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***GENDER DIFFERENCES
IN TEACHERS' INTERACTIONS WITH
STUDENTS FROM DISRUPTED FAMILIES:
A CASE STUDY OF LANGUAGE ARTS
AND MATHEMATICS TEACHERS
IN AN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL***

by

Elsa Lo

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Educational and
Counselling Psychology
McGill University, Montreal
September, 1993**

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ISBN 0-315-94671-7

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Re: Elsa Lo
Doctoral Thesis Submission
September, 1993

Shortened version of thesis title:

Teachers' interactions with students from disrupted families

Abstract

This study explores gender differences in the ways teachers interact with high school students from disrupted families. Four language arts teachers and five mathematics teachers from an urban high school in Montreal, Quebec were interviewed and observed in their classroom interactions with students. The findings revealed that gender differences were related to the teachers' perceptions of professional roles, and were reinforced by the segmentation of teaching and guidance responsibilities in urban schools. Female teachers were inclined to consider teaching as related to the upbringing of youths, and perceived themselves as responsible for the academic and social-emotional development of their students. Male teachers, in contrast, viewed their role as subject-specialists to disseminate knowledge. These role perceptions strongly influenced teachers' classroom interactions with students from disrupted families.

Résumé

Cette étude a examiné l'effet du sexe du professeur sur la manière d'agir avec les élèves issus de familles éclatées. Quatre professeurs d'anglais et cinq professeurs de mathématiques oeuvrant dans une école secondaire urbaine à Montréal, Québec furent observés en interaction avec leurs élèves. Des entrevues se sont également effectuées avec les professeurs. Les résultats ont révélé que le sexe du professeur est associé à des perceptions différentes quant au rôle professionnel et à la division nette des tâches d'enseignement et de «counseling» auprès des élèves des écoles urbaines. Les professeurs du sexe féminin avaient tendance à attribuer une importance à l'enseignement et à l'éducation générale des adolescents. Elles se sont considérées à la fois responsable de la formation académique et du développement social et émotif de leurs élèves. Les professeurs du sexe masculin, par contre, se sont perçus comme des experts de la matière et leur rôle était de propager le savoir. Ces perceptions de rôle agissaient profondément sur les interactions entre les professeurs et les élèves issus familles éclatées.

Acknowledgements

I express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Thomas Owen Eisemon, my thesis advisor, whose insight and expertise guided me throughout the research and writing of this thesis, and enabled me to develop research skills in qualitative methods. I am also indebted to the principals, teachers, and students at the setting of the study, who cannot be thanked by name (in order to maintain anonymity), for assisting me with enthusiasm in the long hours of interviews, and sharing their classroom experience.

Special thanks to Dr. Mary Maguire and Professor Rachelle Keyserlingk who provided valuable feedback in the conception of this research. I owe an immense debt to Dr. Rosalind Zinman, Dr. Miranda D'Amico and Ms. Sylvie Bosher for their constructive comments during the writing of this thesis.

I am fortunate to have my family's encouragement to endure a very lengthy period of study and to accept life's challenge. A most heart felt thanks to my spouse, Ian, for his humour and partnership. I also thank affectionately my son, Maximilien, for his endearing smiles and babbles that made the long hours of work at night bearable.

The research was supported by doctoral fellowships

from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and "le Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche". My gratitude is extended to the Councils.

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Introduction

This study highlights gender differences in the ways teachers interact with high school students from disrupted families. The presence of such students in the classroom poses special demands on the teacher. The literature on at-risk children and youths highlights the crucial role that teachers play as significant adults who provide social-emotional support (Chandler, 1981; Rutter, 1979, 1981). Several studies suggest that the interpersonal contacts, stability and support initiated by teachers and other school personnel can be crucial elements of students' successful adjustment to the changes occurring at home as a result of marital disruption (Drake, 1979; Galbo, 1981, 1983, 1989; Hetherington, 1989; Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan, & Anderson, 1989; Roseby & Deutsch, 1985).

Previous research has shown that teachers generally have unfavourable perceptions of students from disrupted families. Some studies have attempted to study teachers' perceptions of students from disrupted families by presenting them with short, descriptive scenarios about children from different types of family situations. Using questionnaire methods, teachers' perceptions are induced by making

them focus solely on the family constellation of students. However, this may not accurately reflect teachers' perceptions when they have the opportunity to interact with them.

Teachers' perceptions of students are seldom based on a single piece of information, such as the marital status of the students' parents. They also have information about parental involvement in schooling, socio-economic status, ability and aptitude, class behaviour, and so on. Teachers integrate information from school records with what they have heard about students from other teachers. As well, how teachers use this information to make interpretations about their students is influenced by how they perceive their teaching role. Within this framework, gender differences in role perception are particularly salient.

Male and female teachers' interactions with students from disrupted families were observed in Parkdale Academy, an urban high school in Montreal, Québec. Over a period of one academic year, four language arts teachers and five mathematics teachers from Parkdale Academy were studied. In keeping with an interpretative study that examined the intentions and actions of teachers, two primary data sources were used: classroom observations and interviews with the

nine teachers. These primary sources of data were then triangulated (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) with four secondary sources of data; interviews with students, interviews with other administrative and professional staff, reviews of samples of students' work, and follow-up interviews with teachers through informant-check procedures (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Mishler, 1986; Wolcott, 1990).

During the period February 1991 to January 1992, the researcher attended the school every Tuesday and Wednesday, and also every Thursday morning, for a total of 34 weeks of on-site data collection. Field-notes from classroom observations recorded teacher-student interaction patterns, students' classroom behaviour and peer interaction.

Interviews with teachers were conducted on a weekly basis and also informally following every classroom observation. The latter were generally shorter in duration, since teachers most often had another lesson immediately following. The formal interviews were scheduled during the teachers' spare periods, and information from the interviews was tape recorded. These interviews elicited information about the teachers' interaction with students from disrupted families and their understanding of the effects of family disruption.

Students who were mentioned in the teacher interviews were asked to reflect on their in- and out-of-classroom interactions with their teachers, and assess their behavioral and emotional reactions to these interactions. Interviews were conducted on the school playground, in the cafeteria and school corridors. Informal meetings with the principal, vice-principal, guidance counsellor and crisis-intervention teachers provided corroborating information concerning the teachers' perceptions, behaviours and attitudes toward students from disrupted families.

Throughout the period October 1992 to February 1993, during which the researcher was compiling and analyzing the results, the teachers involved in the study were asked to help verify interpretations. All but one teacher participated in this procedure; that teacher had since retired and is now living outside of Montreal. One teacher had transferred to another high school, but he also agreed to take part in the informant check procedures.

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters. Chapter I presents students from disrupted families as a special education population with significant social-emotional and academic needs. Chapter II indicates how the guidance of students has been devalued in teacher education and reinforced by

the segmentation of guidance and teaching responsibilities which stems from the professionalization of teachers. Chapter III illustrates how the organization of Parkdale Academy reflects the segmentation of academic and guidance functions in urban high schools.

Chapter IV compares male and female teachers' perception of their responsibilities. Differences in role perception are related to gender stereotypes; however, teacher training, personal life experience and sense of professional security also have a strong impact on what teachers see as crucial in their role.

Chapter V shows how the two female teachers extended their role perceptions to incorporate guidance and teaching functions. They structured classroom activities so that they have a better understanding of their students' personal lives, and created opportunities to assist their students by providing academic and emotional support.

The male teachers' interaction with students is the subject of Chapter VI. Male teachers generally avoided being personally involved with their students, and they carefully organized classroom activities to minimize interpersonal contacts. When students required academic or social-emotional support, male teachers usually relegated these tasks to other

professionals in the school.

The final chapter summarizes the findings and implications of the study.

Chapter I

Academic and Social Consequences of Family Disruption

Teachers have a multiplicity of professional roles which encompass the responsibility for the personal growth, social development and mastery of academic knowledge and skills of their students (Weil & Joyce, 1978; Gouvernement du Québec Ministère de l'éducation, 1981). Noddings (1984, 1986, 1987) describes the "ethic of caring" as critical to students' motivation and adjustment in school, to their social and academic competence, and to teachers' choice of their career (Goodman, 1988; Prillaman, 1988).

Students' reactions to caring teachers also confirm the positive influence of teachers. They are more likely to succeed academically when they perceive their teachers to be caring individuals who are sensitive to their academic and developmental needs. The influence of teachers among children from disadvantaged backgrounds is notable, since the positive expectations and support of teachers is often productive of success orientation and motivated attitudes toward learning and school (Galbo, 1983, 1984, 1986; McCall, 1989; Ross & Glaser, 1973).

With the increasing rate of family disruption, more and more students in schools demonstrate

maladjusted behaviour and their academic functioning is compromised. The family and school have a synchronous relationship in which the changes and disruptions in one milieu affect the individual's functioning in the other. Research clearly suggests that marital disruption alters the family organization and interaction between family members. These changes will, in turn, affect the students' ability to meet academic and social expectations at home and in school (Bisnaire, Firestone, Rynard, 1990; Hetherington, 1989; Kaye, 1988/1989; Wood, Chapin, & Hannah, 1988).

Students' Reactions to Family Disruption

A great deal of attention has been directed to the psychological effects of marital disruption. Hess and Camara (1979) reported that the stress of family disruption impedes children's developmental processes by absorbing much of their mental and emotional resources. The threat of disrupting a primary bond with the parent who is leaving the household can have negative developmental consequences for children.

Social-Emotional Consequences

Family disruption evokes feelings of abandonment.

Children and adolescents from disrupted families develop feelings of worthlessness (Cornell, Wexler, & Dannefer, 1987; Kalter, 1987; Long, Forehand, Fauber, & Brody, 1987), and self-blaming attitudes (Irion, Coon & Blanchard-Fields, 1988). These sentiments are particularly salient during the initial phase of marital disruption (Parish & Wagle, 1985), when most youngsters assess the implications of the family situation negatively (Kurdek & Berg, 1987; Kurdek & Sinclair, 1988; Rutter, 1981).

The negative effects of family disruption are often compounded by the display of overt conflict between the parents. For adults, the anger and rage that accompanies marital disruption is a natural defense mechanism against depression and abandonment (Barry, 1986; Barry, Cloutier, & Gosselin, 1985; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989).

Yet, many parents who are in conflict with each other have a tendency to coerce and persuade their children to form a hostile alliance against the other parent. When children are enmeshed in parental conflict, they invariably feel a sense of disloyalty and guilt as they may not be emotionally prepared to reject one of their parents (Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1979).

Inter-parental aggression often renders a

youngster helpless and confused, and explicit attacks made by one parent on another can further exacerbate a child's fear of abandonment (Kalter, 1987; Kelly, 1981; Long, Slater, Forehand, & Fauber, 1988; Shaw & Emery, 1987).

Youngsters' reactions to family disruption are also a function of the age of onset of the disruption. Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 1984, 1985; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974, 1975, 1976) reported that children 5 to 8 years of age are particularly sensitive to family disruption. Their psychological impairment was observed to be even more pronounced 18 months after their parents' separation or divorce. Such children are preoccupied with feelings of loss, rejection, guilt and loneliness, and often develop fantasies of reunification.

Adolescents usually experience longer lasting negative effects since family disruption brings to them the loss of something fundamental to their development. The intact family from which they learn about themselves and the world around them provides structure and guidance that are necessary for the development of their individuality. When the family structure disintegrates, these children often become intensely anxious and tend to blame one of the parents for the family disruption.

At the same time, they tend to take on the adult role in relation to the "needy" parent, a task which is emotionally and psychologically arduous (Blaine, 1972; Chess, Thomas, Mittleman, Korn, & Cohen, 1983; Proulx & Koulack, 1987; Saayman & Saayman, 1988-89; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). Kalter (1987) has shown that adolescents' psychological reactions often render them socially isolated, and lack the opportunities for growth-enhancing peer relationships.

Academic Consequences

The most consistently reported outcome of parental separation and divorce is the deterioration of school performance. Children's adjustment to the disrupted family circumstances necessitates a reorganization of their social and affective world and less emphasis is placed on their academic work during this adjustment period (Bisnaire, Firestone, & Rynard, 1990; Hess & Camara 1979; Roseby & Deutsch, 1985).

That family disruption may have negative influences on children's learning is also well documented by Wallerstein (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1976, 1980). A significant proportion of children from disrupted families, at all age levels, demonstrate a marked decline in academic achievement.

In a 10 year longitudinal study, Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1989) found that these students suffer a precipitous decline in school performance over the duration of at least one school year. Similar findings were reported by Mundek (1980) who showed that students from disrupted homes achieved much lower grade-point-averages than those from intact families. Dawson (1984) summarized the literature on the effects of single-parent families on children's academic achievement. Such children have lower academic achievement, poor attendance, and difficulty interacting with peers and teachers.

According to Guidubaldi (Guidubaldi & Perry, 1984, 1985; Guidubaldi, Perry, & Cleminshaw, 1983), family disruption accounts for a substantial proportion of variance in the social and behavioral components of academic adjustment. As well, conflicts between the parents, which often heighten during the onset of family disruption, have been found to account for disturbed school behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Emery, Weintraub, & Neale, 1982; Rutter, 1971; Rutter, Yule, Quinton, Rowlands, Yule, & Berger, 1974; Wood, Chapin, & Hannah, 1988). Students from disrupted families are more prone to "acting out", being "distractible" (Hammond, 1979; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980), and to exhibit other mildly delinquent

behaviours such as stealing, lying, and manipulation (Steinberg, 1987; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989). These behaviour patterns are also correlated with lower achievement.

Children whose divorced parents continue to be preoccupied with conflict after the marital disruption have more difficulties than those children whose parents manage to establish an amicable relationship as co-parents (Anthony, 1974, 1985; Jacobson, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976; Hess & Camara, 1979). They have been reported to have significantly lower grades (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Estrada, Arsenio, Hess, & Holloway, 1987; Kalter, 1987; Long, Slater, Forehand, & Fauber, 1988).

Marital conflict has been associated with teacher-ratings of lower academic achievement and other dimensions of dysfunctional school behaviour (Long, Forehand, Fauber and Brody, 1987). Furthermore, parental conflicts, coupled with strong parental emphasis on their children's achievement, are even stronger predictors of underachievement. The expectation of high achievement, and the stress of dealing with the family disruption negatively affects school work (Wood, Chapin, & Hannah, 1988).

Teachers' Attitudes Toward Students From Disrupted Families

Teachers often rely on stereotypes to help them make interpretations about their students' home lives and make predictions about their academic functioning. Several studies have suggested that teachers' expectations of their students are influenced by the students' gender as well as by information about their home lives (Ball, Newman, & Scheruren, 1984; Good, 1982; Guttman & Broudo, 1988/1989; Meichenbaum, Bowers, & Ross, 1969; Santrock & Tracy, 1978). When well controlled and experimental manipulations were employed, teachers were found to view boys from disrupted families more negatively than girls from a similar family background (Ball, Newman, Scheuren, 1984; Hammond, 1979). In addition, they had a tendency to perceive children from disrupted families as exhibiting more behavioral problems, as having less achievement orientation and exhibiting less effective coping behaviour, and as being more maladaptive compared to those from intact families (Ball, Newman, Scheuren, 1984; Santrock & Tracy, 1978).

