# Neoliberalism and education: a case study on Québec

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**Abstract**

Neoliberal policies and globalization have significant implications for public education. This case study on Québec will examine how neoliberalism and globalization influence two aspects of its educational system. The first aspect will focus on the processes of privatization and marketization in Québec. These processes not only enable private interests to influence public education but also obfuscate the relationship between educational inequality and social inequality. The second aspect will focus on recent educational reforms which determined that globalization has significant implications for Québec education. The Québec Education Program was devised in a context where curriculum had to adapt to the changing nature of work amidst greater economic integration and more information technology. This case study will end with a chapter that is dedicated to teacher trade unionism in Québec, Canada and North America. It is through these struggles that neoliberal ideology is challenged and alternative visions for public education are presented as concrete aims.

**Résumé**

La mondialisation et les politiques néolibérales ont des conséquences importantes au niveau de l'éducation publique. Cette étude examine l'influence du néolibéralisme et de la mondialisation sur deux aspects du système d'éducation au Québec. Le premier concerne les processus de privatisation et de marchandisation. Ces derniers non seulement permettent aux intérêts privés d'influencer l'éducation publique, mais occultent également le rapport entre les inégalités éducatives et les inégalités sociales. Le deuxième aspect porte sur la récente réforme scolaire qui illustre l'impact considérable de la mondialisation sur le système éducatif au Québec. Le Programme de formation de l'école québécoise a été élaboré dans un contexte d'ajustement du curriculum scolaire aux changements apportés à la nature même du travail par le renforcement des intégrations économiques et la prolifération des technologies de l'information. Le chapitre final est consacré à l'activité syndicale dans le domaine de l'enseignement au Québec, au Canada et en Amérique du Nord. C'est à travers ces luttes sociales que l'idéologie néolibérale est contestée et que des alternatives en matière d'éducation publique sont présentées en termes d'objectifs concrets.

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## Introduction

### Neoliberalism and Education

Globalization has reshaped how we live, work, consume and interact but does it influence what we learn? Over the last few decades, public institutions, like education, have dramatically shifted both structurally and ideologically under the pressures of globalization. From an economic perspective, globalization is associated with "international economic integration that can be pursued through policies of 'openness', the liberalization of trade, investment and finance, leading to an 'open economy'" (Van Der Bly, 2005, p. 875). As societies become more economically integrated, public education systems have responded to this globalized context by adopting neoliberal educational reforms.

In order to analyze the influence of neoliberal globalization on local educational policies and practices, an investigation into the relationship between state institutions and the private sector needs to be initially addressed. David Harvey has written extensively about the evolution of neoliberalism as it influences the role of state intervention and serves the interests of markets and ruling elites. According to Harvey (2005):

> Neoliberalism is a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices...Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security or

> environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. (p. 2)

The value of Harvey's definition with respect to public education is multifaceted. Firstly, public education receives state funding and is dependent on and vulnerable to increases and decreases in its financing. Funding has significant implications for the process of privatization within educational sectors across the world. Secondly, neoliberalism assumes a prescriptive role in human welfare through an inherently value-laden set of remedies that are oriented towards the market. When educational reforms are driven by a "for-profit" value system, what are the implications for a public education that is supposed to be a social right? Thirdly, the level of state intervention within public education varies according to how education serves the needs of the state. This delves into the role of schools as sites of socialization into a society's norms and practices. For example, a critical current in the sociology of education has located schools as sites of social reproduction, which enable the state to function while also reinforcing the inequality of class-based societies (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Apple, 1990; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Lastly, the creation of markets within public institutions, like education, facilitates the private sector's involvement in education while minimizing the state's responsibility for education. These features of neoliberalism serve as the starting point for understanding the general characteristics of neoliberal educational reforms.

Throughout this thesis, *neoliberalism* will refer to the practice where the state minimizes its responsibility over the administration of public education. The term *market* is also used throughout this analysis in order to demonstrate a close association with a "for-profit" rationality that has become popular within some educational systems. The term

*knowledge-based economy* is defined in Chapter One and is used throughout Chapter Three. This term places a specific emphasis on information technology and global economic integration. At varying points in this thesis, the term *ideology* will be used to illustrate different ideas concerning the overall purposes of education and curriculum. Terry Eagleton (1990) explains that "ideology is less a matter of the inherent linguistic properties of a pronouncement than a question of who is saying what to whom for what purpose" (p.9). The idea that education should be oriented towards the market presents itself as a necessary response to the immense pressures of greater economic integration. From an ideological perspective, it is crucial to question which educational stakeholders maintain this point of view and what interests are met by this position. Incorporating ideology into this analysis also helps to illustrate that there are different and sometimes conflicting notions of education's role both in the local and global contexts.

**Research Questions**

The overarching question guiding this inquiry relates to how neoliberal globalization influences the educational context of Québec. In addressing this question, three sub-questions emerge:

In Chapter Two: What evidence exists for the neoliberal practices of privatization and marketization within Québec's educational system?

In Chapter Three: What effect has globalization had on curriculum development in Québec?

In Chapter Four: How do teachers contest and mobilize against neoliberal educational policies and practices?

**Purpose**

The overall purpose of this research is not only to analyze neoliberal educational policies and practices but also to contribute to the field of teacher activism within Québec. Véronique Brouillette and Jocelyn Berthelot of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec *(*CSQ*),* a trade union federation representing education, community and health workers, have analyzed and critiqued neoliberal educational practices within Québec. This thesis is intended to contribute to their analysis of Québec's educational system by adding to their critique of neoliberalism and focusing on one component of the provincial curriculum. The decision to pursue this research comes from a deep concern for the state of public education; it is hoped that in some small way this thesis could contribute to the struggle for an educational system that is oriented towards global solidarity, justice and equity.

**Methodology**

This thesis is a case study on Québec's current educational system. More specifically, it will investigate where neoliberalism and globalization have influenced a specific aspect of Québec education. This case study includes an analysis of Québec educational policy, documentation from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and literature from the private sector. The focus on OECD and private sectors documents is intended to demonstrate how the economic orientation of this literature influences components of Québec education. The rationale for using literature that is primarily from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development relates to its status as an inter-governmental organization that analyzes policy and influences its implementation across wealthy nations. It typifies the alliance between economic prosperity and governance; in essence, it reflects the convergence of political and economic

policy. Furthermore, the decision to use recommendations from this organization is meant to illustrate how the market orientation of educational policy practices is a general trend within the context of globalization.

**Overview of Thesis Chapters**

In Chapter One, a brief summary of two major educational reforms will be presented in order to familiarize the reader with significant influences on Québec education. By contrasting two periods of educational reform, a major shift in the restructuring of Québec's educational goals and organization as well as curriculum will be shown. This shift moved education from having a significant role in the democratization of Québec to being a tool for adapting to globalization.

In Chapter Two, general neoliberal educational practices will be presented in order to examine how privatization and marketization encourage educational inequality in Québec. This chapter will incorporate literature from Québec's private sector to highlight its degree of influence on public education. Theoretical work on social reproduction will also help to investigate how educational inequality is closely linked to social inequality

In Chapter Three, the context of international testing will be examined in order to present the argument that adapting to a globalized world influenced the development of the Québec Education Program's cross curricular competencies. The specific cross-curricular competencies have a close similarity to work skills that could give Québec students a comparative advantage. Adapting this aspect of Québec's curriculum has an ideological basis that assumes that schools have an obligation to prepare students to work under increased global competition.

In Chapter Four, the nature of ideology will be further analyzed in order to illustrate how teachers have contested neoliberal ideology and organized against its destructive practices. It is through these struggles that a fair and accessible public education system that acts in students' best interests become a concrete demand.

## Chapter One:

## An Overview of Québec's Educational Context

This historical overview is meant to familiarize the reader with two major educational reforms within Québec and their relationship to the social context in which they were developed. Religion, language, social democracy, nationalism and globalization have all had a significant influence in shaping Québec's educational system. This chapter will focus on the educational reforms of the 1960s and 1990s in order to illustrate the extent to which the context of the time influenced the overall educational goals, curriculum and organization of Québec's educational system. Since the 1960s, Henchey (2007) maintains that "the various waves of educational reform which have taken place in Québec over the last half century have profoundly changed all aspects of education: philosophy, priorities, school board organization, the teaching profession, and the culture of institutions" (p.443). The contrast of the major educational reforms of the 1960s with those of the 1990s illustrates how the desire to modernize and democratize Québec shifted towards adapting aspects of its educational system to globalization.

### The Quiet Revolution: the Legacy of Social Democracy in Québec Education

Québec has undergone significant social and political changes since the 1960s. Its socio-political context has influenced all aspects of its educational system. Until the 1960s, decentralized governance and locally-determined curricula based on French-Catholic and English-Protestant divisions formed the basis of classroom instruction (Smith, W.J, & Donahue, H.M., 1999). Throughout the 1960s, the forces of social progress and protest pushed Québec society into a new era. Henchey and Burgess (1987) stated that "a new sense of identity emerged-secular and humanist, pluralist and urban, economic and

technocratic-markedly more in line with the realities of a modern industrial state" (p.27). This new Québec identity based on notions of social progress strongly emphasized state involvement and the development of a welfare state. In response to "modernization, bureaucratization and influence of the state" (Dickinson and Young, 2002, p. 305), the public sector was established as a means of centralization, particularly within health and educational services. Béland and Lecours (2008) also maintain that the political legacy of the Quiet Revolution was "the foundation for a strong linkage between Québec nationalism and social democracy" (p.59). The legacy of the Quiet Revolution and its impact on the administration of education still exists today. The 'social democratic' basis to these reforms focused on the accessibility of education and the role of the state in administering education to all Québec citizens.

The establishment of accessible education guided the major reforms in the 1960s. As a result there were significant implications for school governance, the organization of the educational system and the allocation of funding. The Royal Commission of Inquiry on Education (1963-66), also known as the Parent Commission, provided the foundation for Québec's education system and "inspired the modernization of the entire system" (Smith & Donahue, 1999, p.37). In three parts divided into 5 volumes, many of its recommendations were passed into legislation. The Parent Commission included: Part I (volume 1) relating to the provincial structures that administered education; Part II (volumes 2 and 3) dealing with educational reform and program of study; and Part III (4 and 5) dealing with Finance and the roles of Stakeholders. The Ministry of Education (M.E.Q) was established in 1964 in accordance with legislation from the Commission. The Superior Council of Education was also developed in order to monitor the M.E.Q. so that it maintained the interests of the

public. Magnuson stated that "beginning in 1966, the Ministry of Education was given legislative approval to implement structural and curricular reforms covering elementary, secondary, pre-university and vocational education" (1980, p.109). Furthermore, the centralization of public education "not only signified the politicization of education but represented an effort to bring a measure of co-ordination and coherence to public education in the province" (1980, p.108). The newly developed Ministry of Education helped to usher in "the era of progressive attitudes to curriculum, student-centred learning, activist methods, experimentation, core and elective courses in secondary schools, empowerment of teachers and new kinds of courses" (Henchey, 2007, p.449). Within a decade, the administration of education shifted from decentralized and religious-oriented instruction to a centralized and secular-based education system. The move towards secularization would reemerge as an educational priority within the reforms of the 1990s.

In the early 1960s, the Parent Report was crucial in establishing the structure of Québec's educational system. It served as a blueprint for compulsory and free education at the primary and secondary levels; a pre-university collegial system, referred to as CEGEPS; and a network of public universities (Université du Québec). Although these institutions have undergone changes since their initial development, they were developed with the intent of increasing public access to education at all levels. Increasing accessibility to university through the establishment of student financial aid was also a focus because "no qualified student should be denied a university education on financial grounds" (Magnuson, 1980, p.118). This move towards the democratization of education in Québec was synonymous to "educational movements, often referred to as "liberal", "progressive", or" humanistic" [that] were widespread in many Western countries during this period and, in

most instances, were reactions to the somewhat authoritarian and teacher-centred elementary schools that existed previously" (Henchey, 1987, p.72). The development of a public education system was foundational to Québec's social history because it was directly related to the changing values of its society.

Social democratic values, increased centralization and the preservation of French-Canadian identity would guide educational reforms throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The educational reforms of the 1970s continued with the democratic values of the Quiet Revolution by increasing local school governance and autonomy; encouraging greater involvement of parents and community; and furthering the rights of children with special needs to access education. Major developments throughout the 1970s and 1980s had significant implications for funding. Prior to the 1970s, most schools were funded by local school taxes. However, the levels of state funding gradually increased until the mid-1980s (Smith, Foster & Donahue, 1999). During this time, a combination of provincial grants and local property taxes were used to fund schools. Throughout these decades, the Québec government had established an equalizing method that ensured all school boards, regardless of the amount received from local property taxes, received the same amount of funding. By the mid-1980s, the Québec government had restructured educational funding by assuming all financial responsibility and eliminating the use of property tax to fund education (Smith, Foster & Donahue, 1999). French nationalism was also a major social and political value throughout the 1970s. The preservation of Québécois cultural identity and its impact on English minority language rights resulted in a series of institutional changes within Québec that had significant implications for schools. These institutional changes are not the focus of this analysis despite of their importance to Québec's educational system.

## The New Era: Québec Education Goes Global

### A Starting Point: The Global Context

Canada has been a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) since it formed in 1961. Although primarily concerned with the economy, governance and the relationship between the two, OECD has devoted many resources towards analyzing the role of education in fostering strong economies. At this time, the growing proliferation of information technology in everyday life was transforming how people worked, communicated and interacted with each other. For this reason, meeting the demands of the *knowledge-based economy* permeated into the educational sector because education had to adapt to this changing world by reevaluating its overall goals.

In 1996, the OECD published a report entitled *The Knowledge-Based Economy* in response to the multiple innovations in communication and information technology within OECD nations. According to the OECD:

> The term "knowledge-based economy" results from a fuller recognition of the role of knowledge and technology in economic growth. Knowledge, as embodied in human beings (as "human capital") and in technology, has always been central to economic development...The OECD economies are more strongly dependent on the production, distribution and use of knowledge than ever before. (1996, p. 9)

The emphasis on knowledge production, economic growth and technological change are significant in relation to employment. In essence, the changing nature of work within OECD nations requires a workforce with the appropriate skills to meet the demands of a *knowledge-based economy*. For example, the report presents labour market trends within

OECD nations since the 1970s. In general, a decline in the manufacturing sector, coupled with an increased wage gap between skilled and unskilled labour is common across most OECD nations (OECD, 1996, p.17). One of the central points of this document is the need for OECD governments to increase investments in research and development as well as education and training in order to meet the needs of the changing global economy. The OECD's influence on Québec's educational reforms in the 1990s illustrates popular currents of thought as the new millennium approached. As a result, the emphasis on educating and training for the global labour force emerged as a priority within Québec's educational reforms in the 1990s.

**The Groundwork for Québec Educational Reforms**

In 1994, the Québec government set up the Task Force on Elementary and Secondary School Learning Profiles. The Task Force published a report entitled *Preparing Our Youth for the 21st Century*, which consisted of a set of recommendations for student learning objectives within compulsory education. The authors stated that "the world of the 21st century will be characterized by three trends that are already part of our lives: internationalization and globalization; increasingly rapid growth and technology; and the increasing complexity of life in society" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1994 p. 5). One of the major underlying themes within the report is the role of schools and knowledge in enabling Québec students to meet the challenges of a highly technological and globalized world. This sentiment would reemerge within a set of major public consultations concerning Québec's educational system.

