Tracing Neoliberal Governmentality in Education: Disentangling Economic Crises, Accountability, and the Disappearance of Social Studies

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Abstract

Recent scholarship on the impact of neoliberalism in education centers on the creation of policies, curricula, and programming, positioning education as a system that produces marketable, entrepreneurially-minded, global workers (DeLissovoy, 2015; Peters, 2017). What is less known are the ways in which economic principles and mechanisms work in school systems, and how these changes affect teachers and social studies disciplines. Through a critical discourse analysis of policy and other official education documents, interviews, and focus groups with experienced administrators and social studies teachers in the province of Nova Scotia, Canada, I argue that changes in education policy between 1994-2016 have altered the purpose of public education, entangling schooling with economic and accountability goals of the province. The purpose of this qualitative study is threefold: first, using Foucault's (2008), and later Stephen Ball's (2013a) theorization, I investigate the extent to which neoliberal governmentality shaped education policy changes in Nova Scotia between 1994-2016. Second, I examine how these changes implicate educators in practice, including the ways teachers perceive changes to their jobs over the last decade. Lastly, I explore the state of high school social studies in Nova Scotia as a site to test the micro-effects of neoliberalism and governmentality in changing policies and practices in education. I conclude that neoliberal governmentality has emerged in distinct patterns in Nova Scotia, which articulate with specific policy technologies and practices in education. Such patterns include the strategic use of economic and educational crises to forward neoliberal policy reform, the expansion of governmental mechanisms to track student and teacher performance, and the dis-articulation of social studies disciplines from the education system.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

There can be a point, a breaking point, where the pressure is too much and what did not seem possible becomes necessary. Think of when a twig snaps. We might hear that snap as the origin of a movement, as the beginning, but we don't notice the pressure on the twig.

- Sarah Ahmed, *Willfulness* (2014)

I feel like they're creating this superman, super teacher, super power. The one who doesn't sleep or need to eat, who focuses. This is what I feel, and more and more and more – if you ask me again I will get back to this, and that's why I am burned out. We're all done at this point. We're just tired. It's excessive.

- Catherine, Teacher (June, 2015)

Unrest in Nova Scotia education: Contract disputes, 2015-2017

In July 2015, the contract between public school teachers in the Nova Scotia Teachers Union [NSTU] and the province came up for renewal, and since that time, tensions between the teachers and the government have escalated during contract negotiations. In December 2015, teachers rejected a proposed contract from the provincial government, going against the NSTU recommendation to accept the agreement forwarded by the Liberal government.[1] Less than a year later, in October 2016, the NSTU members voted down a second contract, with 70% of teachers declining, and finally, for a third time in February 2017, the members voted down the last contract offer with 78.5% voting against the proposed agreement (Gorman, 2017). After the third failed contract negotiation, the provincial government signed Bill 75, legislating a forced contract between teachers and the province (Pearson & Squires, 2017), leading to the first work-to-rule strike action in the 122-year history of the NSTU. While issues concerning wage freezes

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[1] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-teachers-contract-1.3346281

permeated conversations on the contract dispute,[2] teachers cited the government's refusal to discuss their "crushing workloads," including the extra time they are expected to work outside of their contract hours as one of the main underlying reasons for their frustrations (Gorman, 2017). Teachers and supporters protested en masse, and implemented work-to-rule job action lasting for two months in late 2016-early 2017, with a one-day strike in February 2017. However, despite job actions and organizing around increasing workload and workplace concerns, a new four-year contract was imposed in February 2017 (Gorman, 2017).

The beginning of the labour dispute, one might argue, could be associated with the first contract refusal in December, 2015. As Ahmed (2014) notes, the "snapping of the twig" is not the beginning of a movement, and not indicative of a single moment, but rather the end point of increasing pressures over time. Thus, December 2015 does not reflect the slow build-up of tensions required before such "tipping points" (Gladwell, 2006), and Catherine was not the only teacher seething underneath the surface for years prior to the labour dispute. As she asserted, "we're all done at this point"; many teachers were fed up, exhausted from their work, and could not keep up with the constant expectations placed on their shoulders.[3] In other words, at least for Catherine, the teachers had reached the breaking point and had "snapped." The recent contract dispute between the government of Nova Scotia and the NSTU revealed pressures that teachers confronted in the face of the government's efforts to redefine the purposes of education in Nova Scotia. This thesis examines the origins and construction of some of the pressures leading to the 2015-2017 contract dispute, and the effects on teaching practices as seen in the case of high school social studies education.

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[2] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-teachers-contract-1.3346281
[3] see "Teachers of Nova Scotia" site for anonymous teacher posts related to work expectations: https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/.

Researcher rationale: Drawing from experience

As a high school social studies and English teacher from Nova Scotia (2007-2012), I observed some of these pressures in the education system first-hand, which has brought me to the research questions I have pursued since 2009. After teaching for two years in the Halifax Regional School Board, I left to pursue a Master of Arts at McGill University. In my thesis, I created I conducted a critical curriculum analysis and interviewed social studies teachers to better understand issues concerning secondary Afrocentric and Indigenous knowledge-based curricular implementation (Rogers, 2011). While the new social studies courses were created for equity purposes, to bring excluded knowledges into the curriculum and to provide curricular content outside of Eurocentric histories, the curricula faced many systemic barriers that blocked their full realization in practice. Having observed these barriers as a social studies teacher, I became interested in researching how the racial equity courses were constructed, and to what extent teachers understood the purposes and potentials of the newer curricula.

Using qualitative research methods, including teacher interviews and document analysis, the critical curriculum analysis demonstrated a lack of teacher professional development, guidance counselor knowledge and misinformation, negative student perceptions, and a dearth of teaching resources created an environment where courses produced to support racial equity in schools were struggling with systemic inequities and competition for student enrolment. Since social studies courses arguably offer the best routes for discussing critical content, including social justice and equity issues, the problematic sidelining of such courses by systemic and institutional barriers provides the basis for my current project concerning the disappearance of social studies.

When I returned to teach in 2010, I recognized that significant programming, structural, and bureaucratic changes had taken place within a short amount of time, and to better understand these shifts I would have to ask broader questions about *how* the education system was developing as an institution. During this time, I observed that with the influx of bureaucratic education reforms, including increases in the amount of paperwork and other non-essential teaching duties such as data collection, meetings, and student information technology implementation, came increases in teacher dissatisfaction, frustration, and fatigue. What was considered important in schools had become narrowly focused on testing results, and quantifiable figures, with accountability measures for educators to monitor and track progress. I noticed that colleagues were becoming increasingly burnt out and irritated with the additional workloads they were managing, and on top of added job demands, many felt as if they were being micromanaged by their superiors. At the same time, my readings of the critical education literatures on neoliberal policy changes and governmentality in school systems in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand resonated with these teaching experiences, and led me to wonder about the connections between larger education policy changes and educational practice. The connections I saw between practice and literature included the reliance on education reform for furthering economic competition, increased performance pressures on teachers and administrators, and the decline of social studies courses in schools. These connections have contributed to the development my research questions.

Objectives and research questions

Flowing out of professional teaching experiences, the purpose of this qualitative study is threefold: first, using Foucault's (2008) theorizations, investigate the extent to which neoliberal governmentality (see also Ball, 2013a; Lemke, 2012, 2010) shapes education policy

in Nova Scotia; second, show how neoliberal governmentality *works* in school systems by examining the case of high school social studies education; and third, demonstrate how these changes implicate educators in practice, including the ways in which teachers perceive changes to their jobs over the last decade. I answer the complex, intersecting lines of inquiry that result through a multimethod qualitative research design, including a critical discourse analysis, focus groups, and interviews with experienced Nova Scotia educators.

A history of the present: Neoliberal governmentality in education

This research project is located within a context that is framed by labour disputes, teacher unrest, reform, and abundant public discussion on education in Nova Scotia. While tensions between teachers and the Liberal government have been front and center in public discourse, there has been little discussion of the education system's historical trajectory over the last three decades of policy and education reform.

To understand the present state of affairs in education politics, I employ a Foucauldian (1972) genealogy as a methodological "toolkit" (O'Neill, 2015, p. 832), tracing three, interconnected lines of analysis, including the economy, accountability, and social studies education, through official education documents published between 1994-2016. Using a genealogical approach to understand the present, through a critical discourse analysis I locate particular moments of importance in official documents to piece together how the education system has come to be, what has been positioned as imperative, and what mechanisms are put in place to ensure its success. The critical discourse analysis is accompanied by data collected from teacher and administrator interviews and focus groups to illustrate how teachers have lived these changes, and how they experience being an educator in a system that is reliant upon data, testing, and evidence for improvement. Recent scholarship on the impact of neoliberalism in education

has focused on the creation of policies, curricula, and programming that alters the purpose of

education into systems that produce marketable, entrepreneurially-minded, global workers

(DeLissovoy, 2015; Peters, 2017; Roberts-Holmes, 2015; Sellar, 2015). I rely upon the work of

scholars located in various fields, including policy, sociology, critical and political theory, and

argue that changes to education (as forwarded through policy), were not neutral, and demonstrate

a system of neoliberal governmentality at work. Neoliberal governmentality has tied the

purposes of education to economic market principles that were mechanized through bureaucratic

measures of control and surveillance.

In this study, I analyze educational shifts in Nova Scotia which encompasses policy

discourse, deleterious effects on social studies education, and the lives of educators in and outside

of schools. As a broad category for disciplinary fields that have traditionally been concerned

with teaching analytical thinking through history, civics, and geography, social studies was

marginalized in an education system that emphasized accountability and standardized

assessments. If neoliberal governmentality was changing the direction of Nova Scotia education

in general, these changes should show up in how social studies was being conceived and

delivered. Using a critical policy analysis (Gale, 2001), I argue that education reform between

1994-2016 has moved the education system toward a neoliberal governmental state over the last

three decades. During this time, the aims of education have narrowed significantly, positioning

economic goals at the forefront of education through entrepreneurialism, global economic

competition, and international testing discourses. To achieve these goals, accountability

mechanisms such as surveillance technologies (i.e. PowerSchool, data collection), have

increasingly been implemented to monitor all levels of the education system to track progress in

accordance to the overarching direction of the province. In doing so, math and literacy have been

placed as the central foci of education, around which all other disciplines must pivot, with social

studies departments shrinking, losing teachers and electives with declining enrolments due to low student interest. Lastly, through interviews and focus groups, I argue that pressures from bureaucratic mechanisms and policy reforms have resulted in a loss of educator professional autonomy and judgement.

Chapter Overview

In the "Conceptual Framework" (Chapter 2), I provide an exploration of underpinning theoretical concepts animating the study, with relevant literature to situate each field individually and in conversation with one another. Using a three-part outline of "policy," "pressures," and "practice," a multilayered and interdisciplinary framing of theoretical and practical conceptualizations is presented to guide the direction of the project. These concepts include theoretical understandings of neoliberalism, governmentality, discourse, and power, with practical fields of school accountability, social studies, and teacher performativity.[4] By weaving together macro-level "pressures," intermediary "policy" constructions through discourse, and micro-level "practices" of schooling, I forward a theoretically-rich, yet empirically grounded springboard for policy and qualitative data analysis.

In "Methodology and Methods" (Chapter 3), I examine the methodological tenets of genealogy grounded in the work of Michel Foucault, and include a discussion on the philosophical and methodological implications for using genealogy for this study. A genealogical framework and schema are created for researching neoliberal governmentality in education, including connections to the research questions and qualitative methods used to operationalize the methodology in practice. In the methods section, the research plan

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[4] As derived from Judith Butler's (1997, 2009) theorizations, performativity has been taken up differently in education (Ball & Olmedo, 2013), and is further discussed in Chapter 2.

components, including critical discourse analysis, interviews, and focus groups, are examined for their connections to the underlying genealogical schema, and how each fit with the overall scope of the project. I outline coding, transcription, ethical considerations, and procedures for each method, including the phases of recruitment, and treatment of the data for each stage of the research plan.

The first analysis chapter, "Economic troubles and education reform: Schooling for the workplace" (Chapter 4), is divided into two sections. In the first section, using a genealogy of education policy, I trace constructions of the provincial economy in education documents from 1994-2016. The second section of the chapter is concerned with practical implications, in which I use policy discourse and the experiences of teachers and administrators to illustrate how neoliberal knowledge constructions are supported (and in some cases, resisted) in schools. I conclude Chapter 4 with an analysis of neoliberal education in schools, which supports the use of market principles, education to "save" the economy, and deficit constructions of teachers and schools to forward a political agenda for educational reform.

Following the structure of the previous chapter, "Accountability: Mechanisms of tracking and surveillance" (Chapter 5), I apply a genealogical tracing of accountability in official documents to show how its definitions have "emerged" and "descended" (Foucault, 1984, p. 83) over a period of 22 years. Using critical discourse analysis as a method to discuss accountability manifestations in practice, the genealogy highlights specifically how changing conceptualizations of accountability coincide with programs to heighten tracking, monitoring, and evidentiary-based programming in schools. In the second section, teachers and principals discuss how mechanisms and technologies of accountability have, in most cases, negatively affected their jobs, and argue that such changes have not provided efficient or effective ways to improve education. I conclude

that mechanisms of accountability for the school system, and in teachers' daily lives, illustrates how governmentality functions in schools.

The final analysis chapter, "The "squeezing out" of social studies: Essential knowledges and curricular gaps in data-driven reform" (Chapter 6), is written using a similar two-part structure to follow the previous analyses. In this chapter I trace the constructions of "important" curricular knowledge in official documents, starting with a broad conceptualization of schooling, into an increasingly narrowing vision of disciplinary focus over time, where knowledge considered vital for students is gradually reduced from multiple disciplines into an amplified focus on mathematics and literacy achievement. In the second section, teachers and administrators explain how specific, niche programming has affected social studies departments, which are more often than not experiencing declining enrolment numbers, and offer fewer course options for students. I conclude this chapter by discussing how neoliberal education and governmental mechanisms of control affect students in their learning, in what choices students are provided, and how social studies disciplines are precariously positioned in a school system that champions workplace skills and testing success.

I conclude the thesis with a discussion of how each of the chapters does not work alone, but as articulations of/with one another, with the contents of each chapter influencing and inflecting upon the next. Using an overarching analysis, I conclude that neoliberal governmentality works through policy and practice in distinct patterns in Nova Scotia, which are related to economic and education crises, and supported through evidence-based mechanisms of data collection through digital monitoring platforms. In this formulation of education, social studies disciplines no longer articulate (Hall, 2002) with the purpose of education, leading to their precarity and decline in the present.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

Using a multidisciplinary approach, I draw from several academic disciplines to analyze the relationships between various levels of the education system, including changes in governance, policy, teacher experience, and social studies disciplines. While this is primarily a study in education, it also encapsulates literatures from diverse fields of thought, including: policy sociology, theories of state formation, social studies education, and theories of knowledge and knowledge production. Individually, these fields animate the research questions in their respective layers of analysis; however, more importantly, the relationship between the moving pieces enables a theoretical analysis that would not be possible without its fragments.
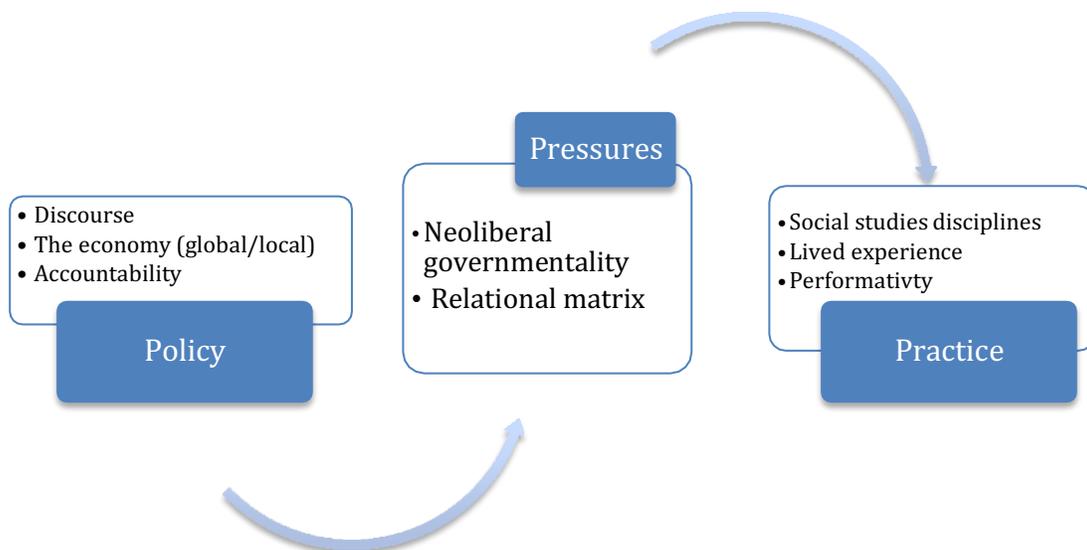
Figure 1. Visual representation depicting the relationship between concepts, adapted from Lemke's (2011) methodological schema (see Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods).

The above visual (Figure 1) illustrates how each concept is operationalized in the project, showing how the concepts are integral pieces of a larger matrix of relations. These concepts are a dynamically-related, complex set of institutional relationships occurring at multiple levels of formations of state and self (Lemke, 2011), meaning that while each piece of the conceptual framework is discussed below as a seemingly separate piece of the research design, in reality, macro and micro processes in institutional and subject experiences cannot simply be dismembered and localized into neat categories. The formulation of theoretical layers is similar to the methodological structure of the project, which I further explain in Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods. The relationship between the three moving layers is reflected in the diagram, though, it is important to note that *Practice* is not nested inside *Policy* because it would incorrectly describe the relationship of policy with teaching in classrooms: not all teachers have knowledge of provincial policy changes, or seek out recent policy documents, while other educators actively resist these changes (discussed in Chapter 6: The Disappearance of Social Studies). This is not to say there is *no* relationship between policy and practice, but its tenuous details are highly changeable, dependent on the historical period, school context, and political climate. While concepts such as neoliberalism and policy are explored as seemingly contained wholes, this choice was strategically made to contain the discussion. However, I realize that in the process of conceptual containment, it has been necessary to bind their interpretations; a particular path was chosen for this study, but it is recognized that this is one of many paths that *could* be. This problematic boundary-defining is at once liberating, but more often than not, "anxiety-making" (Hiddleston, 2010, p. 11) for those working through poststructuralist musings of the material world, in projects such as this (Peters, 1996; Williams, 2014).

In this chapter, conceptual layers are situated in relation to recent literature, and in corresponding reference with the theoretical framework of the study. To animate the concepts in this chapter, theoretical and conceptual layers are divided into three distinct sections to provide a structured discussion. The three layers of analysis are the following, which are expanded upon sequentially throughout the chapter:

a)   Macro level *pressures,* including an analysis of neoliberal governmentality in school governance, and international trends of policy standardization and testing;

b)   intermediary level of provincial *policies* which are a possible (but not necessarily directly causal) interceder between macro and micro layers of analyses, including policies for teacher accountability;

c)   micro layer of analysis, *practice,* investigating educator experiences in an era of teacher measurement and performativity; taking into account the future of social studies disciplines in Nova Scotian high schools.

Pressures

The term "pressures" is used to identify external tensions and trends possibly affecting and influencing public education on levels of policy around teacher accountability/performance, standardized testing, and overall directions in governance, as seen through the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] testing literature cited in Nova Scotia's official education documents (e.g. *Planning for Success,* 2002, p. 9; *Status Quo,* 2014, p. 10; *Action Plan,* 2015, p. 47). The role of external (international) policy and governance in the local context will be explored in-depth through critical discourse analysis, teacher focus groups,

and interviews in later chapters, while this section is focused on a theoretical discussion of

guiding concepts. Key guiding concepts, *governmentality* and *neoliberalism,* are taken up

separately to delineate their individual genealogical progressions and uses in recent literature,

however, these concepts are most often discussed in tandem as *neoliberal governmentality,*

allowing for a theoretically complex conceptualization of state formation at this particular

historical juncture in education (Ball, 2016; Jankowski & Provezis, 2014).

Governmentality[5]

The first central concept in the category of *pressures* is derived from Foucault's lectures

at the Collège de France in 1978–1979, extending into his final lectures of 1980-1984, where he

develops a theory of state formation by questioning what it truly means to govern, and

if/how/where a center of "the state" (and a broader conceptualization of power) is actually

possible to locate (Foucault, 2003, 2008, 2010; Petersen, 2015; Rawolle & Lingard, 2015).

Unlike his earlier works, driven by genealogical analyses of power/knowledge in the circulation

of discursive formations (to be defined in the next section), and operationalized through examples

of state surveillance, exclusions, and discipline, Foucault's later works rip open the idea of

governance, as Petersen (2015) notes, "to 'decenter' the state, that is, to problematize the

conception of the state as possessing a coherence and unity" (p. 147). This "opening up" of state

analysis, from a set of hierarchical rational actions and actors into a multiplicity of autonomous

relations, challenges possible unified generalizations, as Foucault deems the state to be "only a

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[5] Placing governmentality first in the discussion of "neoliberal governmentality" has been a
strategic choice. Governmentality is taken up first due its institutional nature: in the analyses, I
demonstrate how neoliberalism affects schooling, however, these changes occur through
governmental mechanisms forwarded through policy. Therefore, the "institutional" and
governance is of primary concern, yet neoliberal governmentality, when combined, offers a more
complex understanding than either concept alone.

composite reality and a mythicized abstraction" (2007, p. 144). What, then, is government, and how can one possibly begin to analyze mechanisms of state power and domination if it is illusory?

In his later lectures, Foucault carefully explains how government, or what he deems, "the conduct of conduct," is connected on a grid of power relations, rather than being understood as a "principle in itself" (2008, p. 186). This understanding of government lies outside traditional notions of governance in its political and legal rationalizations, but encapsulates a much broader scope of governing, including spiritual, medical, and other ontological and axiological aspects of life. In effect, it is at the same time the "governing of others" and the "governing of self" (Foucault, 2017; Lemke, 2010, 2011), which extends pre-modern definitions of "government *as* sovereignty" to enquire into identity and subject formation in relationship with self, others, and broader forces, including what can (and cannot) be called "the state" (Dean & Villadsen, 2016; Foucault, 2010, p. 42). Foucault proposes *governmentality* - a way to study and trace these relations of power in the governing of self and of others, through an analytical matrix of interactions that are highly contingent upon historical, political, economic, and geographical contexts. Simply put, one cannot understand power circulation through a top-down analysis, or bottom-up approach alone, as power (or domination) is not absolutely located in either end of the spectrum, but with(in) the interplay of individual and total overall relations.

Corresponding to his decentered conception of the state, Foucault also suggests that one should "free oneself from any would-be Theory of Power" and instead situate analysis in the historical "procedures and technologies" that make up relationships and actions (2010, p. 42). Power, according to Foucault, cannot be possessed, but is exercised as a strategy, and flows through a set of social relations in different ways, depending on the context (Elden, 2002); as

Foucault adds, "power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them" (Foucault, 2003, p. 29). These micro relationships continuously interact with larger macro *inter* and *intra* institutional grids of strategic conduct, bounded by cultural and societal norms, taboos, among other social barriers to action, which Foucault defines as domination. What distinguishes domination from power is that relations are asymmetrical: some subjects will have less space to maneuver in society than others, just as some people will hold more liberties in a given context depending upon the historical, somatic, and social locations they inhabit (Foucault, 2008; Puwar, 2004). However, in the same vein as state and power theorizations, Foucault similarly cautions against an overarching definition of dominance that is seen as being enacted *on* people, and instead asks one to think of power and dominance, like the state, as functioning "only when it is part of a chain" (2003, p. 29). Governmentality as a technology of the grid of governmental relations, then, lies "between the games of power and the states of domination" (Foucault, 1987, p.19), which can neither be completely powerful nor submissive in an absolutist sense, as these rely on networking relations between subjects and institutions to exist as parts of the "chain." Moving away from previous understandings of state as a repressive and disciplinary entity, the act of governing, "governmentality," marks a change in what is required to govern. According to Dean (2010), contemporary forms of governmentality are imbued with the notion of economic prosperity to satisfy the needs of a population and to solidify international relationships/placement in global markets by "optimizing and using all prospective resources from the population" (p. 29), placing governmentality at the interstices of economy, governance, and population.

In this project, I operationalize governmentality as a concept paired with neoliberalism drawing from Foucault (2008), and later theorized by Lemke (2010, 2011). Lemke states that governmentality and neoliberalism are paired "to allow for a more comprehensive account of

the current political and social transformations, since [neoliberal governmentality] makes visible the depth and breadth of processes of domination and exploitation" (2010, p. 54). In other words, this study seeks to disentangle recent changes to educational policy and practices in Nova Scotia, and to deconstruct a "history of the present" through genealogy (Foucault, 1972, 1984, discussed in Chapter 3). The concept of neoliberal governmentality is appropriate for this task to trace and analyze multilevel power relationships between and with(in) policy and practice (governmentality) in a system that has become increasingly intertwined with economic and market relationships in education (neoliberalism, discussed in section below). Together, neoliberal governmentality produces a full picture of policy changes in the province, that attends to both power/knowledge configurations at the level of policy, its possible impacts in schools, and to determine which direction policy is steering the education system.

In the field of sociology of education, neoliberal governmentality has been more recently used as an analytic tool to critique the lack of interconnectivity between macro and micro processes (discourse ↔ materiality) which has led to oversimplified discussions of exclusions and domination, instead of being understood as dynamic, decentered processes (McCarthy & Dimitriadis, 2000). This being said, there is an emerging theoretical work in the field of neoliberal governmentality and education (Lemke, 2013; Oksala, 2013; Rose & Miller, 2010), but little on how all levels are connected in a non-hierarchical fashion, using both genealogy as a methodology, and pinpointing specific examples in practice as connected to the theoretical. Instead, the use of neoliberal governmentality has been primarily either "neoliberalism" or "governmentality," specifically stemming from Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1977). Foucault's (1977) earlier version of governmentality posits educational institutions as primarily functioning to train students to be self-disciplined and self-censoring through pedagogies that promote fear instead of inspiration, of surveillance instead of freedom.

As students move out of the school system, they become citizens who (ideally) break the law less, and who are more obedient because they internalized and incorporated these surveillance measures into their everyday actions. When governmentality is operationalized in this way, education is limited to a particularly micro-analytical, embodied perspective of as part of a larger, hierarchical institutional arm, more so like a factory of obedience and discipline, instead of seeing the education system as a more complex, non-linear entity. As an exception to these dominant understandings of Foucauldian theories in education, the work of Stephen Ball (2013a, 2013b) provides a genealogy of neoliberal governmentality though education policy and practice in the United Kingdom, by providing a detailed analysis of neoliberal discursive formations (see section below for discussion), for example the attention to education as an economic enterprise, circulating not only in policy documents, but in public opinion and in discussions with educators. Through this work, Ball demonstrates the circulating and productive (therefore powerful and exclusionary) effects of neoliberal discursive formations through educational governance.

As a second example, Olssen (2014) adds that in the field of educational research more generally, Foucault's concepts of power/knowledge and neoliberal governmentality are continually expanding, but the "theoretical radicalness" (p. 215) of these ideas has yet to be realized. It is important to note that since education is a provincial matter in Canada, such formations will vary widely across provinces, lending to the notion that neoliberal governmentality has its "own history, own trajectory, own techniques and tactics" in the Nova Scotian context, therefore it is necessary to "look at how these mechanisms of power, which have their solidity, their own technology, have been and are invested, colonized, used, inflected, transformed, displaced, extended" (Foucault, 2003, p. 30). This is not to say that each province is in itself an island, where it is isolated from external influences, trajectories, and trends, but

quite the contrary, as Gidney and Millar (2012) have shown in their historical investigations in early 20th century education in Canada. In their work, Gidney and Millar (2012) compare structural educational changes across provinces, locating them distinctly in their own contexts, while also providing in-depth descriptions and comparisons across provinces. Through their work, they are able to provide historical research that is archaeological (see Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods, for an in-depth discussion of archaeology) in nature, determining the ways in which structural shifts were common (or not) across provincial contexts. With this being said, this project does not provide an inter-provincial analysis on the politics of education reform, and instead focuses on the history of the educational present in Nova Scotia, to trace governmental "techniques and tactics" in discourse and in practice.

Neoliberalism

Although the concept of "neoliberalism" has been wildly popular recently in education, including the influx of edited collections, special conference topics, and journals (e.g. Berg, Huijbens & Larsen, 2016; Godlewska, Shaefli, Chaput, 2013; Peters, 2014, 2017), for the purposes of this project I primarily draw on Foucault's theoretical description (with a discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's theorization), stemming from lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008), more recently elucidated upon by Stephen Ball (2013a, 2013b), and Thomas Lemke (2011). Foucault (1991) describes neoliberalism as a particular analytics of government, with diverse genealogies of uneven development, depending on the local historical context. What is "new" to older versions of liberalism (pre-World War II) are the roles and actions of government, what Foucault (2008) calls, "something new in the comparison with everything that since the eighteenth century, constituted the functioning, justification, and programming of governmentality" (p. 86). A slightly different understanding of neoliberalism

from Pierre Bourdieu, whose work in neoliberalism encompasses a breakdown of social welfare and organizations such as trade unions. This understanding of neoliberalism is what Bourdieu calls "the left hand of the state" to open up all levels of governance to free market principles (2003, p. 34). Unlike Bourdieu's approach, Foucault (2008) theorizes the changing nature of human subjects in neoliberal societies, and engages in how neoliberal economic principles not only lead to disruptive changes in public systems such as education, but also contribute to a differing process in the way subjects evolve, are produced, and are in constant remaking, in a co-constitutive relationship to the needs of the state and the market. Through the continual process of formation and reformation via institutional/market life, subjects (such as students, teachers, administrators) come to understand themselves as marketable products that are individual brands, which they alone are responsible for maintaining.

Peters (2017) calls the process where students begin to see themselves as "marketable" as "self-responsibilization," where subjects within education institutions navigate the system as entrepreneurs. In this understanding, education is a market through which students are responsible for choosing the best path for their own individual growth, development, and success (Peters, 2017). In other words, humans emulate particular economic principles of competition, individualism, profitability, and entrepreneurial spirit through choices in career trajectory, and in their actions, which are contextually negotiated (and resisted) in relation with institutions they belong to (Foucault, 2008). Villadsen (2015) argues that education policies that espouse discourses of economic competitiveness "may underpin appeals to students for exerting their educational choices as an 'investment' and the corollary demand for establishing flexible and competitive education services" (pp. 152-153). The construction of education policy can influence the ways students will relate to/with the education system, whether education id understood as an "investment" in their future, or through certain "services" or

programming options that are considered to have high economic or social capital.

In his series of lectures in 1978-1979, Foucault (2008) discusses the difference between German and American versions of neoliberalism and their separate trajectories due to political, historically specific differences in the way governmental policies/practices have been developed, partially as a response to economic and social events of the twentieth century. While these examples are necessary to understand the genealogy of neoliberalism in Western, English-speaking nations, Ball's (2013a, 2013b) work more clearly describes neoliberalism in late twentieth, and early twenty-first century policy in education systems. Albeit slowly, institutional metamorphoses occurred from these reforms, most often stemming from external governing bodies (for example, OECD PISA test scores) and education policies affecting local education contexts. Consequently, broader institutional definitions of education, as understood through neoliberalism, are tied to the changing idea of the "subject." Ball and Olmedo (2013), for example, argue that in an era of education reform for free-market economic principles, goals of infinite expansion, improvement, and competition, what it means to be a teacher or student in this era shifts into something radically different; teaching and learning for a specific monetary or quantifiable outcome changes the nature of teaching and/or learning.

Complementing Foucault's historically situated neoliberal genealogies, Bourdieu's analyses of neoliberalism (1998, 2003) explore how education systems function to produce students as rational, economic actors through learning principles of competition and efficiency, while simultaneously being subject to knowledge reformation, where: "information is conceived as a mere commodity, treated as any other product and subjected to the law of profit" (2003, p. 68). In this form of neoliberal education, economic principles are not only taught

explicitly as such (for example, through curriculum), but also subtly promoted through implementation of reform with more emphasis on testing and rewards, based on performance and efficiency in students', teachers', and administrators' practices. According to Bourdieu, neoliberalism in the strict understanding of economic reform "from the top" does not take into account acts of resistance from educators or students in shaping their own pedagogical experiences, nor does it take into account how neoliberal subjects (in the Foucauldian sense) then reinforce the changes that are being made by complying to underlying concessions in neoliberal schooling.

More implicit neoliberal operations in schools include the informal, commonsense understanding that studying certain disciplines leads to a greater chance for monetary compensation, for example mathematics and life sciences as more profitable than social sciences and the humanities, therefore creating more prestige and authority for teachers and students aligned with these disciplines (Bourdieu, 2010). Bourdieu's examination of neoliberalism and education cautions against the streamlining and narrowing of curriculum for economic efficiency, and the seemingly neutral catering to knowledges that are more adaptable to free-market principles, therefore creating a self-fulfilling prophecy in schools through the illusion of choice: students choose courses they believe will allow them to enter into the workforce/further their competitive marketability, leading to the lessening of course choices (such as humanities and arts) directed by declining student enrollment (Apple, 2011; Bourdieu, 2003). Recent research on neoliberalism in education often stems from this popularized understanding of economic reforms in schools (Au, 2016; Hursh, 2016; Peters, 2012), and while Bourdieu's definition of neoliberalism makes connections between rising hyper-individualism in education, and the breakdown of collective structures from a fundamentalist fixation on the economy. However, Bourdieu's understanding of neoliberalism does not

provide an analytical platform to interrogate the elasticity through which mechanisms of power

between state and classroom level can adapt, reproduce, and circulate. In this way, the

definition does not allow for an "analytics of government" to understand how "technologies of

domination" and "technologies of the self" are relational outside of a dialectical

conceptualization. Bourdieu's use of neoliberalism for this project is useful, however, for

understanding economic ideologies as being embedded in, and shaping, both educational

policy reform and relative prestige of school subjects, and how students and teachers become a

function of a twenty-first century hybrid economic/educational institutions.

With these differing understandings of neoliberalism in mind, the concept of

neoliberalism is operationalized as a particular type of governing that involves policy reform to

reflect economic aspects of competition, performativity measures, and standardization of

practice, while being connected to a particular dismantling and rebuilding of the educational

"subject" for specific goals (Foucault, 2003, 2008). Further to this understanding of

neoliberalist policy reform in/through governmentality, the concept is connected more broadly

to Foucauldian notions of the "subject" and "technologies of the self" (Foucault, 2010).

Changing institutional and philosophical meanings of education through the creation of rational

economic "actors," as Bourdieu (1998) has noted, is also in the process of co-creating what it

means to be a (neoliberal) subject not simply from a perspective of inculcating the student

passively, but also from the perspective of student reinforcing, resisting, or shaping these

knowledges. In other words, it is the type of student and future citizen, that a neoliberal system

aims to shape, changing the nature of teaching and schooling (Peters, 2017). Using Ball's

(2013) methodology of policy sociology, and Lemke's (2011) framework to connect

neoliberalism to governmentality, this project aims to answer these questions of educational

practice by engaging with theory.

Policy

Similar to issues of boundary-drawing in the above definitions of government and governance, Gulson, Clarke, and Petersen (2015) note that studying educational policy through a poststructuralist lens has proven difficult for several reasons: first, policy must be defined – what exactly *is* policy and what makes it so? Is policy a "text, a narrative, a technique of subjectification, a defensive strategy . . . a spatial orchestration?" or all of these things simultaneously (p. 5)? Second, policy needs to be "removed from its pedestal" (p. 7), which is to say, policy must be understood as a particular type of doxic construction, far too often normalized and taken-for-granted as an effort envisaged by "government," and not through struggles of human beings in various social locations. Lastly, policy should be understood outside of "functionalist understandings . . . as being implementations, cycles, agenda-setting[s], evaluations" (p. 5). Heeding Gulson, Clarke, and Petersen's analysis of education policy in what they define as poststructural studies, I turn to Stephen Ball's fitting policy theorization in his work in the field of policy sociology.

Ball (2012) quotes Ozga (1987) as coining the term "policy sociology" (p. 1). Ozga's (1987) early work describes policy sociology as "rooted in the social science tradition, historically informed and drawing on qualitative and illuminative techniques" (as cited in Gale, 2001, p. 380). Gale (2001) describes that *critical* policy sociology is a "better description" for the analytic work policy sociologists create out of critically understanding the "social world" and the "personal troubles" people face out of "public issues" (p. 381). From this perspective, policy sociology seeks to "illuminate" how education policy in this case is constructed out of particular forms of knowledge, and how those involved in education live these effects. While Ozga (1987) situates the study of policy from this approach as a "qualitative" endeavor, Gale

(2001) suggests that quantitative, empirical policy analyses are also essential for an accurate representation of policy environments. The "theoretical eclecticism" of policy sociology allows one to stray from typical sociological analyses into more interdisciplinary social science fields, however, this is not without criticism (Gale, 2001, p. 382). Criticisms of policy sociology come from its lack of methodological specificity, but the point of this approach is to "bring together structural, macro-level analysis of education systems and education policies, and micro-level investigation, especially that which takes into account people's perception and experiences" (Ozga, 1990, as cited in Ball, 1993, p. 10). Traditional sociological approaches often deal within macro or micro analyses, but policy sociology brings both "levels" together, by accepting that they are not actually separate, but are *inseparable.* With this in mind, this project borrows the idea of the multilevel analysis, theoretical eclecticism, and critical sociological tactics from policy sociology, however, this is methodologically grounded in the style of critical discourse analysis (see Chapter 3: Methodology). The specific (poststructural) definition of policy through Ball's work is apt for this study, and moves the analysis outside of policy as inert, historical documents, into living and breathing pieces of information that construct, and co-construct the reality of teachers.

Ball defines policy as being "both systems of values and symbolic systems, ways of accounting for and legitimating political decisions" (2006, p. 2). Using this definition, policy is understood to be two separate but interlocking categories of conceptualization: policy as a fluid and shifting, manifested material example of historically contextualized systems of value (Ball, 2012, 2013; Gale, 2001), and secondly, policy creation as a political response to the economic climate. In addition to this dynamic positioning of policy, the discursive composition of its contents is explored by navigating which discursive practices and formations are produced and circulated, within a relatively short genealogy of Nova Scotian official education documents

(1994-2016). In the next chapter, I include an in-depth discussion of genealogy and critical

discourse analysis, but first, Foucauldian *discourse* is defined in the integral role it plays in the

conceptualization of educational policy as relational to the trifecta of "truth, power, and right."

Discourse: Practices and Formations

In a well-known series of collected lectures, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and

Other Writings*, Foucault (1980) furthers his earlier theorizations of power by questioning how

power works: what are the mechanisms of power and how are these exercised? Using a triangle

of power-right-truth, Foucault explores the relationship of power to governance and

truth/knowledge production, and seeks to unravel *how* power is mechanized through this

relationship in material reality, not through a question of power through the fixing of certain

truths, rather by questioning "what rules of right are implemented by the relations of power in

the production of discourses of truth?" (p. 93). In other words, how does the production of

particular "powerful" discourses (power ↔ truth) help to create mechanisms by which certain

forms of governance can be produced?

The question of the ways discourse and power work together is paramount for studying

educational policy in an era of neoliberal governmentality, both for understanding policy as a

manifestation of powerful notions of the "truth," and as a mechanism through which certain

truths have the possibility to be operationalized in everyday life through governance. Petersen

(2015) further adds that educational policy is not only a "serious speech act, but it is a world-

making act: it constitutes times, places, problems, relationships, solutions, objects, norms,

moralities, subject positions, institutions . . . [and] has implications for what actions,

sentiments, bodies, material arrangements and so on are deemed appropriate and desirable, and

which are not" (p. 64). Policy as a "world-making" act, as "construct[ing] the problematic, the

inevitable, the necessary" (Ball, 2013a, p. 7), becomes a significant piece in the power-right-truth triangle, where *right*, seen through educational policy, articulates with *power* and *truth*, in a way that makes possible the mechanisms via which policy discourse is a vehicle for privileging certain truth claims over others. In effect, education policy constructs what is necessary for which type of material world and what is in fact desirable in that world.

Foucault's inaugural lectures at the Collège de France in 1970-1971 (2013), and *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) supply a foundation for his conceptualization of "discourse," in its relation to the configuration of language, and the systems through which knowledge is produced through linguistic successions (signs + statements), which he calls discourse. Foucault's *discourse* diverges from other definitions that privilege individual semiotic arrangements as signaling certain meanings (e.g. Jamani, 2011), to an abstract notion of language, where a semiotic sign is not meaningful on its own, but only through a variety of sequenced pathways where meaning is communicated between and, overlapping within objects, subjects, and statements (Foucault, 1972). This fluid and shifting view of discourse must also be situated within the historical, social, and political context in which it is being read/spoken, leading to Foucault's (2013) argument that discourses not only change depending on the historical context, but are also a system of representation where topics are constructed through, and together with, social practices of the sociopolitical milieu.

Policy discourse, then, needs to be situated in its broader social world, with a textual reading that allows for semiotic signs to be read not as isolated meanings in separate documents, but as part of a chain of power, legitimizing and privileging certain discourses over others, which Foucault calls *discursive practices* (Bouchard, 1977). Discursive practices, according to Bouchard, are "not purely and simply ways of producing discourse; they are embodied in technical processes, in institutions, in patterns for general behaviour, in forms for transmission

and diffusion, and in pedagogical forms which, at once, impose and maintain them" (1977, p. 200). Discursive practices are a particular set of processes within legitimized forms of cultural and societal knowledges that try to "fix" and normalize meanings, which Foucault (1981) adds, "in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers" (p. 52).

As such, discursive practices are involved in the maintenance of relationships of power, through the circulation of carefully curated discourses, however, these practices take place in a larger set of laws governing their mobility, which Foucault calls *discursive formations.* In the same way that statements only work in relation with other statements to produce discourses, discourses function in a similar fashion as discursive formations: existing as a type of dispersal system bounded by rules/laws (Foucault, 1972). Foucault (1972) defines a discursive formation as "a system of dispersion of objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices," where certain, "correlations, positions and functionings, transformations" exist in some sort of regularity (p. 38). To complicate matters, Foucault then discusses how a discursive formation cannot, and is not, *just* a type of statement or thematic choice alone picked off a page or through a series of documents, but a combination of all of the factors together. This cautionary practice is to avoid mistakenly naming a particular discursive formation as such, without delving more into its precise constitutive parts, as there can be contesting statements, world-views, concepts, and themes that exist in the same formation. The naming of a discursive formation is not a hopeless exercise, however, and is accomplished through the meticulous process of defining the system and the strategies that are deployed within it, "in other words, if one can show how they all derive (in spite of their sometimes extreme diversity, and in spite of their dispersion in time) from the same set of relations" (1972, p. 68). One such

naming of a discursive policy formation in this project, is the way accountability is defined, how it shifts and changes over time in policy, and the ways in which accountability mechanisms for teachers and administrators shape the experiences of people who work in schools.

Accountability

Accountability in education is not a new concept (Becher & MacLure, 1978; Lessinger, 1970), and it has held different meanings over time. Reese's (2013) historical account of testing politics in schools reaches back into the mid-19th century in Boston, and Brookhart (2009) also found that performance testing in Boston has been used for accountability and monitoring for almost two centuries. Historically, the tests were used as political appendages as proof that students were learning in their small, one-room schoolhouses (Reese, 2013), but in its more recent iterations, the definition of accountability has expanded from localized school testing into other avenues, such as provincial and national governance, teacher competencies, and the politics of international testing results (Olssen, 2016). Levin (1974) presciently describes the use of accountability in education literature, and provides four different possibilities for its newly "burgeoning" uses in education research (p. 363). His concerns were with the lack of direction and clearly defined "systems of accountability" (p. 385) to evaluate schools and their level of achievement, and not in the fact that accountability was becoming a major tenet of education policy. Levin (1974) forwards four types of accountability processes in education: performance reporting (testing, justifying financial expenditures), technical processes (changing the system based on performance reporting), political processes (fulfillment of some goals over others), and institutional processes (changes to governance structure). While each is a separate process, Levin (1974) suggested that the four need to work

together as an overall framework for education accountability to achieve results, and cannot rely on one more than others for an overall evaluation of school systems.

More contemporary definitions of accountability in schools are dependent upon the individual school system, and as Levin (1974) suggested several decades ago, is often not defined, and left as implicitly ascribed to deeper political values of the government in power at the time. These more recent accountability definitions, however, are mostly aligned with only performance indicators, and not in a broader typology as Levin (1974) suggested for practice. As an example, Figlio and Loeb (2011) define accountability in education as "the process of evaluating school performance on the basis of student performance measures" which are most often realized through national and international assessment programs (p. 384). The countries most interested in this type of education accountability, according to Figlio and Loeb (2011), are Western European nations, the U.S., Australia, and Canada, but increasingly, performance-measurement educational accountability are taking root internationally (Hursh, 2001; Olssen, 2016). Levitt, Janta, and Wegrich (2008) suggest that accountability in education has become "synonymous with concepts of transparency, liability, answerability, and other ideas associated with the expectations of account-giving" (p. 2). Because of these assumptions, there are concerns with narrowly-defined understandings of accountability, as only related to outcomes, or with market-based definitions of education, such as international testing results and economic prosperity of the nation (Hibou, 2015; Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich, 2008). Some reasons for the rise of education accountability can be connected to supranational programs of assessment, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD] testing, which began at the end of the 1990's, an increased focus on schools to "perform" in this global testing milieu (Olssen, Codd, O'Neill, 2004), and for increasing what Hibou (2015) calls, the "rhetoric of transparency" (p. viii). What is not new in education accountability is the

use of testing and inspectorates in school governance (Curtis, 2012), but what is "new" in accountability is the use of teacher monitoring in tandem with global, economic discourses paired with testing results.

Rasmussen and Gowlett (2015) describe the "new schooling accountabilities" (p. 203) as leading to a hyper-competitive schooling model, where testing results are not primarily used for the justification of funding, but to forward particular models of schooling that will more closely align with neoliberal economic principles of "choice," "the market, and entrepreneurship" (Gerrard, 2015, p. 129). Under the guise of "political discourse of urgency and necessity" policies forwarding more teacher monitoring, control, and surveillance, "are presented as vital, imperative, and inexorable" (Gerrard, 2015, p. 128) for schooling, global competition, and for the economy (DeLissovoy, 2015). Neoliberal accountability in education moves away from a more simplistic notion of the cost-efficiency and public input model (Wotherspoon, 2014, p. 328), and into a focus on globalized competition, the knowledge or information economy, skills discourses, and policy for marketable outcomes of education (Peters & Besley, 2007). Such "policy technologies" of neoliberalism, along with what Ball (2003) calls, "discursive interventions" rearranges who the education subjects are in education, and which values are embedded in policies, therefore affecting the education students receive, and how it is delivered (p. 218). With changes to education accountability, policy development and education reform in neoliberal governmentality, this has resulted in shifts in teaching and in the delivery of particular disciplines.