Research on teacher expectation effect has documented the potential negative effects of teachers' unfavourable perceptions of students (Firestone &

Brody, 1975). According to Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968), teachers' expectations can function as self-fulfilling prophecies, causing students to achieve at levels that they have anticipated.

It is generally agreed that teachers formulate their expectations of their students based on a variety of sources. Students' achievement, gender, psychological reports and other information shape teachers' expectations (Doyle, Hancock, & Kifer, 1972; Humphreys & Stubbs, 1977; Mason, 1973; Palardy, 1969; Rolison & Medway, 1985; Tom, Cooper & McGraw, 1984).

There is evidence that teachers favour those students who exhibit "middle-class" attributes. Their families' socio-economic status, parents' level of education, their external appearance, as well as language and interpersonal behaviour are all cues that teachers utilise to develop their expectations and explanations of student performance. For example, children from higher-income families are expected by their teachers to be high achievers (Rist, 1970). Those who are rated as more attractive based on facial appearance often receive more positive attention from their teachers (Adams & Cohen, 1974; Rist, 1970). In addition, teachers have been shown to hold more positive expectations of students based on their racial characteristics; White and Asian students are

consistently favoured over Blacks, Mexican or West Indian students (Baron, Tom, & Cooper, 1985; Irvine, 1986; Jensen & Rosenfeld, 1974; Short, 1985; Wilkerson, 1980; Williams & Naremore, 1974; Wong, 1980).

Beez (1968) investigated the consequences of teachers' high expectations of students in a Head Start program and reported a positive link between expectations and future achievement. He proposed that the expectation-achievement link was mediated by teachers' differential behaviour toward the students. This was also illustrated by Kester and Letchworth (1972), who reported that teachers had more verbal interaction with and support for students when they had higher expectations for their success.

However, teachers' expectations are not static (Borko, 1979; Shavelson, Cadwell, & Izu, 1977; Short, 1985). Meichenbaum, Bowers, and Ross (1969) observed that when there is a discrepancy between their initial expectations and subsequent intelligence test data, teachers readily search for evidence, however insignificant, to reformulate their expectations according to the objective test scores. Brophy (Brophy, 1983, 1985; Brophy & Evertson, 1976; Brophy & Good, 1974) concludes that many teachers also modify their expectations according to daily interaction and ongoing observation of their students. Subsequent

investigations of teacher expectation effect revealed that the impact of teachers' expectations on students' achievement is mediated by complex teachers' behaviour toward their students (Brophy, 1985; Rist, 1970; Rosenthal, 1974).

Teachers initial expectations of their students are communicated to them via subtle, yet consistent behaviour. Teacher feedback, seating arrangements in the classroom, and interaction between teachers and students capture the differential expectations of their students (Babad, Berniero, & Rosenthal, 1989; Brophy & Good, 1970; Good, 1982; Meichenbaum, Bowers, & Ross, 1969; Rist, 1970; Harris & Rosenthal, 1985). Less resilient students eventually develop lower self-esteem and achievement motivation, causing a sustaining expectation effect (Brattesani, Weinstein, & Marshall, 1984; Cooper & Tom, 1984; Good, 1987; Cooper & Good, 1983).

Cooper (Cooper, 1979; Cooper & Good, 1983, p.17) proposes a model for the communication of teacher expectations which incorporates the teachers' need to maintain predictability and control as important determinants of teacher-student transactions. For instance, teachers strive to minimize students' disruptive behaviour by limiting their classroom interactions with them. By calling on disruptive

students less often, teachers maintain control of the class and reduce the tendency for disruptions to become the focal point of classroom dialogue.

Chapter II

Segmentation of Teaching and Guidance

Raising the standard of the teaching profession has been synonymous with a systematic devaluation of the ethic of caring and the role of women in teaching. As teacher education became formalized and more uniform, more emphasis was given to training in subject specialization and in the methods of instruction; emphasis was also placed on the social and psychological foundations of the emerging profession. These changes in Canadian education reflected the changes which took place in United States and Britain (Katz, 1974; Wilson, Stamp & Audet, 1970).

Prior to the nineteenth century teacher preparation in North America followed a seminary model where experienced school masters were mentors to a selected few students. In Quebec, the Catholic church sponsored schools and education (LaZerte, 1964). As early as 1608, the Jesuits provided classical education for boys and young men. Many graduates went to teach in elitist settings such as private schools, colleges and affluent homes. Clergymen determined who were allowed to teach in schools, and they also provided teacher training through lyceums that were part of the parish ministry. By 1639, the Ursuline sisters also began to provide elementary instruction of writing,

reading and arithmetic to girls (Katz, 1974; Marcil & Lemelin, 1989). In the vast majority of rural communities where teachers were predominantly female, most teachers did not have any formal training (Borrowman, 1965). In the French Catholic system of Quebec, women teachers were not trained or certified until 1937 (Parent, 1963, p. 17).

Establishing a Uniform System of Teacher Education

Following the Act for Free School in 1901, Quebec witnessed a rapid growth in public education. During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, many communities in Quebec and North America recognized the need to improve the conditions of public schools (Herbst, 1989; Parent, 1963, p. 7). Political and religious leaders in North America drew attention to the significance of public education as a tool to unify the diverse population (Borrowman, 1965; Dorros, 1968; Katz, 1974; Wilson, 1988). Education was a means to impart the Christian values of good order, moral discipline, regularity, punctuality and reliability, which were the foundations of a society of industrious citizens. These values were expected to be transmitted by competent, dedicated and well-educated teachers.

James Carter in his "Essays on popular education"

proposed the creation of public institutions for the training of common school teachers, and that they should offer courses on anatomy, physiology, physical education, child and adult psychology, and philosophy. Teachers, he suggested, should receive vigorous academic education and practice what they have learned in the common schools throughout their training (Herbst, 1989).

Such ideals did not, however, gain immediate acceptance, and many teachers, particularly those in rural areas, continued to receive minimal training. Teachers were generally older widows who needed to teach for their subsistence, or younger girls who were good at school and stayed on to teach until they married. Women were welcomed into teaching positions and they significantly outnumbered men. Particularly in elementary school settings, the proportion of female teachers was much higher than male teachers (Herbst, 1989; Parmelee, 1914, p. 65). Home and school were considered "women's sphere" (Herbst, 1989) where teaching and guidance duties replicated their role as mothers, transmitting the values of domesticity and gentility to children.

Even during the early decades of the twentieth century, schools were not successful at attracting men into the profession. Young men who taught in schools

did so only temporarily and seasonally; those who stayed as teachers for life were usually incapable of undertaking traditionally masculine work (Herbst, 1989). There was a common belief that teaching "belittles a man" because it involves insignificant and "petty dealings with children" (Felmley, 1908, cited in Herbst, 1989, p. 148). Clearly, teachers who were generally women or men of less adequate abilities, were not well-respected as professionals.

Professionalization of Teaching

The first normal school in North America was founded in Montreal, Quebec in 1837, but survived only 5 years and trained a total of 23 candidates (Audet, 1970, pp. 161-162). In 1839, Cyrus Peirce established a normal school in Lexington, Massachusetts. As an experienced Bostonian teacher with a baccalaureate and a divinity degree, the training Peirce developed for his female teachers emphasized "the art of teaching". Peirce explained (Norton, 1926):

..... A majority of those engaged in school-keeping, taught few branches, and those imperfectly, that they possessed little fitness for their business, did not understand well, either the nature of children or the subjects they professed to teach, and had little skill in the art of teaching or governing schools.

..... I admitted that a skill and power to do all this might be acquired by trial, if teachers continued in their business long enough; but while teachers were thus learning, I was sure that pupils must be suffering.

[With training], teachers may be prepared to enter on their work, not only with the hope, but almost with the assurance of success.

In 1842, Henry Barnard, with the collaboration of Emma Willard, founded The Normal Institute in Connecticut which was modelled after Peirce's school (Mattingly, 1975). Barnard's institution provided a one-month training program in April and October for four consecutive years, and those training to become teachers obtained actual teaching experience in public schools to help them refine their techniques. Seeing the success of Peirce's and Barnard's normal schools, Horace Mann campaigned for public funding to support the development of similar teacher-training institutions. In Quebec, legislation was passed in 1856, which allowed public funding for normal schools (Parent, 1963). The first normal school - McGill Normal School - was established in 1857 (Wilson, 1988).

Although the strengthening of teacher training was initially intended to equalize the discrepant standards between rural and urban schools and attract more men to the teaching profession, normal schools in the rural areas continued to produce mostly women teachers. The

state normal schools in urban settings provided more prestigious professional studies for teachers, which enabled some of them to take on administrative posts. In New England, for instance, women continued to occupy 60% of the classroom teaching jobs during the late 1800s; 44% of the male graduates became administrators, while only 11% of females attained similar positions (Tropp, 1957).

Throughout North America, most teachers continued to receive minimal formal training, or no training at all. In Connecticut, for instance, there was but one normal school until 1883. It produced less than 100 graduates in total; yet there were 4,000 teachers in the state (Mattingly, 1975). Despite the early efforts to raise the professional respectability of teachers, teaching continued to be viewed as a domestic task reserved for untrained women.

In the late nineteenth century, the reform of teacher training involved providing increasingly vigorous academic studies over a longer period of time. Those who received one to four years of teacher training were, respectively, qualified for rural schools, elementary schools, high schools, or administrative positions, representing four levels of prestige in increasing hierarchy. Obtaining more teacher education led to a more "respectable" career

with stronger masculine appeal.

Still, the system of teacher training was not uniform. A large number of high school teachers in urban areas in Canada and the United States held college degrees, but had no teacher training. These college graduates viewed normal school graduates with abhorrence, and they devalued the professional standards of normal school training. Legislators, administrators and those evaluating programs of teacher education also held the view that normal school training in pedagogy was remedial and supplementary (Borrowman, 1965; Herbst, 1989).

To diminish such prejudices, many efforts were made to raise the standard of normal school training to those commensurate with a baccalaureate degree. In 1892, Teacher's College in New York provided a two-year program of post-secondary teacher training with a strong emphasis on liberal arts education. By 1904, the Chicago public school system adopted the four-year college degree in education as a requirement for classroom teachers. The transfer of the McGill Normal School to the administration of McGill University in 1907 also reflected this trend (Parent, 1963, p. 18).

Colleges and universities throughout North America offered teacher training with emphasis on "the science of education". They included courses in child

psychology, learning theories, tests and measurement, as well as a full program of course work in teaching subjects. Classroom communication and interpersonal skills are expected to develop mainly through in-service teaching. Typically, education studies including practice teaching accounted for a fourth to a third of undergraduate course requirements.

The professionalization of teaching had different impact on male and female teachers. Acquiring sufficient knowledge for subject teaching is the primary concern for many male teachers. But the majority of female teachers, particularly those in Quebec, were still uncertified. Only in 1953 was there institutional attempt to equalize the training and certification requirement of male and female teachers. The professionalization of teacher training and its integration into mainstream higher education has reinforced gender segregation in education. The majority of female teachers have received inferior training and remained in the classroom.

In contrast, ambitious male teachers left the classroom to assume administrative duties; those who remained in the classroom have been trained to define their professional role as transmitting subject-specific knowledge. Particularly in high school settings where the proportion of male teachers in

academic subjects is usually high, the guidance of students is now relegated to other professionals.

Separating Academic and Guidance Responsibilities

In the recent decades, the separation of teaching and guidance functions has been reinforced by the introduction of guidance counsellors in schools. Guidance counsellors complement the teachers' academic role in providing professional assessments of students' performance and they advise and support students on academic and personal matters. Counsellors and other specialized professionals such as psychologists, social workers and special education teachers have strengthened the view that it is not the responsibility of classroom teachers to guide and nurture students. The unionization of teaching has also reinforced the separation of guidance from teaching by rigidly defining the professional responsibilities of staff within the school.

The terms guidance and counselling are used interchangeably, although they, in practice, refer to different processes in educational settings (Milner, 1974). It is important to address the issue of how guidance and counselling emerged, in order to understand how the contemporary guidance and

counselling services operate in relation to teaching.

The Guidance Movement

The guidance movement originated as vocational guidance in the early twentieth century. Its pioneer, Frank Parsons, became the director and vocational counsellor at the Vocational Bureau of Boston, and advocated that vocational guidance should eventually be part of the public school system in every community (Zeran, Lallas, & Wegner, 1964). Parsons believed that students should make career decisions based on information provided by experts in vocational domains. He designed vocational guidance programs, using academic records, questionnaires measuring students' occupational interests, and information about employment opportunities. Parson, however, did not use aptitude tests.

In the next two decades, intelligence tests became available. The Binet-Simon test, which in its later revision became the Stanford-Binet intelligence test, produced information about an individual's intellectual capabilities to make decisions on educational placement. The proliferation of vocational, interest, and aptitude inventories in the first quarter of the twentieth century transformed vocational guidance from

an idiosyncratic process of individual counselling into a predictive "science" using quantitative measures and objective tests.

The Depression in the 1930s was largely responsible for bringing vocational guidance into schools. When employment opportunities were limited, many elementary graduates found themselves continuing onto high school. This social change created an intellectually more heterogeneous student population which many classroom teachers and school administrators were not prepared to cope with.

Two federal acts led to the expansion of guidance and counselling services in American schools after the Second World War. First, in 1955, the National Mental Health Study Act emphasized the need for early identification of mental health problems and treatment. Although counselling has always been provided in the communities by clergymen, teachers, doctors and nurses, trained mental health professionals were now needed in the schools. Second, in 1958, the National Defense Education Act stipulated that guidance counselling and testing be publicly funded and available for all high school students (Landy & Perry, 1966; Patterson, 1962).

These legislative initiatives resulted in the introduction of "pupil-personnel services" in many schools. Pupil-personnel services enlisted specialists

such as nurses, special education teachers, speech and hearing specialists, psychologists and social workers, etc. All these specialists were expected to reduce the responsibilities of the classroom teachers and facilitate students' adjustment and adaptation.

The continual increase in the school population into the 1960s, and higher levels of educational attainment, jointly created a strain on the school systems in North America. In order for teachers to effectively teach more diverse students, administrators introduced ability grouping (Altbach, Kelly, & Weis, 1985) where students are streamed into different levels of education based on their standardized test scores.

Specialists took on more responsibility for guidance and counselling and assisting students was increasingly separated from the work of the classroom teacher. In turn, teachers focused principally on their academic duties which varied according to the different groups of students being taught. This segmentation of the guidance and teaching functions was intended to ease the increasing social demands on teachers. However, social problems have not diminished and schools continue to be viewed as repositories for poorly disciplined and unmotivated youths, many of whom are products of broken homes.

Chapter III

Parkdale Academy

Parkdale Academy is situated in the downtown sector of Montreal and educates students from the middle to upper income levels as well as those from lower income neighbourhoods. Its diverse population of students is typical of an urban high school. There are many students from disadvantaged and disrupted family backgrounds.