In 1995, the Québec government conducted 56 public hearings relating to the status of its educational system thirty years after its modernization in the Quiet Revolution. The

results of these consultations were published in *The Estates General on Education, 1995-1996 The State of Education in Québec.* The report included major areas of concern relating to "educational mission, accessibility of education, curriculum, elementary and secondary education, college, university, pedagogical process, vocational education, continuing adult education, educational governance, private education, funding, and the role of religion/ secular education" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996). The concerns that are raised in this report are foundational to the educational reforms that followed.

In the section entitled *The Need to Review the Educational Mission*, the changing nature of Québécois society and globalization are viewed as having a substantial role in influencing the function of schooling. The report stated that:

> the reality of market globalization has opened up new possibilities; the labour market has become more complex; the bounds of knowledge have been pushed back; new technology has been put to previously unimagined uses; the era of State providence has come to an end and the trend toward decentralization has increased. (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996)

In addressing how to restructure Québec's educational system, globalized markets, increased complexity in labour and enhanced technological innovation are recognized as the reality at that time.

The Ministry also addresses how this reality signifies reduced state involvement in the forms of support and control. The report further recognized that the educational mission needs "a reappraisal of both education and the school system as part of a broader redefinition of society" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996). For this reason, school organization and governance, teaching and curriculum were reevaluated in relation to

greater social and global complexity. In addressing this, the report mentioned that new educational goals are required within the areas of: "instruction, socialization and preparation for the exercise of various roles in society" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996). The concerns that were raised in *The Estates General on Education, 1995-1996 The State of Education in Québec* reflect a climate where the role of education was weighed against the impacts of globalization on daily life. The influence of globalization on Québec's educational system became most evident when the province's curriculum was reevaluated during the late 1990s.

In 1997, a task force on curriculum reform presented a series of recommendations on how Québec should reconstruct its standardized curriculum. In the report entitled *Reaffirming the Mission of Our Schools*, the need for a new curriculum addressed some of the concerns that were raised in *The Estates General on Education, 1995-1996 The State of Education in Québec.* In regard to the concerns with "instruction, socialization and preparation for the exercise of various roles in society" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996), the report started with the international context of curriculum reforms within Western OECD nations. In these nations, knowledge and schooling had changed because:

> the economic vitality and prosperity of a country are no longer contingent on whether or not it possesses raw materials. With the advent of international competition, knowledge, along with scientific and technological expertise, has become the key to wealth and power. (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1997, p.14)

Another reason to reevaluate and restructure a new curriculum related to the idea that "schools are expected to act as agents of social cohesion" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1997, p. 14). According to this position, the rationale for curriculum reform required schools to

teach students how to live, interact and work in a more complex global reality that is driven by technology and financial competition. In one set of recommendations, globalization and the proliferation of information technology are cited as factors of "social change" that require schools to adopt a curriculum that addresses "social diversity, internationalization, the omnipresence of the media, the rapid development of new information technologies, environmental concerns and the importance of technology" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1997, pp 30-31). This rationale for reforming the curriculum is in stark contrast to the agents of social change, democratization and modernization, which shaped Québec's educational system during the Quiet Revolution. Henchey (1999) maintained that "in the 1960s the curricular reforms were part of a larger social, political and economic revolution in Québec which gave special meaning to the educational changes" (p.235). Thirty years later, Dickinson and Young (2002) maintained that "in a major reform in 1998, the confessional status of school boards was abolished in favour of secular and linguistic school boards, following the recommendations of the Proulx Report" (p.361). Throughout this period, changes within Québec's education system involved a major restructuring of schools and their governance, adjustments to funding allocations and budgetary control and a reexamination of pedagogical focus and curricular implementation. One of the major products of these reforms was the development of a new provincial curriculum. The Québec Education Program was developed at a time when OECD nations were responding to the changing nature of life and work in relation to globalization.

**The Québec Education Program (QEP)**

One aspect of Québec's curricular reforms involved the role of schools in delivering the QEP. For this reason, an emphasis was placed on a school's mission in guiding how the

curriculum should be implemented. According to the 1997 policy document entitled *Québec Schools on Course*, the mission of a school must "provide instruction with renewed conviction, socialize [students] in order to live together and provide qualifications through a variety of options" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1997, p.9). The reform led to the reorganization of grades into cycles: kindergarten, cycle 1 (grades 1 and 2), cycle 2 (grades 3 and 4), cycle 3 (grade 5 and 6), cycle 4 (grades 7, 8 and 9) and cycle 5 (grades 10 and 11) (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1997). Curriculum content was also another area that was reorganized. At the elementary level, the program of study was separated into five subject areas (languages, English, French, or other; mathematics; science and technology; social sciences; arts education and personal development), five broad areas of learning (Health and Well-Being; Personal and Career Planning; Environmental Awareness and Consumer Rights and Responsibilities; Media Literacy; Citizenship and Community Life) and three main cross-curricular competencies that are sub-divided into particular skill-sets. (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2001). The five broad areas of learning follow the Task Force on Curriculum Reform's recommendations for curricula that incorporate "social diversity, internationalization, the omnipresence of the media, the rapid development of new information technologies, environmental concerns and the importance of technology" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1997, pp 30-31). The implementation of a competency-based curriculum is of particular interest to this analysis because this approach to curriculum illustrates the relationship between school knowledge and the *knowledge-based economy*. This relationship will be further analyzed in Chapter Three.

**Competencies: The line between school and work**

In the introduction to the QEP's elementary program, the rationale for implementing a competency-based curriculum involved:

> establishing a different relationship to knowledge and refocusing on training students to think. The idea of a competency reflects the conviction that students should begin at school to develop the complex skills that will permit them to adapt to a changing environment later on. It implies the development of flexible intellectual tools that can be adjusted to changes and be used in the acquisition of new learnings. (MELS, 2001, p. 4)

The competency approach encourages a new "relationship to knowledge" that involves greater complexity, flexibility and adaptability to change. This need for a more sophisticated understanding of knowledge is similar to what the OECD identifies as "know-what, know-why, know-how and know-who" (OECD, 1996, p.12). These four types of knowledge are of central importance to the *knowledge-based economy* because:

> this process of learning is more than just acquiring formal education. In the knowledge-based economy "*learning-by-doing*" is paramount. A fundamental aspect of learning is the transformation of tacit into codified knowledge and the movement back to practice where new kinds of tacit knowledge are developed. (OECD, 1996, p.14)

The development of a competency-based curriculum enables a more complex relationship to knowledge. The value of adapting curricula to the *knowledge-based economy* relates to how "education will be the centre of the knowledge-based economy and the learning tool of individual and organisational advancement" (OECD, 1996, p.14). Since the QEP forms the

basis of classroom instruction in Québec, it is crucial to recognize how teaching has been tailored to meet the need for greater complexity, flexibility and adaptability.

One of the consequences of the *knowledge-based economy* is the need for workers to have "both formal education and the ability to acquire and apply new theoretical and analytical knowledge; they will increasingly be paid for their codified and tacit knowledge skills rather than for manual work" (OECD, 1996, p.14). Therefore the establishment of a competency-based curriculum prepares Québec students to develop a more complex relationship to knowledge so that they can work within more complex environments. In addition to the implementation of competencies within subjects, the development of cross-curricular competencies illustrates the fine line between school knowledge and the necessary skills required for the *knowledge-based economy*.

The QEP contains nine cross-curricular competencies (CCCs) that are grouped into four categories: intellectual, methodological, personal/social and communication-related. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) described them:

> like a subject-specific competency, a cross-curricular competency is a set of behaviours based on effective mobilization and use of a range of resources. However, cross-curricular competencies transcend the limits of subject-specific knowledges while they reinforce their application and transfer to concrete life-situations precisely because of their cross-curricular nature. (2001, p12)

One fundamental feature of CCCs is that they are defined as behaviours that are supposed to be evaluated and integrated into all levels of school life rather than just in the classroom. Another fundamental feature of CCCs is that they are not related to any particular subject area; instead they must encompass all areas of learning. This has a remarkable similarity to

the knowledge that includes: "know-what, know-why, know-how and know-who" (OECD, 1996, p.12) identified by the OECD as significant both for individuals and their workplaces. CCCs are supposed to be a set of abilities that move beyond school learning and extend to the rest of a learner's life.

The development of the QEP as a means for adapting curriculum and classroom instruction reflects the changing nature of educational goals within Québec and across OECD nations. Whereas the reforms of the 1960s treated education as a conduit for the democratization and modernization of Québec society, the context of the QEP emphasized globalization as a major force for educational reform. Chapter Three will analyze how the individual CCCs and their relationship to essential work skills are intended to give Québec students a comparative advantage in a globalized labour market. In the next chapter, the current educational context of Québec will be examined in greater detail. More specifically, the issues of privatization and marketization will be addressed; these processes are characteristics of neoliberal policies in education. Chapter Two will also examine educational inequality with Québec.

## Chapter Two:

## Neoliberalism and Québec Education

In this chapter, some general characteristics of neoliberal educational policies will be presented in order to illustrate how privatization and marketization exist within Québec educational system. Historically, private education has received state subsidies due to its role in preserving Québec's religious traditions. In recent years, Québec's private sector has also had a significant role in influencing its public education. The greater influence of the private sector illustrates how marketization works within Québec's educational system. It will be shown that the public subsidization of private education coupled with the increased marketization of public education system is at the root of educational inequality in Québec. Educational inequality in Québec will be examined by incorporating the theoretical works of Bowles and Gintis and Bourdieu and Passeron. These theoretical approaches to social reproduction illustrate how educational inequality in Québec schools is a microcosm of social inequality in the larger social order.

### General Characteristics of Neoliberal Educational Reforms

The mutually-beneficial relationship between public education and the market has inspired a breadth of literature relating to its local impacts within "liberal" democracies such as Australia, England, Canada and the United States. Generally, the body of literature indicates that the state has restructured public education through the processes of decentralization, privatization, marketization and standardization (Astiz, Wiseman, & Baker 2002; Hursh, 2005; Davidson- Harden & Majhanovich, 2006; Zadja, 2006; Lipman & Hursh, 2007; & Sloan, 2008). These processes of decentralization, privatization, marketization and standardization illustrate how states restructure their educational policies

and public education systems in response to markets. In each of these "liberal" democracies, the state allows the private sector to intervene on its behalf within institution for which it is responsible. In Canada, public education is administered provincially, which means that there are no national policies, educational standards or curricula. Provinces receive some federal funding for education in the form of federal-transfer payments, which varies according to each province. For this reason, neoliberal educational reforms differ according to provincial educational legislation.

**Decentralization and Privatization**

Zadja (2006) maintained that the significance of addressing decentralization under neoliberalism is "the necessity to understand who controls and who ought to control education, in terms of administration, financing and curriculum" (p.11). Within Québec, there is a mixed model of centralized and decentralized control within its public educational system; this model is a product of the major educational reforms of the 1990s. In 1997, the Education Act was amended and resulted in the reorganization and redistribution of power between schools, school boards and the Ministère de l'Education, du Loisir et Sport (MELS). At the state level, MELS administers funding, creates curriculum and legislates policy. At the local level, school boards and schools have a great deal of control over allocating funding and establishing how the curriculum is implemented. For this reason, the issue of school autonomy and greater local control were meant to encourage parents and community involvement within local decision-making and school governance. The issue of decentralization is not a focus of this analysis; therefore whether it is relates to neoliberalism is a point for further research.

The move towards greater decentralization demonstrates how state involvement in public education changes under neoliberalism. Astiz, Wiseman, and Baker (2002) stated that "over the past two decades, this transformation of the state's role has occurred within a policy climate of fiscal discipline and austerity in public spending" (p.71). Thus, under financial constraints and decreased control, the need to finance public education facilitates privatization. Although the drive towards privatization within public education is prevalent within many liberal democracies, this process varies according to the local context.

In general, privatization is linked to a reduction in public funding, which creates opportunities for private ventures to intervene. Lipman and Hursh (2007) used the Chicago Public School system to demonstrate how neoliberal restructuring had increased the involvement of the private sector by encouraging the growth of charter schools within the public system while disempowering teachers' trade unions. Sloan (2008) illustrated how funding cuts to public education in Texas created opportunities for private control of local curricula, labeled as an "intervention" by the private firm that provided the compensation. In Canada, Davidson-Harden and Majhanovich, (2006) have found similar trends with regards to decreased public expenditures on education and increased privatization in the 1990s. Within Canada, there has been a significant reduction in educational spending:

> in a time when corresponding ideologically driven provincial policies have converged with ongoing and recurrent issues in public education systems at the K-12 level to create pressure and momentum for different sorts of educational privatization in the form of public-funding arrangements for private education. (Davidson-Harden & Majhanovich, 2006, p. 33)

Although such arrangements vary from province to province, the public funding of private schools undermines the overall accessibility of public education; this point will be further investigated as it relates to the Québec context later in this chapter.

**Marketization**

The marketization of public education is prevalent within many liberal democracies. While it celebrates "individual entrepreneurial freedoms" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2), it simultaneously undermines public education as a fundamental social right. Although the marketization of public education varies according to national and provincial/state contexts, the underlying assumption that the private sector can enhance or improve schools is rampant. Davidson-Harden and Majhanovich (2006) explained that "discourses of neoliberal market mechanisms in education [involve] emphasizing the introduction and expansion of 'quasi-market' mechanisms such as choice and competition [and] are leaving their mark on Canadian education systems at all levels" (p.38). Alfie Kohn of the Canadian Federation of Teachers notes that this market-oriented shift in Canadian education also includes "the tendency to view children as 'investments' (whose ultimate beneficiary is business) and a market-driven credentialism in which individuals struggle for competitive distinctions" (2005, p.7). Competition, choice, investment and individualism have all become common parlance within public education. In addition, this market-laden orientation includes the drive towards standardization where schools are promoted through high student achievement (i.e. test scores), alignments with provincial/national curricula and teacher quality.

**Standardization**

In 2001, the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) oriented public education towards the market in the United States. The emphasis on standardized tests and measures of individual achievement for the purposes of "improvement" drove this set of educational reforms. Hursh (2005) explained that:

> Under NCLB, schools must not only develop and assess students, they must make public the aggregated test scores for groups of students delineated by gender, race and ethnic group, and with or without disability...In the USA, corporate and political leaders have promoted testing, accountability, markets, and choice by arguing that such reforms are necessary to ensure that all students and the nation succeed. (p. 608)

Hursh raises the failure of educational standardization to incorporate issues of equity while at the same time illustrating the lack of local control for schools to meet the needs of their students and community at large. Although national legislation like *No Child Left Behind* does not exist in Canada, the shift towards standardized testing as a measure of knowledge acquisition is common in many provinces.

With regard to the Canadian context, Marita Moll (2004) maintained that "the standardized testing movement now consumes millions of dollars and hundreds of hours that could be better spent on educational resources known to improve learning-like text-books, teachers and adequate support services" (p.11). The designation of provincial standards marks an interesting shift in the value of education because it reduces school knowledge into measurable amounts that are delivered, evaluated and eventually ranked in some instances. These standards are often used to determine the 'effectiveness' of schools

or in some instances as a marketing tool for schools to increase enrollments. This latter point will be analyzed in relation to the issue of school choice within Québec.

