing the following subject areas in "Everyday English, Survival Stories."
- Grades 8/9     Home Words, School Words, Family, Time

Grades 10/11 Food, Health, Food Store, Community

Grade 12 Travel, Restaurant

To provide small group lessons based on skill level:

Level A Working with sounds, Phonics, 100 fundamental words, Numbers

Level B 4 types of Sentences. Capital letters, Commas, Abbreviations, Periods, Question Marks, Exclamation Marks. Verbs, Nouns, Adjectives, Adverbs. Tenses.

Level C Paragraph Writing. Types of Writing - Letters, Subjective, Objective. Using a Thesaurus. Synonyms, Antonyms.