The School and Its Community

When Parkdale Academy opened in 1961, the enrolment was 1,282. During its first decade, it was a well reputed high school in a middle-to-upper income neighbourhood. However, declining birth rates, the political climate of the province, and the militant activities of the teachers' union since the mid-1960s greatly effected the Anglophone education in the province as well as the reputation of Parkdale Academy.

Quebec teachers experienced a tumultuous decade in the 1960s when the province experienced its "Quiet Revolution". In 1964-1965, the teachers of Quebec joined the other Quebec public service employees to support the right-to-strike in negotiating for better

working conditions. In January of 1967, the Quebec Teachers' Union led its members into a province-wide strike, demanding better working conditions in the form of contractual personnel assignments, salary increases and smaller and fewer classes. During the period of 1968-1971, teachers negotiated their first provincial collective agreement. This agreement broke the paternalistic control of the teachers by the confessional school board. The collective agreement was expected to increase teachers' professional autonomy and pupils' educational gains (Shils & Whittier, 1968; Ozga & Lawn, 1981).

Political conflicts between the French and English communities led to the exodus of many Anglophones from the province. This and the trend toward smaller families eventually produced a sudden decline in school enrolment. Parkdale Academy, which is located in a predominantly anglophone area, was hit hard by these political and social changes.

During the next two decades, many anglophone high schools throughout Montreal struggled to maintain their enrolment, and with the closure of many high schools, students from neighbouring and more impoverished communities enrolled in Parkdale Academy.

The Student Population

Enrolment at Parkdale High School has been increasing steadily since the late 1980s. At the beginning of the data collection in the 1990-1991 school year, the student enrolment was 408. In the 1991-1992 school year, it increased to 447. The increase in enrolment was in direct relationship to the implementation of a school-wide academic enrichment program in the fall of 1989 that provided students with access to resource centres to maximize their learning. The program included advanced level studies in the core subjects (English, Mathematics and French), in French immersion programs, as well as in small group instruction. Increasingly, middle income professional families in the neighbourhood sent their children to the school.

The program has been reviving the school's reputation and is favoured by the long-established and economically well-to-do anglophone residents of the community. In an affluent neighbourhood, a "good" public high school was needed to reflect the community's dedication to education. The implementation of enrichment programs attracted successful high school students who would otherwise have enrolled in private schools.

In spite of this, Parkdale Academy still has a heterogeneous population of students because its catchment area also includes lower income neighbourhoods. According to the vice-principal, approximately 60% of the students are Canadian-born Caucasians, while 30% of the school population are "visible" minorities predominantly from the Caribbean islands and East Asian countries. Another 10% of the student population are recent immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Middle East who require English-as-a-second-language support. Statistics on the number of students from disrupted families are not available, but administrators at Parkdale Academy believed that the proportion of such students in the school may be as high as one third of the total school enrolment.

Social diversity and the dissolution of traditional families create a large body of poorly adjusted students, many of whom need special education assistance. Parkdale Academy offers a "Preventative Service Program" that is open to all students. The objective of this program is to treat early symptoms of school failure rather than deal with critical behaviour and academic problems. The program began in the 1990-1991 school year and evolved as a combined program of "crisis intervention" and "special education" in 1991-1992. It provides tutorial services, individual and

family counselling and individual monitoring of school progress of at-risk students.

The School's Administrative Structure

Parkdale Academy is under the administration of a school board with 49 elementary schools, 34 high schools and 11 special affairs schools. Special education services for these schools are provided by the student services department of the school board, with 10 social workers, 11 guidance consultants and psychologists, 6 special education consultants, and 3 speech and language therapists. These professionals are involved with students only when a referral is made. Special education and guidance professionals based in the school include a guidance counsellor, 2 crisis-intervention teachers, a child-care worker, and a part-time school nurse.

The Principals

Arriving at Parkdale Academy in the fall of 1988 when the enrolment of the school was critically low, the principal, Mr. Mortimor, was assigned the task of reviving its reputation.

Mr. Mortimor favours the use of "streaming" to

ensure that all students are placed in appropriate classrooms. He has implemented a policy whereby all the Grade 7 and Grade 8 students' basic academic skills (reading, spelling and mathematics) are assessed at the beginning of the year. Subject to the testing results, the Grade 7 and 8 language arts and mathematics classes have been reorganized to create more homogeneous remedial and regular streams. The remedial classes will include more basic skill-building teaching and learning activities. In the subsequent grades, language arts and mathematics classes are separated into remedial, regular and advanced streams. Mr. Mortimor feels that he knows the strengths of each of his teachers well and assigns them to teach at the appropriate levels. He works closely with the head teachers from nine instructional departments on curriculum development and implementation.

Disciplinary matters are handled by the vice principal, Mr. Jacoby. He was a mathematics teacher at the school for 12 years, during 4 of which he was the head of the mathematics department. Mr. Jacoby is active and well-respected in the Black community. He advocates minority rights and multiculturalism in the school.

Seven years ago, noting that many students from impoverished families arrive at school hungry, Mr.

Jacoby started a breakfast program. At his own initiative, he organized fund-raising activities, and wrote to many large and small businesses for contributions. He arrives at the school every morning at 6:45 am to prepare the breakfast; he also enlists other staff members to assist him.

As the administrator who deals with the attendance and discipline of students, Mr. Jacoby has more contact with students' parents than the principal. Students are referred to him by classroom teachers for problematic behaviour such as lateness, skipping classes, absenteeism and disruptive classroom behaviours. Frequent and chronic problems merit after-school detention and sometimes suspension. When students are suspended, they are not permitted to return to school until they and their parents have met with the principal and/or vice principal and agree to contract to reform their behaviour.

The Guidance Personnel

Although the guidance counsellor's role should involve "counselling" students, Mr. Koeller has very little time for these activities. From mid-October to December, he begins academic testing of the Grade 7 and 8 students. He is also in charge of all the psycho-

educational testing of students who are referred by classroom teachers because of learning difficulties. With the senior students, he takes charge of vocational testing and preparing college applications.

Counselling of students is conducted at the crisis intervention centre by Mrs. Marling. She is also in charge of the Preventative Service Program. After teaching English for 17 years, she was granted permission to reduce her teaching load and in 1988 set up a Crisis Intervention Program at the school to provide services to students who have behavioral difficulties. In the fall of 1990, with the support of the new administration, she was relieved from all teaching duties to expand her program into a drop-in centre for all the students in the school. College and university students tutor students who nominated themselves for academic help or those who have been identified by their teachers as needing remediation.

In the 1990-1991 school year, Mrs. Marling had 24 students who were described by the school board as requiring crisis intervention support. These are typically students whose academic adjustment and progress is believed to be affected by severely disruptive family situations, behavioral and/or social-emotional problems. Five of the students were in Grade 7, and were assigned to Mrs. Marling during the home-

room period so that she could monitor them on a day-to-day basis. With the other 19 students, she scheduled bi-weekly counselling sessions.

Mrs. Marling describes her role as being a "student advocate". Occasionally, she schedules case meetings with other teachers to keep herself up-to-date with the students' progress, and to inform teachers about personal difficulties the students may be experiencing. Her work with students also necessitates regular contacts with the students' families.

Mrs. Marling is assisted by Mr. Ladner, who supervises some of the volunteers, from the local colleges and universities, participating in internship activities at the Crisis Intervention Program. However, he is not involved in the counselling activities with the students. After teaching physical education for 12 years in a high school in suburban Montreal, Mr. Ladner became a child care worker at an organization for emotionally disturbed adolescents that is affiliated with the school board. In 1990-1991, he was appointed to Parkdale Academy to supervise and monitor five students who were integrated into the regular high school academic program.

The Teaching Staff

In 1990-1991, Parkdale Academy had 27 teachers responsible for all regular classes, and an additional 5 teachers who were assigned crisis-intervention and special education duties. The teachers were predominantly from white, middle-class backgrounds. Among the 32 teaching staff, only one teacher was a member of a visible-minority. This low ratio of minority teachers is typical of many high schools in Montreal.

The teachers were assigned to nine instructional departments, each led by a department head. Among these 32 regular and special education teachers, 16 were male teachers and 16 were female teachers. However, the majority of male teachers taught academic subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science and technical subjects. Elective subjects such as home economics, art, drama and music were taught exclusively by female teachers.

The Teachers Studied

The main informants for this study were four Language arts and five Mathematics teachers. Within a seven-day cycle, students attend a minimum of six

periods each of language arts and Mathematics. At Grades 7 and 8, they attend language arts for as many as nine periods per cycle and six periods of mathematics per cycle. In addition, the language arts teachers also teach Moral and Religious Education.

The teachers in this study were all experienced teachers. Their length of teaching ranged from 16 to 32 years, with a mean of 22.2 years (mean years of teaching of language arts teachers: 25.5 years; mathematics teachers: 19.6 years). In teaching experience, these teachers closely match the population of 27 teachers who teach academic subjects at Parkdale Academy (mean number of years: 23.3) with the least number of years being five. The less experienced teachers are females who instruct in non-academic subjects such as home economics, fine arts and drama, and their teaching experience was six, three and seven years respectively.

In the language arts department of Parkdale Academy, there was one female and three male teachers. In the mathematics department, there was one female and four male teachers. The female teachers both had a teaching load of 21 periods per seven-day-cycle, while the seven male teachers ranged from 24 periods to 33 periods per cycle (mean = 27.8 periods). In general, teachers' teaching loads varied according to their

level of seniority and category of teaching duties. Department heads often had reduced loads because of their additional responsibilities for curriculum planning; special education teachers also were recognized as requiring more time for teaching and preparation. Of the female teachers who participated in this study, one of them was the head of the language arts department, and the other was a special education teacher, which accounted for their reduced teaching loads.

Teachers at Parkdale Academy were not required to organize extra-curricular activities, although the principal encouraged their participation in such activities. The drama, music and physical education teachers were most active in after-school activities. Those teaching academic subjects, particularly the mathematics and science teachers, did not participate at all.

The Female Teachers

Mrs. Milgram. Mrs. Milgram has been teaching at Parkdale High School for 22 years. She received a Bachelor of Arts and one year of training in a Bachelor of Education program at the University of Toronto's College of Education. She completed graduate training

in the Counselling Education program at McGill University in 1976. During the 1970s, her responsibilities at the school involved teaching as well as guidance. In 1980, the school board eliminated the teaching/guidance positions and Mrs. Milgram chose full-time teaching. She felt that classroom teaching allowed her to interact with students in learning situations and she could continue to see students out of the classrooms for informal counselling. This, she believed, permitted more realistic appraisal of the overall development of students.

Mrs. Milgram grew up in rural Ontario. She is an only child from a "loving home", and succeeded in school; her mother passed away shortly after she left home. She married a fellow student from a prominent Ontarian family the summer she completed her Bachelor's and had two children during her marriage. She divorced five years later, and accepted a teaching post at Parkdale High School in Montreal when she lost custody of her children to her husband.

She visited her children occasionally during the first few years after her divorce, but because of her tumultuous relationship with her ex-husband, she did not maintain regular contact with them. In 1975, Mrs. Milgram married an English teacher at Parkdale High School (he retired from teaching four years ago). She

and her present husband do not have children, although they are in regular contact with the three adult-aged children from her husband's previous marriage.

As the head of the Language Arts department, Mrs. Milgram has a reduced teaching load. She teaches 24 periods per seven-day cycle in advanced English at three levels (Grades 7, 10 and 11), and Moral and Religious Education in Grade 7. A few years ago, she organized an enrichment program, Odyssey of the Mind, for language arts studies, promoting cooperative learning and creative writing. Mrs. Milgram is an advisor to the student council and is the head teacher of the prefects at Parkdale High School.

Mrs. Lessing. Mrs. Lessing was transferred to Parkdale High School in October of 1990 when the school board approved the principal's plans to establish a special education program. She obtained her Bachelor of Education at McGill University in 1970, and through part-time studies, received a special-education certificate in 1973. She took a one-year sabbatical leave to begin her graduate studies in Counselling Education in 1977, and received her M. Ed degree from McGill University in 1980. She remained a teacher of special education students at the high school level, and has never worked as a counsellor.

Mrs. Lessing described herself as a somewhat "depressed" child and teenager. She was born in the Eastern Townships and her natural father left the family when she was four years of age and has not contacted the family since. Her mother's subsequent re-marriage ended after six years. During the elementary and high school years, Mrs. Lessing and her older brother were sent away to Catholic schools in Montreal. She boarded at a convent where one of the religious sisters provided her with a lot of comfort, love and nurturing. She remembered that she disliked holidays and summer vacations when she had to move back home. She recalled her mother and stepfather's incessant and violent conflicts. Mrs. Lessing has minimal contact with her mother and since she and her brother were separated, they do not maintain a close relationship. She was married briefly after she graduated from university. She does not have children.

Mrs. Lessing teaches 24 periods per cycle in remedial mathematics and science at the Grade 7 and 8 levels. She has 13 and 14 students in each of the classes.

The Male Teachers

Mr. Attewell. A teacher with 23 years of teaching

experience, Mr. Attewell has been at Parkdale High School for the past six years. He received his Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and one-year of teacher training at McGill University. Upon graduation, he taught at a Montreal high school for six years before joining an international exchange program for teachers. He spent four years in Japan, Nigeria, Singapore and Malaysia in the mid 1970s. In the 1982-1984, he took a two-year sabbatical leave to complete a Master's degree in Mathematics.

Mr. Attewell immigrated to Canada with his parents and siblings from Estonia when he was seven years old. He has bitter memories of his entry into Canada. Immigration regulations stipulated that he and his family had to be placed under quarantine in Nova Scotia. His father, an intellectual in his native country, left the family in Nova Scotia to seek employment, and finally settled in Montreal where the rest of the family joined him. Mr. Attewell commented that the early hardship had been the catalyst for his high achievement in school.

Mr. Attewell has been married for 12 years, and has two sons. His spouse recently returned to university to study Art Education. He feels that self-discipline and academic achievement are priorities for children and adolescents; he and his spouse work

closely with their children to ensure that they develop their potential and respect adult authority. At home, he assumes the role as the head of the household, and in the classroom, he also exerts a high level of control.

Mr. Attewell has an extensive teaching load that includes 33 periods per cycle. He teaches Grade 10 Mathematics at the remedial and regular levels, Computer Science at the grades 7 and 8 levels, and Technical Explorations at the Grade 9 level.

Mr. Burroughs. Mr. Burroughs became a teacher of mathematics in 1967. His first marriage in 1969 lasted seven years, and he has two daughters who are now young adults. He described his first marriage and subsequent divorce as "hostile" and "angry". The couple fought over child custody and visiting rights for many years. In the mid-70s, following his divorce, he left Montreal for New York where he worked as an antique appraiser. In 1982, Mr. Burroughs returned to Montreal and taught in a Francophone high school for 8 years. He felt discriminated against because he was the only Anglophone in a French high school. In the fall of 1990 he was involved in conflicts with a colleague. Subsequently, he requested a transfer to Parkdale Academy where there was an opening for a mathematics

teacher. He teaches 24 periods per cycle.

Mr. Burroughs has been remarried for 12 years, and has two children from his present marriage. He owns an antique business in the suburbs of Montreal. It is a successful business which occupies much of his spare time. Quite frequently, he delivers goods to clients during his spare periods.