The issue of standardization in Québec is similar to other educational contexts because it implements a provincial curriculum and administers standardized tests. Québec not only conducts testing at the provincial level but also at the international level. MELS requires schools to administer end-of cycle examinations in English Language Arts and Mathematics as well as subject-specific evaluations at the Secondary level. Québec students are also evaluated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that tests reading, mathematics and science skills of 15 year olds worldwide; the role of PISA testing will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Within the educational contexts of liberal democracies, the policies of decentralization, privatization, marketization and standardization require the state to restructure its authority and/or priorities within public education. The precise ways in which states reduce responsibility over the administration of education while enabling private sector involvement varies according to local context. For example, although a standardized curriculum is common in many educational systems, the allocation of public funding towards private education is not as commonly practiced. In spite of the general similarities of neoliberal educational reforms within liberal democracies, their local impacts truly disregard public education as a social right or vehicle for social justice, equity and democracy. To further this claim, an examination of Québec's current educational context will focus on privatization and marketization in order to illustrate how public education has moved towards serving the needs of the market.

**The Public's Private Dilemma: Neoliberal Privatization in Québec**

**The Historical Basis for Private Education in Québec**

Public education is precariously dependent on state funding in Québec. Although it would be assumed that only public institutions receive state funding, this is not the case in Québec. Québec is one of five provinces in Canada that finances private education with public funds. In general, governments typically invest in private education through "tuition subsidies, tax credits and scholarships" (Paquette, 2005, p.573). Of the 290 private institutions in Québec, 185 of these are accredited to receive Québec government grants (MELS, 2009, p.1). Teyssier (2009) has found that per capita, public funding of private schools is higher in Québec than any other province. According to MELS (2009), "the private school system accounts for 6% of elementary students and approximately 18% of secondary students in the youth sector. About half of the operating expenses of subsidized private institutions are funded by the Québec government" (p15). According to Québec's Budgetary Rules, "the total subsidy for the academic year of 2009-2010 was $468 500 000, which accounted for 5.5% of the overall educational budget" (MELS, 2009, p.1). Though the percentage of overall spending seems almost miniscule, the amount of money that is diverted from the public system is not. The broader question of whether a private educational system should exist in the first place is not within the scope of this study. However, why private education is publicly funded in Québec is an important question to consider.

The subsidization of private institutions is not a new phenomenon in Québec, in fact, educational legislation that condones this practice dates back to the educational reforms of the late 1960s. As noted in Chapter One, prior to the educational reforms of the Quiet Revolution, private education was predominantly denominational and administered

by the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Amidst the drive towards the democratization of public education, diverting funds to private education was meant to preserve religion and its central role in the social and political history of Québec, particularly within education. Bezeau (1979) explained that the fallible state of private education amidst the developing public educational system meant "that they would disappear altogether if not helped by the state and helped soon" (p. 25). As a result, the *Private Education Act* was established in 1968 in order to designate which institutions received state subsidies and to what extent. The act established private institutions as:

> (Act, i): academic education, vocational education, education for handicapped children, self-improvement education, and education by correspondence. Only the first three types benefit from the grant provisions, with self-improvement education denied grants by statute (Act, I i and i6) and correspondence education by practice. (Bezeau, 1979, p. 24)

Throughout the years, the Bill was amended as Québécois society progressed. The major educational reforms of the 1990s brought the issue of subsidization and private education back into the debate.

The Ministry of Education published *The Estates General on Education, 1995-1996: The State of Education in Québec* as an overview of major issues throughout its 30 year history. The Ministry acknowledged the historical relevance of religious education and why those institutions received subsidies in the following way:

> Thirty years ago, those private institutions that elected not to become part of the public system did so in order to ensure the survival, in Québec, of the educational traditions of the religious teachings orders, such as the Jesuit, Ursuline and

> Sulpician orders. In the eyes of the public, the survival of these traditions justified the maintenance of a subsidized private education system. (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996)

While acknowledging the historical relevance and religious legacy of private education, the Ministry also presents an interesting stance from proponents of the private system within the same report. According to MELS:

> The arguments used to support the existence of the system at the present time, however, are of a different kind. They are based on the rights of parents to choose a system of education for their children, and on the advantage of having, within our society, a subsidized private system in competition with the public system. Freedom of choice and the rules of the marketplace are thus offered as guarantees against the shortcomings and inefficiency of the public service. To our surprise, almost all the leaders in the field of private education seem to have adopted these arguments. (Ministère de l'Éducation,1996)

This shift from recognizing the role of private education within religious tradition to the market value of private education as a conduit for choice and competition marks the advent of neoliberal ideology within the Québec context. "Freedom of choice and the rules of the marketplace" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1996) are typical claims within neoliberal educational policy that push for marketization and privatization at the public's expense.

**Neoliberal Marketization: The Private Sector Steps In**

Given that Québec invests the most in private education when compared to other provinces, it is not surprising then that the rate of enrollment within private institutions has increased. Holmes (2008) has found that "Québec's independent schools rose by 12 percent

between 1999 and 2004, while public school enrollment fell by 5.6 percent" (p. 202). To add to this increase in private school enrollment is a decrease in the overall student population, particularly within English school boards in Montreal. Marketing schools amidst a declining student population feeds the drive to compete for students to enroll within private and public schools. In this sense, approaching education as if it were a consumer good undermines a fundamental social right that should be equally funded for all students.

This drive towards marketing schools has enabled the Montreal Economic Institute (MEI) to offer its remedies for Québec's educational system. The MEI is comprised of business leaders, academics and economists who study Québec's public policy. One of the main activities of this think-tank is to create publications and policy recommendations that often criticize Québec's public sector. Since most of its solutions for the public sector involve an orientation towards the market, it is not surprising that enhancing competition between schools is logical for improving public education. Sylvain Bernier of the MEI advocated a voucher system in Québec:

> which would aim to introduce a market mechanism to the public education system by linking school financing to the number of pupils they receive. The goal is to encourage schools to respond to demands from consumers of educational services, namely parents. (2003, p. 3)

The opportunity for parents to choose the school in which to enroll their children typifies the market rationality of neoliberalism within the educational sector. This approach to education reduces schooling to a service where clients get to exercise choice as if it were a consumer right. The question of choice then leads the analysis into whether this right is

shared by all parents equally. Bernier's remedy for making the right to choose more equitable is to set up a system that grants greater access to education through the designation of:

> two types of educational voucher: selective and universal. Selective vouchers are normally restricted to families with incomes below a set level...They enable under-privileged parents to register their children in private schools that would otherwise be beyond their reach...Unlike selective vouchers, universal vouchers allow for true democratization of the right to school choice and correct any inequalities in the way schooling is financed. With universal vouchers, all parents receive the same amount of money, whether they choose a public school in their neighbourhood, a public school in another neighbourhood, or a private school. (2003, p. 3)

In Bernier's view, once parents, regardless of income, have the equal right to choose the educational system/institution for their child, only then will democracy reign within the realm of school choice. This point of view is inherently flawed for a number of reasons. Firstly, increasing access to private education for under-privileged students does not delve into the relationship between educational inequality and the larger social structures, a point that will be examined later in this chapter. Secondly, the public funds that are used for increasing access to private education could be used to improve public education across the province. Thirdly, there are myriad ways in which schools compete for students by promoting high achievement, teacher quality and academic standards. For this reason, wealthier schools have a comparative advantage of investing in educational innovation, academic support and teacher recruitment because these incentives attract clientele. In Québec, public schools also offer special programs in science and technology or arts and

music in order to attract students. Berthelot (2008) stated that "the number of public schools offering special programs with selective admissions procedures is estimated at more than 700, that is more than a quarter of all public schools" (p. 73). This competition between private and public educational institutions for a limited number of students champions market rationality over the fundamental importance of providing accessible education in Québec. For this reason, a voucher system distracts from examining how to improve public education for all students irrespective of their parents' income.

In Québec, proponents of school choice have devised the appropriate tools to help facilitate the process. In 2008, the Montreal Economic Institute published a *Portrait of Québec High Schools 2008* that ranked every high school, both public and private, within the province. According to the report:

> The fundamental importance of education is widely acknowledged in contemporary society. Education is considered not an expense, but rather an investment. This does not mean, however, that we must invest blindly. While the benefits of education are sizeable and numerous, so too are its costs. This is why it is important to evaluate the results achieved by our schools. (MEI, 2008, p.7)

The authors attest that not only is education an investment but also an expensive one. For this reason, the Montreal Economic Institute conducted its study rating every high school in Québec based on academic performance and *impact indicators*. The results of the report could act as a set of standards or "benchmarks" that could be used "as a tool to serve at once the needs of parents and the needs of those who manage the school system" (MEI, 2008, p. 8). On the one hand, this report could help schools to be run more effectively on the financial and academic fronts. On the other hand, it could allow parents to evaluate the

performance of a school and determine if they want to enroll their children in it. The MEI's interventionist position minimizes the state's role in maintaining its responsibility for public education. Furthermore, it reduces a social right, like education, to the producer/consumer relationship of the market.

Within Québec, the right to choose a school based on how it is ranked by a consortium of the private sector embodies the marketization of education. Within market rationality, the right to choose assumes all parents have similar rights to enroll their children in any institution they please. Ball (1993) countered this assumption because this rationality serves as a mechanism for "class advantage" due to "the self-interest of some producers; the self-interest of some consumers; and the control of the performance criteria of market organisations— which in this case lies with the State" (p.4). In Québec, proponents of private education have managed to have their position legislated and protected through the *Act Respecting Private Education* (instituted in 1968, chapter 67). In this sense, the state legitimizes private educational institutions that both minimize its responsibility and reinforce a system that is accessible only to those who can afford it. Ball (1993) further addressed the inherent class-based nature of school choice as:

> unlike most other markets, *who* the client is matters, quality and reputation are related in good part to the clientele themselves, not solely to the service. What is being produced as a result is a stratified system made up of schools which can afford to turn away certain clients and other schools that must take any they can get. (p. 8)

The value of incorporating a class-based analysis into who gets to access private education in Québec is a matter of educational equity. Paquette (2005) has critiqued the public

financing of private education because it allows wealthier parents to choose the best institutions for their children while funds that should be used to strengthen the public system are diverted. Even though some private schools have scholarships for under-privileged students, this sets up a system for a worthy few to access a more quality education.

In Québec, a system of publicly financed private schools combined with public high schools with selective admissions creates an environment where access to education is not equally distributed. In order to address educational equity within the Québec context, its class-based nature must be furthered analyzed. In addressing the class-based stratification of schools within the context of marketized education, Dave Hill explained that:

> where there is a market in schools (where high status schools can select their intakes, whether on 'academic achievement' or other class-related criteria such as 'aptitudes'), then the result is increasing 'raced' and gendered social class differentiation. The middle classes (predominantly white) rapidly colonize the 'best' schools; the working classes (white and black) get pushed out. They don't get through the school gate. High status/high achieving middle class schools get better and better results. In a competitive market in schools, 'Sink' schools sink further, denuded of their 'brightest' intakes. (2006, p.15)

Although Hill is referring to the educational context in England, parallels exist with Québec. Upon reviewing the MEI's 2008 report, it is not surprising that a majority of the highest ranking schools were private. There were only 14 public schools among the top 150 high schools, while a majority of the lowest ranked 150 were public. What is most compelling is that even though the highest ranking school in the study was public, it had

selective enrollment with an average parental income of $80 917 (MEI, 2008 p.106). Within the Québec educational market, the right to choose undoubtedly becomes a choice between public and private institutions. Furthermore, this choice is not fair or accessible to all because it reflects and reproduces inherent social inequality.

**Educational Contradictions**

The class-based stratification of education in Québec becomes more evident with the most recent crisis in public education. In an article detailing the rising rates of high school dropout under Québec's Liberal government, *Le Devoir* (2009) stated that:

> En 2000, 26 % des jeunes du secondaire du réseau public quittaient l'école sans diplôme. L'an dernier, c'était le cas pour près de 29 % d'entre eux. Chez les garçons, le constat d'échec est encore plus troublant: un sur trois — plus de 35 % — fait l'école buissonnière. En milieu défavorisé, c'est encore pire. Si à Westmount, seulement 6% des jeunes décrochent, dans des quartiers comme Pointe-Saint-Charles ou Parc-Extension, à Montréal, la proportion dépasse les 40 %, indiquent les statistiques officielles. (para. 2-4)

These numbers highlight that the increases in school dropout rates were disproportionately higher in neighbourhoods with high populations of new immigrants (Parc-Extension) and/or inter-generational poverty (Pointe-Sainte-Charles). This so-called crisis in school retention should be a public concern where citizens, communities and educational workers question the provincial government about these findings while holding it accountable for the failings of its educational system. However, the loudest voices calling for action were coming from the private sector.

The dire situation of high dropout rates caught the attention of one of Québec's most powerful financial leaders who joined the cadre of concerned citizens. L. Jacques Ménard, chairman of BMO Nesbitt Burns and president of BMO Financial Group, was so disturbed by the statistics relating to school retention that he spearheaded the Groupe d'Action that was comprised of the private sector, government, civil society, provincial organizations and academic researchers. The result of this group created a plan of action entitled *Knowledge Is Power: Toward a Québec-Wide Effort to Increase Student Retention* as a way of mobilizing those concerned with the state of Québec's most recent educational crisis. In the report, school retention and its relationship to low socio-economic status, parental income and cultural background were examined. It also presented the impacts of high school dropout rates on unemployment and the economy while presenting such social implications as greater incarceration rates and the effects of low education on overall well being. Recommendations for educational policy and best practices as well as long-term educational goals were also presented. Mr. Ménard's commitment to school retention even got him blogging with high school drop-outs about why they left school; these interactions were documented and then published in another document entitled *Beyond the Numbers, A Matter of the Heart, Shoulders to Wheel What Québec Can Do To Reduce The Dropout Rate* in 2009. In addition to documenting how students were bored, uninterested or disconnected from their schoolwork, this report serves as another rallying cry for the public and government to deal with the crisis.

Mr Ménard and his Groupe d'Action (2009) stated that "besides being an important tool for fighting poverty, education is nothing less than the key to the sustainable social, cultural and economic enrichment of Québec society" (p.9). Although it is easy to dismiss

his concern as mere corporate responsibility or citizenship, the fact that the private sector has the audacity to be the voice of advocacy for public education is compelling. Following the lead of Mr Ménard and his Groupe d'Action, Jacynthe Côté, Chief Executive of the transnational mining company Rio Tinto Alcan donated $15 million towards 'Stay-in School Initiatives' as a commitment to Québec's youth. The impact of Mr Ménard and his Groupe d'Action's intervention also motivated the Québec government to adopt a five year strategic plan to counter the issues of school retention and youth employment as well as educational challenges within the global context. The overall effectiveness of Mr Ménard and his Groupe d'Action reflects how the private sector's license to improve public education is becoming normalized. Though addressing the shortcomings of public education should be a concern for everyone, the fact that the private sector mobilized resources in order to instruct the government on how to improve its public system really is a sign of our neoliberal times.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Montreal Economic Institute has a tendency towards vilifying public education. Its critiques of the public sector also help to normalize the private sector's interventionist stance that pushes for a market-driven ideology within the public sphere. Apple (2007) attested that vilifying the public sector "takes long-term and creative ideological work, but people must be made to see anything that is public as 'bad' and anything that is private as 'good'" (p. 113). The persistent undervaluing of public education by the private sector furthers the neoliberal project in Québec by reducing education down to a "good choice" and "bad choice" which parallels consumer choice in the market. Furthermore, it creates a two-tiered educational system where the top tier is accessible only to those who can afford it. This issue of educational

inequality in Québec goes beyond merely investing more into school improvement, community involvement or youth incentives. In fact, it requires a deeper analysis into structural inequality and the role of schools in relation to the social relationships of capitalism.

