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AUTHORS' ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We remain indebted to all the people who contributed to the publication of *Stacking the Deck:The Streaming of Working Class Kids in Ontario Schools,* published over 20 years ago. With the development of the current neo-liberal order in our schools, the authors of that book — Bruce Curtis, D. W. Livingstone and Harry Smaller — felt it was time to address the issue again, as did David Clandfield, Grace-Edward Galabuzi and Alison Gaymes San Vicente who joined them in this task. George Martell, who edited *Stacking the Deck*, once more agreed to support production and, with David Clandfield, to edit the sequel. We knew that, in addition to an emphasis on social class, a new book would need to focus on Special Education as an integral dimension of the province's streaming practices and also address both race and gender questions in fuller ways than the earlier volume. The chapters, this time around, are signed by individual authors — reflecting particular interests and backgrounds — but we have all kept in close touch throughout the writing to ensure the coherence of the argument throughout and have collectively developed the introduction and the conclusion.

We greatly appreciate the assistance of the various people interviewed and others who provided valuable resource materials. In particular, Rob Brown and Gillian Parekh of the Toronto District School Board provided special runs from recent graduating student cohorts in that board, which offer the most up to date evidence of the extent of streaming in Ontario schools. Doug Hart and Milosh Raykov provided statistical analyses of other relevant data sets. Several people offered useful feedback on different portions of the manuscript, or engaged in useful conversations,

INTRODUCTION

"Will we waste another generation?" This is the question posed in *Stacking the Deck: The Streaming of Working Class Kids in Ontario Schools*, published over 20 years ago. It is time to answer this question. Some may say the question is now irrelevant in light of the growth of post-secondary education, some form of which is now accessible to a majority of Ontario youth. This prior book was written in the wake of a government commission that recommended the abolition of ability grouping and the deferral of streaming in schools until Grade 10, and after the election of a New Democratic Party government that appeared to be committed to this goal too. Destreaming initiatives met strong resistance from some parents and teachers committed to the status quo. Today, destreaming — and the deepening of student equality that goes with it — is not really part of the public debate about education. Yet the research evidence indicating that working-class and minoritized youth do better in schools with mixed-ability grouping and that youth from more affluent backgrounds do no worse under these circumstances remains compelling. The current book documents how streaming based on class, race, gender and imputed special needs still occurs extensively in our schools. What has changed is that the most evident consequences of streaming are being deferred. Higher proportions of working-class and minoritized kids are now completing secondary school and getting offers to post-secondary institutions. But they are still suffering from substantial discriminatory treatment in elementary and secondary schools and their odds of completing post-secondary education are still relatively poor. So the answer to the question we posed 20 years

ago is yes, we have indeed continued to deny equal opportunities to far too many talented youth from working-class and some minoritized backgrounds. Another generation of these children is in the process of being wasted. The purpose of this book is to document the current extent of these educational inequities and to make the case for resurrecting destreaming as the most obvious solution to the problem.

Two generations ago, Loren Lind (1974) concluded that:

> [T]hrough streaming the schools retain the dominance of the middle class at the expense of those at the bottom, promoting students on an apparently equitable basis that remains harshly discriminatory … it fosters a smug elitism that maintains the gross disparities of Canadian society. To change this, at this late date, requires a very radical beginning. (pp. 227-228)

As later chapters will show, streaming continues to exist throughout Ontario, with devastating consequences for many socially disadvantaged children. Children from working-class and some minority families continue to be pejoratively labelled with exceptionalities and special needs in elementary school, streamed into dead-end programs that encourage many of them to drop out of secondary school, and excluded from post-secondary education. These conditions continue to represent both a severe social injustice and a tremendous waste of human learning potential, particularly in light of the increasingly widespread view that advanced formal education is an essential ingredient for the future well-being of our society.

Biases against those from less affluent backgrounds remain inherent in the form and content of the public school system. From its origins in the middle of the 19th century, public education in Ontario has worked to ensure that the majority of working-class people will remain in their class of origin, while recruiting a small and select minority of them for social mobility. Demands from the working class and from progressive educational reformers have frequently shaped aspects of the public educational system, but the core programs of public schooling in Ontario continue to embody the interests of powerful business and affluent middle-class groups.

Major post-war reviews of public education, from the Hope Commission in 1950, through the Hall-Dennis Report of 1968 and the

Secondary Education Review Project in 1982, to the Radwanski Report of 1987, noted that members of different social classes receive different kinds and different qualities of education in Ontario. While deploring educational inequality, these reviews consistently ignored the political processes that lie at its root. These processes are grounded in the differences of economic wealth and political power that characterize our society. The responsiveness of public education to the interests of the business community and of the upper middle class has ensured the existence of discriminatory patterns of schooling, from system-wide policy planning to the making of local classroom decisions.