Mr. Barkley. Mr. Barkley has 25 years of teaching experience at the high school level. This is his 16th year at Parkdale Academy. He received his teacher training at MacDonald College.

Mr. Barkley grew up in the western suburbs of Montreal, and is the fourth of six children. He described his early home life as "traditional", i.e. his father was the provider and his mother was the nurturing matriarch. He remembered growing up with few material goods, but a lot of support from the members of his immediate and extended family. One of his uncles was a teacher who inspired him to become a teacher. Mr. Barkley has been married for 24 years. His spouse works part time as a librarian; they do not have children.

Mr. Barkley teaches 24 periods per cycle and is not involved in the extra-curricular activities in the school. Many years ago, he headed the chess club at

Parkdale High School, but it dissolved when the enrolment of the school declined and students' interest in chess diminished. He is reluctant to organize such a club now, but hopes that another teacher, "perhaps someone younger and more enthusiastic," will do so for the students.

Mr. Bailey. Mr. Bailey has been a teacher at Parkdale Academy since his graduation from McGill University's Bachelor of Education program in 1973. He is the second child of a family of nine children. Seven of his siblings were sisters, and his only brother is the youngest sibling, 18 years his junior. Although he described his childhood as "uneventful", and his family as "close and together", he recalled that he had to become independent at an early age because he had younger siblings to support. He has never been married.

With 17 years of teaching experience, Mr. Bailey is now the head of the mathematics department. He has a much reduced teaching load of 24 periods per cycle compared with the other mathematics teachers. He teaches advanced mathematics at the Grade 7, 8 and 11 levels, and Physics at the Grade 11 level.

Mr. Laqueur. A teacher at Parkdale Academy since the beginning of his career 32 years ago, Mr. Laqueur received his teacher training at MacDonald College. He then earned a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English at McGill University. He also took sabbatical leave to complete a Master of Arts in English Literature. He teaches 30 periods per cycle.

Mr. Laqueur is now in charge of the breakfast program and arrives to prepare the food at 6:45 am. He often complains of uncooperative and undependable colleagues, and "too many students who need it but are too lazy to come." Perhaps it is because of his early arrival at the school that Mr. Laqueur often naps in the staff room during his spare periods. He is distressed by the low academic potential of his students and feels that teaching 30 periods per cycle is overwhelming. At the end of the 1991/1992 academic year, he took an early retirement offer by the school board and terminated his teaching career to live in the country.

Mr. Laqueur described his childhood and adolescence as "depressing" years. His parents divorced when he was in Grade 5. Although he felt "relieved" since his parents never got along, he also felt that "there was nobody out there" for him. Nevertheless, he believes that one comes to cope with

such life experiences through maturation, and outside support is not to be expected. He often wonders how much his parents' unsuccessful marriage has affected him. He married at the age of 39, and this marriage lasted "eight years too long". He has a twelve-year-old daughter, with whom he spends alternate weekends.

Mr. McPhee. Mr. McPhee had 18 years of teaching experience prior to joining Parkdale Academy in the fall of 1990. He received a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English and History, as well as a Bachelor in Education at McGill University.

Mr. McPhee has been with the school board for only nine years, and has taught in elementary as well as in high schools. Prior to that, he was teaching at a private high school in Montreal. Since he has relatively few years of teaching experience with the school board, his placement is subject to availability.

In March of 1991, he was notified by the administration that he would be classified as a "surplus" teacher at the school board where he would receive 90% of his salary and be scheduled to do supply-teaching at various schools on demand. He would only be able to return to the same school as a full-time teacher in the following academic year if the student enrolment continued to increase and the

principal was successful in making a request for an additional language arts teacher. It was only in August of 1991, three weeks prior to the beginning of a school year, that his placement was finally confirmed.

Mr. McPhee described his childhood and youth as "normal" middle-class upbringing. His father passed away when he was five years old, and he and his four other siblings were raised by their mother, who remained a widow. His Catholic upbringing instilled in him a strong value system in which the cohesion of a family unit is of utmost importance. He has been married for four years, and has one child. His spouse is a guidance counsellor at a private Catholic high school for girls.

Since Mr. McPhee is the language arts teacher with the lowest seniority at the school, he has the most demanding teaching load of all the English teachers. He teaches 30 lessons per cycle in three different subjects: Language arts, Moral and Religious Education, and History, at 3 different levels (Grades 7, 8, and 10).

Mr. Newman. Mr. Newman has been a teacher for 16 years. He grew up in a low-income family, and was the youngest of six children, and the only one who achieved a university education. He has been married for 17

years, and has a 12-year-old son who is beginning high school. His spouse is working full time as an administrative assistant at Concordia University. He extends his teaching role at home, where he devotes a lot of time to assisting and monitoring the academic progress of his son.

Mr. Newman teaches 30 periods per cycle and spends most of his spare time in the staff smoking room, although he is not a smoker himself. The smoking room was once the male staff room at the school, and like a few other male teachers, Mr. Newman continues to use this room out of habit. He has made many attempts at reducing his consumption of 12 to 15 cups of coffee daily. Occasionally, he joins Mr. Laqueur at a neighbourhood cafe during a spare period, but in general, he is considered a "loner" among the teachers. He does not assist in extracurricular activities at school and feels that he is overloaded with the responsibilities of classroom teaching and preparation.

Chapter IV

Gender Issues in Teachers' Role Perceptions

While all teachers are expected to teach, male and female teachers develop different conceptualizations of what this may entail. There are many conventional interpretations of teaching, some of which are rather vague and apparently contradictory. For instance, in teaching, one must be humane and personal, but teach basic skills; a teacher must treat each student as an individual, but ensure that they get a standard education (Joyce, 1980). These dichotomous expectations require teachers to make choices about their professional commitments (McIntyre, 1980).

The female teachers in this study viewed teaching largely from the perspective of incorporating teaching and guidance roles in their classroom experience. There was the shared belief that the objective of teaching was to help students develop as happy, socially and emotionally well-adjusted, intellectually motivated individuals. In contrast, the male teachers were strongly influenced by their training in methodology, evaluation and instructional design. They narrowly defined their pedagogical role in terms of specific professional tasks and measures of performance that can be readily assessed. For instance, close

adherence to curriculum plans and increasing students' test scores were some of the responsibilities and educational outcomes that male teachers identified as important.

Interviews with the teachers revealed that perceptions about gender characteristics, teacher training, personal life experience, and sense of professional security all contribute to the way in which they "vocalionalize" or "professionalize" their roles.

"It Is Better To Talk To A Woman"

Male teachers often assume that they are less effective than females in developing an understanding of youngsters' social-emotional needs. For instance, Mr. Barkeley, who teaches English and Moral and Religious Education, believes that students naturally seek a female for social-emotional support. He analyzed why he has rarely been approached by students to discuss personal or familial difficulties, and attributed it to his gender. In his experience, boys, in general, were not likely to want to talk about their family problems, and girls would prefer to talk to female teachers. Moreover, he added:

Men tend to be more taciturn than women. Men tend to be more business-like, and their

business is teaching. So that we don't, even out of curiosity, get into kids' lives. Females tend to take interest in the details. If a student tells me, "my parents are going through a divorce", I'd probably say, "ah, that's too bad". Whereas a female might be more curious about some of the details. I also wonder if kids can open up to females more because of the mother figure.

Indeed, when a Grade 7 student, Simone, said that her grandmother would not be attending the parent-teacher interviews, Mr. Barkeley did not further inquire about her family situation. He correctly speculated that Simone did not come from an intact, two-parent family.

Stereotypical beliefs characterized some of his speculations about Simone; many Caribbean families were headed by single, unmarried mothers, and grandparents often brought up the children. Would he need to verify his speculations? Mr. Barkeley stated:

There is no point in my asking. It's none of my business what people do in their own homes Maybe if I were [a woman] she would feel comfortable telling me more. I don't know. Naturally, I don't want to pry.

By affirming the students' natural tendency to confide in female teachers, Mr. Barkeley found justifications as to why he need not become involved in their personal lives.

Past experiences where students have distanced themselves from a teacher can reinforce the teacher's view that males are less able to assume guidance

responsibilities. For instance, while Mr. Barkeley has developed sympathetic understanding toward students from disrupted families because he has encountered many of them in his classes, he believes that a student would be better assisted by a female teacher:

[From my experience], women are more successful in getting kids to talk. Sometimes I notice kids going through a really hard time, but they always seem to look at me and say "back off"!

Similarly, Mr. McPhee experienced rejection from students when he offered help. He recalled an incident a few years ago:

.... A [student in my class] was out of school for a few days, and when she came back she spent most of the day crying. I wanted to help but she clearly did not want to tell me anything.

It is often difficult to understand students' reactions to teachers' concerns. However, one can assume that when the interpersonal relationship is not well established, the assistance offered from one person to another may not be accepted. Male teachers often use students' initial closure as a sign of rejecting help. These experiences with students further confirm their prior conceptions that males are less adequate in the social-emotional domain.

Mr. Bailey also used the notion of gender "instinct" in describing gender differences in social

interactions. He did not recall that he was ever approached by students who revealed personal information to him. He interpreted this as students' intuitive responses to those teachers who seemed "available" and those who did not. Female teachers, he felt, were generally more available to students for non-academic support.

Mr. Bailey was confident that students know when they need adults' support, and they would naturally approach a teacher who was likely to give them the support that they sought. He noted that female teachers were usually more verbal, and students in distress were probably more attracted to them. "It's not for no reason that there are more women doing psychology work with students." He also sensed students' reluctance to approach him:

I am most comfortable with teaching [maths and science], and I think students also know what the teachers' strengths are, too. Men are usually more awkward with words. Women instinctively know what to say to comfort someone.

Mr. Burroughs also perceived females as "wanting to know all the nitty-gritty details" about students' lives. He described this as a universal gender difference that was commonly found in many societies. He observed that male teachers in the staff room talked about "lawn mowers and cars", and female conversations

revolved around "things about the kids that bothered them". Hence, females sought interpersonal knowledge, and they could do so without eliciting misunderstandings.

Mr. Attewell had specific fears that his intentions to provide emotional support to a student could be misconstrued:

I'm afraid to ask a kid to stay on and talk to me alone. I'd like to close the door and I don't want [others] barging in and interrupting. And with the door closed, nowadays, a student can turn around and charge you with sexual harassment.

Although he has never experienced such accusations, nor had other colleagues at the school, Mr. Attewell felt that "[students] cannot accuse a woman of sexual harassment, but they could accuse a man". Therefore, discussing personal information with a student was more appropriate for the female teachers.

Did female teachers acknowledge their gender-advantage in assisting in the social-emotional development of students? Mrs. Milgram and Mrs. Lessing both felt that facilitating communication and being emotionally supportive to children and youths were expected of women. As teachers, they are also expected to exhibit these qualities in their interactions with students. The ability to be warm and nurturing, attentive and understanding, flexible and open-minded,

transcends teaching responsibilities. Mrs. Lessing implied that there are social norms that support these gender characteristics:

We have some notion of how a man should behave and how a woman should behave. It is masculine to take control and dominate, and feminine to be motherly Mothers give to others, guide them toward the right path It's neither good nor bad, as long as it is gender appropriate.

In her own life, she has no children, but feels the strong compensatory need to assume the female nurturing role with her students:

Being a woman [to be caring and nurturing] is my second nature I don't have my own children to go home to, but I have many children that I work with every day. They are my children!

Mrs. Milgram recognized that although there were individual differences among females, they were more likely to take on the nurturing role than males:

[If I were to make a generalization] I would say that women are a bit more [able to be] empathetic and understanding. Especially with kids [Men] are usually not as patient.

She also implied that these gender characteristics were stable personality traits that were not instilled through academic training:

It's the old cliché: you can teach someone in theory what you have to do, but you cannot make someone more empathetic by training.

It is not unexpected that male teachers consider themselves unskilled to meet the psychological needs of their students. This has been reinforced by society's norms; females are readily accepted as more appropriate for raising children and youths. Research on gender showed that females have been socialized to be more inter-personally oriented than men, and they are more accurate in discerning nonverbal cues during interactions (Bakan, 1966; Block, 1983; Carlson, 1971; Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1975).

Such views were also reflected in students' attitudes toward their male and female teachers. Interviews with the students revealed that they had the tendency to approach their male teachers solely for academic help. They also favoured female teachers who showed interest in their personal lives.

Students frequently described their female teachers as "nice" or "mean", and their male teachers as "good" or "not good". Stanworth (1983) has reported similar findings. He observed that effectiveness in subject-teaching was the sole criteria that students used to evaluate their male teachers. They judged their female teachers' effectiveness by their success in establishing interpersonal relationships. Male teachers were not expected to be emotionally supportive

and available to their students, but female teachers were expected to do so.

Teacher Training and Guidance

That the guidance of students is of little importance is communicated to teachers through their pre-service training. Teacher education is synonymous with the technical training in pedagogy, which emphasizes the instructional methods, tests and measurement, and is far removed from the realities of the classroom. The teachers in this study received fairly uniform training with at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent. Male teachers generally had strong faith that teacher training provided them with the knowledge and skills to teach.

For example, Mr. Attewell, Mr. Newman, and Mr. Laqueur stressed that they were specifically trained to teach and were confident about the quality of their training in a reputable university. According to Mr. Newman, he largely relied on knowledge that he acquired in his undergraduate training to help him solve classroom problems. He holds the general view among male teachers that:

.... kids are not that different from when I did my B. Ed. Anyway, we learned some theories and they can be tailored to

different situations. [My teacher training] helps me teach, no doubt. I guess you get something out of a degree from McGill!

Not surprisingly, these male teachers also felt professionally unprepared to become involved with the social-emotional development of their students. Mr. Bailey commented:

[Teacher training] has very little to do with what kids are really like in the classroom. Especially the kinds of kids that we get in inner city schools You hear about divorce, and how traumatic it can be for the kids, but we don't know what we can do to help. I can say from my [training], we didn't learn anything about that.

Mr. Laqueur, an English teacher, seemed equally ill-prepared to make use of information about his students' family situation:

[The principal] tells us [about the students' family]. I suppose the information is useful, but I don't know what I'm supposed to make of it. Why am I told anyway? What I am trained to do is teaching. The other [things], well, that's not what I'm trained for and not what I came here to do.

When Mr. Laqueur and Mr. Newman chatted about students in the staff room during their spare periods, their verbal exchanges inevitably focused on the shortcomings of students that they both knew. However, their discussions addressed only the students' academic performance. As Mr. Newman explained:

We [have to decide] who should be passing or not. That's what we are trained to do as teachers.

Consequently, male teachers felt justified in limiting their role to the transmitting of subject-matter knowledge; promoting students' social-emotional development was relegated to other specialists.

For instance, ensuring that students become competent in mathematics was what Mr. Attewell saw as most crucial. He wanted to be certain that when his students graduate from his class, their passing grades reflected their mastery of the course material. Since his pre-service training did not provide him with specific skills to make sense of his students' home lives, Mr. Attewell felt awkward and became confused about how he ought to teach students who were experiencing social and emotional difficulties:

Maths, OK, come ask me. But if you are going through a hard time because your family life is upside down, well, it's sort of a conflict of interest. "You come and talk to me about your problems, and I'll do this and that to make your life easier." Well, I don't know if I should do that at all!