**Unequal Education and Social Reproduction**

Within Québec's educational system, there is an inherent contradiction. On the one hand, the lower rate of high-school retention in poor neighbourhoods is a public crisis that requires educational stakeholders to reevaluate how schools are failing students, particularly those who are marginalized. On the other hand, some students are entitled to a quality education that is subsidized by public funds. The question as to why Québec funds private education while having disproportionately high secondary school dropout rates within the public system opens up the discussion for how social reproduction functions. According to Collins (2009) "the basic reproductionist argument was that schools were not exceptional institutions promoting equality of opportunity; instead they reinforced the inequalities of social structure and cultural order in a given country" (p. 34). If the role of schools reinforces rather than helps to overcome social inequality, why have schools been allowed to function in this manner?

Bowles and Gintis clarified this question from a reproductionist point of view that is positioned in Marxist educational theory. Their pinnacle work, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (1976), connected the role of schools and the educational system to the larger inherent inequalities of capitalism. In this sense, they argued that schools replicate the social organization and relationships of capitalist society so that students are eventually socialized into their class positions. Although their analysis related to the historical

developments of educational reforms in the United States, the premise that schools serve as a microcosm of larger capitalist processes provides a useful understanding of inequality in the current educational context of Québec. From this perspective, the increased likelihood of school dropouts coming from poor and/or racially marginalized backgrounds would not be surprising, in fact, it would be expected. Similarly, state subsidies for students from privileged class positions would not be surprising either. A closer look at Bowles and Gintis's work examines the social nature of this educational contradiction.

Drawing from the rich Marxist tradition concerning the hierarchical, exploitative and class-based social order, Bowles and Gintis demystified any altruistic assumptions of public education. They maintained that "the educational system helps integrate youth into the economic system, we believe, through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production" (1976, p.131). Bowles and Gintis referred to this relationship between school and work as the *Correspondence Principle* (1976). This critical stance on schools and schooling explains how social divisions, alienation and atomization as well as meritocratic incentives in schooling exhibit the same organizational relationships that exist in the workplace.

The *Correspondence Principle* begins with the role of hierarchy and the subsequent relationships of power within schools, which Bowles and Gintis referred to as the "social relationships of education" (1976, p.131). This hierarchy exists between "administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students their work [which] replicate the hierarchical division of labor. Hierarchical relations are reflected in the vertical authority lines from administrators to teachers to students" (p.131). These social relationships and lines of authority are apparent in most schools since they are the basis of

its internal organization. What makes the reproductionist approach compelling is the location of schools as the point of socialization into the analogous hierarchical structures of the workplace. According to this analysis, the hierarchal structure within schools also carries power differentials similar to those found in the workplace so that students inherit similar amounts of power according to their class positions.

Bowles and Gintis' examination of the analogous relationship between school work and labour also borrows the Marxist concepts of alienation and atomization as well as applies them to the relationship between students and their schoolwork. They stated that:

> Alienated labor is reflected in the student's lack of control over his or her education, the alienation of the student from curriculum content and the motivation of school work through a system of grades and other external rewards rather than the integration with the process (learning) or the outcome (knowledge) of the educational "production process". Fragmentation in work is reflected in the institutionalized and often destructive competition among students through continual and ostensibly meritocratic ranking and evaluation. (1976, p.131)

Incorporating the notion of alienation could help to understand why students may feel disengaged from their own learning. With regards to educational inequality in Québec, the notion of alienation could help explain why disproportionate numbers of marginalized students feel disconnected from their own learning.

For this reason, increasing student control over learning would seem like an initial step towards ensuring that students are more engaged with their own learning and knowledge. Yet, this alienated relationship to learning goes beyond the classroom and instead prepares students for a similar relationship to work. The emphasis on individual success, referred to

as fragmentation, and the spirit of competition between peers are also common elements within schools. The fact that Bowles and Gintis conceptualize the educational work that normally occurs within a classroom as analogous to the productive work in the labour market illustrates how schools serve the larger contexts of state and economy.

Although the *Correspondence Principle* does not include how schools, like the work place, are also spaces to contest capital, it serves as a valuable theoretical starting point for examining educational inequality. There is an ongoing mythology that champions education as a ticket out of adversity. According to this mythology, with hard work and determination any student can overcome a social obstacle like poverty and succeed in society. The *Correspondence Principle* starts with the understanding that social inequality is systemic and is the basis of social organization. Furthermore, in order to challenge, contest and overcome inequality, proponents of fair and accessible education must look at the socially constructed roots of inequality.

**Educational Inequality and Social Inequality**

Within schools, there is a common concern for how greater access to education can enable marginalized students to overcome the social obstacle of poverty. In this approach, the relationship between poverty and school performance is a major focus. In measuring the effects of poverty on school performance, the term socio-economic status (SES) is often in some of the literature. In the report entitled *Is the Class Half Empty? A Population-Based Perspective on Socioeconomic Statues and Educational Outcomes*, the Institute for Research on Public Policy found that the:

> well-established relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and social outcomes is not just a case of impoverished children having poor outcomes when

> compared to others. Children from lower-middle SES families have poorer outcomes than children from middle-SES families, who in turn have poorer outcomes than children from upper-middle SES families. Each increase in socioeconomic status raises the likelihood of positive outcomes. (2006, p.4)

If school achievement is directly linked to the level of socioeconomic status, then ensuring academic success furthers inquiry into the internal and external conditions of a school. Internally, whether schools have adequate funding and appropriate resources as well as properly trained teachers to help students achieve is one line of inquiry. Externally, the conditions that affect student performance become more socially determined. Depending on the scope of the study, a myriad of factors constitute how SES is measured.

In the Montreal Economic Institute's *Portrait of Québec High Schools* (2008), SES was determined as a significant variable in student achievement which had a direct correlation to a school's rank. In the ranking, factors such as "the average income of mothers" and "total household revenue" contributed to how SES was defined in their study. The rationale for using these factors to quantify SES as a determinant for academic success was stated as follows:

> the mother's educational level is an important variable in the prediction of perseverance and academic success since it indicates which environments value education. The more the students' parents are educated, the more likely it is that they will devote resources in terms of time, energy, and support to promote their child's success. For the same reasons, *total household revenue* is another factor that influences a student's chances of succeeding...Here, total household revenue is used as a measure of parents' professional status. It also measures parents' capacity to

> devote financial resources to supporting their child's academic success. (MEI, 2008 p. 12)

Even a right-wing think tank that is driven by market ideology recognizes the relationship between academic success and parental level of wealth and status. To further inquiry into the extent of educational inequality in Montreal, there is evidence that it is also racialized. Caldas, Bernier and Marceau (2009) analyzed test scores in Québec public and private schools in order to determine whether a racialized achievement gap exists. They found that:

> as in American schools, there is a Black achievement gap in Montréal's schools as well. As in the United States, this racial achievement gap in school outcomes is closely associated with school family structure and family income. ... Importantly, we account for much of the variance in school academic performance (approximately 40%) by those sociodemographic variables over which schools have no control (our input factors), suggesting once again some limits that schools may face in boosting academic performance. (2009, pp. 209-210).

The researchers identified substantial gaps in academic achievement of Black students in Montreal. Although they attribute this gap to family structure and income, the identification of factors that are external to schools is significant. These so-called externalities are social in nature and relate to the larger social order.

Using the term *socioeconomic status* tends to euphemize the significance of social class and its overall impacts on students both within and outside of schools. This tends to obfuscates how these inequalities are structural in nature and mirror the larger inequalities of class-based societies. Minimizing the relevance of social class helps to maintain the

position that improving overall educational achievement or outcomes depends on merely improving access to educational resources within schools. With better educational opportunities, poor students can perform better and eventually gain better educational opportunities. All of this greater access to opportunity could eventually increase a poor student's standard of living and raise her/him out of poverty. This logic is inherently problematic. The failure to address the relationship between social class, poverty and educational inequality assumes an apolitical stance that hinders the contestation of why access to a quality education is determined by social class. Furthermore, this emphasis on individual success tends to place blame on individuals for their failure rather than critique the tangible causes of low achievement. Similarly, individual success is championed while the meritocratic notion that hard work can counter social adversity is reaffirmed.

Applying the *Correspondence Principle* to educational inequality in Québec is useful in order to address the so-called crisis in school retention. The racialized and class-based nature of school retention is not surprising from this perspective. In fact, it fits with the understanding that these educational inequalities are part of larger social processes that serve specific purposes, namely the goals of a capitalist economy. Since the labour market requires both skilled and unskilled labour, schools serve as the initial step into the vocationalization of the workforce. A central concern with regard to the role of schools for preparation for the labour market is based on the premise that class-based societies are fundamentally unequal; this is significant when analyzing educational inequality in Québec. More specifically, a class-based analysis is the initial step towards dispelling the common notion that education is a primary tool for poverty reduction. Furthermore, it digs even

deeper into the fallacy that schools are places where 'equal opportunity' exists for all and questions the overall purpose of schooling within liberal democracies.

Approaching educational inequality in Québec using a class-based analysis furthers inquiry into what purposes education, whether public or private, serve within the larger social order. Drawing from Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) work on social reproduction clarifies this inquiry because it examines the ideological roles of education and schooling in relation to the capitalist social order. Bourdieu and Passeron explained that:

> The educational system succeeds so perfectly in fulfilling its ideological function of legitimating the established order only because this masterpiece of social mechanics succeeds in hiding…the relations which, in a class society, unite the function of inculcation, i.e. the work of intellectual and moral integration, with the function of conserving the structure of class relations characteristic of that society. (p. 200)

In this view, schools serve as a site both for the indoctrination and preservation of class-based society. Students not only learn about their class positions and the associated knowledge that will lead them into their future careers but also the associated logic of living in a capitalist society. Bourdieu and Passeron demystify any progressive or altruistic functions of schools because of their role in perpetuating the inequalities of the larger social order. From their perspective, educational inequality has an ideological basis in its ability to reproduce itself at the individual and institutional level. Recognizing that there is an ideological basis to how schools "inculcate" students into the capitalist social order furthers the analysis into how ideology functions.

In Chapter 3, Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) work on social reproduction will be used to further illustrate the relationship between schools and the labour market. More

specifically, the Québec Education Program will be analyzed in order to illustrate the relationship between school curricula and labour market preparation. Under neoliberal globalization, referred to as the *knowledge-based economy*, the market orientation of education becomes a logical end for curriculum planning; this process requires an analysis on the role of ideology.

## Chapter Three:

## Competencies for a Competitive World

In this chapter, it will be argued that the current curriculum in Québec demonstrates the extent to which neoliberal globalization has shaped the content of classroom teaching. Though the larger processes of globalization may seem far removed from schools, school curricula have a role in connecting teachers and students to this global process. This analysis begins with an overview of the international context for testing and standards through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The analysis will return to the theoretical work of Bourdieu and Passeron, in order to address the role of curriculum and social reproduction. This will help build the argument that the Cross-Curricular Competencies (CCCs) of the Québec Education Program (QEP) are designed to give Québec students a comparative advantage within the globalized workforce.

### PISA testing and the Establishment of Globalized Standards

The OECD's policy recommendations for the alignment of educational goals with economic prosperity have influenced member nations in myriad ways. As illustrated in Chapter One, encouraging OECD nations to adapt their education systems to the *knowledge-based economy* served as a backdrop to Québec's educational reforms in the 1990s. Another major influence of the OECD was the creation of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Developed as an initiative amongst member nations of the OECD, the assessments are administered every 3 years and in total, "over one-quarter of a million students, representative of close to 17 million 15-year-olds enrolled in schools across these 32 countries participated" (OECD, 2010, p.25). Since 2000, OECD member nations and participating countries have administered PISA in order to:

> assess the extent to which students at age 15, approaching the end of compulsory schooling, are prepared to meet the challenges presented to them by the knowledge societies of the twenty-first century. The assessment is therefore focused on young people's capacity to use their knowledge and skills to solve real-life challenges rather than on mastery of a school-based curriculum. (OECD, 2010, p.24)

Creating a system of international testing requires international standards within specific subjects according to which students are tested. These standards are set within reading, mathematics and science and are meant to be used as international benchmarks for literacy, numeracy and scientific thinking. In each year of testing, one of three subject domains is prioritized and analyzed in greater depth than the others. PISA determines proficiency within these subject areas and "suggests a minimum threshold level of proficiency, below which competency levels would be considered to be inadequate for effective functioning in the modern world" (OECD, 2010. p. 26). The implied logic of PISA testing amongst participating members is to keep up with the rapidly changing world or else be deemed ineffective to function in it. Unfortunately, the burden of this race between nations rests on the educational systems, schools, teachers and students of those nations who participate.

Since literacy, numeracy and science are evaluated, there must be a reason why these particular subjects have value over others. Apple (1990) referred to these subjects as "high status knowledge" and explained that:

> the benefits of maximizing the production of scientific and technical knowledge are easily visible and ... that it has a (supposedly) identifiable content and stable structure that are both teachable and, what is critically important, testable... High status knowledge is seen as macro-economically beneficial in terms of long run

> benefits to the most powerful classes in society; and the socially accepted definitions of high status knowledge preclude consideration of non-technical knowledge. (p. 38)

Apple raises some crucial points in relation to the value placed on the types of knowledge that can be identified and tested. This could explain why PISA bases its testing on subject areas that can be quantified and measured in order to determine appropriate levels of proficiency. The convergence of educational goals with the dictates of the market is a norm within OECD nations; Apple illustrates this in his second point concerning how the macro-economic benefits of "high status knowledge" help to incorporate economic rationality into schools. In this sense, the emphasis on high proficiency within literacy, numeracy and science is intended to ensure whether the returns invested in education are measuring up to the global standards set by PISA.

**PISA and National and International Ranking**

Canada has participated in PISA since it was initially implemented in 2000. PISA is performed through the cooperation of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, the Council of Ministers of Education Canada and Statistics Canada (Bussière, Knighton and Pennock, 2007, p.9). This represents the collaboration of provincial Ministries of Education with the federal government. One of the so-called benefits of participating within PISA is determining how national achievement ranks in comparison to other OECD nations. Within Canada, students' achievement in literacy, numeracy and scientific thinking is used to determine a national average based on overall test scores within each of the subject areas. Since provinces are primarily responsible for administering elementary and secondary education, they also have access to how they

compare nationally and internationally. According to authors of the federal government report entitled *Measuring up: Canadian Results of the OECD PISA Study The Performance of Canada's Youth in Science, Reading and Mathematics, 2006 First Results for Canadians Aged 15*, the rationale for Canada's involvement with PISA is that it "invests significant public resources in the provision of elementary and secondary education. Canadians are interested in the quality of education provided to their youth by elementary and secondary schools" (Bussière, Knighton & Pennock, 2007, p.10). In this sense, determining the cost-effectiveness of a public investment like education is one reason why the test is administered.

As a developed economy within the OECD, Canada and its provinces have used PISA to determine where they rank on the international stage. To further justify its participation in PISA, Bussière et al. noted that:

> Canada's economy is also evolving rapidly. Between 2006 and 2015, the fastest labour market growth is among occupations requiring higher skills. Even employees in traditional occupations are expected to upgrade their knowledge and skills to meet the rising demands of new organisational structures and production technologies. Elementary and secondary education systems play a key role in generating the supply of skills to meet this demand. The competencies acquired by the end of compulsory schooling provide individuals with the essential foundation necessary to further develop human capital. (2007, p.10)

The demand for "higher skills" as a result of technology and the changing economy is represented as impacting the nature of work, in this sense; the onus is on Canadian schools to provide students with the necessary skills. Measuring the knowledge and skills that

students have acquired helps to ensure that schools and educational systems are fulfilling their responsibilities. Throughout Canada's overall rankings and comparisons with other nations, differences in proficiency levels within the subject areas are thoroughly analyzed. High levels of proficiency, particularly within science and the domain of scientific thinking, are championed as a national success across provinces, while discrepancies within proficiency levels in literacy and numeracy create varying hypotheses to account for variation in test scores. For example, "in every province, students with higher SES tend to perform better in mathematics. Furthermore, students tend to have better performance when they attend schools with students from high SES backgrounds, regardless of their own families' SES" (Bussière, Cartwright and Knighton, 2004, p.62). In this example, discrepancies in performance on the mathematics exam in 2003 are attributed to socio-economic status.

