



**VIEWS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY  
OPINIONS DE PARTOUT AU CANADA**

**PAUL CAPPON**

Council of Ministers of Education  
*It's time for a National Dialogue on Education*

**MARILIES RETTIG**

Canadian Teachers' Federation  
*Canada's Public Education:  
A Right and Not a Cause*

**MALKIN DARE**

Organization for Quality Education  
*Better Schools Through Choice*

**MICHAEL TEMELINI**

Canadian Federation of Students

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McGill University

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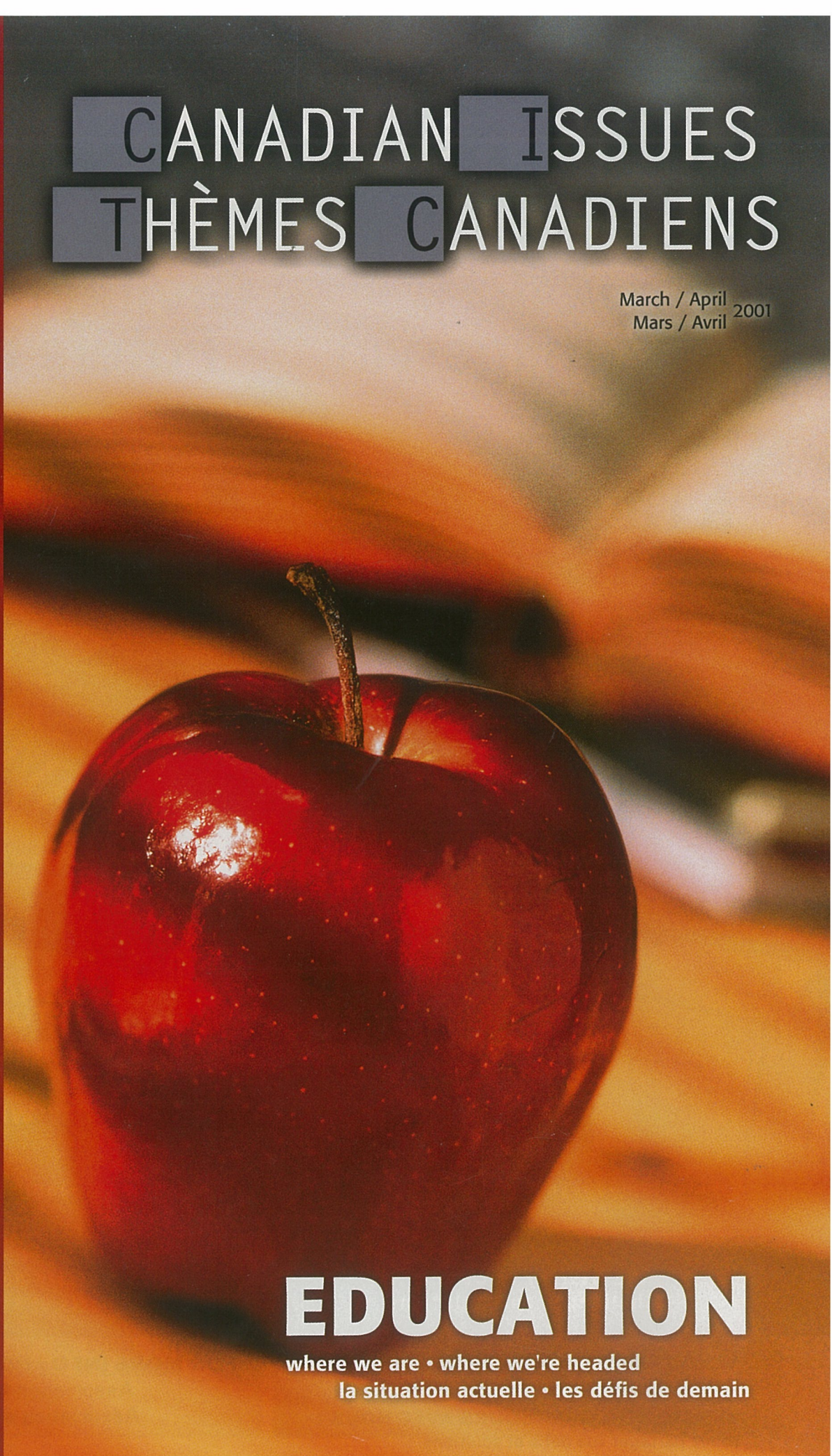
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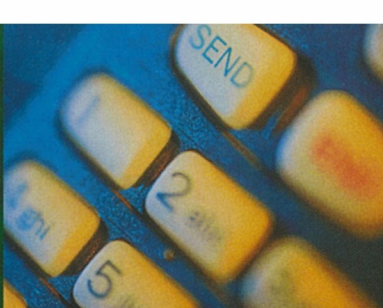
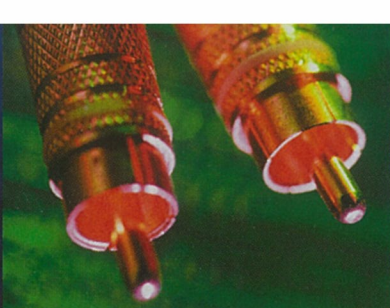


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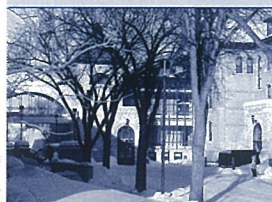
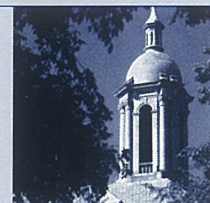


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EDITOR / RÉDACTEUR EN CHEF  
Robert Israel

ASSOCIATE EDITOR / RÉDACTEUR ASSOCIÉ  
Gregory Slogar

TRANSLATION / TRADUCTION  
Mathias Oliva

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT / ASSISTANTE ÉDITORIALE  
Nancy Plante

DESIGN / GRAPHISME  
Bang! Marketing (514) 842-5779 • 1-888-942-BANG  
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STREET ADDRESS / ADRESSE CIVIQUE  
209 St. Catherine E., Room V-5140 Mtl (Que) H3C 3P8  
Tel/Tél: (514) 987-7784 - Fax: (514) 987-3481  
E-mail/Courriel: general@acs-aec.ca

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CITC est une publication bi-mensuelle de l'Association d'études canadiennes (AEC). Il est distribué gratuitement aux membres de l'Association. CITC est une publication bilingue. Tous les textes émanant de l'Association sont publiés en français et en anglais. Tous les autres textes sont publiés dans la langue d'origine. Les collaborateurs et collaboratrices de CITC sont entièrement responsables des idées et opinions exprimées dans leurs articles. L'Association d'études canadiennes est un organisme pan-canadien à but non lucratif dont l'objectif est de promouvoir l'enseignement, la recherche et les publications sur le Canada. L'AEC est une société savante, membre de la Fédération canadienne des sciences humaines et sociales. Elle est également membre fondateur du Conseil international d'études canadiennes.

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## EDUCATION IS THE ANVIL

upon which democracy is forged.

So wrote Thomas Jefferson two centuries ago.

SINCE THERE IS LITTLE REASON TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE TODAY, AND GIVEN THE RECENT FOCUS ACROSS NORTH AMERICA ON THE WEIGHTY CHALLENGES FACING ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION, WE DECIDED TO DEVOTE A SPECIAL EDITION OF *CANADIAN ISSUES* TO AN EXAMINATION OF THOSE CHALLENGES THROUGH SOME OF THE LEADING VOICES IN THE FIELD. IN THIS ISSUE, WE ATTEMPT TO ADDRESS PREVAILING CONCERNS ACROSS THE SPECTRUM — FROM THE GRADE SCHOOL CLASSROOM TO THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICES OF OUR TOP UNIVERSITIES. IN BETWEEN WE SHARE THE PASSION AND WORDS OF TEACHERS, STUDENTS, RESEARCHERS, ACADEMICS, GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS.

Though the educational debate was overshadowed to some degree by health care and other issues in last fall's federal election, it continues to rank extremely high in importance in the minds of Canadians from one end of the country to the other. With this in mind, we did our best to solicit contributions from all parts of the country. In securing opinions from Pugwash, Nova Scotia to Brandon, Manitoba to Vancouver, British Columbia, we succeeded in this pursuit and thus set a standard for future issues. And while education may be a provincial domain, with strong local influences, it nevertheless maintains a regional and national focus.

It is therefore appropriate that we begin our analysis with Dr. Paul Cappon, Director General of the Council of Ministers of Education. Dr. Cappon discusses the apparent renewed interest Canadians have towards educational issues and highlights the ways in which education has played an important role in Canada's historical development. He then offers a few suggestions on how education in Canada can be enhanced, while concluding that the time is right for a national dialogue on this critical issue. Our other contributors then bravely dive into all manner of controversies — from privatization and funding to student debt and emotional intelligence, through it all searching for the best formula for giving Canada's youth the strongest possible education in the years ahead.

Since education is a universal pursuit, and because our debates on the issue seem to be intersecting more and more, we also thought it would be interesting to seek out the view from our neighbours to the south. We are delighted that Richard Riley, the highly praised past US Secretary of Education, offers his perspective on the educational legacy of the Clinton years. When you notice his reference to Pierre Trudeau, you'll see that this contribution is a rare exclusive. We are equally grateful that Myron Lieberman and Graham Spanier took the time to offer their thoughts.

The growing conservative influence on education is no longer confined to our American friends. We therefore thought it would be useful to include two opinions about the heated 'school choice' debate which is being waged across the US as we go to press. Jerry Ellig and Ralph Neas generously give us their starkly differing views on who benefits and who loses with choice. It will be fascinating to watch this debate in action as George W. Bush takes priority one — his education package — to Congress.

This special edition of *Canadian Issues* marks a new beginning for the publishing arm of the Association for Canadian Studies. We have made significant improvements in style and content to better inform the Canadian public about the issues that most affect them. As always, we welcome your comments.

## « L'ÉDUCATION EST L'ENCLUME sur laquelle la démocratie a été forgée », avait écrit Thomas Jefferson il y a deux siècles.

PUISQU'IL N'Y A AUCUNE RAISON DE PENSER AUTREMENT DE NOS JOURS, ET ÉTANT DONNÉ L'ACCENT MIS RÉCEMMENT SUR DES LOURDS PROBLÈMES À TOUS LES NIVEAUX DE L'ÉDUCATION À TRAVERS L'AMÉRIQUE DU NORD, NOUS AVONS DÉCIDÉ DE CONSACRER UN NUMÉRO SPÉCIAL DE *THÈMES CANADIENS* À UNE ÉTUDE APPROFONDIE DE CES PROBLÈMES PAR QUELQUES SPÉCIALISTES DE CE DOMAINE. DANS CE NUMÉRO, NOUS TENTONS DE FAIRE RESSORTIR LES SOUCIS PRIORITAIRES COUVRANT L'ENSEMBLE - DES SALLES DE CLASSES ÉLÉMENTAIRES JUSQU'ÀUX BUREAUX PRÉSIDENTIELS DE NOS MEILLEURES UNIVERSITÉS. AU COURS DE CETTE ANALYSE, NOUS PARTAGEONS LES PASSIONS ET LES PROPOS DE PROFESSEURS, D'ÉTUDIANTS, DE CHERCHEURS, D'AGENTS GOUVERNEMENTAUX ET D'ACTIVISTES DES COMMUNAUTÉS.

Le débat sur l'éducation demeure important pour plusieurs Canadiens d'un bout du pays à l'autre malgré le fait qu'il a été placé au deuxième rang derrière les problèmes des services médicaux au cours des élections fédérales de cet automne. Prenant ça en considération, nous avons fait notre possible pour solliciter des contributions de tous les coins du pays. En s'assurant des opinions de Pugwash en Nouvelle-Écosse, de Brandon au Manitoba jusqu'à Vancouver en Colombie-Britannique, nous avons atteint notre but, et en ce faisant, nous avons aussi établi des normes pour les numéros à venir. Et même si l'éducation relève principalement du domaine provincial, elle a aussi une importance régionale et nationale.

C'est donc pertinent de débiter notre analyse avec Paul Cappon, directeur exécutif du Conseil des ministres de l'éducation. Dr. Cappon parle du renouvellement apparent d'intérêt des Canadiens pour les questions d'éducation et explique pourquoi l'éducation a joué un rôle important dans le développement historique du Canada. Il offre ensuite

quelques suggestions concernant l'amélioration de l'éducation et conclue que le temps est venu pour une discussion nationale sur cette question critique. Nos contribuables se lancent courageusement dans toutes sortes de controverses — de la privatisation et des consolidations jusqu'aux dettes des étudiants et de l'intelligence émotionnelle, toujours à la recherche de la meilleure formule qui donnerait à la jeunesse canadienne la meilleure éducation dans les années à venir.

Puisque l'éducation est une préoccupation universelle et que les débats sur cette question semblent s'entre-croiser de plus en plus, nous avons pensé qu'il serait intéressant de demander l'avis de nos voisins du sud. Nous sommes ravis que Richard Riley, l'ancien Secrétaire de l'éducation des États-Unis, couvert d'éloges, offre sa perspective sur l'héritage éducationnel des années Clinton. Quand vous remarquerez sa référence à Pierre Trudeau, vous allez voir que cette contribution est d'une rare exclusivité. Nous sommes également enchantés que Myron Lieberman et Graham Spanier ont pris le temps de nous offrir leurs pensées.

L'influence conservatrice grandissante sur l'éducation n'est plus seulement exclusive à nos amis américains. Donc, nous avons pensé qu'il serait utile d'inclure deux opinions concernant le débat actuel sur le « choix d'école » ayant cours aux États-Unis avant d'aller sous presse. Jerry Ellig et Ralph Neas nous font part généreusement de leurs opinions très différentes sur les effets bénéfiques et les effets négatifs que peut entraîner le fait d'avoir « le choix ». Il sera fascinant de surveiller l'évolution de ce débat pendant que George W. Bush présente sa priorité — son projet éducationnel — devant le Congrès.

Cette édition spéciale de *Thèmes canadiens* marque un nouveau début pour les publications de l'Association d'études canadiennes. Nous avons fait des progrès significatifs quant au style et au contenu, toujours avec comme but de mieux informer le public canadien de ce qui les concerne. Comme d'habitude, nous apprécions tous les commentaires.

### Comments on this edition of *Canadian Issues*?

#### **We want to hear from you.**

Write to *Canadian Issues* – Letters, ACS, a/s UQAM, V-5140, P.O. Box 8888, succ. Centre-ville, Montreal (Quebec) Canada, H3C 3P8. Or e-mail us at <robert.israel@acs-aec.ca> Your letters may be edited for length and clarity.

**Des commentaires sur ce numéro? Écrivez-nous à *Thèmes canadiens*** – Lettres, AEC, a/s UQAM, V-5140, C.P. 8888, succ. Centre-ville, Montréal (Québec) Canada, H3C 3P8. Ou par courriel au <robert.israel@acs-aec.ca> Vos lettres peuvent être modifiées pour des raisons éditoriales.

# LETTERS

## LAURIER

*Congratulations on the Laurier issue of Canadian Issues. I was impressed by the quality of the contributions, some of which were critical while remaining respectful of the Laurier legacy, by the timeliness in connection to the death of Mr. Trudeau, and even the connection at election time to Mr. Chretien's high regard for Laurier.*

*Thanks for a very well conceived issue.*

**Marco Adria**  
Edmonton

# IT'S TIME for a National Dialogue on Education

**BY** Paul Cappon

DR. PAUL CAPPON HAS BEEN THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA (CMEC) SINCE 1996. ESTABLISHED IN 1967, CMEC IS THE NATIONAL VOICE FOR EDUCATION. COMPRISED OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEARNING FROM EVERY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY, CMEC WORKS WITH THE BROADER EDUCATION COMMUNITY TO ENSURE THAT THE EXPECTATIONS AND NEEDS OF THE CANADIAN LEARNER ARE BEING MET, AND THAT CANADA'S SYSTEMS OF EDUCATION REMAIN AMONG THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND FLEXIBLE IN THE WORLD.

Education, it seems, is now high on the national agenda.

In the final week of last November's federal election campaign, the Globe and Mail's editorial pages called education the "forgotten" issue of the contest, and demanded that the federal government take a greater interest in the learning opportunities that are provided to Canadians. A day before the Globe editorial, the Ottawa Citizen reported that John Manley, a high-ranking member of the federal cabinet, wanted to see a first ministers conference on education. Provincial and territorial cabinets, meanwhile, are finding that their education portfolios are (next to health care) among the most challenging to manage, let alone reform, and this is a trend that has remained constant for much of the last ten years.

Politicians and pundits are often accused of meekly following polls, and in this instance they may be right in doing so. In the latest annual Maclean's year-end poll, education (10%) was in a virtual tie with the economy (11%), in response to the survey question "What is the most important issue facing Canada today?" While health care topped the poll (at 35%), so-called hot button issues like crime (3%), taxes (8%) and government spending (7%), were all well behind education, indicating that the public may in fact be ahead of politicians in seeing this as a priority issue.

The apparent shift towards greater public understanding of the importance of education, along with a renewed willingness among politicians to explore new

ideas, is certainly a welcome development. There are, however, a number of questions that should be asked before Canadians undertake any significant changes in the way education is provided.

## **A NATIONAL PRIORITY?**

If Canadians want education to be a national priority, how should education providers — and the politicians responsible for delivering the service — respond? How can a long-standing jurisdiction of provincial and territorial governments be co-ordinated along national lines? Or is this even a good idea? If we start discussing new ideas about education, who should lead the dialogue?

***While health care topped the poll (at 35%), so-called hot button issues like crime (3%), taxes (8%) and government spending (7%), were all well behind education.***

A quick sampling of these questions reveals the complexities involved in any retooling of the way Canadians learn. This should not, however, be seen as an excuse for inaction. Much of Canada's historical development has been fuelled by revolutions in education, and there is no reason why the country's future should not continue to be tied to the way in which Canadians learn.

The extent with which education, and educators, have shaped Canada is obvious. Past figures such as Bishop Laval and Egerton Ryerson helped fashion the early Canadian state through their establishment of colonial learning institutions. The delivery of education was in large part the impetus behind the federal system of government that came out of the Confederation debates. Canada's strong network of public universities was built to educate returning war veterans, and the massive growth in the size of provincial governments throughout the 1960s was fuelled by the need to educate an entire generation of baby boomers.

The links between education and the country at large remain transparent today. Much of Canada's future progress is linked to the new economy, an economy that places a great emphasis on an adaptable, highly-educated work force. From what we have seen so far, it appears that Canada is well-positioned to take advantage of this new paradigm. While the changes brought about by the information revolution are still ongoing, they have already transformed much of Canadian society. Just as the modern Canadian economy is symbolized by Nortel and not the CPR, the modern Canadian classroom can be found in the portable, electronic notebook of a lifelong learner, where it once was found mainly in red brick buildings.

While Canada — in large part due to its educated workforce — has so far benefited from the new economy, there is no guarantee that our current prosperity is limitless. Indeed, if education is the key to prosperity in this new age, then perhaps the growing number of Canadians (if the polls are any indication) who see this as a national priority in the years ahead are on to something.

### A FEW SUGGESTIONS

If Canadians want to revamp the way(s) in which we educate ourselves, then how should we go about it? Below are a few suggestions:

Focus on educational delivery, not just constitutional responsibilities. In Canada, education is the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces and territories. While the federal government has historically played a significant role in the funding and support of education (particularly in colleges and universities), the principal vehicle for educational delivery has always been the local, and not national, government. This is unlikely to change. If significant improvements to the delivery of Canadian education are warranted, they must be implemented with the full support of provincial and territorial governments. If pan-Canadian action is required, then it can be achieved only through the co-operation of provinces and territories that desire to seek improvements. Any and all systematic attempts to change the way Canadians are educated must recognize this.

Try new ideas, as well as new technologies. The revolution brought about by modern computing and the internet has certainly been felt in the classroom. Students now have access to more information than ever before, and learning institutions are struggling to find ways to keep up with technological innovations. But a focus on new technologies only provides the learner with an incomplete experience, since new ideas about how individuals learn are also beginning to transform the classroom. Researchers are learning more and more about the capacity of the human brain, and their studies are suggesting that greater stimulation of this vital organ can lead to an increase in learner development. A number of groups, such as the trans-national 21st Century Learning Initiative, are

attempting to use this knowledge while designing new methods of teaching. Canadian schools could become more involved in the current transformation of the way in which individuals learn, and focus as much on pedagogy as technology.

Compare and contrast results and procedures, then see what works. In recent years, one of the most prevalent trends in Canadian education has been the increasing use of standardized assessments in schools. This trend has caused plenty of controversy in postsecondary education, as rankings (such as those undertaken each year by Maclean's) have opened up all sorts of debate about the merits of comparing distinctive universities and their programs. In the elementary and secondary sectors, uniform province-wide tests in core subjects have also generated much discussion.

While these forms of assessment may be in need of fine-tuning, their presence is useful; it has enhanced the ability of Canadians to undertake improvements to their education systems. By knowing to what degree institutions — or, on a pan-Canadian basis, jurisdictions — are succeeding in their attempts to provide a high-quality education, Canadians can have a more informed discussion about best practices while they determine how to achieve the best possible results.

This sort of information has been used to great advantage by our major trading partners. The United States has been tracking student progress in public schools since 1969, under the form of NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress). The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in comparison, published the results of its first pan-Canadian standardized assessment (under its SAIP program) in 1993. In order to track generational trends and derive greater benefit from this information, these assessments should continue.

Replace debate with dialogue. Perhaps the most deliberate way in which we can change how Canadians learn involves a reshaping of how the current discussions over education take place. In the past decade, most (if not all) provinces and territories have attempted to restructure their education systems, only to face a barrage of criticism. While public questioning of government initiatives is an

important part of Canadian democracy, indiscriminate resistance to change does not serve the Canadian learner. This is because the very forces that have been behind education reforms — the information revolution and globalization — will not simply go away if educators ignore them. The world is in fact undergoing an important economic and social transformation, and this transformation must be reflected in the classroom. It is critical, then, that a fair and frank dialogue replace acrimony, and that all stakeholders participate in the transformation of the Canadian classroom.

*Perhaps the most deliberate way in which we can change how Canadians learn involves a reshaping of how the current discussions over education take place.*

### A NATIONAL DIALOGUE

The time appears to be right for a national dialogue in education. There are important issues, ranging from the retirement of a generation of university professors to the proper use of new communications technologies in schools, which need to be addressed. The Canadian public, if polls are any indication, appear to be ready; the same might be said for Canada's political leadership.