Practice

Social Studies

In this study, social studies is used as a way to understand micro-level processes of governmentality in practice, to comprehend what happens at the school level in relation to global and institutional shifts in education policy. Social studies was chosen for two reasons: first, it lies outside of the purview of standardized testing which focuses on literacy and numeracy, and secondly, because the types of knowledge delivered through social studies disciplines (for example, critical thinking, civics and citizenship) are primarily taught through social studies. In this investigation, I trace changes in programming offered, and the ways social studies disciplines are implicated in schooling shifts over time. These are discussed through policy analysis and from teacher experience.

As a relatively "new" field, social studies has its beginnings in the United States in the early 20th century (Osborne, 2003, 2007), and in Canada in the 1920's, drawing from a wide range of disciplines, such as history, geography, citizenship, sociology, psychology, and economics, among others (DeLeon & Ross, 2010). Since its implementation in public schools, there has been widespread debate about what content should be covered, how it should be taught, and who should be able to teach it, along with questions of why it should be taught, at which ages, and for what purposes (Clark, 2004; Evans, 2004; Kirman, 2004). In its one hundred years of existence, social studies has changed dramatically depending on political shifts, times of war, funding changes, and school reform movements, making it "the most handicapped" of any school discipline (Evans, 2004, p. 4). Evans argues that social studies has the most barriers of all school subjects, having to take into account large independent fields of study, such as history, geography, and civics, each with different epistemological, ontological,

philosophical underpinnings, and varying political locations, from traditionalist methods to radical pedagogies (see also Au, 2010; Fleury, 2010).

Further complicating the social studies matrices of conflict, or as Sears (2017a) distinguishes them, "layers of complexity" (p. 3), there are political interests, pedagogical paradigm shifts, and external forces shaping the way curriculum is designed, delivered, and assessed. However, a larger current in social studies literature in the last decade has circulated around the importance of the field in the face of external influences, such as international testing and "global education reform movements" (Sahlberg, 2010, p. 151; Sears, 2017b, p. 43). These influences illustrate how the classroom context cannot be separated from national, continental, or international trends and developments in education, teaching methods, and technological advancements (Au, 2013; Sears & Wright, 2004). Recent (neoliberal) trends in standardized testing, teacher accountability, and quantitative data collection on literacy and numeracy skills have made social studies a low priority in the U.S. context, forcing educators to take up older, traditionalist ways of teaching "to the test," using textbooks as a main tool due to time constraints, to cover all curricular expectations (Misco, Patterson & Doppen, 2011; Ross, 2006). Due to the focus on test results and literacy skills (in countries such as the U.K., U.S., and Australia) teachers in social studies disciplines are faced with dilemmas of what to teach and how to teach it, and which skills to focus on, while attending to the diverse cultural needs of students, and keeping up with advancements in technology (Levstik & Tyson, 2008). DeLeon and Ross (2010) go so far as to say that social studies, in an American neoliberal educational context, has "virtually disappeared" (x) due to more time spent on literacy, numeracy and science/technology/engineering/mathematics (STEM) fields of knowledge.

In the Canadian context, Martin and Brown (2013) suggest that social studies disciplines do not fit into the scope of neoliberal education reform centered on global competitiveness

through standardization in mathematics and literacy. Through its incongruencies with future

"valued" educational imaginaries of entrepreneurialism and individual competition (Carpenter,

Weber, & Schugurensky, 2012), social studies disciplines are at crossroads in neoliberal

education systems. Such "social imaginaries" (Angus, 2015, p. 408) are founded upon simplistic

understandings of "bad" and "good": schools, teachers, students, and possible life/career paths,

which reduce schooling to yearly results detached from societal, historical, and political

processes (Angus, 2015). Social studies knowledge, whether history, civics, or geography, are

innately differential to simplistic "good" and "bad" binaries through their disciplinary methods

(e.g. balanced evidence, critical investigation), making the fields both alternative to and opposing

the dominant educational frame of quantifiable results (DeLeon & Ross, 2010). In other words,

social studies disciplines do not easily fit into education systems built around such values, nor are

they easily quantifiable into data through standardized testing, while at the same time, provide the

possibility for a deeper critique and understanding of the education system itself (Au, 2011,

2013).

Similar to discussions in other English-speaking OECD member countries, the United

States (Au & Ferrare, 2015; Ross, 2014; Ross, Mathison, & Vinson, 2014), Britain (Ball, 2013;

Webb, 2009), and Australia (Lingard, Creagh, & Vass, 2012; Martin & Brown, 2013), portions of

the Canadian context (Ontario, British Columbia, New Brunswick) present similarities to

critiques posed by authors from each of the member countries on neoliberal accountability

through mathematics and literacy testing (Sattler, 2012; Sears & Hyslop-Margison, 2007).

However, due to the decentralized nature of education in Canada, comparative critical

discussions taking place between provinces in educational literature concerning social studies

and/or neoliberal policy educational reforms, in general, is less known. In British Columbia, for

example, Steeves (2014) discusses the Liberal government's quickly constructed and

implemented policies to cut education funding drastically, with the closure of over two hundred schools in the decade of 2001-2012, and ensuing rising numbers of students in classes. Also during this time, the government passed Bill 28, revoking formerly imposed class size limits, and Bill 22 in 2012, which suspended union job actions (Steeves, 2014, p. 6). While Bill 22 was deemed unconstitutional by British Columbia's Supreme Court in 2014, the school closures and greater demands on teachers remained (Steeves, 2014, p. 7). Although the British Columbia context is not directly connected to disciplinary discussions of social studies, math, and literacy testing, the educational "crisis" and urgency for reform with continued high expectations for teachers through budgetary cuts reflects the Nova Scotia political landscape.

In the Ontario context, Carpenter *et al.* (2012; see also Pinto, 2012) have documented longitudinal effects on teachers and schools in Ontario after the Mike Harris Liberals "Common Sense Revolution" in the 1990's. Gidney (1999) described the fast-paced education reforms during this time as "chaotic" and "remarkable in scope," with many changes happening at once (p. 234). Based on interviews with veteran high school and adult educators in Ontario from the 1990's, Carpenter *et al.* (2012) concluded that not only have policy reforms, including curricular changes, standardized testing, greater school accountability to math and literacy results and funding cuts, greatly influenced how teachers' lives are affected through added stress and exhaustion, but that the arts and social sciences have "languished" in the process of neoliberal reform (Carpenter et al., 2012, p. 151). Their analysis, however, focuses on the lived experiences of teachers in a broad discussion of neoliberal education, and does not attend to the details of discursive policy formations that support and reflect the disappearance of social studies. Similar to the Ontario context, in New Brunswick, Sears and Hyslop-Margison (2007) raise concerns with the adherence to test results in education reform, and the "attempts to reshape curriculum on the basis of narrow ideological commitments" (p. 44). Such narrowing of

commitments under the precipice of educational crisis has led to a narrowing of

curriculum along the lines of standardized testing content areas (Roberts-Holmes, 2015).

In recent literature on the effects on curricular knowledge in neoliberal education in

English-speaking OECD nations, the *languishing* of social sciences and arts is repeated, in a

framework of standardization, accountability, and evidence-based education (Webb & Gulson,

2012; Yates, 2013). Whereas discussions on the field of social studies in the Canadian context

remains mostly focused on *what* is taught (Evans, 2010; Sears, 2014), which disciplines are most

important or credible (Lévesque, 2016; Morton, 2006), and best practices (Seixas, 2017; Tupper,

2012), its disappearance remains regional rather than national in conversations in Canada. Sears

and Wright (2004), however, discuss how social studies have become "low priority" in an era in

standardized testing in literacy and numeracy in the Canadian context, and suggest that while

policy and curricula advance a progressive form of citizenship in theory, the results do not match

up in practice (p. 104). The invisibility of social studies in neoliberal education reform based on

math and literacy results require a deeper engagement with educational policy as a place of

legitimization for curricular knowledges (DeLeon, 2014; Endacott, Wright, Goering, Collet,

Denny, & Davis, 2015). Through these processes, social studies becomes devalued, but because

social studies is the predominant vehicle for marginalized historical content, such as racial equity

curricula (Rogers, 2011), such knowledges are devalued as well.

Social studies curricula in Nova Scotia has been a possible route for addressing racial

inequities, historical marginalization, and colonialization in the province. In the 1990's, the

Taskforce on Mi'kmaq Education (1993) and *Black Learners Advisory Committee* (1994) reports

recommended institutional redress which included the creation of a *Racial Equity Policy* (2002b)

and a new mandatory high school Canadian History credit, through which students have the

choice between three history courses: Mi'kmaq Studies, African Canadian Studies, and Canadian

History (see Rogers, 2011 for implementation and curricular analyses). A 2009 follow-up report

from Enid Lee Consultants, *Reality Check*, concluded that despite calls for institutional and

systemic changes, such as the increased hiring of teachers and administrators from Mi'kmaq and

African Nova Scotian communities, greater curricular inclusion across disciplines, and antiracist

professional development for teachers and administrators (*Racial Equity Policy,* 2002b), not all

recommendations have been implemented or sustained. Outside of the social studies inclusive

curricula, an option for the grade twelve English credit, African Heritage Literature 12, was also

implemented into high schools, but antiracist tenets of assessment, hiring, community

partnerships, continual institutional change, and inclusive environments have yet to be fully

realized in practice (*Racial Equity Policy,* 2002b; *Reality Check,* 2009). This being said, if

critical, antiracist curricula and content is (mostly) located in social studies courses, when social

studies disciplines lose their relative "value," the promise of racial equity content, or even critical

thought development in the education system could dissolve, leading to the lessening of

curricular options for critical, antiracist pedagogies. As a way to "foster student growth in

historical knowledge and thinking" (Sears, 2017b, p. 42), social studies disciplines are necessary

for developing an awareness of how the world as we know it today has been constructed through

multitude of processes, including its social, cultural, historical, political, and spatial formations.

Describing social studies as a "compelling" content area for culturally responsive pedagogical

work, where content is developed in response to learners' cultural identities in the classroom,

McGregor (2015) further adds that social studies teaches "the foundation for how human beings

live respectfully in relation to the environment, and to each other. This is what social studies

teaches" (p. 59).

In these ways, social studies as a concept, as critical disciplinary fields, and as curricular

content areas that have the potential to advance a deeper, more profound sense of relationality,

offers one possible way to understand the significant connections between macro and micro level

processes of power and domination in educational governance, as seen through broader

governmental strategies for economic prosperity. While social studies disciplines offer a glimpse

into the shifts happening to curricular content areas, including the ways some disciplines do not

fit, or articulate with, current shifts in neoliberal education reform, teachers' lives have also

changed significantly. These changes can be understood through the ways teachers navigate the

education system by upholding and resisting restricting accountability frameworks in which they

live and work. Together, both social studies disciplines and social studies teachers are

participants in governmentality, although, while social studies teachers are the main players,

social studies disciplines are relegated "to the bench": without providing evidence for testing,

data, and standardization practices, social studies is left behind, whereas the teachers continue to

work within a system of performativity, no matter their subject area.

Performativity

Performativity is a concept that is often used in gender and sexuality studies (e.g. Butler,

1997, 2009), however, this study situates performativity in teachers' work in neoliberal

education systems. Ball (2003) defines performativity in education as "a technology, a culture

and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means

of incentive, control, attrition and change, based on rewards and sanctions (both

material and symbolic)" (p. 216). As a policy technology, a schooling culture, and

mechanisms of regulation, teachers' work is (re)defined through specific "performances" that

can be held in high regard (with rewards), or sanctioned for not following specific institutional

expectations.

The concepts of accountability and performativity go hand in hand, where teachers must be accountable for their students' results, and in following accountability mechanisms, teachers perform a particular type of educational role. For the accountability of teachers in a highly competitive education system, measures are added to ensure that quality education is being achieved in all classrooms, which Hibou (2015) describes as being "neoliberal formalities" (p. x), those processes by which teachers become more invested in. Hibou (2015) explains such formalities as being:

> Bullshit tasks . . . extras that take people away from the heart of their jobs, forcing them to undertake administrative tasks, follow rules, respect procedures, focus on security issues or the quality of tasks completed, and to an even greater extent to ascertain and demonstrate that this has indeed been done, by filling forms, ticking boxes, giving feedback on the actions that have been carried out, quantifying the activity, assessing the time used to perform a particular task, organizing checks, audits, evaluations, and so on. (p. viii)

When teaching is centered around "performance" through the completion of accountability tasks, described here as "bullshit tasks," it removes educators from "the heart of their jobs," which is teaching. This teacher-identity field is difficult at times to navigate, as Ball (2003) suggests, since teacher experiences in accountability systems are "highly personal" and can have a negative effect on teachers' "mental health and emotional well-being" (p. 216).

In the context of higher education, Berg, Huijbens, and Larsen (2016) have found that "audit" or monitoring systems for professors and students alike have found to have created "unprecedented levels of anxiety and stress" with students expecting "hoop-jumping" and "box-ticking" from their professors, connected to strenuous "performance assessments" (p. 169). While this study took place in Western European nations (Denmark, Iceland, the Netherlands,

U.K., Sweden), the authors point to parallel issues of accountability and performativity in increasing stress on staff. They connected the stressors to "neoliberal rationalities" (p. 170) in education, including increased competition between professors and academic departments and disciplines, through monitoring and controlling both the process and the output of the educational process (Berg, Huijbens, & Larsen, 2016). Hall and McGinity (2015) from the U.K. public school context call this "deliverology," where the failure to deliver successful performances of students, and therefore teaching, is "ineluctably associated with national economic disaster" (p. 5). Pressures on teachers to be accountable for their work, for which they are monitored, is not only associated with student performance in neoliberal rationality, but economic prosperity as well.

In an education system based on "datafication" and a "results-orientation," teachers become the "problem" or "barrier" through which advanced "accountability/responsibility instruments" are then created to solve (Singh, 2015, p. 364). Such circular logic replicates and further accentuates the collection of data in monitoring teacher performances, to which Ball (2003), borrowing from Lyotard (1984), described as the "terrors of performativity" – a cycle of monitoring and surveilling teachers to account for their "results" (Singh, 2015). Using Ball's (2003) definition, Meng (2009) advances that "the terrors of performativity privilege measurable outcome goals, often in the service of the economy. In this way, performativity refocuses the [teacher's] cognition away from other kinds of goals" (p. 160), in effect pulling teachers' work away from aspects that cannot be quantified (for example, care of students) and into quantifiable work (testing, progress). By shifting the focus of education into data, quantifiable measures, and monitoring teacher/student performance, the jobs of teachers, and thus, their experiences, also change.

Through a multilayered analysis that takes into consideration pressures on the education system, policy constructions, disciplinary programming, and the lived experiences of teachers, the conceptual framing of this project bridges disciplines and traditional understandings of "the institution" and "experience" through the theorization of a matrix of relations in neoliberal governmentality. In this, the boundaries of teacher experience, or even the state, are not solid, but are perforated, bleeding into one another, as Alexander (2015) calls "bleeding borders" (p. 142), which continuously create, reproduce, and reinforce one another *co-constitutively*. To reiterate Foucault's (2003) point about power acting "as a chain," it does not sit in, nor is locatable in one place or space, but is shifting and relational. Therefore, to trace neoliberal governmentality, the methodology must be in agreement with these poststructural principles of power and the boundary-less-ness of institutional life (see Gulson, 2015; Hibou, 2015; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Villadsen, 2015). Out of these complex theoretical and conceptual understandings what follows is the methodology and methods chapter, which further situate the research project in a framing of Foucauldian genealogy and qualitative multimethods.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Introduction

I begin this research project with the assertion from Denzin and Giardina (2016) that qualitative education research in social science approaches that are "critical, feminist, poststructural, postmodern, and posthuman," are "inherently political" acts (p. 6). Based on the idea of critical research "as a political act," this project disentangles, and makes complicated, messy layers of policy knowledge construction, teacher lived experience, and possible consequences for social studies disciplines, through an interpretive reading of the historical present. A qualitative approach is used to answer the research questions, as it allows for a design that can offer "simultaneous" understandings of complex, multidirectional sets of phenomena, instead of a linearly described "sequential" methodological approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 6). I utilize a qualitative research design to investigate the research questions, compiling a "set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5), as a "description of things" (Berg & Lune, 2013, p. 3). To comprehend the complexity of the educational present, and its current state of politics, this description relies on a qualitative reading of discourse that is historically situated, yet plays in the present moment through reflexive teacher experiences. In this way, this project employs a qualitative design to weave together an interpretive, theoretical, and political representation of a historically contextualized educational moment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5), which seeks to capture the "struggle of truth" and "other forms of life and subjectivity into history" (Cordero, 2017, p. 147).

Methodology: Foucault, schema, framework

I use a Foucauldian genealogy to best fit the methodological aims of my project. To

support the genealogical approach, I have chosen Thomas Lemke's methodological schema

adapted from Foucault (2010) and the policy sociology framework of Stephen Ball (2013a).

Below, I take up Foucault's genealogy, Lemke's Foucauldian schema, and Ball's exemplar

analysis of neoliberal governmentality in education in turn, providing an overarching view of

the methodological scope, its connection to the research questions, and choices in multimethod

qualitative design. Out of these decisions in methodology and methods, the subsequent

analysis chapters contain a consistent pattern: a policy genealogy and critical discourse analysis

begins each chapter, followed by an analysis of teacher experience gathered from focus groups

and interviews. The intention of a relatively consistent pattern is to keep the methodology and

methods consistent across the analyses. In this chapter I outline the implications for such

decisions in methodology and methods, and attend to the theoretical foundations for each

choice, beginning with genealogy as the guiding research methodology.[6]

Genealogy: Archaeological beginnings, research decisions

Genealogy is originally a Nietzschean historical concept used "to cure a current illness"

(Elden, 2001, p. 99), and differs from Foucault's (1972) earlier archaeological methodology,

which views "truth" and knowledge production as a system of operations, where buried

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[6] I deliberated which methodology would best fit the aims of the research, and went through a decision-making process whereby, at first, archaeology seemed the better choice, however, upon deeper theoretical engagement, it became clear that Foucault's later work on/in genealogy was more appropriate for my research. I believe the differences between methodological perspectives, archaeology and genealogy, are an important aspect of the methodological discussion, and therefore are included in the discussion.

discourses can be unearthed and understood as they are (Dean, 2010). However, the unearthed

material is not used for further purposes other than to show its path of production through its

ordered system of distribution. In other words, the archaeological process seeks to place specific

moments of discourse (and their meanings) in their historical specificity, to "follow them their

whole length to their exterior edges" (Foucault, 1972, p. 139), and to provide a total picture of

discursive specificity. Calling archaeology an "anthropology of creation" (p. 139), Foucault

writes that he is "concerned with its own volume as a *monument*" (p. 140, emphasis added).

Each historical "monument" of knowledge production, however in-depth, is not necessarily

connected to the next, and places imaginary borders around the formations used to understand the

historically specific moment. As such, archaeology has been critiqued as being structuralist and

overly determinist, although still quite useful to explore what discourses are and what they "can

do" in a temporal and spatial microcosm (Dean, 2010; Dean & Villadsen, 2016, p. 11). In his

later work, Foucault moves toward a multidirectional methodology to break out of these

limitations, expanding into what some consider a "post" structuralist understanding of meaning

(Williams, 2005); seeing discourses as ongoing constructions without beginning and end, that

cannot be easily bound by false borders (Peters, 1998). Therefore, although archaeology has

been critiqued as "structuralist," Gale (2001) suggests that it is still useful when in conjunction

with genealogy, to extend the methodological scope of the research project, as it provides a

thorough excavation of each historical moment.

In *Society Must Be Defended,* Foucault (2003) describes the theorization and process of

what he has called genealogy. In this lecture, he discusses subjugated knowledges as the pretext

for genealogy as a methodology: these knowledges are both "historical contents" that become

buried under institutional and systemized functions, and/or knowledges that have been

"disqualified as nonconceptual" or "insufficiently elaborated" (2003, p. 7). In other words, he

uses genealogy to disrupt normalized, seemingly banal knowledges that are often not seen as

important, or generally viewed as insignificant (unscientific) in research, and secondly, to dive

deeper into histories or taken-for-granted phenomena that are generally glazed over – comparable

to his work on the histories of human sexuality and the prison system (Foucault, 1977, 1978). He

refuses to glance over outcast histories of peoples, concepts, or institutions that are complicit with

technologies or power/knowledge and domination, and historically traces how mechanisms of

power are mutable in society, and shift depending on the context. Genealogy examines

subjugated knowledges through localized, historical readings to "make critique possible" (2003,

p. 8), since these pieces of information contrast with normalized meanings in institutional life.

Foucault asserts that institutions are "designed to mask" (2003, p. 7) such knowledge, and

whether this "masking" is intentional or not is not of importance, but lies in the recovery of

subjugated knowledge, both from historical sources, and through peoples whose experience

qualifies (for example, teachers in the education system). Typical of Foucault in his work, he

does not want to claim that genealogy is a precise method, or that there is a specific set of

theories that scholars should follow. What he does give is an overarching methodology that can

be taken up in various ways, while cutting across a variety of subjugated knowledges, spaces, and

times.

Foucault calls the process of pairing knowledges that are usually not placed in the same

analysis "genealogy": those knowledges of "scholarly erudition and local memories" (2003, p.

9), when mirrored with one another, provide a context from which to practice an analysis.

Genealogy exposes multiple relations of power and domination from within institutional

discourses that are blind unto them, to undo their illusory disconnections. In short, the point is

to use this newly traced knowledge, the leftover and neglected (assumed mundane) pieces of

the sociological puzzle, for political change. Garland (2014) argues that the genealogist

forwards a critical, political agenda by "presenting a series of troublesome associations and lineages – that institutions and practices we value and take for granted today are actually more problematic or more 'dangerous' than they otherwise appear" (p. 372). Genealogy is beneficial for bringing subjugated knowledge to light to show the "dangerousness" of power and domination often masked by institutional functionality. Working in policy genealogy specifically, Gale (2001) suggests that genealogy "seeks out discontinuities" (p. 389) to move away from one long line of discourse development into the nuanced, uneven shifts and struggles found in political documents. This moves away from a never-ending search to source "origins" of specific discursive lineages, and into a search of "descent and emergence" (Garland, 2014, p. 372) of particular ideas.

To summarize, a Foucauldian genealogy begins with the political act of tracing subjugated, historically situated knowledges to uncover potentially "dangerous," hidden, or otherwise masked institutional operations. The tracing process combines multiple sources of information at different points in time to illustrate inconsistencies, problematizing the notion of even development, and to have evidence as to why some educators are feeling "the ground crumbling beneath their feet" (Foucault, 2003, p. 6). A genealogical investigation provides an iterative oscillation between past and present, document and lived experience, that lends to a "diagnosis" of education politics in the present (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 119).

Methodological Schema

A connective tissue is needed to operationalize theoretical concepts of neoliberalism and governmentality with genealogical realms of official knowledges (policy) and local knowledges (educator experiences). Foucault briefly describes his layered genealogical method in his later

work, *The Government of Self and Others* (2010), as interweaving stratum: "analysis of forms of veridiction; analysis of procedures of governmentality; and analysis of the pragmatics of the subjects and techniques of the self" (p. 42). What is missing in Foucault's work is the mechanization of these three levels of genealogical focus: since policy discourses ("forms of veridiction"), operationalizations of policy ("procedures of governmentality"), and educator experiences ("pragmatics of the subjects") emerge from different, yet interrelated, historically specific processes (the state, and the self), in which ways can this information be understood as working on disparate levels of institutional power and authority (Lemke, 2011)? Sociologist Thomas Lemke (2010, 2011) has questioned how these interconnected realms relate in a matrix of power relations; how do technologies of dominance, and technologies of the self/subject, converge? Lemke's theorizations have implications for the research questions in two ways: first, through the operationalization of the matrix of power into permeable, distinct layers, and second, in the understanding that there are multiple interactions between each layer, although they are separate, to trace institutional power and its possible lived effects. Lemke also provides the "missing link" between these two methodological levels of inquiry through a schema, for which I have developed a visual representation (Figure 2). The visual depicts how a genealogy of the state and a genealogy of subject interact, and are interrelated (yet separate) processes.

In this schema, Lemke takes Foucault's methodology of genealogy as one broad notion, and develops a multilayered approach through a separation of "state genealogy" and "subject genealogy." This is particularly relevant for this project, where shifts in policy, and educators' experiences working in educational institutions, are traced. Lemke's (2010) link between state and subject is located (theoretically and conceptually) in between the poles of macro and micro, on a methodological axis of conjuncture. This space is of extreme importance, because the ways in which certain institutional discourses are accepted, maintained, rejected, or unauthorized,

occur in this (theoretical) space of neoliberal governmentality.
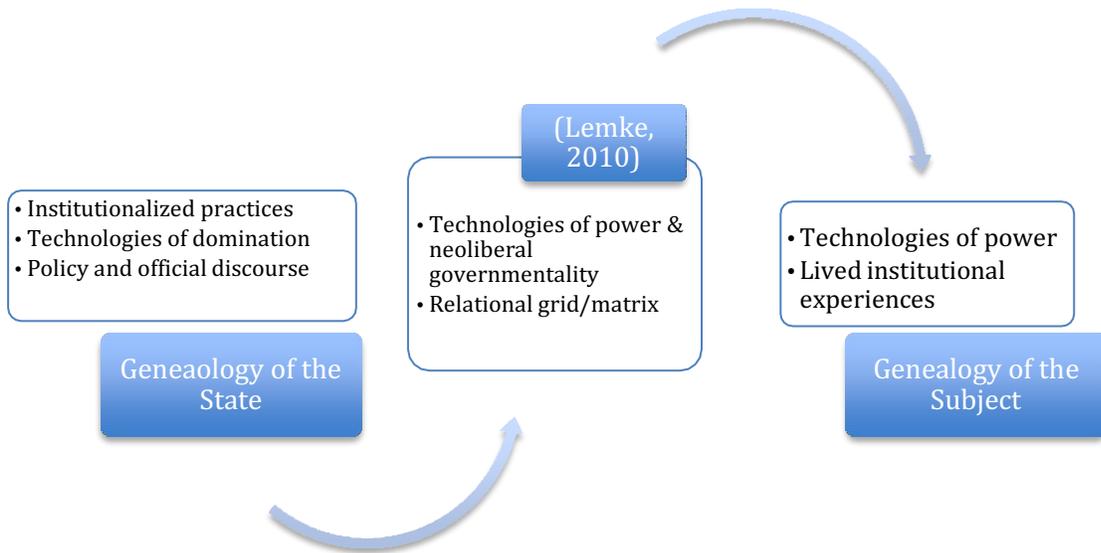
Figure 2. Visual representation of Lemke's (2012) multilayered methodological schema

A second methodologically important aspect is the acknowledgement that the relational

grid of power and domination can fluctuate, expand or contract, depending on the historical

moment, regional context, and discourses of power/domination at that particular moment. The

metaphor of a grid is given here, however, the possible movements of power/domination are not

limited to linear pathways that a grid suggests. Such pathways can also be non-linear, in a sense

that there are multiple points of negotiation taking place instantaneously. Cultural theorist, Stuart

Hall (2002), has called this point of relational space a "conjuncture," where multiple possible

relationships simultaneously exist, and are configured differently depending on the trajectories of

each part of the matrix of relations. Hall (2002) calls this momentary point of complex

connection in a conjuncture an "articulation," and while he writes primarily about racialized and economic identities in various social sites, the use of the terms articulation and conjuncture are excellent descriptors for this space (or plane) of power relations in Lemke's (2010) schema. The junctural space where policies, the institution, and teachers exist together, is a site of ongoing struggle in neoliberal governmentality. It is where institutional directives and mechanisms for micromanagement (via policy and leadership) meets social actors (teachers, administrators), their individual pedagogical politics, and personal experiences, both attached to, and distanced from, institutional life. It is in these articulations that the genealogical brings such struggles to the surface.

It is important to note that articulations are neither predetermined nor absolute, but in their overall patterns, create, reproduce, destroy, or sustain particular discourses, practices, policies, and contestations. Lemke's schema adds a layer of mechanization for this project into these difficult, tenuous spaces of articulation that are missing from the previously more elusive methodology given by Foucault. Ball's (2006, 2013a) work in policy sociology then provides an "example in practice" as a genealogical educational policy sociology.

Neoliberal Governmentality

In the broad field of education, genealogy is present in critical policy studies (Fairclough, 2013; Gale, 2001), educational globalization (Komulainen et al., 2014; Olssen, 2016; Olssen, Codd, & McNeill, 2004), and policy sociology (Ball, 2006, 2013a) among other examples. As a methodology that articulates broad and local levels of knowledge through discourses and contextualized local histories, Stephen Ball's use of this methodology is well-suited as a genealogical exemplar for my project due to his work in (educational) policy sociology. Ball

critiques education policy reform in the United Kingdom as historical processes of knowledge construction, which exhibits the critical genealogical approach that is necessary to understand lived effects of neoliberal governmentality. In his explanation of Foucault's genealogy, Ball (2013a) describes its purpose as "cutting" knowledges open: "the point is not to make sense of our history in the present but to make it unacceptable. It is about questioning the history that enfolds us, as a violent imposition of truth" (p. 87), and as O'Neill (2015) argues, "the genealogical approach has allowed for an "unpacking the microphysics of [neoliberal governmentality's] discursive basis" (p. 850). Ball's work draws from themes of power, dominance, and knowledge production in shifting educational policy as connected to changing socioeconomic "truths." These so-called truths are pieces of policy, taken-for-granted knowledge that is often glanced over, when in some cases policy can be that missing point of conjuncture between two (or multiple) realms of connection.

Ball's (2006) genealogy of neoliberalist discourses in national education policies carefully deconstructs how neoliberal concepts such as meritocracy, competition, the knowledge economy, and race, have become spoken of in particular ways, at specific moments in the last twenty years in the public forum. In this work, he delineates policy shifts that he calls into question as being reproductions of classed, gendered, and racialized inequities in education, through his delving into a short history of policies and official documentation. In his own work, he does not provide a qualitative component of research that is compiled from educators and their experiences in school systems, but he does quote other educational researchers who have completed teacher interviews in the United Kingdom. This is a limitation to his work, which otherwise would follow Lemke's schema. The benefits of his most recent work in education will methodologically connect to my project by showing how policy shifts can be connected to the larger realm of neoliberal governmentality, and the subjective layer of educator responses.

Methods

Flowing directly from the research questions, conceptual framework, and methodology, is a multimethod design, including a policy analysis (critical discourse analysis), qualitative focus groups, and individual interviews with educators. Using a genealogy of policy documents between 1994-2016, the critical discourse analysis traces the uneven development of neoliberal governmentality in the education system. To understand if, and how, these changes implicate educators in practice, including the ways in which teachers perceive changes to their jobs over the last decade, I collected and analyzed qualitative data through focus groups and interviews, and emerging from these sources of data, and developed a genealogical history of the present.

Critical Discourse Analysis: Rationale

Using critical discourse analysis [CDA] as a method to compliment the genealogical methodology (see discussion below) (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012; Graham & Luke, 2011; van Dijk, 2012, 1993), I trace discursive changes in eight main Nova Scotia policy and official documents from 1994-2016, supplemented by yearly statements from 2000-2016. These documents are accessible to the public on the Nova Scotia Department of Education website,[7] and the earlier documents 1994-1995, were accessible through Saint Mary's University library in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

These specific official documents were used in the CDA to show the overall orientation of education reform through policy platforms and reports over the last twenty-three years, which reflected changes to the education system, and provided a large scope to allow discursive patterns to unfold over time. The *Business Plans* (2000-2009) and *Statement of Mandate*

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[7] https://www.ednet.ns.ca/

(2010-2016) were necessary background documents for this study as they outlined yearly

goals and action plans for the department, which illustrated how and when changes were

made. These documents also helped to fill in the gaps between the years of the main

documents cited above. Altogether, the official documents provided an analytical basis for

how discourses in policy are connected to, and in articulate with, larger concepts of

neoliberalism and economic pressures in education in Nova Scotia.[8]

Table 1

List and Type of Official and Policy Documents Analyzed

Year	Title	Document Type
1994	*Restructuring Nova Scotia's Education system: Preparing All Students for a Lifetime of Learning*	Discussion Paper
1995	*Education Horizons: White Paper on Restructuring the Education System*	Policy
2002	*Learning for Life: Planning for Success*	Policy
2005	*Learning for Life: Brighter Futures Together*	Policy
2014	*Minister's Panel on Education: Disrupting the Status Quo*	Report
2015	*Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education: The 3R's: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild*	Policy
2016	*From School to Success: Clearing the Path, Report of the Transition Task Force*	Report
2016	*Be There: Student Attendance and Achievement*	Discussion Paper
00-09	Yearly departmental *Business Plan* reports	Report
10-16	Yearly departmental *Statement of Mandate* reports	Report

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[8] Education reform does not exist in a vacuum, and while external and comparative documents would potentially broaden the analysis of neoliberal governmentality in Nova Scotia (for example, Canadian Minister's Education Council, PISA or the OECD), I have contained the research within the provincial context to fully understand education reform and its effects in the local context. I discuss how I intend to expand my analysis through further research in the concluding chapter.

I chose the historical context, 1994-2016, for two reasons. First, while neoliberalism's roots reach back into the 1970's and 1980's in education policy (Davies & Bansel, 2007), as stated above, the genealogical approach is not interested in finding the "beginnings" of a particular discourse, but how it has developed over time in specific contexts. The 1990's also provide a fruitful period to begin the exploration, since considerable education reforms were enacted in the early 1990's in the John Savage Liberal era, including institutional restructuring, severe cut backs, and changes to educational governance (Clancy, 2000). This period of time also marks the beginning of advanced technology (computers, the internet) being integrated into schools more widely, and shifts in economic discourses to include the idea of the global village and globalization (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004). Due to the broad technological, political, and educational shifts happening at this time, the 1990's was chosen to situate the recent past of education policy evolution. Secondly, and for more pragmatic reasons, the three decades (1990's, 2000's, 2010's) provide a manageable historical context of study to contain the genealogy.

CDA is an interpretive (qualitative, textual) method used in social sciences and humanities as a way to trace how power, social inequalities, domination and knowledges, circulate, are reproduced, and articulate (ideologically) within various discursive formations. According to van Dijk (2008), CDA is a multidisciplinary, "dissident" method used to "expose" and "resist" particular forms of dominance that are enacted in social and political contexts (p. 85). Other research explored in this field (for e.g. Fairclough, 2001; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012; Henry & Tator, 2002, 2007; van Dijk, 1991, 1993, 2012; Wodak, 2009; Wodak & Meyer, 2009) includes the ways discursive knowledges in print/social/digital media, politics, and education are gendered and racialized, and articulate with larger notions of power. In this project, I use CDA as

an analytical tool to determine how discourses of power (particularly through neoliberalist

language) circulate and are taken up in different ways through policy discourse.

As an example of "neoliberal language," Ball (2013a) analyzes specific word usage over

time, and connects the shifts in discourse back to broader political shifts in education in the

United Kingdom.[9] Through this approach, he pulls out specific lineages of discourse that are

connected to neoliberal governmentality that have changed the trajectory of the education system.

For example, in a section titled "The rhetorics of education reform," (p. 17) Ball describes the

historical political context of the 1980's in the United Kingdom, provides examples from

historical education policy sources, and delves into discursive packaging of key neoliberal

signifiers. This discourse analysis includes tracing ideas such as "modernization,"

"competitiveness," and "knowledge economy" as educational responses to globalization (pp. 17-

18). Ball is able to extrapolate meaning by seeing how discourse both creates and is created by

political and economic contexts. In other words, policy reform influences the direction of the

education system, but reforms are also influenced by historically significant factors such as

political platforms and responses to larger global economic changes.

It is in this iterative process of close reading, tracing specific discursive (political)

instances, and connections to the theorization of power/knowledge, that Fairclough and

Fairclough (2012) call "a way of construing aspects of the world associated with a particular

social perspective (e.g. neoliberal discourse of globalization)" (p. 81). The connection between

discourse, the social world, and processes of shifting discursive configurations, is an interpretive

process which allows for a broad, yet specific, critical reading of policy, with the purpose of

disrupting taken-for-granted knowledge constructions influencing educational change. The CDA

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[9] Although Ball calls this method "policy sociology" (Ozga, 1987), the understanding of policy
discourse as connected with larger notions of power/knowledge is analogous to CDA.

is created through this repetitious process of reading, and connecting to literature from critical

policy analyses created across various Western global locations (for example, the U.K. (Olmedo

& Wilkins, 2016), Denmark (Villadsen, 2015), the U.S (Peters, 2011), and Canada (Carpenter et.

al, 2012)). From a wide theoretical understanding of neoliberalism in education policy, this is

combined with a process of discourse analysis described below.

Critical Discourse: Method of Analysis

Fairclough's (2012) description of CDA as an interpretive method posits a type of

analysis which needs to be backed by a particular definition of discourse, and with theoretical and

conceptual engagements that best fit the research purposes. The CDA method is largely

dependent on the research design and the aims of the research, and provides an analysis based on

a theoretical and material engagement with texts. In the case of critical education policy analysis,

discourse (text) is at once discursive, and created for the purpose of action in the real world

(Heimans, 2015). Fairclough (2012) calls such texts as having "partially discursive and partially

material character" which "are materially grounded and materially promoted" (p. 464). As

political "strategies," policy discourses provide "particular ways of representing, or rather

imagining a new political-economic order" (Fairclough, 2012, p. 463). This project uses a CDA

of education policy to illustrate how the education system is shifting through policy discourse, in

which ways these changes emerge and descend, what kind of "material world" is being promoted

and encouraged through specific discourses in policy over time. These lines of inquiry connect to

the overall research questions by providing discursive genealogies connected to conceptual tenets

of neoliberal governmentality in education (e.g. Jankowski & Provezis, 2014).

Stemming from the idea that methods are "emergent construction[s]" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5), I analyzed policy discourses using Strauss' (1990) "open coding" procedure, which differs from other models of coding, such as a stage model of content analysis to determine analytic categories before engaging in an analysis (Berg, 2009). Berg (2009) describes the open coding process as the "unrestricted coding of data" which requires minute and multiple readings of text, from which analytic categories are created (p. 358). As readings continue, this procedure is interspersed with "frequent interruptions" to connect back to theory and the intent of the research questions, through the use of reflexive "field notes" (Berg, 2009, p. 355). Using the open coding method as a guideline, an iterative, 7-stage analysis process progressed and organically emerged over an 18-month period:

a. Reading policy documents: Policy documents were read in full, twice. During this process, I read the documents "widely at first" to be read "deeply once immersed in the data" (Augustine, 2014, p. 752). The first read-through did not involve note taking, and the second read began the process of immersion in the data.

b. Reading and taking notes: After becoming familiar with the content, the third read involved in-depth note-taking, with connections to theory and to interview and focus group data (this activity is repeated in every subsequent stage).

c. Reading minutely for specific emerging patterns: This stage involved a deep engagement with the documents, with an increased iterative reflective note-taking connected to theoretical concepts. This narrowed the reading process to focus on particular lines of discourse.

d. Determine emerging patterns: Out of the first three stages, I created 13 initial categories of interest. These categories initially included: accountability, the economy, competition, standardizing/testing, math/literacy, international/global

discourses, monitoring/tracking, early childhood education, business/partnerships, urgency/deficits, optimism, performance, achievement/success/excellence.

e. Trace individual patterns, create genealogies: From the above 12 categories, 7 genealogies of specific discursive use were created by combining several of the smaller categories into larger ones. The new categories were: accountability, economy/competition, standardizing/testing/international discourses, monitoring/tracking, math/literacy/early childhood education, business/partnerships, urgency/deficits/optimism, performance/achievement/success/excellence.

f. Re-read policies to confirm categories: I re-read the policies to check for accuracy, to include any missed pieces of information, and to continue the iterative process of note taking with reference to theoretical information. At this point of the document analysis, the interview and focus group analyses were taking place concurrently. The end result of this stage was the creation of 7 genealogical tracings of categorized discourse. For example, the ways in which the concept of "accountability" was used between 1994-2016 was recorded through detailed notes, with examples from policy texts. This process includes how "accountability" was defined, framed, and connected to specifics (teachers, students, testing, etc.). Results were recorded and analyzed with reference to theory. As an example, Ball (2013a) attends critically to discursive and strategic uses of "accountability" in education policy, and discusses what this means for the education system with reference to policy constructions.

g. Printing, rearranging, re-bundling of categories: In the last stage, all policy notes were printed out in hard copy and cut up into individual sections. These sections were then bundled into 3 larger categories from which the analysis chapters were derived. The new categories were: economy/deficit/testing/competition,

accountability/monitoring/tracking, math/literacy/disciplines (derived from former

categories).

As an example of this process, after the documents were read through twice, particular

usages of words emerged as patterns, which precipitated a third reading. In the third reading, the

documents were re-traced from the beginning to verify, while at the same time connections to

theory and interview data were made to/with the discourse. The CDA process involved a deep

reading to understand how specific discourses were packaged in each document, but also how

other manifestations of the same idea were also replicated. One such discursive pattern of

interest, "educational accountability," emerged in the *Restructuring* (1994) discussion paper as a

particular definition of accountability, which was paired with fiscal restraint, excellence, and

productivity. In this case, the critical reading included understanding each specific usage of

"accountability," its associations with words such as "effectiveness" (1994, p. 40), and began the

tracing process of accountability constructions across documents. Each document was read

thoroughly for its individual positioning of accountability, associated meanings, connecting

words, and mechanisms for its implementation, which changed over time. An example of this

change can be illustrated in the *Planning for Success* (2005) policy, through which accountability

shifted, to include mechanisms of monitoring and tracking student behaviour data. Through

multiple readings, patterns of discursive construction over time showed the fluctuating and

changing nature of accountability, which emerged and descended.

Limitations

There are several limitations and criticisms of CDA as an interpretive method, because it connects political and (often) ideological discourse to a broader theoretical analysis in way that is "biased." In their chapter titled, "Critical Discourse Analysis: A Powerful but Flawed Tool?" Frances Henry and Carol Tator (2007) delineate the criticisms charged against this popular method of analysis. They detail the ways that their research (and others' research, such as van Dijk and Fairclough) has been dismantled and cast out by some empirically based social researchers for being politically motivated or as having ideological bias. Henry and Tator (2007) argue back, stating that CDA as a field involves the task of unearthing latent ideological discourses that perpetuate harmful knowledge in various textual forms, therefore they inherently have an agenda. This agenda is for equity/social justice, and is made transparent in the researcher's methodology, however, disagreements remain. Despite these criticisms, CDA as a method is powerful, and can be appropriately used (with strong theoretical and conceptual backing) to make covert underlying "patterns of oppression as articulated in everyday talk…[and] discursive institutional spaces" (Henry & Tator, 2007, p. 127). For this project, CDA works holistically with the overall questions, conceptual and methodological framework.

The CDA demonstrated significant discursive shifts at the level of policy (genealogy of the state), however, to understand the material effects on the education system and on educators (genealogy of the subject), I gathered qualitative data from interviews and focus groups.

Focus Groups & Interviews

Focus Groups

Berg (2009) describes focus group interviewing as a strategy in multimethod research design to both: "diagnose problems with a new program, service, or product" and "generate

impressions of products, programs, services, institutions" (p. 158). The focus group format works well in the study, as it holds potential to diagnosis potential problems, and generate impressions of changes in relation to teacher experience in social studies education. Secondly, to understand the ways neoliberal governmentality manifests in various ways in schools, secondary social studies educators were recruited to participate in either a focus group or individual interview format centering on changes in schooling in the last decade.

While focus groups are well-known for their strategic use in market-based research as a way into the world of the consumer (Krueger & Casey, 2014), recent literature on qualitative focus groups by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2008, 2013, 2014) and Dimitriadis (2016) posit focus group as a political research method. Focus groups, as "complex and multivalent articulations" offer a critical inquiry that is already connected to "real-world problems and asymmetries" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 376). Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2014) outline three interrelated essential functions of focus groups for social justice, which are the pedagogical, political, and inquiry functions. The pedagogical function is used to create collective knowledge through popular pedagogical methods. This function focuses on the group experience of dialogical learning through discussion, where *learning* is the central motivation. The inquiry function is the research aspect of focus groups, where the researcher is immersed in a group discussion, yet at the same time is in a position to "strategically generate interview prompts in situ" to capture relevant responses (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, p. 323). While the three functions are interrelated, and difficult to separate in a live discussion, the most important function for the purposes of this research is the political aspect of the function group.

The political function is used as a way to "highlight the sources of collective support that occur around social and political issues" (p. 319). This focuses on group members being able to share common experiences in a particular social location, to connect with each other and

possibly understand similarities and differences. As an example, the authors describe a focus group for women used primarily for the political function to discuss their experiences with crime. From this research, the authors argue that the political function of the focus group brings out "talk about sensitive topics in uninhibited and honest ways" where "women could support each other" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 321). This was true of the two focus groups of teachers and administrators, where the researcher was "decentered" and the semi-structured conversations were almost entirely guided by the group conversations. While there was a focus group guide developed, with questions and prompts ready for the discussions (see Appendix G for example questions), the conversations organically unfolded in such a way that little researcher interference was needed. In these sessions, the common experiences of educators brought forth lively, engaging, and passionate discussions about current education politics which were uninhibited and honest, even when the group members had only met for the first time. The conversations were supportive and allowed for participants to engage with each other in unique ways that would not have been possible in individual interviews. With that being said, individual interviews were also conducted with educators for reasons of preference or logistics (for example, distance or scheduling conflicts).

Interviews

With focus groups having the potential to draw political conversations based on common experiences, this result is largely dependent upon the group conversation. By contrast, individual interviews allow for in-depth discussions "to reach areas of reality that would otherwise remain inaccessible" (Peräkylä, 2008, p. 351). In semi-structured, or "semistandardized" (Berg, 2009, p. 107) interviews, the interviewer has set questions or

particular questions ready, however, the discussion remains guided by the participant and the direction they are interested in taking the conversation. The interviewer is also "expected to probe far beyond the answers to their prepared standardized questions" (Berg, 2009, p. 107) meaning that while there are expectations for the interview process, there is room for significant movement and changes in direction, like the semi-structured focus group process.