When a student, Chelsa, approached Mr. Attewell when she was very disturbed because of family problems, and was not able to concentrate on writing a test, Mr. Attewell felt ambivalent. He recalled his interactions with Chelsa:

She came and told me that she is having a very hard time. I said, "What would you like me to do?" Really, I didn't know what she expected from me. I can help her with maths, but that's about it. There are other people in the school that she should be talking to. I told her that, too.

Male teachers developed role expectations within narrowly defined professional parameters with some differences in their willingness to learn more about their students' personal lives. Mr. McPhee, an English teacher, showed some interest in students' family backgrounds:

If I know more about their family situation, especially if they are having a hard time because their parents are splitting up, it would be useful. I'll know basically who I'm talking to, so I know what to expect from [them] I capitalize on every opportunity to know every part of them, so I can work better with them.

Nevertheless, he felt that better understanding his students would actually make his role as a teacher more confusing, and he would then need to remind himself that **teaching** was what he was trained to do:

Well, sometimes you get too involved in the psychological and social, and not as much as you would like to on the academic aspect. You have to be careful that the balance is right, I guess. Kids have to come up being literate in English, and in the higher grades, know some literature. I'm really trained to teach English. That's what I know how to do.

When male teachers pursued further training, they were more likely to select an area of study directly

relevant to the subject that they teach. For instance, Mr. Attewell's and Mr. Laqueur's Master's degrees in Mathematics and Literature, respectively, indicated that when male teachers participated in professional development, they sought to strengthen their skills teaching academic subjects.

The two female teachers, on the other hand, felt that their teacher education was only intended to impart the basic knowledge of teaching subjects.

According to Mrs. Lessing:

.... teacher training cannot teach [us] everything [What we have to learn] is squeezed into such a short time. But if I think about it, I can say that it showed me the basics It's like a bag of tricks, some are useful some are not. Most of the tricks you need to practice and personalize it as you [continue] to teach.

Hence, female teachers saw pre-service training as a foundation on which effective teaching skills were to be fine-tuned. According to Mrs. Milgram, teacher training could not guarantee effective classroom teaching, particularly since effectiveness was based on the inter-personal relationship between teachers and students:

How do you deal with kids [who have problems]? You learn the theories, which gives you [a general understanding] of the situation. But [theories] have to be adapted and applied, and how you do that is not really taught.

Mrs. Milgram was also sceptical about the depth of her teacher training and education. She remembered her first day of teaching in a high school in Sudbury, Ontario:

I was confident that I had everything it takes to be a good teacher, until I stood in front of my class. I was **so** nervous, and trying **so hard** not to show it. I forget everything I learned. Well, I did my student teaching in a girl's convent school, and my job lead me to an inner-city high school with these big and rough looking kids who hardly noticed that I was there. Nothing looked like what I had learned from the books.

Mrs. Lessing and Mrs. Milgram both recognized the limitations of their teacher training in developing an effective interpersonal understanding of their students, they sought training in counselling to further their own professional development.

But it was also their belief that teaching and guidance are part of a teacher's role that compelled them to seek such training. As Mrs. Lessing put it succinctly:

.... It takes two conditions: realizing that you need these skills as part of your day-to-day encounter with students, and admitting that what you have learned so far is not enough. [The former] is most important, because how and what you teach your students is really up to you. You can do the minimal and teach the basic just to stay out of trouble, or you can give [all that you have] to teach kids.

Mrs. Lessing, supplemented her basic training in

teacher education with a certificate in special education, and a Master's degree in Counselling. In teaching students with special needs, she noticed that a vast majority of her students exhibit social-emotional difficulties, which make them more complex learners to understand and teach:

They are so preoccupied that they can't even listen, let alone do their homework. I tried to work with them to ease some of their trauma so they could have some left-over energy to listen to me talking about school. I did that naturally for years. Counselling training helped me gain some confidence that what I was doing with them is OK.

Personal Experience and Role Perceptions

The rich personal and teaching experiences of the teachers in this study also interacted with their gender conceptions and teacher training to determine whether they saw teaching as a vocational activity or a professional one.

Mr. Attewell and Mr. Laqueur had different but nonetheless scarring memories of their childhood experiences. Mr. Attewell felt discriminated against as an immigrant, but struggled to achieve despite his disadvantaged background. Mr. Laqueur spent his early years in a conflictual home and his own marriage also ended in a divorce. Both teachers had fantasies of having enjoyable school lives where they could have

special alliances with some teachers, but Mr. Laqueur explained:

[The teachers] were busy with teaching and, like myself, they were probably not trained to do counselling either After all, I don't think there was much they could have done. I was a good student, so I never really needed their help anyway.

Mr. Laqueur's rationalization of his teachers' distancing behaviours confirmed his perception that teachers were trained and available mainly for academic assistance. Mr. Attewell also explained that his teachers were academically driven and were predominantly male teachers:

I was in the science stream most of my teachers were men. They were excellent teachers - that's why I was able to excel in science and maths Maybe a woman teacher could pay a bit more attention to me, but anyway I did well in school. I worked hard.

They felt that because of their own strong academic motivation, there was no need for a teacher to help them. That should also be true for their students. According to Mr. Laqueur:

.... a student who wants to get ahead has to work hard; it is as simple as that and they have to learn to do that despite their misfortunes. Nobody will bother to help you in life if you do not want to help yourself.

Female teachers, in contrast, used their prior experience with students to affirm their role in assisting students in distress. Mrs. Milgram's

experience in the classroom provided her with the insight that children and adolescents often react to life events in idiosyncratic ways. Only through the interactions with students and insightful analysis of daily experience would a teacher be able to understand each student's needs.

Although Mrs. Milgram was determined to see her students become competent learners, her experience in teaching told her that effective teaching was contingent upon a student's emotional stability. Since "learning naturally occurs when [one is] relaxed and comfortable", Mrs. Milgram believed that it was particularly important to facilitate communication with students when they experienced crisis situations:

I feel that I can do more good staying after school and talking to [the students], and developing a counselling relationship. You have to understand; you are not teaching a class, but a group of 25 to 35 *individuals*. And you have to be sensitive to what each one of them is going through.

Many personal experiences helped Mrs. Milgram develop her role as a caring teacher. She described her own stable childhood when she felt supported and loved:

I think of how I grew up and I see what it takes to be parents myself. What people call insight really comes from having strong childhood support. It's so true when people say, "when you are loved, you know how to love". I know how to be supportive because I was supported.

Her own marital life was a particularly significant experience. When she left her first marriage, she had to relinquish custodial rights to her own children. It was a decision that she regrets to this day, but she was too "powerless" at the time to have perceived other solutions. "I know what kids have to go through when their parents split up; I saw that from my own kids," she said. She described her children as "very closed up" when she was going through the divorce. Although she was too overwhelmed by her own struggles to recognize the meaning of their silence, she now understands that while some children are cognizant of what they need, a large proportion of them need to be "drawn out". To those students, "I'm their 'surrogate mother'. I give [them] daily 'hugs'".

Mrs. Lessing's childhood in a very disruptive family, and the strong support of a religious sister at the convent where she boarded emphasized how adult support could facilitate personal development. Her experience as a youngster also led her to believe that disruptions in the family have direct consequences on a student's social interaction with peers. She recalled her isolation from friends at school, and her hesitance to invite friends to her house as related to the chaos in her own home:

Kids are embarrassed, especially if there is a lot of fighting at home, to let their

friends see that. Disruptive homes are not safe havens, and you don't let your friends in on that part of your lives. Quite often, you see these kids hanging-out, but not at their houses. They go elsewhere.

Growing up under adverse emotional conditions helped her realize that teacher's support can help students adjust to life's demands. Her training in counselling helped her develop insights about her own experience, which were analytical tools that she uses to deal with the students who approach her for emotional support. She felt that her willingness to listen to her students was part of her way of interacting with people because of her own constant need to counsel herself:

I not only do that with my students, but also with myself and other people I know. Working with kids, you have to improvise as you go along, and learn from your experiences, and your own mistakes. Sometimes I do or say something to a kid, and afterward I think, "maybe I should have said this if I had said this [to the student], maybe he wouldn't have clammed up." Kids teach me how to listen, not books and theories.

Women have always been socialized to nurture and engage in the upbringing of children. Personal life experiences interact with these social norms and expectations to reinforce their role conceptions.

Developing A Sense of Professional Security

Students' achievement often becomes the criteria on which teachers are judged. The principals and other administrators at Parkdale Academy seldom visited classrooms, and made inferences about teachers' competence from the grades of their students. Mr. Newman felt tremendous pressure each term when he had to submit his grades:

[The principal] asks a lot of questions when the marks are too high, or too low. Well I can't always come up with this smooth bell-curve. How can I? Half the class doesn't want to do homework.

In such an administrative climate, it is expected that teachers are cautious about giving grades to their students. The male teachers showed an overwhelming concern about their accountability for the knowledge acquired by their students. For instance, Mr. Burroughs tried to limit his involvement with students to matters directly associated with teaching mathematics, because his competence was judged by their grades:

When kids come up to me, I listen, sure, but it's their work that counts. I teach them maths, and I evaluate them and give them a mark. I have to be accountable this way. Sure I can be nice and everything, but if they leave my class and [go on to the next grade] and they don't know their stuff, it's me who is the bad teacher.

Mr. Attewell was convinced that the upward mobility within the educational system was based on whether a teacher was perceived to be "good" which, in turn, was operationalized as whether one's students achieved good grades. He had the misconception that the current vice principal, who was previously a mathematics teacher, "inflated the students' marks so that [he] could get a promotion". This kind of professional rivalry is common when there is the feeling that administrators are using simplistic and insufficient data to make judgements about teacher competence. Hence, teachers are suspicious of each other falsifying students' grades in order to "look good".

These conflictual and jealousy-ridden collegial relations create difficulties for teachers working together. Mr. McPhee, a relatively new teacher at Parkdale Academy, described his reluctance to consult with other colleagues:

We are afraid to ask because we don't want to reveal our ignorance. We all want to look like we know what we are doing [but] I think most of us panic when we hand in the grades, at least I do, wondering what [the principal] will say when he sees those horrendous marks. You see, the head of each department is supposed to help the others out. But I'm an experienced teacher myself, and I wouldn't want [to look like] I don't even know how to teach.

Although research has shown that teachers get the

most help from each other, and informal professional interactions are the main resource for teacher development (Joyce, 1980), many teachers isolate themselves from other colleagues.

Historically, female teachers have been considered suited for classroom teaching because of their maternal qualities. Hence, it is adaptive for women to highlight their nurturing role in the upbringing of children and youth. They often develop a sense of professional security by establishing satisfying relationships with their students. Mrs. Milgram commented:

My students are telling me that I am a good teacher when they come back to visit me years after they have left my class.

Mrs. Lessing also took pride in the relationships she has with her students long after they leave her classroom. She explained the significance of such relationships:

When students keep coming back to see you, it's really the friendship that is sustaining the relationship, because you are not the teacher any more [Such friendship] is based on the mutual respect that you have built right from the classroom interactions. This is what I care about when I teach.

Female teachers frequently ascribe these self-evaluations to their professional competence. Since they view their nurturing role as superordinate to

their subject-teaching role, being able to establish amicable relationships with their students is a source of professional gratification. They strive to be liked by their students and to be regarded as nurturing and caring teachers.

Chapter V

Female Teachers: Integrating Guidance and Teaching

The two female teachers constantly balanced their roles as teacher-counsellors. In the classroom, they placed importance on imparting knowledge as well as on addressing students' emotional needs. Mrs. Milgram explained:

There are very few professions that can be as challenging as [being a teacher]. Teaching to me is never a routine job. I am like a mother to my students - I baby them (laughs), and their father who disciplines them, and a teacher who teaches, and a friend who discusses their favourite books. [Prior to the 80s] I was a teacher and guidance counsellor, half and half time. When the board eliminated that, I chose to be a classroom teacher. I can still do my counselling bit, but I am also all those other things.

For Mrs. Lessing, teacher mentors in her youth strongly influenced the way she approaches her work:

I had some of the best role models when I was a student. Some bad ones, too, but the ones that made a mark in my life - they believed in me, when I didn't even believe in myself. I think we all have a "calling", and mine is to become a good teacher to perpetuate the gifts I got from my own teachers.

As guidance and caring of students are integral to teaching, an effective teacher cannot relegate these responsibilities to other professionals. To Mrs.

Milgram, assisting students to overcome stresses in their lives is the natural behaviour of a teacher who cares about her students:

I just put on my "counsellor hat" whenever I feel at wits end with a student. When they behave like that, there has to be something more. I can't see how anyone can make the kids learn when they are acting-out all their frustrations in every way possible.

Yet, Mrs. Lessing attributes her orientation toward teaching to her training in counselling rather than teacher education:

As a classroom teacher, I expect obedience and order. But as a counsellor, I keep myself at the level of the students, so that we can begin to see each other's perspective. Kids like you and will open up to you when they are convinced that you will listen to them and understand them Teacher training focused a lot on classroom management, which puts the teacher in command there should be more focus on how to listen to kids.

Integrating guidance and teaching as reciprocal roles, these teachers continuously make observations and gather information about their students. They actively search for signals that may indicate family difficulties.

Diagnosing Student Behaviour

Mrs. Milgram establishes a parallel between what she does when she is alerted to students' behaviour,

and making a medical diagnosis. Both procedures require gathering multiple sources of information, and then to assess the combination of "symptoms" as a whole:

Acting-out doesn't always mean that a student's parents are divorced. I see lots of angry teenagers who have perfectly loving parents who are wondering what's wrong with their kids But if you see a kid suffering in all areas, in school, with their friends, being lethargic and depressed well, then, that's probably more than just being rebellious.

Tara is a grade 7 student who is slightly overweight, and wears her blond hair in two pigtails which makes her seem much younger than her age of 13 years. She expresses herself well orally, and incorporates mature vocabulary in conversations. However, she is weak in spelling and writing and also achieves poorly in mathematics. In class, Tara acts inappropriately. She is often the target of peer ridicule and tries to compensate for the peer alienation by eliciting positive feedback from the teacher. During one lesson, Mrs. Milgram discussed with the class the techniques of public speaking. Tara raised her hand to make a comment, "Oh, Miss, I could do that. I have no trouble at all." A few classmates began to laugh at her.

Although Mrs. Milgram purposely did not deal with these outbursts because she did not want to end up with

an uncontrollable situation, such classroom behaviour enabled Mrs. Milgram to readily identify Tara as a troubled child with a problematic family life. She made other observations about Tara's apparent isolation from peers outside of the classroom.

Mrs. Milgram recognised Tara's "depression beneath her obnoxious facade." She observed that Tara always sat in the front near her desk and needed a lot of attention from her. Whenever there were small-group projects, she often had to help Tara find a group since the other students were not eager to work with her.