There are a number of groups that can help frame the ideas for discussion, both within and outside the education community. These include organizations like the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the student federations, the Conference Board of Canada, the Canadian Education Association, the Canadian Federation of Labour, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and the Business Council on National Issues. There is also, of course, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, which is — given its membership — a logical vehicle for any national dialogue.

Who leads the dialogue is not what's important. What is important is that there be a lot of participants, and that the dialogue should start soon.

It is time to hold a national dialogue on education.

# CANADA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION: A Right and Not a Cause

**BY** Marilies Rettig

President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation

CANADA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM HAS BEEN POUNDED BY WAVE AFTER WAVE OF RESTRUCTURING IN RECENT YEARS. BUDGET CUTTING HAS RUN RAMPANT, SOCIAL VALUES HAVE SHIFTED OFTEN AND DRAMATICALLY, WHILE TECHNOLOGY AND CURRICULA SEEM TO CHANGE WITH THE SEASONS. DESPITE THE FACT THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AS THE CORNERSTONE OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY AND THE VEHICLE WHICH ALLOWS ALL CHILDREN TO DEVELOP THEIR FULL POTENTIAL, THE SYSTEM CONTINUES TO COME UNDER ATTACK. FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CANADA'S EDUCATORS, IT IS NO EXAGGERATION TO SUGGEST THAT TEACHING IN CANADA HAS BECOME MORE DEMANDING, MORE COMPLICATED AND MORE DIFFICULT THAN EVER BEFORE.

From this rather bleak scenario, four interrelated issues emerged, which are of key concern to parents, students, and in particular, Canada's teachers, who, with representation from the 240,000-member Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), are endeavouring to point out that a viable public education system and a prosperous future for Canada go hand in hand.

## **TEACHER SHORTAGE**

At an October 2000 demographics conference sponsored by CTF, a survey initiated by the teachers' federation revealed that the number of teachers in Canada declined to 271,000 in 1999-2000 from 284,000 in 1991-1992. During the same period, the number of students increased by more than 200,000. As a result, educators are operating within a system where there are fewer teachers available to teach a growing body of students.

The survey also showed that more than two-thirds of Canadian school boards expect to have difficulty hiring teachers this year. It also indicated that 51 per cent of boards surveyed found it increasingly difficult over the past four years to attract good quality candidates for full-time teaching positions, especially in rural areas. To make matters worse, certain jurisdictions are experiencing difficulties finding qualified teachers for specific subject areas, including general science, chemistry, biology and physics. Blame for the shortages has been laid with retirements, teacher burnout and a reduction in school support services. Other causes are deteriorating working conditions, including lack of preparation time and minuscule wage increases, and a negative public perception of the teaching profession, both of which have caused fewer teachers to graduate. The problem has been compounded by aggressive marketing campaigns in some parts of Canada which are luring teachers to jobs outside the country.

CTF has responded by calling on governments to increase the number of spaces in teacher training institutions and develop support programs for beginning teachers. CTF is also asking governments to improve the conditions under which teachers teach and children learn; maintain support programs, resources and competitive remuneration packages; utilize the pool of qualified substitute and part-time teachers to fill part-time positions; provide greater opportunity for in-service training; and increase investment in public education and the provision of education resources.

## **LACK OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS**

With teachers in short supply in Canada, teachers and school

boards are under severe pressure. Teachers are facing increased stress, resulting in symptoms such as fatigue, headaches and more absences, which in some areas leads to even more teacher shortages. Boards are under fire to fill vacancies.

Some school boards — in Canada's North, for example — have reacted by hiring under-qualified teachers. This is causing further problems. First, teachers who lack proper training are unable to handle the workload and don't stay in the profession for long. So this stopgap solution does little to solve the country's mounting teacher shortage. Second, educators who are not properly trained cannot possibly offer the sound academic training that Canadian students and parents have come to expect.

Should this trend continue, Canada's students will be the big losers. It will be a tragic situation, indeed, if significant numbers of children cannot be guaranteed a sound educational program.

*Blame for the shortages has been laid with retirements, teacher burnout and a reduction in school support services.*

The solution would appear to be relatively simple: Teachers, governments and faculties of education must initiate discussions which will ensure there are adequate spaces to train new teachers — particularly in subject areas plagued by shortages. Broader discussions are needed, including at the high school and teachers' college level, on how to attract more people into teaching in Canada. In short, teaching has to be made more pleasurable and more rewarding. Then, these attributes must be heavily promoted.

## **USE OF THE NEW MEDIA**

In several provinces, education ministers have embraced technology with ambitious plans to bring more computers into the classrooms, based on the assumption that technology has the potential to allow students to proceed at their own pace.

This may be true, but the intended outcome may never be realized because in many parts of Canada teachers are not adequately trained to deal with new media issues. Put simply, they have not been shown how to blend computers into existing academic programs. In these situations, the likely and unfortunate result, is that the advent of technology could do more damage than good, by leaching resources from an already financially

strapped system, effectively undermining those whom children depend most heavily on in the school system — teachers.

In 1994, The Ontario Royal Commission on Learning recognized this, stating "... we are [not] suggesting that technology is an automatic good in the learning process... We acknowledge that machines must be at the service of humankind — not the reverse. That is why we insist so vigorously that, without appropriate teaching strategies, information technology will not do the job required."

To date, teaching strategies linked to technology have not materialized. Rather than add to teacher resources, education ministries in several provinces have proposed cuts in teacher preparation time partly to pay for incoming computers. While there is no question information technology can be extremely motivating and conducive to creating new and exciting classroom environments, governments have not developed the necessary understanding of how new technologies will affect the learning environment. Nor have they given teachers the tools they need to help students take advantage of technology.

Canadian educators are united in thinking that the education system will only harness technology's tremendous potential, if teachers are better trained in the use of computers. Without a strategy, and without training, this potential may never be realized. The education system needs an agreed upon set of goals and ongoing research which can be used to build a responsible plan to introduce technology into the classroom on a country-wide scale. With the current set of irrational plans, schools stand to lose control of the agenda in a way our children may live to regret.

It is CTF's view that teacher education should be readily available to generalists as well as instructional specialists, with particular emphasis placed on multidisciplinary studies and the integration of technology with other print and audio-visual resources.

## **COMMERCIALIZATION OF THE CLASSROOM**

Across Canada, teachers and students are operating in a climate of underfunding. As a result, private corporations are

attempting to capitalize by turning classrooms and teachers into profit centres and profit maximizers. Their goal is to provide certain resources to schools in return for having access to a captive audience of Canadian students who will be bombarded on a daily basis with advertising which aims to sell products such as computers, clothing and soft drinks.

Thanks to the lack of government support, business/education sector partnerships are a growing phenomenon in Canada. Partnerships run the gamut from school-to-work programs and private companies running schools on a for-profit basis, to arrangements involving the "matching" of specific businesses and schools, school-related fundraising, business-related curricula and business involvement in the development of curricula and privatized management of publicly-funded schools and school divisions/boards.

One highly publicized attempt at commercializing the system is the Youth News Network (YNN), which wants to advertise in schools under the guise of providing a news program. Secondary schools are lured by offers of televisions, VCRs, satellite dishes and computers in exchange for students watching more than 12 minutes of YNN-packaged news, information programs and commercials. There are now plans for YNN to move into the web-based field offering so-called "educational portals" that would expose students to additional advertising while surfing the web at school.

To date, CTF and educators across Canada have withstood attempts by YNN to infiltrate Canada's education system. This is due largely to staunch resistance from CTF and the Canadian public, which in a recent survey turned thumbs down on the commercialization of the public school system. Parents, teachers and school boards have made it amply clear that the YNN approach is unethical, since it holds students hostage to the almighty dollar — the ultimate goal of businesses such as YNN.

The reality, however, is that as governments continue to hack away at education budgets, teachers, schools, school boards and students are becoming extremely vulnerable to attempts by YNN and others to commercialize the public education system. This cannot be allowed to happen:

On more than one occasion, experts have cautioned educators of the dire consequences when negotiations occur between parties that know what they want and parties that are driven by need. Disaster for the need-driven party is a common result because in the end, students will be exposed to curricular materials that promote corporate interests.

CTF believes that materials intended for classroom use should be subjected to rigorous evaluation. Particular attention should be paid to accuracy and completeness, objectivity, commercialism, bias and stereotyping. CTF has stated unequivocally, that successful partnerships are based on sound educational principles and are built on trust and mutual respect between the contracting parties. Programs of corporate involvement should meet an identified education need, not a commercial motive.

*Thanks to the lack of government support, business/education sector partnerships are a growing phenomenon in Canada.*

## **THE NEED TO PROTECT PUBLIC EDUCATION**

It is imperative to remain vigilant in reminding the public and decision makers not to lose sight of what schools are for and whom public education should serve. We as a society need to take a step back and take an ideological and philosophical view around public education. As the Governor General of Canada so eloquently stated: "It is a tragedy that public education in Canada, which used to be a given for every child, is now becoming a cause."

That is why at CTF, we will continue to speak in defence of our public education system. Our voice will be heard calling upon governments to provide the necessary human and financial resources to allow all Canadian children equitable access to quality public education.

That is our best guarantee of a caring, prosperous and socially engaged society. That is our guarantee for our collective future. After all, public education is to democracy as spelling is to writing.

# BETTER SCHOOLS Through Choice

**BY** Malkin Dare

Director, Organization for Quality Education

THE ORGANIZATION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION (OQE) WAS FOUNDED TEN YEARS AGO WITH THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ONTARIO STUDENTS. INITIALLY, OUR FOCUS WAS ON THE USE OF EFFECTIVE PEDAGOGY TO TEACH BOTH THE HIGHER ORDER SKILLS, SUCH AS PROBLEM SOLVING AND CREATIVITY, AS WELL AS THE LOWER-ORDER BASIC SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE THAT ARE THEIR PREREQUISITES. OVER THE YEARS, HOWEVER, WE LEARNED THAT THE IMPEDIMENTS TO IMPROVED LEARNING ARE NOT SO MUCH PEDAGOGICAL AS POLITICAL AND STRUCTURAL.

Ontario is a high-cost province from the standpoint of wages. To retain our international competitiveness, we must ensure that we get optimum productivity from our labour inputs. This implies that our students (and future workers) must on average be among the top in the world. Complacently accepting third-quartile performance will threaten the future economic and 'quality of life' prospects of our graduates and society as a whole.

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

From the beginning, OQE was aware that some of the usual suspects — such as finite resources and large classes — are not the reason that Ontario students score below the national average on national and international comparisons. After all, Ontario spends more on education than most other Canadian provinces, and its per-pupil spending in real dollars has more or less tripled over the last 30 years. During the same period, the average class size fell from approximately 30 to approximately 25. Clearly, throwing even more money at the problem was not the answer.

Eric Hanushek is an economist who used to be famous for disparaging all the usual approaches to raising student achievement — smaller class sizes, more spending, teacher testing — none of these measures did much good. In fact, for many years Professor Hanushek couldn't seem to find anything that helped students much at all.

These days, though, he has changed his tune. Recent research has revealed that the quality of instruction makes a big difference to how much students learn. Teacher A's class may learn more than Teacher B's class in a year, even though the children start off roughly the same. And, in some cases, the size of the difference is astonishing. "The difference between a good and a bad teacher can be a full level of achievement in a single school year," says Hanushek.

Hanushek's findings suggest that OQE was right all along about the importance of zeroing in on improved teaching practices. While our analysis of the problem may have been accurate, however, our analysis of the solution was incomplete.

## WHAT'S BEING DONE ABOUT IT?

OQE thought that centralized curricula and standardized tests

would motivate educational leaders to seek better programs. Consequently, our directors lobbied the Ontario government to bring in these things, and we were elated when they started to materialize. It turned out, however, that the new curricula and testing did not have the desired effect. Student achievement remained stagnant.

Why? For one thing, the inertia inherent in the size and complexity of any highly-bureaucratic system like our schools prevents it from changing very quickly. In fact, the primary coping mechanism that bureaucratic systems use when confronted with change is to resist vigorously, typically while making empty gestures to head office or political masters.

We have ample evidence that many parts of the Ontario education system, such as school boards, faculties of education, and even ministry staff, are indulging in such resistance today. A bureaucratic organization operating in an environment where there is competition resists change at the risk of endangering its own health and long-term existence. On the other hand, a monopoly like our education system can resist change much more effectively.

The basic problem is that most publicly-funded schools are guaranteed a steady supply of students and funding; lacking competition, the schools have almost no incentive to improve their results or be responsive to their customers. Typical of monopolies, public education is characterized by inefficiency, mediocrity, and unresponsiveness. OQE has had to come to grips with the reality that the school system will continue to resist change as long as it retains its monopoly status.

## WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Unfortunately, the Ontario government has failed to face this fact. Although the government took a leadership role in creating the necessary framework of centralized curricula, testing and funding, it has hesitated to follow through with the second half of the solution: decentralization and school choice.

Believing it possible to improve all the public schools at once, the Ontario government is wedded to the concept of a monolithic education system. Like many Canadians, the government is seduced by the idea that schools should act as social equalizers, places where children from different backgrounds can rub shoulders and learn to get along.

Over the years, educators have encouraged us to believe that such integration will foster increased tolerance and harmony. Implicit in the integration argument is the contention that a single publicly-funded system is also the best vehicle for delivering social equality among groups.

This position is tough to argue against because people do not want to sound as if they are against peace, harmony, and equity. Even a cursory investigation of today's schools, however, exposes a reality where integration is far less than claimed. A glance at the

racial and economic composition of the bottom streams in the province's high schools, as compared to the most competitive university programs, proves that the schools are not acting as social equalizers.

And even in the elementary grades, where there is no streaming (unless you count French immersion), there is surprisingly little social integration. Because people tend to live in neighbourhoods with people of a similar education level, most Ontario children find themselves in classes with others from comparable walks of life.

In contrast with neighbourhood public schools, schools of choice often feature more diversity. Of course, this diversity varies with the nature of the choices, but even some fee-paying independent schools have greater economic diversity, as do most publicly-supported religious schools.

One way, therefore, of increasing the overall integration of children from differ-

ent backgrounds would be to provide parents with at least part of the cost of tuition at independent schools. The current separation of children on the basis of their parents' incomes would be diminished if all parents could choose from the same array of schools. This arrangement would also go some way toward mitigating the destructive effects of education's monopoly status. In addition, it would provide enhanced equality of educational opportunity by providing all parents with a variety of choices, instead of just those parents who can afford to move to better neighbourhoods or pay for independent schools.

The Manhattan Institute recently ranked the U.S. states in terms of education freedom (availability of school choice). After controlling for demographics, spending, and other input variables, the researchers found a high ranking on their 'Education Freedom Index' to be associated with higher student achievement.

Several Canadian provinces, notably Quebec, BC and Alberta, do fund a number of alternatives to the public system. They are, not coincidentally, the same provinces that do best on national and international comparisons of student achievement. Topping the rankings is Alberta, which funds the widest range of independent schools, including religious schools and home schools.

It is worth noting that Alberta's policy of funding religious schools has not resulted in increased religious tensions. It is said that religion is divisive, and so it is in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and India, but those divisions pre-date mass education by centuries. Bosnia's ethnic tensions persist despite several decades of Communist secular schools.

Lois Sweet is a former Toronto Star reporter who began her research opposed to public funding for religious schools but, as she learned more about the issue, she became more receptive. Here is what she wrote about Holland, which has been funding religious schools for more than 70 years.

"For those who believe the public funding of religiously-based schools will lead to ghettoization, social division, and religious conflict, the Dutch experience suggests otherwise. People on all sides agree that differences have narrowed, not grown. This has undoubtedly been in part because a policy of equality and tolerance has contributed to the integration and emancipa-

tion of religious minorities."

Religious minorities in Ontario, served by independent schools inaccessible to the public, are far more ghettoized, physically and psychologically, than are those in Holland where they are supported rather than rejected.

Best of all, strengthening the independent schools is likely to strengthen the public schools, as the strong competition galvanizes them into improving their service. In Milwaukee and Cleveland, for example public school parents tend to be more satisfied with their children's schools now that some low-income parents receive the full value of their children's tuition at independent schools.

Funding allows specialized schools to emerge to serve the special needs of children who fall through the cracks of publicly-funded schools. And the more parents who go to the trouble of selecting alternative schools, the more parents there are who have taken an active interest in their children's education — a factor that is, in itself, known to promote student learning. As well, since independent schools enhance parental satisfaction and teacher morale, there are more happy parents and teachers.

The very act of choosing does several things: it brings like-minded parents and like-minded teachers together. It increases parental commitment and responsibility. Above all, it changes the nature of the school from being a collection of individuals acting out their own interests to a community with shared hopes and aspirations.

Sweden has been funding independent schools for almost ten years. The Fraser Institute reports that this policy has proven so popular with voters that "today about one-half of Social Democrat politicians, one-quarter of the Communists, and all of the Environmentalist and Liberal-Conservative politicians support the policy, a sea-change from five years ago when nearly all the Social Democrats and Communists supported the central government's monopoly of schools."

In Ontario, however, parental satisfaction is dropping steadily, according to the annual OISE survey. This is the unavoidable result of trying to put all parents and all teachers into a one-size-fits-all model. Inevitably, both parents and teachers have varying aspirations — not between the two groups, but rather within each group.

#### INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN MATHEMATICS

Average mathematics performance (scale score) of students in grade 4, 8 and in their final year of secondary school, by country: 1995

COUNTRY	GRADE 4	GRADE 8	FINAL YEAR of secondary school
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>500</b>
AUSTRALIA	546	530	522
AUSTRIA	559	539	518
BELGIUM (FLEMISH)	—	565	—
BELGIUM (FRENCH)	—	526	—
<b>CANADA</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>519</b>
CZECH REPUBLIC	567	564	466
DENMARK	—	502	547
ENGLAND	513	506	—
FRANCE	—	538	523
GERMANY	—	509	495
GREECE	492	484	—
HONG KONG	587	588	—
HUNGARY	548	537	483
ICELAND	474	487	534
IRELAND	550	527	—
ISRAEL	531	522	—
ITALY	—	—	476
JAPAN	597	605	—
KOREA	611	607	—
NETHERLANDS	577	541	560
NEW ZEALAND	499	508	522
NORWAY	502	503	528
PORTUGAL	475	454	—
ROMANIA	—	482	—
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	—	535	471
SINGAPORE	625	643	—
SOUTH AFRICA	—	354	356
SPAIN	—	487	—
SWEDEN	—	519	552
SWITZERLAND	—	545	540
THAILAND	490	522	—
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>461</b>

— NOT AVAILABLE

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, NCES 2000-062

**CONCLUSION**

Three years of provincial test results clearly show that about half of Ontario students are still not being adequately prepared for the work of the next grade. Ontario teachers are unable to get better results because they are still using the same flawed teaching methods and materials — albeit with a few more bells and whistles — as they have been using for the past 30 years. If a new curriculum, enhanced parental input, and province-wide testing cannot induce educational leaders to promote better methods and materials, what can?

The answer is clear. Only competition and the threat of school closure will be sufficiently galvanizing. If parents could shop for schools in the same way they now shop for pre-school programs, then the schools would have to become responsive to their customers' wishes or go out of business.

The world is moving in the direction of increased diversity and choice — except in education. Even our health care system, that we consider to be 'one-tier,' provides us as individual patients with considerable

choice. We can choose a personal physician who favours prevention over prescription or one who has admitting privileges to a preferred hospital. Neither decision costs us a penny.

The Organization for Quality Education is calling for the introduction of a wide variety of options for Ontario parents to choose from — including funded independent schools, alternative public schools, assisted home schools, distance schools, charter schools, boutique schools, apprenticeships, and many more. The proliferation of specialized schools will have several beneficial effects.

The most obvious benefit is the enhanced likelihood that students and educators will find a school that meets their particular needs and talents. As well, since all of each school's participants (students and parents, teachers, and administrators) are there by choice, they will be more inclined to work together as a team towards common goals.

In addition, the competition among schools to attract students will increase the schools' responsiveness. Administrators and


teachers will become more accountable, since dissatisfied parents will have the option of withdrawing their children from the school. And the very fact that they have this option will render parents and students more accountable too: they will no longer have the excuse that they and their children are without fault, the only problems lying with the teacher and the school.

If schools are forced to compete for students, their staffs will have to choose their methods and materials on the basis of how effective they are, as opposed to their ideology. In addition, assumptions and practices that have been passed along from one generation of teachers to another will suddenly be subjected to critical scrutiny in order to determine whether or not they are still appropriate for contemporary students. As well, teacher training, professional development and research spending will rise, as competing education providers look for better and more-cost-effective programs.

The impact of such changes will benefit everyone involved, but most especially the students.

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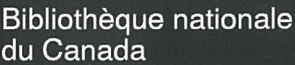
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# THE EROSION OF QUALITY and Accessibility in Canada's System of Higher Education

**BY** Michael Temelini

Staff member responsible for government relations and research,  
Canadian Federation of Students

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PLEASE VISIT THE ACS WEB SITE AT [WWW.ACS-AEC.CA](http://WWW.ACS-AEC.CA)**

FOR AT LEAST A DECADE THE STUDENT MOVEMENT HAS BEEN WARNING THAT CANADA'S SYSTEM OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IS FACING A RAPID AND STEADY EROSION OF QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY. RECENTLY A NUMBER OF STUDIES HAVE CONFIRMED THESE TRENDS.

Since 1981 the Canadian Federation of Students has been the progressive and democratic voice of Canada's college and university students. Today the Federation unites over 400,000 graduate, undergraduate and college students from over 60 students' unions from Newfoundland and Labrador to British Columbia. The assumption on which our movement was founded is that education is a fundamental right, not a privilege limited to the wealthy. When we say 'education is a right' we do not make a distinction between primary, secondary and post-secondary education. We mean that a free and democratic society and a vibrant and socially just economy depend upon universal access to post-secondary education. The system of education we promote is one that is based on the five principles of the Canada Health Act: public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility. In spite of one of the strongest periods of economic growth in Canadian history, the past ten years have brought us farther rather than closer to these goals. Students are more indebted, the system is less accessible and quality has seriously eroded.