With this conversational fluidity in mind, Davies (2016) offers the idea of "emergent listening" in interviewing (p. 82), "through which the not-yet-known might open up" (p. 73). The semi-structured style of interviewing welcomes this type of emergence, since the interviewer is aware of the roadmap of inquiry, but is listening in such a way that important diversions can take place if necessary. Unlike "listening as usual" which can be presumptive, lacking creative engagement, emergent listening "is actively engaged in the formation of selves" (Davies, 2016, p. 73). Emergent listening seeks to break through the role of researcher and researched, by promoting and accepting unexpected deviations in the conversation, where the interviewer remains cognizant of the research process, while at the same time is a "bystander" (p. 82) to the unfolding narrative. Using this conceptual understanding of the semi-structured interview process, I conducted four individual interviews, transcribed, and analyzed the data (see Appendix G for sample interview questions).

Participant Recruitment

Research ethics approval was obtained from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board in February 2015 (certificate, Appendix A) to conduct research with educators in Nova Scotia. Participants were recruited through social media (Facebook) and word of mouth using the snowball method, between March and May, with the interviews and focus groups taking

place in June 2015 in various locations throughout Nova Scotia. To facilitate a discussion of recent changes in the Nova Scotia education system, the requirement of recruited educators was to have at least 8 years teaching experience, and a second requirement was experience teaching in social studies disciplines to be able to comment on changes to the disciplines. To provide a history of the present educational moment in Nova Scotia, the participants were not asked to give oral histories, rather, to discuss their experiences in teaching, and how these have changed over time, culminating in 2015. In this way, the participants did not offer their own personal teaching histories, rather, their current experiences in teaching, as related to changes over the past decade. These "inclusion" and "exclusion" criteria (Eide, 2008, p. 745) provided a research context that was closely related to the research questions. Participants were contacted through established, personal teaching networks[10] using a recruitment text via social media (Appendix B), and those who were interested in the study were sent a follow up message containing an introductory letter of participation (Appendix C). For those interested, they first established contact and there was a follow-up with a recruitment text and letter of participation.

Between March and May 2015, eight educators confirmed their participation in the research, with four requesting individual interviews, and four interested in the focus group option. The focus groups were divided between administration and teachers. This was done for two reasons: to have more commonalities between respondents, and also to thwart possible power imbalances between a higher-ranking administrator that could have possible repercussions for a teacher. The group of participants represents a racially and culturally diverse, knowledgeable, and experienced collection of educators, with a group average of 16

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[10] Personal teaching networks were created during my time as a high school teacher in Nova Scotia between 2007-2012.

years teaching. All educators taught in social studies fields, and five had experience in

administration at the high school level (or higher). Their combined experience covers four of

seven provincial school boards, multiple provinces, and countries.

Participants were contacted to schedule their preferred time and place for the interview

or focus group, taking place in June 2015. Based on their preferences, meeting rooms at

locations such as public libraries were booked for focus group and individual interviews. With

the exception of one interview, which was based out of the participant's home, the location of

the meetings was in public, secure spaces. Focus groups lasted approximately 90-120 minutes

each, and the individual interviews ranged from 60 minutes to 120, depending on the

participant's interest and answers. Notes were taken during the interviews and focus groups,

and with participant permission, also audio recorded and stored on a locked digital filing

system.

Transcription and Analysis

Similar to the CDA analysis process, the transcription and analysis of focus group and

interview data took place in 8 stages and over 14 months, concurrently with the document

analysis. The method of coding used, again, is open coding, which allows for an iterative

analysis of data:

Table 2

Educator Participants: Pseudonyms and Experience

Pseudonym	Participation	Position, Experience (as of 2015)
Andrew	Focus group	Retired high school administrator; working in education sector, 32 years
Brian	Focus group	High school social studies teacher, 11 years

Catherine	Interview	High school social studies teacher, 20 years
David	Focus group	Retired high school administrator; working in educational sector, 35 years
Greg	Focus group	High school social studies teacher, 9 years
Howard	Interview	High school social studies teacher, 17 years
Karen	Interview	High school administrator, 13 years
Marcus	Interview	High school administrator, 25 years

a. Initial focus group/interview: At this stage, I audio recorded conversations, and took field notes during and after the sessions.

b. Revisiting: In the two-weeks following the data collection period, I listened to the recordings a second time, and took notes from key concepts in the discussions.

c. Transcription: I transcribed all audio recordings, using exact phrasing, pausing, and affect suggested by Saldaña (2014), to collect the feelings from the participants, but also *to feel* as a researcher (notes were taken throughout this reflexive process *as* researcher).

d. Transcription checking/reading: I checked transcriptions a second time by listening to audio recordings and reading the transcribed material. In this process, I digitally wrote notes in the margins. This began the narrowing process of reading, while still collecting responses to the data.

e. Determine emerging patterns: During this stage I applied colour codes to patterns in the text, with 6 initial categories of interest created. These categories included: critiques of schooling/teacher stress, neoliberal discourses, workplace skills/jobs,

administration/governance, social studies/humanities, strong affective responses, race/racism

f. Data reduction: To make the above 7 categories of data easier to access, I copied and pasted each colour code from the original file into a new file corresponding by colour. Berg (2009) describes this process of "data reduction" as the need to "simplify and transform raw data into a more manageable form" (p. 54), moving from large amounts of transcription text into categorized pieces.

g. Re-read and confirm categories: I re-read the transcripts in full, and small changes were made to confirm the data in each of the 7 categories. The categories remained the same after this process. During this stage, notes and comments continued to be compiled (digitally) in the margins.

h. Printing, rearranging, re-bundling of categories: In the last stage (like the CDA), I printed quotes from all categories and cut up into individual sections. These sections were then bundled into 3 larger categories, from which the analysis chapters were derived from. These analytical categories were: a) economy/deficit/testing/competition, b) accountability/monitoring/tracking, c) math/literacy/disciplines.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure the safety of participants, their anonymity is preserved through the use of pseudonyms and secured data storage, however, teachers participating in focus groups could know each other professionally due to the small population of social studies teachers in the province. Therefore, professional confidentiality for focus group members is highlighted on both recruitment and consent forms. Although Hollander (2004) argues that focus group

research can have negative consequences due to the social context and dynamic of the group, there are benefits of having discussions with small groups of educators that are not be possible in one-on-one interviews alone. The focus groups took place in a secure location, and participants signed a consent form (Appendix D) that outlined their role in the research. Participation was strictly confidential, utilizing pseudonyms and markers such as age, racialized grouping or other easily identifiable attributes not included in individual descriptions of participants quoted in the analysis. The conversations were audio recorded, transcribed, and stored on a locked external hard drive. In one focus group in particular, the educators were former colleagues, leading to extensive, detailed, and open discussions, which was an asset due to the established level of comfort. On account of the small network of secondary teachers in Nova Scotia, teacher colleagues will not be identified, since confidentiality has been assured both as a professional agreement, and by signing the consent form.

Chapter 4: Economic Troubles and Education Reform: Schooling for the Workplace

If you send your kids to a nice private school they get a beautiful education in arts, history, and all those things, but for public school kids, we're trying to turn them into efficient workers.

- Greg, Social studies teacher

I think this year alone though, our provincial government has made some moves that are definitely going in bad directions. They're *pushing it* and *butchering* it, and going in that direction [American model of schooling].

- Brian, Social studies teacher

Introduction

This chapter demonstrates how the strategic use of economic deficit discourses in education policies create and maintain "crises," and a loss of public faith in the public education system, while at the same time supporting a shift in education's priorities toward schooling "for the marketplace" (DeLissovoy, 2015; Peters, 2017). Through a policy genealogy, critical discourse analysis, and discussions with educators, I argue that educational and economic crises are used strategically and discursively articulating in official documents to force the need for perpetual education reform in Nova Scotia with the primary goal of strengthening the economy. In part one, I begin with a policy genealogy and trace how the economy is positioned in education documents between 1994-2016. While the presence of the economy in education policy fluctuated over time, I argue that the genealogy indicated an overall consistent trajectory, where "economic" priorities became increasingly interwoven with the goals of education over time. Through a critical discourse analysis, I demonstrate how shifts in specific discursive

patterns are evidence for the increase of neoliberal governmentality in education, where education is tethered to economic crises and restrictive reform, as found in structural, curricular, and programming decisions.

In part two, teachers and administrators speak about the transition of education to being one mostly concerned with the market, and its impact on their jobs as educators. Such changes toward market-based education and purported economic and education crises have influenced the structure of the system to the point where educators have struggled to maintain their optimism in the face of mounting negativity. Through the discussion of focus groups and individual interviews, educators are hesitant to "complain" or to be critical of the system, and despite struggling with/against a system they do not agree with, they continually express their love for teaching. Part two concludes with a discussion of the lived effects of neoliberal education reform on educators, and through their opinions and experiences, shows how education reform has altered the purpose of education, and teachers' livelihoods, in the process.

Part One: Genealogy of economic deficits and education reform, 1994-2016

This section is divided into three periods of policy development: 1994-1995, 1999-2005, and 2013-2016. Beginning with the economic historical context of Nova Scotia in the 1990's, I trace how economic deficits are connected to restructuring and austerity measures in education policy. The second section shows a reprieve in education crisis discourses between 1999-2005, however, curricular programming implemented at this time continued the trajectory of economic goals in education. Lastly, I discuss 2013-2016 as a time of education and economic panic and urgency, and I argue that this era in education demonstrates the further articulation of

neoliberal economic goals in policy and practice.

Historical context: Fiscal austerity in the "Savage years"

In the 1990's, provincial politics were shaped by uncertainties surrounding mounting economic deficits, an aging workforce, declining population, loss of resource-based jobs, and out-migration of young workers. These insecurities furthered government interventions to remedy provincial issues through the education system (Clancy, 2000). It was in the 1990's when federal transfers in the form of equalization and other transfer payments to Nova Scotia were the lowest in history (Eisen, Murrell, & Fantauzzo, 2014, p. 6), placing increased pressure on the province to cut expenditures in a climate of "fiscal austerity" (Lecours & Béland, 2010, p. 573). During this time, the John Savage (1993-1997) and later, Russell MacLellan (1997-1999) provincial Liberal governments were infamous for slashing education funding, rolling back teacher salaries, cutting school boards, and amalgamating departments, becoming known notoriously as the "Savage years" in education (Clancy, 2000). As a driving force behind changes in the education system, concerns with curriculum, accountability, testing, and competition surrounding the provincial economy appear in *all* education policy documents between 1994-2016. The relationship between economy and education, and the extent to which this relationship is apparent in policy, has fluctuated over time, but nonetheless remains present in each of the official documents. Beginning in 1994, n the following sections I trace the discursive patterns of the economy in education.

Economic deficits and crisis in restructuring: "Jeopardizing the future" 1994-1995

Connections between education and the economy were central to the 1994 and 1995 documents, *Restructuring Nova Scotia' Education System* [*Restructuring*] (1994) and *Education*

Horizons (1995). As an example, in the introduction of *Restructuring* (1994) the education

system is framed as "needing improvement" to "increase our global competitiveness and produce

an economy which offers ample employment opportunities" (p. 7). These documents established

a direct linkage between education, global competition, and jobs, where an improved education

system would positively affect those living and working in the province, while also increasing

the global capital of the province in an increasingly globalized era (Peters, 2015). In the

following section, "Forces of Change" (p. 7), the idea of the "global" is attended to in detail, with

economic changes used as the basis for the restructuring plan in Nova Scotia.

The economic changes listed in "Forces of Change," such as "accelerating" economic

shifts from a "resource-based economy" to a "knowledge-based" economy relying on

"information-based enterprises" (p. 7), form the proposed structural changes to the education

system in *Restructuring* (1994). Such global-scale changes are positioned as "profoundly

affecting the lives of Nova Scotians" (p. 7), with rapid transformations in technology and global

competitiveness as external influences the province needs to contend with economically. The

role education had in these global economic shifts was to help "be prepared" for drastic

changes, so that future "Nova Scotians are prepared to meet these challenges and opportunities"

(p. 5). The economic challenges and opportunities are vaguely situated in *Restructuring* (1994),

but the education system committed to the preparation of students for living in a post-resource-

based economy which was becoming increasingly globalized through technological

advancement. The tone in "Forces of Change" surrounding economic changes is important to

note, as it strategically positions Nova Scotia on the periphery to "the global"; in this section,

the policy positions the province as doubtful and insecure for future. As an example of this

tone, economic shifts are explained as "continuing to accelerate" into an uncertain,

interdependent, globalized future (p. 7). With "acceleration" being a main point of contention

for the small province already carrying a large amount of public debt (p. 7), and not knowing

how to prepare for changes that had not yet taken place, there was a reactionary impetus for the

province to not fall behind the rest of the world.

The overall message in *Restructuring* (1994) focused on essential structural reductions in

the education system during an economically insecure time, with the cutting of school boards

from 22 to 7, but the document does not mention other cuts that occurred such as teacher salary

rollbacks, education funding, amalgamation of departments, and decreases in government (see

Chapter 5: Accountability for further discussion). Instead, the policy discourse is focused on

changes to educational governance structures and ways to make education fiscally viable in a

time of purported economic decline. Discourses of urgency in *Restructuring,* placed Nova Scotia

in a precarious position – one that *must* change before change is forced onto it. This tone of

urgency for reforming the education system, accompanied with crises in fiscal matters, began to

shape a particularly negative and panicked view of economic change in the province.

The follow-up education policy, *Horizons* (1995) furthered the inklings of economic crisis

and suggestions for possible pathways forwarded in *Restructuring* (1994), adding increased

pressure to make changes based on external influences. As an example of increased pressures in

global discourse: "Nova Scotia's education system must be able to respond to a rapidly changing

social, economic, and technological environment" (*Horizons,* 1995, p. 1). In this excerpt, Nova

Scotia was positioned outside of the global technological curve, and employed urgent discourse

to assert the need to react to external demands, for fear of "falling behind": "We must act now to

meet these higher expectations. Further delay will cause Nova Scotia to fall further behind in

worldwide developments and jeopardize our province's, and our children's, future" (p. 10).

Using education to support the need for economic restructuring, both documents forwarded a

type of fiscal responsibility through austerity measures in a time of economic uncertainty,

population decline, and increasing public debt. Stronger language surrounding "falling behind"

and invoking a sense of urgency in *Horizons* (1995) more directly placed Nova Scotia in a perilous predicament, in which education could "jeopardize" (p. 10) the future of the province and its children. The pressing, "must act now" (p. 10), discourse placed an ultimatum on the province: either actions would be taken to improve the economy to compete globally, or, the province would be left behind in the race to "modernize" (p. 7) education. With the above urgent and persuasive discourse in mind, in the next section I attend to practical matters in education: the primary goals of education in 1994-1995, "important" skills and competencies as forward by the Department, and their relationship with the economy.

The purposes of education: Discourse switching, competencies, and skills performance

Situated in the era of globalized economic shifts, *Restructuring* (1994) and *Horizons* (1995) positioned education as a possible remedy to provincial issues of debt, an unstable/diminishing workforce, and overall decline in population. In *Restructuring* (1994) the vision for future education was one that would facilitate a "world-class education" focused on "higher standards" (p. 23), and "excellence, standards, equity and relevance" (p. 5) situated in an era of global economic and technological shifts. *Restructuring* (1994) did not delve into specific suggestions for program or curricular changes directly connected to the economy (unlike later documents), however, *Restructuring* did include external reports to support schooling for "the marketplace" (p. 5) through valued skills, and qualities sought after by employers. *Horizons* (1995) furthered the skills discourses with more direct connections to specific job competencies, and their place in the provincial education system.

The bulk of *Restructuring* (1994) focused on examples of restructuring plans to be more efficient, accountable, and fiscally sustainable (see Chapter 5: Accountability for expanded discussion). However, *Restructuring* also provided insights into the future trajectory of the

education system through its introduction of workplace skills for a "knowledge-based economy"

(p. 7). This "skills" approach to schooling was demonstrated through two competing ideas: a

well-rounded education, and entrepreneurship/marketable education. Quoting a Nova Scotia

Teacher's Union document, *Challenge 2000* (1993)*,* one of the goals supported in education was

the development of the whole learner, who would have the "knowledge, skills, and attitudes

necessary to be an effective citizen, to earn a living and to have a rewarding life" (*Restructuring,*

1994, p. 10). This vision of education supported the "lifelong learner" whose knowledge of the

world would be drawn from multiple disciplines, including the arts, humanities and social

sciences, and sciences (p. 10-11; see Chapter 6: Social Studies for further discussion of

disciplinary knowledge). Centered on citizenship and a well-rounded education, the section on

"Goals of Education" (pp. 10-11) focused on a wide-ranging education, without mentioning

specific workplace skills. Outside of the two-page "Goals of Education" section, workplace

skills and marketable attributes of future workers were attended to through supportive external

documents included in the document's Appendices. This external documentation included: *What*

Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America (1991), and the *Employability Skills*

Profile: *The Critical Skills Required of the Canadian Workforce* (1992) from the Conference

Board of Canada.[11] What is interesting, is that although external sources are quoted in

Restructuring, and included as appendices, these references were not used to justify program

changes, but as referential material to forward changes in the *next* policy document, *Horizons*

(1995). Therefore, at first glance, *Restructuring* (1994) provided an argument for a balanced

education with the primary goal being personal growth for students as lifelong learners and

citizens, but the supporting documentation and attending discourses were contradictory; the

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[11] I analyzed multiple external documents during data collection, however, to strategically discuss
the education system in Nova Scotia and its changes in-depth, it required a singular provincial
focus to contain the discussion.

referencing material suggested that education needed to be structured around valuable skills in the marketplace for future workers. In effect, *Restructuring* (1994) presented one vision of education, and through strategic use of reference materials, switched discourses into a different direction.

The discourse switching in *Restructuring* (1994) illustrated how competing goals could exist in the same document, on the one hand, praising "appreciation for the arts" (p. 11), and on the other, forwarding the idea that schools are for "equipping every student for entry into the workforce" (p. 9) through employability skills. Such skills included "creativity and innovation" which "are highly valued in the marketplace," and entrepreneurship is highlighted as one route for "wealth generation" (p. 7). Further, information from the *SCANS Report* (1991) and *Employability Skills Profile* (1992) are outlined in the "Goals of Education" section, the previous page before information on a well-rounded education is provided. In this section, "employability skills" such as academic, personal management, and teamwork skills are suggested as being "important for the development of a productive workforce," quoted from the Conference Board of Canada (1992) document on critical skills (p. 9). This is followed up by information from the *SCANS Report* (1991) which suggested that workplace skills are "competencies" needed for "solid job performance" (p. 9). The discourse concerning workplace skills, job competencies, and performance are connected to "quality of life . . . through economic success and prosperity" (p. 10), which tied back into the urgent introductory "Forces of Change" shaping the economy. While specific curricular ties to these workplace skills and job competencies were not made in *Restructuring* (1994), the urgency to change the education system to closer fit with economic goals was furthered in *Horizons* (1995). As discussed above, *Horizons* (1995) forwarded an urgent discussion of the economy as being "at a crossroads," where actions needed to be taken to not "fall behind" (p. 10) the globalizing economy, and

insisted that education keep pace with global economic demands. *Restructuring* and *Horizons*

focused on creating structural efficiencies, while supporting the idea that "excellent results are

occurring in Nova Scotia schools," and tackling the underlying problem: "the problem is not the

people in the system; the problem is the system itself" (p. 1). Using the education system as a

catalyst for shifting education priorities, *Horizons* (1995) placed the utmost importance on

attending to the economy through educational attainment of workplace skills.

  This "workforce" and "skills building" discourse is not new, as Canadian education

systems underwent major schooling shifts in the post-World War II era. Booming industries

required skilled workers, which in turn, required higher numbers of educated workers in

industrialized technologies to fill these skill-based positions (Wotherspoon, 2014). During the

1960's and 1970's, both secondary and post-secondary education of skilled workers became

increasingly important to support a variety of new industries at a time when social mobility was

quite high, as Wotherspoon (2014) suggests, "educational achievement and the attainment of

stable jobs with good wages and working conditions were closely related" (p. 79; see also, Lipset

& Zetterberg, 1959). Newly graduated students in the 1960-1970's had increased chances of

acquiring steady employment based on their educational credentials, which is an economic

context vastly different from 21st century realities, where employment is increasingly temporary

and unstable (Peters, 2011; Bourdieu, 1998). It is within this post-1990's global economic

context that the policy documents were situated, where the former school-to-work employment

route had shifted away from post-WWII era employment in industry, to a global knowledge

economy.

  In the "Framework for Renewal" section in *Horizons,* it is stated that the province is "proud

of their educational accomplishments," but, "many of our educational practices, however, were

designed for a quite a different era" (p. 9). The educational practices forwarded in this section

align with the future economy and global workplace. These included, "high literacy and

mathematics competencies, problem solving skills and technology application skills" in an

economic environment of "accelerating change" and "transformation" (p. 9). Although praised

for its accomplishment earlier in the document, the education system's standards were considered

"too low," and that "graduates lack the basic skills required in the global marketplace" since the

"least educated are being shut out of the job market" (p. 9). This entire section is dedicated to the

"performance" of the education system, on one hand praising the accomplishments of students,

and on the other, using fearful discourse insinuating that students were not prepared to work after

they completed their schooling. Such sharp swings in tone create a form of discursive panic and

crisis in education and the economy, which unlike *Restructuring* (1994), was focused on the

performance and testing results.

In the "Higher Expectations," section in *Horizons* (1995), Nova Scotia scores from

international and national science and math tests were quoted as being "only average when

compared to other provinces" and "low when compared to other international leaders" (p. 10).

The paragraph following "Higher Expectations" switched again from test scores back into the

"school to work" discussion, stating that students could learn about workplace opportunities

"through curriculum initiatives like co-operative education and entrepreneurship training" but

concluded that "more must be done to prepare them for the transition from the classroom to the

workplace" (p. 10). This section exemplified the overall use of conflicting hopeful and urgent

discourses throughout the document, and the conflation of testing, the global market, and

workplace skills. At the end of *Horizons* (1995) the economic goals of the province, as

connected to the education system, are summed up in one quote:

> If Nova Scotia is to compete successfully in the global economy, our education system
>
> must be strong enough to support the needs of our communities and flexible enough to

change with them. We cannot serve the needs of future generations by standing still. (p.

48)

This specific packaging of economic crisis and education reform in the 1994-1995

policies relied on the idea of success in the "global marketplace" as a panacea to provincial

economic woes, where education, when done correctly, could make the province competitive in

the global economic arena. The need for immediate action, opposed to "standing still" created a

tension for swiftly enacting the proposed changes. This plan for the system, to help fix the

economy, was two-pronged: to be able to compete in international and national test scores

(demonstrating prominence in math, science, and literacy), and increased workplace

programming for students under the guiding idea that specific skills (math, literacy) would

increase economic prosperity for individuals and thus, the province. Through this logic, there

are only two options, one of which is perceived to be "good" or "right," and the other perceived

to be "bad" or "incorrect," without a range of other possibilities. The strong discourse centered

around crisis in *Horizons* (1995) changed significantly in the next decade, where a new

government tackled education issues, and the economy, using a different type of discursive

approach. In the second part of the policy genealogy, crisis and urgency switched to positive

discourses, with new hope for the education system and for the province.

Crisis averted: "The best province, in the best country, in the world", 1999-2005

Following the John Savage (1993-1997) and Russell MacLellan (1997-1999) Liberal

provincial governments of the 1990's was ten years of Progressive Conservative [PC] leadership

under John Hamm (1999-2006) and Rodney MacDonald (2006-2009). During the decade of PC

government in Nova Scotia, three main education policies were created: *Racial Equity Policy*

(2002b), *Learning for Life: Planning for Success* (2002)*,* and *Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together* (2005). Unlike the previous decade of policy discourses invoking crisis and urgency in *Restructuring* (1994) and *Horizons* (1995), the policies in the 2000's were optimistic in comparison, with respect to the economy and the education system. There was a noticeable, and encouraging, difference in the discursive packaging of the provincial economy. Yet, the underlying shift toward education for the marketplace did not change. Although the discursive shift away from crisis was apparent, the connection between the economy (primarily through the workplace) and education became more engrained and advanced through testing, curricular programming, and expectations of student performance.

Connections to, and discussions of, the health and vitality of the local economy were a central theme throughout policy and official documents in the 2000's. Beginning with the election platform for the PC government, *Strong Leadership* (1999)*,* John Hamm positioned education as the "foundation of an economy of sustained growth," and the need to "prepare young Nova Scotians to compete in the job markets of today and tomorrow" (p. 15) was placed at the forefront of the plan, not unlike the focus of the previous decade for preparing workers. The difference between the two eras, however, was that the latter decade included concrete advancements in curriculum and programming through a "basics first" approach related to specific work skills in *Planning for Success* (2002). The discourses surrounding mathematics, literacy, and testing achievement followed the path of the former documents, although, the content was expanded to include specific funding and curricular development. These discursive changes moved away from a direct acknowledgement of economic crises and obvious discussions of schooling for the workplace.

The economic deficit discourses from the 1990's documents were no longer present in *Planning for Success* (2002). In fact, the word "economy" only appeared three times in the document, twice as a footnote (p. 9; p. 14) and once in the Bibliography (p. 47). Yet, even with

the change in tone the presence of the economy is consistent, albeit tangentially advanced

through a "basics first" approach. After a decade of austerity measures, the Hamm government

plan included the reinstatement of education funding. This is evident through *Strong Leadership*

(1999), where education was cited as an investment: "It's time government started looking at

education as an investment in our future rather than simply as a cost to government" (p. 15) and

in *Planning for Success* (2002), in the proposal to inject new education funding into

"overcrowded classrooms and scarce resources" (*Strong Leadership,* 1999, p. 15). The 172

million dollars (p. 41) in new funding for education included money for math and literacy

initiatives, smaller class sizes in the early years, early-years initiatives, money for school

infrastructure, technology implementation, course development, and new books and textbooks for

all age levels (p. vii). *Planning for Success* (2002) also included a plan for financial controls and

fiscal accountability within the education system (pp. 37-38), however, no information

concerning the state of the provincial economy was present. In the policy following the Hamm

leadership plan, *Brighter Futures* (2005), economic discourses returned after a brief reprieve.

In his second elected term (2003-2006), Hamm's government released an additional

leadership plan, *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia* (2003)*,* where the "need to make the

economy more competitive" (p. 4) became the impetus for the province. Similar to the previous

plan *Strong Leadership* (1999), education featured as a major component of economic growth

and provincial prosperity through continued investment in schools. *Blueprint* (2003) repeated the

quote*,* "education is the cornerstone of a strong economy*"* (p. 6) which was recycled in every

major policy document after 2003, albeit in different ways, demonstrating continuity in policy

discourse across governments. In this plan, Hamm contended that "the financial situation has

never been more secure, economy more strong . . . Nova Scotia is the best province, in the best

country, in the world" (p. 2). Similar to the *Planning for Success* (2002) policy, the government

remained confident and hopeful for the future, which was contributed to through increased

investments in education, and a drive to retain graduates as workers in the province. The yearly

Education Department *Business Plan* (2003) reflected these sentiments, with slight deviations

from the positive political rhetoric in *Blueprint* (2003). In the Department plan, demographic

concerns such as declining student enrolment and teacher attrition continued to garner attention,

although not included in the policy documents. After 2004, changes in economic discourse

became more apparent through yearly business plans, and in the second major education policy

document *Brighter Futures* (2005).

The *Business Plan* (2004) marked the beginning of major discursive shifts in official

documents. The previously used quote, "education is the cornerstone of the economy" (2003)

was repeated, with an addition, ". . . vital for personal growth and professional success" (p. 1),

situating individual growth and achievement within educative and economic contexts. This was

the first instance since *Horizons* (1995) where the provincial economy was discursively

connected to both education *and* the labour market. The economic discussion was expanded in

the *Business Plan* (2005) to include labour market challenges in technology and globalization to

diversify the local economy (p. 1). Although prominent in the 1990's official documents, the

"global economy" discourse was not central to education documents between 1999-2003, until it

reappeared in the *Brighter Futures* (2005) education policy.

Under the Hamm leadership, provincial education priorities were contained within the

province, focused upon increasing provincial economic diversity and stability to sustain growth

through education, as seen in increased funding with *Planning for Success* (2002). There was a

switch in 2005, when the *Brighter Futures* policy outlined the need for students to "know more

than ever before" and to "successfully participate in the global society and economy" (p. vii).

This shift moved away from the local and regional economic discourses to place youth/students

in a global economic context of competition and labour demands. One of the tensions between

the *Blueprint* (2003) and *Brighter Futures* (2005) documents was this oscillation between the

local and the global economy: the desire and necessity of keeping youth in the province,

especially those who have recently graduated from post-secondary institutions, and the need to be

competitive, to "participate fully in a global society" (p. ix). These opposing goals, training

workers for the global economy, yet retaining and building a local workforce in a declining

population, was one of the major tensions that remained through the rest of the policies – how

does a province become "globally/nationally competitive," and have a workforce that meets

significant, local, labour market demands? The irreconcilable nature of stratified economic

pressures continued to build throughout the documents, where changes to curriculum reflecting

labour needs pointed to the underlying priorities of the province: schooling for work, and

schooling for the economy. In the following section I present specific economic discourses from

education policy documents, furthering the genealogy of schooling for workplace in Nova Scotia.

Education programming to "Raise the Bar" and "Close the Gap": 1999-2005

Planning for Success (2002) laid out the proposal for a "basics first" approach to increase

literacy and numeracy skills at all levels of education (p. iii). Moving away from the idea of a

"well-rounded education" in *Horizons* (1995), the "basics first" focus was related to the first

international Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] Programme for

International Student Assessment [PISA] results in literacy and mathematics. In the section titled

"Basics First," the Nova Scotia public high school program was applauded for "maximizing

student interest in learning through choice," but in the next sentence stated, "however, the basics

must come first" (p. 9). On this page, PISA test results are referenced in the footnotes for the

first time in the official documents, suggesting that the shift to a basics first approach was not

accidental, but arose in tandem with international competition. The majority of *Planning for*

Success (2002) centered around the idea of achievement in math and literacy through testing, and

included increased funding in these areas, teacher professional development, more time allotted

in the timetable, new course development, targeted resources such as textbooks, and math and

literacy coaches (pp. 10-13). *Planning for Success* (2002) was an anomaly in the sense that it did

not mention the economy, workplace skills, or jobs specifically. Nevertheless, it created the

foundation for the "basics first" approach, having attended to achievement in mathematics and

literacy in international testing, which was connected to global economic discourses in previous

(and future) policy documents. This policy also was the first to put specific plans and directed

funding into place for curricular and program changes based on testing achievement. These

programs for basics and workplace skills expanded in *Brighter Futures* (2005), which

straightforwardly attended to "the economic" and "the global," embedded in education

outcomes.

Provincial goals for education shifted in *Brighter Futures* (2005), which was the first

document to devise plans for different schooling "routes" depending on student levels of success

and interest. Because of the goals framing the policy, *Brighter Futures* (2005) was positioned as

"student-centered" (p. vii), which furthered the "basics first" plans from *Planning Success*

(2002) and *Blueprint* (2003). *Brighter Futures* (2005) was more organized than previous

policies, and was focused on five underlying "belief statements" (p. vii). The first of these

statements, "students need to have a solid educational background to successfully participate in

the global society and economy" (p. vii) was a departure from *Planning Success* (2002), which

did not use "global" *or* "economic" discourses in its plan. *Brighter Futures* (2005) continued

with increased funding for programming in math and literacy, but also included two new

departmental goals in education, "raising the bar," and "closing the gap" (p. viii). This change

divided the previous overall goal of "student achievement" into two distinct sections: "raising

the bar" with "setting higher standards for learning . . . raising expectations for increased

achievement" (p. 3) for students on an academic route, and "closing the gap" to help students

who were "not succeeding in the existing public school system," and those who needed help to

"move into meaningful work or post-secondary education" (p. 7). The two goals effectively

sought to provide programming for students who would seek either route: to higher education or

the workplace after high school.

Raising the bar commitments attended to the idea of the "global" by providing funding for

specific programming in languages and international education (*Brighter Futures,* 2005, p. 5).

Funding for math and literacy course development, whole school improvement, and increased

availability of French immersion were included in this goal. More importantly, the International

Baccalaureate [IB] diploma program was initiated by this plan, which was the first document to

include the program. The IB program, often run through private schools, expanded from two to

twelve public schools after *Brighter Futures* (2005), and was advertised as an "advanced liberal

arts diploma meant for high-achieving students in grades 11 and 12," and as "one of the world's

most respected pre-university diploma programs."[12] According to the Department of Education,

"no other province or state has launched the IB diploma program in so many schools at one

time"[13] and would offer "international mindedness" for high school students. Students interested

in taking this program were most likely to pursue a university degree after high school, and those

who, upon attaining post-secondary education, would be among the globally mobile workforce in

the future. With goals of international mindedness and global mobility, the IB program

encapsulated the implementation of neoliberal education in a public system: students

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[12] https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20070423001
[13] https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20070423001

had the option to choose a program that could offer the possibility of academic advancement, and the province could benefit from having students trained in external, internationally recognized, curricula. In effect, IB connected Nova Scotia to the global economy through education.

The second goal, "Closing the Gap," provided programming for students who were going into the workforce, training and apprenticeship programs after high school; in other words students who are not "engaged" or "successful" in the academic setting (p. 7). Skills and workplace discourses were only mentioned in this section, and were either assumed in Raising the Bar, missing, or are not considered "skills" in the same sense of "workplace skills." A program for students seeking employment or training, Options and Opportunities [O$_2$] was initiated in *Brighter Futures* (2005). This program sought to "include community learning partnerships, integrated career education and planning, workplace skills, family connections, a head start in trades" (p. 7). A second existing program, Youth Pathways and Transitions [YPT], helped students acquire credits for community college and "enhance students' capacity to demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and experiences to employers" (p. 7). Both O$_2$ and YPT directed certain students into trades, community college, and the workforce after high school, and curtailed the high school course selection based on this route. Also included in the Closing the Gap commitments were supports and programming for African Nova Scotian, Mi'kmaq, and special education students, which lumped all equity and training programming into the "workplace skills" discourse. With the distinctions between academically motivated students for the province to "raise the bar," in the IB program, and all other students lumped together in "closing the gap," *Brighter Futures* (2005) coupled certain economic futures (globally minded, professionals versus trades workers) to education programming.

The *Brighter Futures* (2005) policy articulated connections between the global economy, the local workforce, and gaps in achievement for specifically identified groups of students

(including racialized communities) to succeed. "Success" in life remained connected to a sense

of personal economic prosperity, by "participating in the global society and economy" (p. vii) in

varying capacities. Developing out of previous policy and official documents, *Brighter Futures*

(2005) presented a plan for the economy, without overtly (and excessively) attending to

economic discourses. By providing specific programming for students to either go into the

workforce, learning workplace skills while in high school through O_2 and YPT, *or* into the high-

achieving and internationally-minded IB university preparatory program, the province continued

its focus on testing, mathematics, and literacy achievement, while expanding programs for

students to enter the workforce. Throughout the 2000's documents, there remained a sense of

calm confidence about the education system and the economy, while providing a detailed plan

for the future. In the following decade, however, the pendulum undulated back to economic

crisis and educational deficit thinking, using similar discursive techniques from the Savage era

policies of the 1990's. Continuing the genealogy of schooling for the workplace in the next

decade, I demonstrate this marked change in policy discourses after *Brighter Futures* (2005).

Economic and education crises: The path of education *for* the economy, 2013-2016

After an era of optimism and confidence in the education system under the Progressive

Conservatives, the first ever New Democrat Party government was elected in Nova Scotia.

During this time (2009-2013), no major education policies were created. Aside from changing

the naming of the yearly departmental *Business Plan* to a *Statement of Mandate*, and the creation

of the *Racial Equity and Cultural Proficiency Framework* (2011), this era under Darrell Dexter

was outwardly inactive. However, the education plans put into place from the previous

government remained, and continued to steer the education system into more surveillance,

tracking and accountability measures for teachers and schools (see Chapter 5: Accountability).

The enduring connection of education documents to the global economy also remained during this

time. This uniformity is evident through the goals of education continued in the *Statement of*

Mandate documents during the NDP leadership.

As an example of such education goals, the 2012-2013 *Statement of Mandate* introduced

more career-related courses in secondary schools, doubling schools offering trades, and the

creation of a new trades course related to shipbuilding[14] alongside a proposed, expanded

entrepreneurship course, and more guidance in career choice planning (p. 8). Under the heading

"Create good jobs to grow the economy" education was emphasized as being the route for

developing "skills needed for the twenty-first century global economy" to "prepare young people

for today and tomorrow's workforce," in turn "maximiz[ing] career opportunities and earning

potential" (p. 7) to be competitive in the global marketplace. The discourse of "global

marketplace" (p. 8) and being "globally mobile" to help build the provincial economy remained

in the yearly plan between 2009-2013, even in the absence of policy creation in this era.

Although the Dexter leadership was dedicated to increased mental health initiatives (p. 6),

expanding curriculum in "Africentric and Indigenous content" (p. 8), and reducing the number of

standardized assessments in schools (p. 1), the main messages in the departmental plans

nonetheless centered around the health of the economy through student skill acquisition and

workplace learning. It is worth noting that discourses surrounding the state of the economy were

neither urgent, nor optimistic at this time, but continued the same messages from previous

decades: the world has become increasingly globalized, and the province needs students to have

career skills and opportunities to first, meet the demands of a global marketplace, and second, to

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[14] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/jubilation-as-halifax-shipyard-awarded-contract-1.1059989

have high "earning potentials." Such messages are not neutral, and continued to connect career, earning potential, and workplace skills to education even in the absence of policy documents. What this discursive pattern points to is a continuance of neoliberal education discourses as a major tenet of education: schooling is necessary because students need to make money to support the economy, therefore schooling must provide direct routes for students to learn workplace skills and entrepreneurial mindsets. In the next decade, leadership under Stephen McNeil continued the same message, however, education and economic crises are (re)invoked, fostering a demand to overhaul the education system.

ONE Nova Scotia: Forwarding education for the marketplace

At the beginning of the McNeil Liberal leadership, an external, non-partisan commission released *Now or Never: An Urgent Call to Action for Nova Scotians, The Report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy* [*ONE NS*] (2014). The *ONE NS* (2014) report suggested economic goals for growth and renewal, strategies for policy, and provided a future vision for all key sectors. Framed as "urgency for action," as the title suggests, this was "a wakeup call for Nova Scotians" who are "at a crossroads" (p. vi). The overarching plan for the province, according to the commission, included the harnessing of opportunities to compete in the global market, increasing inter-provincial migration, international immigration, establishing an entrepreneurial culture, increasing activity in private sectors, and decreasing the role of government in business (p. xi). Using strong language centered on employee management, free market enterprise, and individualist performance/success/excellence and achievement discourses, this plan was an alarmist call for Nova Scotians to understand that they were falling behind in business, education, and "missing opportunities" (p. 3) in the global economy. The discourse directly connected the world of business to the education system: if Nova Scotian businesses must compete to endure an economic "survival of the fittest" global climate, "so too must the

educational outcomes for our students be measured against a world standard" (*ONE NS,* 2014, p. 58).

Although only one-and-a-half pages of the 87-page document, the *ONE NS* section on education is important for several reasons: there was an urgent call for the education system to work more closely with the global economy through a business management model of performance, competition, and entrepreneurship. This was evidenced through the use of business discourses in the document, such as: ". . . business and community spokespersons calling for improvements in education to better prepare our youth from transition from school to work in a knowledge-driven economy" (p. 58). The repetition of ideas, such as transitions for students to work in a "knowledge economy," and the use of business spokespersons staking claims in the education system are novel developments in the ONE NS document. Key education development areas suggested in *ONE NS* included "link[ing] our education system to the labour market," "promoting entrepreneurship," "expanding employer engagement in apprenticeship," and "pursuing excellence in math and science" (p. 58). The focus on narrow purposes and visions of schooling, to primarily attend to the economic, through particular disciplines (math, science, entrepreneurship) continued the "schooling for the economy" pathway established in the 1990's documents. The specific use of deficit and urgency discourses in *ONE NS* (2014) were also emulated in subsequent education documents between 2014-2016. While *ONE NS* (2014) was promoted as an "external" and "non-partisan" document, its style and tone were mimicked, and it is referenced as a primary source in official education policies and documents.

Disrupting the Status Quo: Creating the need for reform

Between 2013-2016, the provincial McNeil Liberal government generated four official documents: a report, *Disrupting the Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student*, *Report of the Minister's Panel on Education* (2014), a policy, *Nova Scotia's*

Action Plan for Education, The 3R's: Renew, Refocus, Rebuild (2015), another report, *From School to Success: Clearing the Path, Report of the Transition Task Force* (2016), and a discussion paper, *Be There: Student Attendance and Achievement* (2016). Each document focused on the provincial economy and the role of education in shaping the future workforce, further concentrating the economic purposes of education in the province.

The first of the documents, *Status Quo* (2014) was released eight months after *ONE NS* (2014). The report communicated the results of a province-wide survey on education, and suggested possible routes forward through four overarching themes: strengthening the curriculum, making high-quality teaching the norm, preparing today's students for tomorrow's opportunities, and ensuring that inclusion was working for everyone. The "Minister's Panel" of researchers who compiled, analyzed, and created the report were members of the public, led by former teacher and Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Myra Freeman. Included in the 78-page document was a discussion centered on the results of a public education survey, and suggestions to reform the education system. Similar to previous documents, the economy remained a central focus in the discussion of education reform. What was different, however, was the alignment of education reform suggestions in *Status Quo* (2014) with the external *ONE NS* (2014) commission's report. Also similar to previous education documents, *Status Quo* (2014) continued the conflation of international testing results with economic competition and the health of the local economy, positioning these results as evidence for the success of the entire education system. Through the discursive packing of education as a vehicle for the province's economic success, *Status Quo* (2014) positioned the education system as being in need of "modernization," with greater focus on workplace skills in classrooms as the way to do so.

In the discussion section of the report "Charting a Course for Change," the education system is situated as needing "modernization" with "structures that have existed for many years,"

discursively positioning the system as pre-modern, or backwards. Using *ONE NS* (2014) as a

reference for the changes proposed in the report, the panel of researchers "strongly agree with the

commission's direction," adding that, "the current system is failing our students and the public

has send a strong message that there is an urgent need for change" (p. 58). The panels' suggested

changes were described as a "daunting challenge" for Nova Scotians, "but with courage,

conviction, and a relentless focus on what is best for students, we can make our education system

respond" (p. 58). Although an external report, the use of *ONE NS* (2014) in *Status Quo* (2014) to

support the idea that the education system is "failing" its students, primarily reinforced by

evidence from PISA test results, set up a policy environment where external influences were

openly incorporated into public policy. This was also the first instance where an external

document was given so much weight in education policy between 1994-2016, with direct

discursive constructions of "failure" and "economic urgency" transferred into official education

documents. The Minister's panel furthered deficit thinking in *Status Quo* (2014) in their alarmist

message: "staying the course will result in Nova Scotia continuing to slip relative to others,

leaving our students at a competitive disadvantage in Canada and in the world" (p. 11). Success,

or reported lack thereof, in math and literacy performance was directly connected to economic

success in *Status Quo* (2014) through targeted measures: "every jurisdiction is emphasizing

education as the key to its economic future and is putting in place targeted measures to increase

the performance of their students" (p. 11). These measures of success were taken from

standardized tests, and when coupled with economy- first discourses, forwarded the idea that the

purpose of the education system was strictly for future economic gain. The fear that students

were not doing well enough on the standardized tests, "to prosper in education and the labour

market" (p. 11) was used as the backbone of the education reform plan for greater accountability

measures. Using urgency and fear to promote the plan for global competition, *Status Quo* (2014)

connected testing success, the economy, and modernization, where reform of the education

system remained the center of policy discourse. This deficit construction of schooling was

reproduced in the education *Action Plan* (2015) through the idea that students were falling

behind.

Education Action Plan: Entrepreneurship and workplace skills

In the introduction to the policy from Minister Karen Casey, testing results were again

prominent: "time and again, test results show our students are falling behind in math and literacy"

(p. 5). Such discursive packaging reiterated deficit understanding of education from previous

documents - that the education system and its students were not performing up to expectation.

This was repeated again in the document, "it is an unfortunate, accepted truth that we have fallen

behind in educating our children" (p. 7), making the assumption that this is the "truth" about the

education system based on standardized tests. However, the ways in which internationally

comparative test scores were presented to the public need a deeper investigation to determine

their reliability. In the Canadian education context, Green (2016) argues that "students do

comparatively well in international assessments," but no matter the outcome, "their performance

is still deemed unacceptable" (p. 72), suggesting that there are ideological uses for the "failing"

tests to enact education reform. Lentin and Titley (2011) describe performance data as having

considerable "malleable political capital" (p. 13), where information is used politically to "shock"

or incite "public panic" (Alexander, 2012).

In the context of Atlantic Canada, Corbett (2016) explains that especially the context in

rural areas, where "students consistently perform below the national average in all forms of

comparative standardized testing" (p. 2), and when test scores are announced, what follows from

the Department is a predictable pattern of panic, deficit-hysteria, and reform:

. . . the result always seems to be pretty much the same: British Columbia, Alberta, and

Central Canada, the more urbanized Canadian provinces, consistently finish on top,

jockeying for the top spots in different subject areas. . . Next come the Prairie Provinces

that tend to fall into the middle range nationally, usually below the Canadian average.

Trailing the pack are the Atlantic Provinces, followed by the Canada's three northern

territories. (2016, p. 2)

Corbett calls the international testing results "depressingly predictable" as they precipitate

economic "doom and gloom" (p. 2) thinking, along with ushering in major changes to curriculum

and programming. Although Nova Scotia consistently performs below the national average,

internationally, it is still comparable with the highest performers, yet the same reactions occur.