The continuous ranking between member nations of the OECD is supposed to help nations determine where they stand in relation to each other. In Canada, provinces are also compared and ranked in relation to a national average. This data is intended to inform provinces of their national and international rank within the OECD. Dedicating classroom time to international testing is intended to inform and influence provincial educational policy. According to Bussière et al.:

> The average performance of students in Alberta was significantly above the Canadian average. Québec, Ontario and British Columbia performed about the same as the Canadian average while students in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan performed significantly below the Canadian average. (2007, p.20)

Although Québec is at the national average, its performance on the national and international stage has enabled the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) to publish its own analysis based on "evidence" derived from PISA. In general, Québec ranked within the top ten of all participating nations and "the performance of Québec's 15-year-olds in the PISA assessment holds promise not only for their own future, but also for Québec as a whole" (MELS, 2007, p. 29). Québec's high performance on PISA is one facet of how its educational system has adapted to the demands of a globalized world.

Within the international arena of standards and testing, meeting the demands of knowledge requires Québec students not only to have appropriate levels of proficiency over "high-status knowledge" (Apple, 1990, p.38) but also to acquire the appropriate competencies to live and work in a more complex world. The analysis now turns to Québec's curriculum as an illustration of how globalization has influenced curriculum development within the province.

**The Globalized Curriculum: Schools and Social Reproduction**

Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) maintained that schools are one of the main sites for social reproduction. In their pinnacle work *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1990), Bourdieu and Passeron examined how an educational institution must reproduce itself in addition to the two-fold role of reproducing the social relations and values of class-based societies. The value of drawing from Bourdieu and Passeron relates to the significance of the internalities of the local school to the larger socio-cultural context. They maintained that "given that it must ensure the institutional conditions for the homogeneity and orthodoxy of the work of schooling the educational system tends to equip the agents appointed to inculcate with a standard training and standardized, standardizing instruments"

(Bourdieu & Passeron 1990, p.58). Here trained teachers and curriculum are located as the "agents" and "standardizing instruments" within schools. By locating the roles of teachers and curricula in relation to the larger social context, the analysis turns to how global knowledge is transmitted at the local level. Given that the *knowledge-based economy* requires specific skills and training, it is essential to analyze the content of curriculum in relation to this global context. The context of PISA testing is a compelling point of departure for understanding the influences of neoliberal globalization on the Québec Education Program.

**QEP Cross-Curricular Competencies: A Competitive Advantage?**

The focus of this analysis is on the Cross-Curricular Competencies (CCCs) within the Elementary curriculum. The QEP contains nine cross-curricular competencies that are grouped into four categories: intellectual, methodological, personal/social and communication-related. The guiding principle in this analysis relates to how the ideology of globalization informs curriculum development in Québec in order to serve the interests of the market. The ideology of globalization has transferred into the realm of education through concepts like the *knowledge-based economy*. In addressing how the *knowledge-based economy* changed labour market trends in the mid 1990s, the OECD stated that "the knowledge-intensive or high-technology parts of the economy tend to be the most dynamic in terms of output and employment growth, which intensifies the demand for more highly skilled workers"(OECD, 1996. p.18). This projection of trends amongst OECD member nations evoked a reevaluation of how schools could provide the essential preparation to meet these global trends. This sentiment led to examining how school curricula could equip students with the proper skills to participate in the global labour market.

Paula Allman has critiqued how the ideology of globalization affects people under the guise of education and training. Allman (2001) clearly explained the ideology of globalization functions by:

> persuading people to accept increasing insecurity or uncertainty of employment and therefore convince them of the necessity of adopting flexibility in their attitudes, working practices and also their lifestyles. Once the vast majority of working people have adopted these dispositions and attitudes or have been inculcated with them through the processes of education and training, it is much easier for capital to extort a greater amount of either or both absolute and relative surplus-value from them under the conditions of heightened global competition. (p. 72)

Allman indicates how the rhetoric of global competitiveness is used to justify greater labour exploitation. She also illustrates the role of education and training in the indoctrination of the ideology of globalization.

Each set of the CCCs will be analyzed in order to illustrate how these work skills enhance global competitiveness. The role of ideology will be further discussed in greater detail in order to illustrate how the rationale for using schools for the world of work is perceived as logical. The language of the QEP and CCCs assumes that globalization is a reality that we must all adapt to without contestation. Michael Apple (1990) maintained that "the language of learning tends to be apolitical and ahistorical, thus hiding the complex nexus of political and economic power and resources that lies behind a considerable amount of curriculum organization and selection" (p.29). The QEP and CCCs are inherently political and grounded in an economic rationality that adapts educational goals in response to the globalization. For this reason, educational systems across OECD nations

have restructured their curriculum under the guise of being more adaptable and flexible to an increasingly complex world.

**Why competencies?**

The OECD has published countless reports on education and its relation to national and international economic prosperity. Perhaps the most compelling influence to this analysis is the close relationship between the language of the QEP and the body of published literature from the OECD. The Québec Education Program's (QEP) emphasis on competency-based learning has many parallels with to the 1998 OECD report entitled *Making the Curriculum Work*. According to the OECD, the rationale for this approach to classroom instruction has to be:

> directly relevant to those outcomes of learning, by whatever route, that are of central relevance to employers and to individuals in respect of the capacity to keep abreast of, and to operate effectively in, rapidly changing environments. Arguably the competency-based movement can open up access outside the formal education system, counter the traditionally excessive emphasis on academic learning, and create a system which is better matched to the needs of lifelong learning. (OECD, 1998, p.70)

Parallel concepts exist between the rationale for incorporating a competency-based approach in *Making the Curriculum Work* and the motive for integrating this into the QEP. According to the introduction to the QEP Elementary program:

> The focus on competencies entails establishing a different relationship to knowledge and refocusing on training students to think. The idea of a competency reflects the conviction that students should begin at school to develop the complex skills that

> will permit them to adapt to a changing environment later on. It implies the development of flexible intellectual tools that can be adjusted to changes and be used in the acquisition of new learnings. (MELS, 2001, p. 4)

Both documents recognize that globalization requires a complexity of skills and a different relationship to knowledge. Both rationales also imply that "traditionally excessive emphasis on academic learning" (OECD, 1998, p.70) or "a different relationship to knowledge" (MELS, 2001, p. 4) are past approaches to learning. The competency approach to knowledge is purported to be an essential tool in order to ensure that Québec students not only survive but also thrive in a globalized world.

In the OECD report entitled *Educational Policy Analysis 2001*, an entire chapter is dedicated to the specific competencies that are needed for the *knowledge-based economy*. Designated as "workplace competencies", the OECD (2001) explained that:

> a literature review reveals that the different types of workplace competencies that are most agreed upon by different analysts, surveys and country reports are: *Inter-personal skills*: team work and the ability to collaborate in pursuit of a common objective [and] leadership capabilities. *Intra-personal skills*: motivation and attitude, the ability to learn, problem-solving skills, effective communication with colleagues and clients, analytical skills and *Technological or ICT skills.* (p. 106)

There are many similarities between these "workplace competencies" listed by the OECD and those of the QEP. According to the QEP for elementary education, there are nine cross-curricular competencies that are grouped into four categories:

> *Intellectual competencies*: to use information, to solve problems, to exercise critical judgment, to use creativity. *Methodological competencies*: to adopt effective work

methods, to use ICT. *Personal and social competencies*: to construct his/her identity, to cooperate with others. *Communication-related competency*: to communicate appropriately. (MELS, 2001, p.13)

These similarities indicate a significant amount of influence from the OECD on the CCCs of the QEP. This point will be illustrated as each set of CCCs is analyzed and compared in greater detail. For a detailed listing of CCCs and how the MELS describes them, please refer to the Appendix.

**Intellectual Competencies: New Knowledge, Same Old School?**

The first set of CCCs is designated as intellectual capabilities. They include: "using information, solving problems, exercising critical judgment, and using creativity" (MELS, 2001, p. 13) According to their description they "go beyond superficial memorization of content and mindless conformity, and…aim for a higher-level of skills" (MELS, 2001, p. 15). This is a remarkable statement to find in a curriculum document namely because of the way it alludes to the traditional school. This perception of schools as places of conformity sets a point of comparison for the competencies to be presented as modern and progressive. The innovative nature of the intellectual competencies is further justified because they present "an active relationship to knowledge, and enable students to relate to reality -to grasp, interpret and understand it" (MELS, 2001, p. 15). Here, student passivity and out-dated teaching practices represent the old in contrast to this new curriculum of the future. This language of binary opposites consistently appears throughout the CCCs and is a constant reminder that the world is moving forward and at a faster pace. Furthermore, the immediacy of meeting the needs of the *knowledge-based economy* requires all those

involved in education to keep meeting the pressures of this changing world, particularly when access to information continues to grow exponentially.

When the OECD proclaims that "changes in technology, and particularly the advent of information technologies, are making educated and skilled labour more valuable, and unskilled labour less so" (OECD, 1996, p. 7), it is not surprising that the first intellectual competency relates to gathering and using information. According to MELS (2001), "schools have to ensure that students develop the cognitive flexibility required today, and for this reason, it is just as important for them to teach students how to acquire knowledge as to convey it to them" (p. 16). Given the barrage of information and increased access to it, this competency has the potential to create meaningful learning opportunities. However, the intent of this competency seems to be more aligned with the position that ability to utilize information is a marketable skill in a globalized world where skilled labour is valued over unskilled labour. This reality requires Québec schools to respond by teaching students to adopt the necessary skill of using information effectively. The relationship of the CCCs to job skills becomes more evident with the next three intellectual competencies.

In *Making the Curriculum Work,* the OECD outlines specific curriculum reforms within OECD nations where:

> learning outcomes are everywhere receiving special emphasis, as countries seek to redefine the aims and goals of schooling. They are including inter-disciplinary problem-solving, creative initiative, flexibility and adaptability to address change, ability to work in groups, and an intelligent interest in technology -its uses, limitations and demands on social responsibility. (OECD, 1998, p.8)

The intellectual competencies of problem-solving, exercising critical judgment and using creativity are almost identical to the "learning outcomes" that are outlined in *Making the Curriculum Work*.

The ability to solve problems is a designated as a complex skill. According to MELS (2001), the rationale for such an in-depth approach to problem-solving is:

> in daily life, there are many situations that require our attention. We have to choose from among a range of possibilities that are not all equally viable. The ability to handle these situations rationally may prove valuable when an important problem arises. This is the ability used in this competency. (MELS, 2001, p.18)

Having the mental agility to solve everyday problems both simple and complex seems like a valuable life skill that should be taught in schools. However, this ability is viewed from the perspective of greater employability because "this problem-solving function is being given more emphasis in the knowledge-based economy. For example, the advent of flexible manufacturing systems has created new demands for scientific insights into materials, production processes and even management" (OECD, 1996, p.26). For this reason, this intellectual skill can be transferred into the world of work.

The use of critical judgment is the third intellectual CCC that also has a tendency to be oriented towards an employment skill. MELS (2001) explained that:

> schools have an important role to play in developing students' critical faculties, by teaching them to weigh all the facts, to take into consideration their own emotions, to use logical arguments, to take the context into account, to allow for ambiguity and to weed out preconceptions. (MELS, 2001, p.20)

Although this competency encompasses life and academic skills, the ability to "exercise critical judgment" (MELS, 2001, p.20) has a strong parallel to the notion of critical thinking as an essential work skill. Erik de Vries (2009) explained that "the *Essential Skills Initiative*, developed since 1994, was the Canadian incarnation of a multi-country movement towards the articulation of a set of core skills or competencies responsive to the demands of modern citizenship and work" (p. 2713). Human Resources and Development Canada (HRDC) has determined nine essential skills that are "the skills people use to carry out a wide variety of everyday life and work tasks" (HRDC, 2007). Critical thinking is defined by HRDC as "the process of evaluating ideas or information using rational thought and referring to objective criteria to reach a rational judgment about value, or to identify strengths of weaknesses" (de Vries, 2009, p. 2719). The ability to "exercise critical judgment" (MELS, 2001) is rather similar to the concept of "critical thinking" as an important occupational skill that was determined by HRDC. In this sense, it is difficult to separate this learning skill from its intended purpose of employability.

Using creativity is the last of intellectual competency that draws on the popular relationship between being creative and problem-solving. The need to be a creative worker in the *knowledge-based economy* seems to be an underlying rationale for the fourth intellectual competency. The demands of fast-paced and technologically-laden workplaces require innovative thinking, for this reason, MELS (2001) affirms that creative problem-solving "can lead to an inventive solution to a situational problem" (p. 22). In the report entitled *Critical Skills in Five Canadian Industries,* Derwyn Sangster of the Canadian Labour and Business Centre surveyed the aerospace, automotive, biotechnology, environmental and information technology sectors across Canada in order to establish

which skills were desirable or in future shortage. Creativity was designated as a "specific *high priority skill* particularly within the biotechnology and educational industries" (Sangster, 1999, p. 10 and p.12). In this sense, creativity has turned away from having intrinsic value for students to explore towards being a skill that employers seek. The further emphasis on work skills in relation to greater employability is illustrated within the next set of CCCs.

**Methodological Competencies: Go on Kids, Get a Job!**

The second set of CCCs is designated as methodological competencies. These competencies include: adopting effective work methods and using information and communication technology (ICT) (MELS, 2001). According to MELS, (2001) the purpose of these CCCs is the "development of attitudes such as a sense of responsibility, pride in work well done, discipline and rigour" (p.25). It would seem that any teacher would want her/his students to have these personal skills. However, the methodological competencies evaluate the use of work skills and the ability to utilize information technologies as preparation for working in a globalized world. Carnoy (1999) stated that "globalization and the new technology are knowledge intensive, and the new labour markets are increasingly information intensive, flexible, [and] *disaggregative,* or individualizing of labour" (p.29). As a result, ensuring that Québec students possess the individual capacity to work under these pressures requires specific aptitudes. MELS (2001) describes "effective work methods" as the ability to be "self-reliant, to select appropriate means for attaining objectives, to analyze the way they [students] use the available resources and to evaluate the effectiveness of their work methods" (p.26). The skills of independence, self-

evaluation and planning in the attempt to further the learning process are necessary teachable skills that can benefit a learner throughout her/his life.