## **GROWING POVERTY AND DEBT AMONG YOUTH AND STUDENTS**

On June 1, 2000 the Canadian economy reached a milestone. For the first time in our history the economy, which was already one of the most powerful and stable in the world, pushed the gross domestic product past the \$1-trillion mark. On average Canadians are wealthier and more prosperous today than at any other time in our history. Yet there is growing anxiety among the youth and students of Canada. From the massive student strike on January 25, 1995 against Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy's proposed cuts to social programs, to the protests against the World Trade Organisation in Seattle in November 1999, students in Canada are challenging the claim that the economic growth of the 1990s has benefited everyone.

The historic protests of the 1990s remind us that in spite of soaring corporate profits and growing GDP, the Canadian economy has marginalised an entire generation of young people, including students. According to the Canadian Fact Book on Poverty, there are 1.3 million more poor households in Canada than there were 20 years ago. One of the most disturbing trends in family poverty, according to the study, is the rapid increase in the rates of poverty among Canada's young families over the past two decades. Between 1981 and 1997, the rate of poverty among

young families (where both spouses were under 25 years of age) more than doubled from 21.7 per cent to 46.1 per cent. Furthermore, poverty rates among families with some post-secondary education or those with post-secondary degrees increased throughout the 1990s, "most notably among university degree holders." It is no coincidence that the growth in poverty levels among graduates occurred simultaneously with the phenomenon of skyrocketing student loan debt. Student debt has risen from an average upon graduation of \$8,700 in 1990 to over \$25,000 today. Recent studies indicate that 1995 graduates owed at least 60% more than their 1990 counterparts two years after graduation. It is not unusual for students to assume much higher than this average to help pay for user fees, books, supplies and basic living expenses. All this suggests that students are much worse off today than they were ten years ago. Moreover, many Canadians simply cannot afford to get a post-secondary education. And the evidence here is provided by very credible sources.

## **THE WIDENING 'ACCESSIBILITY GAP' IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

In February 2000 Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada jointly published a report on the state of Canada's system of post-secondary education entitled *Education Indicators*. According to the report, during the decade of the 1990s a "widening gap" emerged in the post-secondary education participation rates between young people from low socio-economic backgrounds and those from high or middle socio-economic backgrounds. The report concludes that the steady increase in debt among post-secondary graduates, together with this "widening gap" in participation between people from poor and wealthy backgrounds "raise concerns about access to post-secondary education." In other words, this 'accessibility gap' reveals the inequity in Canada's system of post-secondary education: for many Canadians, access to education is now defined by the ability to pay rather than initiative and merit.

The *Education Indicators* report offers some reasons why students are worse off today than they were ten years ago and why access has been eroded. First, the higher debt levels upon graduation "reflect increases in tuition and other costs, at a time when family income (in constant dollars) changed little." Since the late 1980s, universities have been relying more on private funds from tuition fees and less on public funding from governments. Between 1982-83 and 2000, government funding to universities has decreased as a percentage of operating revenue from 74% to 55%. Over the same period tuition fees have roughly doubled, increasing as a percentage of operating revenue from 8% to 17%. Furthermore the changes in student aid policy with respect to grants and loans have "had an impact as well." The

appearance of this inaccessibility gap coincided with a period in which real income for those between 18-24 actually dropped, income inequality increased, and "student assistance moved toward a more loan-based rather than a grant-based approach." Indeed, every province except Québec and British Columbia has eliminated needs-based grants from its student financial aid program.

Both the federal and provincial levels of government equally share the blame in the inaccessibility and debt crisis that now exists because they collaborated in the move toward more private and less public expenditure on post-secondary education. From 1985 to 1989 the federal Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney introduced five pieces of legislation affecting transfer payment to the provinces. By 1993 these measures resulted in an estimated \$7 billion in lost revenues for colleges and universities. The cuts continued in earnest with the election of the Liberal government in 1993. Since 1993, the combined federal cuts to post-secondary education have totaled over \$5.2 billion (even higher if we include cuts to training). To make matters worse, in the February 2000 federal budget the Liberals chose to allocate \$58 billion in tax cuts but only \$2.5 billion to the Canada Health and Social Transfer to be used for both health and education. In the October 18, 2000 budget update, the tax cut was increased to \$100 billion, but no new spending was

proposed for education.

The drastic and severe federal cuts to transfer payments provided provincial legislators an ideal scapegoat. First, they tried to compensate for lost revenues by dramatically increasing user fees. Between 1990 and 2000, tuition fees increased by 126%. Average tuition fees in undergraduate arts programs more than doubled across Canada. They are now \$3,378, up from approximately \$1,500 in 1990. The costs of other programs have increased even more dramatically. In short, the decade of the 1990s was the worst period in Canadian history for tuition fee hikes.

Almost two decades of massive federal and provincial public divestment constitutes the backdrop for an even more disturbing development: the establishment of private for-profit universities. These institutions will not be excluded from the Canada Student Loans Program, from scholarships and bursaries programs, from research granting councils, nor will they be excluded from tax-credits and indirect grants programs such as the Canada Education Savings Grant. Thus, they will drain scarce resources from the public system, despite claims to the contrary. They will also charge outrageously high tuition fees. By conservative estimates the total annual cost of a private for-profit post-secondary degree will be \$40,166. This is based on the sum of two figures: the average tuition fee at US privately funded institutions is US\$15,380 or

about \$23,400 in Canadian dollars. Add to this \$16,766 — the cost of books and supplies, room and board, transportation and other basic costs of living for a single individual. This figure also assumes that the student does not go on to do a graduate degree or a professional degree. The implications here are obvious: in order to attend the 'elite' private for-profit university, an average student will have to incur a staggering life-long debt. Private for-profit universities will be exclusive places of privilege, open only to those who can afford to pay.

**COMPROMISING QUALITY**

Facing this massive public underfunding, university and college administrators pursued a variety of measures that exacerbated the growing inaccessibility and also seriously eroded quality. Access was further eroded as additional costs were down-loaded onto students in the form of a myriad of 'administrative' user fees. Quality was eroded as a result of a number of decisions: universities and colleges turned to contracts, donations and sponsorships from privately owned corporations and wealthy individuals, which meant greater private influence and control in setting curricula. They closed departments and programs and they dramatically reduced the numbers of full-time faculty. In fact, today's universities are relying more on part-time faculty to deliver their educational programs. Between 1992-93 and 1997-98 while the number of full-time faculty in Canada declined by nearly 10 per cent, the number of part-time faculty increased 6 per cent. Furthermore, wages and benefits of Teaching Assistants and administrative support staff were reduced and the jobs and working conditions of maintenance workers were threatened and degraded by contracting out and attrition. With fewer people sharing the teaching workload, professors have less time to undertake basic research. Sessional professors and teaching assistants are increasingly overworked and underpaid as they assume increased duties and everyone has less time either to prepare courses or provide students the personal attention and mentoring they require and deserve. All this, with fewer course offerings, means that students must settle on much lower expectations. In this sense quality is seriously compromised.

**AVERAGE UNDERGRADUATE ARTS TUITION • CANADA\***

	% CHANGE			
	1990-1991	1999-2000	2000-2001	1990 to 2001
Canada	\$1 496	\$3 281	\$3 380	125,9
Newfoundland	1 344	3 300	3 300	145,5
Prince Edward Island	1 840	3 480	3 480	89,1
Nova Scotia	1 943	4 101	4 408	126,9
New Brunswick	1 898	3 329	3 519	85,4
Quebec**	902	1 868	1 898	110,4
Ontario	1 653	3 865	3 971	140,2
Manitoba	1 415	3 018	2 873	103,0
Saskatchewan	1 526	3 164	3 409	123,4
Alberta	1 244	3 658	3 841	208,8
British Columbia***	1 727	2 470	2 520	45,9

\* Using the most current enrolment data available, average tuition fees have been weighted by the number of students  
 \*\* Fees for both local and out-of-province students are included in the weighted average calculation. Note that the weighting methodology was revised to reflect more accurately the impact of Quebec's differential fee policy. Hence, average tuition fees by program at all Quebec university and subsequently at the Canada level have been revised for the years 1997-1998 through 2000-2001  
 \*\*\* Fees at both public and private institutions are included in the weighted average calculation

Source: Statistics Canada, Education Quarterly Review, 2000, Vol. 17, No. 1, p. 50

## THE FAILURE OF THE LOAN-BASED STUDENT FINANCIAL AID STRATEGY

The latest studies and statistics on the state of post-secondary education clearly demonstrate a glaring paradox. Canada now has a trillion-dollar economy that co-exists with record-levels of student debt and a system of post-secondary education that is of low quality and out of reach for low and modest income families. As *Education Indicators* reveals, people from the middle and lower socio-economic status "must make a relatively greater financial sacrifice to attend university" than individuals with higher incomes. The consequence of soaring tuition fees and stagnating salaries combined with the existing student financing arrangements is stark: the poorest members of our society are registering "the smallest increase in participation."

Two other studies support this conclusion. A September 2000 study by Statistics Canada published in its *Education Quarterly Review* supports the findings of *Education Indicators*. The federal agency reports that "One of our most significant findings...is that there has been a widening gap in university participation by family socio-economic status" and this raises questions of "accessibility and equality of opportunity." When the study was reported in the mainstream press, one journalist wrote that it "finally adds credence to the anecdotal evidence of educators and student groups that the escalation in tuition fees has meant that fewer lower income youth can afford to attend university." A study by the Canadian Association of University Teachers confirms that the burden of increased fees has disproportionately fallen on modest income Canadians. When measured as a share of after-tax disposable income, households in the lowest income category spent 11 per cent of their income on tuition fees in 1992. By 1998 that had increased to more than 19 per cent — six times more than households in the highest income bracket.

These recent studies and reports are a clear repudiation of the public policy decisions adopted by both the federal and provincial governments between 1984 and the present concerning post-

secondary education. They demonstrate that the cuts have affected the poor more than the wealthy and they demonstrate the complete failure of the loan-based student financial assistance strategy. At a time when everyone is being told that higher education is the key to survival in the 'new' economy, the poor are being driven away by high tuition fees and the spectre of debt. Post-secondary education is already a privilege for the wealthy. Still, the student movement has many practical suggestions that might militate against this growing crisis. If the federal, provincial and territorial governments are serious about ensuring a high quality accessible system of education, they must restore the billions of dollars that have been siphoned from the system in the last two decades. More

importantly, they cannot continue to ignore soaring student debt levels and tuition fees. They must develop relevant and appropriate policies to eliminate the financial barriers to an accessible system of education. One option is to follow the lead of many European nations and abolish user fees. Another way to ensure access is to abandon the loan-based system of student financial assistance. Instead, Canadian legislators must join the rest of the industrialised world by making funding available in the form of grants for individuals in need. As Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education themselves concluded, without such funding even greater inequities will result from financial circumstances, "regardless of the ability of the student."

## ESSENTIAL EDUCATION

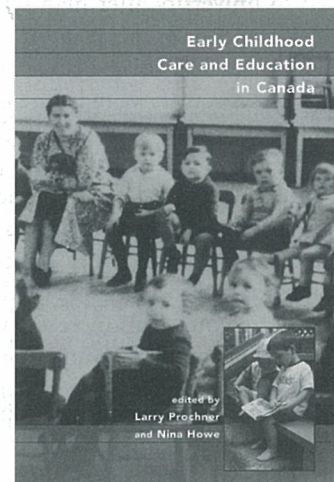
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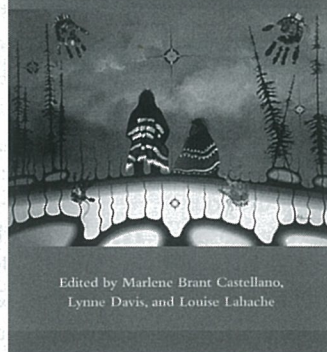
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# RETURN TO A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA and the Decision to Drop Out New Evidence from Canada

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BY Daniel Parent

Department of Economics, McGill University

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES HAVE HISTORICALLY BEEN HIGHER IN CANADA THAN IN THE UNITED STATES. ALTHOUGH THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES HAS BEEN PARTIALLY CLOSED IN RECENT YEARS, THE DROPOUT RATE IN CANADA IS STILL SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN IN THE U.S., AT LEAST FOR MEN, AND ESPECIALLY SO WHEN WE LIMIT THE COMPARISON TO THE STATES THAT ARE NEIGHBOURING CANADA. TO PERHAPS GAIN SOME INSIGHT AS TO WHY THIS DISCREPANCY IN HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES HAS EXISTED, IT MAY THEN BE USEFUL TO STUDY THE LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES OF YOUNG CANADIANS IN RELATION TO THEIR SCHOOLING LEVEL.

It is generally believed that individuals with low levels of schooling will have greater difficulties thriving in today's environment compared to what previous generations of low education individuals experienced, which should have the effect of inducing people to study beyond high school. Yet the evidence shows that a fairly large proportion of the population does not complete high school (the high school non completion rate was estimated at around 18% for Canada in 1991 using Statistics Canada's School Leavers' Survey). It may be that for those individuals who do not plan to go to university after high school, the value of finishing high school hinges on whether doing so brings large enough benefits and if, as the Canadian data show, those benefits appear to have been very low, then we may find ourselves with a situation in which we have both a relatively high dropout rate from high school and a large fraction of young people enrolling and completing university education. In other words, for high school dropouts, the margin at which schooling decisions are made is different from that of people who hesitate between stopping after high school graduation and going to university. If the university to high school wage premium increases while the high school completion to high school non-completion wage premium decreases, then the result may be that those who are hesitating between high school and university will be more likely to enroll in university while the others will be more likely to dropout, given that they heavily discount any potential benefit from a university education.

## HIGH SCHOOL NON COMPLETION RATES (CANADA AND THE U.S.)

Figure 1 shows the high school non-completion rate among individuals aged 20-21. Those numbers represent annual averages computed using the basic CPS monthly files and the LFS monthly files. As we can see from the comparison, the difference in 'male' rates at the start of the decade was about 4%, roughly the same as in 1997, while it was smaller for women. Indeed women's dropout rates essentially converged over the nineties while the gap closed somewhat for men. However, once we compare Canada with the neighbouring U.S. states, we can see that even in the case of women there is still a higher fraction of Canadians not completing high school. For men the gap in 1997 was still about 5% compared with roughly 7% at the start of the decade. Naturally, one difficulty in making comparisons of the high school dropout rate in Canada and the United States stems from the fact that while the twelve years of schooling criterion is uniformly applied in the U.S., it is not in Canada. The two largest Canadian provinces, Ontario and Quebec,

have until recently required thirteen and eleven years of schooling respectively, while the others require twelve.

Also, individuals in both countries have ways other than the "regular" schooling process to acquire their high school diploma. In the United States individuals can get certification through an equivalency exam such as the General Educational Development (GED) (see Cameron-Heckman, 1993). As argued by Cameron and Heckman, individuals getting GED certification may be closer to dropouts than to "true" high school graduates. Individuals may also achieve certification through night classes. This may consequently inflate the U.S. high school completion rate. In Canada, more or less similar alternative routes of completing the requirement for a high school diploma exist. For example, in Quebec individuals who left high school without a diploma may get their certification through night classes. In Ontario a GED-like certification process is available for people aged at least 18 and who have been out of high school for at least a year. It is difficult to judge the relative difficulty of these different institutional arrangements in terms of getting certification as the requirements are likely to vary across countries.

In summary, it appears that Canada is catching up to the United States in terms of the rate at which young individuals complete high school, especially in the case of women. Yet, there still are differences when we compare the average completion rate across Canadian provinces with that of their immediate neighbours. It should also be noted that while the parents' educational attainment no doubt plays a role, other evidence suggests that it cannot really be the whole story behind the historical differences in dropout rates in Canada and the United States. In a recent paper, Card-Lemieux (1997) show that the fraction of men and women aged 20-24 who are enrolled in school is actually higher in Canada than in the United States, and especially so for women. They also show the reverse is true for individuals aged 16-17.

## THE RETURN TO A HIGH SCHOOL DEGREE IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1981-1998

In this section, I document the evolution of the return to holding just a high school diploma in both countries using the 1981, 86, 91, and 96 Canadian Censuses, the 1998 Canadian Labour Force Survey (LFS), and the 1981-1998 March Supplements of the Current Population Survey (CPS). Except for the LFS, whose earnings measure refers to the job held at the time of the interview, both the CPS and the Census ask questions on earnings and weeks worked during the previous calendar year. In

addition, the CPS (but not the Canadian Census) asks a question on usual hours worked per week in the previous year.

To measure the return to a high school degree, I focus on individuals with a strong degree of labour market attachment. Consequently, I only used individuals who worked full-time for at least 39 weeks the year before the respective surveys. For 1998 I cannot impose quite the same restrictions with the LFS. I use only individuals working full-time at the time of the interview. Note that all self-employed individuals are excluded from the analysis. I also exclude people attending school, when possible.

For 1998 with the LFS, I also exclude the summer months so as not to include summer jobs (the sample restrictions made little difference in the results). The next step was to run a series of regressions by sex and by age group of the log weekly wage on a linear age term and a dummy indicator for high school graduation. Note that all wage observations in the bottom and top per-

centiles were excluded to eliminate outliers. These figures reveal that while the return to a high school diploma in Canada is very small for the youngest individuals compared to their U.S. counterparts, the return is actually smaller for all age groups. This strongly suggests that whatever factor is causing the wage premium to be smaller in Canada appears to affect all individuals with low levels of education. Indeed, it seems that the difference in the return to a high school diploma is the largest for workers aged 25 and above. As for the youngest individuals, the return is consistently at most half of what it is in the United States. Also, although it has been shown recently that the return to a high school degree in the United States has increased markedly over the last twenty years for workers aged 25 and over (Krueger, 1997), it appears that much of that increase is in fact the result of composition effects. Older workers' return has indeed increased somewhat over that time period but the overall rise in the aver-

age return stems from the increasingly important demographic weight of the older workers.

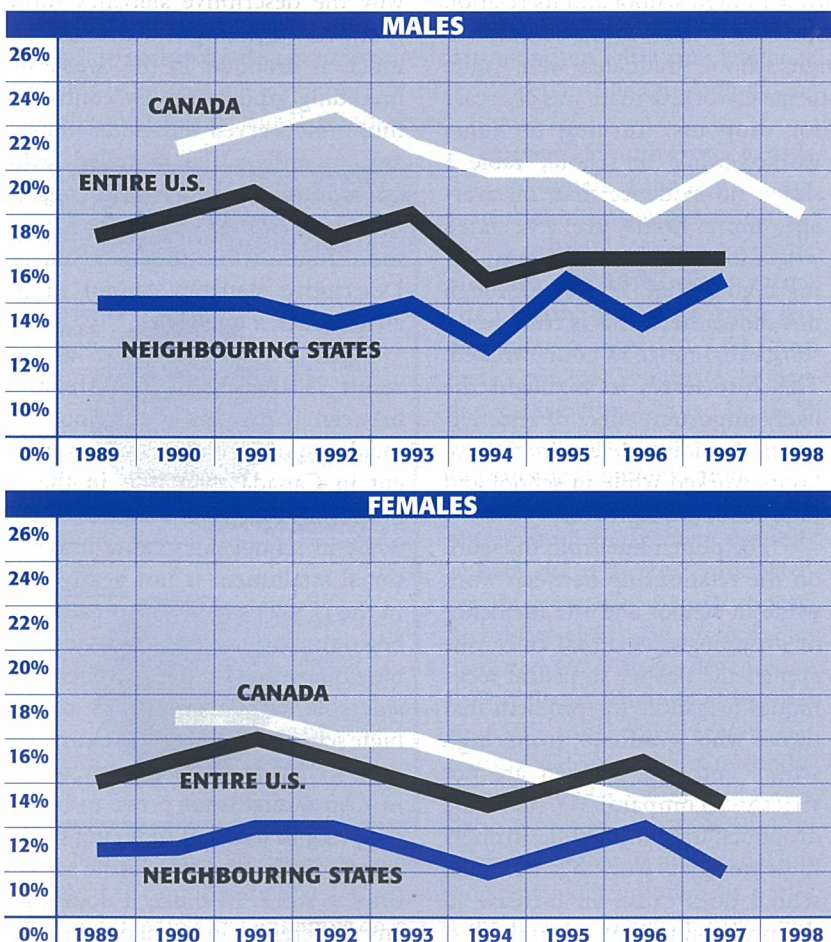
Naturally, such persistent differences beg for an explanation, such as perhaps the ways in which the different institutional arrangements in Canada like the minimum wage and the unionization rate interact with the operation of the labour market for individuals with low levels of education. Perhaps also the fact that Canada has a much higher proportion of individuals with some post-secondary education than in the United States (Riddell-Sweetman, 1999) and that those individuals may be close substitutes to high school graduates in the labour market might depress the wages paid to high school graduates.

Overall, then, there is little in the Canadian data that suggests that the value of holding a high school diploma has increased over time or even that it is substantial. Again, it is worth reiterating that this statement applies to people who do not envision pursuing university education; in fact the "real" value of holding a high school diploma would include the expected added return from higher (university) education. However, it is still the case that high school graduates in 1998 have a larger employment rate compared to high school dropouts, even though there is very little advantage in terms of wages, conditional on having found a job.

### PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GRADUATES AND DROPOUTS

In 1991, Statistics Canada collected information on the school and post-school labour market experiences of 9,460 young people aged 18 to 20. One of the main purposes of that survey was to estimate the high school completion rate. In 1994, Human Resources Development Canada commissioned Statistics Canada to re-interview the same individuals in 1995. These individuals were thus aged 22 to 24 at the time of the re-interview and, as a consequence, the data are best suited for studying the early labour market experiences of the less educated among them. Table 1 shows some simple descriptive statistics documenting the differences in individual characteristics by schooling attainment. In terms of family background variables, it seems clear that high school graduates come from families with

**FIGURE 1 – HIGH SCHOOL NON COMPLETION RATES INDIVIDUALS AGED 20-21**



better educated parents than is the case for dropouts (with no post-secondary education) and, also, they performed substantially better when they attended school, as reflected by the much higher proportion of individuals with a B grade point average or better. They also were significantly less likely to have failed a grade in elementary school. This last piece of information suggests that, at least to a degree, poor performances in school precede the process by which students start to contemplate dropping out of high school, instead of the idea of dropping out subsequently affecting school performance.