Corbett further adds that in terms of testing data, what PISA test results indicate are parental

socioeconomic status at "its most basic level" (p. 34), meaning that while the tests are often

politically packaged to repeat that the "province is falling behind," in actuality, the students are

performing along the lines of their relative economic status. In fact, the highest math results in

Nova Scotia were from the first PISA tests in 2003, as presented in *Status Quo* (2014, p. 10; see

Fig. 3). Since the first results in 2003, these results have fluctuated slightly, however, the best

scores were achieved prior to programming, curricular, and resource reforms were put into place

for achievement in mathematics (further discussed in Chapter 5: Accountability).
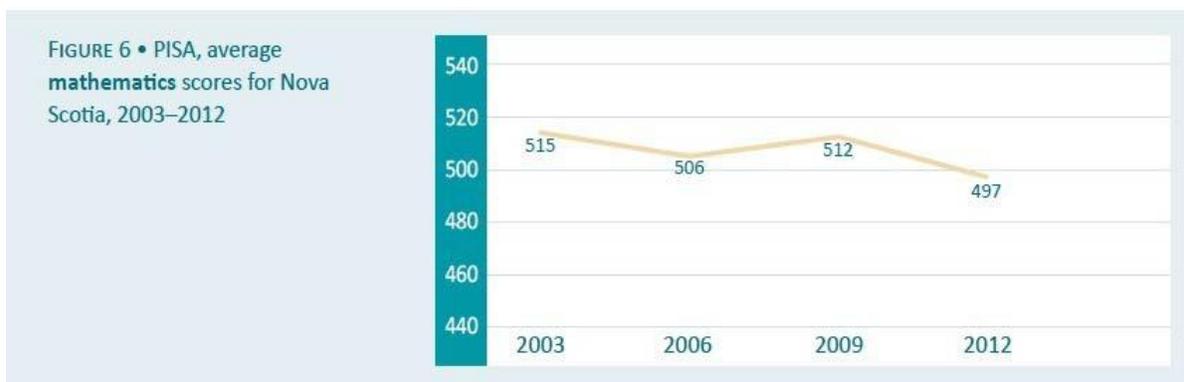
Figure 3. PISA Mathematics Scores for Nova Scotia (*Status Quo,* 2014, p. 10)

Following the lines of Corbett's (2016) critique of testing results as informing curricular and programming changes in public education, the *Action Plan* (2015) was based upon test results and economic fears to drive change. Using the testing results to further the urgency for change, Minister of Education Karen Casey, stated that the education system had "lost credibility in the eyes of many Nova Scotians" but the province had "enormous potential" (p. 6), and with the *Action Plan* (2015), planned for major changes in four areas: modernizing the system, innovating curriculum, promoting inclusive school environments, and advancing excellence in teaching and leadership.

Neoliberal discourses from *Status Quo* (2014) continued in *Action Plan* (2015) through the ideas of testing success, competition, higher achievement, and excellence, as well as the articulation with the concept of "modernizing" the education system. Modernization includes more impetus on test success, business-education partnerships, workplace skills and attitudes in "innovative" curriculum (p. 18) (discussed in the following section), and specific changes to the education system for the economy through market rationalities. The proposed changes, however, come without more funding for the system, as one administrator, Andrew stated, "there's actually only enough money for the first year of the plan, and that really only covers the elementary grades" (June, 2015). Using test results as "politically malleable capital" (Lentin & Titley, 2011, p. 13), and a political message that may or not be backed by evidence of actual "failing" students, the *Action Plan* (2015) strategically positioned public opinions of failure, through surveys and testing results, to overhaul curriculum and programs for the benefit of the economy. In the next section, I provide a close reading of two out of four themes from the *Status Quo* (2014) reform plan (Strengthen the curriculum to transform teaching and learning, and Preparing today's students for tomorrow's opportunities) supported by evidence from the *Action Plan* (2015) and supporting documents *School to Success* (2016), *Be There* (2016), to

show how neoliberal education policy discourses are embedded into curriculum and school

programming.

Workplace skills, labour partnerships, early childhood education: Cradle to Career, 2013-2016

Status Quo (2014) used discourses of urgency of economic decline, and the idea of

"falling behind" internationally in tests scores to forward curriculum and program changes to fit

the economic needs of the province, which was considered to be "in need of significant repair"

(p. 18). Under the first theme "Strengthen the curriculum to transform teaching and learning,"

the idea of "back to basics," was presented, including the return to, "spelling and basic

mathematical operations" at the elementary level and "strong foundations in mathematics and

literacy" at intermediate and secondary levels (p. 19). The basics approach, also forwarded in

Planning for Success (2002) and *Brighter Futures* (2005), was returned to here as a "critical gap"

in the curriculum, along with financial literacy, civic engagement, entrepreneurialism, and career

and management skills (p. 19). A second recommendation made by the panel was for curriculum

development at the junior high level, to prepare students to "take different pathways, including

trades and technology courses emerging programs, such as coding, associated with STEM

careers" (p. 22). At the high school level, "critical gaps" were suggested to be filled in areas of

"life skills, financial literacy, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)" (p.

23). Such changes keep the focus in education on literacy and numeracy at all levels, with

expanded curriculum to set students on an occupational "path" for trades or STEM fields. These

"curricular gaps" and attention to mathematics and science, financial literacy and

entrepreneurship, forwarded a particular type of educational reform that matches the *ONE NS*

(2014) calls to action for furthering the provincial economy.

The third theme, "Preparing today's students for tomorrow's opportunities" suggested that better programming was needed for transitioning students from high school into the workforce, and for life and workplace skills to be learned in schools (the work skill "counting change" is given as an example, p. 35). The panel also suggested that attitudes and behaviours of workers needed to be instilled in students, such as "attendance, meeting deadlines, [and] making an effort to do well" (p. 35). In the recommendations, the panel forwards changes to attendance and assessment policies, including, "policy development to reinforce the importance of job and life-related competencies, such as punctuality" (p. 38), and forwarded a call to increase the graduation requirement from 18 to 21 credits to reduce the number of "free periods" students have in high school (p. 39). Such recommended changes concentrated on curricular and behavioural aspects of schooling, to further the overall goal for the province which is to transition students into the workforce, stimulating the economy. Using both *ONE NS* (2014) and *Status Quo* (2014) as reference points, the *Action Plan* (2015) forwarded specific curricular and program changes to put the previous recommendations into effect.

Like the documents before it, the *Action Plan* (2015) advanced "achievement in math and literacy, improved career-readiness for students, expanded programs and services for pre-schoolers, and reduced disruptive student behaviour" (p. 9). Aside from curricular and program reform, the plan also presented several new partnership councils, including: An Achievement Gap Initiative, Business-Education Council, and Transition Task Force (p. 11), to study the "achievement gap" between groups of students, create labour partnerships with schools, and policies on school to work life paths. At the school level, curricular changes were proposed to embed learning in entrepreneurship (p. 16), career exploration beginning in grade 4 (p. 22), and a "ready to launch" curriculum in high schools to make sure that students were "competitive on the international stage" (p. 24). Such changes included the proposed increase of credits to graduate

high school from *Status Quo* (2014), continued focus on mathematics, literacy, and international test results. A new focus on early childhood education, including the monitoring of milestones and early intervention for math and literacy was also created in this policy. Each goal, council, and curriculum reform suggested in this plan, however, was geared toward the economy, whether through international mobility and global competition, success in standardized testing, early childhood education, or partnerships with the business community.

In the section on "Partnerships with the Business Community" business leaders had stated interest in working with students and the school system "to ensure our children have the skills they need to be successful in the workforce" (p. 16). With their help in mentoring students, the Department sought to "foster a shift in thinking" toward entrepreneurship, forwarding the goals of "developing the future workforce" and "entrepreneurial skills and attributes" (p. 16). These partnerships sought to foster more career exploration with students, increase the number of entrepreneurial and co-op opportunities, and embed entrepreneurship into mandatory high school courses (p. 17). While the business partnership discourse certainly attended to workplace skills, future work paths for students, and the idea of businesses being a part of the school system for mentorship, these programs were focused on students in junior and senior high schools. At the other end of the spectrum, early childhood education, *Action Plan* (2015) set out a detailed plan for preschool and early grades for "achievement" and "success."

Beginning with *Status Quo* (2014) there was a shift in attention, not on student performance and excellence, which continued from former documents, but towards tracking early childhood development. With the renaming of the Department of Education in 2013 to include early childhood education, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development was in charge of implementing programming for preschool aged children in the province, including the tracking of development, and providing early interventions for children not meeting

benchmarks. There was an earlier attempt to emphasize early childhood education [ECE] in the *Planning for Success* (2002) policy where an "Early Years Agenda" was first proposed (p. 5), which included the "ready for schooling" initiative, with new parents receiving literacy packages for their newborns before leaving the hospital. The "Read to Me!"[1] (p. 5) program began in 2002, and was continued to provide families of newborns access to reading materials, music, with options in several languages, however, other than this program it was not until 2008 when an early development index [EDI] survey was implemented to monitor child development before school. In the later documents, however, there was a shift in attention to ECE through a plan to expand "family-centered policy, research and evaluation mechanisms to inform strategic directions and the establishment of an integrated early years system" (*Statement of Mandate,* 2013-2014, p. 2), and the creation and distribution of developmental benchmarks literature to caregivers.

The ECE plan included a mandatory 18 and 36-month-old "wellness visit" (*Statement of Mandate,* 2014-2015) with a physician to track milestone achievement through the proposed "integrated early years system," which is further explained in the *Action Plan* (2015). The early educational digital system, "electronic school file" (p. 21) (much like PowerSchool and TIENET, see Ch. 5: Accountability) would create, collect, and maintain a digital education file for every child at birth, which "may be used by the DOEECD to help plan services like pre-school screening and transition plans to school" (*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 21). While well-intentioned, the proposed system would place the development of young children under a surveillance system where their emotional, physical, and psychological development would be traced from birth. The *Action Plan* (2015) was also coupled with an early intervention math program for students showing signs of struggle in grades primary to three to thwart issues at an early age who have

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[1] www.readtome.ca

issues with self-regulation, stating "self-discipline and concentration can seem entirely unnatural and entirely irresistible to a young mind" (p. 22). The expectations placed on young children for "achievement" in math and literacy scores could have long-term damaging effects for children, including the never-ending "interventions" for some from the age of 18 months, a time when children develop at disparate paces and encouraging stigmatization from being "abnormal" compared to the standards set at each level. The conclusion of *Action Plan* (2015) restated the importance of career planning for students to help them "enjoy success in their chosen careers" (p. 34). The last sentence, where students need the "knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a quickly changing economy" for Nova Scotia to "build the economy," continued the singular insistence that the economy must be the first priority in the education system. This "education for the economy" path was continued in the two later documents, *School to Success* (2016) and *Be There* (2016) which focused on career planning and transitional support for students, and building appropriate attitudes and behaviours for the workplace.

School to Success (2016) and *Be There* (2016) were a pair of documents that supported career decision making, and education policy to put into place recommendations for attitudes and behaviours of workers from the *Action Plan* (2015) and *Status Quo* (2014). While *School to Success* (2016) was a report from the "transition taskforce" comprised of multiple stakeholders including teachers, members from the Department of Education, and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, the overall report provided recommendations for increasing career information for youth in the province by reviewing the recommendations put forth in the previous document. The newly defined set of recommendations by the Task Force included aspects of education such as greater access to hands-on learning and career decision making, but also to use data from the education system to better understand/track which paths youth are taking, by using the "unique identifier system": "to track youth from birth, inter and through public schools, and

into and out of apprenticeship, colleges and universities . . . into, around, and out of the

workforce" (*School to Success,* p. 16). This data would then be used to make "informed program

decisions" (*School to Success*, p. 16), but it was also recommended that the individual transition

data should also be "expanded beyond the public school system" (*School to Success,* p. 16). It

was not stated for what purposes personal data would be used outside of the school system,

however, the idea was planted in *School to Success* (2016). With a taskforce in place for career

readiness and advancement, the second document, *Be There* (2016), centered on attendance,

discipline, and behaviour for students to learn how to become workers, including, "preparing

young people for expectations in the workplace" (p. 1). As of September 2017, there was not a

formal policy indicating specific attendance, punctuality, organizational, or other behaviours

connected to educational outcomes. *Be There* (2016) laid the groundwork as a discussion paper

from which the province could potentially create a policy based on the research quoted in the

document. *Be There* (2016) situated the public consultation as a way to "help develop a

provincial student attendance policy" (p. 3), gesturing to the creation of an attendance policy in

the near future, but also revealing the repetitious nature of public consultations as/for policy

creation.

Conclusion

Through Part 1 of this chapter, I have shown how economic and workplace discourses in

policy and official documents remained consistent over time, while adding additional discourses

over time. Each decade presented the education system differently, for example, as needing to be

more fiscally sustainable (1990's), as a great system only needing a few changes (2000's), or as a

system failing students and the province (2010's). Yet, throughout the decades, the attention to

provincial (and global) economic concerns remained present. What did change during this time

are the discursive constructions of the economy as connected to education, international testing,

and the level of urgency and necessity in the reform plan. The higher the level of urgency, I

argue, the closer the discursive connection to the economy and plans to reform curriculum and

programming. This relationship was most prevalent in the latter documents where a high degree

of urgency and deficit discourses combined with reform concerning workplace skills,

entrepreneurship, and connecting schooling directly to market needs. While the tenets of

neoliberal education were present in all of the documents, what I have shown through the

genealogy is the sharp increase in neoliberal discourses from 2010 onward. Using data from

teacher interviews and focus groups, in Part two I connect the policy genealogy to the lived

experiences of educators. In this discussion, teachers and administrators provide their

experiences with education reform, negative public perceptions, and their opinions on the

changing education system.

Part Two: Teachers – Teacher Responses to Schooling for the Economy

This section draws teacher experiences from two focus groups, one with two

administrators, one with two social studies teachers, and four individual teacher and administrator

interviews held in June 2015. In these sessions, educators discussed how the public perception of

education has changed over the span of a decade, through surveys, testing data, and negative

perceptions of the education system. Teachers and administrators held differing views on the

direction of education reform in the province, ranging from positive responses toward "schooling

for the workplace," to critiques of a narrowing conceptualization of education. With the daily

work of teachers and administrators mainly pertaining to students, staff, and running a school,

once given the chance to move away from discussing "teaching" or "leading," their views on the

inner workings of policy, economy, and the politics of education, discussions exposed the inner

turmoil of educators who needed to reconcile their love of teaching and (sometimes) disdain for

the system they worked in.

Overall, teachers and administrators displayed frustrations with being in a system in a state of

perpetual reform, with each of the teachers at one point or another in discussions stopping to say

"but I love my job," before returning to critiquing the education system allegedly in a "state of

crisis." The following collection of conversations with educators shows interest and knowledge

of provincial politics, their passionate views of education, and their hesitancy to "vent"

(Catherine, June, 2015) or to be viewed as "complaining" (Brian, June, 2015). The data is

divided into three sections, centering on educators' responses concerning "deficit hysteria,"

"schooling for the workplace," and "education crises." Through these conversations, educators

illustrated their understanding of the shift into a deeper state of neoliberal education over time.

While most of the opinions are shared by multiple participants, such experiences are not

necessarily shared by all teachers across the province, however, these insights nonetheless help to

build an understanding neoliberal education in Nova Scotia.

Neoliberalism and Education Politics: "Deficit hysteria" and "butchering education"

One focus group comprised of two social studies teachers, Greg and Brian, held in-depth

exchanges about the direction of the Liberal government, its "neoliberal" politics (Greg, June,

2015), and the context of teaching in this educational environment. When asked, "what do you

think the driving force is behind the recent policies produced in the province?" the responses

ignited a conversation on neoliberalism and its connections to Nova Scotia politics:

Greg: [immediately] Neoliberalism! [laughter from the group]

Interviewer: Can you tell me more? What does this entail?

Greg: I don't know how much you want me to get into the mechanics of neoliberalism but

it's right-wing drift, since the Regan, Thatcher, Mulroney years and the constant

lowering of corporate taxes, and *deficit hysteria* – we're always in financial trouble

and we always have to cut back, we're always living beyond our means . . .

Brian: [interrupts] Yes! We're always on the brink of something! [laughing]

Greg: . . . you know the economy is always about to crash so we need to prepare for the

jobs of the future and those jobs are of course temporary, insecure, and require hi-

tech knowledge nothing else, and there's this sense that everything else is fluff. In

public school, you know if you send your kids to a nice private school they get a

beautiful education in arts, history, and all those things, but for public school kids,

we're trying to turn them into efficient workers . . .

The exchange between Brian and Greg on neoliberalism is important for three reasons: first,

Greg's knowledge of the mechanisms of neoliberalism and its connection to the education system

demonstrates how some teachers were cognizant of historically significant, right-leaning shifts in

governance and the effects those have on their daily lives as educators. While Brian

emphatically agreed with Greg, he did not necessarily add to the discussion, pointing to the idea

that although *some* teachers have knowledge of the inner workings of neoliberalism, not all

educators have the background knowledge or vocabulary to express such concerns. It is worth

noting that 2 out of 8 participants specifically used the term "neoliberalism," in their discussions.

Second, the idea of *deficit hysteria* as a function of the neoliberal shift in politics speaks to the

recent policy changes in the province in their positioning of the economy and the education

system. The idea that "we're always on the brink" shows the amount of uncertainty and state of

"lack" surrounding the education system, and more broadly, the province. Lastly, the

conversation on preparing students to work in a climate of job instability through a focus on

"work skills," juxtaposed with a private school "beautiful education," signified the difference

between public education as "schooling for work" versus private schools, assumed here to be

"beautiful." The idea that "everything else is fluff" outside of preparing students for the

workforce reiterated the singular insistence of the "economy first," "work skills" message

throughout the policy documents, but more significantly in the recent documents.

Following this exchange, Brian and Greg discussed the province's education system in

comparison with the United States, at first saying, that it is "not as bad" as what teachers are

going through in the US, however, the conversation weaved out of the comparison as Brian stated

that the current government is "butchering it [education]":

> Greg: It's not as bad as some part of the States, if you read about some of the States
>
> there's a very deliberate agenda that has to do with breaking teachers unions, and
>
> really over privatization, and I don't think we're really quite there yet. I think we
>
> need to be cautious of it though [trailing off] . . .
>
> Brian: I think this year alone though, like, our provincial government has made some
>
> moves that are definitely going in that direction. They're pushing it and butchering
>
> it, and going in that direction.
>
> Greg: Yeah but part of me thinks that is it this nefarious plan? Or is it this really
>
> simplistic analysis that they really don't know what they're doing.
>
> Brian: [laughing] I think that's exactly it. Which is the scary part!

Greg's attempt to normalize the state of "deficit hysteria" he earlier described, as not being "as

bad" as union-breaking in the U.S., is indicative of each of the conversations that I had with

teachers who continued to relay a "could be worse" attitude about their jobs. To not look like

someone who is complaining about their job, 6 out of 8 participants discursively tried to work

their way back into positivity concerning teaching, yet in this instance, Brian affirmed Greg's

concerns and furthered them by stating that the government was indeed "butchering" education.

He stated that in the "last year" the government had "made moves" that were comparable to the

United States, noting that education was going in the direction of privatization with anti-union

politics. Greg again gave the government the benefit of the doubt, responding that he did not

think there was a "nefarious plan," but that it was more likely due to incompetence, upon which

Brian agreed and responded with laughter, stating that was the "scary part."

This discussion revealed attitudes toward the Liberal government as being incompetent

and as reforming the education system to mimic its American counterparts, with the insinuation

that they "don't know what they're doing," and as such, destroying education in the process.

This focus group was the only session to discuss neoliberalism as such, and were the only

participants to delve into provincial politics in such a direct way, while others brushed off the

current provincial government and its reform, as being "something else to live through" (David,

June, 2015; Howard, June 2015). Greg and Brian provided an analysis of the political climate,

whereas other participants came to similar analyses through discussing specific curricular or

assessment changes to the education system to drive their critique.

As an example of the varied discussions of provincial politics, David criticized the

government for their use of tests to push an agenda of competition:

> All those things [standardized testing] though are driven by what is *perceived* to be
>
> accountability and competition - competition with other provinces, with the rest of the
>
> world! They're driven by that, and then accountability, "well those are tax payers'
>
> dollars", and I mean look at the rigorousness of report cards. [group laughter] (David,
>
> June, 2015)

While David did not openly point to the provincial leadership or speak about neoliberalism in the

same vein as Greg, he brought up the concept of national and international competition. Using

the international test results and the report card system as examples, David commented that

"they're driven by that," by ideas of competition and "perceived" accountability. Being "driven"

by competition and the use of being accountable for results from tax payers' money speak to

neoliberal politics of efficiency, competition in the global marketplace, and attending to

outcomes rather than process in education. This specific attention to outcome, through testing

results and "rigorous" report card formatting, David states, is "driven" by a particular market

rationality in schooling. While Greg named this underlying ideology "neoliberalism," to which

Brian emphatically agreed, David distinguished "them" (the government) as separate from "us,"

the teachers and administrators who work within the system. The next section expands on

teachers' understandings of education politics into curricular and programming changes in

schools.

Schooling for work: Entrepreneurship, multiple pathways to work, "tailoring" education

In a conversation with high school Principal, Marcus, discussions were more positive in

light of the school-to-work focus. Though he strayed from negativity or criticism of the

government and its recent reforms, he did discuss the struggle with getting students to see the

value in their education outside of "making the most money" (Marcus, June 2015). From his

perspective, it would be much "less stressful" on teachers if students had a career path in mind

before entering high school: "Yup, I just think that if the kid knew what they wanted to do or had

an idea in grade ten and you can have one block a day that you could find a way to get them

connected to that job, your stresses would be less. It would be less" (Marcus, 2015). Getting

students "connected to that job" using time in the school day through a co-operative approach

was a method Marcus is strongly in favour of, which was the direction that the *Action Plan*

(2015) and *School to Success* (2016) official documents advocated, but teachers were wary of.

Karen, a second administrator was not in agreement with this approach: "They don't know what

they like yet because they haven't been exposed to it. So how are they supposed to know what

they want to do for the rest of their lives?" Catherine and Howard also questioned the idea of

students "knowing their career path" upon entering high school.

Yet, Marcus' statement about "lessening stress" on teachers is revelatory because, of all

the stressors teachers discussed, from being overworked, lacking resources, doing too much

paperwork, not one teacher identified "student transitions to work" as a stressor in their jobs.

This is significant as he was the only educator to discuss the "school to work" path in a positive

light, and also was the only participant to identify this as a stress in his job. He also mentioned

that as a "younger administrator he can't get away with" not following policies, and the

"direction of the board and the department" as he was "accountable to his supervisor" (Marcus,

June 2015). The new policies placed different pressures on newer administrators to strictly abide

by recent reforms, and as such, could force different directions in the governance of their schools,

such as the idea of creating "tailor made" routes for student-career pathways. During the

conversation on student stress, Marcus shifted from the idea of "career-first" education into

"student passions" and creating an atmosphere to work with those strengths:

> I think what we need to start doing is finding ways to tailor make what our kids love to
>
> do, with their actual course load. What is it that you love to do? How can we tailor make
>
> that to get you out of here in grade twelve with the courses that you need? (June, 2015)

Using the idea of individual customizable education cohorts, to serve the student (as client)

through choice, and "tailor making" the high school experience, students would ideally be able to

choose their experience to "get the courses students need" for their next phase in life. This

presupposes that students are aware of their individual strengths, their passions, and their career

path and interests. Keeping Karen's concerns in mind, how can youth know their passions if they

have yet to be exposed to them? Marcus oscillated between an approach that supported a

schooling-for-education choice model, where students build a specialized program based on their

career trajectory, and helping students "find their passions" to drive such choices, stating "there's always a battle in what students perceive will make them the most money, and what they actually love to do" (Marcus, June 2015). He identified that students were interested in taking paths in high school to "make money" not associated with their actual interests, but because they thought that is what was needed of them. Karen agreed with this comment, adding "they think science and math will make them money, but their passions are in art and music. Because they're focused on making money and getting a job, they don't follow their passions" (June, 2015). The drive to get students to have a clear career path upon entering high school on the one hand would "lessen stress" as Marcus stated, and on the other, Karen commented that the school-to-work mentality enforces an "education as money-making" attitude in some students, steering youth away from their interests into what they understood as being a profitable path through education.

While teachers attempted to get students to know their interests, and use this information to plan for their futures, they collided with commonplace perceptions students held about particular pathways in schooling that will "make them money." This became a self-fulfilling prophecy were some students were taught throughout their education to care about their careers first and foremost, and their passions and interests as secondary. While some students knew themselves well enough to know what they want out of life, as Marcus mentioned, that was a small number of students. The vast majority did not know what their strengths and interests were yet, as Karen suggested, because they had not been introduced to a wide enough scope of content and disciplines. There was a negative public perception about schooling from the provincial surveys due to students not being "employable" – the public perception was that schools were not preparing students for the workplace.

Educational crises: "Schools are failing and a crap survey"

When discussing negative public perceptions surrounding teaching and the school system, educators tried to remain positive, but their obvious frustrations with departmental pressures to perform were apparent. In a focus group with two social studies teachers, Brian and Greg, they conveyed how "disheartening" it was to constantly hear negative feedback about education, and stated that the provincial surveys in the Minister's *Action Plan* (2015) were out of touch with the realities of the classroom. When asked about public opinion and perception of the education system, the following conversation revealed the affective response of teachers in this negative educational climate:

> Greg: Yeah. In the Minister's *Action Plan* there's just a lot of emphasis on job readiness and on math and literacy, and scores, and the same rhetoric of how our schools are failing, and a crap survey to say that 50% of people are dissatisfied with the NS ed system . . .

> Brian: [picks up from Greg] Which is so disheartening for us, because we work hard in there every day. I'd like to think that yeah, you know, we're doing an alright job! And they have no vested interest in the public ed system . . . whatever, I mean . . . [shrugs, trails off]

> Greg: [picks up from Brian] It's hard . . . well when you're actually doing it and there you're just with the kids and you don't have time to think about that stuff.

Their exchange revealed a complex web of dissatisfaction. Referencing the 2015 policy document *Action Plan*, Greg listed 6 reasons for the apparent high discontent with the system, citing the heavy focus on math and literacy, test scores, and "a lot of emphasis on job readiness" (June 2015). These components placed extra pressure on schools to perform, counting their performance on tests and the students they "produce" as the measurable outcomes of the system.

These "tangible" aspects of the education system were also intricately connected to the economy

and its success, both in education policy and in public perception. The survey rates of public

satisfaction with the education system, being at 50%, were perhaps due to test scores reported in

the press, or perceived connections to the economy, and demonstrated an external feedback loop

of negativity. In this feedback loop, test scores were presented as "failing," public satisfaction

with the education system was extremely low, which Greg called a "crap survey." When

combined with economic figures on the workforce presented in public documents like *Action*

Plan (2015), *Status Quo* (2014), and *ONE NS* (2014), both public survey results and official

documents further negatively framed education, teachers, and students.

Brian questioned the knowledge and interests of those who took part in the anonymous

public survey responses, and wondered why the results were so negative. Brian was critical of

the people who were the most negative survey respondents, namely, business owners and

anonymous members of the public, as they did not have any "vested interest" in the system.

Through all conversations with the 8 participants, they all stated that constant negative feedback

has had a toll on teachers, as both Greg and Karen (in a separate interview) called it

"disheartening." The use of words like "crap," "whatever," and other attempts to shrug off the

negative statements, showed how teachers were dismissive of their true feelings. It was clear

that talking about issues such as public perception and negativity surrounding the performance of

the education system brought up deep hurt from teachers who cared about their jobs and their

students. Greg stated that he just "doesn't have the time to think about this stuff," and that he

was most concerned with being in the classroom doing his job, which was a method to swing the

conversation back on matters where teachers have the most control - their classroom practice.

For 7 out of 8 conversations, educators changed the topic away from criticism and

negativity back to their practice. In only one discussion, the administrator steered the

conversation away from controversial or political topics, not answering two of the questions, but in the end stated "I don't know what you want me to say, my hands are tied" (Marcus, June 2015), which showed his frustrations not being able to manoeuver as an administrator in the system. Out of the other teachers, all four classroom teachers (Catherine, Brian, Greg, Howard) at one point in the conversation said, in one form or another, "I love my job." In the middle of discussing accountability measures, Howard stopped and said "I love my job okay? I just wanted to say that!" while Catherine repeated throughout the interview, "I'm not trying to vent but . . .," hedging before offering her concern or critique. Both Greg and Brian said that their most important focus was their students, adding that "all of this stuff doesn't matter" (Brian, June, 2015). Catherine's sentiments summarized the way in which teachers struggled to negotiate the tumultuous political and ethical terrain of their jobs:

> Again, I love my kids, they make my day, not to be negative, I don't want to be negative. Because that's what keeps you going, but if you don't reflect or say what I had said, that you're a robot, a zombie . . . and it's not that I'm trying to vent. Seriously, I feel like it's negative, and I don't want to display this negativity, but I feel like . . . I don't know . . . If my job was to just show up and teach, I'd be the happiest person alive! (June, 2015)

Catherine repeated here how she did not want to be understood as "being negative," like other times when Greg did not want to "complain," and Howard wanted to make clear that he "loves his job." The daily reality for these educators was that they lived the manifestations of education reform on the "frontlines," seeing the effects of policies first-hand in their impact on teachers, students, and administrators.

Conclusions

Through a policy genealogy of the economy and education, supported by teacher interview and focus group data, this chapter demonstrated how education reform between 1994-2016 was consistently, and directly, connected to economic priorities for the Nova Scotia economy. With an "economy first" approach, starting in 1994, the education system shifted away from the purpose of education to be for a "well-rounded" and "holistic" public education (*Restructuring,* 1994), to a continuously narrowing purpose attuned to increased math and literacy testing scores, and focus on national and international competitiveness, workplace skills, career preparation, and global mobility for Nova Scotia citizens. Although there were shifts in the amount and type of economic discourses in education policy over time, these remained consistent, if not steadily increasing, regardless of government leadership. Such shifts in policy toward a neoliberal education system articulate with national and global economic and education trends, which Olssen (2004) describes as "not a question of globalization *or* the nation-state, but of globalization *and* the nation-state" (p. 231). While the policies of economic austerity in the 1990's was unique to the specific political and economic context of Nova Scotia, it was also part of broad patterns of austerity measures nationally, and internationally (Lecours & Béland, 2010). This particular provincial economic rationality of education reform, however, did not vanish after the 1990's, but became more deeply entrenched over time, culminating in the most recent policies, leaving educators (and students) to navigate the system of education-as-marketplace.

The shaping of the education system over the last twenty years into one that increasingly focused on students-as-workers, to find their career path at early ages, to achieve excellence through testing, and to become interested in STEM and entrepreneurship, has (according to participants) affected how students imagine their futures, and how they envision themselves getting there. Teachers and administrators confirmed such changes through their frustrations

with students who do not see value in learning what they did not equate with having a "future

marketable value." Peters (2017) calls this phenomenon "responsibilisation" in neoliberal

governmentality, where individuals "self-govern" and make choices to provide themselves with

the most plausible economic future possible (p. 142). In other words, students choose their

futures not based on their interests and passions, but on their understanding of the education

system as a market, in which they are a student-entrepreneur, accruing skills, and choosing the

best path for their economic futures.

In Part two, educators critiqued the current system for pandering to "neoliberal" politics

of deficit mentality and failing students (Greg, June, 2015). Public perceptions of provincial

education, as seen through public education surveys, described a high level of dissatisfaction with

the system, including the quality of teaching, lack of workplace skills, career readiness, and

international test scores. With consistent pressure for the province to excel in testing and in

economic pursuits, and a perceived crisis through public consultation surveys, teachers were

affected by the persistent negative press education received. This "failing" system, was one

where teachers cared very deeply about their jobs, and about their students' futures. The changes

to education over the last two decades have transformed the very nature of their profession into

one where they felt at odds with the system, and still, do their best in spite of the constant

negativity. Brian described recent reforms violently, as "*butchering*" the education system,

implying that decisions made on the provincial level are harming, or have the potential to cause

harm, in the longer term. While this chapter worked with tracing neoliberal economic discourses

in policy, and demonstrated how such policy environments shift curriculum and programming in

schools, the next analysis chapter delves into a critical discourse analysis of neoliberal

governmentality in educators' lives. Through the first two analysis chapters, which

investigate neoliberalism, and governmentality as separate but interwoven entities, the third

analysis brings the two together to show its effects in practice.

Chapter 5: Accountability: Mechanisms of Tracking and Surveillance

You see, that's all about tracking. It all comes down to tracking . . . In order for it to really

count, it's gotta be submitted online.

- Brian, Social studies teacher

It's all Big Brother now, all of it. With everything coming down on us from admin,

teachers just find the least amount of resistance . . . So to me, it's accountability, and it's

one way to control us. We are in fear, and of course, it's the best tool for control. We

look over our shoulder, we are scared of who's listening, and I can see it in teachers'

eyes!

- Catherine, Social studies teacher

Accountability discourses transformed significantly in provincial policy and official

documents between 1994-2016. As a central tenet of the public education system, accountability

and the "new" management of its workers (educators) (Ozga, 2008, 2015; Rasmussen & Gowlett,

2015) and clients (students) over this period became increasingly connected to the performance

of students on standardized testing, the collection of data on student success and teacher

effectiveness, and the continuous improvement of schools. In this analysis chapter, I investigate

the emergence of neoliberal accountability and governmentality in education, and trace the

shifting definitions and conceptualizations of accountability in official documents using a policy

genealogy. Starting with a genealogy of fiscal accountability and its connections to achievement,

success, and results in a social context of economic globalization in the 1990's, I argue that

policy transformed into the expansion of accountability mechanisms from 2005 onward in

schools, and consequently has had an impact on the experiences of teachers and administrators in

schools.

In the first section of this chapter, I trace accountability discourse in official education documents from 1994-2015 to set an historical policy context of accountability, and to establish in what ways the deepening of accountability language changed expectations placed on teachers and administrators. In the second section, I analyze official documents from 2005 onward in a discussion of governmental policy technologies, and provide teacher responses to accountability mechanisms to illustrate how educators live the effects of policy changes in schools. Through the two analysis sections, I argue that the expansion of governmental policy technologies have (re)shaped educators' jobs into a profession of accountability measures, check points, and quantifiable tasks. Governmental policy technologies of hyper-accountability included teacher monitoring and surveillance, whole school improvement, standardized testing, and real-time digital data-entry platforms, which made educators' jobs increasingly difficult to negotiate over time.

Part One: The development of a concept: Foundations of accountability, 1994-2015

In the mid-1990's, accountability discourses on government spending, increased effectiveness, and efficiency were central to changes proposed in official education documents (*Horizons,* 1995; *Restructuring*, 1994). During this time, the provincial education system was majorly restructured: amalgamating school boards, decentralizing governance through site-based management, and the beginning discussions of an outcomes-based curricular framework[15] (*Horizons,* 1995). Clancy et. al (2000) describe this Provincial Liberal government (1993-1997) as a time of institutional restructuring and reform that was "harsh, abrupt, and dictatorial" (p. 2). In this political climate of decreased expenditures and "severe financial restraint" (Clancy, 2000,

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[15] During this time, Universities in Nova Scotia also saw large changes, including the deduction of programs offered, and funding cuts (Clancy, 2000).

p. 140), the Department of Tourism and Culture was subsumed into the Department of Education, amalgamating the two into a new department overseeing education, tourism, and culture,[16] changing the structure of education governance. Education accountability during this time was two-fold. First, through decreased provincial expenditures, evidenced through the restructuring of the education system with 70 million dollars cut from the education budget (Clancy, 2000, p. 140). Second, in education policy, accountability arose through discussions of fiscal responsibility, but also through a redefined "client-driven" approach with students (*Restructuring,* 1994, p. 23), and the idea of outcomes-based success measures for excellence.

In the 1994-1995 pair of education documents, *Restructuring Nova's Scotia Education System: Preparing All Students for a Lifetime of Learning, a Discussion Paper,* and *Education Horizons: White Paper on Restructuring the Education System* the first, a "discussion paper" sets the stage for the follow up policy document, *Education Horizons. Restructuring* (1994) was centered on the results of a public consultation through mail and telephone survey responses in the same year. These results were quoted in the introduction of the document, with Nova Scotians portrayed as, "demanding an education system which is world-class, focussing on excellence and standards, equity and relevance" (p. 6). While the individual survey results were not quoted in the document, the summary of the public's "demands" around education quality and accountability frame the rest of the document, in which the bulk of information (39 out of 59 pages) proposed changing roles and responsibilities in restructuring educational governance for greater fiscal accountability. This required "articulating measurable students and system goals", and "developing standards and setting targets" (p. 39). The results garnered from these steps are made publically available to provide "responsibility for the results achieved" (p. 39). Using the notion of accountability for education through results, *Restructuring* (1994) and *Horizons* (1995)

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[16] https://novascotia.ca/archives/gaho/authority.asp?ID=27

constructed a discursive framing of education around a "client-driven" system, achievement and success, and restructuring of governance. While many of changes were made between the 1990's and early 2000's policies, some of the central ideas remained, such as results-based environments, and evidenced school improvement accountability. In the 1990's documents, the concepts of results and evidence-based education were only discursive, but after 2002, became implemented into schools.

Restructuring: A "client-based" approach, 1994

In the first section of the discussion document, *Restructuring* (1994), titled "Vision of Education" (p. 7), external forces of change such as technology, global competition, economic shifts, and the need for workplace skills were outlined with reference to relevant literature from the Conference Board of Canada (1992) and the Corporate-Higher Education Forum (1992) (p. 9). This section described the social and economic contexts of schooling in Canada, and referred to students as needing "employable skills for the workforce" (p. 9). In terms of the purpose of *Restructuring* (1994), which was to propose changes in provincial school governance, the information provided on the "goals of education" (p. 9), "the learning environment" (p. 13), and the "forces of change" (p.7), at the beginning of the document did not necessarily connect to discussions of governance as seen later in the text. However, these "student" and "workplace" discussions provided a discursive platform for "increasing student achievement and success" (p. 13), and for later discussions in which students came to be known as educational "clients" in the system (p. 18).

With the positioning of students as "clientele" in *Restructuring* (1994), the education system discursively packaged education as a system to cater to specifically defined needs, through the lens of a client-provider relationship. A client-driven system identified "the

students, parents and community" as the clients, in which "services are developed and delivered

to satisfy client needs" which needs to be "anticipated and met" (p. 23). This client-based

relationship began to shift education system dynamics into one where administrators and teachers

were accountable for the success of the students in their charge, not in a general sense, but

through measurement and evidence. At this time, however, the ideas for heightened

accountability through a "client-based relationship" only existed in policy, as no accountability

mechanisms had been implemented in practice. Yet, (discursively) altered roles and definitions

of education moving away from, and understood as, a community practice into a business

transaction model with "good management" (p. 23), began the changing discursive patterns in

official documents after this time. The idea of "student as client" placed the impetus on the

education system to cater to student "needs" as the "primary focus" of the "coordination of

services" (p. 18). In this model, students became customers, or system "users" through which

their "changing client needs [were] anticipated and met" (p. 23), meaning that the system was

responding to the "needs of the client" through the more strategic "managing of schools" (p. 25).

To attain this level of client-based delivery, accountability for the client came to be paramount

through the education system's management and governance.

In a section on the changing roles and responsibilities of governance, *Restructuring*

(1994) outlined its guiding principles for change for the future education system. This system

was projected to become: a. economical, efficient, and productive; b. use shared decision making;

c. committed to quality; d. equitable; f. accountable; and g. a contributor to economic

sustainability (pp. 23-26). The descriptions of each of the principles furthered the business

discourses also reflected in the "client-based" constructions of the education system. Although

the "principles for change" included democratic aspects such as "shared decision making" and an

"equitable" system (p. 24), the remaining four espoused change that was rooted in business

principles of "accountability," "efficiency," and "productivity" (pp. 24-25). For example, the "economical, efficient, and productive" principle advocated for "continuously search[ing] for innovation and productivity increases" (p. 24), pointing to the need for fiscal efficiency, while instilling a need for continuous increases in productivity in education. The concept of productivity in education in *Restructuring* (1994) was not defined or discussed in any further detail. Additionally, the principle of being "committed to quality" outlined that "schools work at daily improvement" (p. 24). The types of improvements required of schools were not clearly defined, however, schools were to function as service "hubs" for client needs (p. 24). The use of neoliberal discourses such as "hubs," "client needs," and "daily improvement" connect back to the overarching goals in *Restructuring* (1994) of productivity and efficiency. Such discourses constructed schools not as community-based learning centers, but as efficient institutions that would accountably cater to local client through efficient management of funds and other resources.

The fifth principle, "accountability" extended the idea of education-as-and-for-business through its focus on a "results-oriented environment," where "successes, problems, progress and opportunities are continuously tracked, reported and acted upon" (p. 25). Using a reporting system much like businesses would use to track profits and losses, this idea of educational accountability similarly looked to use information of student results to drive planning for future "problems" and/or "opportunities" (p. 25), which introduced an evidenced-based understanding of education through policy. Lastly, through accountability measures, the education system was situated as a "contributor to economic sustainability," which valued schooling as "an essential part in developing competitive advantage" (p. 25). To achieve these accountability goals, the *Restructuring* (1994) plan offered a vision of education that included school advisory councils (p. 29), site-based management (p. 35), strategic planning (p. 38), and an accountability

"framework" (p. 39). The accountability framework positioned the education system as being

first and foremost accountable to its clients, namely, "students, parents, and society" (p. 39), by

providing ongoing performance monitoring, where "superior performance should be recognized

through an effective evaluation process and action should be taken where needed" (p. 39). The

results garnered from these steps would then be made publically available to demonstrate

"responsibility for results achieved" (p. 39). The suggested targets, evaluation processes, and

monitoring was not expanded upon or given direct actionable steps that could be taken to achieve

these ends, however, performance indicators were continually signified in the text as a "building

block for increased student achievement and success" (p. 40). Such performance indicators

included: achievement tests, graduation rates, attendance rates, operating costs, and satisfaction

of students and parents ("clients") within the system (p. 40). To accomplish high performance

levels, it was suggested that school boards should publish an "accountability report card,"

including "key performance indicators and measures . . . [and] thereby provide schools with

strategies for continuous improvement" (p. 41). Through the concept of the "client-centred

approach," and "guiding principles" in *Restructuring* (1994), a reconceptualization of the

education system emerged in the ways education was redefined through accountability and

results-based educational governance that continued into *Horizons* (1995), and furthered in

subsequent decades of education policy.

Horizons: The global marketplace and teacher expectations, 1995

The second policy document, *Horizons* (1995)*, advanced accountability and performance

indicators promoted in *Restructuring* (1994)*. The majority of the *Horizons* (1995) policy was

dedicated to providing clearly defined roles and responsibilities for restructuring school boards,

supplying models for school governance, and introducing an "action plan" (p. 46) for changes

proposed at each level of education governance. Like *Restructuring* (1994)*,* the text began with

a discussion of public consultation results on education, economic factors affecting Nova Scotia,

and the need for "demanding excellence" from the system (p. 1). *Horizons* (1995) was located as

a response to the public consultation to create a more effective system that "fosters excellence"

and was accountable for results in education (p. 1).

The first 5 pages were devoted to financial expenditures and declining enrolments in

schools in rural communities, setting the stage to justify significant cuts to a system that was no

longer sustainable in low-populated areas. *Horizons* (1995) solidified plans from the

Restructuring (1994) discussion document by giving concrete, actionable timelines and plans for

the suggested changes in education governance. These changes included decreasing the number

of school boards, implementing school advisory councils, and proposing site-based management

plans (p. 2). The roles and responsibilities for each level of government were outlined, including

education partners and community involvement, however, the foundation of the changes rested

upon the discursive framing of concepts established in *Restructuring* (1994): accountability,

effectiveness, performance, and excellence. In the "Framework for Renewal" (p. 9) section, the

idea of the global ("global marketplace") and local economic contexts were outlined and

connected to the idea of workplace skills, such as "high literacy and mathematical competencies"

(p. 9). Literacy and math skills were positioned as necessary for a "world of accelerating

change" (p. 9), and discursively packaged alongside the global marketplace with local schooling

contexts through policy. To achieve math and literacy skills, the Department suggested that the

education system must "seek to provide excellence" by "improving the performance" of the

system (p. 9). Through a discussion of "education renewal" (p. 11), *Horizons* (1995) provided an

outline of expectations for teachers and administrators in a system based on education performance.

Educators as shepherds of student performance

Teachers and administrators played a role in the process of renewal, and their roles were outlined in policy as "new expectations" (p. 11). Teachers were described in *Horizons* (1995) as "professionals having personal lifelong learning responsibilities and the freedom to exercise their professional teaching skills and knowledge," and as needing "more autonomy to make decisions" (p. 29). Without professional autonomy, teachers "cannot exercise their professional training and judgment" (p. 29). Principals were described as having "adequate authority to match their responsibility as the school's educational leader and operational manager" (p. 11), including autonomy over the daily interactions of the school. *Horizons* (1995) explicitly stated that both teachers and administrators required flexibility to act autonomously through their own professional judgement, and, perhaps most importantly, the *only* document to forward this message. The *Horizons* (1995) plan for renewal through performance and excellence advanced the idea that educators needed freedom in professional judgement in their occupations to fulfill their duties as teachers and administrators. Yet after the statements supporting educator professionalism, the policy discourse switched back onto measurable "performances," furthering the idea that restructuring "must also focus on increasing quality, effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, sustainability and accountability, fostering excellence in ways taxpayers can afford" (p. 11). While *Horizons* (1995) posits educators as needing significant amounts of professional autonomy, the switching back to underlying goals of "productivity" and "performance" illustrated contradictions between policy discourses of education accountability and teacher support through professionalism.

Educators would be expected to implement accountability measures into schools, therefore while *Horizons* (1995) discursively supported teachers by suggesting teacher professionalism and autonomy was necessary for a good education, the overall path of the education system toward efficiency, excellence, and market-based education was at odds with teacher autonomy.

A plan was not given for how the system would become more effective, productive, and/or efficient, although the suggestion for "greater use of technologies to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity at the school level" was provided (p. 47). No such technologies allowing for the "increased network capability" for the "monitoring and delivery of programs" (p. 47) were listed, however, this thread of technological platforms for monitoring efficiency carried forward into the next two decades of policy. The discourse of "client-based" relationships (*and* support for teacher autonomy and discretion), faded away after the 1990's, but the underlying tenets of performance, evidence-based governance, and their connections to the economy remained rooted in education policy into the 2000's.

Monitoring and tracking: Accountability through testing and evidence 2002-2005

The era of fiscal restraint of the 1990's was followed by ten-years of Progressive Conservative leadership under John Hamm (1999-2006) and Rodney MacDonald (2006-2009). Hamm's electoral platform plan *Strong Leadership … a clear course* (1999) outlined the Progressive Conservative strategy for "reinvesting in education" (p. 15) after a time of funding cuts, salary freezes and roll-backs on teachers during the "Savage years" (Clancy et al, 2000; Guilford, 1994). Included in the plan was funding for textbooks, school technology, and classroom caps, and the reinstatement of the Department of Culture and Tourism as separate from

the Department of Education after five years of amalgamation (1994-1999).[17] The *Strong*

Leadership (1999) platform also introduced new accountability measures for "transparency of

government" (p. 18), which included a yearly *Business Plan* for each department.[18] Beginning in

2000, the Department released publically available business plans outlining the departmental

mission, goals, functions, and budgeting context to allow greater accountability and government

transparency. While only two major policy reform documents were released, *Learning for Life:*

Planning for Success (2002), and *Learning for Life: Brighter Futures Together* (2005), the yearly

official reports provided consistent documentation to trace substantial changes in accountability

discourse over time. These changes included the connection of accountability to school-level

practices around testing, monitoring and tracking performance, and school data collection, and

the changing relationship between teachers and administrators.