Mrs. Milgram felt that "[Tara's] basic unhappiness manifests itself as totally inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour", but she believes that it is more important to attend to Tara's maladaptive social behaviour than to her classroom behaviours:

Like many [children from disrupted families], Tara has difficulties in perspective taking, and alienates herself from her peers. We have to look at her present home life as well. Kids 6 or 7 will say those inappropriate things to shock, that's the nature of egocentrism. But a 14 year old who is still so incredibly egocentric, the problem is not just the divorce, but also family dysfunction.

Many students react to an aversive family life by showing their anger in class. Such anger should not necessarily be interpreted as defying the teacher's authority. Mrs. Lessing is often alerted to students

from disrupted families by their acting-out behaviour. She characterized students who mask emotional vulnerability with aggressive behaviour as follows:

These kids are too cautious to leave themselves wide open. They will only give you a little hint that they are in trouble, and [the teacher] has to do the rest of the work to find out where the problem lies. It's too simplistic to say that they act out because they need attention. I think kids act out for different reasons, just like they each want attention in different ways.

Mrs. Lessing uses social difficulties as a predictor of family disruption, particularly for younger high school students. For Grade 7 students who are new at the school, adjusting to a new high school and making new friends requires considerable self-confidence and social skills that, quite often, students from disrupted families lack.

She identified Tisila and Keon, who frequently interrupted classroom activities, as students from disrupted families. Tisila is a tall, angry 13-year-old who has severe acne and rarely maintains eye contact with others. Her interaction with peers is antagonistic and conflictual. Many students avoid interacting with her. When the students in the classroom are asked to do seat work, Tisila often curses audibly, and storms out of the classroom without notifying the teacher. Mrs. Lessing is sensitive to

her emotional difficulties:

My heart goes out to Tisila. I can get very angry at her because she causes trouble in my classroom, but I worry more about how much she is hurting. Teenagers all want to fit in and when they don't, it is because they feel so different from the others. I know that Tisila wants to be happy and be good, but when her home life is a storm she cannot be any of these.

In the same class, Keon is always talking and interrupting others. It was Keon's social interactions with peers which initially caught Mrs. Lessing's attention. He seems sociable, verbally skilled and makes a lot of jokes to get his classmates' attention. But the reactions of his peers are often unfavourable. While she does not make deliberate attempts at intervening in peer relations, Mrs. Lessing uses her observations to formulate hypotheses about Keon's troubled behaviour:

Keon would do anything to get a laugh out of you You could say that he tries too hard It's an attention-seeking behaviour that masks what is troubling him inside.

The female teachers did not react to the classroom interruptions by sending students to the other professionals at the school for disciplinary actions or assistance. Keeping the students in the classroom allows them to continuously observe and develop an understanding of these students.

Maximizing Classroom Interaction

Mrs. Lessing and Mrs. Milgram always encouraged their students to work in small groups and discuss among themselves. These are good learning opportunities for the students and also help the teachers understand the students' sociability, peer interactions, and cooperative skills. Mrs. Milgram often asked students to work together to do "community writing", so that through the students' interaction, they may encourage each other to reveal their personal concerns. Such activities are effective because:

[students] hesitate to talk about their difficulties unless they see others as having similar experiences. When you get them to talk about [their personal experiences] to each other, they can often offer each other insights. They can be more effective helpers than experienced counsellors.

Mrs. Milgram also used reading materials as catalysts for students to think of incidents that were relevant to their own lives. She encouraged her students to directly or indirectly refer to their own experience in class discussions. In her Grade 11 language arts class, students were asked to read a short story about a young girl's anger toward her father, a Catholic priest, of whom she felt ashamed.

Mariah, a student whose parents were divorced,

expressed her disagreement with the young character in the novel and directly related it to her own life, "at least she could see her father and get to know him, I never even knew my father." Mariah's comments subsequently led to a discussion about the difficulties adolescents experience when they lack the support of both parents.

In her language arts classes, Mrs. Milgram also deliberately used written assignments so that she could learn more about students' family lives:

When I was making up the exam, I had [a particular] student in mind I gave them an opportunity to talk about different circumstances that young people now have to face I pick my brains to find topics that encourage students to write about their personal experiences.

Allowing students to work together in small groups can also help students discover each others' strengths. In order to accomplish this, Mrs. Milgram often assigns group projects where students collaborate rather than do seat work independently. This maximizes students interaction and discussions and she seldom interferes in the group processes. To ensure that her students are also producing high quality work, they are graded for their group effort and product rather than assigning individual scores.

Similarly, Mrs. Lessing thinks of activities that

require different skills and talents. She assigns group projects that elicit students' writing skills, public speaking skills and creativity. For instance, Tisila was not well-liked by peers, but she earned amicable support from her group partners when she designed and produced a collage for the group project that raised the group's rating. In subsequent group work, Tisila's participation was increasingly welcomed by the other students.

The physical organization of the classroom is also important. The female teachers' classroom management style is distinct from the male teachers. Students' seats are arranged either in small groups or they form a large circle. The latter's row-by-row arrangement and didactic teaching do not encourage students' participation. By creating a flexible seating arrangement in the classroom, the female teachers allow students to interact with each other.

After School Contacts with Students

Mrs. Milgram routinely works with students during after school hours, and occasionally during lunch breaks. When school ends at 2:50 pm., she often has students in her classroom working. Students who have not completed their homework are asked to stay on to

complete their work. These are also opportunities for her to work with students on an individual basis.

Mrs. Milgram sees Tara once a week during lunch break for tutoring. She teaches Tara how to be a more fluent writer using the MacIntosh computer. She also takes the opportunity to help her monitor her social behaviour and recognise the precedents and antecedents of her behaviour. Through these informal conversations Mrs. Milgram learned about Tara's traumatic reactions to her abandonment by her father when she was 3 years old. Tara also revealed that her mother, a successful executive, is rarely at home in the evenings and Tara is alone.

In coping with another disruptive student, Chris, Mrs. Milgram tries to lessen the frequency of disruptions. In spite of his incessant conflicts with other teachers, Chris sought an emotional alliance with Mrs. Milgram. She overlooks his aggressive behaviour as long as they do not effect other students. She purposefully takes the attention off Chris, so that his disruptive behaviour is not reinforced. In class, she also ignores the fact that his homework is either not submitted or is incomplete, and deals with these matters privately when she and Chris are alone.

Mrs. Milgram meets regularly with Chris, usually in the morning before classes begin, so that she can

help him organize his notes and text books. They discuss in a non-antagonistic manner how he can approach teachers to explain that he had not completed his work. She often kept Chris after school to ensure that he has completed the work she assigned before he leaves to go home. Although Mrs. Marling and the crisis intervention teacher can take responsibility for this, Mrs. Milgram did not refer Chris to them for help:

I didn't feel I needed [the crisis intervention teachers'] help. I can manage Chris myself. As long as he cooperates when I talk to him after class, I feel I can help him improve.

In encouraging after-school contacts with her students, Mrs. Milgram has many opportunities to obtain additional information about their lives at home:

It's too intrusive for me to go and ask directly what's happening in their lives, even if I suspect something. But if I ask them about why they did not do their homework, it's part of my job, and they can't say that I'm nosy and I pry.

Mrs. Lessing also supplements classroom instruction with individual tutoring. She sees students after school, and during her spare periods. She negotiates with other teachers, so that her students can occasionally be released from classes to get special tutoring.

Although Keon does well in mathematics, Mrs. Lessing helps him maintain his good performance. When he returned after missing two school days due to legal procedures related to his custody, she took him out of his art class during her spare period to give him an individual lesson on the material he had missed.

For Mrs. Lessing, tutorials are opportunities to show the students that she cares about them:

We often overlook the significance of 30 minutes - in their eyes, it says much more than "you are helping me with school work". We are telling the kid that they are important enough for me to give that little bit of my spare time.

Some students do not come to value these opportunities initially. Mrs. Lessing realized that her tutoring sessions with Tisila were often unsuccessful. Tisila communicated her uncooperative gestures by refusing to make eye contact. She also sat back at her chair to extend her distance from the desk. As Mrs. Lessing persisted in working with Tisila, she began to see some changes:

Once in a while, she would throw me these sidelong glances, like "how come you don't give up on me like everyone else? I'm interested to see what you are up to, but I don't want you to know that I am interested." That's when I know that I can start to talk to her person-to-person, not just about school work, but about other things that make her so unhappy.

Maximizing Teacher-Student Communication

Mrs. Milgram used journal writing not only as a class assignment, but also a way for her to get to know her students. Tara took advantage of this free writing exercise to disclose how her parents' marital disruption has affected her. In her responses, Mrs. Milgram encouraged her to explore her feelings. Through these journal dialogues, Mrs. Milgram also learned that Tara distrusts the crisis intervention teacher because of her unpleasant experiences with a court-appointed psychologist many years ago. Tara felt that the psychologist was too inquisitive and pressured her to reveal information that she was not comfortable disclosing.

In responding to Tara's journals, Mrs. Milgram explained to her that psychologists can often help individuals deal with personal difficulties by assuming a non-judgemental stance; they also keep information confidential so that friends and family need not be involved. She foresaw that her personal contacts with Tara would have to be supplemented with more structured therapeutic interventions. These journal dialogues continued for approximately seven weeks, until she believed that Tara was ready to accept an outsider's help. Mrs. Milgram then signalled the crisis

intervention teacher to make a referral to the Psychology Department at the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Journal writing was also a way for Mrs. Milgram to communicate with Mariah, an attractive girl who is well-known in the school for her dramatic talent. She has never met her biological father, and has a very tumultuous relationship with her mother's boyfriend, who recently left the family. Mrs. Milgram quickly recognized her developmentally inappropriate maturity:

It's hard for [her] to be a kid [her] age. She is extremely protective of her mother. They have this incredible closeness. I don't know them enough to judge whether it is a symbiotic one, but Mariah does not seem to have a normal mother-daughter relationship with her mom. She is both the mother and the daughter.

As a seventeen-year-old, Mariah says that she "picks out the right boyfriend for her mother", and "listens to [her] mother when she is depressed". At seventeen, she may seem mature and supportive of her mother, but when she was younger, she remembered feeling overburdened and, at times, intensely angry at her mother for "not being a happy mother like everyone else". Mrs. Milgram is cautious in making interpretations about Mariah's reactions:

Mariah may sound mature, but she is still a teenager. Maybe I'm too hung-up on this

"youth" business; I try to let her know that she doesn't always have to be a grown-up, because she is not yet a grown-up. I want her to realise that she doesn't always have to be the strong one, because we learn about ourselves by being vulnerable.

Observations of Mrs. Lessing's mathematics classes revealed that she also used various instructional opportunities to initiate individual counselling. Although the classroom may seem to be too public a place for such activities, students soon become accustomed to teacher-student conversations during seat-work time and pay little attention to what is going on. For instance, during the time for seat-work, she quietly talked to Tisila about personal hygiene, to Dwayne about his visits with his father and to Melanie about her relationships with boys.

Mrs. Lessing circulates in the classroom to monitor all her students' class work; in doing so, she manages to keep all her students on-task. When she first noted that Tisila was reluctant to work independently in class, she started to closely monitor her work. Sometimes she would explain the task to Tisila. She would remain beside Tisila and help her begin the tasks.

Increasing Students' Self-Esteem

Mrs. Milgram thinks that grade inflation helps to improve the self-esteem of students, and she believes that this is particularly important for students who are experiencing disruptions in the family:

This is about the best kind of "positive reinforcement". I have not seen a single student who did not respond to this.

She remembered that when Tara started in September, her work was, perhaps, deserving of a grade of 7 out of 20. She tried to motivate Tara by adjusting the grade to a passing 12 out of 20. Two months into the school year, Tara's work reached a "well-deserved 14 out of 20".

As a language arts teacher, Mrs. Milgram feels that grade inflation can be done discretely without other students' being aware that the teacher is using differential standards for grading. With students like Tara, who generally receive a lot of negative attention from teachers, Mrs. Milgram also uses grade inflation as a means to establish an alliance:

..... students always like the teachers who give them good marks. They always say, "so-and-so always fails me - she must hate me". Kids pick who is their ally by how they are doing in the course.

It opens the communication channel with her students:

As a teacher, you can't force a kid to come to you. But if they feel that you are nice enough, they'll come on their own. There are so few adults in the world they can talk to.

When they find them, believe me, they'll use [them].

Once a trusting relationship is established, Mrs. Milgram then capitalises on her amicable relationship with Tara to help her develop coping strategies to deal with the stresses of school and family.

Mrs. Lessing also wanted Tisila to make the connection that her extra work in mathematics indeed leads to the better achievement that she deserves. As a general teaching strategy, Mrs. Lessing allows her students to make corrections on their tests and examinations, as many times as they would like, so that they can improve their grades. This is particularly effective for Tisila, since throughout the school year, she changed from being resistant to making any corrections to voluntarily resubmitting her work for a better grade. Mrs. Lessing explains why Tisila is receptive to this intervention:

I could put a high mark on her reports, but she may just think, "Hey, [the teacher] made a mistake and I got lucky". That's not really showing her how she can take control over her own learning and how her studying would pay off. I tell her that she can work to get a better mark and I know she could do better.

Communicating With Parents

Mrs. Milgram uses the formative evaluation procedures, which are implemented for all language arts classes, to communicate with parents about their children's achievement and progress. Parents are asked to sign and return the evaluations. Mrs. Milgram uses these evaluations as an initial contact with parents and makes it her priority to ensure that parents see them. During the first parent-teacher meeting of the school year, Mrs. Milgram explained to each parent the importance of cooperation in this endeavour.

Parents who did not attend the parent-teacher meeting received a letter describing the nature and function of the formative evaluation. In class, she routinely collects the evaluations by calling students' names one by one. She contacts the parents when formative evaluations are not returned. She found this useful because it initiates an understanding of her students' family lives:

When I call home, I get to find out what's going on. Quite often parents will tell me, "be easy on my son [or daughter] because we are having some family problems". Sometimes you get parents who tell you to mind your own business - that tells you something, too.

Mrs. Milgram is very careful about approaching her students' parents. For instance, she did not want to exacerbate the conflict between Tara and her mother

given their already fragile relationship:

Some parents are afraid that if the teacher knows too much, their kids will suffer because of prejudice. It happens, sometimes, unfortunately, I know that from my colleagues that it does happen. Tara's mother keeps everything business-like with me. That's OK. That's why I figure that the crisis-intervention teacher is better [at making the referral and informing the mother], because that's their rightful place to do that, not mine.

To help strengthen the mother-daughter relationship, she made an arrangement with Tara's mother to elicit her help in doing some writing assignments such as book reports. Capitalising on Tara's good verbal expression, Mrs. Milgram asked her mother to be a scribe to record Tara's ideas. This serves to capture some of Tara's best ideas, and is also a way of involving her mother in her school work.

Mrs. Milgram believes that teachers should be non-judgemental in their contacts with the families. She has encountered parents who resented teachers who approached them with the question "What's wrong?"

However, parents are much less defensive when teachers have the attitude of "What can I do to help?" That was how she communicated with Chris' mother about his incomplete school work, and hopes to find a way in which his mother could monitor his progress more closely:

By putting Chris in the focus, I am letting

his mom realize that we could work together to help him. It probably made her feel at ease that I didn't say, "divorce is awful for kids, and no wonder he is not doing well." I don't know [the parent] so well, and I certainly wouldn't want to offend a parent and risk her taking her anger out on [the student].