The data indicate that although graduates seem to have fared better in terms of employment rates, the same cannot be said for labor earnings (or wages): both groups earn approximately the same on average. It is interesting to note that the characteristics of the dropouts who did pursue post-secondary education are different from the characteristics of the "real" dropouts on one important dimension: they are more likely to come from more educated families although they performed just as poorly in class. In fact, their parents are more educated than those of high school graduates. In terms

Student Variable	H.S. Dropouts with no Post-sec. Educ.	H.S. Dropouts with Some Post-sec. Educ.	High School Graduates	H.S. Graduates with Some Post-sec. Educ.	B.A Degree Or More
Father went to Coll/Univ.	5,25%	13,93%	6,31%	10,96%	33,51%
Mother Went to Coll/Univ.	3,49%	11,03%	8,54%	8,82%	24,62%
% Males	55,19%	49,83%	48,70%	44,97%	40,49%
GPA of A in H.S.	3,43%	2,51%	9,82%	18,38%	53,28%
GPA of B in H.S.	26,30%	31,19%	43,80%	48,14%	43,61%
GPA of C in H.S.	56,11%	52,29%	42,33%	31,27%	3,11%
GPA of D in H.S.	14,16%	14,01%	4,06%	2,20%	0,00%
Failed in Primary School	38,37%	25,98%	21,28%	12,35%	0,87%
Collected UI in Last 12 Months	21,99%	18,85%	19,05%	22,03%	15,05%
Collected Welfare in Last 12 Months	21,47%	17,37%	12,21%	6,29%	1,65%
With a Child	41,00%	29,66%	24,08%	16,26%	4,14%
Hours Worked While in School	13,43	15,71	13,60	12,43	8,73
Had a Job While in H.S.	56,29%	64,28%	66,36%	67,43%	58,40%
Had at least one reference job	80,33%	87,66%	87,12%	86,16%	71,93%
N (in the sample)	1188	285	1002	1572	568
N (population) <small>Obtained from the sample weights</small>	98149	29006	168248	326097	138555

of employment rates, dropouts with some additional post-secondary schooling are doing just as well as high school graduates. Therefore, it seems appropriate to separate them out from the other dropouts if one wants to evaluate the differences in labour market performance between graduates and dropouts.

Finally, if we look at the incidence of work while in high school and its relation to completion rates, we can see that in fact high school graduates were more likely to have worked than was the case for dropouts. Turning to hours worked while in school, Table 1 shows no evidence that, on average, more hours are associated with a lower incidence of completing high school. In fact, although not shown here, this is true over a substantial range in hours worked. This just serves to highlight the likely important effect of selectivity in the joint determination of hours worked while in school and high school completion.

The punch line from my work on the relationship between work while in school and the incidence of dropping out is that once one applies the proper statistical techniques to handle the problem that those who graduate from high school and who worked are not strictly comparable to the dropouts, then the results strongly indicate that working while in school does cause an increase in the probability that an individual will not graduate from high school. The intuition behind this

result and the fact it reverses what simple descriptive statistics would lead us to believe is the following: high school graduates are better students than dropouts on average and some of the qualities that make them better students, such as motivation and work ethics, also seem to make them more likely to search for and find a job while they are in school. This explains why the descriptive statistics show that graduates actually worked at least as much as dropouts in the twelve months preceding graduation. By controlling for those unobserved individual traits, I am able to answer the so-called "what if" question: what would have happened to the same individuals had they worked more hours while they were in school? Descriptive statistics cannot in general answer such a question.

The interesting thing about this result is that the causal relationship between work while in school and the incidence of dropping out is very different in Canada than it is in the United States. Overall, the evidence that work while in school does cause lower educational attainment is not nearly as strong in the U.S. The evidence presented at the beginning of this article provides a possible explanation: in the U.S. there are considerable wage benefits to completing high school while such is clearly not the case in Canada. Consequently, work while in school might not prove to be quite as tempting in terms of inducing students to simply drop out and devote all of their time to work. In short, it does not make any difference in Canada, in terms of wages, whether one has a diploma or not; in the U.S. it does.

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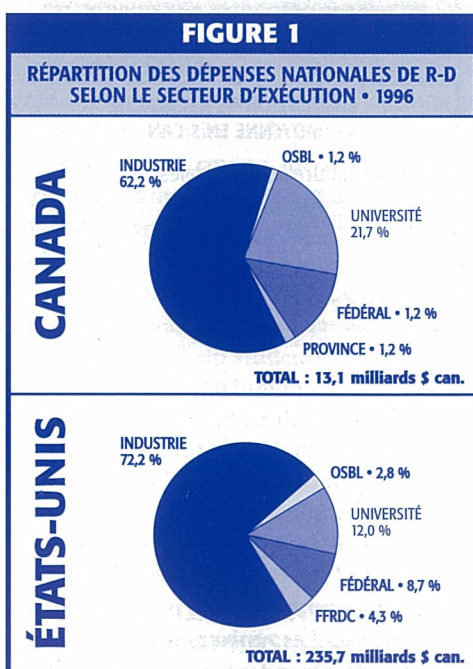
# LE NIVEAU DE FINANCEMENT DE LA recherche universitaire au Canada et aux États-Unis : Étude comparative

**PAR** Jean-Pierre Robitaille et Yves Gingras  
 Département d'histoire et Centre interuniversitaire de recherche sur la science et la technologie (CIRST)  
 Université du Québec à Montréal

EN RAISON DE SON RÔLE AU SEIN DE LA R-D NATIONALE ET DE LA STRUCTURE DE SON FINANCEMENT, LA RECHERCHE UNIVERSITAIRE CANADIENNE PEUT LÉGITIMEMENT ÊTRE COMPARÉE À LA RECHERCHE UNIVERSITAIRE AMÉRICAINE. LES GOUVERNEMENTS DES DEUX PAYS RECONNAISSANT EN EFFET DEPUIS LONGTEMPS L'IMPORTANCE DES UNIVERSITÉS AU SEIN DU SYSTÈME NATIONAL D'INNOVATION ET, DANS LES DEUX CAS, LE GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL DEMEURE ENCORE LE PRINCIPAL BAILLEUR DE FONDS, BIEN QUE DES EFFORTS NOTABLES AIENT ÉTÉ RÉALISÉS CES DERNIÈRES ANNÉES AFIN D'AUGMENTER LA PART DE FINANCEMENT EN PROVENANCE DU SECTEUR PRIVÉ.

## CONTRIBUTION DES UNIVERSITÉS À LA R-D NATIONALE

Au Canada comme aux États-Unis, les universités représentent en 1996 le deuxième secteur d'exécution en matière de R-D, après le secteur industriel. Au Canada toutefois, la part des universités dans la R-D nationale (21,7%) est presque deux fois plus élevée qu'aux États-Unis (12,0%). Ce recours plus massif du Canada à la capacité de recherche de ses universités correspond en fait à une tendance observée dans la plupart des économies avancées de petite taille qui compensent ainsi la faiblesse relative de leur R-D industrielle (figure 1).



La part des universités dans la R-D nationale canadienne, qui avait atteint un sommet record de 26,1% en 1991, n'a cessé depuis de diminuer. En 1996, elle a même atteint son niveau le plus bas depuis onze ans (21,7%). Aux États-Unis, par contraste, la part des universités dans la R-D nationale est passée de 11% à 12% au cours de la même période.

Les universités s'illustrent en outre par un engagement prononcé dans des recherches productrices de nouvelles connaissances. Aux États-Unis, par exemple, les deux tiers (67,0%) des dépenses de R-D réalisées dans les universités en 1995 sont consacrées à des travaux de recherche dite fondamentale. À elles seules, les universités effectuent un peu plus de la

moitié (52,2%) de toutes les dépenses de recherche fondamentale aux États-Unis (NSB, 1998). Les données de Stat Can ne distinguent malheureusement pas la recherche fondamentale de l'ensemble de la R-D, mais il y a tout lieu de croire que, tout comme leurs voisins du Sud, les universités canadiennes sont elles aussi responsables de la plus grande partie de l'effort national en matière de recherche

fondamentale.

Tout indique en somme que, dans les années 1990, les Américains et particulièrement leur gouvernement fédéral, accordent encore une grande confiance à la recherche universitaire ou, à tout le moins, qu'ils sont tout à fait disposés à soutenir son développement, même dans un contexte où l'ensemble des activités de R-D connaissent un

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ralentissement notable. Par contraste, l'ensemble de la R-D canadienne connaît une accélération de son rythme de croissance dans les années 1990, mais les ressources tendent à se concentrer dans l'industrie alors que la recherche universitaire assiste à un certain effritement du support qui lui est accordé. Si une telle tendance se maintient et si, comme aux États-Unis, la plus grande partie de la recherche fondamentale canadienne se concentre dans les universités, ce qui est plausible, il y aurait lieu de craindre une certaine détérioration des capacités du Canada en matière de recherche fondamentale. Notons toutefois que la création au cours des dernières années de différents programmes d'investissements (Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation. Chaires du Millénaire, Génome Canada) laissent croire à un renversement des tendances. Cependant, étant donné le taux de croissance de la R&D aux États-Unis, il n'est pas certain que ces initiatives permettront de faire diminuer les écarts observés. Seules les données statistiques des prochaines années permettront de mesurer les effets de ces nouvelles initiatives canadiennes.

### RECHERCHE SUBVENTIONNÉE ET CONTRACTUELLE

Selon une perception largement répandue, le secteur privé canadien n'aurait pas réalisé, historiquement, des efforts aussi substantiels que les entreprises américaines dans le financement de la recherche universitaire. Les gouvernements canadiens auraient ainsi été appelés à jouer, dans ce secteur comme dans plusieurs autres, un rôle beaucoup plus considérable que leurs homologues américains. Une tradition d'aide et d'intervention gouvernementales serait, autrement dit, l'une des caractéristiques distinctives du Canada. Or, les données présentées ici démontrent que cette perception n'est pas fondée. Toutes proportions gardées, les universités canadiennes

recevaient déjà au milieu des années 1980 autant d'argent du secteur des entreprises que les établissements américains et aujourd'hui, le financement privé de la recherche universitaire est nettement plus élevé au Canada qu'aux États-Unis. En revanche, les subventions du gouvernement fédéral ont été et demeurent encore beaucoup moins substantielles au Canada qu'aux États-Unis.

Avec un taux de croissance annuel moyen de 4,58% entre 1984 et 1996, le financement du gouvernement fédéral américain a progressé trois fois plus rapidement que celui du gouvernement fédéral canadien qui se situe pour la même période à 1,20%. Au Canada, le financement fédéral connaît une décroissance assez sensible depuis 1995. Aux États-Unis, par contraste, la valeur réelle (en dollars constants) des subventions et contrats fédéraux n'a jamais diminué au cours de la période étudiée.

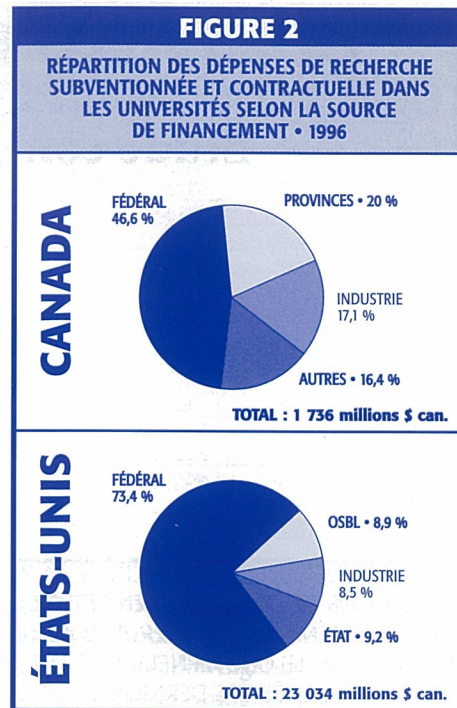
La valeur des subventions et contrats accordés par les gouvernements des États américains a elle aussi progressé plus rapidement (4,51%) que celle des gouvernements provinciaux canadiens (3,57%).

En revanche, avec des taux de croissance respectifs de 11,36% et de 5,76% le financement de l'industrie et du secteur privé sans but lucratif canadiens a progressé plus rapidement que le financement de leur vis-à-vis américains. À partir de 1994 toutefois, le financement du secteur privé plafonne au Canada, ce qui n'est pas le cas aux États-Unis. Aux États-Unis comme au Canada, le gouvernement fédéral demeure le plus important bailleur de fonds en matière de recherche subventionnée et contractuelle dans les universités. Mais les octrois fédéraux représentent une part beaucoup plus considérable des dépenses totales de recherche dans les établissements américains que dans les établissements canadiens (figure 2).

Réciproquement, la part des provinces, des industries et des organismes sans buts lucratifs canadiens est plus considérable que celle de leurs vis-à-vis américains.

### LA SUBVENTION MOYENNE ACCORDÉE AU CHERCHEURS

Afin de ramener à une échelle humaine les données sur les octrois fédéraux, nous avons tâché d'établir une mesure de la subvention moyenne accordée aux chercheurs américains et canadiens. Le tableau 1 met en présence les subventions moyennes des organismes canadiens avec les subventions



moyennes des organismes américains. Or, cela nous permet de constater que les subventions américaines demeurent encore trois fois plus élevées que les subventions canadiennes, même lorsque la part des frais indirects est déduite.

**TABLEAU 1**  
CANADA & ÉTATS-UNIS  
VALEUR MOYENNE DES SUBVENTIONS DE RECHERCHE ACCORDÉES AUX UNIVERSITÉS  
PAR LE CRSH, LE CRSNG, LA NSF, LE CRM ET LES NIH  
FRAIS INDIRECTS EXCLUS (EN \$ CAN.), 1995

SUBVENTION DE RECHERCHE MOYENNE EN \$ CAN.	
<b>Sciences naturelles et sociales</b>	
CRSH	21 824
CRSNG	35 537
NSF	116 718
<b>Sciences de la santé</b>	
CRM	73 537
NIH	223 879

Notons en terminant que, dans les deux pays, la croissance du financement de la recherche universitaire en provenance de toutes les sources s'est ralentie entre la fin des années 1980 et le début des années 1990 et ce, tant pour les fonds d'origine publique que privée. Les universités américaines bénéficient cependant, tout au long de la période étudiée, d'un support gouvernemental qui leur assure globalement, en matière de R-D, un meilleur climat financier que les universités canadiennes.

**LE RAPPORT COMPLET EST DISPONIBLE À L'ADRESSE SUIVANTE:  
HTTP://WWW.OST.QC.CA**

OSLB	ORGANISATION SANS BUT LUCRATIF ORGANISMES CANADIENS
CRSH	Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines
CRSNG	Conseil de recherches en sciences naturelles et génie
CRM	Conseil de recherches médicales
ORGANISMES AMÉRICAINS	
FFRDC	Federally Funded Research and Development Centers
NSF	National Science Foundation
NIH	National Institutes of Health



# THE EDUCATION LEGACY of the Clinton Administration

**BY** Richard W. Riley  
U.S. Secretary of Education, 1993-2001

**NOTE: ALL FIGURES ARE IN U.S. DOLLARS.**

DISCUSSING THE EDUCATION LEGACY OF THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION IS SOMETHING IN WHICH I TAKE PARTICULAR PRIDE IN AS I PREPARE TO LEAVE MY POSITION AS THE UNITED STATES' SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. WHEN BILL CLINTON BECAME PRESIDENT ON JANUARY 20, 1993, HE SAID THAT ONE OF HIS TOP PRIORITIES WOULD BE TO IMPROVE THE STATE OF AMERICAN EDUCATION. HE WAS NOT SPOUTING EMPTY WORDS. THE EDUCATION SUCCESSES HE ACHIEVED AS ARKANSAS' GOVERNOR CERTAINLY INDICATED HE PROBABLY WOULD BE THE MOST PRO-EDUCATION PRESIDENT EVER. REMAINING TRUE TO HIS WORD, PRESIDENT CLINTON, ALONG WITH VICE PRESIDENT GORE, WORKED TIRELESSLY THROUGHOUT EIGHT YEARS IN OFFICE ON BEHALF OF BETTER EDUCATION. AND WE NOW CAN SAY THAT THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION INDEED WAS THE MOST PRO-EDUCATION PRESIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATION IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES.

Of course, the efforts of countless American teachers, parents, community leaders, and education administrators (along with those of us in the administration), who believed that the nation could and should do a better job of educating its people, have reaped rewards. American education, by most any measure, is in a far better condition today than it was in 1993. Support and interest in education is greater today than at any time in our nation's history. Of course, we still have a great deal of work to do in many areas. They include modernising and building new schools to accommodate increasing enrolments, boosting mathematics and science performance, reducing class sizes (especially in the early grades), expanding after-school learning opportunities, improving teacher quantity and quality, and further narrowing the gaps in performance among racial groups, among others. Still, our record of accomplishments is as worthy as were our intentions.

Between 1993 and 2001, the Clinton Administration made the largest overall financial investment in American education in 30 years. It made the greatest investment in higher education since the G.I. Bill was enacted after World War II by doubling student financial aid to help students and families pay for college or university to nearly \$60 billion per year.

At their core, all of these investments and efforts were basically intended to challenge students, teachers, parents, and school staff to achieve high expectations. Still, an overriding concern was that if we were to expect the most of American education, our schools must first be safe.

## **SAFE SCHOOLS, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND AN INCREASED EMPHASIS ON TECHNOLOGY**

Despite the intense media coverage surrounding events such as those in Littleton, Colo. and Taber, Alta., statistics confirm that American schools have become safer since 1993. In fact, schools are the safest places in most communities. A full 90 percent of our schools have experienced no serious crime on their premises. Still,

if one person is injured or killed in a school, that is one person too many.

One thing we accomplished to help make schools safer was the enactment of the Gun-Free Schools Act in 1994. The act requires the expulsion of any student who brings a firearm to school. The act also recommends involving parents in the process as soon as possible.

Whether we are in Canada or the United States, we all know that increased parent involvement in education can help make our schools both safer and more productive. To that end, in 1994, we inaugurated the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. We started the partnership to strengthen family-school-community links through good communication and mutual responsibility for children's learning. What began with just 33 member organisations has grown to more than 6,000 partner groups.

One of the partnership's priorities that was shared by all in the administration was an emphasis on safe and smart after-school programs. Our 21st Century Community Learning Centres program allows schools to stay open longer to provide enriched learning opportunities. We know that the hours between 3 and 6 p.m. can be among the most dangerous for students and that is why quality after-school education is so necessary for so many children. Some 850,000 students were served in fiscal year 2000. The centres offer many services, including: youth tutoring; college and university preparation work; music classes; technology education; drug and violence prevention counselling; and, services for youth with disabilities.

A critical part of many after-school programs is an emphasis on using technology for learning. A growing concern in both of our countries is the "digital divide." Thanks to the leadership of Vice President Gore, schools across the United States had increased access to technology through both the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund and the "E-rate." The E-rate is a discount



program that makes technology more readily available and affordable to education institutions like schools and libraries. It made a difference, providing more than \$4 billion in discounts to connect schools to the Internet. Put another way, some 95

administration proposed a federal tax credit program that would pay the interest on nearly \$25 billion in state and local bonds to modernise and rebuild up to 6,000 public schools that are overcrowded, out-of-date, and unsafe. The fiscal year 2001 budget included a \$1.3 billion renovation loan and grant proposal that would immediately repair 5,000 schools.

It has been estimated that \$127 billion is needed to bring U.S. schools into good overall condition. My sincere hope is that the new administration will do its best to see that all American children go to schools that are safe, healthy, and conducive to good learning and teaching. While we were blocked by the majority in Congress from moving aggressively to help solve this problem, we were the first administration to hold a national debate on this issue. This is important because many communities can't raise local funds to pay for construction or renovation.

Another way in which we improved American education was to reduce class sizes. Research has proven that children, especially those in the early grades, learn more in smaller classes. The Class Size Reduction Initiative that we put into place in 1998 has placed some 29,000 more teachers into the nation's classrooms. More funds will be needed if President Clinton's goal of putting an additional 100,000 well-prepared teachers in our schools is to be realised.

Our administration's concern for young children extended to our pre-school program for low-income children known as Head Start (originally created by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965). Head Start has been proven to give low-income children a real chance to do well once they start elementary school. Head Start funding was increased by 90 percent between 1993 and 2001 and the program served 880,000 children in fiscal year 2000. The administration also created Early Head Start, which brings Head Start's successful comprehensive services to families

with children from birth to age three.

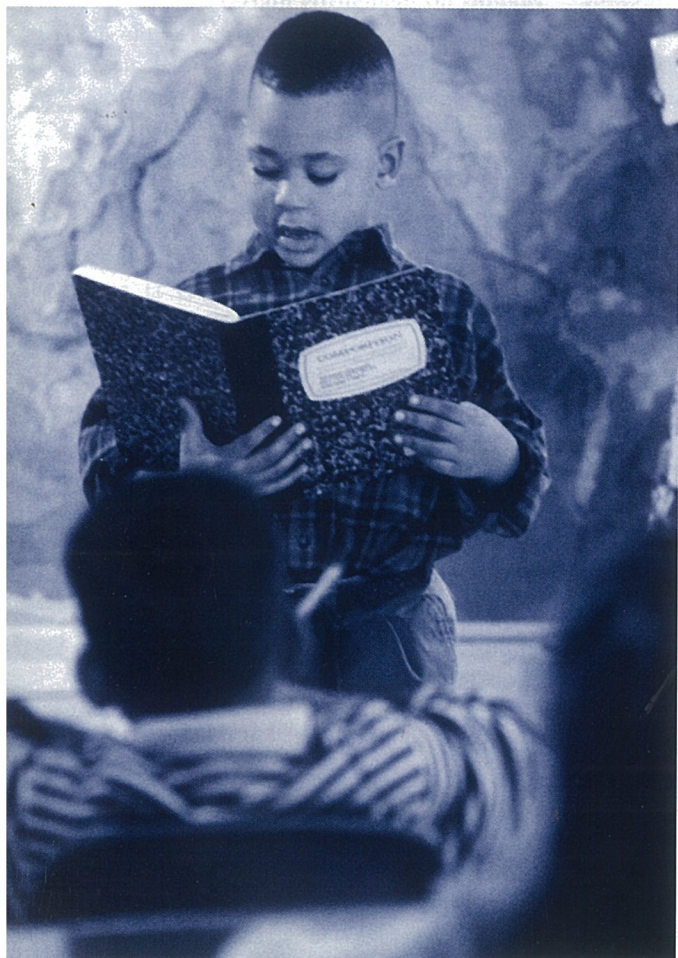
Of course, one of the most important parts of any good school, whether it be Canadian or American, is quality teaching. As I often say, teachers make all other professions possible. Currently, the United States is facing a teacher shortage. We need 2.2 million new teachers over the next 10 years, with a particular need for mathematics and science teachers. I appointed a commission chaired by former astronaut and U.S. Senator John Glenn, which presented a report to me last September as to how we must improve the training, recruitment, and retention of mathematics and science teachers. It is now up to the new administration to decide if it wishes to fully consider the report's recommendations.