    Planning for Success (2002) was the Department's policy to get "back to basics," with a

significant focus on grammar, literacy, and mathematics programming (p. 9). This was

introduced at the beginning of *Planning for Success* (2002) stating, "people want more attention

to quality, standards, and accountability" (p. 1). While *Horizons* (1995) and *Restructuring*

(1994) mentioned the importance of math and literacy associated with workplace skills, no

concrete programming was developed or forwarded through these documents. *Planning for*

Success (2002) provided a detailed outline of expenditures, and the introduction of math and

literacy foci for testing, interventions, expanded resources, and curricula for these areas (p. 13).

The accountability concepts from the previous documents, particularly concerning public school

funding, cutting government expenditures, and changing the structure of the system, transformed

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[17] https://novascotia.ca/archives/gaho/authority.asp?ID=27

[18] In 2010, the yearly "Business Plan" was renamed "Statement of Mandate" under the Darrell
Dexter New Democrat Party government.

into school-level accountability in *Planning for Success* (2002) in the ideas of quality and standards in teaching and achievement, and continuing the idea of measuring success.

Quality and standards were mainly stressed through achievement in the basics (defined as math and literacy), however, the idea of accountability through "quality" education becomes important through teacher quality, curriculum quality, and testing scores. Mathematics was the first section of the document that directly discussed what accountability means in schools, through "higher achievement in math . . . and accountability for progress" (p. 13). The math strategy included more required time in the school day for math instruction, new courses, more resources, and "quality teaching" with more time and funding for professional development (p. 13). Similar to the math plan, "higher achievement in reading, writing, grammar" also pinpointed expanded courses, more instructional time, professional development for "quality instruction," and testing to show progress (p. 10). Accountability, as attached to educational "quality" through math achievement, forwarded a type of measurement in schools that could be linked directly to what was happening in classrooms. While math results were positioned as the main pathway for classroom performance accountability, literacy was also implicated in the plan.

The word "accountability" was not included in the *Planning for Success* (2002) literacy plan (unlike the mathematics section), however, the recurring usage of "teacher quality," "testing for progress," and "more funding and resources" repeated the accountability goals of the department, albeit with slight variances. The repetition of accountability discourses such as quality, success, achievement, and evidence were not relegated to fiscal matters in 2002-2005, but were applied to all layers of the education system, including whole schools, and teachers. For whole school accountability, mechanisms for "accreditation" and "whole school improvement" were introduced in *Planning for Success* (2002), where "improvement plans are built on evidence: test scores, school and student statistics, parent surveys" (p. 29), thereby

linking accountability goals with classrooms. While the school improvement plan was mentioned

in *Planning for Success* (2002) it did not become fully realized until the *Brighter Futures* (2005)

document (discussed below). School improvement was directly integrated into an evidenced plan

that took into account test scores for individual schools to become "accredited" (p. 29) by the

province, therefore making *testing* a central tenet in the accountability plan for achievement.

Testing discourse recurred frequently in *Planning for Success* (2002), with the words

"test" or "testing" used 34 times in the 47-page policy. In the opening Minister's Message,

education Minister Jane Purves pushed the idea of testing as a requirement: "We also need to

challenge some misguided concepts, like testing is a bad idea. We can't help students do better

unless we clearly measure their progress and openly and honestly share with them the results of

their efforts" (p. iii). This quotation sets up the idea that testing was needed to have progress,

and arguments opposing this view were "misguided" (p. iii). *Planning for Success* (2002) was

the first policy document to cite the PISA tests[19] to push for testing and accountability in schools

by including statistics on Nova Scotia student success: "most Nova Scotia 15-year-olds

performed about the international average, but below the Canadian average in reading" (p. 9),

which positioned Nova Scotia education as below average. The Department also advanced

accountability in the province through policies surrounding "time on task" for more instructional

time in the school day for math and literacy (*Time to Learn Strategy,* 2002), and the began

discussions of a "monitoring system" for student performance in math and literacy (*Business

Plan,* 2000-2001, p. 6) as a reaction to international testing results in PISA and PIRLS

assessments. Standardized testing results became increasingly significant for the province

during this time, and goals to improve results were aligned through governance structure

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[19] The first official document to reference PISA was the 2000-2001 *Business Plan* in a discussion
of the "evaluation of programs and services, using PISA results" (2000, p. 6).

changes. Although testing, quality, and achievement were intertwined with the plan to heighten success in specific areas of math and literacy, this focus coincided with the first direct discussions of accountability for teacher "quality" as well. Such shifts in policy discourse were also seen through governance changes.

Coupled with changes at the school level, the department continued to shift its structure of governance to reflect new priorities of testing and accountability. In the *Business Plan* (2002-2003) a new support unit was added to the Department of Education governance structure, called the "Education Renewal Office." In the *Business Plan* (2002) document the reasons for (and operations of) the support unit were not explained, but in the *Business Plan* (2003-2004), the Education Renewal Office was moved from a support unit into its own larger branch, for purposes of tracking "quality, standards, and accountability in public schools" (p. 4). The Education Renewal branch was responsible for maintaining accountability through the "quality of education provided to its learners . . . to ensure that standards of quality are established, measured and reported on" (*Business Plan,* 2003-2004, p. 5), however, this branch only existed for one year before being removed for reasons not communicated through official documents. While the Education Renewal branch did not remain in service after 2004, the central concepts of quality, measurement, and evidence through testing continued discursively, and in practice. Quality standards for the system were based on the "results of provincial, national and international assessments" (*Business Plan,* 2003-2004, p. 5), meaning that accountability was directly connected to the quality of testing results from various assessments, whether provincial, national, or international. Secondary to the testing-as-accountability discourse was the treatment of teachers in the documents: teachers were part of the accountability-quality matrix, not as full autonomous professionals, but as those who prepared students for tests in certain subject areas, primarily math and literacy.

This accountability-quality matrix was the confluence of mitigating factors that simultaneously implicated teachers in accountability through their duties as teachers, and in their duty to deliver improvements in testing data. In this neoliberal understanding of schooling, teachers were not autonomous individuals acting from their professional knowledge and experience, but were mandated to show student and whole school growth through results from standardized tests. This was evidenced in the movement away from teacher autonomy and professional judgement cited in the 1994-1995 documents, and into a new relationship between the department, schools, and teachers in *Planning for Success* (2002).

Teacher Quality as Accountability

The concept of "teacher quality" in *Planning for Success* (2002) centered around the training, hiring, and retention of teachers in the province. The idea of "early recruitment tours" (p. 24), allowing school boards to hire earlier in the year to fill essential positions in specialty areas (math, French, literacy) were the main concern for quality teaching in *Planning for Success* (2002). At the end of the three-page "teacher quality" discussion (pp. 23-25), however, was where discourses of teacher "ongoing monitoring and evaluation" (p. 25) were first presented. *Planning for Success* (2002) noted that teachers "pursue opportunities for professional growth to differing degrees" (p. 23) and that most teachers sought out professional development opportunities on their own. To ensure the development opportunities teachers were taking were connected to student achievement, the department outlined a professional growth process, where "teachers will develop growth plans in consultation with school principals that will reflect priorities" (p. 25). The policy positioned the teacher growth plans as a framework "to assist all teachers" in their professional development, which included "goal setting and monitoring" (p.

25). Principals were named as the overseers of the growth plans, who "consulted" with teachers

to certify that each teacher's plans "reflect priorities in the school improvement plan linked to

student achievement" (p. 25). This point began a shift away from principals as being educational

leaders in their schools to educational managers of teachers, to ensure that Departmental

guidelines are followed and goals were being met. Such shifts in the role of administrators

changed the relationship of teachers with their principals.

Commencing in the 2002 policy, but not implemented until 2006-2007 (*Brighter Futures,*

2005), the relationship between administrators and teachers shifted from one where teachers had

more freedom and autonomy in their day-to-day activities, and administrators were considered

educational leaders, into the educational management of teachers *by* administrators. In this

rendition of school governance, teachers' goals were monitored by principals, who had the added

task of managing departmental and school goals of testing achievement, and filtered these

expectations down to the teachers. This "new architecture of regulation based on interlocking

relationships" (Ball, 2013, p. 48) changed the roles administrators had within their schools from

one of "custodians of resources" (Pinto, 2012, p. 262), to focusing on outcomes and performance

(of students, and by extension, teachers), instead of process. The change in governance

architecture through the creation of an Education Renewal Office was supported through

accountability discourses as a "policy technology" (Ball, 2013, p. 49). As a mechanization of

policy reform, the architecture articulated between policy, Education Renewal, administrators,

and teachers created a system of neoliberal accountability that was built upon testing, ideas of

teacher quality, and administrators' management labour to uphold a system educational

performance. The specific accountability discourses in *Planning for Success* (2002) were

signified through the use of specific bundles of words to describe the roles of educators, such as

"quality," "qualifications," "professionalism," "monitoring," and "performance" (pp. 23-25), at

once creating and supporting the shifting relationships for administrators and teachers to become

intimately tied to the accountability-quality matrix through student achievement data. As an

example, teachers were expected to be "monitored and evaluated," with the principal expected to

"monitor and evaluate [teacher] growth" (p. 25). This relationship of principals-as-accountability

officers for whole school performance *and* for each employee, was clarified in the *Brighter*

Futures (2005) policy and solidified further in subsequent yearly plans and 2014-2015 policies.

Brighter Futures – Policy technologies of school accountability

Brighter Futures (2005) was the second education reform policy created by the Hamm PC

government, implemented between 2005-2009. The policy was headed by a new Minister of

Education, Jamie Muir, who announced the government's plan to increase education funding by

21.4 million dollars to implement reform recommendations (p. iii). There were six main themes

in this policy: "Raising the Bar," "Closing the Gap," "Developing Healthy Active Learners,"

"Providing Time to Teach and Learn," "Measuring and Reporting on Success", and

"Strengthening Partnerships" (*Brighter Futures,* 2005, p. v). Each section was clearly outlined

with the amount of financial assistance it would receive, with a timeline and measurable

outcomes provided in the appendices for accountability and transparency. Accountability arose

in two main ways in *Brighter Futures* (2005): in the idea of data collection in "Raising the Bar,"

and though tracking assessments in "Measuring and Reporting on Success."

Raising the Bar was the provincial plan to set "higher standards for learning and

teaching," with raised "expectations for increased achievement" (p. 3), to be realized in the

improved performance of students and schools. To achieve this goal, *Brighter Futures* (2005)

outlined the need for "more and better information to make sound educational decisions and to focus on continuous improvement for students and teachers" (p. 25). The "whole school improvement" process was recognized here to be "one of the most important tools for improving school and student performance," where school performance data were collected, allowing schools to make educated decisions from testing results (p. 3). The two goals, increased achievement and more data on performance, were assumed to create a more accountable and prosperous educational environment, based on the understanding that more data would lead to better planning, and better planning equalled improved test results.

Raising the Bar, as a central theme and goal of *Brighter Futures* (2005) required precise data collection, monitoring, and tracking mechanisms to be put into place, which were specified in the "Measuring and Reporting on Success" section, such as expanded standardized testing and performance of high school students in math and literacy (p. 24). Tied into provincial goals of Raising the Bar were mechanisms for gathering, reporting, and creating improvement plans based on standardized testing evidence. The Department relied on performance assessments, such as provincial, national, and international standardized testing to provide information on mathematics, literacy, and science success, yet at the school-level, there was little available information gathered (p. 24). To increase performance, *Brighter Futures* (2005) initiated the implementation process of whole school improvement in all high schools, which relied on math and literacy data gathered through tests administered and compiled in high schools. This school-by-school information was provided to school boards and the Department to track and monitor the progress of all individual schools separate from larger provincial, national, and international assessments.

A second mechanism for school-level data collection was the introduction of a "comprehensive student information system to support improvement initiatives" (*Brighter*

Futures, 2005, p. 26). The platform was not named in the policy document, but the "student information system" was projected to be in the stages of "preparation, procurement, and implementation" during the 2008-2009 school year (p. 26). Since "reliable data is one of the biggest concerns" as "student achievement can be demonstrated, but only in general terms" (p. 25), this system would allow for school, classroom, and student-level performance and achievement information to be collected for the Department. In other words, the whole school improvement plan for individual school achievement, and student information system to further track and monitor individual students and schools changed the meaning of accountability after this time. While accountability was previously connected to fiscal and structural changes in the 1990's, after *Brighter Futures* (2005), accountability became entrenched in daily school activities through digital technologies, teacher and student monitoring, and whole school improvement.

Policy mechanisms: Data, evidence, and standardized testing

Brighter Futures (2005) marked a movement away from schools, principals, and teachers as autonomous actors to "data collectors" (Catherine, June, 2015) for the Department and its overarching goals of testing success and economic competitiveness. Direct measures such as enhanced standardized testing and accountability for student performance enhanced school scrutiny, diverting attention and energy away from holistic relationship building with students and educators based on professional autonomy and trust, into the growing demand for data by "maximizing organizational effectiveness and accountability through employee improvement and enhancement" (*Business Plan,* 2005, p. 7). In *Brighter Futures* (2005) principals were positioned as "educational leaders" who "have said they struggle to fill this role," to which the department suggested "a structured process will be introduced to support this work" (p. 3). As

educational leaders, principals, were expected to "work with classroom teachers to help them improve their teaching" (p. 3), and teachers "need to be well-prepared" (p. 3) in their field of study and pedagogical planning. To be certain that teachers were matched in their subject specialties, "an audit" (p. 5) was scheduled to perform background checks on teacher education and their work assignments. Through these examples, *Brighter Futures* (2005) proposed new forms of accountability that intimately enmeshed teacher and administrators as tools of the Department for data accumulation, with increasing controls and monitoring techniques placed on all parts of the education system. Between 2005 and 2013, no formal policies were created, however, the implementation of *Planning for Success* (2002) and *Brighter Futures* (2005) continued until 2010-2011. After this time, policy discourses concerning teachers became increasingly concerned with the work of teachers and administrators in schools, and in (re)defining their roles in relation to education accountability.

Technologies of surveillance: Teacher performance and hyper-accountability, 2013-2015

In 2009, Nova Scotia elected a New Democrat Party for the first time in its history, under the leadership of Darrell Dexter as Premier, lasting until Fall 2013. During Dexter's leadership, no major education policies were released, however, the previous goals of measuring and reporting were continued in yearly *Statement of Mandate* reports (formerly known as the yearly *Business Plan*). The former goals of "strengthening accountability in areas of governance . . . [and] the reporting of results" (*Statement of Mandate,* 2010-2011, p. 35) remained in the yearly plan, including the ongoing use of PISA results and provincial assessments for monitoring success. Although this era did not see *new* or additional accountability mechanisms in policy, the continuation from the previous government's education goals signaled that the shift in accountability was not simply a party platform matter, but indicated a broad change in education

governance. The previously embedded market rationalities of testing, competition, and

achievement, already rooted in structures of educational governance, were not disrupted with

the NDP government, but maintained.

In the next era of education policy, the intellectual and affective labours of educators

became what DeLissovoy (2015) calls "an important instrument of exploitation" (p. 49) through

deepening accountability and surveillance measures that seeped into the daily lives of teachers.

This third accountability shift occurred in the renamed "Department of Education and Early

Childhood Education," through the Stephen McNeil Liberal government after October 2013. The

Liberal government released two major education documents: a discussion paper, *Disrupting the*

Status Quo: Nova Scotians Demand a Better Future for Every Student – Report of the Minister's

Panel on Education (2014), and a policy, *Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education: 3R's –*

Renew, Refocus, Rebuild (2015). Similar to the style of official documents released by the John

Savage Liberals 20 years prior (1994-1995), the 2014-2015 documents were released within

months of each other, and based on public consultation surveys. One significant difference to

note between *Restructuring* (1994) and *Status Quo* (2014) was the use of consultation and survey

data in the official documents to guide recommendations. In *Restructuring* (1994), the results

were discussed, but not in depth, without graphics or specific statistics around the results, while

Status Quo (2014) based the reform plan off of the survey results, which were displayed in every

section of the document in large, colourful graphics.

The public consultation in *Status Quo* (2014) was conducted by a panel, headed by the

former Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, Honorable Myra Freeman, and survey results

showed that half of respondents (teachers, administrators, school board staff, students, parents,

and community members) were dissatisfied with the public education system (p. 1). Those most

satisfied with the system were school administrators (71%) and students (63%), with parents

(47%) and community members (33%) the most dissatisfied with public education. Based on the

results of the survey, the panel submitted suggestions to improve the system in 7 main areas:

curriculum, teaching, transitions, inclusion, school climate, health and well-being, and modern

structure.

In the Executive Summary the Minister of Education, Karen Casey, used urgent discourse

to convey the "demand" for change in the province based on the public survey results, with

phrases such as "significant change," "deeply disturbing," and "pressing need" (p. 3) at the

forefront of the reform plan:

> The panel's recommendations constitute a significant change for the management of our
>
> school system. There is no other choice. The assessment results of Nova Scotian students
>
> reveal that our students are not performing well in comparison to other provinces. Given
>
> that our youth need to succeed in a competitive world, this is deeply disturbing . . . There
>
> is a pressing need for the government to move forward with the full range of
>
> recommendations presented in this report . . . Simply picking and choosing from the
>
> recommendations will diminish the synergy to be achieved". (*Status Quo,* 2014, pp. 2-3)

This passage emits an insistency that was unparalleled in previous education documents around

four main areas of accountability: management, performance *as* testing, economy, and

curriculum implementation. Mimicking former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's

infamous quote "there is no alternative," Casey stated that the plan for reform must be

implemented in full to not disrupt the "synergy" as "there is no other choice" (p. 3). This

particular passage describes what Séville (2016) calls a return to "one way" politics, which is to

say there is only one possible answer to the problems the education system faces, and the answer

is more accountability for the results of student performance. *Status Quo* (2014) hinged its

recommendations upon competitive student achievement in international tests (p. 10), articulating

with new forms of teacher and administrator accountability in the process. The second major

theme, "Make high-quality teaching the norm in every classroom" (p. 24), demonstrated the

intricate connections of teacher accountability and educational management in the shifting

educational environment. Teaching quality and teacher effectiveness were major points in *Status*

Quo (2014) which shifted discussions away from whole school improvement into individual

classrooms.

Survey respondents stated that teachers were the "bedrock of the public school system,"

yet the plan recommended to fix the "cracks in the bedrock," where "teachers are not effective,"

"engagement is low," and "teachers are mismatched to their assignments" (p. 24). Although

survey responses were in favour of teachers, with 70 percent responding that "students are

receiving highly effective teaching in their classes," the provided recommendation was that there

are "issues with teaching quality that need to be addressed" (p. 25). The ensuing discussion of

workplace stresses on teachers as being too high, with "paperwork and non-classroom

expectations, too many initiatives, lessened autonomy, and lack of resources" (p. 26), provided

some insight into the ways in which teachers' jobs had changed, however, no plans for rectifying

these issues to lessen the burden on teachers was provided. Instead, the succeeding section

"Improve the management of the system's personnel," described how "higher standards for the

knowledge, skills, and experiences new teachers bring into the classroom" (p. 27) were needed.

The recommendation forwarded in *Status Quo* (2014) for improving the quality of teachers was

an additional accountability program: "There is a call for the province to develop a new

performance management system that mandates accountability for the quality of instruction

received by students and the learning that occurs, while allowing for some flexibility at the

classroom level" (p. 27). This "provincial performance management system" would "require

mandatory performance appraisals" leading to recognition, plans for growth, or "identifying those

not meeting the requirements of their positions" (p. 30). Although the results of the public

opinion survey did not present negative results concerning teaching quality, *Status Quo* (2014)

nonetheless proposed a new performance management system to either recognize or discipline

teachers based on performance standards which were not explored in the document. Teachers

were subject to criticism in *Status Quo* (2014), however, at the same time, their professions were

discussed as being increasingly difficult.

      Status Quo (2014) provided insight into difficulties teachers were facing, such as

overcrowded classrooms and hard to manage student workloads (p. 25), but the answer to these

issues was to create another system of performance appraisal to ensure high quality teaching that

would lead to results. Principals were implicated in the suggestion of a performance appraisal

system for teachers, as they would be the main administrators of such a system. The discourse of

principals-as-managers revolved around teacher performance and accountability in *Status Quo*

(2014)*,* where administrators were part of a "managerial system" that needed to have a "more

structured approach" for "performance management" (p. 31). It was recommended that

principals should not be in the same union as teachers, and instead removing administrators from

the NSTU to facilitate "more effective" management of teacher performance (p. 31). This shift

was a significant change in discourse from earlier documents that supported principals' roles as

educational leaders, who were there to help guide teachers in their classrooms (*Restructuring*,

1994; *Horizons*, 1995), to one of a disciplinarian and manager overseeing the school for the

department (*Status Quo,* 2014*; Action Plan,* 2015)*.* The same ideas of teacher accountability,

student and teacher performance, and principals as school managers was furthered in the *Action*

Plan (2015) policy document.

The *Education Action Plan*: Advancing excellence through accountability, 2015

The *Action Plan* (2015) began with Education Minister Karen Casey's quote "We have done the studying; now it is time to do the work" (p. 5), referencing the *Status Quo* (2014) discussion paper released three months prior. The *Action Plan* (2015) was a response to the recommendations in the previous document, and provided an implementation road map for the following four years (2015-2019). Similar to previous policies such as *Planning for Success* (2002) and *Brighter Futures* (2005), the *Action Plan* (2015) provided a timeline for implementing new initiatives. One difference in the latter document was that financial costs were not attached to each initiative. A second difference was in the pressing tone and centering of the system's issues on test results in math and literacy: "It is an unfortunate, accepted truth that we have fallen behind in educating our children in Nova Scotia. And they, in turn, have fallen behind their peers nationally and internationally" (p. 7); and again, "we want to ensure that our students do better, especially in math and literacy" (p. 6). Centered on the idea of students falling behind, four "pillars" for change were identified in the *Action Plan* (2015): "Build a modern education system," "Create an innovative curriculum," "Promote inclusive school environment," and "Advancing excellence in teaching and leadership" (p. 6). In the following sections, I discuss how accountability is furthered through the *Action Plan* (2015), followed by its implications for teachers and administrators.

The first pillar "Build a modern education system" provided a plan for restructuring the system for efficiency, flexibility, and effectiveness, which would be "revamped to create a firm foundation for change" (p. 13). This pillar included a plan for restructuring divisions within the Department, a review of efficiency and effectiveness, and the establishment of a "centre for excellence" within the Department to "advance student achievement" for "high-quality teaching"

and "strong leadership" (p. 13). Along with these changes, an audit to the current governance model would be carried out for senior staff, within and across school boards to see how "effective school boards are in delivering results for key department initiatives" (p. 14). This restructuring plan for efficiency and accountability was comparable to *Restructuring* (1994) and *Horizons* (1995) with one major difference – the audit was not to reduce the number of school boards across the province, but to see if they were at all necessary for carrying out the Department's initiatives. The *Action Plan* (2015) also did not discuss restructuring for fiscal reasons, as in *Restructuring* (1994)*, but for efficiency and standardization of the Department's goals as evidenced in their implementation plan: "2015-2019: Mandate that all provincial policies and procedures will be implemented consistently across all school boards" (p. 38). Like *Status Quo* (2014), it was also recommended that school board officials be removed from the NSTU. The top-down governance accountability formula also applied to principals and teachers, in removing principals from the NSTU, and changing the collective agreement between the teacher's union and the province.

Under the heading "cooperation or negotiation with the Nova Scotia Teacher's Union" (p. 17), the *Action Plan* (2015) included a section for the need to resolve key areas within the collective agreement such as "changes to the school year," with the suggestions: professional development days be held during the summer, the (repeated statement) "removal of principals and school board administrators from the NSTU," the "creation of a robust system for teacher performance management," "new requirements for teacher certification," and "strengthening the process for addressing poor teaching performance" (p. 17). The *Action Plan* (2015) was the first time the NSTU and collective agreement are directly addressed in official documents (1994-2015), also the first time the prospects of changing the school year and teacher performance assessment practices that would challenge union regulations were discussed. In effect, the *Action*

Plan (2015) advocated for taking accountability further with restructuring and auditing of all

levels, implementing a "robust" teacher performance system (p. 17), and solidifying the

separation of principals and school board members from the NSTU. At the same time, the

standardized testing framework remained unchanged, but the department sought to change its

collective agreement and relationship with the NSTU through "cooperation or negotiation"[20]

(*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 17). Other relationships, such as the mentorship role between principal

and teacher, were altered in this accountability-governance formulation.

   Status Quo (2014) and *Action Plan* (2015) did not only alter the definition of

accountability in school governance, but modified the relationship between all levels of the

public system to mimic private enterprise, in essence, further entrenching the education system

in neoliberal models of governance. In this model, principals' roles as educational "managers of

teacher performance" and school test results no longer focused on teachers as continuously

learning and growing individuals, but as technicians who delivered a product. A further

requirement outlined in the *Action Plan* (2015) was teacher performance and appraisal training as

a prerequisite in becoming a principal (p. 33), with a standardized formula from the department

for applying the appraisal. As professionals, the cumulative effects of such policy technologies

on educators have not gone unobserved, with some teachers and administrators openly opposing,

and in some cases, resisting ongoing mechanisms of control in their professional lives. In the

next section, educators discuss their experiences with accountability mechanisms in their daily

lives, including the effects on their jobs and their overall connection to the education system.

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[20] Labour dispute between the NSTU and the Nova Scotia government lasted from August 2015
until February 2017. Three contracts were voted down by NSTU members, ending with a
contract legislated without further negotiation in February 2017.

Part Two: Lived experiences of accountability mechanisms

The accountability policies of restructuring, reform, and performance normalized discourses and mechanisms of tracking within schools. Over a period of 15 years (1994-2009), these policy changes affected practice slowly, with the latter plans for monitoring technologies not being implemented until the 2010-2011 school year (discussed below). The slow institutional change Everett Rogers (2003) has theorized as the "diffusion of innovations," allows for structural changes in organizations without causing disruption on a grand scale. "Diffusing" new accountability mechanisms slowly and strategically over longer periods of time maintains a sense of normalcy and stasis in practice, while still being in phases of reform (Rogers, 2003). In this context, policy changes are introduced on the provincial level, new terminologies and specialized educational lexicons become utilized more widely by administrators, reaching teachers through meetings, and professional development sessions. When structural and operational changes do occur, the ideas and discourses are already familiar to those working within schools to make implementation run more smoothly in their transition. In the instance of implementing accountability changes, the mechanisms introduced, including increased testing, provincial school report cards, whole school improvement, student information systems, teacher assessments, growth plans, and monitoring, took place slowly between 2005-2010. Unlike the previous decades of education policies, the 2014-2015 plans for institutional restructuring and reform did not fit with the "diffusion of innovation" principle, with many initiatives expected to be implemented at once.

Teacher and administrator responses varied in discussions concerning changes over time to the education system. For example, some administrators did not know the specifics of testing (which tests were still being used and when), initially some teachers forgot or downplayed the

effects of monitoring technologies, and others thought teacher performance assessments were a "joke" and laughed it off. In the interviews and focus groups, however, the longer the conversations lasted, the more apparent it became that accountability mechanisms were latent until the brevity of the changes brought out frustrations and (in some cases) defeatist and/or angry responses.[21] The following three sections on accountability mechanisms, "Standardized Testing," "Principals: Praying for Improvement," and "Teachers: Accountability and Surveillance," demonstrate the material effects of policy in practice. In these sections, teachers and administrators discuss how such accountability mechanisms have affected them, and in most cases, have negatively altered their livelihoods.

Standardized testing for accountability: "They're basing my job off of these things?"

There were a variety of responses regarding the role of the OECD PISA tests in Nova Scotia high schools, including the amount of teacher knowledge about standardized testing, the role of testing results in policy formation, and general confusion over the different types of ever-evolving assessments that have been in schools since the early 2000's, including international PISA, PIRLS, national (Pan-Canadian Assessment Program [PCAP]), and provincial-based examinations. Upon asking the participants to what extent teachers and administrators discuss standardized testing in schools, two focus group participants made it clear that teachers, "if anything, mocked and laughed" (Greg, Brian, June 2015) the process of international testing in their schools, and had never heard talk of PISA in the staffroom in particular, since it had "no part of our day to day reality" (Greg, June 2015) in classrooms. Interestingly, one teacher

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[21] It is important to note that interviews and focus groups were conducted June, 2015, only four months after *Action Plan* (2015) was released. During negotiations between the Department and NSTU in 2016-2017, anonymous posts by teachers provide insights into educator's lives after 2015, as the plan was implemented: https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/.

remarked, "I don't know *anything* about those, they have nothing to do with me. I think we stopped those tests a few years ago" (Catherine June 2015), demonstrating variations in teacher perceptions, especially when it came to the role of testing in shaping policies. International tests such as PISA and PIRLS were not administered by teachers in their classrooms, but by external proctors in conjunction with school administration, consequently testing was removed from the daily routines of teachers, who were generally unaware that external examinations took place in their schools. This disconnection could be possibly due to the sampling techniques used in schools, where select students were chosen from their classrooms to write in a separate space from their regular classroom teachers (Karen, June 2015).

Since the standardized assessments did not have an immediate effect on the teachers' day-to-day tasks, the international tests were easily brushed aside as superfluous, and therefore meaningless in relation to their everyday realities. At first, teachers' comments were dismissive of the testing, both in terms of how much teachers discuss or think about the testing in their daily jobs, and how it was (not) connected to their classrooms, nevertheless, as the sessions evolved, so did their critiques. While the topic of PISA started as a benign, non-subject in the discussion, the testing results became a topic that evolved into a deeper dialogue where external testing suddenly *did* impress upon their professions, albeit through negative public perceptions and effects on policy. One teacher described his disbelief as to why tests carry so much meaning in public perceptions of the education system:

> I still can't get over the amount of *airtime* that's given to these test scores . . . especially in the public's eye, the public that doesn't know better, and I think that it certainly inflates for them how important they are. They come out thinking these scores are *it*. It's the be all and end all, and it's not, not at all. (Brian, June 2015)

This account contradicts Brian's previous statement, that the tests "if anything, were mocked," into a serious engagement with the amount of "airtime," or public press that the PISA tests garnered, describing how the public "doesn't know better" about what really happens in schools. In a focus group with two social studies teachers, Brian and Greg, their discussions turned into airing frustrations surrounding public perceptions of PISA test results, and the connections to *Action Plan* (2015). Greg added what his thoughts were on testing discourse in local newspapers (Willick, 2014; Zwaagstra, 2013) and policy (*Status Quo*, 2014; *Action Plan,* 2015): "You know there's this thing that happens [testing] and then you see the news for it, and you're like, so that's what they're basing my job on? On these things?" (June 2015). Both Brian and Greg were perplexed as to why, in their professional day-to-day realities, the tests were meaningless in their classrooms, yet, in policy and in the public eye, PISA tests were used as *the* barometer for the health of the entire school system. Greg's critical question, "that's what they're basing my job on?" illustrates the disconnect between what is relayed to the public about the education system, and the realities of teachers who work in schools on a daily basis, which broadens divisions between teachers and the Department as two separate entities in a hierarchical relationship. While the Department was reliant upon PISA tests, with a wide broadcasting of the test results, teachers were left questioning what were tests' true purpose, which have, in their words, no immediate bearing on their students' learning.

Brian and Greg progressed from a rejection of the results into a critique that stemmed from constant negative feedback through media releases and news reports (e.g., Willick, 2013), criticising the N.S. education system for below-Canadian-average math and literacy grades. One teacher, Greg, directly connected the testing to education politics and the *Action Plan* (2015)*:*

> I mean, they're all political things. When the government is able to go to the media and just point to their test scores and say, there! There's the issues that we need to deal with,

and put all of this focus on the narrow view of what they think education is, because it's

easier for the public to digest literacy scores or math scores. (Greg, June 2015)

Greg critiqued the "political" use of test scores in the media to influence public perception about

education, and commented that this strategic usage of media coverage only shows a "narrow

view" of what education is. The complexity of education was diluted through the reporting of

math and literacy scores, which were conveyed negatively. This diluted understanding of

education created a self-fulfilling sequence that constructed the education system as deteriorating:

tests were administered, scores were reported to the public as "failing," the public was

dissatisfied with the system, plans were put into place to "fix the problem" of the alleged low

scores, which changed the system to become increasingly in line with testing performance for

public accountability. The focus on PISA results in official documents described in the above

section as "falling behind" (*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 3), "failing our students" (*Status Quo,* 2014, p.

58) in addition to negative public perceptions, and "dissatisfaction" (*Status Quo,* 2014, p. 1) left

teachers in disbelief over the amount of "airtime" the tests received, which had nothing to do with

their daily teaching routines. This negative feedback loop from the public, official documents,

and news coverage were as one administrator described "extremely damaging to teachers" who

ended up "very disheartened with the constant negativity," yet who continued to face their

students daily (Karen, June 2015). Karen also administered the PISA tests in her school, and

described the process:

> I had to administer that [PISA] here this year! Oh yes, that was a lot of "fun" [used air
>
> quotes, laughing]. In fact, the woman who came here to do it was *extremely* frustrated
>
> with the entire process as well. I kind of get the value in it, but I think comparing
>
> countries from different parts of the world like that is like comparing apples and oranges.

Living conditions are different, government structures are completely different . . . so I

think that the testing overall is inaccurate in that sense. (June 2015)

Karen described the "frustrating" process of implementing the PISA tests in schools, hinting at

the procedure as being difficult for school administrators and the external examiners alike. While

Karen noted that she "kind of gets the value" in the tests, she also critiqued the international

testing process as being akin to "comparing apples and oranges" and not providing "accurate"

data from the results. The purposes, validity, and "accuracy" of the tests were critiqued by

administrators and teachers as "frustrating" multiple times, in their perceived importance and the

actual process of testing within schools. One department head, Howard, commented that "they"

(the Department) were supposed to move away from standardized tests, but, "They still did it and

they're still going to do it. They said no standardized tests, but . . . here we are" (June, 2015).

Teachers were working under the assumption that the Department would "move away" from the

reliance on standardized testing, however, international tests were still being used for

performance evidence. Similar responses were heard from a focus group of high school

administrators (Andrew, David) who were unsure whether standardized testing was still in effect

in the following exchange:

Andrew: I think it's gone?

David: Yeah, I think that's gone . . .

Andrew: I don't know about PISA, but other tests are gone now?

David: I don't know anything about those!

Andrew: I know that the provincial tests are supposed to be gone . . .

David: Were they PISA?

This exchange between David and Andrew shows how unsure teachers and administrators were

of the standardized testing taking place in their schools. Although both recently retired

administrators, the educators, each having more than 30 years of experience and still actively

working in the system, pointed to the issue of clarity in accountability assessments. After trying

to iron out the details of which tests were still in effect, the idea of the "rules changing again"

was brought up by Andrew. The continuous "changing of rules" and regulations around testing

and lack of clarity circulating among educators added to the ongoing "frustrations" with PISA, as

Catherine displayed by throwing her hands in the air and shutting down the conversation with, "I

don't know anything about those" in frustration. David and Andrew stayed with the idea of

"changing rules" with testing and accountability in an exchange that evoked laughter, but also

exasperation:

> David: All those things, though, are driven by what is perceived to be accountability and
>
> competition. Competition with other provinces, with the rest of the world! They're
>
> driven by that, and then accountability, they say, "well those are tax payer's dollars," and
>
> I mean look at the rigorousness of report cards! [group laughing]
>
> Andrew: And it's changing again!

David pinpointed the tests as being part of the Department's plan for accountability. The

Department here, "they," are pointed to as being "driven by accountability and competition" – a

powerful statement about the underlying purposes of standardized tests in the province and the

use of discourses such as "tax payers" and "competition" to signify the need for more testing data

to compete internationally. Andrew's retort, "And it's changing again" left the group shrugging

their shoulders and shaking their heads in disbelief, indicating how disempowered and

bewildered educators felt with the system. Although the participants were not always clear on

the exact tests, how they were being run in their schools, and their validity, seven out of eight

participants were genuinely discouraged. One administrator chose not to answer the question

about PISA tests, stating "this is the direction we're heading in, so I'm not going to bother

fighting things outside of my control" (Marcus, June 2015). Nevertheless, the overall responses were indicative of a feeling of helplessness with test results being the driving factor in the direction of the education system. The PISA testing was far removed from classrooms in some ways, yet the broadcasted results, public perceptions, and policy changes based on the results has had tangible, material effects, whether or not teachers chose to acknowledge their influence. While educators could not always pinpoint their exact frustrations with the use of standardized tests and their influence on policy, they articulated how their lives have changed, and their discouragement with the government using results to change education.

Principals: Data collection and "praying for improvement"

In *Planning for Success* (2002), accountability in schools became a main focus for the Department. A new plan for "school accreditation" through a three-year whole school improvement process, "Planning for Improvement" [PFI], was an attempt to standardize school growth (primarily student achievements in math and literacy scores) using data collection mechanisms in classrooms such as pre-and-post-tests. To gain "accreditation" (*Planning for Success,* 2002, p. 29) through PFI, individual high schools determined their yearly goals based on the overarching provincial goals of increasing results in mathematics and literacy. Schools needed to collect school-based data on their improvement goals in math and literacy, and submit analyzed data to the Department to become an "accredited" school. The PFI process was piloted in 2003 and became the provincial standard three years after (*Brighter Futures,* 2005, p. 3). While the province received data on individual school improvement during this process, teachers and administrators found that it placed the onus on staff to not only teach, plan, mark, and enrich the lives of their students, but to also contribute to the new provincial measurement standard; in

effect, educators also had to become researchers to fulfill this mandate. One administrator, David, commented on the PFI process as being unnecessary, where academically struggling schools had to show growth through data, when in reality "they were *praying* for improvement," hoping for the improved data, and in some cases, "skewing representations" to fit the goals for the school (Karen, June, 2015). To show evidenced improvement in math and literacy testing, as David and Karen mentioned, tremendous pressures were placed on staff to deliver analyzed data, which was conceivably flawed. After the PFI accreditation process was reached, a second, longer and ongoing process was implemented to continue the cycle of data collection and analysis in schools, as connected to the provincial goals.

Similar to PFI, Continuous School Improvement [CSI], was a process where schools presented empirical evidence demonstrating that they followed the provincial plan for growth in areas necessary in their schools, again, primarily through improvements in mathematics and literacy. The difference with the newer process was that PFI was a three-year progression that ended, whereas CSI was ongoing in five-year stages, with only one year in between cycles of growth, meaning that schools did not get a break from phases of building empirical evidence to justify their continued existence (Howard, June 2015). The underlying philosophy behind CSI was that schools must, and can, always improve from the previous years, however, the participants were quite apprehensive with this process, because unlike the private sector, where profits are expected to continually rise, public schooling does not operate in the same cycles of growth. Older students move on to the next grade and newer students replace them, who need to learn the same amount as the former group, making actual, sustained "growth" problematic to track on a year to year basis for the same grade/age level. Aside from the pressures for schools to produce positive data yearly, all professional development sessions, staff meetings, department, and mandatory professional learning community [PLC] teacher meetings provided

data for the school goals, intricately linking teachers to the CSI process. Both teachers and administrators commented on their hesitations toward constant states of tracked improvement. One social studies department head, Howard, explained the difficulty with constant improvement, calling it "not possible:"

> Constant improvement *is not possible*! No. Looking at my own practice, there's certain things that work well, and it's okay to be at that level. If I was to try to make it any better, I might screw it up. Just by trying to tweak it, there's certain things that work . . . so can I continually improve that? No. (Howard, June 2015)

In constantly, "trying to make things better," Howard argued that there was a chance in "screwing it up." Resting upon the premise that infinite improvement was possible (and necessary), administrators and teachers faced pressures to continuously produce data to account for their work to show "growth" in student achievement. Howard described how the endless "tweaking" of his teaching and of school practices diminished the positive, effective practices already occurring, to sustain a system of growth. The collection and presentation of data to school board officials for accreditation, as Karen noted, "takes considerable time and energy to analyze and interpret, in which schools are not given extra supports to complete" (June 2015). Due to the lack of time to properly interpret and analyze the gathered data, Howard alluded to the fact that the whole presentation was superfluous:

> The presentation will *look* wonderful, there will be snippets of pieces of data, and we can be like "oh here, this answers our questions." It's a large undertaking over several years, but in terms of survival, I'm sure people do analyze the remarks and their questions, but, how can you analyze, in a critical way, with any depth, in the time that you have?
> (Howard, June 2015)

The aesthetically pleasing representation of data, making up for the lack of depth, was a metaphor for the PFI and CSI processes: the presentations looked nice but did not have meaning – in effect they were a possible charade, where improvement was shown, but in reality, may not have occurred. To keep schools "accredited" administrators had to "play the game" (Marcus, June 2015) of accountability, submitting data that might or might not have been helpful to the school, to continue the conveyor belt of "progress" for the province. Knowing that the process was a "large undertaking" as Howard suggested, teachers were often implicated in helping with the process, creating, analyzing, and interpreting data from multiple sources in the school. The paperwork in this process, described by former administrator Andrew as being "one of the biggest complaints from admin" crippled school resources and energies. In one case, Karen personally took on extra duties to not "download the extra responsibilities onto teachers." While Karen seemed to be an outlier in the CSI process in her support of teachers, Catherine agreed that as a teacher she was being asked to do too much, stating that "they [administrators] download all of their improvement projects onto us, and I'm not a researcher" (June 2015). Calling the improvement process "administrator's projects," Catherine showed her disdain towards school improvement data collection as another "extra" to be "downloaded" onto her shoulders.

On the other hand, as a vice-principal, Karen stated that she would complete the reports herself, and try to not bother teachers as they already were so pressed for time and energy that they could not possibly help further in the process. While she took pressure off of her staff, she stated that she "was wiped" at the end of the week, and exhausted when the process was over. She added, albeit laughing, "I don't know if I will have the energy to get to retirement at this rate!" (Karen, June 2015). The taxing effects of "continuous improvement" on teachers and administrators in charge of this process was noted by 5 of the 8 participants, signifying that data collection and analysis was an issue in multiple schools and school boards who were trying

to do two jobs at once: providing the best for their own schools and local communities, while at the same time also fulfilling Departmental mandates for accountability.

As evidenced during this discussion of PFI and CSI, consistent improvement by isolating only one or two areas of schooling involved "tweaking" certain approaches, which could have negative effects on teaching practices in the long run "from trying too many new methods," as Howard stated. In terms of compiling and analyzing data to present to school boards and the Department, teachers and administrators were expected to complete this task on top of their regular daily demands, leading to questions of authenticity in the process of "continuous improvement:" did schools simply show what they needed to show to survive? Opposing this view, a former administrator shed light on the shifting nature of data-driven policies:

> One of the things that I think is happening is that along with the data-driven decision making that came into this province about ten to fifteen years ago, as being the sole source of information in helping inform how we change our practice, I think that there's a shift happening. I'll use CSI [as an example], it's literacy/numeracy, but every teacher and every principal knew that you weren't going to improve these results unless you did something with your school climate. But you can't measure school climate . . . people are starting to say now that there's other sources of information and that there's other things we need to take into consideration. (Andrew, June 2015)

Whereas Howard critiqued the practice of continuous school improvement, Andrew showed more optimism for changes in data-driven policies, and believed the reform would return to an expanded educational focus that would encompass the complexity of schools on the ground. Interestingly, Andrew indicated that administrators and teachers in every building knew the difference between policies that worked in schools, and those that simply must be, as Catherine stated, "complied to, as directed from above" (June 2015). Nonetheless, schools were required to

function in ways that were counterintuitive to practices they knew work best for their own communities. Andrew's statement was a reminder that school reform had real consequences on the lives of educators, not only in the amount of time and frustrations experienced from external influences like policy reform, but in the shaping of what schooling could look like under those pressures. Andrew remained hopeful for a shift away from data-driven schooling, unfortunately, recent policy changes did not reflect this statement – in fact *Status Quo* (2014) and *Action Plan* (2015) both further entrenched data-driven accountability measures in schools, as seen through the discussion in Part One. While Andrew admitted that "all teachers and administrators know results won't improve unless you did something with your school climate" but that "school climate cannot be measured," there was a disparity between what administrators knew to be true in their schools, and see as helpful, and what they have to do for the Department. Working on "school climate" might help in raising results, but as Andrew described, it will not count as "improvement" because it "cannot be measured." Educators perceived CSI and PFI as being quite ineffective and impractical in their schools, placing undue workloads onto administrators and teachers, however, mandated directives from the province remained intact, disconnected from what educators perceived as being effective and working in practice.

Professional development: "Strangling our time"

Professional development was one such area where administrators felt heavily restricted, where they battled between providing leadership for their school's needs, versus data-driven decisions on enhancing student performance in math and literacy scores. Since *all* school-based professional development must be tied to the school's CSI goals, any wanted/needed sessions that lie outside these goals were not permitted, as explained by Howard:

It really strangles our professional development time, because in order for our

professional development to be approved, we come up with a schedule around the table

but then we go through the list and cross items off, oh this, this doesn't have anything to

do with CSI, it's not going to be approved. So it really strangles us. That takes up, in all

honesty, every department meeting we've been in for the past three weeks, CSI has been

on the agenda, and takes 30-40 min out of a 75-minute meeting. (Howard, June 2015)

In this example, regardless of the school's needs, administrators could not maneuver around

systemic apparatuses tied into school accountability mechanisms for growth. The word

"strangle" is important here, as the improvement process was understood by Howard to take the

life out of professional development and to subsume all meeting time allotted for the social

studies department. This left out important issues in classrooms that teachers would have liked

to discuss, instead, they were forced to work on CSI goals. Although school departments, such

as the social studies department in Howard's instance, had topics they would like to cover, like

"student mental health" as both he and Catherine discussed in their interviews, they were not

able to work in time for professional development because mental health (as an example) was

not connected directly to math and literacy results or their CSI goals. Howard's comment also

described how closely mandated and controlled department professional development had

become, leaving little professional judgement or autonomy as it first had to be "approved" and

connected to the overall goals of the Department and school improvement plan.