When Chris' mother felt that she could collaborate with Mrs. Milgram, she started to reveal to the teacher her difficulty in setting limits for Chris since the divorce upsets the dynamics of the family. She has not been able to successfully monitor Chris' after-school activities, and his homework and study habits have suffered in consequence.

Mrs. Milgram capitalised on this opportunity to provide an intervention:

I just suggested some simple things that they could do to ease the tension at home. Parents often forget about the common-sense parenting skills when they are in distress themselves. I'm not sure if the intervention is all that successful, but at least from my end, Chris got a bit more work done.

With older students, Mrs. Milgram is less inclined to initiate contact with the parents. However, some of the students have been in her classes in earlier grades and she has already established rapport with the parents. She keeps in touch with these parents to discuss their children's progress.

Freddie, for instance, is one the students that she has known since he was in grade 7. Mrs. Milgram

remembers him as a top student who was a prefect of the school, but changed dramatically when his parents separated 3 years ago:

Almost overnight, I saw this kid acting just a little too tough for his age. I didn't like the friends he was hanging out with, because they were simply not his calibre. He started to smoke, and God knows what else. He told me, "Miss, who else can I hang out with? I don't want be with the nerds, and there is no one else in between".

In the past year Freddie's father has talked to Mrs. Milgram about his son's sudden lack of academic motivation. Freddie is now in Grade 11, and at the height of six feet and four inches, he is a popular male student with stylish long blond hair and a nonchalant attitude. He is in Mrs. Milgram's advanced English class, where the top students of his grade are, but his homework habits are still inconsistent.

Mrs. Milgram was particularly concerned about his overall functioning when she realized that he was sexually active, and that his girlfriend who is five years older, had had a second abortion. She formulated an explanation of his behaviour:

The way I saw it, he was suddenly left on his own when his mother left, and had to grow up. I don't know if he was looking for a "mother figure" or if he was trying to prove to himself that he is old enough to cope with all his family problems.

Mrs. Milgram's past interaction with Freddie's father has helped her understand the post-divorce

family dynamics. Freddie has to be responsible for family duties that may not be age-appropriate. Even now, Mrs. Milgram continues to gather information about Freddie's life at home, and to help his father understand the importance of spending time to guide and nurture Freddie:

He had to suddenly grow up when he lived with his father. [His father] is an executive, and when he comes home late, Freddie has to do some of the cooking, housework. He was suddenly asked to assume an adult role. That's hard for a kid, and he gets very confused about what he is expected to do.

She tried to help the parent understand the inappropriate psychological burden on a youngster who may not be developmentally capable of assuming an adult-like role.

Mrs. Lessing contacts some parents by making home visits. Although this is time consuming and she often has to do it in the evenings when working parents are available, she finds such visits the best way of understanding her students. For instance, when Tisila was suspended by the school because she attacked another student, Mrs. Lessing visited Tisila at home to deliver the required assignments:

I certainly didn't have to do it. It's a school rule that when [a student] is suspended, they have to come to school to pick up their work. But I delivered the work anyway. I thought that this is the only way to show Tisila and her mother that I care about what's going on. And I like her despite her [disruptive and aggressive]

behaviours.

These visits also sensitize her to the constraints and limitations of the parent. Mrs. Lessing begins to better understand the social context of the student's behaviour:

It's hard to expect a mother to sit down to work with her teenager when she has to work two jobs to make ends meet. I can't assume that a student is getting helped at home when it is not realistic. But I can get the mother to be a sounding board to make sure that the student has tried to do the homework, and bring back what she cannot do to ask me the next day. Or I can arrange to have the student do the homework with me after school.

The close up view of the student's family helps Mrs. Lessing assess whether interventions should focus on the student or extend to the family. For instance, Tanya was a 15-year-old who was repeating Grade 8. Her participation in classroom activities was minimal, and she did not bring her textbooks to her classes.

At the beginning of the school year, Mrs. Lessing became concerned with Tanya's chronic absenteeism, and decided to discuss this with her mother. After repeated attempts, she talked to Tanya's mother, who "sounded intoxicated and quite incoherent". The conversation left her concerned about the student's home life and she persisted in finding ways to get a clearer picture of Tanya's life outside of school.

Mrs. Lessing decided to arrange a meeting with

Tanya's mother in person, and as she did not attend scheduled school meetings, Mrs. Lessing decided to pay a home visit. Her past experience suggested that most families cooperate with the teacher when they find the teacher visiting at home:

My biggest objective is to get Tanya to come to school regularly. I would like to work out a system, so that I could call home when she is not here, and we can try to nail down where she is when she is not here. But [Tanya's mother] was too incoherent to return phone calls, and did not want to meet, and was so noncommittal when I met her. I didn't know how much I could count on her.

The female teachers' interactions with students suggested that nurturing and guidance are necessary in order for teachers to assist students from disrupted families through the adjustment period. They do not rely on other school staff to provide interventions for their students, but take responsibility for tutorial assistance, counselling, and dealing with behavioral problems in the classroom.

Chapter VI

Male Teachers: Minimizing Involvement With Students

For the male teachers studied, assisting students from disrupted families involved activities that interfered with their teaching. Like other male teachers, Mr. Laqueur, a language arts teacher, expressed resentment toward the complex behavioral problems brought into the classrooms by the students from disrupted families:

Nearly every one of them who causes trouble is from a [disrupted family]. I am really getting quite tired of them. I wish someone would just take them away and leave me with ones that really want to learn English.

In the classroom, the male teachers place importance on students' behaving cooperatively and compliantly. Students who are unable to do so are often challenging for these teachers and diminish their sense of accomplishment. Male teachers usually referred them to the vice principal, Mr. Jacoby, school counsellors or to the staff of the crisis intervention centre.

Teaching The Subject

Male teachers avoided situations where they might

be confronted with students' emotional needs. They designed activities to focus interaction on the subject-matter taught and discouraged students from using class time for other purposes. Expression of students' social or personal concerns was considered inappropriate. Most male teachers also avoided social contact with students outside of the classroom.

Mathematics teachers seldom deviated from the subject-matter. However, on one occasion, in Mr. Burroughs's Grade 9 mathematics class, students requested to have a period to "discuss issues" rather than learning mathematics. Mr. Burroughs obliged and students discussed racism. A student asked Mr. Burroughs if he is married, and if he has children. He replied, "If that's all you want to talk about, let's do maths!"

Mr. Burroughs felt that this was a "mundane question" because his family life should be of little interest to his students. Such discussions were not appropriate for a mathematics class:

That's just a way to get away from maths. Kids always like to make it sound like it's educational That's kind of a manipulation, to get away from doing what we have to do and waste some time. I'm there to teach maths and I can't really justify spending time chit-chatting about how many kids I have.

Male language arts teachers set restrictive

boundaries for their classroom activities as well. At the high school level, the objectives of the language arts program are not only to develop literacy skills and competencies, but also to develop self-expression and creativity. Hence, class discussions are an integral part of the lessons. There is the aim of making language arts a more socially relevant subject. But the male language arts teachers did not take advantage of the flexibility of the curriculum to relate instruction to their students' lives.

Mr. Barkeley, for instance, felt that his responsibility for ensuring that students learned what they are supposed to know precluded any serious digressions from the curriculum:

We have quite a few things to get through during the year. Kids who come into my class virtually can't write! I have a lot to teach and I also have to keep an eye on the time, to make sure that I don't fall behind. Well, we are always a little bit behind but I can't let too much of the syllabus pile up at the end of the year. That wouldn't be fair to the students, would it? It's nice to be the "nice guy", but when parents come and say, "what have you taught my kid", I have to be held accountable.

Mr. McPhee and Mr. Barkeley both avoided controversial topics in their Moral and Religious Education (MRE) classes. In this subject, students are typically exposed to family issues and to social and political moral dilemmas. Nevertheless, these teachers

carefully selected and presented topics so that they would not be confronted with students' concerns that they were not prepared to deal with.

Mr. McPhee's MRE classes usually began with a unit on Christianity in the first term, followed by a unit on other religions in the second term. In the third term, there were a series of debates on euthanasia and abortion, and he also used moral dilemma scenarios to prompt students to consider the pros and cons of various complex moral and social issues. In the last term of the school year, he tended to select current political topics for discussion. Among these carefully selected topics, the changing family situation and its effect on youngsters' lives was not discussed. Mr. McPhee explained:

I do touch on the family when I do the unit on religion. Religion and family they have always been closely tied, even historically. I give my students positive information. OK, it may be far from what their lives are like, but I guess they can always learn from school what a better family is.

By teaching the historical and the ideal, however, far from the social realities of many of his students, Mr. McPhee ensured that students discussed only topics that he was comfortable in dealing with.

Mr. Barkeley's MRE class was very much the same. He spent more time on the discussion of multicultural

issues, but the changing family organization in our society received limited attention. Mr. Barkeley avoided this topic because he did not feel adequately prepared to lead discussions. Furthermore, he believed that:

..... school is not a place to be too controversial. We have only 50 minutes every lesson, certainly not enough to open somebody's wound and patch it up. I don't think I am doing anybody justice by making them reveal very personal stuff in front of the whole class.

Male teachers of language arts employed many strategies to avoid personal revelations in their classrooms. In language arts classes where students may use their personal experiences in writing assignments, the male teachers stressed the mechanics of writing rather than the content. Mr. Laqueur felt particularly ill-at-ease when students revealed personal information in their assignments:

Sometimes it's embarrassing to read their writing. Some of them do get very personal. Then , I almost think, "ooh, you're telling me too much"!

Yet, in teaching students to brainstorm for ideas in creative writing, Mr. Laqueur explained to his students how personal experiences could help enrich the contents of a writing sample:

You can take something that you experienced, and use your imagination but you need not lavishly report every detail. [You can] write in the 3rd person, which [you] may be more comfortable doing so, or [you] don't have to write exactly what has happened.

When he sensed the dissonance between what was revealed to him and what he viewed to be his role as a language arts teacher, he would always choose the latter to help him resolve any confusion. Mr. McPhee occasionally received writing samples from students that included information about disruptions in the family. He treated them as creative writing and assessed the work from the perspective of an English teacher concerned with the quality of written expression:

It's hard to know whether students are writing something about themselves, or are they just making it up. It's easy to hear about things, on [television], in books, or [their] friends Anyway I have to mark them for their grammar, [and whether] their work is up to the level. It is my job to make sure that they become literate.

Ignoring Students In Distress

Mr. Burroughs does not pay much attention to the motivation of his students. In his experience, many students lose interest in school when they reach adolescence. Those with intellectual potential will

eventually regain an interest in school. "This is a phase that they go through," Mr. Burroughs emphasized, "maybe it is good for them to wait till they are really ready to learn."

Mr. Burroughs noticed that Michelle stayed at the back of the classroom. Michelle is a Grade 10 student who transferred to Parkdale Academy toward the end of Grade 9, when she moved to Montreal with her father. Two of her younger siblings remained in rural Quebec with her mother as part of the custodial arrangement when her parents divorced. Although she has lived in Montreal for over a year, she has not adjusted well to urban life, and expressed some resentment toward her parents.

Classroom observations revealed that Michelle did not participate in Mr. Burroughs's class, but she also did not disrupt the classroom. He was not convinced that Michelle had the aptitude to learn mathematics; he thought that "she's too spaced-out and unmotivated I don't think she even knows what page we are on now." Later when he was informed of her disrupted home life, he did not believe that it was his responsibility to provide any support. Students must be treated impartially, he said. If necessary, the student should seek help from other professionals responsible for helping them:

I am not going to say to a kid, "you have problems, so go and talk it out with Mrs. Marling." It's up to [the kids], or their parents. Maybe they should see a psychiatrist! Teachers shouldn't get too involved in these things.

Michelle believes that Mr. Burroughs is not concerned about how she performs in his class:

He doesn't care! I can be reading the newspaper and he wouldn't care at all. I have walked out of the classroom and he never stops to ask me where I am going. I don't think he would notice whether I get a 100% or a zero.

Like Mr. Burroughs, Mr. Newman was overwhelmed with the "attention-seeking" demands of some students. Confronted with many disruptive students and having tried various ways of gaining control over his classes, he still found himself "losing it." He attributed the high frequency of disruptive incidents in classrooms to the increasing number of broken homes. He saw the majority of students as undisciplined and unmotivated in their studies. "It's frustration and hopeless to teach these kids," he said, "they don't want to be there."

Usually Mr. Newman lectured for the first half of the lesson and the rest of the class time was used for seat work. He habitually remained seated in the front of the class, and a few students, usually those who were good in mathematics, would approach him with

questions. Most of the students who needed assistance, or those who had difficulty focusing on independent work would form small groups and chat about other matters. Their conversations were often disruptive to the few students who were trying to stay on task. Mr. Newman attempted to ignore these students, but was tremendously frustrated that they interfered with teaching activities:

I yell, I scream, I send them to the [vice principal]. Nothing works. They don't care I don't care either. If they fail, it's their own fault. I am here to help them every class, but if they don't make use of the time, they can't expect me to stay after school and give them a crash course before the exam.

Mr. Newman pays little attention to who is in his class and who is not. Some students were chronically absent from his class, and although the school administration relies on teachers to follow up, Mr. Newman has not made any effort at contacting the parents. Moreover, he rarely returned phone calls from parents:

I probably should, but it's harder to do than you think I have 50 minutes to spare, and by the time I get the student's file, and call his [or her] parents, and they may not be there, or the phone is busy Actually you know the school only has 3 [phone] lines, and often they are occupied I'd like to be able to have a coffee and get ready for the next class.

He feels that such students lack family support and contacts with the parents would not change either the parents' or the students' school behaviour.

Rejecting Help-Seeking Behaviour

At the beginning of the school year, Chelsa did not have many friends, and was very quiet in the classroom. Mr. Attewell felt concerned about her. During the first mathematics test of the school year, she approached Mr. Attewell as she handed in a blank answer sheet and said to him, "I have a lot on my mind." Immediately, he concluded that it was related to family disruption:

Nowadays what is it? one out of every three kids are from divorced homes? If I have to make a guess about what the trouble is, I would guess that one.

Chelsa did not display disruptive behaviour. In an attempt to provide assistance, he asked her, "*what would you like me to do?*" Chelsa's failure to respond to his offer suggested to him that she did not want his assistance.

It is very common for adolescents to signal for help, but are unable to verbalize how they would like to be helped (Montemayor, 1984). Mr. Attewell had not anticipated this. Hence, he quickly assumed that an

intervention on his part was unnecessary. Her lack of positive response also suited his emotional needs. It was important for Mr. Attewell to feel confident in what he did; he was evidently insecure about initiating such contact.

Naturally, Chelsa's perception of her help-seeking incident was quite different. She recalled that she was overwhelmed and "blanked-out" during the test, and approached Mr. Attewell so that he knew that her test performance did not reflect her conscientiousness. His counter-question left her somewhat confused and embarrassed:

I didn't really want him to do anything. I didn't know what I wanted either. Actually, even if I had something in mind, I wouldn't have said anything. I don't want to say that in front of the whole class.