With regard to mathematics and science, it is worth noting that the very strong Canadian showing in the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is to be commended and studied. Canada's placement in the scores goes a long way towards achieving the goal set by your finance minister, Paul Martin, when he said that if Canada is to compete in the new knowledge-based economy, your students must reach the top five world rankings in mathematics and science achievement. Of course, we in the United States plan to be right there with you.

### A QUEST FOR HIGH STANDARDS

The quest for high standards extended to other subjects, including reading. President Clinton challenged the nation to ensure that all children be able to read well and independently by Grade 3. The America Reads program was put into place early in the administration and more than 1,400 colleges and universities have committed more than 26,000 students to tutor children in reading. In addition, more than two million children have been taught, tutored, or mentored by national service programs. President Clinton also said that each Grade 4 student should be tested in reading to ascertain achievement.

Another program intended to achieve high standards is Goals 2000, an education reform initiative enacted in 1994. The program helped states establish standards of excellence for all children and plan and implement steps to raise educational achievement. Communities in almost



percent of public schools were connected to the Internet in 1999, up from 35 percent in 1994. In 1999, 63 percent of all public school classrooms were connected to the Internet. Only 3 percent enjoyed such access in 1994.

### SAFE AND UP-TO-DATE SCHOOL FACILITIES, QUALITY PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND A NEED TO IMPROVE MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

Of course, safe and challenging teaching and learning that takes advantage of current technology can only occur in sound and healthy school facilities. Unfortunately, many American schools do not provide suitable environments for enrolments that are expected to climb to a record 44.4 million elementary and secondary students in 2006. In 2000, the

every state received Goals 2000 funds to upgrade curriculum, improve teaching, increase parental involvement in schools, and make better use of computers in classrooms. We also made a special effort to remind Americans that good schools include the study of music and the arts.

### **BOOSTING LOCAL INVOLVEMENT AND MAKING HIGHER EDUCATION AVAILABLE TO ALL**

Local communities are necessary to American education because local communities do the bulk of the work in providing quality public education. One way in which the administration tried to help communities, along with parents and students, was to expand choice and accountability in public schools. "Charter schools," which are public schools that have been given flexibility from some local, state, and federal regulations in order to achieve high standards, have been a tremendous success. Only one charter school existed in the U.S. in 1993. Now there are more than 1,700, enrolling more than 250,000 students in 30 states and the District of Columbia. And the president also supported local education reform efforts by signing the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 that gives all states the ability to use federal resources in ways that best complement local efforts and innovation.

By encouraging public school choice, charter schools offer a very positive contrast with the use of vouchers, which involves the transfer of public monies to pay for private school tuition. Vouchers are very divisive and take away from the American ideal of the free public school. For almost a century, 89 percent of American students have been educated in public schools. Vouchers take precious resources away from public schools and are, I believe, a mistake.

I've talked a fair amount about what we accomplished in supporting elementary and secondary education. But the Clinton Administration also will be remembered for its tremendous efforts to help students and families pay for higher education as well as in changing the American view of higher education. There is a growing recognition, caused in part by ideas advocated by the Clinton Administration, that at least two years of post-secondary education should be the

norm for all Americans.

To help make this possible, we enacted scholarships and tax credits that were claimed by 10 million American families in 1999. The scholarships, known as HOPE scholarships, provide a tax credit of up to \$1,500 for tuition and fees for the first two years of college or university. The Lifetime Learning tax credits provide a 20 percent tax credit on the first \$5,000 of tuition and fees for students beyond the first two years of college or university. In 2000, 5.6 million families received \$5 billion in HOPE scholarships and 7.2 million families received \$2.4 billion in Lifetime Learning tax credits.

The Clinton Administration also expanded work-study programs and Pell Grants, a program of direct grants of up to \$3,750 per student. We lowered fees and interest rates that have saved the average student loan borrower over \$500, and we also instituted more flexible repayment terms, and restored tax deductions for student loan interest. We also lowered the default rate on loan paybacks. The AmeriCorps program, established in 1995, has allowed some 150,000 young people to serve in their communities while earning money for college or university or skills training.

Minority students (or what Canadians call visible minorities) and those from disadvantaged backgrounds also received our help in obtaining higher education. In 1993, we started a program known as TRIO to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds as they progress from middle school to post-secondary education. Some 760,000 students now take part in TRIO. We also established a program known as GEAR-UP, which is a national mentoring initiative that helps over 750,000 low-income middle school children finish school and prepare for college or university.

The Clinton Administration also increased funding and grants for historically black and Hispanic-serving colleges and universities. As well, support for a new program, the Hispanic Education Action Plan, was designed to help Hispanic youth graduate from high school and then go on to college or university.

One final subject I wish to discuss is the emphasis we tried to place on the matter of learning other languages and gaining a better sense of the world beyond the

United States. American students must develop a broad understanding of the world, including other languages and cultures, if we are to remain both competitive and intellectually keen. There's an old joke that says a great deal about the way our nation historically has treated the study of foreign countries and languages. The joke goes like this: What do you call a person who knows two languages? Bilingual. What do you call a person who knows three languages? Trilingual. And what do you call a person who knows only one language? An American. The truth behind

*American students must develop a broad understanding of the world, including other languages and cultures, if we are to remain both competitive and intellectually keen.*

this joke is no longer funny. We need to increase our efforts to make sure American students learn additional languages and increase their exposure to, and interest in, the world at large.

Former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau made an excellent point back in 1962, some years before he entered elected politics. Writing in *Cité Libre*, he said, "the day of language barriers is finished, as least as far as science and culture are concerned." In this technology-driven economy in which we now live, where borders and barriers are invisible or fibre-optic thin, his words have never rung more true.

In closing, I'd like to say that the Clinton Administration's efforts to make the phrase "knowledge is power (or *connaissance est force*)" a working mantra for all Americans have resulted in great achievements. And I believe many in Canada share our goals. As President John F. Kennedy said when discussing the U.S.-Canada relationship back in May 1961, "Geography has made us neighbours. History has made us friends. Economics has made us partners. And necessity has made us allies. We are co-tenants of the same continent; heirs of the same legacy."

I am hopeful that the American people will continue down the path we have started and I have great hope that the march towards better education will not diminish.



# THE EDUCATIONAL MORASS

## Neglected Aspects of U.S. Education

MY THESIS IN THIS PAPER IS THAT THE EDUCATIONAL DEFICIENCIES IN U.S. EDUCATION ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE REMEDIED FOR SEVERAL YEARS TO COME. THE DEFICIENCIES ARE POOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF STUDENT MISCONDUCT, INADEQUATE PREPARATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT, RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS TENSIONS, AND EXCESSIVE COSTS, TO CITE SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT. I SHALL NOT TRY TO PROVE THE EXISTENCE OF THESE DEFICIENCIES, BUT WILL ASSUME THEIR EXISTENCE IN WHAT FOLLOWS.

I begin with a few statements that are accepted. Constitutionally, education is not a major function of the federal government in the U.S. There is some federal funding for special purposes, such as education of the handicapped or low achieving students, and such funding amounts to about seven percent of government expenditures for K-12 education. In addition, education is affected by federal legislation that is not education specific, federal legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, or sex, is perhaps the most important. Much as some would like to change the fact, K-12 education in the United States is a state function subject to a host of variations between the fifty states.

***The teacher unions enjoy enormous strategic advantages, as they always do when a single union bargains collectively with a multitude of small employers.***

Except for Hawaii, the states have delegated the operation of education to local school boards, usually elected bodies with jurisdiction over education within a specified political jurisdiction; however, "local" encompasses both one room school districts and enormous urban districts with hundreds of thousands of students and budgets of several billion dollars. Setting aside a host of qualifications and caveats, the day to day management of public education is highly decentralized and there is no movement in sight to change this fact.

In contrast, most public school teachers in most states are members of one or both national unions, the National Education Association (NEA) and/or the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). Thus, we can say that although management is highly decentralized, teacher organizations are national in scope, operations, and orientation.

**BY** Myron Lieberman  
Chairman, Education Policy Institute  
([www.educationpolicy.org](http://www.educationpolicy.org))

The upshot is that the teacher unions enjoy enormous strategic advantages, as they always do when a single union bargains collectively with a multitude of small employers. For many years, the leading example was in transportation; the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) was a national union that was much more powerful than any one of the thousands of trucking companies that employed members of the IBT. The IBT was able to crush any one trucking company that tried to go it alone against the IBT. This situation changed only when highway transportation was deregulated, and over the road transportation became a competitive industry in which employers were much better prepared to confront teamster unions when such action was deemed advisable.

The structure of public education in the United States is even more favorable to the teacher unions. School board members are legally the top managers, but unlike private sector managers, school board members per se have no personal economic stake in the outcome of negotiations. Of course, all board members want union contracts that are favorably received, and many a member of the city council, or mayor, or state legislator was initially an elected member of a school board, eager to achieve a favorable attitude to enhance his/her chances for political advancement. Nevertheless, management by school board members differs significantly from management in private industry. In the latter, individuals are responsible individually for managing a part of the enterprise: manufacturing, sales, advertising, research, and so on. It is rare that important policy decisions affecting a private enterprise as a whole are made collectively. A CEO may elicit the views of the managers who report to him/her, but that is a matter of managerial discretion. In contrast, school board members do not exercise day to day managerial direction over any aspect of school district operations. Supposedly, board members resolve important policy issues that are implemented by staff personnel.

Another critical distinction relates to the managerial stakes in



the enterprise. As previously noted, the jobs of school board members and their economic fortunes are not on the line when they act in their school board role. In the private sector, however, the relationship is direct and immediate. School board members might achieve an agreement by concessions, such as enhanced retirement benefits, that are not evident to the public until long after the responsible board members are no longer on the board. In the private sector, such agreements would have immediate repercussions for management because owners of stock in the company constantly monitor company developments. An agreement that provided generous future benefits would be noticed immediately, and the value of stock in the company would drop immediately if the agreement provided excessive long range benefits. In contrast, substantial number of school board members owe their election victories, past or anticipated, to the teacher unions, thus weakening their incentives to avoid excessive union influence on school district operations. In this connection, it is interesting to note that even employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs) exercise precautions to ensure that the union and/or the employees do not run the enterprise. ESOPs provide the employee owners with more generous shares of the profits (if there are any) but even the private sector unions know better than to support union exercise of managerial control over operations.

Two additional factors render it even more difficult for school boards to avoid union domination. School board members do not represent any particular interest group with a stake in avoiding union domination. In the Teamster example cited previously, the employers had a huge stake in the outcome of negotiations; the viability and profitability of their companies could be weakened or even destroyed by a poor agreement. Thus, there was a strong incentive for employers to join together to resist union over-reaching. This is not the case in education, as evidenced by the pervasive weakness of state and national school board organizations in the United States. In a teacher strike, the local teacher union can rely upon immediate assistance from its state and national affiliates. The assistance might cover the costs of advertising, radio and television messages, legal advice, and strategic/tactical advice generally. The

local school boards are left to flounder on their own; outside of a press release deploring the strike, few, if any, school boards receive any help from their state school board associations, and rarely from the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

Another important consideration is that it is extremely difficult for school boards to work together to counteract overwhelming union power to dominate school boards in collective bargaining. In many industries where a strong union bargains with a multitude of employers in the same area or industry, the employers join hands to enhance their bargaining power. For instance, the hotel owners in Las Vegas and Reno delegate the conduct of bargaining to a single entity, who is kept informed on what concessions their principals can and cannot make in the bargaining. In this way, the employers avoid the likelihood that the union will extract the most generous benefits from the weakest employers and then cite these benefits as the minimum for other employers.


School boards in the United States cannot adopt this strategy. First of all, it would contravene the legal prohibitions against the delegation of powers by legislative bodies. Second, in any group of school boards, the presence of any union supporters renders it impossible for school boards to maintain cohesion or confidentiality regarding their bottom lines. The difficulties of educational reform in the United States should now be apparent. Any change at the local level that affects teacher unions negatively faces an insurmountable management gap. At the state level, the problems are ordinarily insurmountable because the teacher unions are always one of the strongest interest groups that interact with the legislators. At the same time, school boards are unable to muster the political resources required to curb excessive union influence.

In considering the prospects for reform therefore, one of the first questions to be asked is the union reaction to it. Of course, there are degrees of union interest and support or opposition to proposed reforms, but generally speaking, the more important the reform, the


more likely that it contravenes important union interests. This is why the advent of a new administration is not likely to bring about any basic changes in U.S. education. Despite campaign rhetoric to the contrary, education is not and cannot be a more important priority than national defense, foreign policy, the economy, social security, health care, and other problem areas that are federal responsibilities, regardless

***It is extremely difficult for school boards to work together to counteract overwhelming union power to dominate school boards in collective bargaining.***

of whether this is a desirable situation. Clearly, a federal administration determined to effectuate educational reforms will have to address the teacher union veto power over basic change in public education. Even with the most competent leadership, this problem is not subject to resolution in a few years. This is why we should not anticipate any major changes in the educational status quo in the United States for some time to come.

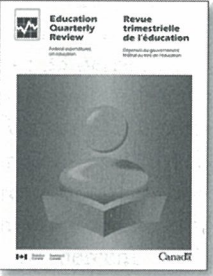


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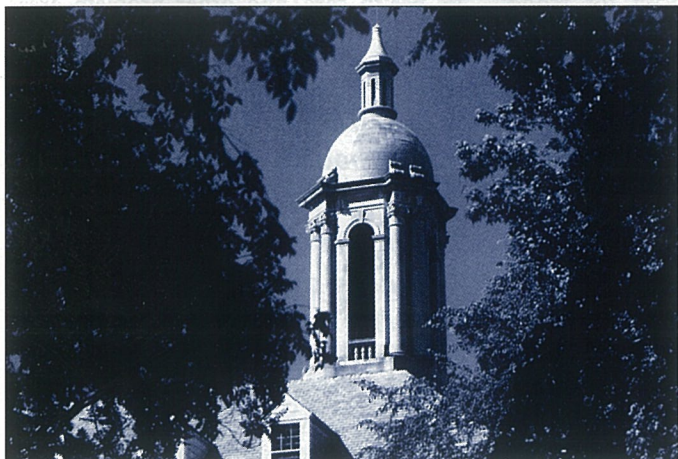
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Canada



## TAKING CHARGE of Change



**Old Main.**  
The Pennsylvania State University

**BY** Graham B. Spanier  
President  
The Pennsylvania State University

IMMERSED IN AN UNCERTAIN SEA OF CHANGE BROUGHT ON BY SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS, INADEQUATE STATE SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, INCREASES IN COMPETITION, AND THE EVOLUTION IN TECHNOLOGY, UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES HAVE BEEN REEVALUATING, REORGANIZING AND REFOCUSING THEIR MISSIONS FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY.

In the 1980s, some dismal predictions were made about the future of American higher education, in part because of an expected decline in the number of students of college-going age. But new jobs in service-related fields, the technology sector, and science-based industries elevated the demand for more postsecondary education opportunities. Industrial jobs, once the backbone of the American economy and requiring no postsecondary education, are now available to just 10 percent of the workforce. In fact, as recently as a few years ago, most U.S. citizens believed that too many people were going to college. Now, three out of four think the country cannot have too many college graduates.

College education in the U.S. is provided by a diverse set of public and private institutions. Currently, nearly 4,000 colleges and universities are educating more than 14.5 million students. In the past 50 years, college attendance in the U.S. has ballooned from roughly 25 percent to 60 percent of each high school graduating class. By 2015, our nation must be prepared to educate over 4 million more students than it educated in 1995 — simply because of population growth.

I believe higher education is clearly at a turning point — a point that requires not just the commitment to change from institutions themselves, but also a commitment from business leaders, government, and the American public to make lifelong learning a national priority.

Recently, I had the opportunity to lead a commission of 24 presidents and chancellors of public higher education institutions from across the United States in what amounted to a four-year study of issues affecting higher education. Known as the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, this group came together to discuss, confront and take charge of the unprecedented change facing institutions.

Determined not to “sugar-coat” the issues, the commission concluded that higher education institutions needed to reaffirm their mission to advance the common good. Through their work, commission members recommitted their institutions to America and outlined a broad-based agenda for sustaining this renewed covenant. The commission also delivered a warning: “Institutions ignore a changing environment at their own peril.”

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The many issues identified as part of the commission's efforts are a blend of long-standing challenges, such as accessibility and funding, and newer complexities brought on by advances in technology and a global economy. Highlighted here are just five topics that I believe are impacting and shaping the future of higher education and America.

### **CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY**

Colleges and universities have long been vehicles for conveying values, principles and traditions to each new generation. Entrusted with a great responsibility, institutions of higher education must continue to develop character, civility, conscience, citizenship and social responsibility in students. Higher education as a whole has an obligation to teach students that they are part of a larger social fabric that requires their fullest participation.

In my view, the development of students as citizens of the world is one of the biggest challenges facing higher education today, and university leaders must be more open in discussing the importance of building student character. Included in this discussion must be frank talk about excessive student drinking and the behaviors that surround it. Many of our undergraduates come to us as experienced drinkers, and the toll of these behaviors is substantial — academically, financially and socially.

### **CROSSING BOUNDARIES**

Traditionally organized by departments based on academic disciplines, our universities have been reluctant to break this mold of compartmentalization. But we must realize that many of the most profound discoveries in science, technology and other branches of learning are occurring at the boundaries between disciplines. I believe that we must facilitate such opportunities for collaboration. Many of the most exciting advances in medicine, science, genetics, engineering, literature, the arts and other areas will only occur in those areas between the sharp dividing lines of disciplines. Fields of study that have evolved slowly and separately over time and kept researchers and scholars isolated must more seamlessly meld with other disciplines if our scholarship is to realize its full potential.

### **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

The discoveries, inventions and creations that come from our institutions have great value to the health and prosperity of society. Today, higher education is still seen as the engine of discovery and intellectual force behind the economic vitality of our nation.

As one of the primary producers of intellectual property, universities have a vested interest in nurturing and protecting these discoveries and in ensuring that this new knowledge reaches society. But the rapid deployment of new information technologies, changes in copyright law, and a growing interest in university-developed intellectual property demand that institutions review their current approach to knowledge creation and protection. In today's Internet world, most everything can be easily reproduced and distributed to a vast audience. We must find an appropriate balance between the interests of the creators of this intellectual property and its users.

### **THE DIGITAL AGE**

The rapidity with which information technology has penetrated higher education has left us little time to understand fully its impact or to anticipate what may come next. Powerful new technologies — many of them the products of our own research labs — are changing the fabric of institutional activities. All higher education institutions are facing the escalating challenge of developing and using these new digital tools to augment, enrich and support their missions.

We now have the technological means to make lifelong learning a reality, but accompanying these new opportunities are also issues related to connectivity and the financial challenges that go along with providing anytime, anywhere learning. Institutions that fall behind in providing adequate infrastructure will find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide and risk losing students to other educational providers.

Technology is also greatly impacting the structure of courses and programs. Instructional integration of these new tools is the greatest information technology challenge identified by colleges and universities today.

In addition, the Internet has brought higher education competition that was

unimaginable just a few years ago. Not only do these new enterprises compete for students; they also compete for our faculty. Leaders of institutions must be well-versed in all aspects of information technology in order for their institutions to continue effectively serving students.

### **ONLINE LEARNING**

While technology is enabling us to reach students where and when they are available to learn, I do not believe that online learning will replace resident instruction. Although continuing and distance education is the most rapid expansion area in higher education today, I believe it is the convergence of online learning and resident instruction that will provide some of the most interesting educational opportunities in the next decade.

*The rapidity with which information technology has penetrated higher education has left us little time to understand fully its impact or to anticipate what may come next.*

Right now, more than a third of U.S. colleges offer online degrees. And over the next several years, distance education is expected to experience a compound annual growth rate of 33 percent.

This growth is definitely having an impact on resident instruction, encouraging the use of technology at all levels. In 2000, almost 60 percent of college courses used e-mail for instructional purposes, compared to just 10 percent in 1994. More than 30 percent of courses now use a Web site, up from 7 percent six years ago. Institutions of higher learning must restructure and work to change policy and academic culture to take advantage of the immense potential of these opportunities.

Universities in the 21st century will be increasingly global in scope, aided by technology and involved with the pressing issues of society. How we respond today to the many challenges that line our path and how successful we are at integrating technology into the overall picture of higher education will be vitally important to our continuing leadership in the future.



# SCHOOL CHOICE

## Issues and Answers

BY Jerry Ellig

DR. ELLIG IS A SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE MERCATUS CENTER, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, AND RESEARCH FELLOW AT CITIZENS FOR A SOUND ECONOMY FOUNDATION (CSE), WHICH HAS GENEROUSLY GRANTED PERMISSION TO PUBLISH THIS ARTICLE. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FOUNDATION AND THE COMPLETE TEXT (INCLUDING A LISTING OF REFERENCES/CITATIONS), PLEASE VISIT THE CSE WEBSITE AT WWW.CSE.ORG.

Americans are free to make decisions about their health, education, and welfare. We can choose what to eat, how to exercise, whom to marry, where to worship, and which candidate deserves our vote. Students can use federal financial aid to attend the college of their choice — even a seminary! But most Americans have little ability to choose how or where their children will be educated during their most critical formative years.

Government decides where the vast majority of children in this country attend elementary through high school, and the fate of most children is determined by their address. Parents seeking the best school must either pay private tuition on top of the taxes they pay to support the public schools, or pay a premium to move to a neighborhood with good public schools. A lot of children do well under this system, but many do not. The children hurt the most are the most vulnerable — poor children whose families cannot afford an alternative to the public school in their neighborhood. Since public schools receive funding regardless of whether they do a good job, they face little pressure to improve. As usual, quality suffers when a substantial number of customers have no option to go elsewhere.

In an advanced Information Age economy, lifetime earnings prospects depend on the quality of education more than ever before. It should be no surprise that school choice has recently enjoyed growing support among parents and the general public.

### WHAT MAKES A GOOD SCHOOL?

To answer this question, it's important to understand what does not make a good school. Simply spending more money does not improve performance. Since the 1970s, spending per student has steadily risen and teacher-pupil ratios have steadily fallen. Yet over that same period, standardized test scores remained unchanged. International comparisons reveal that, if anything, larger teacher-pupil ratios are associated with better academic performance! A much-discussed Tennessee experiment found that reducing class sizes from 25 to 15 students increased achievement for kindergarten students but had no effect in higher grades. The experience of homeschoolers, meanwhile, suggests that teacher credentials make little difference; 25 percent of homeschooling parents are certified teachers, but their children perform no better on standardized tests than homeschooled children whose parents are not certified teachers.