In a focus group, Greg also commented on the lack of autonomy administrators had

around professional development, which were focused on the CSI goals of the school: "they're

doing what they're mandated to do, and they deliver it neutrally, but day to day we're not talking

to admin about test scores." The "neutral" delivery of required professional development shows

how administrators' hands were tied in their schools, as they needed to align with the mandates

of the province. Marcus, an administrator, alluded to this as well, emphatically stating: "What am I supposed to do? This is what I am held accountable for! This is the direction we're heading in, so I can't get past the things that I don't like that exist. My hands are tied. My supervisor is checking on me to make sure this is all completed" (June 2015). Marcus displayed the frustration of, in his words, "being at odds" with teachers who were not happy with accountability measures in schools. As part of this bureaucratic structure, administrators had less autonomy to make decisions for their schools, and were "juggling multiple balls daily" (Markus, June 2015) instead, trying to be everything to everyone, but in the end, not having the time to make connections with teachers and students. The added pressure for administrators to be accountable to their supervisors was exemplified through Marcus' comments of his hands "being tied."

Administrators as managers: "Lucky to get into the hallway at lunchtime"

With heightened responsibilities for principals, their jobs as educational managers had shifted further away from the mentorship of teachers, to produce reports and fulfill the duties expected of the Department, under close supervisor monitoring. In the focus group with Andrew and David, they recounted their last years of being administrators before moving onto different positions, and the difficulties with principals now torn between being an "educational leader" *and* "educational manager," where "the bureaucratic pieces of administration tie them down" (Andrew, June 2015). David and Andrew sparked a passionate discussion about the changes to principal's jobs, which in effect, were insurmountable, having to be both "managers" and "leaders:"

David: There's *so much* management that has to happen for you as an admin that as a curriculum leader you can't even get into a class to see what's going on. You can barely get to the supervisions of teachers . . . [interrupted]

Andrew: They're lucky to get in the hallways at lunchtime! [both laughing] Let alone get into the

classroom and see, especially in the high school some of the larger schools . . . it's

unrealistic to think that your principal can be your educational leader but these ideas of a

principal getting into a classroom and having a conversation with the teacher and

engaging them . . .[interrupted]

David: The principal is out of the school all the time! It's just an overwhelming task in larger

scenarios for administrators. They're principals, per se, and we don't even call them that,

the educational leader has to be that *and* a manager because you could have someone

come in and do all the "management" kinds of things while the educational leader

concentrates on supporting teachers, supporting department heads kind of thing . . . The

reports that they have to write!

Several things are happening in this exchange. First, the former administrators were quickly

bouncing ideas off one another, leading to more examples of how difficult being a principal was

with the increased expectations of performance management of both students and teachers in the

building. Second, with principals "out of the schools" for meetings, responsibilities were passed

onto other staff, like Vice Principals and teachers. Lastly, the role of the principal as an

"educational leader" in the school, who knows their students, and supports their teachers, turned

into one of managing staff instead. According to Karen, principals had the role of "managing

adults" who "need to keep the teachers happy to have happy students." However, this balancing

act between performance management and teacher mentorship often swayed to the former side,

as Andrew and David alluded to in stating there was a "need for a full-time bureaucratic

administrator" along with a full-time educational leader.

Changes to the profession have had consequences for administrators. Karen commented that in an unprecedented turn of events "in the past year" (2015), 8 high school administrators (Principals and Vice Principals) moved *down* to junior high schools, which she stated has "never been seen before in my time in schools" (June 2015). Although this is anecdotal evidence, when asked why she thought this was the case, Karen said she "wasn't sure," but, "it definitely has to do with the workload and stress of being everything to everyone. People aren't willing to put in the extra effort any longer" (June 2015). With the stressors of being a principal, including the need to balance managing and/or mentoring staff, there have been breakdowns in teacher-administrator relationships. Some teachers felt that administrators were intentionally making their jobs more difficult with "extra work" (Catherine, June 2015), while administrators perceived teachers' unwillingness to work through changes and "as a chance to be in opposition with principals" (Marcus, June 2015) to be an issue. Regardless of the opposing perspectives, rifts between administrators and teachers proved difficult, and at times, quite tense, in discussions.

Marcus commented that he was trying to build rapport with teachers, and to lessen the hierarchical relationship between teachers and administrators, however, in another high school, Catherine perceived the hierarchical connection of administrators and teachers as insurmountable, destructive, and degrading. In the quest for school improvement, administrators took on the pressures in different ways: some tightening their grip on teachers through hyper-micromanagement, while others tried to retain a sense of community and collegiality in their schools. From a high school teacher's perspective, Catherine commented that the number of rules for teachers had increased to the point where "there's so many rules and sets of rules that sometimes I question the hierarchy of those rules and I get confused. They (administrators) come down on you so often now." The idea of administrators "coming down on teachers" in some

cases, pointed to stressful changes for administrative positions as well. This topic received significant commentary from participants, including differences over the last decade.

Administrator relationships with teachers

Howard observed that "principals are being tasked with more petty things and admin have lost a lot of . . . autonomy, yes, that's it. They've lost the autonomy that they once had" (June 2015). Having to attend to "petty things," as Marcus called "being out of his control," administrators are at odds. On the one hand, they had significant control over their schools as the administrator, but on the other, their tasks and responsibilities with reporting to their supervisor and the Department continually increased, lessening their autonomy. With increased demands on administrators to be out of the building more frequently, attending meetings, filing reports, collecting and presenting data based on student/teacher and overall school performance, Karen commented, "I'm constantly running my ass off, and working very long days all the time." In a school that is facing multiple pressures on administrators, other issues came to the surface amongst staff, including conflicts and challenges from higher demands, ultimately falling onto administrators to grapple with:

> I think the increased pressure and stressors on staff have had an impact on me as an
> administrator. I find I'm having to put out fires more and more with staff being
> frustrated. I try to help teachers meet the increased demands to support the needs of all
> students in their classes, so that's increased for me. But just trying to help teachers get
> through, I find a lot of the time is what I spend a lot of time doing. (Karen, June 2015)

In a school climate where some teachers were becoming more dissatisfied with their jobs, administrators could be seen as the bearers of negativity, especially when enforcing and

implementing new initiatives that were regarded by staff to be increased workloads. Here Karen says she was having to "put out fires more and more" with staff who were unhappy or stressed with the demands of their jobs. Spending her time "just trying to help teachers through," Karen had lessened the burden on teachers, but has taken that workload onto her existing job, which she commented above as equating to "running [her] ass off all the time."

In another high school, Marcus described the difficulty he had with "unsympathetic staff" when implementing the latest initiatives in his school, which created and extended tensions between staff and administrators, although he was simply following mandates that have been, in his words, "passed down the pipe." Following orders from school board officials, supervisors, and the Department created a demanding position for administrators who carefully navigated the thin line between being an autonomous leader in their school, while also remaining part of the institutional hierarchy in which they played a pivotal role as "the messenger" (Catherine, June 2015). In terms of which policy initiatives were implemented, there were no negotiations with teachers, making the process frustrating for both staff and leaders in the school, as there was no room to bargain with reforms that are merely being "handed down," which Marcus explains: "teachers see as *work* and an opportunity to be at odds with their admin when we're simply enforcing policy" (June 2015). From Marcus' perspective, teachers did not understand that it was the job of administrators to "enforce" policy, which he saw as some teachers taking advantage of, just to be "at odds," or in other words, to make matters more difficult for principals.

The idea that teaching staff need to "buy into" (Marcus, June 2015) new initiatives brought through the department via their administrators created tensions, and in Marcus's perspective, there was a lack of understanding from staff as to the challenging position administrators are placed in as a policy executor. In this context, teachers understood

administrators as placing more work on their shoulders, while administrators did not recognize

that from a teachers' perspective, *anything* added to the amount of work they did was viewed

negatively. A genuine lack of consideration on both sides in some cases amplified the teacher-

versus-administrator frustration, where teachers did not feel truly supported by their leaders, and

leaders' hands were tied to accountability measures from school boards and supervisors above

them in the institutional hierarchy. These bureaucratic constraints on all levels of the system

circulated unconstructive/destructive patterns of blame originating from a lack of autonomy to

move forward in directions that were best for individual schooling communities. While

administrators were the enforcers of new initiatives and rules, teachers were the objects of study

for accountability mechanisms in schools.

Teachers: Accountability and surveillance mechanisms

Performance Growth Plans: "They're not even my goals anymore"

Similar to the "strangling" of options for school professional development, teachers were

also bound to the CSI goals for their annual personal Professional Growth Plan [PGP], and

collaborative mandatory working groups, Professional Learning Communities [PLC], which were

tracked through a Performance Review System [PRS]. Like administrators' experiences,

accountability mechanisms have also changed the job of teaching through the relationships

teachers have with students, their administrators, and with each other.

Starting after *Brighter Futures* (2005), teachers began submitting personal professional

goals to their department heads, which were approved (or changed) by administrators, and sent to

be kept on file at their respective school board offices (*Brighter Futures,* 2005). The goals

outlined three areas of growth for each teacher, with a plan for follow-up at a later date.

However, since 2005, the individual goals have become increasingly tied to the school's CSI

plan, and consequently, teachers' professional targets were intricately bound with the aspirations

of the institution. As an example from one high school, Brian described how administrators

"provided two of the goals for his yearly plan" (June 2015), with only one remaining slot for his

own ambitions. This was apparent in other instances, where teachers brushed off their yearly

plans as being nonsensical paperwork, claiming that it was another tactic to continuously chip

away at their autonomy, deprofessionalizing their jobs (Milner, 2013), and wasting their time for

paperwork that "no one will read" (Greg, June 2015):

> See, I don't even call them my goals anymore. They're not my goals. It's more of a joke
>
> now for my colleagues and I, and I refuse to call them my reflective goals, because
>
> *they're not my goals, at all!* (Brian, June 2015)

Here Brian airs his anger with the "ridiculousness" (Catherine, June 2015) of coerced goal

creation, which he would be held accountable for even though two of three of the professional

goals were not of his own making. The conversations surrounding PGP's drew ire from all

teacher participants, whose frustrations with accountability mechanisms were evident, bringing

forth mixed reactions of mocking laughter and a tired hopelessness. The desire for authentic

goal setting, and choice over their communities of collaboration in an educational climate of data

collection, brought up more examples of deprofessionalization currently taking place, including

the highly-structured, monitored, and tracked professional learning communities [PLC].

Professional Learning Communities: Feeding the data machine

PLC's were one way for teachers to work together on topics such as curriculum and

assessment, to share best practices and to create commonalities between teachers who shared the

same subjects. These collaborative groups were piloted in select schools starting in 2006-2007, and became mandatory after this time. While the idea of the PLC was to spark an intellectual collaboration amongst professionals, sharing has always occurred, although not documented, as Howard noted, "Teachers have always shared and had conversations with each other, except it used to in the hallway between classes, or a binder that was passed around, and now it's a flash drive." The notion that teachers needed scheduled meeting times for their work with each other to "count" had not been received well by many teachers, who believed the process was "infantilizing and condescending" (Catherine, June 2015), and not practical in cases where teachers met with those who did not share the same teaching assignment, or even when they did teach the same course, to have no control over the choice in work partners. The PLC was a mandatory meeting where minutes and attendance were recorded and uploaded to the provincial digital tracking system, PowerSchool (discussed below). This led teachers to feel that the process was inauthentic, and was a "waste of their time," as one administrator indicated, "teachers want to talk about things in a manner that's not phony. It has to be organic" (Marcus, June 2015). Focus group teachers described the mandatory PLC time as anything but "organic," and comparable to feelings about the forced growth plan process, mocked the artificial nature of the meetings:

> Greg: It depends on the admin, mine . . . we're able to bullshit our way through our
> PLC, and they can be useful, there can be good discussions, but you know there's
> the fact that people resent that they're told that you have to get together with this
> particular teacher at this particular time and find something to talk about.

> Brian: Well I know at our school, this year they really started to enforce the PLC's but I
> ended up with teachers in first semester, we didn't have any courses in common,
> so to have a PLC with someone where we are doing two very different things, it to
> me defeats the purpose.

Greg and Brian commented that the experience with mandatory PLC meetings was dependent upon the school and the administrator, with some teachers able to "bullshit" their way through the process. In Brian's experience, however, PLC's were "starting to be enforced," even when teachers were meeting with those who did not share the same assignment. In a separate interview, Catherine described similar sentiments as Brian and Greg: "But how can you be accountable when you don't choose your PLC partner? Did I ask to work with my last year's colleague? No! [hitting the table]." Whereas one teacher was able to muddle through the process without putting much effort in, others were openly opposed to the control of their time and professional judgement, especially when it was connected with their freedom to choose colleagues to work with. Those who had strictly "enforced" meeting times, with closely followed and submitted meeting minutes for tracking, the responses garnered more anger over the process of accountability:

> You see, that's all about tracking. It all comes down to tracking. What I'd like to think our collegial conversations that you would have with a colleague or your admin, they don't count for anything, because they happen like this [looking around the table], and then it's over and there's no data there's no tracking in, so that doesn't count. In order for it to really count, it's gotta be submitted online. (Brian, June 2015)

Brian described how PLC's and collegial conversations, only "counted" if data is collected and uploaded, so that tracking of teacher work was possible. The digital platform for the data collection was the provincial student information system, PowerSchool. Collegial conversations, discussions with parents, and even student-teacher conferencing that took place, but were not tracked using the online system, in the end did not "count."

Digital surveillance platforms: Teacher monitoring

Beginning in *Brighter Futures* (2005) the Department suggested a "new comprehensive school monitoring system" (p. 25), known as a student information system, but did not implement this system, PowerSchool, until the 2010-2011 school year. As the largest U.S. operated student information system company, PowerSchool[22] provided an online platform for digital information tracking, including attendance, grades, assessments, curriculum outcomes and alignment, student health and personal information, behavioural management plans and interventions, school-wide diagnostic information, and teacher-provided information (for example, PLC meeting minutes, and student/parent communications). Most information was real-time when it was uploaded, like attendance and grading, except in the case a teacher overrides the system and inputs a later date to release student grades.

Being the first online student information system in the province, teachers were apprehensive that the program would be invasive (Brian, June 2015). Department heads, administrators, schoolboard, and Department officials would have access to classroom data at any time, and some teachers felt like a camera was being placed in their classroom without their consent. As time has progressed, however, teachers became used to the student information system, although the program has expanded from its original use for grades and attendance to include more information over time, with a broadened operating system added in 2014 (TIENET), for teachers to upload all official student adaptations and Individual Program Planning [IPP] information. Greg described his concerns with the platforms, and how he had "internalized the surveillance" of the programs:

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[22] PowerSchool was acquired by Apple in 1997, Pearson in 2006, and Vista Equity Partners in November, 2015 for $350 million USD. www.powerschool.com/about-us/

I feel like I have internalized the surveillance of PowerSchool now. It's automatic, I put

my attendance in, I put my grades in . . . but the one I'm still mad about is TIENET. It's

associated with PowerSchool for tracking adaptations and IPP's [Individual Program

Plans] but I still don't even know . . . but again there's no extra time given to do this stuff,

you're just supposed to magically make more time in the day, so if you have a bunch you

have to enter, it's just this wieldy, non-user friendly thing, and yet the school can go in

and monitor and check up on you. It just doesn't make a lot of sense! (Greg, June 2015)

Greg commented that he was expected to use PowerSchool and TIENET, with "no extra time"

added into the day for its upkeep. Like other measures, such as PLC's and growth planning,

teachers are expected to "magically make more time in the day," adding to their frustrations. In

addition, knowing that the data can be used to "monitor and check-up" on teachers expanded

feelings of surveillance and micromanagement "coming down" from administration. One

experienced social studies teacher in particular, Catherine, was adamant that surveillance

measures were greatly changing the way teachers feel about their professions, which, in her

estimation, was fearful and controlling:

It's all Big Brother now, all of it . . . In PowerSchool right now, how many assessments

I've given and graded is accessed by an administrator, and because we're so explicit with

what we do on PowerSchool, we plug our curriculum – our syllabus – on there, and

there's a graphing system that shows how the syllabus corresponds to the amount of time .

. . so not only does it show admin how much I enter, but it shows them when, what, where

the last time I've entered my marks. So to me, it's accountability, and it's one way to

control us. We are in fear, and of course, it's the best tool for control. We look over our

shoulder, we are scared of who's listening, and I can see it in teachers' eyes! (Catherine,

June 2015)

As an educator of 20 years, Catherine's statement is particularly powerful. Alluding to accountability as being a "tool of control," she described why teachers would be wary of PowerSchool and TIENET as platforms for surveillance. Since every grade, assessment, and the timing of teacher's actions could be tracked through these systems, Catherine says fear was invoked in the "when, what, where" monitoring of teachers. Being the most critical of all the participants, she also suggested that teachers are living "in fear," worried about their every move for fear of consequences from administrators.

The accountability pressure with a real-time, easily accessible student information system placed extra pressure on some teachers, and according to Karen and Howard (June 2015), this primarily fell on younger teachers who were more likely to depend on the accountability data to acquire a full-time position, or to return to a school the following year. This does not mean teachers with more experience did not feel the same pressure, as Catherine and others from the interviews and focus groups demonstrated, however, the anxiety around keeping their job did not seem to be the highest contributing factor. What *did* have an impact with experienced teachers were the real (and perceived) changes to their roles as teachers, including their ever-increasing workloads, the amount of bureaucracy and surveillance they felt through accountability mechanisms, and the striving toward an endless benchmark of success, leading to burnout, frustration, and in some cases, illness. Brian and Greg shared an exchange on their internalized second-guessing over whether they have done enough data input and tracking to satisfy their interventions with students and parents:

> Greg: You can get pulled in [to the office], and it hasn't happened to me *too* much, but
>
> let's say a kid isn't doing well or is failing your class, then I'm left thinking, well
>
> have I properly tracked everything? Have I paid special attention to their
>
> adaptations? And I have to think if someone talks to me about this I second guess

myself and think, well have I? And maybe I haven't but I've called that kids

parent 5 times and I've pulled that kid into the classroom at lunch and given them

talks and stuff and none of that gets tracked . . . or I know that kid's personal

situation and know them a bit better, but you're still worried that someone's going

to call you out for not doing xyz or for not dotting your I's crossing your T's.

Brian: I know when it comes to failing a kid now teachers are weary about thinking back

on it all, did I do this, can I do this?

Greg: It depends on your admin I'd say, but there's definitely a lot of looking over your

shoulder.

Although both permanent, experienced teachers, Greg and Brian described their sense of

discomfort around uploading the "right" amount of tracking information for students. As Greg

stated, he "second guesses" himself, and while he had put in the effort to talk to parents and

students one-on-one about their education, he still "worries that someone's going to call you out"

if you have not properly input data into the information system. Brian agreed and added that

teachers were "wary" about their decision to "fail" students, if they had not continuously

provided data throughout the school year. Like the growth plan process and PLC, Greg reiterated

that it "depends on your admin," nevertheless, teachers were stuck "looking over their shoulder."

While some teachers became desensitized to the influence of PowerSchool, the notion that

students, administrators, and parents had instant access to student information and can exert

punitive measures based on the data cast a shadow on some educators' responses. Interestingly,

an administrator and department head were the most critical of the student information system:

Oh, definitely, anyone can look at this. In the department, I can look at anyone's

PowerSchool . . . I can go in and see what staff are doing. Anybody in the DOE [the

Department] has access and same with the board they have access, but they also have

access to our staff email, there's a Big Brother aspect to it for sure . . . it can be used as an

accountability measure. We pulled a teacher in based on their PowerSchool use, and it

turned out that there were issues in the classroom as well. (Howard, June 2015)

Howard admitted here that he used the information system to monitor teachers, and he can "see

what staff are doing" in their classrooms, without having to be physically present in the room.

He also commented that the Department can access teacher emails, which are used as further

accountability measures, which he says has a "Big Brother aspect to it." Karen also uses the

phrase "Big Brother" to describe online accountability systems:

There's a lot of pressure for accountability with teachers . . . and I think that with

TIENET and PowerSchool, everyone feels like Big Brother's looking in, because people

have access to that. But, I know a lot of teachers are feeling like that's the case, people are

hesitant to send anything in email, and put anything in writing. They're nervous all the

time, which I find funny because with the union they have nothing to worry about!

(Karen, June 2015)

Karen advanced the surveillance conversation by adding that teachers are "hesitant to send

anything in email," "put anything in writing," and are "nervous all the time." Although she notes

that teachers are protected by the NSTU, it does not change the ways in which teachers perceived

their loss of autonomy in the face of digital monitoring technologies. The amount of tracking and

monitoring of teachers, their conversations, their goals, and their time at school had made

educators wary of the need for data, and of the autonomy they once felt in their jobs. Data

collection processes did not end with PLC's, as teachers received triennial performance reviews,

while continually being plugged into educational monitoring systems for their daily attendance,

assessments, and curricular outcomes.

Teacher assessments: Accountability for performance

Teachers and administrators stuck in the cycle of bureaucratic busy-work were questioning to what extent the documentation they spent hours compiling and submitting were being read at higher levels in the hierarchical structure of the school system. Two administrators commented on the teacher performance review system [PRS], which involved observing three classes and preparing a report for each teacher, as being a "waste of their time." Howard noted that he intentionally withheld the paperwork from his department for a year, and was never asked for it: "I wanted to see what would happen, so I didn't submit the paperwork. Nobody even reads them – no one asked for them, so I kept them." Interested in finding out how important the teacher performance paperwork actually was, Howard resisted to see what would happen, and found that once the deadline had passed, the paperwork was forgotten because "people [administrators] were too busy to remember." Karen described this "performance review system" as being "completely flawed" and a "joke" to teachers, being a waste of time for administrators:

> The PRS is completely flawed . . . it's garbage! Teachers think it's a joke. They know there's no teeth to it. I find sometimes the younger teachers take it seriously, because they haven't gotten to the stage where they realize it's not worth the paper it's printed on, because it goes into a file somewhere and no one ever looks at it again. I've often thought I'd write a bunch of crap on one, send it in and see what happens, because everyone pushes you to get it done and to get the paperwork in on time, but for what purpose? (June 2015)

Karen reiterated Howard's sentiments toward the teacher accountability review system as being "not worth the paper it's printed on," wondering if anyone "ever looks at it again." While

Howard actually withheld the paperwork, Karen suggested that she would also like to resist the review process by "writing a bunch of crap on one" to see if anyone would notice. Both administrators used humor in their answers, but at the same time took their roles in the accountability process quite seriously, questioning if the purpose was to follow deadlines and to not actually change teacher practices. The bureaucratic structure of "following orders" and deadlines left administrators to be the executors of policy accountability mechanisms and teacher monitoring systems. As the new bureaucratic messengers, implementing the will of the "powers that be" in the institutional hierarchy, administrators and department heads acted for the higher levels of the structure instead of enacting change based on their own, localized, and experiential, knowledges. Department heads relayed messages from the administration, who were following their orders from supervisors above, who were in turn following the direction of schoolboards, and ultimately, the Department. One teacher observed that department heads brought forward information to departmental meetings, and presented the information to teachers begrudgingly. Their delivery of "messages from above" was neutral, yet tryied to convey a sense of solidarity, as if to say "I know you're right, but this is what we have to do" (Greg, June 2015).

Conclusions

This chapter provided a genealogy of educational accountability in official documents between 1994-2016, showing how accountability shifted from fiscal and structural accountability, into whole school improvement, and finally into the tracking and monitoring of teachers and students in schools. Increasingly, accountability became tethered to school results, testing, and evidenced-based measures that relied on international, national, and provincial assessments, as well as school data on math and literacy improvement.

Through the school accreditation program, PFI, teacher growth program, PGP, and the

real-time digital tracking system, the Department had access to numerous forms of data:

individual teacher and student information, school improvement information, provincial, national

and international testing results. The incessant need to gather endless amounts of data to

continuously improve increased rapidly during this time, with proposals for more standardized

assessments (*Business Plan,* 2006-2007), teacher summer training (summer institutes, *Action

Plan,* 2015), the creation of a database for tracking student behaviour problems, and the

monitoring of individual schools to guarantee that professional development was connected

school improvement goals. Collectively, these mechanisms pointed to the ongoing reduction of

teacher, administrator, and school autonomy, with ever-increased technologies of control being

embedded into the reality of everyday school practice.

The collection of data from everyday activities like talking to students about their

progress, calling parents, and inputting every occasion onto PowerSchool for each student

seemed like a daunting task for some teachers who felt like their interactions with students did

not qualify as data, or who felt like the tracking of their every move "sucks the life" (Catherine,

June 2015) out of their jobs. The lack of trust within the system was quite unsettling, as teachers

sensed that their every move was being accounted for, and in cases where students were

struggling, the onus was placed back onto the teacher who, hopefully, had recorded and taken

note of all discussions and attempted interventions. As Greg mentioned above, there were

instances that were "un-recordable:" conversations with students at lunch or in the hallway,

discussions with administrators or specialists who were planning to provide support for specific

students, or the time teachers spent contemplating how to help their students – at what point

does data collection become an invasion of privacy for teachers? Catherine's sinister description

of school accountability and surveillance, as a "tool for inducing fear," exhibited an

extreme example of negative repercussions that a hyper-accountable school climate could have on educators who had the impression that their every move is tracked, recorded, and used for purposes of control.

Students and teachers in this system become instruments in what Hibou (2015) calls a "neoliberal bureaucracy:" a hierarchical governance structure to produce and collect data, where teachers are expected to be efficient workers, ensuring continuous progress in a system based on the measuring of, and reporting on, performance. Such performativity discourses continually permeated policies, and teacher responses. The binding of teacher autonomy to the state reflects the tightening of control mechanisms on the one hand, and warranted a closer exploration of the ways in which rules are changing, and being discursively reformulated through policy on the other. Teacher and administrator experiences have demonstrated that accountability mechanisms, first suggested in policies, and later implemented into practice, have changed their livelihoods, and shifted their jobs away from caring for students, and instead caring about every minute detail of their days. While some teachers and administrators did not feel threatened by these transformations in education, they still had to provide significant amounts of time and energy to follow required policy guidelines on data collection and student/teacher monitoring. The ensuing challenges of both teachers and administrators in performing their expected bureaucratic tasks, while at the same time taking care of the students in their classrooms and schools, has demonstrated that students lose out while teachers are caught up in tasks that take away from classroom preparation. Administrators overseeing bureaucratic processes in their schools, as *managers* for the Department, also lose out on making real connections with students and with teachers, who are often seen to be in opposition, as Marcus and other administrators have stated. In the effort to become successful through the collecting, analyzing, and presentation of quantifiable data, educators were entrenched in bureaucratic processes of monitoring and tracking

that ironically took away the element of student connection and collegiality in schools, and cast their jobs into performativity, efficiency, and surveillance procedures - in other words - into a education system of neoliberal governmentality.

Chapter 6: The "squeezing out" of Social Studies

What I've seen at the school is that social studies tends to get pushed to the side. There's been a huge push for math and literacy and social studies gets harmed. So, to see that just get left to the wayside year after year is [shaking head] . . . I don't think it's positive for us. Social studies as a whole, enrolment is going down, yet class sizes are definitely going up.

- Brian, June, 2015, Social studies teacher

You're definitely going to see [social studies] being squeezed out. It's all going to be a numbers game of declining enrolment and not enough teachers to have adequately sized classrooms and offer enough course options.

- Greg, Social studies teacher

In a provincial educational context of testing results, data collection, and market rationalities in education, disciplinary knowledges that were positioned as non-essential for future local and/or global economic competitiveness of the province have been, as one social studies teacher has described, "left to the wayside" (Brian, June, 2015). This discursive framing of disciplinary knowledges *not* directly connected to market rationalities of wealth production and economic prosperity has slowly changed over time, from social studies as central disciplinary knowledge, to becoming practically non-existent in policy discourse and programming changes between 2002-2015. In education policy reform since 2000, social studies as a field of disciplinary knowledge was largely invisible, having been "squeezed out" (Howard, June, 2015) of the provincial school program. Where then, has social studies gone, how did this happen, and which disciplines have taken the place of traditional subjects such as history and geography?

This chapter explores how social studies was "squeezed out" of the Nova Scotia education system in two analyses: first, through a policy genealogy of disciplinary discourse from 1994-2016, illustrating how social studies has been discursively constructed over time. Beginning as an "essential" disciplinary knowledge in the 1990's, to a "basics first" construction of math and literacy in the 2000's, and "curricular knowledge gaps" in STEM fields in the 2010's, the packaging of social studies was enmeshed with provincial economical goals and accountability measures in schools. In the second part of the analysis, I trace curricular and programming changes to demonstrate how policy constructions of knowledge were then implemented in practice. Responses from educator interview and focus groups are then used to show how teachers and administrators have experienced these changes, and what effects policy reform have had in social studies disciplines in schools.

Part One – Social studies policy constructions

In the U.S. context, McGuire (2007) suggests that social studies disciplines have "dissolved into other subject areas," and no longer exist as they once did (p. 622). The continued use of language to describe the current state of social studies, as "disappearing" (DeLeon & Ross, 2010), "dissolving" (McGuire, 2007), and "languishing" (Carpenter et al., 2012) necessitates an investigation into what exactly was taking its place in education reform, and if social studies was indeed diminished in content and scope. In this section I analyze how policy constructs the idea of "important" or "vital" curricular gaps in knowledge, and point out the ways in which social studies have become invisible, silenced, and marginalized in provincial policy reform discourses. What was considered "vital" curricular knowledge in education policies and official documents between 1994-2015 narrowed considerably over time. This tightening of curricular space

progressed from a multidisciplinary approach through *essential* graduation learnings

(*Restructuring*, 1994; *Horizons*, 1995), to an increased focus on math and literacy testing results

(*Planning for Success*, 2002; *Brighter Futures*, 2005), and curricular knowledge gaps in math and

entrepreneurship (*Status Quo*, 2014; *Action Plan,* 2015). What was considered "important"

knowledge shifted over time, and these changes were supported through provincial goals of

education, including what kind of citizens the schooling system wished to shape. This discussion

traces discursive constructions of curricular reform, attending to the particular situating of social

studies disciplines as connected to overall goals of education and citizenship for the province.

Social studies as "essential" disciplines: 1994-1995

The 1994 policy, *Restructuring the Education System,* provided a list of curricular areas

of importance for the overall departmental goals of creating "thinking, learning, physically active,

valued members of society" (p. 10). Included in the list was a discussion of what a well-rounded

education consisted of, and the role of each discipline in creating knowledgeable citizens who

could reach their potential "cognitively, affectively, physically, and socially" (p. 10). According

to *Restructuring* (1994), a highly-valued education did not consist of one or two areas of

knowledge, but demonstrated an understanding of learning that included, and moved beyond,

traditional disciplinary boundaries: "These areas of learning are not the monopoly of any one or

two disciplines. They cross traditional subject boundaries and are developed through many

disciplines though they are not themselves the object of study independent of the discipline" (p.

10). In this construction of education, multiple forms of knowledge (many disciplines) were

needed to provide a successful and meaningful public education, but this formulation also

suggested that overall departmental goals were cross-curricular, and could not be isolated in one

or two subjects. From this standpoint, social studies disciplines were closely enmeshed with

overarching goals of the Department, which included a well-rounded education leading

to a particular definition of citizenship.

Essential knowledges and Citizenship

The list of essential learnings in *Restructuring* (1994) included: language as a tool for

learning and communication, mathematical literacy, and critical and creative thinking (pp. 10-

11). Mathematics and literacy here were not defined as "skills" to be tested, but as particular

fields of knowledge through which students would come to understand the world they inhabit.

Mathematics and literacy were both understood to be part of an overall, broad conceptualization

of essential ways to live and to become active citizens, not directly connected to workplace skills

or career readiness, but for intellectual well-roundedness. Mathematics, when positioned as a

type of "literacy," expands its normative understanding of testing and "correct" answers to

include, "reasoning, thinking, and interpreting through problem solving, so that students engage

in application of mathematical knowledge rather than rote learning" (Colwell & Enderson, 2016,

p. 64). By positioning math and languages through a multiple literacies lens (see also Kanes,

Morgan, & Tsatsaroni, 2014), public schooling curricula are built by scaffolding many pieces of

"vital" disciplinary knowledges toward the goal becoming "valued members of society" – as

well-rounded citizens (*Restructuring,* 1994, p. 10).

In addition to the *essential* learnings, a list of *specific* learnings was also provided. In this

list, students were said to need these forms of understanding before graduating:

An appreciation for the arts as ways of knowing, of understanding self and others, of

communicating personal meaning, and of expressing creativity and imagination; an

understanding of the geography, history, peoples and cultures of the world; and an

understanding of Canada and its people, its relation to other countries and peoples, and of

global interdependence. (*Restructuring,* 1994, p. 11)

In *Restructuring* (1994), the arts were posited as *essential* practices to knowing oneself and

others, with history, geography, and global awareness also included and specifically named in the

definition of what was considered a "valuable" public education. There was a direct connection

between social studies disciplines and art as necessary for productive citizenship in the

Restructuring (1994) vision of public education, with critical, independent thought, creativity,

and effective communication as a global citizen underpinning the definition of "citizenship."

Interestingly, also included in the specific learnings list were: "knowledge, values, skills, and

attitudes for the development of entrepreneurs" (1994, p. 11). It is curious that

"entrepreneurship," and the "values" and "skills" of entrepreneurs were not included in the

subsequent decade's *Planning for Success* (2002) and *Brighter Futures* (2005) education policies.

In fact, there was a nineteen-year-gap in education policy (1995-2014) during which the

promotion of curricula pertaining to the creation of "entrepreneurs" and entrepreneurship was

absent. This demonstrates that curricular development, and the construction of what is

"valuable" knowledge, is uneven and fluctuates depending on the government and its education

priorities. As an example of curricular variations in policy - the "essential knowledges

framework" – which was inclusive of social studies and arts for well-rounded citizens, changed

significantly the following year in *Horizons* (1995).

In *Horizons* (1995), achievement in math moved away from "mathematical literacy" as

part of a multidisciplinary approach, as found in *Restructuring* (1994), and shifted into math-as-

workplace-skills discourse. While *Horizons* (1995) was mainly a document about government

accountability, fiscal sustainability, and governance restructuring in education, the only curricular

discussion in the document was focused on math and literacy. In the "Framework for Renewal"

section, math and literacy were positioned as "basic skills required in the global marketplace" (p.

9). With "accelerating change" to "traditional patterns of work," *Horizons* (1995) states,

"today's workplace requires people with teamwork skills, high literacy and mathematical

competencies" (p. 9), which is a different message from *Restructuring* (1994). *Horizons* (1995)

shifted the message away from a multidisciplinary approach to schooling as workplace skills

through math and literacy. The emphasis on workplace skills paired with particular curricular

disciplines (math and literacy) continued in the 2002-2005 education policies that focused on a

"basics first" approach to education.

Basics first: Math, reading, and testing, 2002-2005

There were major changes in the direction of the Department's priority areas for learning

after 2000. *Planning for Success* (2002) and *Brighter Futures* (2005) were the two main

education policies created by the John Hamm Progressive Conservatives in the early 2000's, the

first of which, presented a "basics first" approach to education, with a simplified approach to

educational success through "good reading, writing, and math skills" (p. iii), not unlike the

hyper-focus on math and reading as basics in Ontario's "Common Sense Revolution" during the

1990's (Gidney, 1999). Leaning away from the more holistic approach to education in the

1990's through *Restructuring* (1994), the Hamm plan focused on higher achievement in math

and reading skills through provincial, national, and international testing. *Planning for Success*

(2002) was released at a significant historical moment in education, as the first PISA

standardized test results were released the year prior in 2001. While only citing the OECD PISA

as a footnote for the first Canadian results in reading, mathematics, and

science (p. 9), it was the first inclusion of PISA in policy, situated within testing discourses for evidence of success.

In the explanation of the "basics first" plan (pp. 9-14) it was noted that "Nova Scotia students are exposed to a rich and diverse curriculum … [with] a solid foundation in a range of subjects," although, "basics must come first as reading and math will help students to be successful in life" (p. 9). The "rich" and "diverse" curriculum was presented positively, but the goals of the province were clearly stated, as "basics must come first," which were defined as reading and mathematics. On the same page, the diverse provincial curricula were both applauded and critiqued, with the focus only on math and reading, and the rest of the curricula (all other disciplines) lumped together into a non-"basics" mass. This strategic positioning situated disciplines outside of math and literacy as secondary, supporting disciplines considered to be "extraneous" knowledges to the basics first plan. Math and reading were the keys to "basics first," which used testing results as measurements of performance and success.

PISA Testing and Mathematics

Planning for Success (2002) was the first document that focused on testing results in math and reading, and the first as well to cite PISA: only cited as a footnote, the PISA results in math and reading were used to justify the "basics first" direction of the Department in the first decade of the 21st century (p. 9). In the document, provincial test results in math were framed as "lower than expected levels," and although students performed "at, or better than, the Canadian average," in national and international assessments, provincial testing suggested that students "should be achieving significantly higher in this important subject" (p. 9). Math was described here as a subject area that was in need of remediation for students to achieve up to the provincial

expectation. Reading test results were not discussed in *Planning for Success* (2002), however, literacy was still positioned as needing a "plan to increase student achievement in reading, writing, and grammar" (p. 10), by adding more resources and curricular time. Through the discursive packaging of international testing, basics, and math and reading assessments, knowledge tapered into a focus on improving student achievement in two disciplines, which opposed the multidisciplinary discussion in *Restructuring* (1994). Unlike the central placement of social studies disciplines in *Restructuring* (1994), eight years later in *Planning for Success* (2002), social studies and arts were not only absent, but missing from the goals of education included in the document. In fact, "social studies" was only mentioned once in the entire document, in a discussion of teacher supply through "a huge imbalance in the supply of teachers by subject areas," where there were only 10 math teachers and 90 social studies majors graduating in 2000 (p. 24). This suggested that too many social studies teachers were graduating than what was needed, and more math experts were required. Other than this statement, there was one instance where history was briefly mentioned through the creation of a new Canadian history credit in a discussion of curricular improvement: "significant work continues in other areas of education," which included, "the new mandatory Canadian History credit . . . new music and visual arts elementary courses" (p. 6). The "other areas of education" in this context were all disciplines outside of math, reading, and writing. The literal positioning of history as "other" in this instance, continued to discursively locate social studies disciplines on the margin of important curricular subject areas.

"Raising the Bar" and "Closing the Gap"

Following the lead of *Planning for Success* (2002), the second policy, *Brighter Futures* (2005) furthered the basics-first approach, with a plan to implement more teaching and learning

resources for math and reading and writing, expanding provincial testing in both disciplines to more grade levels, and adding new curricular programs to achieve the provincial goals of "Raising the Bar" on testing results, and "Closing the Gap" on educational attainment (p. 4). "Raising the Bar" forwarded a plan to "increase achievement" and "set higher standards for learning and teaching" (p. 3), specifically in "math and language arts" (p. 4) so that every student could reach their fullest potential. The "Closing the Gap" goal stated that "some students are not succeeding" in the provincial program, and suggested new programming for students who were struggling, with extra help in math and language arts for "identified students not meeting expectations" (p. 7). For both overarching goals, "Raising the Bar" and "Closing the Gap," *Brighter Futures* (2005) continually positioned success, achievement, excellence, and student potential through the lens of math, reading, and writing. For students who were struggling in math and/or literacy, remedial plans and interventions were offered through the "Closing the Gap" achievement goals. This means that both "Raising the Bar" and "Closing the Gap" goals articulated with student success in math and literacy, which was applied to all students, whether they were excelling or struggling. By packaging success and achievement within two disciplinary areas, *Planning for Success* (2002) and *Brighter Futures* (2005) policies pushed a particular type of "important" curricular knowledge, one that cut whole disciplines out of the discussion entirely. Like *Planning for Success* (2002), social studies was missing again from the conversation of critical or important knowledges in *Brighter Futures* (2005), with the exception that in the latter document, there was *no* mention of social studies disciplines.

Citizenship as Mastery of the Basics

Unlike *Restructuring* (1994), which defined the goals of education through citizenship discourse, the words "citizen" or "citizenship" could not be found in *Planning for Success* (2002)

or *Brighter Futures* (2005). While citizenship was not evoked explicitly, the beginning of each policy document offered a Minister's address that alluded to the overall goals of the education system, in other words, what type of students (i.e. citizens) the school system aimed to create. In *Planning for* Success (2002) Education Minister Jane Purves stated, "Good reading, writing, and math skills have, and always will be, essential to learning everything else in life" (2002, p. iii). Purves' definition of a good education, and a life outside of school, was directly related to learning specific skills, namely "reading, writing, and math" skills. Citizenship here, was associated with foundational skills in the "basics" to continue learning later in life. In *Brighter Futures* (2005) the Education Minister, Jamie Muir, more directly addressed the idea of citizenship as a goal of the education system: "children learn more than language arts, sciences, and math in schools; they learn how to be healthy, confident, contributing members of society" (2005, p. iii). While the goal of schooling was still related to a disciplinary understanding in "language arts, sciences, and math," it was also noted that children learned how to be "contributing members of society," in other words, citizens, throughout their formal education. The specific discourse around citizenship was not used in either Minister's address, but the idea of creating a certain type of citizen, one that had mastery over the basics and who was able to contribute to society, was prevalent. While the "basics" first approach permeated the overall goals of education in the 2000's, this curricular framing shifted again in the 2010 decade to include specific "curricular knowledge gaps," where social studies disciplines continued to remain absent in policy reform, and in the definition of a "good" education.

Filling "critical gaps in knowledge": STEM and the economy, 2014-2015

The education discussion paper, *Minister's Panel on Education: Disrupting the Status Quo* (2014), was based on the results of a public provincial consultation on education completed between February and October 2014 (p. 1). The consultation was completed with school staff, students, and members of the public, to determine their level of satisfaction with the education system. The results were then compiled and used as a platform to create the discussion paper. The document was divided into seven main themes (e.g., "strengthening the curriculum to transform teaching and learning," and "prepare today's students for tomorrow's opportunities") from the consultation process, with recommendations based on each theme from the consultation panel. In the follow-up, *Action Plan,* released January 2015, the policy continued with themes (named "pillars") and recommendations from the 2014 consultation process to deliver a plan which included "building a modern education system," and "creating an innovative curriculum" (p. 5). The recommendations for curricular changes were based on what the public, including business and community members, considered to be missing from students' repertoires of skills, discussed in *Status Quo* (2014) as "knowledge" and/or "critical gaps" (p. 19). These critical gaps were wide-ranging with some not related to traditional curricular disciplines, such as career-life management skills, and personal financial planning, but did include civic engagement among the perceived "gaps" in knowledge:

There are some critical gaps in the curriculum, including life skills (e.g., career and life management skills, healthy living and nutrition), financial literacy (financial planning, filing taxes), civic engagement, entrepreneurial skills, and preparation for careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) or information and communication technology (e.g., coding). (*Status Quo,* 2014, p. 19)

The inclusion of entrepreneurship, financial literacy, life skills, STEM, and coding into policy reform furthered a specific market orientation of education, one that connected schooling to tangible "skills" to help students later in life. This curricular shift moved away from the previous decade's goals of "basics" in math and literacy, and into a broader definition of what was included in a "good" or "valuable" education that was intimately bound with the workplace, science, and technology. In the *Action Plan* (2015), this connection was referred to as "modernizing" and "streamlining" the curriculum.

"Critical knowledge gaps": Modernizing and streamlining

The content areas listed above, such as STEM, coding, life skills, and financial literacy, were part of the "modernization plan" (pp. 5-7) outlined for the school system, which presented the curricular changes as pressing and necessary for the advancement of the province. The word *modernization* is a "key signifier" for progress, and what was associated with "modern" curricula also positioned "outsider" fields that were irrelevant/backwards, since they are *not* connected to discursive "newness" or "transformative" curricula (Ball, 2013, p. 17). Art, music, and civic engagement were positioned as "critical gaps in junior and senior high curriculum" (2014, p. 23) the year prior in *Status Quo* (2014), however, art and music did not appear in the *Action Plan* (2015) the following year, making their suggestions piecemeal without any follow-up actions. While a new mandatory grade ten civics course was introduced in the *Minister's Panel* (2014, p. 23) and further recommended in *Action Plan* (2015, p. 24**)** to be implemented in schools for 2016, the civics course had yet to be realized in practice, suggesting that while certain content areas were discursively framed as part of the "modernization" plan, there was delayed action in the follow-through to curricular change and implementation. Similar to the discussion of art and

music as being important or key features in the modernization plan for curricula, civics education was positioned for a 2016 school year implementation, however that has not been realized in practice (see below, Civics and Entrepreneurship).

Analogous to the idea of curricular "modernization," "streamlining" was also a prominent idea in the *Action Plan* (2015) discourse. "Streamlining" generally signifies efficiency and effectiveness, as a process in business or simplification, however in the action plan this verb was applied to curricular knowledge. Schmidt and Colwell (2017) argue that "curricular streamlining" (p. 13) potentially damages music and arts curricula, as accountability and evidence-based policies no longer see the intrinsic value of disciplines lying outside math, sciences, and workplace skills. In the Nova Scotia context, curricular streamlining was stated to have a "laser focus," to "improve the two most important fundamentals in education: math and literacy" (*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 18). However, creating greater connections to math and literacy across courses might not be possible or even beneficial, for all disciplinary areas, such as social studies. Although the sheer number of utterances of "social studies" increased in the *Action Plan* (2015), appearing five times in the document (up from zero utterances in *Brighter Futures,* 2005), its usage did not convey social studies disciplines as important subject areas, instead, focused on the ways in which social studies could be used as a vehicle for knowledge gap areas to receive more practice time. As an example, in the new "streamlined" grade primary to 3 curricula, there was a plan to: "increase the emphasis on literacy and math by providing students with extra practice in basic skills in other subject areas such as science and social studies" (pp. 22/40). In the grades 4 to 8 curricula, social studies was positioned as a route for "incorporating personal development education" and "character development" to support information on "citizenship, service learning, volunteering, and personal financial management" (pp. 23/42). For grades primary to 3, and grades 4 to 8, in the plan to create streamlined curricula, social studies

was used to add information that was considered "critical knowledge" that was assumed missing otherwise.

There were only two messages in the *Action Plan* (2015) document connected to social studies discourse: first, personal health, personal finance, and character development were to be "streamlined" into already existing social studies courses (pp. 22-23), and secondly, that social studies would be used as a tool to boost literacy, as "extra practice for basic skills" (p. 40). These messages were aimed at secondary classrooms, but in the elementary classrooms, social studies courses have been "streamlined" into literacy between primary (kindergarten) and grade three, meaning there was no more curricular time defined for social studies content in the lower grades (*Action Plan,* p. 10). This "streamlining" process also replaced science from its own dedicated space in the timetable to be dispersed into more curricular time for mathematics, to "reinforce" math with "more time for basic skills" (2015, p. 22). One area where social studies disciplines *were* given importance, was in the creation of a new mandatory grade ten civics credit, however, its content has yet to be implemented as of August, 2017(*Action Plan,* 2015).