Without a doubt, information and communication technologies (ICT) have impacted the pace of knowledge transfer and subsequent access to it, particularly within OECD member nations. Over the last decade, ICT have assumed a remarkable role in everyday life and, for this reason, it would seem logical that schools prepare students to live with copious amounts of information from myriad sources. Johanne Plante of Statistics Canada and David Beattie of Industry Canada stated that:

> In Canada, education authorities and governments have recognized the importance of integrating information and communications technologies (ICT) into teaching and learning both to prepare students for today's economy and to make the most of new learning tools. (Minister of Industry, 2004, p.6)

Plante and Beattie clearly illustrate the two-fold value of ICT skills. Implementing ICT into school curricula addresses the need for skilled labour in relation to the *knowledge-based economy.* In this sense, the rationale for the integration of ICT into school curricula is largely determined by the need for some level of technological proficiency in the labour market. MELS (2001) explained its rationale for designating the use of ICT as a CCC as:

> once associated mainly with research and business, [ICT] use has spread while their content has been diversified so that now they offer something for everyone. It seems likely that within a decade or two, virtually every job will require at least a minimum proficiency in this medium, which is both a language and a tool. (p.28)

To recognize ICT as "both a language and a tool" is a common approach towards the integration of technology into the classroom. The mention of every job needing some level

of technological literacy is an interesting forecast and implies that even unskilled labour will require some level of proficiency. The Canadian Council on Learning, a not-for profit corporation funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada, reaffirms this point by stating that "foreign outsourcing has reduced the domestic demand for unskilled workers, thereby increasing the relative demand for skilled workers. The growing prominence of information–communication technology industries has also fed the demand for skilled workers who can thrive in a knowledge-based economy" (2006, p. 2). This competency treats using ICTs as both an educational skill and one that will transfer into the workplace. A similar recognition of individual aptitudes that can extend into employable skills relates to interpersonal skills; these comprise the last two categories of CCCs.

**Personal and Social Competencies Getting along to do Business**

The increased interconnectedness of the "knowledge-based economy" (OECD, 1996) requires its workforce to have the social skill set to collaborate and interact at all levels. In an OECD report entitled *The Well-Being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital,* the relationship between social cohesion and economic prosperity was evaluated. Of particular relevance is the role of education in fostering the necessary skills for economic stability and prosperity. According to the OECD:

> education and learning can support habits, skills and values conducive to social cooperation and participation. Good quality institutions, a highly-skilled labour force and the prevalence of norms and networks facilitating social cooperation underpin higher levels of investment in physical capital and can potentially enhance strategies to renew the natural environment. (2001, p.13)

Here, the value of cooperation is directly related to economic investment. The emphasis on the social realm requires a workforce that has the "know-how" to create collaborative networks and cooperative relationships. These relationships also have the potential to remedy the ongoing environmental crisis, which is euphemized as "strategies to renew the natural environment" in the document above. In this sense, schools and educational institutions become the site to inculcate learners with the necessary social skills to work and function in society.

Theories of social capital are varied and place different emphasis on the roles of values, relationships, networks and institutions in their definition of the term. Leading neoliberal thinker, Francis Fukuyama defines social capital as "an instantiated informal norm that promotes co-operation between individuals. In the economic sphere it reduces transaction costs and in the political sphere it promote the kind of associational life which is necessary for the success of limited government and modern democracy" (2001, p.7). In addressing the relationship between social capital and the economy, the OECD locates schools as site where social capital is generated. The OECD affirmed that:

> Schools can foster values for social cooperation as well as providing "meeting places" where various social networks can intersect... To the extent that teaching methods and organisation of learning encourage shared learning and teamwork as well as openness to new ideas and cultural diversity, the more schools can underpin social capital which bridge across different groups in society. (OECD, 2001, p.46)

Schools, according to this position, cultivate social capital through the values of cooperation, collaboration and diversity in addition to being spaces where students interact socially. It would seem that teaching these life skills would be an expectation of any

learning environment. However, these attributes are not simply meant to be personal skills for the betterment of students; they have a direct relationship to being marketable work skills. More specifically, the value of these interpersonal skills is beneficial for skilled and unskilled labour to maintain social relations within their workplaces.

A parallel exists between the value of social capital and the personal and social CCCs of the QEP. The competencies include:

> both the cognitive and socioaffective dimensions of learning and are expressed in cooperation and in standing up for one's values while showing respect for others. They also involve attitudes related to open-mindedness, adaptability, commitment and mutual aid. (MELS, 2001, p.31)

These CCCs were written within the context of the changing nature of work amidst the backdrop of capitalist globalization. Although providing learning opportunities that encourage "open-mindedness, adaptability, commitment and mutual aid", should be guiding principles for all learning environments, these are linked more to the increased connectedness associated with globalization. For this reason, it is not surprising that the seventh CCC requires students "to define themselves as individuals, to recognize their cultural identity and to be receptive to other cultures" (MELS, 2001, p.32). Having a sense of self while being respectful to others is not only a necessary human skill but also could be designated as an educational goal that is beneficial for learning. However, it is difficult to discern this fundamental human skill from the context of a globalized workforce where increased 'cultural sensitivity' would seem like a logical skill to maintain work relations across borders.

A similar utilitarian approach towards human interaction for the purposes of business exists in the second social and personal competency. The ability "to cooperate with others" is explained by MELS as:

> a mandate to enhance this spontaneous socialization with more deliberate, systematic measures. The aim of these measures is for students to develop a social competency that meshes with values such as self-affirmation that is respectful of others, consideration of other people's feelings, constructive openness to pluralism, and nonviolence. (MELS, 2001, p. 34)

The values of respect, empathy, pluralism and nonviolence are human attributes that should be modeled and encouraged in schools. As preparation for students to interact amongst themselves and within society at large, these values represent human ideals and guiding moral principles. However, these values evoke the relationship between social capital and economic prosperity. These personal and social competencies also have a close similarity to what Stasz (2001) refers to as *soft-skills*. In addressing the necessary skills for more complex work places, Stasz (2001) explained that:

> the research indicates that employers are often more concerned about soft skills or attitudes, rather than academic or technical knowledge or competencies. They seek employees with the right attitudes and dispositions toward work-individuals who are motivated, reliable, willing to learn and to take responsibility for their learning. (p. 386)

If employers place importance on these *soft skills*, it would make sense to tailor CCCs that encourage the appropriate attitudes and dispositions towards working with other people. This claim is based on the development of CCCs as behaviours that are expected to extend

beyond the limits of the school. The fundamental need to communicate is recognized as a learning and interpersonal skill.

The last of the nine CCCs relates to developing the skill to communicate effectively. MELS explained that:

> the communication-related competency allows students to share information with others, directly or through various media, and to convey messages in clear, appropriate language. This competency has a major impact on academic, social and occupational success. (2001 p. 37)

Collaboration is a necessary skill in the *knowledge-based economy,* which requires workers to communicate and relate to each other. For this reason, it is not surprising to find that the ability to express oneself is designated as a competency that is relevant for all aspects of life. Sangster (1999) maintained that the importance of social and personal skills in many sectors "ranked somewhat higher than management/business skills in overall importance" (p. 9). The value of social, personal and communication skills in relation to working in a globalized world is an underlying theme within these last two sets of CCCs in the QEP. The need to prepare Québec students to live and work in a rapidly-paced and technological world seems like a rational approach to education. Since schools have a foundational role in society it would make perfect sense that they adapt to the ways in which societies are changing in response to globalization. However, this rationality places more emphasis on the economy and markets which brings the analysis to how neoliberal ideology maintains an uncontested logic which underpins the Québec educational context.

**A Fine Line: Schools and Work in the Knowledge-Based Economy**

The context of PISA testing creates the climate for global competition as countries are ranked against each other and strive to determine the effectiveness of their schools. In Québec, the implementation of a competency-based approach to curriculum development and the CCCs as an additional skill-set resonates with OECD policy recommendations. Many of the CCCs closely match the types of skills that employers seek in response to the *knowledge-based economy*. If the purpose of schools is to prepare students to work in a globalized world, how has this logic swayed educational legislators, schools, teachers and parents to adapt to these demands?

Reducing the role of schools down to job preparation for the global labour market turns the analysis towards the role of ideology and how it reaffirms market rationality. Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) position on the role of the educational system in social reproduction illustrates the normalcy of market rationality. They stated that:

> Given that there is no society in which the educational system is reduced to the role of an industrial enterprise subject to exclusively economic goals, that production for the needs of the economy does not everywhere have the same weight in the system of functions and, more profoundly, that the specificity of an educational system and of its 'production' techniques is reproduced in the specificity of its products, it is only by sheer force of ideology that one can present the 'needs of the economy' or of Society as the rational, reasonable basis for a consensus on the hierarchy of the functions incumbent upon the educational system. (p. 185)

A significant point is raised with regard to the role of ideology because it has the capacity to obscure the economically productive and socially reproductive functions of schools.

Furthermore, the "needs of the economy or of Society" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p.185) have a consensual feature that overrides any other educational purposes for schools. In this sense, orienting education to meet the economic need for an appropriately trained workforce requires the ideological consent of educational legislators, school administrators and parents.

The role of ideology helps explain how the confluence of educational needs with those of market-driven globalization takes on a commonsense-like stance that seems logical. Terry Eagleton explained that "ideologies must make at least some minimal sense of people's experience, must conform to some degree with what they know of social reality from their practical interaction with it" (1991, p.14). Since the world is moving faster due to globalization, societies must ensure that their educational institutions are keeping up. This logic does not seem irrational when globalization is presented as the most common social reality within OECD countries. If information technologies are perpetually changing how we interact and communicate with one another, then developing it as a CCC also seems like common sense. When economic prosperity amidst global competition becomes a guiding principle within educational reforms, the emphasis on job preparation also seems logical. It is within this social reality of fierce competition and rapid technological change that the rationale for incorporating the CCCs into the QEP is reasonable if not crucial for Québec students to thrive.

The competency-based approach in Québec helps to ensure that Québec students have the appropriate skill set to survive the pressures of globalization; this rationale helps to legitimize the development of CCCs. Sears (2003) accurately referred to as the *new vocationalism*:

> because it serves to orient education to the market. There is a constituency for this market-defined conception of relevance. Students facing a dismal labour market are likely to be somewhat sympathetic to the idea that education should provide them with competitive advantages. Parents may have some sympathy for this direction of these reforms as they seek out opportunities for their children to succeed. (p.78)

This *new vocationalism* helps to justify the implementation of work skills into the QEP because it would enable Québec students to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. Students would have the comparative advantage of having an additional skill set that increases employability while their parents are appeased that they have the appropriate competencies to compete within the global arena.

Thriving in the globalized workforce also requires a degree of adaptability and flexibility due to technological innovation in relation to changing the nature of work; this is one of the major points within the *knowledge-based economy*. In this sense, increases in technology have also increased precariousness across sectors. This necessity to live and work by constantly keeping up is what Nancy Jackson describes as "economic survival" and reaffirms the logic that gears schools towards fulfilling the needs of the workforce within the context of greater competition and technological change. According to Jackson:

> All this means that having work, and keeping work, is being reinvented in our time not just as a process of economic, technological and social change, but importantly as the necessity for ongoing personal 'retooling' as well. This constant demand for change translates into a popular understanding of 'learning' as a condition of economic survival. (p.39)

This reaffirms the ideological basis, at the personal level, for furthering the vocationalization of school curricula in response to rapid global change. Economic survival within the hostile and hyper-competitive world is also supported by a breadth of publications from popular literature, the private sector and advocacy groups across OECD nations.

Given that the increased connectedness of the *knowledge-based economy* has increased overall access to information within OECD nations, it has had an influence on notions of *global citizenship*. In the introduction to the elementary program of the QEP, it states that the direction of the curriculum "can best prepare the citizens of tomorrow to meet the challenges of a pluralistic society that welcomes diversity" (MELS, 2001, p.2). It could also be added that many of the CCCs could help to accomplish this end. In this sense, the QEP could be used as a springboard into myriad social and global justice issues. One of the products of an increasingly globalized world is the notion of a *global citizen*. Although this term has multiple meanings and its alignment with social justice is often debatable, a sense of global awareness is often associated with this concept. Hébert and Sears defined citizenship education in Canada as:

> the intended curriculum in public schools [that] tends towards an explicit, activist focus for the development of engaged and active citizens. Young people are to become knowledgeable about local, national and global issues, sensitive to other ways of seeing the world, and disposed to act with other citizens to make their communities, nation and world a better place. (p.3)

The increased access to information, a by-product of the knowledge-based economy, has increased global awareness to some degree. Although awareness is an initial step towards a

greater understanding of global issues, motivating action to challenge and alleviate the scope of global inequality requires more than simply being aware.

One of the central themes within the QEP and its CCCs is preparing students to live and work in an increasingly competitive world. The close association between CCCs and work skills that enhance employability has implications for teaching. Sears (2003) maintained that "this alignment of the educational system with employer's goals is associated with a crucial shift in the valuation of learning. The blunt entrepreneurial orientation uses market criteria to measure the true value of learning" (p. 215). In this sense, using schools as sites for vocational training counters the belief that education has value outside of job preparation. This rationale that schools must prepare students for the world of work has garnered the ideological consent of schools, educational workers and parents as a logical educational outcome. In all of this, when do the uglier sides of globalization, *the knowledge-based economy*, or market rationality get exposed?

In all of the educational discourse that calls for greater adaptability or flexibility as a result of globalization, the *re-commodification of labor* is rarely, if ever, presented. According to Brecher (2000):

> Globalization has been characterized by a 're-commodification of labor' in which workers have increasingly lost all rights except the right to sell their labor power. All over the world, employers have downsized, outsourced, and made permanent jobs contingent ones. Employers have attacked job security requirements, work rules, worker representation, healthcare, pensions and other social benefits, and anything else that defined workers as human beings. (p. 3)

Brecher's concise explanation of how globalization has changed the nature of work illustrates the side of this social reality which is not problematized enough. In addition to increasing precariousness, many of basic workers' rights are dismantled. This world of work has also rolled-back the promise of fundamental social necessities like healthcare and pensions.

Casey (2006) has addressed how the *knowledge-based economy* has lead to greater intensification and dispensability across OECD nations; she refers to this as *lean production*. This trend in production involves:

> intensification, which includes higher rates of productivity, increased work tasks or work elements, faster output rates, eradication of inefficiencies, and predetermined work design, is evident in various traditional blue-collar work, and in white-collar and new forms of service work. (2006, p. 161)

The other side of globalization and the *knowledge-based economy* is a climate of work where basic social security is eroded amidst greater amounts of work. This other side is usually overridden by the so-called progress of the *knowledge-based economy*. Carnoy (1999) maintained that in a globalized labour market "workers are being individualized, separated from their 'traditional' identities built over more than a century and from the social networks that enabled them to find economic security" (p.33). In the market-oriented push in education, the effects of globalization on working standards are usually overridden by the need to adapt to increased precariousness. Furthermore, the changing nature of work or its impacts on the lives of educational workers and students are rarely addressed unless it relates to achievement, performance and/or outcomes; all products of market-driven educational goals.

From the theoretical perspectives of Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and Bowles and Gintis (1976), schools maintain a relationship to the larger social order. If the role of schools is to serve the needs of the labour market over those of its students, how does this manage to gain the consent of teachers, administrators and parents?

This market rationality must pose a solid justification for driving education towards the needs of the economy. However, this approach to education is not accepted without question. In fact, due to the nature of ideology, there is a battle of ideas over the value of education and what ends it should serve. The role of ideology and how it helps to challenge neoliberalism is the focus of Chapter Four.

## Chapter Four:

## Ideology and Resistance

In Chapter Two, the neoliberal processes of privatization and marketization were examined in Québec's current educational system. In Chapter Three, it was argued that the *knowledge-based economy* significantly influenced the development of cross-curricular competencies in order to give Québec students a comparative advantage. In this chapter, the function of ideology in creating opposition to neoliberal educational practices will be examined. By presenting teacher trade unionism at the Québec, Canadian and North American level, it will be argued that teachers are agents of social change. Organized teachers have the capacity to not only demand that education be a social right but also to extend the struggle towards challenging neoliberalism.