Of course, one might argue that student performance would have gotten worse if the amount of resources devoted to education had not risen. To assess the effect of inputs, we really need to look at studies that control for the effects of other factors. Eric Hanushek, an education economist at the University of Rochester, examined most of the major studies on school effectiveness and found that common panaceas like more money, smaller classes, and more teacher training rarely make a difference.

INPUT MEASURE	NUMBER OF STUDIES	STUDIES SHOWING POSITIVE EFFECT	STUDIES SHOWING NEGATIVE OR NO EFFECT
Teacher-pupil ratio	277	15%	85%
Teacher Education	171	9%	91%
Teacher Salary	119	20%	80%
Expenditure per pupil	163	27%	73%

Source: Eric Hanushek, "Assessing the Effects of School Resources on Student Performance: An Update" Educational and Policy Analysis 19(2), Summer 1997, pp. 1411-164.

The most important factor affecting student performance is the school's organization and management. Effective schools generally exhibit commitment to a clearly defined academic mission, motivated leadership, and teacher participation in decisions. Schools most likely to have these characteristics are the schools that are most free from interference by higher levels of the educational bureaucracy. Three kinds of schools have this freedom: private schools, charter schools, and regular public schools not part of large systems or districts. If we want all children to have equal educational opportunities, all parents must have the ability to choose these schools.

### FORMS OF SCHOOL CHOICE

**Public school choice:** Open enrollment, magnet schools, and other programs within the regular public system allow parents to send their children to alternative public schools.

**Child-centered funding:** Allows parents to choose their children's school and then funds each public and/or private school based on the number of children enrolled.

**Charter schools:** A charter school is a public school that operates independently of the education bureaucracy's rules and teachers' union contracts. A charter school can educate students only if parents choose to send their children there, and it receives public funding based on enrollment. The school's charter specifies the results for which it will be held accountable. If the school fails to deliver on these results, it receives no more public money. Approximately 1,200 charter schools served more than 300,000 students in 27 states and the District of Columbia in 1999, and 38 states had laws permitting charter schools.

**Home schooling:** Between 700,000 and 1.5 million American children are home-schooled by their parents or tutors. That's three times as many homeschoolers as in 1990, and nine times the number in 1978.

**Vouchers:** Vouchers are scholarships that let students attend a school of their parents' choice. The principal difference between

vouchers and child-centered funding is the administrative mechanism. In a voucher system, schools redeem vouchers given to them by students; under student-centered funding, schools simply tell the government how many students they have and receive funding accordingly. Publicly funded vouchers have been used for decades in two states, New Hampshire and Maine, and two cities, Cleveland, Ohio (since 1996), and Milwaukee, Wisconsin (since 1990).

**Tuition tax credits/deductions:** A direct reduction in taxes that fully or partially offsets expenditures by parents or others on tuition and educational materials, such as books and computers.

**Tax-favored savings:** Various proposals allow parents to defer or eliminate taxes on investments set aside to pay education expenses.

**Private scholarships:** Since 1991, the Children's Educational Opportunity Foundation has provided scholarships that allow children from low-income families to attend private schools. In the 1999-2000 school year, 36,875 children received more than \$140 million worth of scholarships in 37 city-based and three statewide programs.

## RESULTS OF SCHOOL CHOICE

Many forms of school choice have been subjected to rigorous academic study, and the results are simple. School choice works: Students' test scores are higher, and school spending and taxes are lower, in metropolitan areas where the existence of a large number of independent school districts makes it easier for parents to choose among public schools by moving to another neighborhood.

Massachusetts has permitted parents to choose among public schools since 1991, and the district losing a student must pay up to \$5,000 to the district accepting the student. School districts with the largest losses responded by changing their policies and programs in ways that brought back many students in the ensuing years.

A nationwide survey of charter school students and parents revealed that 80 percent of students who were failing at their previous schools performed average or better in charter schools. More than half of them are now doing "good" or "excellent" work. Results improved for children in all ethnic groups and income levels.

After four years in a state-funded voucher program in Milwaukee, low-income

students performed 11 percentile points better in math and 6 points better in reading than similar students who did not receive vouchers. If the program produced such gains for all students over 12 years of schooling, it would eliminate more than half of the gap in reading performance and all of the gap in math performance between white and minority students.

After one year, Cleveland students receiving state-funded vouchers scored higher in language, math, reading, and social studies than similar public school students. At two new schools created to serve voucher students, students scored 5,7 percentile points higher in reading and 8,6 percentile points higher in math after one year. In contrast, percentile scores of inner-city public school students often fall by a point or two a year.

After one year, low-income New York City students using private scholarships to attend private schools scored 2 percentile points higher in reading and math than similar students in the public schools. Fourth and fifth graders did even better, with average math scores 5,9 percentile points higher and reading scores 4 points higher.

For every year students remain in San Antonio's regular public schools, their standardized test scores fall by 2 percentile points in math and 1,4 points in reading. But low-income students receiving privately funded scholarships or choosing to enroll in the city's "multilingual" schools keep up with their nationwide peers, retaining the same percentile scores from year to year. Similar results occurred in Indianapolis, where the performance of low-income middle school students receiving private scholarships held steady while that of their public school peers deteriorated.

Home-schooled students score higher on standardized tests than either public or private school students, and their scores increase more rapidly as they progress from one grade to another. One in four home-schoolers is at least one grade ahead of other students of the same age, and only 5 percent are working below the grade level for their age. The longer students are home-schooled, the better their performance, even after accounting for the fact that homeschooling parents are more highly educated than the general population.

School choice also improves regular public schools by encouraging innovation and competition: A new program in Florida

offers state-funded vouchers to students at schools who received "failing" grades in two out of four years. Two schools lost students due to vouchers in 1999; one responded by adopting a sharper focus on reading, writing, and math. All teachers in the school spend 90 minutes each morning teaching reading. One mother who took advantage of the vouchers noted, "It took competition to make improvements ... Everyone's focus now is the kids. It's a totally different scene. Why didn't they do it before?"

Surveys consistently show that parents whose children participate in school choice programs are much more satisfied with their chosen schools. Cleveland parents whose children received vouchers expressed much more satisfaction with their chosen schools' academic quality, safety, discipline, and attention paid to their children than parents whose children were still in the public schools. More than 80 percent of parents planned on sending their children back to their chosen school the following year.

Half of the parents of randomly chosen low-income students receiving privately funded scholarships in New York City give their schools a grade of "A," compared to only 12,5 percent of parents whose children applied for, but did not receive scholarships. Surveys of low-income applicants for privately funded scholarships in Washington, DC, Dayton, Ohio, and San Antonio, Texas, show that parents of students in private schools are much more satisfied with their schools' academic quality, safety, discipline, and teaching than parents of students in public schools.

The argument for educational choice is not just that choice improves academic achievement, but also that choice accommodates different parents' diversity of views about the types of education that they want for their children. The extensive Catholic school systems in the United States, for example, were established largely because poor Catholic immigrants feared that public schools would indoctrinate their children in Protestantism. In present-day America, educational choice would put an end to seemingly endless arguments over sex education, textbook choice, and censorship in school libraries; parents could simply choose schools that reflect their values instead of fighting to impose their values on their neighbors' children. The result would be an immeasurable but long-overdue increase in civility and social harmony.



# GRAND ILLUSIONS

## Vouchers' Dismal Performance to Date

**BY** Ralph G. Neas

People for the American Way Foundation ([www.pfaw.org](http://www.pfaw.org))

THERE IS A STRONG CONSENSUS AMONG THE AMERICAN PEOPLE THAT THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS NEED HELP. THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, A GREAT MANY PROMISING REFORMS ARE BEING PURSUED, BUT NO PROPOSAL HAS GARNERED THE NATIONWIDE ATTENTION ENJOYED BY VOUCHERS, A PROGRAM THAT DIVERTS PUBLIC MONIES FROM PUBLIC EDUCATION TO ENABLE INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN TO ATTEND PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

In the last few years pilot voucher programs have been established in Milwaukee and Cleveland, making it possible to compare ambitious claims with actual outcomes. So let's look at the real-world experience with vouchers in Milwaukee and Cleveland. The chief finding is that vouchers are a grand illusion.

### VOUCHERS FAIL TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The central argument made in support of vouchers is that they will trigger market competition — and public school improvements — as parents seek out the best schools and leave substandard schools. Let's examine the reality.

Vouchers drain resources from public schools. Overall, the amount of money diverted from the public schools in Milwaukee and Cleveland has been substantial — \$22 million in Milwaukee for the 6,000 voucher students, a sum that could triple, barring a change in the funding formula, if the program reaches its maximum capacity of 15,000 students. In Cleveland, more than \$5.25 million has been diverted to voucher schools, a sum due to increase to as much as \$25.4 million within the next three years.

Supporters of vouchers have presented no evidence to date explaining how voucher monies in Milwaukee and Cleveland have actually improved the public schools or student achievement. In fact, as noted below, student achievement results are mixed at best.

Voucher programs siphon the best students from public schools, resulting in an overall decline in the quality of public school achievement. In an attempt to target the neediest students, the Milwaukee voucher program is restricted to disadvantaged students only. Yet as one researcher writes, "Even when participation was restricted to families with incomes no higher than 1.75 times the poverty level, parents of choice applicants in the Milwaukee voucher experiment had considerably more education and parental involvement than the average parent of children in the Milwaukee public schools."

How then will voucher schools help students whose parents are less engaged, less educated?

A large proportion of voucher funds subsidize existing private school students. Vouchers cannot be considered "opportunity scholarships" when much of the money is simply subsidizing the parents of students already enrolled in private schools. In Milwaukee, more than one-third of voucher students attended private schools the year before receiving a voucher. In Cleveland, nearly one-quarter of the program's cost in the first year went to pay for students enrolled in private schools the previous year.

Former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley estimat-

ed that a national voucher program would cost approximately \$15 billion before even the first child left a public school.

### THE POOR ACCOUNTABILITY, DUBIOUS EFFECTIVENESS AND "CREAM-SKIMMING" OF VOUCHER SCHOOLS

It's not even clear that voucher students get a better education than they would if they stayed in their public schools. Let's look at the Milwaukee and Cleveland experiences.

Voucher schools lack basic standards of public accountability for their funds and management. They are not required to comply with open meetings and records laws; they do not have to open their books for public inspection; and they do not have to release test score and attendance data. The diversion of public monies to such inherently unaccountable institutions is a prescription for waste, fraud and mismanagement. In Milwaukee, three voucher schools closed in the middle of the 1995-96 school year amidst controversies over fraud and mismanagement.

Milwaukee has seen other abuses of public standards. Instead of assuring that voucher schools would choose students randomly, as many as 40% of the religious schools in the program failed to demonstrate that they were living up to the random-selection requirement. Some religious schools explicitly exempted their parishioners from random selection. In Wisconsin, a number of religious schools balked at having to comply with the state's Pupil Nondiscrimination Act, which prohibits public schools from discriminating against students on the basis of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. Facing political pressure, the state Department of Public Instruction withdrew the requirement that religious schools pledge to follow the rule.

Voucher plans have no mechanisms to allow parents to make informed comparisons of schools, as any free-market model requires. Since advocates tout vouchers as a market-based reform, it would be reasonable to expect that they would seek to create mechanisms to help consumers make reliable, informed comparisons of both public and private schools. In fact, the laws now on the books in Ohio and Wisconsin do nothing of the sort. And proposals in many state legislatures go to some lengths to shield voucher schools from scrutiny by their potential customers.

Full disclosure about voucher schools would reveal many significant deficiencies in services. Perhaps one reason that full information disclosure is resisted has to do with the lack of services and resources in many voucher schools. For example, many private

schools refuse to hire teachers with advanced training, serve children with special needs or provide other important services that the public schools generally provide. According to government statistics:

- Less than one-quarter of the nation's private schools have facilities or programs for children with physical disabilities. (About 90 percent of public schools do.)
- Fewer than 25 percent of private schools have programs to provide government-subsidized, reduced-price lunches for children. (More than 95% of public schools do.)
- Less than one-third of private schools provide medical services such as a school nurse. (Nearly three-fifths of public schools do.)
- Just over 45% of private schools provide no remedial academic support services for students who are lagging behind. (Some 83% of public schools do offer such services.)

The very best private schools won't participate in voucher programs. According to survey research conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, some 86% of religious schools would not participate in a voucher program if they were required to permit exemptions from religious instruction or activities; and one-third to one-half would not participate if they had to accept randomly assigned transfer students from the public schools. Only 15% to 31% would participate if they were required to accept students. Most voucher schools are far more eager to accept public funds than to shoulder public responsibilities or accountability.

Student performance results in Milwaukee and Cleveland are mixed at best. The study commissioned by the state found that there was no academic advantage for students attending voucher schools, while another found mixed results. A third study, funded by pro-voucher foundations, found that voucher students outperform public school counterparts, but experts have discredited this research — commonly known as the "Peterson study" — because of shoddy analysis.

They note, for example, that the Peterson study of the Milwaukee program omitted voucher school dropouts from their statistical sample. One critic scoffed: "Would we believe a scientist who claimed

that smoking has no harmful health effects based on a study that simply tracked smokers who were alive?" Unlike the other studies of the Milwaukee voucher program, the Peterson team never submitted its work for peer review but instead released their findings directly to the media — in one instance, to the op-ed pages of the Wall Street Journal.

The Peterson team's study of the Cleveland voucher program has also been challenged on methodological grounds. The State of Ohio's official evaluation of the program, conducted by an independent review team from the Indiana Center for Evaluation, came to quite different conclusions; Ohio found that:

- While voucher students performed modestly better than their public school classmates in language, there were no significant differences in reading, science, mathematics or social studies.
- Students attending two newly established private schools performed significantly less well in all tested areas than scholarship students attending established private schools or than their public school peers.

In short, the first evidence emerging from the Milwaukee and Cleveland experiments offers scant hope that voucher programs will truly provide a better education, even in the less complicated environment of a private or parochial school.

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS WITH VOUCHERS

Directing tax dollars to the support of religious instruction — as vouchers do — runs roughshod over the well-respected principles of separation of church and state. No citizen should be compelled to support another person's faith or religious institutions through his or her tax dollars. The Supreme Court has so far refused to hear any of the cases brought in response to the new wave of voucher laws. Backers of the Milwaukee voucher program mischaracterize the Court's silence as an affirmative approval of the plan.

Eventually, the Court will surely hear a voucher case. When it does, it will need look no further than its own ruling in *Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist* (1973), 413 U.S. 756. In that case, the New York legislature had adopted a program of tuition reimbursement payments to the parents of students from low-

income families attending private schools. Approximately 85% of the schools were sectarian. The Court held that the program was unconstitutional because a "primary effect" was to advance religion.

The overwhelming majority of private schools in America are sectarian, and their avowed mission is to propagate the faith.

- Some 55% of Catholic school principals describe "religious development" as their school's top educational goal — more important than academic excellence.
- 59% of Christian schools rank "religious development" as their top priority.
- In the Cleveland voucher program, 80% of the vouchers are being used in private religious schools.

Religious training cannot be isolated in sectarian schools because it is integrated into the curriculum. Schools created to spread the faith generally do just that and do not compartmentalize the "religious" from the "educational." Thus biology classes might teach the religious doctrine of the Creation as scientific fact while ignoring or denigrating evolution. Sex education classes might tailor instruction on birth control and disease prevention to their own religious doctrine or omit it altogether. Classwork that touches on homosexuality or the study of other religions will likely be affected as well.

Students, it is true, can choose not to participate in voucher programs. But the fact remains that taxpayers will be funding religious instruction — and in some cases, religious intrusion.

## CONCLUSION

The force that has propelled vouchers to its current preeminence is the Religious Right political movement, specifically the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council, and Focus on the Family. The energy, dollars and ground troops provided by these organizations and others have helped make vouchers the Republican Party's central proposal for education reform.

Our primary concern must be to maintain one of America's greatest gifts to every past generation and to those that follow — the public school. Yes, we must acknowledge that problems in public education do exist. But the voucher program simply has not worked in its present experimental state, and won't work were it to expand nationwide, at an astronomical cost.

# THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY

## Three views from the corner office

### FIAT LUX: THE LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES 2020

**BY** Louis P. Visentin  
President and Vice-Chancellor, Brandon University



What is the single most important issue facing “the university”? If you read *University Affairs* or the *CAUT Bulletin* you might be inclined to think it is one or all of the following:

Tuition deregulation, indirect costs, student recruitment, deferred maintenance, capital campaigns, faculty retention, Online-U, safe workplace or poisoned environments, labour relations, athletic scholarships, commercialization of research, Maclean’s rankings, research chairs, tuition hikes, smart classrooms, and student debt load.

The above reads like the agenda for an AUCC meeting of university Presidents. From UBC to Brandon to Memorial, these are important issues for all institutions; issues that are often difficult, divisive, costly, and at best, time consuming. We fret about them. We plan. We mobilize resources to deal with them. We work and we hope.

### CLIMATE OF CHANGE AND THE E-WORLD

As these issues indicate, the world and how we know it has changed dramatically in the last ten years. It is termed Post-modern in the cant of casuists from the land of Lacan, and is a much different reality than the 60s and 70s in which most administrators and professors matured. The world à la 2001 is connected, culturally diverse, non-linear, and global, with an accent on partnerships, quality, complexity, and a high rate of change.

At the same time it is filled with cultural paradox. We think globally and act locally. Mergers abound but small is beautiful. The emphasis is on mega or nano, including universities. We have mass production multiversities and boutique emporiums of elitist values rooted in the distant past. The intellectual “Sears and Saks” operate side by side with the electronic opportunists of distance education. E-U’s offer e-degrees and diplomas ad libitum at less than bargain basement prices.

Online Universities, Consortia and Corporate America have invaded cyberspace. There are new entries into the education market every week and this proliferation will continue. The market capitalization of the twenty or so corporate players already on the horizon approached 10 billion in June of 2000. Of course the former don’t include consortia like the Unext.com:Cardean University, Global University Alliance, Scottish Knowledge, the Mercury Group of Malaysia, and our own Canadian Virtual University. Does this indicate change? The terse answer is yes.

These new forces will serve the demographic and developmental demands of the Third World and of local governments concerned with rural access. Is this new e-world leading us further into the maw of consumerism, utilitarianism, and specialization? No doubt yes, and with a minimalist curricula to match. It is a new environment to which we must adapt. This has all been made possible by the new broad-band communications technologies.

While some academics and critics rebel against technique as an intellectual abomination that only serves the gods and gurus of commercial technology, there is a nagging suspicion that new technologies have changed our world in a fundamental way. I think it has and there are many examples.

### KNOWING, TEACHING AND LEARNING

If the goal of our system is to teach students how to know, then the computer and its allied technologies have changed everything. Consider how technology has allowed explorations in: cosmology, the human genome, the fine structure of the atom, the nature of fractals, population dynamics, economic modeling, geographical information systems or digital art. Not surprisingly, computers have changed what we know about these topics, how we know, how we apply knowledge, and who can access this knowledge. It has allowed for an element of design and understanding of the underlying architecture of knowledge, heretofore impossible to achieve, a jump to another level of abstraction. Simultaneously, it has changed how we know each other. It doesn’t end there. At a time when we need synthesis and multi-disciplinarity, newer consilient search engines will generate and synthesize knowledge across disciplines and provide tools for a different kind of creativity.

### THINKING AND OTHER LEARNING CONUNDRUMS

The technology debates are helping us to focus our attention on the most important aspect of an academic community: our consumers. What are the things that our students are most in need of learning ... so that they can make a living, live together, and live well? Have we imparted the right content? Have we enhanced thinking tools? Are our students truly literate across disciplines? This is what education is about after all. In the chain of knowing, data is not information and information is not knowledge. Knowledge is not understanding, and understanding is not wisdom. The hope has always been that a university education will spark the internal imagination and improve understanding. Given the turmoil and transition in our world, it is questionable how successful we’ve been.

Stated in another way, universities need to teach students how to know, as well as impart and improve the thinking tools that are at the heart of creative understanding. Described by Robert Root-Bernstein in “Roots of Genius”, these include observing, abstracting, analogizing, empathizing, dimensional thinking, transforming, and synthesizing. Critical thinking and productive thought do not only mean being exposed to the narrative, projection and parable of textual literacy. Great books are

not enough to impart modern literacy or “literacy”. We think in words, numbers, shapes, sounds and sensations. Our internal imagining is constructed by a combination of mimetic visualization, the logic of data and external experience. To quote Root-Bernstein, “Productive thought occurs when internal imagination and external experience coincide. It is the task for educators to reunite the two.”

### **RETHINKING LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCE: GOODBYE TRILLING**

With this in mind, we need to question our curriculum — questions that are framed in the context of what it means to live in the world of today and tomorrow. Three guiding principles come to mind: beauty, truth and the common good ... for today and tomorrow. How do we achieve the level of abstraction needed to know the world we actually live in without some exposure to a curriculum with breadth. Just what should that be?

We live in a world permeated by the fruits of mathematics, science, and technology. Modern literacy means going beyond just textual and numeric understanding. It is a context that would make Lionel Trilling, the twentieth century’s most influential literary critic, uncomfortable. The new curricula incorporates philosophy, literature, languages, and history but includes more of the sciences, mathematics, computation, music, and art (including the performing arts). This philosophy mirrors the Swedish approach to education, which begins with a science core and expands from there ... not the reverse.

It sounds more like the trivium and quadrivium of medieval times. The liberal arts of that era were defined as subjects which one was expected to study after basic instruction in literacy, in other words, Latin and Greek. The trivium was grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The quadrivium included arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. These latter four were all connected through mathematics. All of this was considered important for anyone pursuing law, business or politics. A social conscience with a mathematical twist.

### **HOW ABOUT EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

Needless to say we do little or nothing to educate in the realm of social or emotional development. If Daniel Coleman is right in saying that emotional intelligence is twice as important as cognitive skills, then we are educating the wrong people with the wrong curriculum for the wrong world. It’s perplexing and sobering that we admit students on the basis of their performance scores related to cognitive intelligence and we are even ranked according to how many of them we have.