Civics and entrepreneurship: An example of modernizing and streamlining

Civics education is traditionally one of the cornerstones of social studies disciplines to transfer the particular values, attitudes, and knowledges associated with being a citizen in a particular society (Richardson, 2002; Ross, 2006). The Nova Scotia civics curriculum, as discussed in policy, forwarded a type of citizenship that connects the purpose of schooling to the workplace. The packaging of civics education in *Status Quo* (2014) and *Action Plan* (2015) attributed particular understandings of citizenship to the future civics curriculum, with the course to include: "Canadian government, 21st century citizenship, personal financial management, volunteerism, media and digital literacy, and service learning" (*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 24).

Although the curriculum has yet to be released, the list of topics was quite broad and was in line

with a type of civics education Kahne and Westheimer (2004) have criticized in citizenship

education – the creation of a youth culture devoid of politics but rampant with volunteers. The

pairing of personal financial management with civics was particularly noteworthy, as this

implicitly suggests that responsible citizens were employed people who managed their finances,

and actively volunteered in their communities. Typical civics content such as Canadian

government and citizenship were also included, making the course an interesting hybrid of

financial, political, and media/digital literacy content, which is already included in the English

Language Arts curricula from grades 10-12[23] (DOE, 1997, p. iii). The broad content indicated

that the mandatory civics course would be a catch-all for various "critical gaps in knowledge,"

and when paired with the newly mandatory Entrepreneurship 12 course to be "embedded in the

high school curriculum" (*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 17), a particular bundled strand of disciplinary

knowledge emerged, as connected to the idea of the "modern" curricula. This diverges from

traditional social studies knowledge, and into a melting pot of mandatory courses that positioned

business, personal financial management, and entrepreneurship at the center of "modernizing" the

education system. Such changes to curriculum departs from collective civic responsibilities into

individualistic, neoliberal discourses of citizenship.

      Between 2002-2005, entrepreneurship did not have a central role in education policy, but

increasingly in the 2014-2015 policy documents, it featured prominently in discussions of

curricular gaps in knowledge (*Status Quo,* 2014; *Action Plan,* 2015). In the *Action Plan* (2015),

the word "entrepreneurship" was used 29 times in the 47 page document, with most of the usage

connected with future career paths and the workplace, but also utilized to connect

entrepreneurship to the modernized curriculum, with skills that should be "embedded

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[23] https://www.ednet.ns.ca/files/curriculum/ela10_12web.pdf

across the curriculum" (p. 17), including, "innovation, creativity, problem-solving skills, personal initiative, and teamwork" (p. 15). Low-levels of entrepreneurial interest in students was cited as a problem for the province, since "only 12 percent of Nova Scotia's students envision themselves as future entrepreneurs" (p. 16), therefore the mandatory course would ensure that all students learned about entrepreneurship in high school. Through the creation of a mandatory grade 12 entrepreneurship class, and a Minister's Award of Entrepreneurial Excellence to be awarded to a high-achieving business student (p. 17), the Department planned to stimulate more interest in entrepreneurialism as a career path. The combination of "modern" education disciplines in the *Action Plan* (2015) included business, math, sciences, and literacy, which limited the number of electives students could take outside of these fields with a growing number of mandatory courses (see math discussion below), and fewer options for electives in social studies, social sciences, and/or the humanities.

Curricular knowledge gaps structured around math, literacy, entrepreneurship, and business skills positioned curricular development as needing "modernization" and "streamlining," through which all graduation outcomes were intertwined. In this education milieu, social studies disciplines ceased to remain as essential, "core" subjects, and instead, became utilized for the improvement of skills in the newly-defined provincial curricular goals. In so doing, the provincial education policy, *Action Plan* (2015) set up particular curricular knowledges as being more profitable, and a particular understanding of "citizenship" that was closely aligned with the workforce, and thus, the future Nova Scotia economy. Aside from proposed curricular changes to civics courses, the overall goal of the education system in this era was to create citizens who "will reach their potential and enjoy success in their chosen careers" (p. 34). In the conclusion of *Action Plan* (2015), the intentions of education reform as part of a plan to produce productive, financially independent citizens was clearly laid-out:

> There is not a moment to lose: our students are in school now, awaiting better learning
>
> opportunities to prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead. Their future depends
>
> on having the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a quickly changing economy.
>
> Nova Scotia's future depends on healthy, well-educated and socially responsible citizens
>
> to build the economy. (*Action Plan*, 2015, p. 34)

Citizenship shifted from being about well-rounded citizens in the 1990's, to those with mastery

over basic skills in the 2000's, to those who would be able to work adaptively as entrepreneurs to

"build" the economy. Disciplinary knowledge in mathematics, and more broadly, STEM

subjects, was forwarded as one such plan to arm students with the necessary knowledge to be

successful in the "new" economy.

Disciplinary knowledge to save the province: STE(A)M and the economy

The discursive framing of math, and further framing of the province in a time of crisis,

became more closely entangled over time in discussions of declining math test scores, as

connected to specific skills and qualities needed for students to successfully transition to the

workplace. In the *Action Plan* (2015), discussions of workplace skills and career readiness in the

21st century figured prominently in policy discourse, and this discourse of the working world was

paired with particular types of disciplinary knowledge connected to being "productive" citizens:

"In the simplest terms, we want to ensure that our students do better, especially in math and

literacy, and that they are better prepared to lead productive lives in our changing world" (p. 6).

Literacy and numeracy were repeatedly packaged with employment, jobs, the workforce, and

economic discourses in *Status Quo* (2014) and *Action Plan* (2015), which upheld specific

constructions of valued disciplinary and curricular knowledge, namely: skills-based, hands-on

learning, STEM/STEAM for the economy, programming options and student "choice," and

fixing the "math problem" in the province as a remedy for the economy.

The *ONE NS* (2014) report on building the "new" economy of Nova Scotia featured several

suggestions for reforming the education system to better serve the provincial economy. The

central focus of the ONE NS Coalition was to build an economy that moved beyond its historical

reliance on natural resources into "regional, national, and global competitiveness as a leader in

the knowledge economy" (p. 58). The plan included transitioning students to work in a

"knowledge-driven economy" (p. 58) based on high achievement in math, science, and

entrepreneurship, stating: "We are particularly enthusiastic about the emphasis placed on

improving mathematics and science education in our schools to prepare young people for the

kinds of jobs the Nova Scotia economy *should* be generating" (*ONE NS,* 2014, p. 58, emphasis

added). The focus on how the economy "should" be built, centered around the idea of

"knowledge-products," from success in mathematics, science, and entrepreneurship, which was

replicated in official documents, *Status Quo* (2014) and *Action Plan* (2015). The particular use of

STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) and STEAM (science, technology,

engineering, arts, mathematics) disciplinary discourses, were used to animate the proposed "new"

economic directions for the province, away from resource reliance and into the "knowledge"

economy. The "kinds of jobs" eluded to above, are jobs in STEM fields, which in turn required

high achievement in mathematics and sciences.

"STEM" discourse was not introduced in the official documents until *Status Quo*

(2014), and was presented as a configuration of disciplines that fit into the "curricular

knowledge gap" in secondary schools (p. 23). The term "STEM" was used 6 times in the

Status Quo (2014) document, and each use was associated with: career and job trajectory

for students, and programming/knowledge of STEM fields in secondary schools. As an

example of the math➔STEM➔economy discourse from *Status Quo* (2014), low math

competency was associated with students missing opportunities in STEM-related jobs,

resulting in economic repercussions:

> Just over one-half of our students are able to meet the expectations for mathematics at the
>
> end of grade 8. This has significant implications for the number of students who may
>
> choose to pursue science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs in
>
> college and university. What does this mean? Every jurisdiction is emphasizing education
>
> as the key to its economic future. (*Status Quo,* 2014, p. 11)

In this example of the STEM discursive lexicon, there was a fear surrounding math achievement

and its future implications for student career trajectories. The idea of "curricular knowledge

gaps" was solidified in mathematics, with "just over one-half" of students being able to meet

math outcomes at the end of grade 8. Achievement in mathematics was conflated with economic

success, and fear surrounding math failure expanded in this simplistic equation of education as

hinging on math scores.

The STEM discourse changed slightly in the following *Action Plan* (2015), to include

"arts," with the addition of "a" in the acronym. The *Action Plan* (2015) only mentioned

"STEAM" twice in the document, in which the same sentence was repeated on both pages:

"students will receive information on opportunities for the exploration of STEAM careers" (pp.

23). This sentence was found in the "Ready to Launch" (p. 24) section concerning student job

readiness, and the "Innovative Curriculum" (p. 18) section on modernization of school

programming. Although "art" was been added to the *Status Quo* (2014) STEM discourse, there

was no discussion of how "art" fit into the plans of curricular expansion for mathematics and

sciences, instead, it was assumed that arts could be included in the STEM framework. As

noted above, in *Status Quo* (2014), STEM was directly connected to the health of the provincial

economy, and with the addition of "arts" in *Action Plan* (2015) this did not change, but reiterated the importance of STEAM paired with the modernization of curricula and career discourses. In this way, disciplinary success in STEM, and later STEAM, was wrapped up in modernization, economic success, and career readiness for students.

In the U.S., Sochacka, Guyotte, and Walther (2016) suggest that although STEAM schools and programming have increased across the country, artists and art educators are cautious with its usage "as a mechanism to improve learning in STEM field, especially when economic growth is heavily emphasized as an underlying goal" (p. 43). The goal of STE(A)M in the Nova Scotia policy documents was discursively packaged around the advancement of provincial economic development, and like Sochacka et al. (2016) suggest, art was used only to further success in math and sciences. In its lack of definition and connection to essential or specific graduation goals (such as found in *Restructuring,*1994), art becomes a tool, or mechanism *for* and not *of* STEM disciplines. Further, academic references were not provided for STEM and/or STEAM in *Status Quo* (2014) or *Action Plan* (2015) policies, making the claims of economic and educational advantages for the "knowledge-driven economy" direction not grounded in research but in everyday, commonsense knowledge. The knowledge-economy discourse was signified by the marketability of particular forms of knowledge, which could be "treated as a business product, and that educational and innovative intellectual assets . . . can be exported for a high-value return" (Ball, 2013, p. 23).

Such "strong" neoliberal discourses (Bourdieu, 1998) of the economic marketability of STEM/STEAM in educational policy, created an urgency and demand for results in mathematics to sustain and save the economy (Peters, 2007). The *Action Plan* (2015) policy furthered the *ONE NS* (2014) and *Minister's Panel* (2014) deficit discourses of student math performance in PISA results, stating that the province was "falling behind nationally and internationally" (*Action*

Plan, 2014, p.5), and claimed that students were "without the mathematics and literacy skills they needed to prosper in education and the job market" (*Status Quo,* 2014, p. 11). While literacy skills were also mentioned here, there were no policy recommendations for changing English language arts into full-year credits, further, English courses were not connected to STEM and the economy in the same way as mathematics, which was seen as a driver for future innovation and global competitiveness (*ONE NS,* 2014). The continuous pairing of mathematics and global competition was sustained by PISA testing results, which were widely reported and debated in the public sphere. The published PISA scores further created what Alexander (2012) calls "a moral PISA panic" (p.6), after which a downward spiral in confidence in the public education system takes place leaving teachers and students to take on the immense pressures of performing on standardized tests (Jackson, 2013; Lingard & Sellar, 2013).

Within this discursive (negative) framing of math test scores, and by proxy, STEM education in the province, a form of "academic capitalism" developed where certain knowledges are valuable and marketable (STEM fields), and those that were not integral to promoting economic growth were no longer valued (Ball, 2013; Singh, 2015). Not only were social studies fields in this framing not connected to the vitality of the province and its future "new" economy in the direction it "should" be going, social studies disciplines were altogether missing from the educational reform conversation.

Part Two – Shifts in Curriculum and Programming

Each decade of policy presented a particular construction of educational goals, definitions of citizenship, and important disciplinary knowledge, and with this, suggestions for programming and curricular changes. The proposed transformations to the education system, such as new

courses, were then created and implemented in schools. Depending on the implementation of

new programming, and the direction of school leadership, there were a multitude of implications

for administrators, teachers, and students in how these modifications were lived and experienced

at the school level. This section includes a discussion of curricular and program changes between

2002-2015, and provides insights into the ways in which educators understood and navigated

programming changes in their classrooms. While *Restructuring* (1994) and *Horizons* (1995)

discussed the importance of math, science, literacy, and entrepreneurial thinking, no curricular or

programming changes were suggested in these policies. The 1994-1995 policies do offer many

suggestions, frameworks, and templates for structural and governance reform, yet the public-

school curriculum was not discussed. Hence, the following section deals with changes over the

last fifteen years, starting with *Planning for Success* (2002), with teachers responding to the lived

effects of such programming shifts in schools.

Advancing curricular choice, decreasing social studies: 2002-2005

Between 2002 and 2005, the province increased funding for math and literacy disciplines,

which included money for more professional development, math and literacy mentors, textbooks,

and support for full-time educators to have caps on class sizes. *Planning for Success* (2002)

included "$3.3 million" in funding for math initiatives, with a targeted "Math Matters" strategy

involving "new courses, more books and math resources, more time, professional development

and teacher resources" (p. 13). A plan for "higher achievement in reading, writing, [and]

grammar" was also introduced in the *Planning for Success* (2002) policy, which included "$2.4

million" in funding for "more books, teacher and classroom resources, more time for learning,

professional development, [and] early intervention for struggling students" (p. 10). In the "Time

for Learning"[24] section, it noted that "standard minimum times are in place to ensure students

spend adequate time, on a daily basis learning language arts" (p. 10), which was a "90-minute

daily minimum" in the elementary grades. For math, this time varied from "45 minutes a day

in early elementary" to at least an hour in later grades (p. 14). *Planning for Success* (2002) also

extended testing in math and English courses, and created nine new high school math courses,

"from foundation to advanced" implemented between 2001-2003 (p. 13).

Math and literacy: "Two big elephants"

From 2000 onward, literacy and numeracy become a much stronger focus in policy and

official documents, as demonstrated in *Time to Learn* (2002), which lengthened the amount of

time dedicated to mathematics and language arts in the elementary school timetable, and dictated

exact "on task" timelines for teachers. This switch initiated the transformation of the early

elementary curriculum, in which literacy and numeracy steadily subsumed time for topics like

health, social studies, art, and science, leading to the new grade primary to grade three

"streamlined" curriculum implemented in 2015 (as noted in Part One), where social studies,

health, and science were taught in the time allotted for literacy and numeracy during the school

day (*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 18). With the loss of dedicated time for social studies and science in

the timetable, what *exact* social studies content, and *when* it is being taught, are questions that

would need greater exploration. Greg, a social studies teacher, commented, "why don't they put

math and literacy into the more interesting stuff, like history and science, instead of the other way

around?" (June, 2015). Since social studies and science were typically areas of interest for

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[24] A second official document was released in the same year, *Time to Learn* (2002), giving
further instructional guidelines for how much time was to be spent per day on instruction in math
and literacy, and an extension of time "on task" in classrooms.

students, merging them into testable outcomes for literacy and numeracy could be considered

uninteresting for children. Although this example was in the elementary curriculum, what

happened to student interest and knowledge outside of math and literacy after this point was a

valid question, especially when math and literacy were paired with students' future employability

in secondary schools. Funding for math and literacy also posed problems for social studies

departments who were "strangled" by initiatives that did not include their disciplines.

Brian commented that after the math and English departments, if there was any funding

leftover, the social studies department was "lucky to get anything." All four teachers indicated

that their professional development sessions were curtailed toward math or literacy initiatives,

"strangling all of our time" (Howard, June 2015) and taking away from all other disciplines.

Brian offered an extended critique on the amount of time spent on math and literacy, stating that

the focus on math and literacy initiatives, described below as "elephants," were taking time and

energy away from other subjects:

> They're just two huge elephants and are just taking up space . . . any in-school professional
>
> development we've done in the past five years, at least, have either been on math or
>
> literacy . . . there's certainly only so much time you can give to other subjects when you're
>
> focusing so much on those two alleged "problem areas". (June, 2015)

According to the participants, the two "huge elephants," math and literacy have "strangled"

professional development and school inservice days, and have consumed most of the funding,

while leaving little for the rest of the departments. Changes to graduation requirements to

include more math courses, placing caps on class sizes in math, and having a continued focus in

policy and public conversations in education have given social studies teachers and

administrators cause for concern. Furthermore, Karen and David observed that the extra

students from capped math classes often "increase numbers in other areas" (David, June, 2015),

namely

social studies and English classes, who "pick up the slack" (Karen, June, 2015) placing the extra workload in other areas. With the establishment of specific times for instruction in math and literacy, new funding, professional development, and extra courses, the groundwork was laid for the *Brighter Futures* (2005) policy to bring in new programming to further student success and achievement, through new goals: "Raising the Bar" and "Closing the Gap."

Brighter Futures (2005) prioritized two goals, "Raising the Bar" for student learning, and "Closing the Gap" (p. viii) on achievement differentials between students, while maintaining the previous mathematics and literacy priorities from *Planning Success* (2002). In this policy, two major programming options, the implementation of the high school Options and Opportunities, and expansion of the International Baccalaureate Program [IB] allowed more choice for students in their high school experience. The new programs did offer students greater choice in their schooling, however, the influence on social studies departments, school resource allocation, and teaching assignments have contributed to the further crowding out of social studies in high schools.

"Closing the Gap": Options and opportunities for career-based learning

For students who did not excel in traditional academic subjects, nor had a plan to further their education at the post-secondary level, programming for more hands-on learning, skill development, and cooperative education was developed to ensure that students would have proficiencies to work, and therefore contribute to the economy after high school. These school-to-career pathways were aimed at skilled labour and trade routes, and have changed the ways students chose their high school experience.

The "Closing the Gap" priorities in the *Brighter Futures* (2005) policy advised that "some students were not succeeding in the existing public school system," and were in need of alternate programming options (p. 7). One such program, "Options and Opportunities" [O$_2$], which was given $1.5 millions of targeted funding (p. 13), was designed to offer students "community learning partnerships, integrated career education and planning, workplace skills, [and] a head start in trades" (p. 7), to "increase learning success and youth apprenticeship" (p. 13). The O$_2$ program followed the regular public school curriculum, but changed the number of electives and compulsory credits students required to include mandatory career skills co-operative education placements in each of the three high school years (DOE, 2013, p. 14). O$_2$ students needed to take two social studies courses throughout their high school experience, which was the same as students in the regular program: one Canadian history credit in grade 11, and one global studies credit in grade 12 (two, one-semester courses). Outside of their mandatory coursework and field placements, O$_2$ students must take two electives in either math, technology, or science to graduate (DOE, 2013, p. 14). The O$_2$ program garnered discussion with teachers and administrators, who were concerned about the lack of exposure to a wide range of courses the O$_2$ students were expected, and encouraged, to take in their last year of high school. Karen mentioned that the O$_2$ students, "didn't even know what social studies or arts courses were available to take, so instead they took all the classes they thought were easy, like tech or anything that sounded hands-on." This means that O$_2$ students were streamed into a program, but even within that program, they were not accessing a wide-range of course options. Other than their global studies credit, Karen suggested that the O$_2$ students were steered towards non-academic, hands-on or skill-building course work.

One administrator praised the IB and O$_2$ programs as creating choices in pathways that students could take in high school, since "all students entering the building should have a

program that fits their needs for what they want to do after high school" (Marcus, June 2015).

Marcus applauded the O₂ and IB programs for providing targeted choices for different types of

students, and also noted that students should take courses "that are specific to the job they want

after high school." He said a major issue for schools was that "more than fifty percent" of

students did not know what their life path was going to be after high school, and for those

students, he asked, "what are we going to do with them?" (Marcus, June, 2015). The idea that

student choice in courses, and specific programming like O₂ (college and trades-bound students)

and IB (university-bound students), should be tied into what students imagine as the career path

they could/should take, was connected to the discourses of "hands-on" and "skills-based," co-

operative career learning that was more prevalent in the later 2014-2015 policies (further

discussed below). Most teachers did not comment negatively on the O₂ program, and although

some were concerned, *all* participants had discuss concerning the expanded IB program.

Polarized discussions: "Raising the Bar" and advanced programming

The "Raising the Bar" policy goal aimed to help students reach their fullest potential to

"participate in the global society and economy" (p. vii), and included: an influx of targeted

funding ($4.3 million) (*Brighter Futures,* 2005, pp. 5-6) for professional development for all high

school mathematics teachers, seven full-time math and language arts teacher mentors, new books

and resources for both math and language arts, and two additional new math courses to be

implemented (p. 6).

"Raising the Bar" initiatives also included an IB program expansion from two to 13 high

schools in the province, and an increased number of advanced courses in high schools, including

"advanced Global Geography 12 and Global History 12" (p. 6). While mathematics and

language arts initiatives were actualized in practice, advancements in social studies programming,

as one social studies teacher stated, "fell to the wayside" (Brian, June 2015) and were not

implemented, although included in the policy plan alongside the IB and O2 programs. One

administrator, Karen, noted that social studies courses had not been updated "in a decade," and in

terms of course expansion, she "never heard of anyone ever having any advanced social studies

courses in the last ten years" (June 2015). Although advanced courses were supposed to be

developed after *Brighter Futures* (2005), the extent to which these courses were realized in

practice was not clear. The IB and O2 programs, however, were implemented and have expanded

over the last decade.

In discussing the IB program with educators, the responses were polarized, with three

administrators and one teacher highly critical of the program, claiming that its existence in public

schools was "elitist" (Karen, Andrew, 2015), "racially divisive" (David, Karen, Andrew, June

2015), and a "mismanagement of public funds" (Karen, June 2015). One administrator and three

teachers were much less critical, and supported the IB program's expansion, however, these

participants were also IB teachers. Although discussions about IB were contentious and

passionately debated, 6 of 8 participants did agree that fewer public school courses, especially

social studies, could be offered because of the number of students taken away from the regular

program. The IB program was touted as being an equal opportunity for all students due to its

cost (free) and lack of an entrance exam, but was criticized by four participants who believed the

program to create divisions between students along racialized and economic lines, with one

teacher stating: "In the ten years we have had IB, I have not once seen or heard of a student from

[historical African Nova Scotian community] taking the program or show any interest in taking

it" (Brian, June 2015). Two IB teachers were cautious when discussing their IB classrooms, not

being able to describe the racialized or socioeconomic demographics of their classes, while one

teacher described that the program had been a haven for students who "didn't fit in" in their school. While there are many reasons a student will take certain courses, such as "parents and peers" (David, June, 2015), and "because their friends are in the class," (Greg, June, 2015) school demographics potentially played a role in who was enrolled in IB and who was in regular public school courses.

Three administrators and one teacher responded with laughter and said "No" when asked if all students were able to take the IB program (Andrew, Karen, David, June, 2015), while four participants believed that all students could benefit from the content and the structure of the external curricula (Howard, Greg, Brian, Marcus, June, 2015). When asked to describe the difference between a regular public program class and his IB class, Howard said it was "night and day," and that "the hook was already in the IB student. They are engaged and want to learn, and I don't need to spend a month trying to get that hook into them," suggesting that non-IB students were more difficult to engage and manage, creating unequal learning opportunities between courses.

IB programming also presented logistical issues with teacher placements and the course timetable: teachers who would have the expertise to teach advanced (or elective) social studies courses were most often those whose commitments were already divided between the public and IB program, and in terms of the school timetable, there was no extra room for social studies courses because of the additional IB programming, as one administrator explained:

> It [IB] created inequity between teaching assignments, because now in order to facilitate the IB with the allotment of teachers already given, I have to take away from other programs in order to accommodate the teaching blocks that are required for IB . . . We [public program] haven't seen the same infusion of resources, and the same quality of educators to present that opportunity to all students. (David, June 2015)

Three out of four administrators commented on the inequity of resources (funding, textbooks, teacher professional development), and troubles with staffing and scheduling between the IB and public school programs, while the last administrator chose not to comment on the IB program, stating, "It's here and it's not going anywhere, so I'm not going to worry about that" (Marcus, June, 2015). Out of the four teacher participants, three IB teachers offered positive reviews, however, two admitted that its existence beside the public program spread the resources thin in their schools. Three administrators stated that the social studies courses most affected by the loss of students in other curricular programs like IB, were the social studies electives, since "stronger" students were more apt to enrol in the IB program. For students in regular programing, they were more likely to take "something easy and fun, like digital technologies" (Greg, June 2015), instead of history or philosophy. Howard, though, did not agree that the IB courses were taking the best students away from other classes: "this isn't really the case though, because you might only lose a couple students from each class, so it doesn't add up." What he did think was an issue were other course offerings. Because students had six technology courses to choose from, they would take multimedia over economics or political science, as they "sound cooler, are easier and more practical," also noting that his school had not been able to offer economics or political science due to low interest (Howard, June, 2015). The loss of student enrolment in academic electives, as three teachers noted, such as political science and economics for example, meant the courses were potentially not available every year to students, who were more apt to take "easy" electives to keep their grades high.

Since students only needed two half-year credits in social studies courses to graduate, electives based on interest required a mix of high student enrolment, teacher *and* timetable availability for "extras" to be offered. Karen and Brian also added that for IB students, their program requirements were such that they could *possibly* take a public-school course based on

interest via correspondence, but their IB courses alone were difficult to manage. For students not interested in the IB program, but who were interested in being connected with apprenticeships and easier entry to the community college system, the O₂ program also took students away from regular social studies courses, making the enrolment game difficult for department heads and administrators to navigate.

"It's just *not* numbers": Curricular and structural shifts, 2014-2015

With the advancement of math and literacy initiatives, including expanded high school course selections in math, more time devoted to language arts and math in the early years, and new programming for "Raising the Bar" and "Closing the Gap" goals, social studies consistently was pushed to the margins of what was considered "important" or "vital" knowledge for students to learn. In 2014-2015, the previous programming from 2002-2005 was solidly in place, however, further curricular and structural changes continued to crowd out social studies. These changes included new mandatory courses, a second expansion of high school math credits, and a focus on STE(A)M education for career preparation. The packaging of valuable, or necessary knowledge as being "hands-on" or "skill-based," affected the perceptions of students and parents, with whom administrators had difficulty convincing the worth of social studies courses. Structurally, social studies also continued to be decentered as it did not provide testing data, and did not conform to standardization practices as seen in math and science departments. In this section, teachers and administrators commented on how curricular and structural shifts have negatively influenced their jobs, and their social studies departments.

STE(A)M invisibility in schools: "I've never heard that term in my school"

In Part One, "critical knowledge gaps" in policy were described as pertaining to specific disciplinary knowledge, namely, math, sciences (STEM), and entrepreneurship. The way that STE(A)M discourse manifested in schools, however, represented gaps between policy language and teacher experiences. One social studies teacher explained that STEM discourse, or even discussions of STEM, did not exist in schools, as Greg (June, 2015) described, "I haven't heard that term filter down to my admin or anything, and it's interesting with STEM because here there's just the 'M' in STEM, we don't see the STE." Two other educators indicated similar distances between policy discourse and in-school understandings of STE(A)M subjects. Brian laughed, and commented that he had "never" encountered STEM or STEAM used in his school. Karen, like Greg, added that STEM is actually about math, and that it guided how students come to understand what was valuable in their education: "there's a huge focus on math, and kids really think it's what they need to do to be successful." Karen suggested that high school students equated success in schooling as being directly related to their performance in math courses.

Although teachers were not familiar with the move toward STEM/STEAM as described in policy documents, the changes in mandatory courses and pressures around achievement in math were very much felt by staff and students. While success and high levels of achievement in math and science in particular were connected to economic growth through STE(A)M policy discourses, not all students were interested and/or capable of taking STEM disciplines in university, however, education reform was forcing students to take increasing amounts of math as it was connected to the future of the provincial economy in *Status Quo* (2014) and *Action Plan* (2015).

Mathematical saviours: "Squeezing out" social studies courses

As Brian alluded to above, policy discourses of STE(A)M education had not translated into the everyday vocabulary of teaching, yet, conversations around math permeated the focus groups and interviews with the educator participants. The educators unanimously critiqued the newest policies and the Department's plan to implement full-year math at every high school grade level, and were genuinely concerned for students whose public high school diploma would require 25% of their credits in mandatory math. Before 2016, students needed two, half-year (semester) credits to successfully complete their requirements for math, but in 2016, the grade ten math credit became a full-year course. In the *Action Plan* (2015), the province planned on making the grade 11 and 12 math credits mandatory, year-long courses, changing the graduation requirements to, "require students to complete three math courses as a graduation requirement starting in 2020" (p. 20). By changing the semester-long math class into full-year, students would take "only three" courses, however, the courses would all be year-long, the equivalent of six regular semester-long courses. Howard (June, 2015), shaking his head and laughing, commented, "that means our students potentially will graduate with a third of their courses in math, and they don't even like math! Why are we making them take so much math?" Similarly disturbed by this change, Greg (June, 2015) said that "even the math teachers" at his school were not happy about the change to three, full-year math courses: "It's interesting, even the math teachers in my school are against this, because, like my math department head said, you know we have all these kids who hate math and we keep throwing more and more math at them and thinking it's going to solve some sort of problem." With deficits surrounding math test scores in the province, the expansion of math was supposed to assuage fears around math achievement, however, teachers and administrators were wary of its potential side effects.

Educators each had concerns about the expansion of the mandatory math credits, including: the loss of time for other subjects, not having a well-rounded education, and a lack of critical thinking that would otherwise be found in social studies disciplines. Greg (June, 2015) noted that with the expansion of math, that social studies courses were going to be "squeezed out": "You're definitely going to see [social studies] being squeezed out. It's all going to be a numbers game of declining enrolment and not enough teachers to have adequately sized classrooms and offer enough course options." This loss of time for students to take social studies courses was already experienced in two schools, where Howard and Brian both commented that they "had lost their Mi'kmaq Studies 10 course" because of the Math 10 expansion. With the grade 11 expansion, social studies courses would also be further affected, but also the quality of education students would receive.

Howard (June, 2015) was concerned about students having to take so many math courses "at the expense" of learning "critical thinking":

I'm not excited about it . . . I don't think they [the Department] know what the outcome will be, and I don't think it's going to mean higher math scores, I just think it's going to mean students taking more math, that's all. At the expense of their critical thinking courses.

Marcus (June, 2015) also commented on the possible effects of taking so much math:

Too many maths means you take away from other courses that are going to help kids potentially be more well-rounded for lack of a better term, and so in the middle of all that you have social studies courses that would have lots to offer students to become better people.

Howard and Marcus were equally concerned about the effect of too much math on students' education, not only in the fact that they would have to take courses they might not be interested

in, but also that they would not have a chance to learn "critical thinking skills," or to become

"well-rounded people." From the perspective of an administrator and department head, social

studies courses had larger roles to play in students' lives, which was to help them become

critically thinking citizens.

Administrators also worried how this increase in math would affect an already tight

scheduling process; in 2015, two schools could not offer the Mi'kmaq Studies 10 course because

of the expanded Math 10 credit, and since Mi'kmaq Studies was changed to a grade 11 level,

Howard and Karen thought the course "could be safe." However, with the new plan for

mandatory Civics 10, Howard commented "that means that we're going to lose our History 10,

Geography 10, and Career development 10, and I don't know what will happen in the future to

Mi'kmaq 11," meaning that the expansion of the math program would cause other courses to be

squeezed out of the timetable, two of which were social studies courses. With the change of

grade 11 and 12 to a full-year math credit, courses would also have to be scratched from the

timetable, and administrators Karen and Andrew both admitted that they "are not confident" that

social studies and fine arts programs would stay in-tact with the further expansion into grades 11

and 12. Aside from scheduling issues, the focus on math as a "problem area" for the province in

official documents and in the public press (see Chapter 5: Accountability) had placed more

pressure on teachers and students to perform on international standardized tests (PISA).

Five participants noted that their colleagues in the math department were stressed, and

that the "pressure on the teachers to deliver" as Howard (June, 2015) noted, was ever-present.

Greg (June, 2015) commented that students also felt pressure to perform in math, and that the

continual expansion of math credits was not helping students who already felt stressed trying to

pass their math classes. If students did not do well in math, then there was an assumption that

it would in turn negatively affect the future economy, a type of "PISA panic" (Alexander, 2012), to which Greg (June, 2015) remarked: "I just want someone to show me research and directly states that taking more math and doing better in math is going to lead to economic output." Evidenced connections between math and the economy have been largely assumed in the policies, without any necessary referential materials provided in the 2014-2015 documents. Yet, increased funding, curricular time, professional development, and strategic initiatives have continued to increase in mathematics, leaving educators uneasy about the curricular changes, and students perceiving STEM to be the best route for their future careers.

Hands-on, skill-based learning: Student perceptions of social studies

In the *Status Quo* (2014) document, teaching quality was suggested to be improved by more "hands-on, relevant, and interactive" pedagogies (p. 25), which was followed-up in the *Action Plan* (2015) policy further recommending "hands-on" (p. 23) learning activities for student success. The phrase "hands-on-learning" occurred 8 times in the *Action Plan* (2015) policy, with 6 of those instances referring to "developing technology skills" and strengthening student engagement (p. 23). Two of the instances were used to describe "modern, innovative" grade four-to-eight curriculum to be implemented between 2016-2019, where students would be provided hands-on learning for "computer programming, creative arts, science labs, and collective impact projects" (p. 42). The discursive packaging of "hands-on learning" occurred alongside "career" and "skills" discourses, which also included career exploration in STE(A)M fields, computer programming and technology, entrepreneurship, co-op education, and O2. The proposed mandatory Entrepreneurship 12 course would also be a method to provide a course for hands-on learning, while exploring possible future career routes for students in business.

Returning to Marcus' comment that "students should have choice" in programming for their career aspirations, the Department committed to providing students choice in their high school years, including options in higher-level learning (IB), trades and career-based learning (O_2 and co-op placements), courses in technologies, and entrepreneurship. Other than IB, all options were focused on career and workplace skill formation, which increasingly became the case in the regular public school program with mandatory entrepreneurship, and a civics course that included personal financial management and career trajectory content. This model of hands-on learning and career/skills acquisition placed social studies on the periphery, because students did not see courses like history and geography as "being any help to them in the future" or as "ways that they can make money or get a job" (Karen, June, 2015). Outside of mandatory coursework, social studies courses were in direct competition with IB (which includes IB history and economics), other regular programming for space in the timetable, and teacher availability. While students were required in the IB program to take either one history or economics course, their courses were limited outside of mandatory credits due to logistical factors in high schools running the public and IB programs at once. Howard (June, 2015) noted that there were more IB courses available to teach, for example IB philosophy and social and cultural anthropology, which would fall under the social studies department, but none of the participants' schools offered courses outside of history and economics. The potential of IB programs to extend the number of social studies courses available remained within the capacities of individual schools to be able to do so, which in turn, (because it was not logistically possible for many schools) furthered the perception of the social studies credit as being a "one off" or secondary to a main curriculum of other disciplines. The perception that social studies courses did not provide students with the "hard" skills necessary to function in the workplace, but instead, fostered "soft skills" like critical thinking and writing (*Status Quo,* 2014, p. 36) promoted social studies as second-tier courses.

Due to these negative perceptions of social studies as not being "helpful," students "shopped around" for courses that were potentially beneficial to their individual futures.

Neoliberal models of education: Student choice and market rationalities

In the neoliberal choice model of education, students (and parents) are consumers of a public education (Angus, 2015). Through this neoliberal understanding of schooling, students have the expectation that they will have choices in curricular paths, in other words, they will be able to "shop around" for the best program to suit their future plans (Angus, 2015; Wilkins, 2014). With negative perceptions of social studies courses as not building workplace skills or helping students make money in the future, social studies courses are at a disadvantage. Karen added that, "students don't find value in social studies courses, and neither do their parents. They think that they need to take math to get a job or make money" (June, 2015). Because students did not see the value in "choosing" social studies courses outside of the mandatory credits, or outside of courses that can "get them a job" (Karen, June, 2015), they shy away from those disciplines. Marcus further suggested that students wanted to take courses that would "make them the most money, which wasn't necessarily what they're even passionate about" (June, 2015). This model of public education tailored educational programming to student needs, which on the one hand offered multiple routes through high school, but it also supported the idea that education *should* be a marketplace that makes available "different educational programs according to individual needs, interests, and desires," and through this model of schooling, "choice is also represented as a way of ensuring greater efficiency and equity" (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004, pp. 202-203).

Students chose their route based on their own understanding of where they "fit" after high school, be it trades, university, or college, and navigated the system based on their perception of

which knowledges personally held the most value for them. As Marcus and Karen suggested,

students would often choose based on the economic values placed on certain disciplines, and their

perceived connection to a career or the workplace. In this case, schooling equity through the

neoliberal choice model offered more programs for students, but in turn, students slot themselves

into a path they believed they were equipped to handle, not always based on their passions, but

sometimes based on what they perceive will make money. In some cases, David described, "they

take the path of least resistance in order not to be challenged." These "market" rationalities at the

level of individual student program choice extended into accountability structures, where schools

were responsible for their own improvement in math and literacy through the Continuous School

Improvement [CSI] accreditation program. The improvement plans were sustained by the input

of evidence through multiple points of collection: testing, school data, meeting minutes, and

individual test scores from each disciplinary department in high schools. Social studies

disciplines did not clearly fit in a system that highly regarded continuous improvement, data and

evidence collection, and standardization between courses.

"The untouchables": Disciplinary invisibility in a sea of data collecting and testing

Using the words from one of the participants, Howard, social studies has been likened to

"the untouchables:" in this sense, social studies departments did not contribute data for school

improvement, participate in standardized assessments, or were (directly) connected to the

economic future of the province. On the one hand, in these ways social studies was exempt from

processes of standardization and accountability, yet on the other hand, was left in a precarious

position of disciplinary invisibility without contributing to accountability mechanisms of

neoliberal governmentality. Through each of these mechanisms, social studies departments

existed on the periphery of educational standardizability without being able to provide consistent data and evidence for the school's CSI goals.

The school accreditation process was first suggested in the "monitoring and evaluation" initiatives from *Planning Success* (2002, p. 25), and part of the "Whole School Improvement" plan to "improve student achievement" to "Raise the Bar" in *Brighter Futures* (2005), but was not piloted into selected high schools until 2007. Most schools did not start the three-year process until 2008 or 2009, meaning that the first accreditation process did not conclude until 2011 or 2012 for the majority of educators. Accreditation required schools to set measurable goals for student performance in specific areas (math and literacy), through which data was gathered and analyzed by staff and administrators, supported by standardized testing results. The testing results were gathered through in-school math and literacy "pre" and "post" semester tests (Karen, June, 2015), provincially (elementary and secondary math and English, secondary physics, chemistry, biology), nationally (math, literacy, science), and internationally (math, literacy, science) (*Planning Success,* 2002; *Brighter Futures,* 2005). Three administrators, Andrew, Howard, and Karen, also noted that data and evidence were also collected through teacher Professional Learning Community [PLC] mandatory meeting minutes, primarily in math, science, and English departments. When discussing the process of assembling evidence for CSI analysis, Howard commented that social studies departments were "the untouchables," since they did not provide results in the same way of math, science, and English departments:

> We are the untouchables. Which is good in a way, but [trails off] . . . And nobody
>
> questions me. Nobody comes at me and asks why I'm not giving them test scores, why
>
> I'm not giving them PLC ideas about what to do on the next CSI. Nobody comes after us.
>
> (June, 2015)

The social studies department above did not contribute data for their school to use to further their CSI goals, and in this case, no one *asked* for the documentation, therefore Howard did not provide the data, and no one "came after them" for evidence. Howard also mentioned that PLC minutes from teacher mandatory meetings, and their individual class test scores were also not asked for, nor were they given to administrators for analysis. In this case, the social studies department "gets away" with not doing the extra work of compiling and preparing data for administration. However, as Howard noted, it "is good, in a way," but what did it mean that social studies was not essential for the school for "improve" or continue to function? 7 of 8 educators described the "cultivated desire for continuous improvement" (Carpenter et al., 2012, p. 160), to be an "impossible" task in education, a task that was making their jobs as social studies teachers and administrators like living on "an assembly line" (Catherine, June, 2015). The seven participants were critical of the CSI process, and consequently did not have the "cultivated desire" to continue the task of data and evidence creation for the school and province, as they believed the task to be a gratuitous exercise in control (see analysis Chapter 5: Accountability). Aside from "whole school improvement," teacher participants also criticized the ways in which social studies was being made to fit into categories of standardization through common assessments.

Regulating social studies: Impossibility of standardization

In math and science departments, common assessment and planning practices had become normalized, where a similar pacing throughout the course and equivalent assessments were provided across groups of students (Karen, June 2015). Using a PLC model (Harris & Jones, 2011; Bausmith & Barry, 2011), teachers collaborated with each other to produce common

assessments and similar content, met weekly to discuss content they would share in their courses, and collected/analyzed data from testing to improve practice (Williams, Brien, Sprague, & Sullivan, 2008). In theory, the PLC model for collaborative praxis in teaching has garnered positive reviews for urban areas for "closing the achievement gap" (Blank, 2013; Brodie, 2013). However, in discussions with teachers, 7 out of 8 participants relayed their frustration around the inauthenticity of the mandatory PLC model used (see Chapter 5: Accountability). For the social studies teachers, the creation of data and evidence through common assessments and meeting minutes felt quite inauthentic to the point of absurdity for all four social studies teachers, where two laughed when PLC were brought up and the other two were noticeably irritated. This frustration was acknowledged by all of the administrators as well, with Marcus stating that "it's not an authentic process." As Howard expressed, for common tests and assessments, similar sentiments were displayed by the teachers:

> No one will create a standardized test for a social studies course because they can't. How can you standardize the results for you know, I can't quantify this, I can't put it on a multiple choice questionnaire . . . there's no way someone could create a standardized test for social studies courses because answers are subjective and based on argumentative evidence. (June, 2015)

Since there were no provincial, national, or international standardized tests in social studies subjects,[25] the onus of data gathering in these fields fell to individual departments to collect information through the PLC system, and the process' authenticity was questioned by all of the participants. One administrator, Marcus, pointed out that the PLC model could be run in a more authentic way, but currently teachers were feeling like it was "one more thing that they have to do," with Brian and Greg laughing, commenting that they "bullshit their way through in

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[25] IB courses do use standardized testing, however this lies outside of the regular public program.

social studies" due to the lack of standardizable data. Catherine was openly annoyed with the PLC and standardizing of social studies, and described difficulties in standardizing content and assessments in history courses where quantifiable answers are not given as easily:

> I can't take what you do, and apply it in my classroom. I know they want us to know the same, but it's next to impossible, *it's just not numbers*! If I know one topic better than the other teacher, I'll spend more time on a specific case study or scenario a bit longer than someone who knows less and vice versa depending on my background because we have different backgrounds. I try to not care about what's going on in different classrooms, but the problem arrives when it comes to assessment. (Catherine, June 2015)

As noted, teachers might cover the same themes, historical periods, or concepts, but the pedagogies employed and specific content varied between teachers, is dependent upon their educational backgrounds, passions, and interests. Catherine distinguished an "us" (social studies classroom teachers) and "them" (administrators) in the production and collection of evidence for CSI goals through PLC minutes and common assessments, suggesting that decisions about her classroom practice were being shaped by demands from administration. The expectation to standardize content and assessments in social studies in Catherine's example, compelled teachers to re-evaluate what they teach and how they teach it, in favor of being comparable or looking the same as the next classroom, thereby changing the nature of the teaching practice. The PLC model can foster collaboration, but in this instance, through mandatory and highly regulated PLC meetings, an alternate goal of normalization and data generation was evident through teacher narratives.

Conclusion: Social studies invisibility

The invisibility of social studies in recent policy reform points to the relative devaluation of social studies over a period of twenty-one years (1994-2015) in a rapidly changing discursive pattern of essential knowledges into disciplines that could be "governed by numbers" (Ozga, 2015), provide data and evidence of growth, and could demonstrate utility in transitioning students into the workplace. This shift in policy goals toward a neoliberal model of education that was based on market rationalities of choice, competition, and hyper individualism, "reflects a certain set of values, defining priorities and legitimating what is worth learning" (Pinto, 2012, p. 262), which moved away from centering social studies disciplines as legitimate and important knowledges (*Restructuring,* 1994), into obscurity. At one time, "worth learning" and articulated with "essential" graduation knowledge of society, social studies have been disconnected from discourses of "valuable" curricula, and were either completely missing from policy altogether (*Planning Success,* 2002; *Brighter Futures,* 2005; *Minister's Panel,* 2014), or only mentioned broadly as a means for adding on non-Eurocentric curricula to fill in cultural knowledge gaps, however no funding or plans to do so were included (*Action Plan,* 2015, p. 29).

Neoliberal governance formations of discourse in provincial policy, alongside deficit constructions of students, schools, subject areas (math and literacy) and the economy assembled to create a particular construction of education. This construction supported, and made necessary, policy that increasingly governed the work of teachers: how they interacted with one another, how many times they met per week and who they collaborated with, and dictated their pedagogical choices to standardize their work across classes. This discursive formation simultaneously constructed "valuable" curricular knowledge in schools by articulating with neoliberal principles of economic rationality (McCarthy, Pitton, Kim, & Monje, 2009),

determining what was defined in the "critical knowledge gap," and which areas needed

professional development. In its absence from "vital" knowledges, social studies became "un-

articulated" in the discursive formation of schooling. It was no longer connected to the ultimate

goals of the province, to global competition, to standardization, testing and data collection, or to

the workplace. Social studies disciplines were omitted from discursive practices in policy, and

thus existed as excluded knowledges in a framework of "knowledge *for* economic productivity",

which had "shifted from being a common good" (Santomé, 2009, p. 64) and into a commodity to

compete in the disciplinary marketplace.

This erasure of social studies had real effects on student knowledge, and educators

commented on the lack of basic understanding students have of their world, how it works, and

what possibilities there are for them to learn, as Karen noted that "two university-bound students

did not know what anthropology or archaeology were" (June, 2015). Further, the participants

enthusiastically discussed the necessity of history, civics, geography, and social sciences as

fundamental paths to critical thinking, and to the future quality of life of students and their peers.

Marcus described social studies as having a "tremendous role to play, to arm students with

information they're going to need to live by" (June, 2015), with Howard adding that this

information teaches students "to have empathy and understanding with humans from the past as

well as today" (June, 2015). Existing as much more than numbers, Parker (2010) argues that

social studies "is at the center of a good school curriculum, because it is where students learn to

see and interpret the world . . . they are helped systematically to understand it, to care for it, to

think deeply and critically about it" (p. 3). In a system of neoliberal governance, the educational

marketplace has to "sacrifice some goals in order to obtain others" (Levin & Belfield, 2003, p.