### The Role of Ideology

#### The Assumed Reality

In Chapter One, globalization in the form of greater economic integration and technological innovation was the backdrop for Québec's educational reforms in the 1990s. In Chapter Two 2, the private sector involvement in public education illustrated how market rationality has become increasingly common within Québec's educational system. As argued in Chapter Three, when governments and school boards devise curricula to meet the demands of the *knowledge-based economy*, it is based on the assumption that this is the only reality of the modern world. In fact, the rationale of intense global competition has been used to justify the development of cross-curricular competencies. This shift in education towards the dictates of the global market is presented as a logical response to the

social reality of neoliberal globalization. Bourdieu (1998) explained that the logic of neoliberalism manages to portray reality as *utopian*. He maintained that:

> as the dominant discourse would have it, the economic world is a pure and perfect order, implacably unrolling the logic of its predictable consequences, and prompt to repress all violations by the sanctions that it inflicts... Is the dominant discourse right? What if, in reality, this economic order were no more than the implementation of a utopia -the utopia of neoliberalism -thus converted into a political problem? One that, with the aid of the economic theory that it proclaims, succeeds in conceiving of itself as the scientific description of reality? (para. 1)

Bourdieu's reference to the "utopia of neoliberalism" is rooted in the political and economic realms; this assumed reality is one that presents itself as the current state of the world. Similarly, restructuring education to neoliberal policies maintains that the reality of global economic competition is a rationale for adapting educational goals. For example, a market-driven approach to education manages to change the nature of teachers' work so that standardized testing overrides learner-centered approaches to teaching. In addition, when financial expenditure on education is reduced without public consultation in the name of cost-effectiveness or social austerity, the collective sacrifice is shouldered by the public which finances the administration of education. In these neoliberal times, when the private sector interferes within the realm of public education it is heralded as an act of corporate benevolence or as necessary due to budgetary constraints. The ability of neoliberalism to function both as a political and economic reality in education returns the discussion back to how ideology functions.

The proliferation of neoliberal ideology within the educational sector assumes a common sense stance through a set of strategies. These *ideological strategies* tend "to be unifying, action-oriented, rationalizing, legitimizing, universalizing and naturalizing" (Eagleton, 1990, p.45). When these *ideological strategies* are combined with the role and function of schools, tailoring curricula and classroom teaching in response to globalization seems logical.

In the introduction to the QEP's elementary curriculum, it is stated that Québec's education system must "take into account major trends such as internationalization, globalization, the information explosion, rapid technological development and the growing complexity of social life" (MELS, 2001, p.2). In accordance with an increasingly complex and integrated world, it would only make sense to act on behalf of the unified interests of Québec students and their parents. Here, the "action-oriented" (Eagleton, 1990, p.45) response of the Québec government would be to implement the appropriate educational and curricular reforms to ensure that Québec students are prepared to live and work in a highly competitive world. Similarly, adapting education to meet the demands of "globalization and internationalization" (MELS, 1994) is the "rationalizing" (Eagleton, 1990, p.45) aspect of the major Québec curricular reforms of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Because the Québec government implemented these reforms, they are legitimized because governments are supposed to act in the best interest of their citizens. The dominant ideology underlying neoliberal globalization assumes a universalized state because it maintains that everyone experiences this reality. For this reason, adapting the provincial curricula to a universal and global reality is conceived to be a natural response because this is said to be the current and

inevitable state of the world. It is through this assumed state of the world that globalizing educational goals and outcomes maintains their sense of normality.

**The Contested Reality**

Challenging neoliberal ideology and organizing against its practices illustrates how ideology is contradictory rather than rigid in nature. In writing about the historical and material basis of ideology, Gramsci (1971) explained in his crucially important *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* that:

> Man knows objectively in so far as knowledge is real for the whole human race historically unified in a single unitary cultural system. But this process of historical unification takes place through the disappearance of the internal contradictions which tear apart human society, while these contradictions themselves are the conditions for the formation of groups and for the birth of ideologies which are not concretely universal but are immediately rendered transient by the practical origin of their substance. There exists therefore a struggle for objectivity (to free oneself from partial and fallacious ideologies) and this struggle is the same as the struggle for the cultural unification of the human race. (p. 445)

Although written in a different historical context, Gramsci's concept of a *unitary cultural system* stills resonates within the current context of neoliberal globalization. Proponents of neoliberalism consistently maintain that this approach to political and economic policy brings prosperity to humanity in spite of tremendous inequality, exploitation and human suffering. Similarly, educational reforms that adapt schools to meet the needs of the *knowledge-based economy* assume that this is the role of education within this historical context. As noted in Chapter Three, global competition, the rapid exchange of information

and the changing nature of work have guided educational reforms across OECD nations since the 1990s; this assumes a unifying stance on the purpose of education. Proponents of this market rationality or neoliberal education reforms use schools as the interface between cradle and labour market in spite of educational inequality and achievement gaps.

Outside of schools, the devastating effects of neoliberal policies have been met by protest from around the world. Biraimah et al. (2008) affirmed that "globalization has come to be associated with exacerbating social inequality, exemplified in the proverbial race to the bottom. In this race untethered capitalists seek to perfect a socially toxic formula that maximizes production and profit while minimizing worker and environmental protection" (p.xix). It is through these disparities of material wealth and living standards where struggles against the dominant ideology of globalization begin while also serving as a catalyst for alternative visions of globalization.

At times, protest to the effects of neoliberalism may seem far removed from schools. Apple (2001) maintained that "all too often, analyses of globalization and the intricate combination of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism remain on a meta-theoretical level, disconnected from the actual lived realities of real schools, teachers, students, and communities" (p. 421). On the contrary, neoliberal educational reforms are a point of great contention in Québec, Canada and across the world. The ability to challenge and protest the dominant ideology is what Eagleton (1990) refers to as *oppositional ideologies* that "seek to unify a diverse array of political forces, and are geared toward effective action" (p.61). Such *oppositional ideologies* are essential for raising fundamental questions about the value and worth of education in the current era of globalization. For this reason, a similar ideological struggle exists in schools because teachers, educational workers and

parents believe that schools play a fundamental role in ensuring democratic education or that the needs of students should supersede the demands of the global economy.

As noted in Chapters Two and Three, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) and Bowles and Ginitis (1976) have located the school as the site where class-based inequality and capitalist social relations are reproduced. Conversely, Harris (1994) located schools as places where challenges to social inequality can occur while cultivating different visions of education that are aligned with global justice and solidarity. Harris affirmed that:

> schooling can effectively prepare all its charges to become participating citizens, and build up the dispositions required for democratic participation, only within social formations which actually allow for, and which will actively promote, participatory democracy and the equal rights of all citizens. (1994, p.66)

Harris illustrated that schools can uphold and reproduce social justice and democratic principles provided that these conditions exist within the larger social order. The contradictions relating to the role of schools and larger visions of society allow teachers, educational workers, communities, parents and students to contest the dominant logic of neoliberal globalization within education. These visions help to mobilize against the market-driven imposition of neoliberal ideology and practices so that schools become sites for solidarity and equity.

**Teachers as Agents of Social Change**

There is an inherent contradiction in teaching. Bourdieu (1998) maintained that institutions, like education, must "produce and reproduce the institutional conditions" that are necessary for the survival of the institution and the social relations of the social order (p.54). In this sense, teachers replicate the practices and values of the educational systems

in which they work. In addition, they are trained according to the institutional values and practices of teachers' colleges which are part of the larger social order that is inherently unequal due to its class-based nature. The other side of the contradiction relates to how teachers challenge and organize against the very institutions that they are supposed to represent and work within. Harris (1994) explained that:

> the agency of highly educated and morally conscious teachers…could be central to the enterprise of rational social reconstruction based on the promotion of human excellences and genuine participatory democracy… This position and form of agency, however, will not be simply handed to teachers. Taking it up initially, and then maintaining it at a significant level, are matters for contest and struggle. (p.108)

Harris illustrates that teachers have the capacity to challenge and fight for a vision of education that is aligned with democratic values. Teachers have a crucial role in the struggle for "the future of education, and though at times it might seem as though we are losing the war without firing a shot, we have a potentially powerful weapon in our hands - our solidarity and organization into powerful teachers unions" (Compton & Weiner, 2008, p.6). As agents of social change, teachers have immense potential when they organize through trade unionism and mobilize against the political and economic forces that undermine education.

In the face of neoliberal globalization, trade unionism is crucial because of the ways in which educators are implicated both in the ideology and practice of neoliberal education. In many instances, teachers must use standardized curricula and administer standardized tests while also having to work under institutional conditions that are directly

linked to neoliberal practices, like decreased school budgets. Under these pressures, countless struggles for job security and better working conditions have required organization around these working issues. In addressing the need for an international mobilization, Lois Weiner (2008) maintained that:

> Neoliberalism advances its policies as the best and only way to bring prosperity to those who are in poverty, and while it is tempting to ignore its stance of ameliorating inequality, this is a flawed strategy. Teacher unions need to contrast neoliberalism's professed concern about poor people with the reality of what occurs when its policies are implemented. (p. 253)

Weiner calls on teacher trade unionism as a counter-force to neoliberal ideological dominance within education and its subsequent impacts on policy and practice. Teacher unions have been at the forefront of organizing against the privatization of public education and the marketization of schools from elementary to post-secondary. In response to the neoliberal educational reforms of the 1990s, Ontario teacher staged a ten-day protest…across Ontario, which signaled a dramatic shift in teacher and state relations that marked a crisis period in Ontario's educational sector (MacLellan, 2009). Furthermore, teachers have also raised vital questions about the role of education in a world where disparities of wealth and resources have also globalized in magnitude amidst great levels of economic prosperity. Rikowski (2001) affirmed that "teachers and other workers in all sectors and spheres of education and training have a particular form of social power at their disposal: the power to shape, develop and enhance the single commodity on which the whole capitalist system rests: labour-power" (p.8). In this sense, teachers play a central role in mobilizing against neoliberalism and fighting for the educational interests of

students, parents and communities. When teachers' unions confront the larger political and economic context with concrete demands, there is potential for building a movement across the educational sector locally, nationally and internationally.

## Teacher Trade Unionism and the Struggle against Neoliberalism

### Localizing the Struggle: Québec Teaching Unions

In Québec, teacher unions have been leading the way in challenging the neoliberal shift within the educational system. For example, during the provincial elections of 2008, a coalition of teaching and student unions devised a declaration in defence of public education. The declaration entitled *Making Public Education: The Québec Priority* (2008) was endorsed by 12 teaching and student unions across the province. This coalition included: The Centrale des Syndicats du Québec (CSQ), The Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), The Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE), The Fédération autonome du collégial (FAC), The Fédération des associations étudiantes universitaires du Québec en éducation permanente (FAEUQEP), The Fédération du personnel professionnel des universités et de la recherche (FPPU),The Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ), The Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec (FEUQ), The Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université (FQPPU), The Mouvement québécois des adultes en formation (MQAF) and The Syndicat de professionnelles et professionnels du gouvernement du Québec (SPGQ). Although the majority of the unions represented post-secondary and adult education, the defense of public education encompassed the entire educational system. In response to the market-driven ideology of neoliberal education, this declaration stated:

> Our education system is being led down a slippery slope towards commercialization and privatization. The diktats, values, and practices of private enterprise, focused as they are on competition and profit, are attacking the very heart of our institutions. According to this ideology, the general education of students is to be sacrificed in order to train them in skills in order to meet the short-term needs of the labour market. (p. 4)

The value of this declaration not only strengthens solidarity between unions within the educational sector but also attacks the underlying ideology that has guided public education within Québec.

The coalition stated that "for several years now, advocates of neoliberal ideology in pursuit of "zero deficits" and the disengagement of government have been seriously threatening the democratization of education in Québec (2008, p. 4). This common vision of what education should look like in Québec serves as a mobilizing tool to strengthen and unify the voice of educational workers. Building a movement also gives unions the political power to demand a more just vision for public education. This coalition of unions devised ten proposals to the Québec government, citizens and political parties. Their demands included the following:

1) Making education accessible and free;

2) Structural changes in primary and secondary education;

3) Ending the public subsidization of private education;

4) To strengthen the CEGEP system across Québec;

5) To reexamine the governance of universities;

6) To devise guidelines and regulations for the involvement of the private companies within educational institutions;

7) To strengthen the right of adults to regular and continuing education through adequate resources and support;

8) To improve student financial aid and minimize financial obstacles;

9) To support new educational professionals, ensure fair working conditions; promote professional development and great supports for retiring educational professionals and

10) To demand for properly funded public education to meet the needs of the province (2008, "Making Public Education" pp. 14-5)

These proposals serve as concrete political demands by a unified voice across the educational system in Québec. This crucial point illustrates that neoliberal ideology and practice are not received passively in spite of the commonsensical stance that they assume. Furthermore, strengthening solidarity within the educational sector also creates opportunities to build alliances across the public sector. For example, the Common Front represents labour alliances within Québec's public sector that formed in 1972. Consisting of Le Secrétariat intersyndical des services publics (SISP), la Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), La Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ), the Common Front represents 475 000 public sector employees. (SISP, CSN, FTQ) This public sector coalition consistently identifies how Québec's Liberal government undermines the public sector while supporting the private sector.

In addition to creating a movement against neoliberal educational reform, unions have also had an impact on creating schools that are guided by the principles of social and global

justice as well as environment awareness. The Centrale des syndicates du Québec (CSQ) is a federation of education, health and social unions that has a number of social initiatives related to social justice, solidarity and community organizing. One of its social initiatives is the formation of the *Brundtland Green Establishments* that integrate environmental awareness, peace, solidarity and democracy as guiding principles within the institution's mission. Since 1993, this initiative has been integrated into "more than 800 schools in Québec [that] have accepted the invitation from the Centrale des syndicates du Québec (CSQ) and its partners to join the BGS movement" (CSQ, 2007, p. 3). A *Brundtland Green School* integrates global awareness, social justice and environmental action into curricula and school activities so that these spaces become "a place where people take concrete and ongoing action to help build an environmentally friendly, peaceful, united, and democratic world" (CSQ, 2007, p. 3). The emphasis on solidarity and democracy serves as a starting point to critically engage students, staff and parents with issues that may not be integrated into the curriculum in other educational settings. Although not a direct challenge to neoliberal education, this union-led initiative illustrates that students, parents and teachers do not all consent to a market-driven ideology.

The need for schools to be democratically driven, socially just and critically engaged with the world envisions a different type of school that counters the competitive and individualistic spirit that comes with neoliberal logic. This highlights how the CSQ has implemented institutional changes within the educational systems outside of its usual roles of collective bargaining and advocating for its membership. The power of teacher trade unionism to create educational institutions that are aligned with social justice and global responsibility shows that concerned citizens and educational workers view schools as

having a social responsibility to create future citizens that are globally aware and ready to act in their communities.

### Nationalizing the Struggle: Organizing Against Neoliberalism

Across Canada, teachers' unions and federations have raised concerns about the state of public education. In Rothman's (2008) study of teacher activism and social justice, she found that "overall, Canadian teachers' organizations accepted this invitation by building internal organizational capacity for social justice and advocating for public education, educators, and students in relation to the state apparatus" (p.983). In this sense, some have organized in direct opposition to neoliberal ideology while others have expressed concern over increased privatization and decreased funding. The neoliberal shift in education has resulted in direct opposition from teaching unions in other parts of Canada. In 1995, Mike Harris unleashed his 'Common Sense Revolution' in Ontario after his victory in the provincial elections. Amidst massive cuts to social service and tax cuts for wealthier Ontarians, the Harris government ushered in significant educational reforms as part of this conservative government's complete neoliberal policy package.