Emotional intelligence is very plastic and continues to reshape itself through repeated experience. How do we build this into curricula? We need another renaissance. A new enlightenment if you will, and perhaps we have one in our midst. We need a melding of the world of experiential knowledge with the symbolic, theoretical and emotional. The step from knowledge to understanding and wisdom is one that demands the fusion of the image, object and sentiment. It must be an entangling of the tactile world of the senses, with the noetic. All this in a curriculum? Take two parts Galileo and add one part Michaelangelo. Now there’s a good start: Physics and Fine Arts. Then there are the professional schools. Still feel comfortable?

### **MEANWHILE IN ‘O CANADA WEST’**

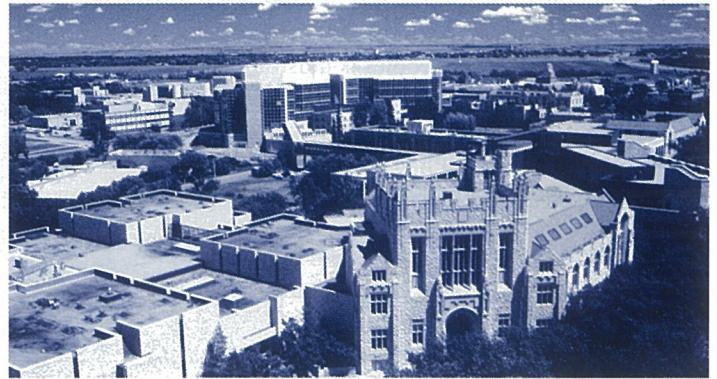
This is Brandon, Manitoba. It is the centre of Canada, a place of boundless horizons, fields of sunflowers, wheat and prairie roses. These lands are filled with memories of trappers, traders, and the Hudson’s Bay Company. It’s where the West begins and where Dobjanski is not a foreign name. Brandon University is where Tommy Douglas was “senior stick”, and is the home of the Bobcats, who bow to no one. The School of Music is internationally renowned, and the liberal arts and sciences are alive and well.

There’s change in the wind.

### **MAKING THE GRADE MEASURING UP TO PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

**BY** Peter MacKinnon

President, University of Saskatchewan



The public fascination with “winners” and “losers” is as old as Cain and Abel. In modern times this fascination has taken a new twist: a desire to rank everything from consumer products to health care providers. Higher education has not been immune to this trend. American universities and colleges are ranked annually in U.S. News and World Report, while in Canada Maclean’s magazine has been ranking Canadian universities since 1991.

These comparisons have arisen to satisfy a public need for informed decision-making. Prospective students in Canada face a dizzying array of post-secondary education choices, from apprenticeship programs to business and technical training schools to community colleges and universities. New competitors such as online universities and private institutions add to the mix. How is a prospective student to choose?

The more significant the purchase, the greater the amount of information a buyer seeks in order to feel comfortable making his or her decision. Consider the amount of information gathered by a prospective car buyer before making a choice. Consumers who are in the market for major appliances turn to resources such as Consumer Reports. When one considers how much more significant the choice of higher education is, it is not surprising that prospective students and their families yearn for an objective third party to provide comparisons of institutions.

Rankings appeal to a basic human yearning for simplicity. However, in higher education one size does not fit all. Unlike many consumer purchases, the choice of higher education is a

highly personal one. Human beings are complex creatures, and their dreams and aspirations, their talents and experiences, and their particular life circumstances are peculiar to themselves. A successful choice of university would take into account the particular needs of an individual, in a way that is seldom, if ever, reflected in rankings.

For example, in Saskatchewan our demographic projections show that in a few years, our student body will be increasingly Aboriginal. We have already seen a marked growth in the number of students of First Nations descent enrolled at our institution. To better serve these students, we have implemented a number of initiatives including an elders' program, an Aboriginal Students Centre, and an Aboriginal caucus to advise the president. Every autumn the University holds a pow-wow in the centre of campus, as part of our Welcome Week activities. We have formed a partnership with our local Tribal Council to offer Super Saturdays, where Aboriginal children visit campus to take part in engaging educational activities, as well as summer science camps for Aboriginal teens. The purpose of both of these initiatives is to foster a positive attitude toward education in Aboriginal youth.

The University of Saskatchewan's commitment to meeting the needs of Aboriginal peoples is illustrated by this goal's inclusion in our academic strategic plan. However, ranking exercises do not take such mandates into account. Only two Maclean's criteria come close to encouraging diversity in the student body: the percentage of out-of-province first year students, and the number of international graduate students (where the University of Saskatchewan ranks first in its class). Neither of these criteria has any bearing on the number of Aboriginal students attending university.

In the mid-1990s, Canadian provincial governments became interested in developing performance indicators for publicly funded sectors like higher education. While Maclean's rankings are criticized for focusing too narrowly on input measures (such as size of operating grant per full-time-equivalent student), a provincial government's focus on output measures (such as graduate employability) may fail to take into account the critical influence of inputs on outcome. In jurisdictions where provincial funding is tied to outputs, a self-fulfilling cycle of mediocrity can inadvertently be established.

The solution to this dilemma for higher education is to embrace the accountability challenge. Each institution must determine its desired position in terms of programs, student body and research, and develop the performance indicators or measurements that will help it to achieve that position. Clear communication about these indicators and progress toward them will then provide prospective students with valuable information upon which to base their decisions.

Many universities produce fact books that contain a plethora of information: enrollment data, faculty and staff profiles, revenue and expenditure figures, and so on. Very few of these explain why this particular set of data is important to the institution's strategic plan. Nor, I suspect, do many institutions refer to this data in their planning and decision making processes.

Fostering a strategic planning approach in a highly decentralized environment can be a challenge for universities. Different schools within a single university made aspire to very different market positions. Similarly, the may of a large provincial universi-

ty to offer a broad array of programs to as many students as possible, may mean that the institution's market niche is based on something other than distinctive programs. In such a case, competitive advantage may come through an enhanced student experience.

The ability to develop meaningful performance indicators relies first upon the existence of a dynamic strategic planning and management process. Benchmarked performance measures could then be developed which are relevant to the institution's mission and vision. Budget allocations to support these strategic areas, and annual reports to measure progress would round out the cycle of accountability.

Canadian universities and colleges may not yet be at the point of linking data to objectives and therefore to decision making. However, as the costs of higher education, the number and type of education providers, and the degree of program specialization increase, the public need for useful information upon which to base choices will become even greater. Those institutions that respond to this need will find themselves at the top of the list.

## KEEPING THE SMALL UNIVERSITY STRONG IN THE NEW ECONOMY

**BY** Janyne M. Hodder  
Principal, Bishop's University

Bishop's University is a small (2000 students) liberal arts university founded in 1843, offering programmes in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, business administration and education, primarily at the undergraduate level. Situated in rural Québec, we are an anglophone institution in a largely francophone environment.

Along with our sister institutions, we have undergone severe budget cuts over the last several years, losing about 25% of our operating budget. A major effect of this was the reduction of the full-time faculty complement from 107 to 86. Some of them were replaced with part-time and sessional staff, and many were not replaced at all. Of course, the budget squeeze was also felt in all of the academic and service areas: a number of senior and middle-management positions have remained vacant, and operating expenditures have been reduced by about 20%.

The Québec government has now indicated its willingness to re-invest in post-secondary education in the province, with substantial grants to be spread over a three-year period, as well as changes to the funding formula. Access to this funding is however contingent on the signing of a performance contract between each university and the Minister of Education. These are tailored to suit the specific circumstances of each institution.

As Bishop's University looks ahead over the next five to ten years, we see three principal areas of concern.

The first is the recruitment and retention of faculty. We must fill some of the positions which have been vacant for several years now, and hire in new areas of priority for our developing programmes. It is well known that the coming wave of faculty retirements will make recruitment a challenge for all Canadian universities. There is the question of competitive wages, as well as the thorny issue of market differential in certain disciplines, which

administrations and faculty associations will need to wrestle with. We as a small undergraduate school, away from major urban centres, face a particular challenge in attracting highly qualified new professors, and providing them with stimulating working conditions. How can we find mechanisms to support active researchers fresh from doctoral and post-doctoral programmes? We are focussing now on improving our support for faculty research by opening a Research Office to help with the search for project funding. We are also actively exploring opportunities for our faculty to collaborate in research projects and graduate student supervision with our neighbour, the Université de Sherbrooke, as well as other institutions further afield.

A second concern is student recruitment and success. Our goal is to maintain our student population at between 1850 and 2000 full-time students. Over the last fifteen years our recruitment base has shifted from the primarily local Québec anglophone community from which we drew most of our students in our early years. Beginning in the mid-eighties, we began to see more and more students from elsewhere in Canada, and in particular from Ontario. More recently, we have maintained a strong pan-Canadian base while also attracting increasing numbers of Québec students, often students whose first language is French. A few years ago, we significantly strengthened our recruitment efforts in the north-eastern United States and internationally, which has led to an increase in this student population from about 4% in 1995 to over 10% in 2000-01.

Concerned as we are for the recruitment of high-quality students who are eager for the special liberal-arts environment we offer, we have dedicated additional resources to our scholarship programme, which has grown from \$300,000 to more than \$700,000 over six years; this year 20% of our entering class were scholarship holders. These funds have come almost exclusively from private sources, as a result of a very successful capital campaign.

Now, demographics across Canada show a potential increase in university-eligible young people, but only in certain areas — Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia. Our challenge is to continue to recruit good students, and to make sure that these students succeed in their programmes at Bishop's. We are taking a closer look now at the first-year experience — this is a period when students away from home for the first time are most at risk — and we are examining our information on student perseverance and time to completion to see where remedial action may be needed.

A third area of concern (and this seems to be increasingly common across the country) is how best to respond to increasing pressures for accountability from government while at the same time preserving the essential autonomy of the university in the planning and development of its academic programmes. We have

found the recent performance contract exercise difficult in that it did not permit us to follow the traditional planning processes of our Senate and Board, but rather obliged us to tailor our activities to fit what we perceived to be the expectations of the Minister. The management of the changing relationship with government is becoming increasingly demanding. We recognize that this may

***Our challenge is to continue to recruit good students, and to make sure that these students succeed in their programmes at Bishop's.***

simply reflect the general public's increased interest in being better informed about the use of its resources. We still believe, however, that the most fruitful changes are and must be driven by institutional choice and ownership of the process.

Related to this issue, there is the question of levels of public versus private funding for higher education. Tuition fees in Québec have been frozen for some years at the lowest level in Canada: approximately \$1,650 per year. Students from elsewhere pay a higher rate, but this additional amount does not return to our universities. The recent cutbacks in public funding have compelled us to exercise our imaginations in achieving our goals. Increasingly universities are turning to the private sector to fund essential aspects of the mission: technology upgrades, scholarships, dedicated faculty chairs, research programmes. At Bishop's, the level of private funding has risen from 1% of the budget to 6% in the last five years, but we still find that we

have significantly less to spend on each of our students than comparable institutions in other provinces have. While there is certainly a role for fundraising from private sources within the university, in the current Canadian context where education is seen as a public good as well as a benefit to the individual, we can debate what the balance between these two sources of funding ought to be. What is clear, is that without major increases in the amount of money we spend, we are not going to be able to compete in the faculty recruitment and retention marketplace, nor provide to our students the educational and living experience they both need and deserve.

At the heart of our challenges is the need for small primarily undergraduate universities such as Bishop's to manage the changes that affect our academic landscape. These include the increased emphasis on high-tech team-based research, the focus on the "potential usefulness" of different programmes, and the increasingly competitive market for faculty and students. We must succeed in this, so we may continue to fulfil the mission to which we are profoundly committed: that of providing a sound and liberal education, the kind most likely to serve not only the new economy but also the society of which Canadians are justly proud.



# THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

## The State of Public Education in Canada

BY Thomas Harapnuick

MR. HARAPNUICK, RECIPIENT OF A 1999-2000 PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE (CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE), IS HEAD OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT AT PRINCE OF WALES SECONDARY SCHOOL IN VANCOUVER.

Some teachers and students, as well as some parents and members of the general public, are in full battle cry over what they see as the diminished state of public education in Canada. Not a month goes by without these voices, sometimes in chorus, bemoaning how this once significant institution has fallen upon hard times. And not a month goes by without newspapers and magazines, radio talk shows and TV stations doing stories on the failure of public education. Escalating discipline problems, teacher incompetence and exhaustion, a lack of standards and rigor, insufficient monies for resources and training, and sorely out of date and irrelevant curricula have all been thrown on the table as evidence of this decline. And to some extent there is a legitimacy in these claims; however, there are some significant ways in which this is far from the actual picture.

In the first place, public education has its own struggles — what social institution today does not? The family, the church, the local community, they are all showing signs of fatigue. That is not to say, however, that the school system (or any of these other institutions for that matter) does not work. The school system may very well be one of the last successfully functioning social institutions that we have, and ironically, its successes may have much to do with what its critics would claim are its inherent weaknesses.

Firstly, our public schools do not have (nor would they want, I suspect) the easy luxury of doing what so many other institutions do (including private schools): the disqualification of “unsuitable” candidates. The public school system is mandated to accept all students and, as a consequence, there are some who might question the caliber of some of those students entering the system and even the nature of the system itself. They will cite “evening news” statistics and anecdotal “tales” that attest to this: favorites usually include teen pregnancy rates, rampant drug use, and an accelerating frequency and intensity of bullying and violence. While these are indeed problems in need of our attention, they are not the norm, nor are they the benchmarks by which our students should be evaluated.

By and large, our students today are a far more comforting, responsible and helpful group than the adult population at large. What's more, there is probably more violence, apathy and reckless disregard in the adult population than in our schools. This generation has had placed in front of it (by our hands) almost every conceivable temptation — drugs, cybersex, endless consumption of manufactured goods, virtual and real violence — and has done, for the most part, a fine job of resisting these temptations. They may very well be the first generation that does not have the luxury of community, family or church to help them maneuver through all of this undamaged. Those who fail to see the rich character of today's youth might really only be showing their position on the human nature debate (man is inherently evil vs. man is inherently good). In any event, like Pascal's wager, it benefits us to proceed only on the

basis that our young reflect a human nature that is both positive and decent. What would be gained in believing otherwise?

At this point I feel I must grant the Cassandras — those that lament the state of public education — one significant concession: while the vast majority of students entering the public school system continue to have wonderful minds and hearts, that portion of the school population that has always entered our doors in need now comes to us in even greater need. These children, so very much damaged because of their upbringing in a reckless age, need more guidance, more resources and more help to ensure their success. And today many efforts are being marshaled to reach just this end.

Another substantial reason for the success of our schools lies in their on-going efforts to reach that fine balance between character education and content education; that balance that aims to create adults of good character and adults who possess fine skills and abilities — both of which are essential for living a good life.

An individual who has mastery over specific skills and ideas but has no compassion for the unquelled hunger in the world (or the hunger in his own neighborhood for that matter) is no more an educated person than that individual who might possess the most intense passion for the world's suffering, but have no tools to alleviate it. Education of value is essentially an attempt to reconcile the importance inherent in both of these elements. And while some of those voices mentioned earlier cry out for “back to basics” and more rigor and focus on academic excellence, and still other voices cry out for schools that are more humane and student focused, our schools seldom make the mistake sacrificing one for the other.

Instead of having students blindly consume and recycle data in an endless spiral, we now focus in on their ability to analyze, evaluate and create information. Instead of assuming that some other institution — usually the family or the church — is going to equip all children with the attributes and values needed to succeed, we now bring this goal, as well, into the classroom. The teaching of knowledge is as vital as the teaching of how one of character should use knowledge.

By way of conclusion, a third significant factor contributing to the success of our schools must be mentioned — even if only briefly. Public schools in Canada are still places where a sense of hopeful future exists; where students, as author Jennifer James would say, think in the future tense. It is a place where committed teachers and administrators reach through the flux of a difficult time to nurture and polish a new generation rich in potential and aspiration. Bill Woods, an administrator with the Vancouver School Board, recently said that the true benchmark of a school's success can be seen by measuring the impact that it has on the lives of its children and by how far towards personal success they have taken these students. Unquestionably true words. An institution that works so well in its overriding goal to ensure the ascent of its students, is surely not itself in decline.

# MISBEHAVIOUR in the classroom

BY Louise Cloutier

MS. CLOUTIER, RECIPIENT OF A 1999-2000 PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE (CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT), IS AN ART TEACHER AT PUGWASH DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL IN NOVA SCOTIA.

Saturday morning the phone rang. It was the substitute teacher. Inservicing had lured me out of the classroom the day before and there was a particular class that she'd like to discuss with me, if I had a minute or two. One half hour later we hung up. Not good.

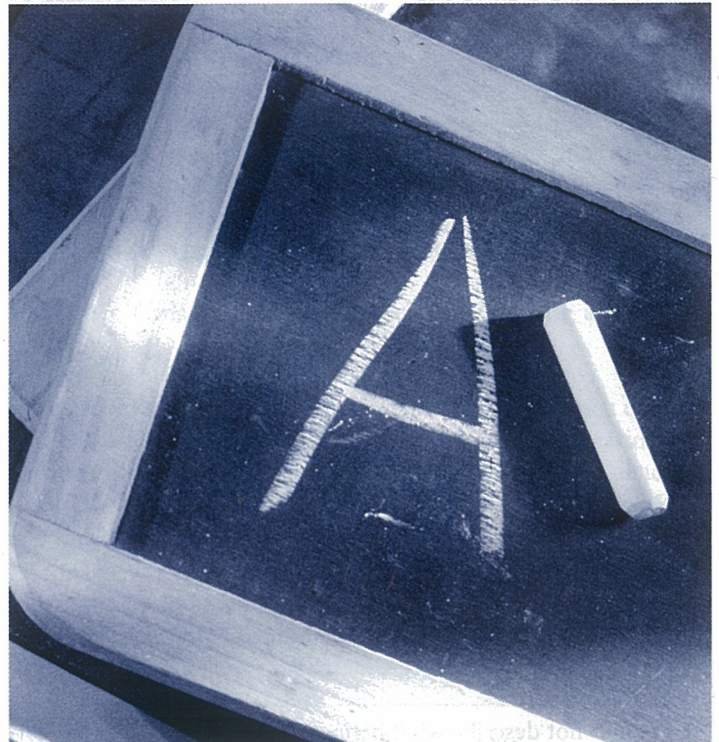
Predictably, negative student behaviours are exaggerated in the absence of the regular classroom teacher. A sort of "While the cat's away..." mentality prevails which challenges the new teacher to earn her relatively meagre pay. Several factors are certain contributors to undesirable behaviours on these days. A student feels anonymous in the eyes of the new authority figure. Anonymity means unaccountability. Paired with the impermanence of the substitute's status, a student realizes that there is little chance for the regular route of teacher recourse: the scheduling of a detention, the talk in the hall, or a call home to a parent. A trip to the office isn't completely ruled out but students feel safe acting out in numbers. Pinpointing one child in a sea of unknown faces is not an easy task and the substitute, in fear of being perceived as ineffective, isn't likely to send half the class to the principal's office!

New teachers as well as the veterans of the classroom encounter intolerable student behaviour. The general consensus amongst teachers is that there are more challenges pertaining to behaviour than there were in the "Good Old Days". The question that begs to be asked is "Why?"

All students, regardless of their abilities, will misbehave at some point in their academic careers. The reasons for misbehaviour are as diverse as are the people who cross the classroom's threshold. This does not suggest that all students are bad. Testing the limits of the tester is somewhat a rite of passage for students. Viewed in a positive light, occasional inappropriate behaviour is an exercise which familiarizes the student with accountability and consequences.

Chronic misbehaviour has more serious connotations. It disrupts not only the learning of the individual who is acting out, but also puts at risk the education of all students. Latch key lifestyles, unrestricted television and movie viewing, the disintegration of the family unit and the severing of community ties, to name just a few, have placed authority figures low on the totem pole. These students are unreceptive to the intervention of adults who have otherwise been absent in the decision making process involved in other situations in their lives. The most effective remedy in these scenarios is for the teacher to invest more time getting to know the student, an option which is nonexistent for substitutes.

A recent shift in educational strategies is also responsible for additional behavioural problems in the classroom. Accommodations and Individual Educational Plans mean that more special needs students are mainstreamed into the regular classroom. The upside of this is that these students are encountering more positive educational outcomes and are more likely to



stay in school longer. The downside is that behavioural problems often accompany students who, over the years, have learned to act out in order to cope with the daily frustrations of achieving success. Of the nineteen students who exasperated my substitute, five children are identified as special needs students. Two of the five require a teacher assistant in the room. However, budgetary constraints and scheduling have resulted in the unavailability of an assistant at that time. Had the substitute known this beforehand, she may have made herself unavailable for that day.

With the threat of more inservicing on the horizon, a mere talk with the disruptive class seemed insufficient. Temporarily putting the regular program aside, I opted to do interactive activities with the students which would enable them to adopt skills and responsibilities of good behaviour. Also in need of attention were my own preparations for the substitute. In the hopes of reducing anonymity, seating arrangement lists for my eleven different classes are presently in the works. In addition, I have created a few quick-to-read emergency lesson plans should the substitute feel more comfortable presenting a new lesson rather than following the one in progress. Finally, after further discussion with the substitute and on my invitation, she agreed, for better or for worse, to observe my teaching practices in the classroom.

I have yet to be absent from my room again, but I am confident things will improve. In the meantime, Saturday mornings are all mine!

## WITH JAMES L. TURK

Executive Director, Canadian Association of University Teachers  
 Directeur général, Association canadienne des professeurs  
 et professeurs d'université

**CITC** You recently participated in the MUNFA walk-out at Memorial. Do you see the deterioration in the public sector collective bargaining process in Newfoundland as a unique development or indicative of a more widespread problem?

**JT** I would not describe what happened at Memorial as a "deterioration in the public sector collective bargaining process." Rather, underfunding and growing commercial pressure on university administrations to act as if they were private sector corporations are creating an increasingly difficult bargaining climate.

**CITC** Is faculty shortage a major concern today?

**JT** Yes. The anticipated increase in enrolment due to the echo of the baby boom and the large number of faculty retirements over the coming decade will create an unusual problem. Our concern is that university administrators will deal with this problem in the same way as their industrial counterparts — by expanding their use of casual labour (there has already been a skyrocketing use of part-time faculty) and by using technology to replace people. The hundreds of millions being spent on online technologies in this era of underfunding suggests administrations are looking to the technology, not as a supplement to face-to-face teaching, but as a replacement for it.

**CITC** What is your counsel to those pursuing doctoral degrees in the hope of joining the ranks of university teachers?