To propose less discriminatory forms of schooling, without address-ing the underlying political and economic mechanisms of inequality, is to aspire to very marginal changes at best. A more "radical beginning" that exposes these political processes and identifies practical alterna-tive programs and collective actions is what we sought in *Stacking the Deck* and continue to pursue in this book.

During the 1980s, public sentiment against the early streaming of elementary school students grew. This sentiment was clearly expressed in the policies of numerous organizations, from the Ontario Federation of Labour to local parents' groups, as well as the NDP's long-standing policy commitment to abolish streaming. In the early 1990s, the political conditions for progressive educational change were relatively open, despite the mobilization of the business community against such attempts at reducing social inequality.

Times have changed. Globalization of economic activities and fiscal austerity measures of neo-liberal governments have weakened organized labour and led to a general preoccupation of disadvantaged social groups with the fight to maintain existing social entitlements rather than for social justice beyond them. These times will only be changed significantly for the better if such groups can be mobilized to fight for progressive change.

The purpose of this book is to offer some ingredients for a social movement to end discriminatory streaming in Ontario schools. As we shall see, streaming occurs in many forms, from different types of schools to different types of programs within schools, to different forms of treatment of students within classrooms.

The first chapter begins with profiles of current differences in secondary school completion and post-secondary acceptance by

parental occupation, education and neighbourhood income levels, as well as some indicators of race/ethnicity and gender differences. We then trace changes over time in university completion by family class origins, race/ethnicity and gender as well as the enduring effects of schooling. We go on to document the continued streaming of children into different schools, programs and classrooms by family origins. Competing explanations for these disparities in schooling are then examined: innate differences; environmental factors; and social power theories. The class power theory informing our analyses is outlined. Contrasting views of class leaders on disparities in schooling are offered to illustrate that systematic differences in wealth and power lie at the root of the form of social violence that is streaming.

In the second chapter, we examine briefly the historical origins of the present model of mass compulsory schooling in mid-19th century class struggles. We suggest that, from the very beginning, our public school system was designed and developed in order to socialize the young into accepting their status in various levels of a stratified society. Public funds were initially provided only for schools providing classical education for the male children of the elite. When it became clear, in the midst of increasing social unrest in the mid-1800s, that a broader mechanism was needed in order to socialize children of the working classes, "public schools" were developed for this purpose — with prescribed curriculum, textbooks and pedagogy provided by teachers who were examined, certified and supervised by carefully selected community leaders. As secondary schools expanded during the first half of the twentieth century, their programs were increasingly diversified into academic, technical/commercial and vocational streams.

Chapter Three offers an overview of the general streaming process in the current elementary and secondary school system. Streaming happens in many different ways in schools. At the elementary level students are often placed in different classes, and in groups within classes, on the basis of their perceived capacities and/or interests. At the secondary level, students starting Grade 9 are placed in streamed courses and overwhelmingly remain in those streams for their entire secondary school career. We are also now seeing a rapid growth of "schools of choice" focusing on specific curricular areas — languages, arts, physical education, etc. In addition, research suggests that teachers' expectations (often unrecognized) play a major role in

affecting individual students' achievement. As this chapter explains, not only is this streaming ubiquitous, it also works most predominantly against the interests of working-class and minority children.

Chapter Four reveals how the education of children once excluded for reasons of disability has produced a form of streaming by (dis) ability in ways that reinforce stratification by class, race and gender, too. The influence of medical sciences and psychometrics along with quasi-judicial processes, which, taken together, sift and select children for special attention have masked these inequities. After all, it is hard to challenge those who claim to offer services and support to children otherwise left to struggle unaided in a system that seems alien to them. Indeed the provision of service to these children is the motivation of many who venture into this field. At the same time, the processes by which special knowledge and expertise are brought to bear are impenetrable to those who worry that their children are not benefiting from the experience. Despite all that we have learnt about psychological testing, labelling and special classes over more than one hundred years, and all that we now know about the virtues of inclusion and accommodation for all, however different, the same inequities persist that we observed when Special Education first became mandatory in Ontario Schools in the 1980s. In the two decades since the first edition of *Stacking the Deck*, the advent of high-stakes standardized testing, public spending cutbacks, and the expansion of private alternatives have served to exacerbate these inequalities in ways we are only just beginning to appreciate.