In response to a large provincial debt, "education was one of the first areas the Harris government identified that needed reform; therefore, it began implementing a number of cost-cutting measures" (MacLellan, 2009, p.60). The Harris government's educational reforms included increased professionalization (the establishment of the Ontario College of Teachers), increased standardization (implementation of a provincial curriculum and province-wide testing) and significant amendments to teacher labour's rights. In October 1997, a massive teacher's strike responded to the development of Bill 160, the *Education Quality Improvement Act*. These changes to Ontario's public education

system were seen "as a ruse to cut nearly $1 billion from the educational system, destabilize and demoralize teacher unions and gut local decision-making to push the government's neoliberal agenda" (MacLellan, 2009, p. 63). The strike was declared illegal by the Ontario government and ended in less than two weeks. In spite of this, these teacher mobilizations were in direct resistance to the neoliberal ideology and practices of Harris's Conservative government. When the Harris government was defeated in 2003, its legacy enabled Ontario's current Liberal government to continue its efforts towards privatization within the province. Both the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (2010) and The Ontario Secondary School Federation (2004) have denounced privatization in Ontario schools.

Concern for the private sector's involvement in public education has inspired teachers' union federations from across Canada to reevaluate the role of underfunding and commercialism within schools. In a joint project with the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF), the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) and the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ), a national survey was conducted in order to determine in what ways private and commercial interests exist in Canadian schools. In the 2006 report entitled, *Commercialism in Canadian Schools: Who's Calling the Shots?,* the survey examined "advertising; partnerships and sponsorships; corporate-sponsored educational (curriculum and classroom) materials; user fees; fundraising; and total money raised through all sources" (CTF, CCPA and FSE, 2006, p.6).

The overall results raised central questions relating to the impacts of under-funding and the unequal, competitive, targeted, conditional, inconsistent and unstable nature of private/corporate funding in addition to the objectivity of corporate/private educational

materials (CFS, CCPA and FSE, 2006). However, the questions that are raised in the report do not identify neoliberal ideology and practice as the reason why funding has been reduced while private interests' involvement have increased within public education. This illustrates that there is a battle of ideas with respect to privatization and education. Although some teachers view the corporate presence within public schools to be deplorable, these critiques do not identify the political and economic factors that enable private interests. For this reason, indentifying neoliberalism within education as the cause of educational inequality is crucial because it illustrates how governments facilitate the private sector's involvement within education.

Larry Kuehn of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF) raised the need for teacher unions to target neoliberalism in education and extend this struggle outside of the realm of teaching. Kuehn (2006) maintains that although resistance in the form of strikes and province-wide shutdowns are important political tools, public education must be reclaimed from neoliberalism. Reclaiming public education involves teachers and educational workers:

> recapturing the promise of public education. Universality and equity can never be achieved in a private system, yet universality and equity are the underlying requirements for an education system that supports a democratic society and prepares citizens for universal participation. (Kuehn, 2006, p.140)

The need for a public education that is 'universal and equal' inspired the BCTF to engage the public in the process of reclaiming education. In order to encourage debate about education between teachers and the public, the BCTF created a series of public consultations concerning the future of public education in British Columbia. Each session

included a panel comprised of "one teacher union activist, a parent with a special needs child, church representative, an Aboriginal leader and schools superintendent" (Kuehn, 2006, p.141). The result of these consultations was the establishment of a *Charter for Public Education* that represented a collective vision for education within the province. This tactic from the BCTF was effective in encouraging the public to participate in and voice concern about the state of education. It also has the potential to politicize communities about the ways in which neoliberalism undermines a social right like public education. The development of the charter led to the formation of the Charter for Public Education Network which is now a province-wide coalition of students, teachers, principals and unions across the public sector in 2004 (CPEN, 2010).

**Globalizing the Struggle: An International Teachers' Union**

Teacher trade unionism within Québec and Canada has extended to incorporate an analysis of neoliberalism that goes beyond borders. The Trinational Coalition for the Defense of Public Education (TCDE) consists of teacher activists from Canada, Mexico and the United States. Since 1994, this coalition has internationalized the struggle against neoliberalism by mobilizing teachers' unions and educational workers across North America. By directly challenging the impacts of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on public education in Mexico, Canada and the United States, the TCDE has strategized towards movement building and strengthening transnational solidarity. According to Kuehn (2008) "NAFTA was seen as a concrete manifestation, as well as a symbol, of the neoliberal integration of economies and thus a threat to public education by at least some union activists in Mexico and Canada" (pp 65-66). These threats

to public education across North America directly affect the nature of education and teachers' work in addition to funding and privatization.

Maria de la Luz Ariaga Lemus explained the direct relationship between NAFTA and public education because it:

> has accentuated tendencies already underway in the educational sector, particularly in four areas: (1) decreases in funding for education and the transfer of public funds to the private sector, (2) a reduction of social programs that influence the quality of children's living conditions, (3) limitations on teachers' rights and demands in their collective contracts, and (4) the deliberate opening of educational services to the private sector (1999, p.147).

These tendencies significantly undermine public education because they influence how education is delivered; the amount of resources available to invest in it; the appropriate social supports for children to achieve and the working conditions of teachers and their right to collective bargaining while ushering in greater opportunities for the marketization of a public institution. Lemus (1999) further explained that "the Canadian and Mexican governments have pursued these policies most aggressively, in part because public education in these nations is more widespread and has been regarded traditionally [as] a social right" (p.147). The value of education as a social right under attack from privatization and marketization was the impetus for forming the TCDE "which meant defining itself as a democratic project, outside the control of the state or a political group" (Lemus, 1999, p.148). The collective vision amongst participating unions concerning mobilizations against neoliberalism rests not only on building solidarity but also on increasing the capacity to negotiate (Lemus, 1999, pp.147-148). In this sense, a long-term

strategy towards building an internationalized teachers' union would have the ability to defend public education and challenge NAFTA and its political and economic assault on a public right.

The need to globalize resistance towards neoliberalism is not simply about ensuring that education is a social right for all but rather to create and fight for a more just global society. Teachers have a fundamental role in this struggle because of their role in public institutions like schools. Weiner (2008) maintained that:

> our [teacher's] ability to build an international movement to reverse policies that are destroying public education (as well as the quality of life generally, working conditions, the environment, etc.) depends on projecting a vision of human emancipation, a world that provides both political freedom and social control over economic resources (p.259).

It is through this long-term vision based on solidarity as well as global and economic justice that teachers need to fight not only for educational rights but also, more importantly, for a vision of a new society. This vision must address how educational equality cannot be attained within societies that are structured on inequality. Whether these inequalities are local, national or global, an alternative vision of education that counters the logic of the market is heavy ideological work. Through mobilizing locally, nationally and internationally, dedicated teachers have demonstrated how justice, solidarity and equality are educational gains worth fighting for amidst the imposition of neoliberal policies that undermines these values.

## Conclusion

This thesis attempted to examine where neoliberal globalization has influenced an aspect of Québec's educational system. Each chapter attempted to address an area of concern relating to the role and purpose of education.

In Chapter One, I argued that the social context of the 1960s and the global context of the 1990s significantly influenced educational reforms in Québec. In both eras, education was valued for differing reasons. Throughout the 1960s, education was viewed as a driving force in the modernization and democratization of Québec. Throughout the 1990s, adapting education to the changing global context became the backdrop for educational reforms in Québec.

In Chapter Two, the neoliberal educational practices of increased privatization and marketization were examined. In Québec, these educational policy practices have created the situation where private education is publicly subsidized while the private sector's influence has become more pronounced. The issue of school choice provided one example where private interests influenced an aspect of Québec education. One fundamental inequality in Québec's educational system is the situation where public money is used to finance private education while marginalized students drop out in disproportionately high numbers. The theory of social reproduction was used to illustrate how educational inequality in schools relates to larger social inequalities.

In Chapter Three, within the context of international PISA testing and national rankings of test scores, I argued that the cross-curricular competencies of the Québec Education Program are designed to give Québec students a comparative advantage within the changing nature of work. Each cross-curricular competency correlates to work skills

that are determined to be necessary for a globalized work force. The use of schools and classroom teaching as preparation for an increasingly competitive labour market has an ideological basis that helps to justify the alignment of curriculum with a market-led rationale. Due to the nature of ideology, the logic of neoliberal educational policies and practices are a site for local, national and international contestation.

In Chapter Four, the role of teacher trade unionism was examined in order to illustrate how teachers are at the forefront of challenging neoliberal educational practices. These struggles represent concrete actions against neoliberal policies that drive education away from being a social right. Teacher activism also has the potential to be a prevailing force in movements towards social change.

**Limitations**

This thesis was limited in analysis in a few areas. The first area relates to the political context of Québec. Due to the time limitations and research scope of a Master's thesis, I could not use research that was written in French. By analyzing original governmental policies that are written in French, concrete examples of neoliberalism could be presented. This would help strengthen the analysis concerning areas where the Québec state has minimized its administration of education in order to create educational markets or increased involvement of the private sector. The second area relates to language. There were difficulties in locating information in English on the political context of Québec from a Québecois point of view. A substantial amount of critiques originated from Anglophone Canada and focused on Québec sovereignty, rather than on neoliberalism as a local and/or national political policy. Most of the analysis on the neoliberal shift in Québec was in

French, which limited my familiarization with analysis and critique from a Québécois perspective.

**Future research**

There are a few areas in this thesis that could inspire future research. In the area of curriculum, a Marxist analysis of labour can further examine the class-based nature of student achievement and vocationalization in Québec. In addition to contributing theoretically to how curricula function, this research could also generate more empirical evidence for educational inequality in Québec. In the area of ideology, a Gramscian analysis could help examine the ideological tensions between market rationality and democratic education in Québec schools.

**Final thought**

The need to critique and contest the influence of neoliberal policies and globalization on education is crucial within this historical context. Allman (1999) affirms that "the effort to transform our educational relations -whether in the classroom or in the context of other political -but equally educational activities -is not only a beginning to but a necessary ingredient for authentic social transformation" (pp. 133-134). Locating education and schools as the site for social change is imperative particularly in the struggles for democracy, social justice and global solidarity. For this reason, analyzing the role of education in relation to its social and now international contexts helps to clarify whether education is truly aligned with democratic values that have the potential to radically shift societies.

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## Appendix

Description of Cross-Curricular Competencies according to the
Ministère de l'Éducation, Loisirs et Sports

Competency 1: To Use Information

- To gather information

  To select appropriate information sources. To compare information from different sources. To make connections between what they already know and new information. To distinguish between essential and secondary information.

- To recognize various information sources

  To explore various sources and understand the use of each. To question information sources.

- To put information to use

  To imagine possible uses. To formulate questions. To answer his/her questions using the information gathered. To consider new uses. To respect copyright. To use the information in new contexts.

Competency 2: To Solve Problems

- To analyze the components of a situational problem

  To identify the context and the main elements of the situational problem and to make connections among them. To recognize similarities to situational problems solved previously.

- To formulate possible solutions

  To list and classify possible solutions. To consider the appropriateness of each solution. To consider its requirements and consequences. To imagine the situational problem solved.

- To test a solution

  To choose a possible solution, apply it and evaluate its effectiveness. To choose and test another possible solution if necessary.

- To adopt a flexible approach

  To redo the preceding steps in the same or a different order as many times as necessary in order to solve the problem.

- To evaluate the procedure used

  To review the steps taken. To identify successful strategies and analyze the difficulties encountered.

Competency 3: To Exercise Critical Judgment

- To form an opinion

  To define the question under consideration. To weigh the logical, ethical or esthetic issues involved. To go back to the facts, verify their accuracy and contextualize them. To look at various options and consider existing or possible points of view. To base his/her opinion on logical, ethical or esthetic criteria. To adopt a position.

•To express his/her judgment

To articulate and communicate his/her viewpoint. To justify his/her position with reasons and arguments.

•To qualify his/her judgment

To compare his/her opinion with those of others. To reconsider his/her position. To evaluate the respective influence of reason and emotion on his/her approach. To recognize his/her biases. To repeat the whole exercise if necessary.

Competency 4: To Use Creativity

•To become familiar with all the elements of a situation

To define the objective, recognize the issues involved and envisage the outcome.

•To imagine ways of proceeding

To imagine various ways to attain the objective. To express his/her ideas in new ways.

•To begin the procedure

To become actively involved in the process. To accept risks and unknowns. To persevere in exploring. To recognize possible or partial solutions. To be receptive to new ideas and ways of doing things.

•To adopt a flexible mode of operation

To go through the whole process, in the same or a different order, as many times as necessary in order to attain his/her objective. To try out new ideas. To choose new strategies and techniques.

Competency 5: To Adopt Effective Work Methods

•To analyze the task to be performed

To espouse the objective. To understand the instructions and visualize the elements of the task. To understand the context of the task.

•To begin the process

To reflect, before and during the action, on the best way to attain the objective. To adapt his/her work method to the task and the context. To anticipate the requirements of the method chosen and the resources that will be needed. To use his/her imagination.

•To perform the task

To make use of the appropriate resources: people, materials, etc. To manage his/her materials and time and to adjust his/her actions as required. To complete the task. To discover the pleasure and satisfaction of work completed and well done.

•To analyze his/her procedure

To examine the procedure used throughout the task. To understand what was effective and what worked less well. To draw conclusions.

Competency 6: To Use Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)

- To master the information and communications technologies

  To be familiar with the purposes, concepts, vocabulary, procedures and techniques of ICT. To recognize familiar concepts in a new context. To explore new functions of software programs and operating systems.

- To use information and communications technologies to carry out a task

  To explore the potential of ICT for a given task. To choose software programs and functions
  appropriate for the task. To use appropriate working and troubleshooting strategies.

- To evaluate his/her use of information and communications technologies

  To recognize his/her successes and difficulties. To identify the limitations of the technology employed in a given situation. To identify ways to improve his/her use of ICT.

Competency 7: To Construct His/Her Identity

- To be open to his/her surroundings

  To react to facts, situations or events. To identify his/her perceptions, feelings, and thoughts concerning these phenomena. To realize that other people's opinion influence his/her reactions. To expand his/her cultural horizons by means of discussions, reading and exposure to a variety of media works. To be receptive to the moral and spiritual frame of reference of his/her community.

- To become aware of his/her place among others

  To recognize his/her values and goals. To have confidence in himself/herself. To define his/her opinions and choices. To recognize that he/she is part of a community. To be open to cultural and ethnic diversity.

- To make good use of his/her personal resources

  To use his/her strengths and overcome his/her limitations. To assess the equality and appropriateness of his/her choices of actions. To display increasing autonomy and independence.

Competency 8: To Cooperate with Other

- To interact with an open mind in various contexts

  To accept others as they are. To be responsive to others and recognize their interests and needs. To exchange points of view with others, to listen and be open to differences. To adapt his/her behaviour.

- To contribute to team efforts

  To participate actively in classroom and school activities with a cooperative attitude.To plan and carry out a task with others. To carry out the task according to the procedure agreed on by the team.

- To use teamwork effectively

  To recognize which tasks can be done more effectively by means of teamwork. To assess his/her participation and that of peers in the team's work. To identify factors that facilitated or hindered cooperation. To identify desirable improvements for his/her participation in the next shared task.

Competency 9: To Communicate Appropriately

- To establish the purpose of the communication.

  To consider the purpose of the communication and identify the recipients. To explore ideas related to the situation.

- To select the mode of communication

  To select one or more appropriate modes of communication, bearing in mind the purpose, the context and the intended recipients.

- To carry out the communication

  To observe the appropriate conventions for the mode of communication used. To adapt the communication on the basis of the reactions of the recipients. To recognize the strategies used throughout the process.