**JT** I would encourage them to pursue their studies, if that is their interest and passion. There will be a lot of job opportunities, and good ones if we can prevent the casualization of the profession

OUR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS ARE AT THE HEART OF MANY OF THE DEBATES RAGING ACROSS THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SPECTRUM. IN HIS WORDS, THE CAUT'S JAMES TURK ADDRESSES SEVERAL OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES OF THE DAY.

NOS PROFESSEURS D'UNIVERSITÉ SE RETROUVENT AU CŒUR DE PLUSIEURS DÉBATS QUI TRAVERSENT FURIEUSEMENT LE SPECTRE ÉDUCATIONNEL. EN SES MOTS, JAMES TURK DE L'ACPPU ADRESSE CERTAINES DES QUESTIONS CRITIQUES D'AUJOURD'HUI.



and the inappropriate use of labour-replacing technologies.

**CITC** New technologies are changing the face of the world, and our universities are undergoing profound changes themselves. What effect will technology have on post-secondary education and, in particular, how will on-line degrees alter the relationship between teacher and student?

**JT** Online technologies are a wonderful supplement to the classroom, but a poor substitute for it. The problem is not the technology but its use. The quality of post-secondary education will suffer greatly if students are denied classroom experiences.

**CITC** Corporate desire to be involved in the shaping of university research and training is on the rise. Does this pose any particular dangers to our students or should their financial support be welcomed?

**JT** It poses grave dangers to the integrity of research and scholarship. Growing corporate involvement in research steers that

research toward topics that offer commercial promise. This means diverting attention away from issues of social importance that lack the possibility of leading to corporate profit, e.g., research on the causes and effects of child poverty, or cultural research on the history of modern dance. In the natural sciences, it means turning increasingly away from basic science — which is the foundation for most of the advances in the 20th century.

**CITC** You have criticized the federal Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Program, which promises \$900 million to cash-starved universities. Why?

**JT** The CRC program allocates chairs in a way that will create two tiers of Canadian universities — a handful of well-endowed research universities and a large number of poorly endowed regional and smaller universities. Nine universities will get almost 60% of the chairs. This is the result of a narrow definition of research that serves as the basis for the allocation of chairs. Further, the CRC program threatens university autonomy by giving an external, government-appointed body veto power over the hiring of all external chairs. With more than a decade of core university funding being cut back, it is irresponsible to pour \$900-million into the CRC program rather than provide core funding that will allow all universities to try to maintain the quality of education they provide their students.

**CITC** Do you see Ontario's Bill 132 as the leading edge of a new more conservative wave in education?

**JT** It is one of many indicators from the Ontario government of its lack of commitment to an open, accessible, high-quality public education system.

**CITC** The Ontario government has claimed that Bill 132 will give students greater choice and improve the quality of their education. What is the danger?

**JT** The Bill will harm the quality of post-secondary education in Ontario by draining scarce public funds away from Ontario's existing and excellent public system. The private institutions that will come to Ontario will primarily be either for-profit outfits like Phoenix and DeVry that will try to skim off profitable courses or land development deals posing as universities like the decade old proposal for a private university in Queensville.

**CITC** The Canadian political landscape appears to have shifted considerably to the right over the last decade. Do you see a vacuum on the left, or centre-left, from where there has traditionally been greater vocal support for public funding of key social programs?

**JT** Polls show there is still strong public support for public education and public health care.

**CITC** Political parties today must deal with a population demanding both a lightening of their tax burden and improved social programs. Will education be caught in the middle or can these competing desires be reconciled in the best interests of

Canada's educational systems?

**JT** The demand for tax cuts is being led by the corporate sector. Polls consistently show that when given a choice between tax cuts and improved public services, a majority of Canadians opt for the latter.

**CITC** Is it still a 'publish or perish' world for university teachers?

**JT** Yes.

**CITC** Is student debt a serious threat to the future of university education?

**JT** It is not only a threat to the accessibility of our education system, it will be an increasing economic problem as a generation of graduates will not be able to buy homes or engage in other economic activities because of huge student loan debts.

**CITC** Are Canadian university teachers optimistic about their future?

**JT** I think teachers are an optimistic lot. We live in a rich country that has the capability of having a first-rate public education system that is genuinely accessible. We have a majority of Canadians who want such a system. It is a matter of developing the political will to realize such a priority. I believe we can do it.

#### FACULTY SALARIES — CANADA (CDN \$)

	1992-1993	1997-1998	1998-1999
<i>All Faculty</i>	77 991	75 075	76 284
Full professor	93 595	89 226	90 464
Associate professor	75 461	70 576	71 943
Other ranks	57 451	56 308	57 523

\*Statistics Canada, Education Quarterly Review, 2000, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 47

#### U.S. FACULTY SALARIES (U.S. \$)

ACADEMIC RANK	PUBLIC	PRIVATE*
<i>All faculty</i>	54 114 \$	54 443 \$
Professor	69 195 \$	72 747 \$
Associate Professor	51 732 \$	50 701 \$
Assistant professor	42 582 \$	41 357 \$
Instructor	31 519 \$	32 325 \$
Lecturer	34 516 \$	38 376 \$
No rank	38 614 \$	39 385 \$

\* Private, not-for-profit institutions only

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2000-062

# RESCOL

## L'apprentissage branché sur le monde

LE RESCOL CANADIEN (CANADA'S SCHOOLNET) EST UN PARTENARIAT D'APPRENTISSAGE EN LIGNE QUI OFFRE LES MEILLEURES RESSOURCES CANADIENNES SUR INTERNET, LES MODÈLES DE PERFECTIONNEMENT PROFESSIONNEL LES PLUS AVANT-GARDISTES ET LES OPTIONS DE BRANCHEMENT LES PLUS AVANCÉES À LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES APPRENANTS.

Introduit, en 1993 dans le cadre de la Stratégie d'emploi et de croissance économique du gouvernement fédéral, Rescol avait comme mandat original de brancher 300 écoles à Internet. En 1994, plus de 3 000 écoles canadiennes étaient branchées à Internet et en 1997 se chiffre grimpa à 9 500. Le 30 mars 1999, grâce aux efforts de Rescol et de ses partenaires des gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux, le milieu de l'éducation et le secteur privé, le Canada est devenu le premier pays au monde à brancher toutes ses écoles et bibliothèques publiques à Internet. Depuis, Rescol continue à travailler avec ses partenaires afin d'étendre la connectivité des écoles aux salles de classe et vise maintenant à fournir un accès Internet à haute vitesse aux écoles et aux bibliothèques canadiennes, pour que tous les apprenants canadiens tirent pleinement profits de l'autoroute de l'information.



Tout le monde sait que l'Inforoute transforme la façon dont les Canadiens apprennent, travaillent et se divertissent. Partout au pays, des enseignants, des élèves et des parents ont recours aux technologies de pointe comme Internet et les applications multimédias pour élargir les horizons du monde de l'apprentissage. C'est pour ces raisons que Rescol, en collaboration avec ses partenaires, se concentre sur les domaines suivants :

### **CONNECTIVITÉ : DES APPRENANTS BRANCHÉS**

Les avantages des technologies de l'information et des communications (TIC) sont maintenant à la portée des enseignants et apprenants de toutes les régions du pays, y compris des collectivités autochtones, rurales et éloignées. Le défi que nous devons maintenant relever consiste à introduire la connectivité à haute vitesse dans les écoles et les bibliothèques.

Rescol, par l'entremise du programme Ordinateurs pour les écoles, demandent aux organismes gouvernementaux et aux entreprises du secteur privé de donner leur matériel informatique excédentaire aux écoles et aux bibliothèques afin qu'elles puissent créer des réseaux qui les relient entre elles et avec le reste du monde.

### **CONTENU : COMMUNIQUER DES OUTILS D'APPRENTISSAGE EN LIGNE À LA NOUVELLE GÉNÉRATION D'ENSEIGNANTS, D'ÉLÈVES ET DE PARENTS**

Le site Web de Rescol ([www.rescol.ca](http://www.rescol.ca)) est une ressource électronique en perpétuelle évolution qui propose plus de 8 000 services, ressources et occasions d'apprentissage. Les visiteurs peuvent y voir des projets d'apprentissage précis, participer à des discussions en ligne avec des astronautes canadiens, consulter des documents historiques numérisés sur le Canada, effectuer de la recherche et se joindre à des forums virtuels. Conçu par des enseignants de partout au pays, ce site renferme un contenu de la plus haute qualité qui peut servir aux enseignants, aux élèves et aux parents.

### **COMPÉTENCES : AIDER LES ENSEIGNANTS ET LES ÉLÈVES À ACQUÉRIR LES COMPÉTENCES NÉCESSAIRES À L'ÈRE DE L'INFORMATION**

Rescol comprend une multitude de programmes, dont Rescol à la Source et le Réseau des écoles innovatrices, qui ont pour but de favoriser l'intégration des TIC en salle de classe. Ainsi, Rescol offre des activités d'apprentissage en ligne de qualité qui motivent les jeunes tout en mettant l'accent sur la résolution de problèmes, le travail d'équipe et la recherche.

Le Programme Rescol à la Source ([www.rescol.ca/ala-source](http://www.rescol.ca/ala-source)) favorise l'élaboration de projets d'apprentissage en offrant des fonds qui permettent aux enseignants et aux élèves de concevoir ensemble des activités et de créer des ressources sur Internet. Grâce à Rescol à la Source, des élèves du pays organisent des clubs de lecture en ligne, publient leurs recherches sur les écosystèmes sur le Web, présentent leurs communautés sur le site Web et préparent des jeux éducatifs interactifs.

De son côté, le Réseau des écoles innovatrices de Rescol ([www.rescol.ca/nis-rei](http://www.rescol.ca/nis-rei)) met en valeur les écoles qui utilisent les TIC de façon innovatrice pour améliorer l'apprentissage. Le Réseau contribue à faire en sorte que les apprenants, les enseignants et les membres de la collectivité soient en mesure de relever les défis et de saisir les possibilités que présente la mise en application des TIC dans le domaine de l'apprentissage. Le réseau offre à ses membres des possibilités stimulantes de perfectionnement professionnel, de mentorat, de recherche, de participation à des projets internationaux liés aux TIC, et bien plus encore.

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# THE POLITICS OF RESENTMENT : British Columbia, Regionalism and Canadian Unity

*THE POLITICS OF RESENTMENT: BRITISH COLUMBIA REGIONALISM AND CANADIAN UNITY* EST ESSENTIELLEMENT UN ESSAI QUI TENTE DE NOUS CONVAINCRE DU CARACTÈRE DISTINCT DE LA COLOMBIE-BRITANNIQUE TOUT EN PRÉCISANT LE RÔLE DE CETTE PROVINCE DANS L'ÉVOLUTION DU DÉBAT SUR L'UNITÉ CANADIENNE.

Écrit par Philip Resnick, *The Politics of Resentment* est un livre qui manque de conviction. Puisant à diverses sources, l'auteur fournit au lecteur une somme impressionnante de données sur l'opinion des politiciens, des citoyens et de ceux qui formulent et reformulent l'opinion publique. Clairement, il s'agit du plus important apport de cet essai. Néanmoins, l'auteur arrive difficilement à dépasser la description factuelle et donner une cohérence globale au livre. Le passage entre les différentes parties du livre est parfois ardu et les liens sont difficilement réparables.

Le premier chapitre nous présente une vue d'ensemble de ce que les historiens, politologues, écrivains, politiciens et autres acteurs publics ont dit à propos de la spécificité de cette province. Ce chapitre s'engage aussi dans une courte exploration de la littérature sur le concept de régionalisme. Construit avec l'intention d'être la pierre d'assise des chapitres suivants, ce chapitre est malheureusement à l'image du reste de l'essai : le lecteur a l'impression de surfer sans jamais aller au fond des choses. On y trouve beaucoup d'informations mais le contexte permettant au lecteur d'avoir une vue d'ensemble et de comprendre le cheminement de l'auteur n'y est pas.

Le deuxième chapitre explore, à l'aide de documents officiels, l'opinion des politiciens par rapport à cinq questions : leurs attitudes envers le Québec ; leurs attitudes envers le gouvernement fédéral et les institutions fédérales ; leurs vues au sujet de la Colombie-Britannique en tant que région distincte ; leurs attitudes envers le séparatisme dans la province et finalement, leur vision du Canada. Bien structuré et proprement appuyé par de nombreux extraits, ce chapitre nous expose l'essentiel des positions officielles sur l'ensemble des questions examinées. Le chapitre nous aide à mieux comprendre l'importance du sentiment régional dans le discours politique en Colombie-Britannique et nous renseigne sur la capacité des politiciens de cette province à jouer les équilibristes entre la défense des intérêts régionaux et le patriotisme canadien.

Le troisième chapitre explore les mêmes questions et présente la même structure que le chapitre précédent mais cette fois l'auteur a sondé les vues de ceux qui formulent et reformulent l'opinion publique en Colombie-Britannique (*BC opinion-makers*). Contrairement au chapitre deux, où la représentativité des données n'est pas à questionner, les extraits présentés au chapitre trois proviennent d'organismes ou d'individus que l'auteur a identifiés comme appartenant à la catégorie *BC opinion-makers*. La période étudiée est elle aussi imprécise. Autrement dit, la démarche méthodologique de ce chapitre est imprécise. L'effort déployé par l'auteur afin de nous présenter un large éventail d'opinions nous fournit néanmoins une bonne occasion de saisir la diversité des opinions de ceux qui occupent le discours public dans cette

UBC PRESS 2000, 172 PAGES PAR PHILIP RESNICK

REVUE PAR Grégory Slogar

Directeur, Communications et Programmes  
Association d'études canadiennes (AEC)

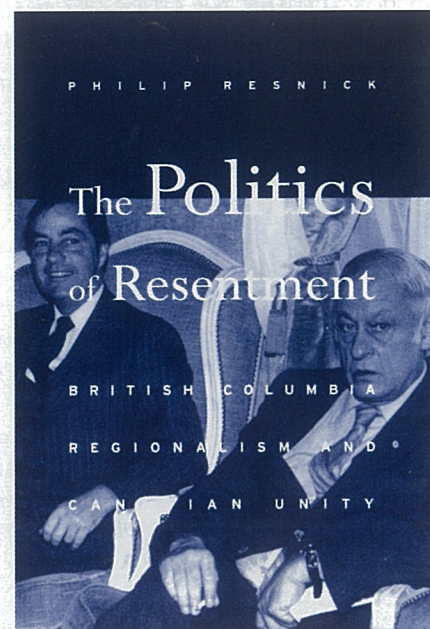
province, et ce, en relation avec les questions étudiées.

Le chapitre quatre est de loin le plus important et le plus solide de tous les chapitres de cet essai. Ce chapitre se base sur les données des audiences publiques du BC Unity Panel qui se sont déroulées dans le contexte de la déclaration de Calgary. En fait, il s'agit de 12 discussions publiques tenues dans 6 régions de la province, d'un sondage auprès de 1800 répondants et plus de 400 mémoires écrits. Le chapitre est divisé en trois parties : un sommaire des résultats du sondage, une étude lexicométrique (analyse de données textuelles assistée par ordinateur) de plus de 250 présentations orales livrées lors des audiences publiques et une présentation des principaux arguments présentés dans les mémoires écrits. La conclusion du chapitre est courte, claire et bien structurée. Pour la première fois du livre le lecteur termine la lecture d'un chapitre avec l'impression d'avoir suivi un parcours qui comporte une introduction, un développement et une conclusion. Le tout présenté dans une structure discursive logique.

Le chapitre cinq est essentiellement constitué de deux éléments : une discussion théorique sur le concept de régionalisme et une proposition pour repenser le débat sur l'unité nationale. Bien que la première partie du chapitre soit un peu rapide, elle est toutefois utile à la mise en relief des éléments explorés dans les chapitres précédents. La deuxième partie de ce chapitre n'est toutefois pas nécessaire à l'ensemble de l'essai.

Le chapitre six est un exercice de spéculation sur la possible réponse de la Colombie-Britannique dans l'éventualité d'une sécession du Québec de la fédération canadienne. Il est toujours périlleux de faire de la projection politique. Dans ce cas-ci l'exercice n'en vaut pas la chandelle.

Bien que ce soit dans le propre de l'essai en tant que genre littéraire de ne pas épuiser le sujet abordé, il me semble que l'ultime objectif de l'essai est de convaincre le lecteur. À cet égard, l'auteur n'a pas su construire le fil conducteur permettant au lecteur de se sentir guidé dans sa lecture.



# THE FUTURE OF CANADIAN STUDIES

## in 'La Gran Familia'

BY Raymond Blake

Director, Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy  
University of Regina

THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC WORLD WHERE CANADIAN STUDIES IS A SUBJECT OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH, THERE MIGHT BE A MOVE TO INTEGRATE CANADIAN STUDIES WITH NORTH AMERICAN OR AMERICAN STUDIES. THIS APPROACH LUMPS THE STUDY OF CANADA, ALONG WITH THAT OF THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO, INTO ONE PROGRAM. THE FEAR FROM MANY CANADIANISTS IS THAT CANADIAN STUDIES WILL LOSE ITS IDENTITY IF THAT HAPPENS.



Prime Minister Jean Chretien may not have realized it, but his comments over the past few months have captured some of the ambiguities between North American Studies and Canadian Studies. On the one hand, he has praised the growth in the international community of scholars studying Canada while, on the other, lauding the fact that Canada is part of the larger family of nations in the Americas.

In recent speeches at various Centres for Canadian Studies outside of Canada, Prime Minister Chretien has praised the expansion of Canadian Studies abroad. Much of the expansion, incidentally, has resulted from the generous support of the Canadian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade which now regards culture and academic relations (including Canadian Studies) as the third pillar of Canadian Foreign Policy.

Hence, the Prime Minister can say — as he did in his Address at the Inauguration of the Chair in Canadian Studies at Université de Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris in June 2000 — that Canada is committed to organizations such as the Association française d'études canadiennes and the many Canadian Studies centres in French universities. Similarly, at Duke University last December he again praised the growth of Canadian Studies, describing it as 'a hot bed of interest in the study of Canada.'

Yet, at the same time that he was praising the growth of Canadian Studies at international universities and noting in France, for instance, that Canada shared with that country a belief that governments have a vital role to play in protecting and promoting culture, he was also playing up Canada as part of a North American community. He told the Institute for International Political Studies in Milan in 1998 that the Italian Canadians — such as those who had accompanied him as part of the Canadian trade mission to Italy — were representative of a new generation in Canada. 'Their origins are Italian,' he noted, 'but they are firmly North American ... with a North American attitude, with North American operations, with North American know-how.'

In fact, in recent months the Prime Minister has been talking a lot about a community of the Americas or 'La Gran Familia' as

he likes to phrase it — to replace his earlier references to amigos who were then negotiating a trade agreement for the Americas. From the Prime Minister's perspective, this is a 'family of different cultures, of different languages, and of many races, but a family nonetheless with shared values and shared goals.' Many others, of course, disagree with him on some of these points.

The great fear of many Canadianists is that when Canadian Studies is promoted as a part of North American or American Studies it will spell the end of Canadian Studies abroad. A quick look at many of the universities where this integration has already occurred does, in fact, give cause for worry. The courses in such programs abroad focus predominately on the United States. At the

University of Lodz in Narutowicz, Poland, as just one example of which they are many, the courses offered in the NA Studies Programme all deal with the United States, and only 6 of 26 courses offered in recent years have focused on Canada.

Yet, the integrating of Canadian Studies within North American Studies Programs may will be the litmus test for the study of Canada abroad. It will put to the test what many Canadianists at home have felt for some time — if the Government of Canada did not support Canadian Studies internationally the programmes would die a sudden death. We will see. Yet it is quite possible that the North Americanization of Canadian Studies fits nicely with what our political leaders and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade want. Canada is, in their minds, very much a part of La Gran Familia and if others around the world teach and research Canada as a part of that family, then the

paymasters may continue on their happy crusade. And it may be the case that only within North American Studies will Canadian Studies find a safe home. Whatever the reasons for the integration of Canadian Studies with Northern American Studies, Canadianists at home may be the ones to complain the loudest about that absorption of Canadian Studies into North American Studies abroad.



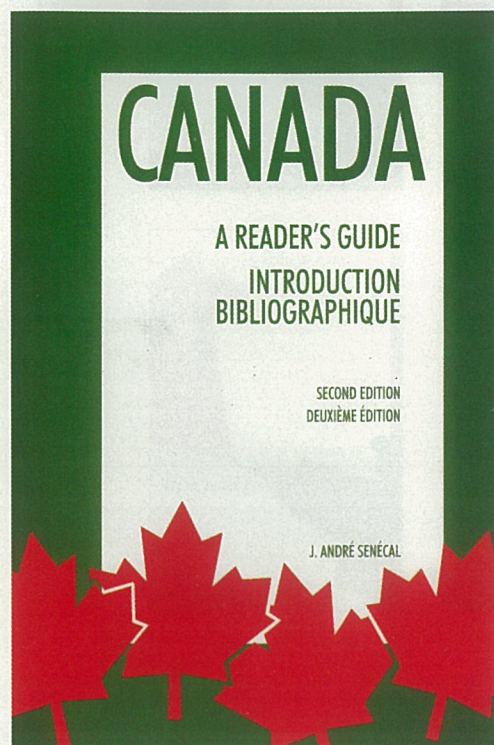


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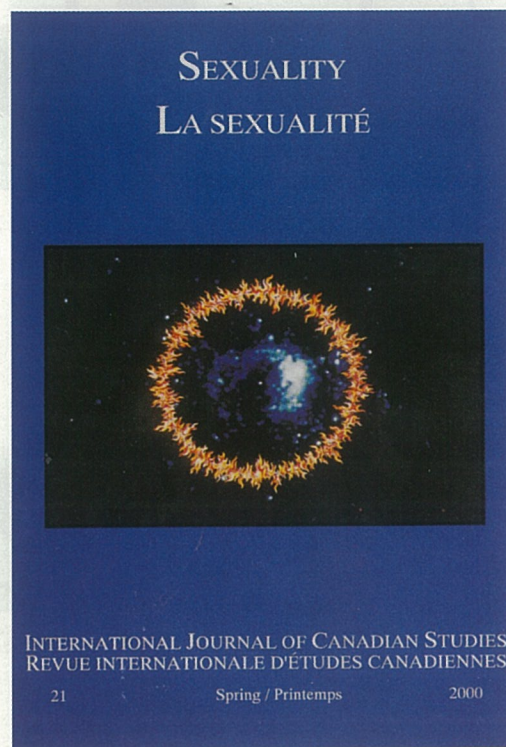


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