184), as resources such as time and funding are scarce. Through a policy analysis and

discussions with Nova Scotia educators, the current goals of global economic competition and

innovation through STEM subjects have steered away from a well-rounded curriculum

(*Restructuring*, 1994), into a much more narrowly defined conceptualization of education that

does not include social studies at its core.

Chapter 7: Conclusions: Neoliberal Governmentality [at] Work

Ode to Joy

But now it's become quite clear,
I don't have as much value here,
Very slowly things have changed,
Priorities have been rearranged,
PLCs* (or SSPs?),
Have now become the death of me,
And learning language? They don't care,
So long as Grade Book marks are there,
Working on my PGP,
And learning new technology,
A new way to do IPPs,
"Put it in TIENET** if you please!" I
work so hard for such faint praise, And
my Premier thinks I want a raise?
I'm honestly so overwhelmed,
We need someone else at the helm,
Is there a memo that I've missed?
"Plan lessons" is the 5th thing on my list,
The pressure now is so unreal,
And the government tells us we have no deal.

They think all of this is just a ploy,
But I just want to find my joy.
Just let me teach the kids, you'll see,

What a great teacher I can be.

 * Acronyms: PLC – professional learning community; SSP – student success planning; PGP – Professional growth plan; IPP – Individual program plan; TIENET – Technology for improving education network

"Ode to Joy" was posted anonymously by a teacher on the "Teachers of Nova Scotia"

WordPress website[26] November 17, 2016. During the labour dispute between the Government of

Nova Scotia and the NSTU, teachers anonymously posted responses to ongoing contract

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[26] https://teachersofnovascotia.wordpress.com/2016/11/17/ode-to-joy/

negotiations starting in October 2016 and ending in February 2017, to share their perspectives on heated public schooling debates, and to offer their personal experiences of teaching in Nova Scotia. The poem encapsulated teachers' frustrations with a system that placed an "overwhelming" workload on educators to the point that "the pressure" was "so unreal," where teachers' time and attention were focused on everything but planning, which the author described as being "5th on my list." Using a barrage of acronyms for educational programming, student information technologies, and other professional jargon, the author stated that [teachers] "don't have much value here," since "priorities have been rearranged." Culminating in a forced contract (legislated in February 2017), the labour dispute illustrated the impact of education reform on teachers' livelihoods, and, as the author noted, how "very slowly things have changed." Such changes to the education system have amassed into a critical breaking point in the relationship between teachers and the government, and also as a critical point of frustration for teachers and expectations placed on their jobs outside of their regular contract duties. Returning once more to Ahmed's (2014) work on resistances and "tipping points" (Gladwell, 2006), while focus is most often placed on the moment of the break in such disputes, or "the snap" – in this case, the historic moment of the first teacher's strike in the province – there are years of building and mounting pressures to force the break.

Through this study, I have demonstrated how priorities and educational values have changed over time through discursive policy constructions and teacher experiences in the education system. Using a genealogical approach, I argued that these shifts were not neutral, but articulated with tenets of neoliberal governmentality, which is to say that the education system had moved toward schooling *for* the economy, basing educational changes off of market principles, while increasing elements of surveillance, control, and monitoring on its educators and students, affecting educators' jobs in the process. Based off of data gathered from interviews

and focus groups, teachers and administrators identified that they have lost a significant amount of professional autonomy, and have become increasingly dissatisfied with their ever-expanding workloads. The underlying purpose of this study was to trace and expose the inner workings of neoliberal governmentality through policy discourses, and to illustrate its complex manifestations over time in the Nova Scotia education system. Three separate (but interlocking) contours of analysis emerged from the policy analysis, interviews, and focus groups, revealing a co-constitutive matrix of relations, meaning that each line of analysis cannot completely be taken apart from the next, but is intimately connected. These three analyses focused on: the economy and its gradual diffusion into education policy and schooling, the mechanisms and effects of educational accountability, and lastly, the disappearance of social studies disciplines in a framework for achievement in standardized testing. Together, the analyses demonstrate "how slowly things have changed" in policy and practice, providing evidence for the ways in which neoliberal governmentality works in(to) school systems.

In the following sections, I first return to the theoretical, with the relational grid/matrix of relations (Foucault, 2008; Lemke, 2012) and the idea of the junctural space (Hall, 2002) to set up the operationalization of overarching articulations between the three analysis chapters of economy, accountability, and social studies education. Using the concept of articulations in a junctural space, I demonstrate how this study has explored the ways neoliberal governmentality works through the continuous and cyclical invoking of economic and educational crises, which has paved the direction of education reform. Lastly, I discuss how shifts in Nova Scotia's education policy point to a need for further comparative research into external (national and international) policy networks, but also the need for more research into ontological dimensions of schooling through neoliberal subjectivities.

A matrix of relations: Articulations of the junctural space

Lemke (2012) describes Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality as not as much intended for figuring out "whether practices conform to rationalities," as it is used for discovering "what kind of rationality [practices] are using" (p. 81). In education, governing practices include policy creation, curriculum and programming, the organization of structures, and reforming rules and regulations for educators and students. In a system of neoliberal governmentality, such strategic governing practices are not simply replicating, or conforming to a particular rationality or knowledge (Lemke, 2012), but are world-making in-and-of-themselves, which is to say that there is not an underlying "nefarious plan" (or specific rationality), but become problematic in the enacting of governing practices through policy reform. Returning to Foucault's idea of the matrix (2003), or grid of relations – the amorphous area where the subject and state meet – (Lemke, 2012) the interactions between policy technologies, networks, and the multiplicity of actors in school systems need to be understood as co-constitutive process of institutional knowledge construction. This grid is made up of different elements at different times, as I presented in the analysis chapters through a policy genealogy. In the conceptual framework (Chapter 2), this complex space was theorized through Hall's (2002) idea of the conjuncture, or the "junctural," where variables articulate (or "dis-articulate" as Grant & Rogers (2018) argue) through relationships between policies, the institution, and the subject, which vary over time depending on political, social, and economic factors.

Using the concept of the grid of relations and myriad articulations in the junctural space, the interactions that have been most prevalent between the three analyses of economy, accountability, and social studies have provided a glimpse into how neoliberal governmentality

works and has become institutionally embedded in education. These relations indicate where policy discourses manifested into mechanisms and actionable changes in schooling, shaping and reshaping the experiences of those in it, however, these need to be read in their totality to make sense of their aggregate meanings. When understood as a whole, the analyses tell a story about changes in the education system that offer an overarching, unevenly developed plotline of reform based on what was strongly valued in the given historical context. In other words, each analysis chapter demonstrated the how the shifting policy imaginary shaped an understanding of what education *should* or *could* become. Returning to the idea of the junctural space, when read as one multifaceted narrative, the analyses show a consistently strong, progressing set of articulations between the economy and accountability, with a weakening connection (or *dis*articulation) between the school system and social studies education over time. Below I discuss the implications of each set of articulations to provide an overarching discussion of neoliberal governmentality in schooling.

There are two dimensions to explain the economy ←→ accountability relationship that are co-constitutive, meaning that they work in a continuous feedback loop to support/produce/reproduce one another, each making and remaking conditions together to create the larger configuration and directions of education. The first set of connections are on the level of neoliberalism, policy discourse, and larger constructions of failure and crisis in the province, which includes crisis in the economy and education. The second set of articulations illustrate how these larger ideas of crisis and the economy become mechanized *into* schools through shifting policy directives – in other words, mechanized through governmentality. While the first dimension sets up the conditions for policy development and reform discourses, the second dimension is where decisions around schooling are actualized in practice; the dimension through which educators and students both experience and animate the changes as appendages of the

state. Finally, social studies, as the "untouchable" subject matter, exists in dwindling space that

has been disarticulated through a variety of neoliberal "schooling for the market" principles, and

governmental modifications to the school system. For school disciplinary formations, on the

other hand, math and literacy strongly articulate with core conceptualizations of economy and

accountability, leaving social studies in a precarious position, as working outside of the main

principles, purposes, and directions of education.

Crisis as a neoliberal policy technology

Beginning in the 1990's, the continued evokation of educational crisis has helped shape,

construct, and advance neoliberal policies in Nova Scotia. However, the idea of what constitutes

"crisis" has changed over the decades, and like neoliberalism, is a shape-shifting entity in the

sense that it is highly changeable and adaptable to fit the needs of the situation at hand (O'Neill,

2015; Rikowski, 2015). As an example, in the 1990's, educational crisis was indelibly

connected to the larger economic deficit of the province, and because of this association, the

education system suffered through cut backs, teacher lay-offs, and a restructuring of education

governance. At this time, the education crisis existed mainly in the economic sphere with

downsizing and austerity measures in the public sector, however, because of the deficit

discourses surrounding the province's debt, education and other public sectors bore the brunt of

cutbacks, and were used as a mechanism for the province to advance its economic goals. The

education crisis after this time switched into fear over testing scores.

In the 2000's the "crisis" was lifted, and the Hamm government switched into an

optimistic direction, pouring money back into the school system, however, the time of crisis

relief – or as Slater (2015) calls crisis "recovery" (p. 2) – was short-lived. This decade began

with the first published PISA results included as part of provincial policy discourse, a back-to-basics schooling reform movement, and the turn to testing results as the main indication of student and school "success" and "failure." Since neoliberal policies exist as "both constructing and responding to material conditions" (Slater, 2015, p. 3), the results of standardized test results in policy were consistently conflated with, and reactionary to, the economic prosperity of the province. On one hand, policy discourses were a response to test results, and on the other hand, used test scores to construct a narrative of the province that connected the results to the health of the economy. During this time policy discourses also centered around neoliberal concepts of: efficiency, success, achievement, monitoring, testing, tracking, skills and employability (see Chapters 3 and 4) and consistently looped and textured education discourses back into and onto the economic realm. For example, educational achievement, skills, and success were considered to be the "cornerstone of the economy" (*Blueprint,* 2003, p. 6), which both created and supported the notion of schools *as* locations for economic growth. While crisis discourses were minimal in the 2000's, the articulations not just between the education system and the economy as a public service (as in the 1990's), but between *schooling* and the economy shifted the focus onto schools themselves as sites of either economic prosperity *or* failure – in neoliberal economic competition, there is no in-between. This important ideological shift in policy located future crises (economic and/or educational) within schools, and on those who work within the system.

The third decade (2010-2017) of the policy genealogy began in crisis. Discourse surrounding the failing province, need for urgent change, inadequate math test scores, economic fears, unacceptability of the status quo, and students unequipped for the workplace filled and fueled public outlets, education policy, and external coalitions (for example, the ONE NS Coalition for the economy plan, *ONE NS,* 2014). The articulations between schooling and the economy in this decade of economic/educational crisis were closely knit, and cannot be separated: schooling was a mechanism for economic growth, and the economy needed schools to produce workers who would benefit the province. This codependent relationship of multiple, and

robust articulations was cyclical and reinforcing, at once created through policy and supported by purported failing test results, and a failing economy. Yet, the test scores, overall, did not reflect a failing, but showed two things: that the scores were the highest before any mechanisms were put into place to improve said scores, and secondly, that testing scores remained relatively consistent over time according to socio-economic standings of students (Corbett, 2016). The illusion of failure, supported through the PISA scores, then, was a method to invoke crisis to forward a particular agenda in school reform.

Referencing Naomi Klein (2007), Slater (2015) suggests that "at the same time as neoliberals create crises, they also position neoliberal reform as the sole medium of recovery" (p. 3). Using crisis/recovery neoliberal policy formations as a way to understand discursive policy changes in the 2010's, the education crisis invoked by the McNeil government *through* education policy also positioned neoliberal education reform as its remedy. Hence, policy both represents the problem *and* the solution to the crisis; it is at once world-*making*, and world-*fixing*, as Slater (2015) explains, "in doing so, neoliberalism becomes further entrenched, both creating and securing the means of its own reproduction" (p. 2). With policy creation and platforms of education reform to solve the created crises, schools are changed, and with these changes, teachers' jobs are affected. Working in a feedback loop, the strategic positioning of crises in policy forwarded a particular vision of schooling through which policy technologies to remedy the issues in practice. Policy technologies to "fix" the system became embedded into practice through heightened monitoring, surveillance, and accountability, establishing efficiency and productivity measures using evidenced-based schooling *for* the economy.

Improvement through data: Mechanisms of governmentality and performativity

The analysis chapters have shown how policy has shaped the experiences of educators, including how they have come to understand, resist, and perform their jobs as teachers and administrators in the education system. Some educators were able to set their own boundaries with work to make sure they had enough time for their families, while others were burnt out and stressed with the expectations placed upon them. What was relayed in the focus groups and interviews was that even with personal differences aside, *all* of the participants were frustrated with the direction of education over the last decade (longer for more experienced teachers). For some teachers, as Catherine mentioned in the introduction, they were tired to the point of exhaustion: "I feel like they're creating this superman, super teacher, super power. The one who doesn't sleep or need to eat, who focuses" (June, 2015). By "they" she was referring to the Department, who had created increasingly invasive and controlling monitoring procedures, in the name of efficiency and accountability.

Just as there were substantial articulations between the economy and accountability in the realm of neoliberal schooling for the economy, strong articulations between the economy and evidenced-based schooling created a system whereby governmentality was a vehicle for the economic to articulate directly *into* schools. The operationalization of neoliberal tenets of education were mechanized in schools to ensure success, including models for efficiency, competition, entrepreneurship, testing, and monitoring educator and student performances. Such changes to the education system had filtered into the minutiae of teachers' daily lives, which Hibou (2015) calls neoliberal bureaucracy, or, I argue, the enacting of neoliberal governmentality. Like shifts to education in the section above, governmental shifts in education also occurred incrementally between 1994-2016.

In the 1990's, policies were concerned with changing the governing structure of the system to be more efficient and cost effective, and provided suggestions and models for decentralized schooling. While education at this time articulated with the economy, measures to ensure student or school progress and success were not discussed or even suggested in policies, only changes to the larger organizational structures of education, including the Department and school boards. During this era, teachers and administrators were given significant amounts of authority and autonomy to make decisions for their own schools (as cited in *Restructuring* (1994) and *Horizons* (1995)), and policies were directed at school boards and whole schools, instead of directly pertaining to educators and students.

Although the 2000's saw a break in major educational crises, education reform intricately connected to ideas of monitoring, tracking, testing, and surveillance intensified during the latter half of the decade. The ideas forwarded in *Planning for Success* (2002) and *Brighter Futures* (2005) were laid out to secure educational attainment through testing at provincial, national, and international levels, primarily in math and reading using school-based data as the foundation for school and student growth. Underpinning the policies was an understanding that a basics approach to schooling, and success in the "basics," would directly lead to economic success, and believed that students would be more employable in the knowledge economy through mastery of these two skillsets (math and literacy). Therefore, the recipe for success was in teacher and student testing accountability, which included additional managerial structures implemented to guarantee that teachers' efforts were only being used for student success. The problem with this type of deductive reasoning was that while such equations might be successful in some sectors, it did not allow for environmental, social, historical, economic, political, or other variables to enter into the "education for results" equation that actually takes place in schools.

Mechanisms for evidenced-based, whole school success were implemented to track and monitor all activity in schools, from administrators to students. Schools were expected to adhere to "school improvement plans" where administrators and teachers took on the extra tasks of creating, collecting, analyzing, and presenting data/evidence of continuous growth in areas (mostly) dictated by the Department. Such practices increased the amount of non-essential teaching work, but also created a system where teachers, students, and administrators were tracked in their daily "performances." Connecting back to the concept of performativity, educators' jobs had moved away from being strictly concerned with teaching duties, to having their daily tasks managed through bureaucratic performance measures. Administrators oversaw teacher performance processes, and after 2005, the process of hyper-managing teachers' work was amplified through personal growth plans, performance assessments, and cross-referenced with data collected from online digital platforms. Such changes in the relationship between administrators and teachers created a *type* of inspectorate inside schools, whereby the state had full access to data without being physically present. By decentralizing the process of the inspectorate using school growth and reporting plans, and shifting the responsibility of teacher inspection onto administrators, which Ozga (2009) has called the move "from regulation to self-evaluation" (p. 149), these changes placed the onus on schools to self-regulate, and to internalize the inspectorate process. On the one hand, the traditional process of the inspectorate was displaced, but whereas inspectors would only visit schools a certain number of times per year, the *new* inspectorate through/as data was everpresent through online digital monitoring systems, which supported practices of teacher monitoring and surveillance through the policy construction of "teacher quality."

After 2009, teacher accountability practices also included the use of student information software (PowerSchool, and later TIEnet) to track and report all activity with student success and

learning, including assessments and grades, anecdotal feedback, interactions and interventions with students, attendance, and meeting notes taken during PLC's with colleagues. While touted as a tool for transparency and greater school accountability, digital data collection platforms work in real-time, which Ozga (2016) critiques as "reducing schools to computational products" (p. 79), and further reduces educating to a process of data gathering and input for teachers and administrators who are surveilled through the use of such digital apparatuses. With bureaucratic mechanisms forwarded in the 2000's, additional governmental mechanisms were added to expand surveillance and monitoring in the 2010's.

In the third decade, mechanisms for data collection, whole school performance, teacher quality and monitoring ("performance"), and testing were already in place from the previous government. What was different about this decade was the use of crisis, through PISA testing data, and from provincial surveys on the state of education in the province, which pointed to a further overhaul of the education system through reform. What was suggested in the *Status Quo* (2014) and *Action Plan* (2015) documents was an even tighter management of educators and students in the system. This was forwarded through the idea of additional teacher training (on weekends and in the summer), "rigorous" performance systems for teachers, and for disciplinary measures to be enacted for teachers not meeting performance requirements. In order to facilitate these changes, it was suggested that principals no longer be part of the NSTU, and that the collective agreement, which protected teachers from punitive measures related to performance, would need to be changed through "negotiation or cooperation with the NSTU" (2015, p. 17). Principals, then, would perform the duties of an administrator, an educational leader, an educational manager through teacher performance reviews, *and* an in-school inspector, while teachers, on the other hand, become "the managed" through their performances, digitally and otherwise.

What the policy genealogy illustrated for educators was the increase of accountability mechanisms to lessen professional authority and autonomy, also increased workloads outside of regular, mandatory marking and planning, and a change into self-managing practices through the collection of data. The interviews also showed resistance from teachers who did not follow the rules, and who made a point to *not* follow expectations for paperwork and data collection mechanisms, but overall, these occurrences were one-offs, and were only done to see if "anyone would notice." Overall, teachers' and administrators' occupations have been deprofessionalized from being (relatively) autonomous educators working within an institution of education, to a performance-based work environment where performativity and competition were paramount. Holloway and Brass (2017) suggest that in a system of educational neoliberal governmentality, collegiality transforms into competition, and "autonomy is replaced with bounded (and calculable) expectations" (p. 3). In this understanding of decreasing (or limited) professional autonomy, teachers' work is constrained and interwoven with methods to quantify their work, thereby increasing competition between teachers, whose student success scores reflect back onto the relative quality of their teaching. Examples of calculable expectations were found in policy and in educator experiences in areas of testing, student and teacher performance, and through the idea of "continuous growth" as monitored through surveillance mechanisms in schools. Teachers were expected to support the Department's plans for student success in areas of testing and measurable performance, and administrators were expected to ensure that continuous growth took place through testing and surveillance mechanisms. As recommended in the *Action Plan* (2015), educators were expected to *produce* results, were rewarded if they did, and allegedly faced disciplinary actions if they did not adhere to the expectations. Such mechanisms of governmentality articulated with the idea of teacher "quality" in policies.

Teacher and administrator "quality" articulated with successful test scores and data production from their daily routines, which "computed" every task in quantifiable measures for the Department to view, monitor, and track through digital platforms. In this way, teachers' work was "productive" in the sense that not only did they take care of their teaching duties, but they produced data for the province, which was used to define whether the system was "successful" or was "failing" as an economically-adjacent institution. The use of "quality indicators" as a performance technology also switched teaching into a prescriptive activity where the understanding of "good" teaching is intricately wrapped up in student test scores, which Holloway and Brass (2017) argue changes the ontological structure of teaching. This ontological shift is the nature of educational performativity in neoliberal governmentality: teachers are heavily monitored, their work is subjected to surveillance technologies and mechanisms for tightened controls, and the results of such work is scrutinized through a competitive lens of "success" *or* "failure." As found in the policy genealogy, the *Action Plan* (2015) forwarded a framework for teaching excellence/disciplinary measures (an either/or framework) based on the idea of teacher quality. This teaching quality framework was supported by the idea of data-surveillance, "dataveillance" (Van Dijck, 2014) which turned teachers into producers of themselves, as they needed to endlessly justify their existence by showing "their own productivity" (Ozga, 2016, p. 79). Productive measures that monitor, track, and make quantifiable every aspect of an educator's day for the sake of "success" and accountability, as conflated with/articulated with the economy both discursively and in practice, are practices of governmentality. Working on the dimension of implementation, schools supported neoliberal policies through governmental mechanisms that seeped into teacher's lives, diminishing their professional autonomy, and making some feel like they were being watched at all times (Catherine, June, 2015).

While such mechanisms were allegedly for greater transparency and accountability of the education system, when looked at more deeply, they changed the purpose of teaching, and the way educators related to their jobs. In a system of neoliberal governmentality, educators, their lives, their energies, become parts of the educational machinery, where every aspect of their day becomes quantified as they work under a metaphorical microscope. Working under the presumption that such mechanisms will support testing success, which in turn will support greater economic growth, governmentality is tightly woven into the fabric of schooling through neoliberal policies, which are both "at work" systematically altering the education system, and functioning to affect teachers' lives "at work." While educators' work exemplified how elements of neoliberal governmentality have seeped into the daily lives of teachers and administrators, the decline of social studies disciplines provided a case study to illustrate how neoliberal governmentality weaved into the education system, and slowly changed the purposes and future trajectory of schooling.

Social studies: Dis-articulated from the education system

In a system that highly valued quantifiable results and metrics, social studies, as Howard described, became "the untouchables." As Chapter 6 has shown, social studies disciplines have been "squeezed out" by a variety of mechanisms, including new mandatory curriculum, programming changes, and logistical issues with scheduling, but also had been pushed aside because it did not fit into the standardized testing model of schooling. In the matrix of relations, however, social studies did not articulate with the economy ←→ accountability version of schooling, where some disciplines were considered more economically valuable than others. This was not always the case, as social studies was strongly articulated with schooling in policy

in the 1990's, but through a process of dis-articulation, social studies slowly became located

external to the grid of relations: social studies were not considered valuable knowledges, as they

did not directly articulate with economic and accountability principles of education, and in effect,

were *un*articulated. While it is also true that the decline of social studies does articulate with

neoliberal governmentality, in the sense that it is more important for students to learn about

entrepreneurship and financial literacy instead of history or philosophy, this type of *thin* or

weakened articulation did not stop the process of social studies decline.

In the 1990's social studies disciplines were considered vital, "essential" knowledges for

students to learn about the world, to understand the historical, political, social, economic, and

geographic constructions of life, and to become well-rounded, well-informed citizens. At this

time, art, music, and social studies fields were considered integral facets of what a "good"

education entailed, and because of this, social studies closely articulated with that vision of

education. With the rise of market-oriented policies, curriculum, and programming, in the

decades following, social studies disciplines lost these strong articulations with the "value" and

the direction of the education system.

The basics movement in the 2000's, along with the beginning of PISA test results, began

the shift into mathematics and literacy as the main foci of education, and with that came the

movement into math and literacy specialists and coaches, testing, curricular expansion, and

workplace skills discourses. In the "raising the bar" and "closing the gap" (*Brighter Futures*,

2005) goals of the province, students were positioned as learners who would become the next

global knowledge-workers, or, as workers in local economies, but nonetheless, citizens *as*

workers. The knowledge they would need to accumulate for those roles was contained within

"the basics;" students needed to be successful in math and literacy to become successful workers

in the future. This understanding of success and what a "good education" was, varied

significantly from the previous decade. What happened to social studies through this transition was three-fold: social studies was dis-articulated with the purpose of education, as it did not articulate with standardized testing, or closely enough with literacy, as understood narrowly through reading comprehension and writing skills. Second, social studies was dis-articulated with what was considered economically "valuable" knowledge. With math and literacy intimately associated with economic prosperity, and conflated with testing scores, social studies was not part of this equation because it did not take part in standardized testing outside of the IB program, whose results were not publically released. Lastly, social studies was dis-articulated from the understanding of data in school improvement goals: unlike math, science, and English courses, which develop data from pre and post-tests, social studies teachers did not provide performance data or other quantifiable information to school improvement plans. All three of these dis-articulations became entrenched, and in the next decade, the process deepened through neoliberal student choice models of schooling.

As an administrator, Marcus stated that every student should know their future plans after high school, whether that be work or further training. He also stated that students would be less stressed if they knew what occupation they were interested in, so that they could choose the program in high school to get them into their desired future work. On the surface, the idea that students choose high school courses based on their desire to work in a certain sector did not sound terrible, however, it did display a marked difference in the purpose of education, compared with the 1990's purported "well-rounded" education. In the 2010's students were given various choices in educational pathways in high school, which ranged from co-op education, Options and Opportunities, IB, and regular public school programming with mandatory course work in entrepreneurship, civics, and full-year math classes (*Action Plan,* 2015). With the expansion of mandatory courses in math and business, and a focus on STEM fields, there was less space for

students to take electives, and although civics had been added to the mandatory course list, the

course was grounded in an understanding of citizenship based on personal financial

accountability, and goal setting, as well as fundamentals in governance structures (*Action Plan,*

2015). This hierarchy supports disciplines that subscribe to economic rationalities of

competition, innovation, "datafication" (Roberts-Holmes, 2015), and "dataveillance" as a

"currency," through which surveillance measures can easily track and monitor progress through

numbers (van Dijck, 2014, p. 200). Disciplines that did not adhere to these neoliberal economic

rationalities no longer fit within the direction and structure of schooling.

In this formulation of education, students were expected to choose a pathway that would

make them employable in the future. The options presented to them were focused on workplace

skills, hands-on skills, and for IB students, the assumption that they will become globally minded

workers for the knowledge economy. The civics course, while an additional course in social

studies, was focused on neoliberal tenets of citizenship, where students learn to become good

citizens through financial stability, being part of the workforce, and an entrepreneur through their

own choices in schooling. In effect, students would create their own path to their working

futures. Social studies courses did not articulate with STEM education, with school choice

models and pathways, or with the hands-on and skills-based approach; outside of mandatory

social studies courses, one history credit and one global credit (geography *or* history), there was

no impetus for students to take these courses when they were only concerned with future work.

As Karen mentioned, she fought with students and their parents to see the value in social studies

courses, and Marcus also stated that students were more interested in taking courses that they

perceived would make them money in the future. This internalized neoliberal subjectivity, the

understanding that one's self is a marketable entity (Peters, 2017), affects how students move

through schooling as entrepreneurs for their own futures. When social studies disarticulated from

"essential" knowledges, and not considered part of "curricular knowledge gaps," like STEM and

entrepreneurship, they also became dis-articulated in the neoliberal school system, as social

studies did not belong to economic and work-focused knowledges. However, in terms of

understanding the current neoliberal system, social studies disciplines have the ability to undo

this system through critical analysis and interrogation; a strength that other disciplinary areas

lack.

In a space where hands-on and workplace skills were considered "vital" knowledges,

social studies did not fit, and did not exist in this framing of schooling for the economy. Termed

"soft skills," social studies fields only offered students knowledge for knowledge's sake, without

any attached dollar signs or standardized testing data for the school, in other words, social

studies did not guarantee a marketable future for students. This is not to say that taking more

math or science course *did* guarantee a stable economic future, but the perception was that this

understanding was true. In an institution of neoliberal governmentality, social studies are not

just loosely articulated, but are unarticulated in formations of testing, data, workplace skills,

basics, evidence, pathways and student choice, and performance mechanisms for teachers who

did not gather and present data from their classes. What the genealogy has shown, is that such a

narrowly defined purpose of education, one for the economy and the workplace, did not simply

change schooling, but also the people who were part of the system.

Final considerations: Limitations and Future research

Using a policy genealogy, read through a critical discourse lens, and supported by teacher

and administrator interviews and focus groups, I have demonstrated how the Nova Scotia

education system had developed into a system of neoliberal governmentality between 1993-2016.

The policy genealogy established the progression of neoliberal discourses and governmental policy technologies, which became more deeply embedded in the school system over time. While the *Action Plan* (2015) policy is in the process of being implemented into schools, the furthering of teacher surveillance technologies (including disciplinary measures), tightening of school to workplace discourses *and* frameworks, and overall reliance on crisis and urgency to fuel and sustain reform, have been put into place. Social studies teachers, however, continually showed resilience and resistance against such changes. The interviews and focus groups revealed that social studies educators felt removed from economic aspects of schooling. While teachers were exposed to negative feedback in public press, in their classrooms they consistently reverted to the idea that their teaching was primarily for connection, for building students' passions and interests, and to not inject students with the idea that they need to have a specific job or only need to be interested in specific content to be successful in the future. The participants signalled their personal philosophies of education were at great odds with the education system. In all but one case (7 out of 8 participants), where an administrator chose not to comment, the educators felt compelled to distance their own personal teaching from the larger system, and to distance their own beliefs about education from the direction the province has taken. In effect, some educators were able to continue their important work with students by focusing only on their classrooms, and by shielding any external politics and negativity from their practice. On the other hand, teachers who were not able to compartmentalize their world of teaching and the external reality of the education system, such as Catherine, provided a snapshot of frustration, burnout, and disillusionment with the system. Both perspectives were important and indicated how teachers dealt with neoliberal governmentality in education in various ways, however, neither coping mechanism was ideal for the teachers, as these mechanisms did not foster change in the system.

Limitations

A multimethod research design was helpful to provide an analyses from textual and experiential source materials, however, only 8 educators were interviewed. Because of this design, I was limited in the number of teachers I could interview and properly analyze, and chose to rely upon education policy only within Nova Scotia. While the educator interviews were completed with experienced educators, because of the small sample group of participants, I do not claim that their opinions and perspectives necessarily encapsulated *the* truth, but their responses did provide a snapshot of how policy changes were experienced in schools. Also, there was a high amount of agreement between participants in discussions, and only in a few instances this was not the case: the conversations on the IB program were completely polarized, and one administrator, Marcus, was the only educator who did not feel comfortable discussing education and surveillance measures in schools. Other than these instances, there was a high degree of agreement between participants. In terms of participant recruitment, I relied on personal teaching networks using a snowball method, which was beneficial for quickly establishing a beneficial level of interviewer-participant comfort. However, a wider array of participants would be helpful in establishing differences across elementary, junior high, and high school teachers. Lastly, the interviews and focus groups took place in June 2015, before the *Action Plan* (2015) was implemented, and before the labour contract dispute of late 2015-2016. For future research, teachers and administrators would need to be contacted for a follow-up session to understand how much has changed since the failed contract negotiations and work-to-rule job action of 2016-2017.

Future Research Directions

Flowing out of my research on the Nova Scotia education system, I imagine three main lines of inquiry for future study: a national and international comparative policy network

analysis, an in-depth qualitative study on teacher neoliberal subjectivity and resistances to

governmentality, and lastly, a need for a deeper understanding of racial equity policies and

practices within neoliberal governmentality.

While my study focused only on education policy from Nova Scotia, as I pointed to in

several instances throughout the project, a greater understanding of national and international

education policies and practices are needed to understand how provinces are influenced,

implicated, and take up (or resist) global trends in educational governance. This research will be

used as a springboard to explore other policy networks in Canada, and into international

influences of global education "policy borrowing" (Ball, 2013a) on provincial policy creation to

establish how discursive policy knowledge circulates across province and state borders, and to

understand how non-governmental, and supranational organizations (for example, OECD)

influence education policy in predominantly English-speaking Western nations.

Through this study, I demonstrated a sense of separation and alienation of teachers from

their work, and their struggle to maintain a semblance of professional autonomy within a system

of neoliberal governmentality, in which teachers have experienced high levels of stress and

anxiety. As one of the interview questions, teachers were asked how their jobs and their

understandings of the educations system have changed, however, further research is needed to

understand how teachers perceive their own practices, their lives outside of school, and how/if

they have been affected in governmental education through mechanisms of performativity. This

realm of "neoliberal subjectivity" (Foucault, 2017; Ball & Olmedo, 2013; Brown, Weber, &

Yoon, 2016) is a "site of struggle" between "truth, power, and the self" (Ball, 2015, p. 2), where

those who work in governmental systems exercise reflexivity to negotiate their institutional

positionality (Dean, 1994, as cited in Ball, 2015, p. 2). While I hinted at subjective realms of

neoliberal governmentality in this study, teachers (and possibly students) would need to be

(re)interviewed with the specific intention to better understand the ontological realm of neoliberal education. In other words, how do teachers in governmental systems negotiate the embodied, being-ness of neoliberal education, which includes the ways people resist, organize, and speak back to these systems? After establishing an understanding of neoliberal governmentality, I foresee a need to interview more teachers about their experiences through the contract labour dispute, and to see if, and how educators' sense of self has changed.

A third line of flight for further research is in the area of race, racial equity, and critical social studies content in neoliberal governmentality. One limitation of the research is that I was not able to attend to how racial equity becomes disarticulated in neoliberal education, and although data was collected and analyzed in the policy genealogy and from participants, I was not able to cover all topics within the thesis. Similar to social studies, these dis-articulations have taken place slowly over time, however due to the amount of data collected, racial equity in neoliberal governmentality will be an area of future research. Although currently in a state of dis-articulation, a reinvigorated and reinvented, strategic use of social studies courses could prepare students to critically understand neoliberal constructions, including implications with their experiences with schooling, and the ways they imagine their futures. As a powerful method for students to understand their world and their engagements with(in) it (McGregor, 2015), social studies disciplines have the capability to ensure that critical, analytic work continues to be done in schools so that politics and race are not "erased" (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Jiwani, 1999). While my study has shed light onto the ways in which neoliberal governmentality in schools has transpired over time, much more research is needed to understand the bigger picture across Canada, and more broadly into global policy networks.

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Appendix A: Research ethics certificate

File Number: 02-15-13   Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 03/18/2015

Université d'Ottawa   University of Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche   Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice

Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Role
Timothy J.	Stanley	Education / Education	Supervisor
Pamela	Rogers	Education / Education	Student Researcher

File Number: 02-15-13

Type of Project: PhD Thesis

Title: Dissipating disciplines? Disentangling social studies, pedagogical negotiations, and policy shifts.

Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Approval Type
03/18/2015	03/17/2016	Ia

(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)

Special Conditions / Comments:
N/A

File Number: 02-15-13   Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 03/18/2015

Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at:

Signature:

Riana Marcotte
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
For Barbara Graves, Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Appendix B: Recruitment texts

Social Media Script

Subject line: University of Ottawa research, invitation to participate: Nova Scotia Social Studies Education

Dear Teachers,

I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, and am currently recruiting secondary social studies teachers from Nova Scotia to participate in a focus group discussion (and possible individual interview) on the state of social studies education in Nova Scotia, as part of my Ph.D. dissertation research. I am hoping to learn how teachers view their practice in the face of societal pressures and recent policy changes, to examine the relationship between social studies disciplines and racial equity goals, and to explore how this relationship has evolved over time in relation to policy changes.

I am looking for nine teachers in total to participate in this study, which will involve a 90-minute focus group discussion with two other social studies teachers to take place in Spring 2015. There is also a possibility for a 45-minute follow-up interview depending on your interest. While I will try to mitigate any discomfort in the focus group setting, possible risks in this study could include feelings of marginalization, if there are large differences of opinion. Every effort will be made to protect your privacy, and your name, or any other identifying information will not be used in the analysis or publication of the study. You can withdraw from this study at any time during the focus group and/or interview.

If you are interested in possibly participating in the study, or are interested in learning more about the project, please contact me by private message on Facebook, or by telephone at the number below. Thank you for your time and consideration with this project, and I'm looking forward to connecting with those who are interested!

Pamela Rogers
Ph.D. Candidate in Education
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

Email Script

E-mail Subject line: University of Ottawa Research – Nova Scotia Social Studies Education

Dear _____ ,

I am inviting you to participate in a 90-minute focus group discussion with two other social studies teachers taking place in Spring 2015. There is also a possibility for a 45-minute follow-up interview depending on your interest. This study focuses on the state of social studies education in Nova Scotia, and is part of my Ph.D. dissertation research through the University of Ottawa. I am hoping to learn how teachers view their practice in the face of societal pressures and policy changes. I am also hoping to examine the relationship between social studies disciplines and racial equity goals, and to explore how this relationship has evolved over time.

The possible risks in this study are minimal, but could include feelings of marginalization in the focus group setting, if there are large differences of opinion. I will try to mitigate any discomforts in the group setting. Every effort will be made to protect your privacy, and your name, or any other identifying information will not be used in the analysis or publication of the study. You can withdraw from this study at any time during the focus group and/or interview. I have attached a copy of a letter of information about the study that gives you full details.

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board at the University of Ottawa. If you any have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted you can contact:

> Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Ottawa
> Telephone: (613) 562-5387

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration. After a week, I will send you a one-time follow-up reminder.

Pamela Rogers
Ph.D. Candidate in Education
Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

Appendix C: Letter of information focus group

u Ottawa

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Faculty of Education

LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT

A Ph.D. Study: Dissipating disciplines? Disentangling social studies, pedagogical negotiations, and policy shifts

RESEARCHERS:
Pamela Rogers, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education,

Tim Stanley, Ph.D. Thesis Supervisor, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education,

Purpose of the Study:

You are invited to take part in a study on the state of social studies education in Nova Scotia, as part of my Ph.D. dissertation research. I am hoping to learn how teachers view their practice in the face of societal pressures and policy changes. I am also hoping to examine the relationship between social studies disciplines and racial equity goals, and to explore how this relationship has evolved over time.

Procedures involved in the Research:

I am inviting you to participate in my study, and would appreciate your input to help me carry out my research. If you agree to participate, the research will consist of one 90 minute focus group discussion with two other educators, with a possible 45 minute follow-up individual interview. The purpose of this focus group is to gain an understanding of how social studies teachers have experienced changes in the school system since 2002. I will give you focus group questions before the session to allow you to think about the topics beforehand. Following the initial group discussion, I will hold individual interviews based on interest. If you choose to participate in the interview, you will have the chance to add, clarify, or retract any information from the first session. Your participation is completely voluntary in both focus group and interview settings. Your permission is necessary to audio record the interview and to take notes during the sessions, which will then be transcribed.

Potential Harms or Discomforts:

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. You may feel uncomfortable discussing your views with people you do not know. Along these lines, you may worry about the reactions of others, and while I will attempt to create a positive environment where all participants are heard and respected, focus groups dynamics can be unpredictable. There is a chance that

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you could feel like your opinion differs greatly, and because of this, you could feel marginalized in the group setting. You do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy. You will be asked to travel up to one hour to attend the focus group session, which will be held outside of school hours at a public library meeting room most convenient for all participants.

Potential Benefits

You will have an opportunity to discuss how the teaching profession in Nova Scotia has evolved, and to connect with other social studies teachers who might share similar experiences and concerns. I hope to learn more about the role of social studies disciplines and social studies educators, in a period of major changes to the school system in Nova Scotia.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy, and I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified, such as age, gender, or other identifiable characteristics. I will undertake measures to safeguard the confidentiality of the discussion, and the anonymity of all participants involved. Other than the researcher and the focus group members, no one will know whether you were in the study unless you choose to tell them. Members of the focus group will sign a confidentiality agreement to keep your identity and any information learned during the discussion confidential, but it is not guaranteed that they will do so.

The information you provide, along with any analyses or transcripts, will be kept in a locked desk/cabinet, on a password protected external hard drive where only I will have access to it. Anonymized data will kept by my thesis supervisor (Dr. Tim Stanley) in a locked cabinet in his office. Once the study is complete, an archive of the data, without identifying information, will be maintained for a period of ten years. At the end of the ten years, the data will be destroyed using shredding and secure deletion.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be part of the study, you can withdraw from the focus group or interview for whatever reason, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to withdraw during or after the focus group session, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal from the focus group, any data you have provided could possibly be used in further research analysis. In cases of withdrawal from the individual interview, the data collected will not be used in further analyses. If you do not want to answer some of the questions

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in either the focus group or individual interview, you do not have to, but can still be in the study.

Transcripts

After the focus group and/or interview discussions have been transcribed, you will have access to the transcripts to review your participation through a securely shared digital service that is password and share protected, if you choose to review the documents. These files will only show your participation in the conversation, in order to safeguard the identities and participation of the other focus group members.

Information about the Study Results

I expect to have this study completed by approximately May, 2016. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you. If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

This study has been reviewed by the University of Ottawa Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board and has received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

> Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Ottawa
> Telephone: (613) 562-5387,

Appendix D: Letter of information, interview

LETTER OF INFORMATION

A Ph.D. Study: Dissipating disciplines? Disentangling social studies, pedagogical negotiations, and policy shifts

RESEARCHERS:

Pamela Rogers, Ph.D. Candidate, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education

Tim Stanley, Ph.D. Thesis Supervisor, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education

Purpose of the Study:

You are invited to take part in a study on the state of racial equity and social studies education in Nova Scotia, as part of my Ph.D. dissertation research. I am hoping to learn how teachers and administrators view their practice in the face of societal pressures and policy changes. I am also hoping to examine the relationship between social studies disciplines and racial equity goals, and to explore how this relationship has evolved over time.

Procedures involved in the Research:

I am inviting you to participate in my study, and would appreciate your input to help me carry out my research. If you agree to participate, the research will consist of one 60-minute individual interview *or* one 90-minute focus group discussion with two other educators. The purpose of this interview is to gain an understanding of how administrators and teachers have experienced changes in the school system since 2002. I will give you questions before the session to allow you to think about the topics beforehand. Following the interview, you will have the chance to add, clarify, or retract any information from the session. Your participation is completely voluntary in both focus group and interview settings. Your permission is necessary to audio record the interview and to take notes during the sessions, which will then be transcribed.

Potential Harms or Discomforts:

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. You may feel uncomfortable discussing your views with people you do not know. You do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable. I describe below the steps I am taking to protect your privacy. You will be asked to travel up to thirty minutes to attend the session, which will be held outside of school hours at a public library meeting room most convenient for the participant.

Potential Benefits

You will have an opportunity to discuss how racial equity, and social studies education in Nova Scotia has evolved, and to possibly connect with other social studies teachers who might share similar experiences.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy, and I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified, such as age, gender, or other identifiable

characteristics. I will undertake measures to safeguard the confidentiality o f t h e discussion, and the anonymity of all participants involved. Other than the researcher and possible focus group members, no one will know whether you were in the study unless you choose to tell them.

The information you provide, along with any analyses or transcripts, will be kept in a locked desk/cabinet, on a password protected external hard drive where only I will have access to it. Anonymized data will be kept by my thesis supervisor (Dr. Tim Stanley) in a locked cabinet in his office. Once the study is complete, an archive of the data, without identifying information, will be maintained for a period of ten years. At the end of the ten years, the data will be destroyed using shredding and secure deletion.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be part of the study, you can withdraw from the focus group or interview for whatever reason, even after signing the consent form or part-way through the study. If you decide to withdraw during or after the focus group session, there will be no consequences to you. In cases of withdrawal from the focus group, any data you have provided could possibly be used in further research analysis. In cases of withdrawal from the individual interview, the data collected will not be used in further analyses. If you do not want to answer some of the questions in either the focus group or individual interview, you do not have to, but can still be in the study.

Transcripts

After the focus group and/or interview discussions have been transcribed, you will have access to the transcripts to review your participation through a securely shared digital service that is password and share protected, if you choose to review the documents. These files will only show your participation in the conversation, in order to safeguard the identities and participation of the other focus group members.

Information about the Study Results

I expect to have this study completed by approximately May, 2016. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you. If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me.

This study has been reviewed by the University of Ottawa Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board and has received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Ottawa
Telephone: (613) 562-5387

Appendix E: Focus group consent form

uOttawa

Université d'Ottawa
Faculté d'éducation

University of Ottawa
Faculty of Education

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Pamela Rogers, from the University of Ottawa.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details, if I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time, however the data that has been collected could possibly be used in data analysis.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

1. I have been informed that the focus group will be audio recorded and notes will be taken.
   Please circle:

   YES   NO

2.
   ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.
   Please send them to me at this email address:

   _____

   Or to this *mailing address*:

   ☐ No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

3. I agree to be contacted about a follow-up interview, and understand that I can always decline the request.

   ☐ Yes. Please contact me at: _____

   _____

   ☐ No, I am not interested in a follow-up interview.

   * If you answered yes to number three, please answer the following:

   I agree that the individual interview can be audio recorded and notes may be taken.
   Please circle:

   YES   NO

Appendix F: Interview consent form

CONSENT

- I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Pamela Rogers, from the University of Ottawa.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details, if I requested.
- I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time, however the data that has been collected could possibly be used in data analysis.
- I have been given a copy of this form.
- I agree to participate in the study.

Signature:_____Date:_____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

1. I agree that the interview can be audio recorded and notes may be taken.
   Please circle:

        YES   NO

2.
   ☐ Yes, I would like to receive a summary of the study's results.
      Please send them to me at this email address: _____
      Or to this *mailing address*:

   ☐ No, I do not want to receive a summary of the study's results.

Appendix G: Sample focus group and interview questions

1. How long have you been teaching? What courses have you taught?

2. How has social studies in Nova Scotia changed in the last ten years? (prompts: courses, curriculum, professional development, size of classes, curricular time, policy)

3. Have these changes affected your teaching in any way? If so, in what ways?

4. What do you think could be influencing these changes?

5. What changes have there been at the departmental, board, union, and administrative levels that coincide with any of the changes you have seen in your practice?

6. What changes, if any, have made your job as a social studies teacher easier, or more difficult in this time? What are some examples of this?

7. What is your familiarity with global/international/national pressures in education that you have witnessed, that have influenced schooling in Nova Scotia, in social studies, or more generally in teaching?

8. With the incorporation of the International Baccalaureate program since 2007, what changes have you seen in social studies departments/schools? (Positive/negative/other)

9. Do you feel that broader changes are impacting the way you see your role as a teacher? If yes, how so, if no, what has stayed the same?

10. Have any of these shifts changed the way you do your job, or affected (positive/ negative/other) how students are learning in your classroom/school?

11. Is there anything else about the education system you would like to discuss, or think has been missing from the conversation?