Mr. Attewell's sympathy toward Chelsa diminished as she started to befriend other students whom he felt were poor achievers:

She's hanging around with the undesirable types. That gang [of kids], all they do is hang out and who knows what they are into! School is the last thing on their minds. They just stay around until it's time to leave Well, [Chelsa's] school work suffers. She was not a good student to begin with, and if she doesn't work I guess socializing is more important to her!

Mr. Attewell was brought up to believe that while

teachers were supposed to teach, students were responsible for learning. Moreover, his experience as a child from a disrupted family suggested that focusing on academic work was the most effective way to cope with distress.

He did not hesitate to put a grade of 27% on Chelsa's first term report. He had already raised all his Grade 10 students' mathematics grade by 20 points during the first term report. Chelsa's actual achievement was, in fact, only seven percent. Mr. Attewell was aware that, regardless of her subsequent performance, this low grade would diminish her chance of passing the year when the term marks are averaged to arrive at the final grade. Nevertheless, he wanted to be impartial, without taking into consideration that her test results might have been related to her reaction to family disruptions:

20 points is a lot anyway, if [the student] had done some work, that's a bonus. [With the marks], I have to be fair to everybody. If I give Chelsa enough to pass, then I have to do that to everyone, and some of the better students will have more than a 100%. That doesn't work!

Indeed, Chelsa's achievement throughout the year remained very low. Mr. Attewell recognized that her aptitude in mathematics was poor, but he did not assist her academically:

Students have to come and ask for help themselves. If you care to do well, you will go and get help. That's natural, isn't it. With Chelsa, she came to tell me that she had a lot on her mind, but she never came to ask me for help in maths.

Relegating Guidance Responsibilities to Others

When students showed overt signs that they needed support or assistance, male teachers readily refer them to other professionals at the school. Students from disrupted families who have difficulty maintaining their academic motivation often gravitate to the back of the classrooms, where they participate minimally. Their presence is purposely ignored by the teacher unless they become disruptive.

Sending Students to the Vice Principal

The male teachers studied often relegated discipline responsibilities to other personnel at the school. They showed minimal tolerance toward disruptive behaviours in the classroom. Mr. Attewell explained:

[Students] all have reasons why they are [being] disruptive. But they all have to learn to put their problems aside when they are in the classrooms.

Mr. Attewell expects obedience and respect from

his students. His upbringing emphasized these behaviour, and his earlier teaching experience in Southeast Asia and Africa also reinforced the notion that teachers' requests ought not be questioned. When he returned to teaching in Canada, he felt his authority challenged:

Kids try to run the classroom here and [teachers] get no support at all. The ones above us tell us "you are not to do this and that", and parents come to tell you, "don't discipline our kids, just teach them". Well, I can't teach when [the students] do not listen. And [the administration and parents] are not letting me do my job.

When Mr. Attewell notices students disobeying class rules, such as chatting during lectures, he immediately issues a dismissal note and sends the student to the vice principal who will take disciplinary action. But, when Freddie gets a dismissal note, he often refuses to leave the classroom. This creates havoc in the classroom, because Freddie is well liked by his peers who admire his audacity. That does not discourage Mr. Attewell:

I'll let the vice principal handle Freddie. It's his job to discipline students. I'd like to see what miracle he can [perform].

Like Mr. Attewell, Mr. Laqueur reacted to misbehaviour by sending the student to Mr. Jacoby, the vice-principal. One such student, Maxim, often made

comments to trigger bursts of laughter from other students. He also asked questions that were awkward and embarrassing for the teacher to answer. Maxim realized that teachers found his behaviour antagonistic, but he thought that a "good" teacher ought to be able to deal with his behaviour.

Whenever he displayed aggressive behaviour in the classroom, Maxim was immediately sent to the vice principal and he would eventually be detained after school. Even when he was not disruptive, Mr. Laqueur would try to avoid confrontations with Maxim by sending him to the crisis intervention work area to do his class work without disturbing other classmates.

The presence of other professionals at the school to whom problematic students could be referred helped Mr. Laqueur maintain a sense of control. This enabled him to demonstrate to the other students that disruptions were not tolerated. He wanted to teach only those who were ready to learn, and resented students who challenged his authority:

I've thrown [Maxim] out about 10 times [for the last four weeks]. I don't care what happens to him, as long as he is not creating chaos in my classroom. I feel great tension [when he is in the classroom] because I know that the minute I turn my back on him, he'll stir up trouble.

Mr. Laqueur was aware that Maxim's parents were in

the process of divorcing, and heard from other teachers that while Maxim's parents were battling over the custodial issues, Maxim had run away from home and was eventually placed temporarily in a group home. However, he was not sympathetic to Maxim:

being a nuisance [in the classroom] cannot be justified because [he] does not have the perfect family life Everyone has to learn to deal with their own misfortunes.

Some male teachers were more sensitive to the difficulties experienced by students confronted with family disruption. For instance, Mr. Barkeley drew attention to the overwhelming psychological demands on a student when family disruption occurs:

Divorce would be an example of something that gets in the way of everything else. The kids are sitting around waiting, hearing all the fighting and discussions, and with all that uncertainty in their heads school would have to take a back seat. I am sure they think about the [divorce] every waking hour. So they just can't concentrate on things like school.

But he also avoided involvement with students and treated all misbehaviour by sending the students to the vice principal.

Nevertheless, he expressed some ambivalence about how he should interact with two disruptive and aggressive students, Michael and Marc, who came from unstable families:

Some of these kids just act like they have to grow up on their own. [Michael] is probably from Point St-Charles, he has to defend himself on the streets. I don't know much about Mike's family. But I get the idea that it is poor. Whether there is a father on the scene, I don't know. But they are poor maybe it's a single parent family. Well, [such students] have to be tough, and it shows in the class.

In the case of Marc, he causally correlated three phenomena: behavioral problems, poverty and the single-parent family, to make sense of his aggressive behaviour:

Marc was always fighting with somebody. One time I took Marc to the vice principal's [office], and on our way there, he was very aggressive, "don't touch me", I guess he was afraid that I would hit him. Kids nowadays, well, it's not easy, you hear about someone's mother has boyfriends going in and out of the house. If he is not your own kid, you can easily be a bit short-tempered and heavy on the hands.

Mr. Barkeley sent these students to the vice principal's office so frequently that they were rarely in the classroom. Mr. Barkeley recognised that this was, perhaps, not an effective strategy and hindered the students' learning as well:

It's difficult to do anything else because they obviously need more help. But with so many other kids in the class, I don't have time to talk to them patiently. I can't let the rest of the class go, because I might end up with a whole class of Michaels (laughs) if they think they can get away with it.

Mr. McPhee was often overwhelmed by the complex needs and acting-out behaviour of his students. For instance, Charmaine, a student in his Grade 10 English and Moral and Religious Education (MRE) class, was verbally and physically aggressive and frequently sent to Mr. Jacoby who would detain her after-school. Although such discipline essentially did not change her classroom behaviour, Mr. McPhee persisted in using this strategy. He saw Charmaine as an adversary that he had to struggle with daily.

Another student, Kevin was bright, challenging and insubordinate. He had a difficult time understanding and following the school's regulation of not permitting the use of Walkman cassette recorders in the classroom. Kevin found that he worked more efficiently, particularly in creative writing, when he listened to music, and this was a principal source of conflict between him and Mr. McPhee.

During the lessons, Mr. McPhee was perturbed by Kevin's incessant physical twitches and movements, and constantly told him to quiet down. Sometimes Kevin became intensely angry, kicking chairs and banging at the lockers on his way to the vice-principal's office.

Referring Students to Other Support Staff

Despite the importance they gave to student achievement, none of the male teachers tutored students after classes, even when they recognized that this was needed. Mr. Barkeley, for example, attributed Darryl's poor achievement to gaps in basic skills because of disruptions at home throughout his elementary years. Although he described how Darryl could be helped by one-to-one academic assistance, he did not follow up on his own suggestions:

If somebody were to work with Darryl, he would be able to do OK. He is a good student, but he doesn't get a lot of help at home with his homework, and it shows If someone could take Darryl and give him a hand every now and then, he probably would show some improvement.

Tutoring students required an additional time commitment that he and the other male teachers were unprepared to make. Mr. Attewell, for instance, does not answer the door when students come to his classroom during his spare periods. "That is time for me to prepare my lessons, or just to take a break," he explained. He said he would help a student if she/he approached him immediately after a class. In fact, students do not have time to approach a teacher for help especially if they have a class immediately

following. If a teacher is not willing to offer after-school or lunch-hour assistance, students are not likely to see the teacher as willing to help.

At Parkdale Academy, the Preventative Service Program enlists college and university students to provide tutorial services for all students at the school. Many students voluntarily sign up for tutorials. At the beginning of the school year, teachers are approached to nominate "weak" students in their classes who may need help. Many teachers consider that they have done all that is necessary to assist their students as long as they make these recommendations.

Unfortunately, the Preventative Service Program has a limited number of tutors to meet the large number of requests. The crisis intervention teachers in charge of this program, Mrs. Marling and Mr. Ladner, estimate that nearly half of the requests cannot be met. Some teachers seem to be unaware of this and make repeated requests and keep reminding the teachers in charge of the Preventative Service Program to ensure that tutors are assigned to their students. Mr. McPhee was discouraged when his referrals were not followed through:

I keep wasting my time going to see the teachers in charge and they keep putting me off. Meanwhile the students are suffering

academically because of it. The students' skills are so weak and they need so much help. I cannot do my job if the Preventative Service Program are not providing the supportive help.

Mr. Attewell felt that counselling can be useful for a student in distress, and he regretted that such personnel were not available for him when he was in school:

We didn't have social workers or counsellors [when I was in high school], and the teachers were busy doing other things [such as teaching] It's better to talk to a guidance counsellor, because he [or she] does not have to be concerned about your report card, and can be just as nice to you whether you are an "A" student or an "F" student And the teacher can be fair to everyone without giving someone extra marks because he [or she] feels sorry for [the student].

Quite early in the school year, Mr. Bailey speculated that Michael, a student in his grade 7 class, was from a disrupted family because of his attention seeking behaviour:

Michael is constantly interrupting; he is not unpleasant or anything, but just constantly drawing attention to himself, joking, "rapping". The rest of the class suffers on account of a kid like that.

Whenever he saw Michael in the corridors, he was always greeted pleasantly by him. Such brief one-to-one encounters led Mr. Bailey to conclude that Michael needed and would respond well to individual attention.

Mr. Bailey believed that students from disrupted families often lack a trusting relationship with adults and, hence, the ability to establish such a relationship at school would be a crucial developmental step. Consequently, he referred Michael to Mrs. Marling, for counselling assistance.

In the fall of the academic year of 1990-1991, informal teacher meetings were organized by the crisis intervention teacher so that teachers could help each other find successful strategies for assisting their students. Mr. Bailey found these discussions useful and had always attended when his students were involved:

Colleagues share information, and study various situations that have popped up. We had a meeting recently about [a grade 7 student] Colleen. I only knew that she couldn't do maths, but I didn't know, until I went for the meeting, that she was having such a hard time at home.

Nevertheless, most male teachers rarely used these opportunities to seek advice from colleagues. For example, Mr. Bailey did not seek the help of Mrs. Marling, the crisis intervention teacher, in dealing with Colleen or any other student. He explained that:

[I don't ask Mrs. Marling] because there is not one way of handling a kid. What she suggests may not be something that I am comfortable doing Teachers are not always comfortable in asking for help,

because it shows their weakness and they most likely would not get the help anyway.

Like Mr. Bailey, Mr. McPhee also relied on the crisis intervention teacher to help students in distress, but did not seek their assistance. Teachers and other guidance personnel maintain such a professional distance that team meetings organized to discuss strategies to help students were not effective. After four of these meetings, Mrs. Marling decided to discontinue them because most teachers were not attending.

In brief, the seven male teachers interviewed for this study set strict curriculum boundaries so that they could distance themselves from their students' personal lives. When students from disrupted families displayed behavioral problems, these teachers usually reacted by sending the students to the vice-principal. Other signs of the students' poor classroom functioning prompted the teachers to find other professionals to help the students.

Chapter VII

Summary

The psychological burden of family disruption on adolescents is frequently manifested in poor school functioning. Previous research has shown that teachers have negative perceptions of students from disrupted families (Ball, Newman, & Sheuren, 1984; Santrock & Tracy, 1978). Teachers in this study often attributed students' behavioral problems, poor homework habits, lower academic motivation and problematic peer interactions to a disruptive home life.

Interviews with the teachers and observations of their interaction with students from disrupted family backgrounds revealed profound gender differences. The female teachers recognized the critical importance of providing emotional support and nurturing to students. They strived to understand their students' school and home lives so that they could teach more effectively. They used flexible classroom management strategies and broadened curriculum objectives to increase rapport with their students. They also worked with students after school to build academic competence and to raise their self-esteem. Through their involvement with students and amicable contacts with parents, female teachers provided the students from disrupted families

with multi-dimensional support.

Women teachers have historically combined teaching and guidance functions. There has always been a strong social expectation that teaching is synonymous to the upbringing of children and youths, which is central to the role of women in our society.

Personal experiences also reinforced social norms to shape the female teachers' beliefs that guidance and teaching are interrelated responsibilities. Their childhood experience with a female mentor-teacher who helped them, together with their rewarding experience as mentors to their students affirmed the social norm that women have the natural endowment to nurture.

Interactions between the male teachers and students from disrupted families were quite different. The male teachers were critical of the students' behaviour and poor academic motivation. They systematically relegated disciplinary responsibilities to the vice principal and other specialists in the school. They limited classroom contact with their students by setting rigid curriculum boundaries to avoid discussing students' family lives. When students showed their personal distress, they were often ignored or referred to the guidance personnel at the school.

The male teachers' behaviour reflected the view that teachers' role is to disseminate subject-specific

knowledge and to be accountable for their students' academic achievement. The social stereotype that females are natural nurturers was not only held strongly by the male teachers, but by many female colleagues and especially by the students, who usually consulted female teachers for guidance.

The clear separation of teaching and guidance roles observed among the male teachers was reinforced by the segmentation of teaching and guidance activities at Parkdale Academy. The male teachers were encouraged to relegate guidance functions to other professionals. The vice principal's role in disciplining students with behavioral problems and the crisis intervention teachers' tutoring and counselling responsibilities allowed the male teachers to focus on their teaching.

The increasing number of students from disrupted family backgrounds with critical social-emotional needs poses a challenge to the school system, and to the teachers, in particular. Guidance and special education services in schools are already overwhelmed by the number of students who need special assistance.

In the past, the attempt to attract males into the teaching and to raise the professional respectability of teachers resulted in a strong academic emphasis in the training of future teachers. The ethic of caring in pre-service teacher education has not been given

much importance. In order to strengthen teachers' capacity to assist students from disrupted families, the content of teacher education programs needs to be re-examined. Efforts should be made to provide future teachers with basic counselling skills which they could further develop throughout their career. As well, a re-organization of guidance and teaching responsibilities in schools is also crucial. Teachers and guidance personnel should be encouraged to work together to meet the needs of students from disrupted families.

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