In Chapter Five, major forms of streaming by racial origins are identified and inequitable outcomes summarized. At the centre of this form of streaming is the constitution of distinctive identities based on racial and religious differences that become the basis for differential treatment in the system. Identity formation ends up as an essential part of the practice of streaming, especially for Aboriginal and racialized students. For our schools, these identities are formed primarily out of the intersection of race and social class and particularly out of racialized poverty. This process of racialization leads to the well-discussed achievement gap between racialized and non-racialized students. These key identities also intersect with the 'youth at-risk' identity to harden the streaming process. Overall, racialization should be seen as an act of social construction that seeks to maintain the dominance

of the White power structure that uses the ideology of meritocracy to maintain the dominant order in education and society, consistent with the current hierarchy of globalizing capitalism. We are interested in how processes of racialization and colonization are mobilized to enable the practice of streaming, and how it manifests within schools and across the education system to deny Aboriginal and racialized students the full benefit of the learning experience.

In Chapter Six, significant forms of streaming by gender are recognized and estimated. In both race and gender terms, some of these effects are difficult to measure but nonetheless persistently damaging to educational opportunities. A conversation around gender as a social construct and how education streams girls and boys according to this construct is examined. Here we suggest the streaming of students, at all levels in their educational experience, is shaped by how females and males are socially constructed resulting in a system where females often do very well with respect to academics in school, but are underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields as well as secondary level business positions. At the same time, the experience of females of colour (especially those who are poor) differs dramatically from their while middle-class counterparts. On the other hand, males as a group are over-represented in many Special Education programs, General/Applied course types, as well as the dropout rate, and yet are likely to earn more money than females.

The final chapter offers a summary of our analyses of present streaming conditions, identifies some of the essential features of de-streamed schools (co-operative management, common curriculum, flexible mixed-ability grouping, etc.) and suggests some practical democratic strategies for moving toward them.

Once more, this book has been written with the hope that it will reach as wide an audience as possible — including parents, students, academics, educators, educational researchers, school administrators and politicians. Classroom teachers are at the top of this list, for a number of reasons. First, teachers have the most invested in the schooling system; their direct contact and interaction with students — day in and day out, year after year — speaks clearly to this fact. Secondly, teachers, and students, are most affected by change in schooling routines. However, schooling reform has usually been designed and

dictated "from the top", with little or no input by classroom teachers themselves. Ironically, as many studies have shown, such attempts at schooling reform often fail, precisely because teachers have been left out of the planning and implementation process. Schooling reform occurs most effectively when teachers know that it is needed, and take an active part in all phases, from planning to implementation.

The book speaks about the need for a destreamed schooling reform because many students are not being served well by the present streamed system. The way the system has been structured by those in power and the ways in which teachers are required to work within these prescribed boundaries are mainly at fault: the grouping, selective treatment of students, differential program streams, differential expectations, the large classes, the pressure on teachers to cover a standardized curriculum, the lack of opportunities and resources for teachers to offer innovative curricula, courses and programs to students, not to mention the multitude of regulations, policies and procedures that determine where and how teachers will carry out their duties. These factors, and many more, result mainly from conscious decisions made by administrators and politicians, not by teachers. Ironically, teachers are being held more and more responsible for the results of a system over which they are given less and less control.

Teachers, of course, have to find ways of resisting these structures. But that's not an easy task. Many teachers in Ontario continue to think that grouping or streaming of students by achievement or ability should occur, in the belief that it is the most efficient and/or fair way for children to be taught. Teachers themselves are, for the most part, products of a highly streamed schooling system and, by definition, have "succeeded" at these schools. Secondly, most teach in streamed settings, and to believe otherwise would raise troubling dissonance in their own minds. In this regard, it is interesting to note the number of studies that have shown conclusively that teachers who do teach in non-streamed settings believe as strongly in the value of their programs as "streamed teachers" do in theirs (Dar, 1985). But most importantly, streaming occurs in schools because, as we show in the following chapters, those who have been in the position to make decisions about schools have decided that schools, programs and students should be streamed. Alternative, non-streamed approaches within regular schools have generally not been attempted, and those

in charge of our school systems have, over the years, made sure of this. Few teachers have had the opportunity of learning or teaching in a truly integrated setting. Some efforts are now being made to address discrimination on some gender and racial grounds by providing separate schooling experiences. But the alternative of de-streaming and mixed ability grouping, which could demonstrably be of great benefit to many working-class and minoritized kids, remains beyond the realm of possibility in our current school order.

In the following chapters, we describe many of the ways in which schools, programs and classrooms have been structured in order to stream kids, and the reasons why this streaming should be eliminated. For many teachers, as well as for students, the streaming structures are clearly in place; the deck has merely been restacked higher over the past generation. Will we allow it to persist for another?

1. CLASS, RACE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SCHOOLING

D. W. Livingstone

Introduction

Let's start with a few facts. If you were born into a professional family and finished your schooling around 2004 in Ontario, your chances of completing a university degree were about four times as great as if you were born into an industrial worker's family. If you started secondary school around that time in Toronto, for example, coming from a working-class family, your chances of even getting an offer of admission to university in the past year or two were about half as much as kids from professional families. If you were a Black boy from a working-class family, your chances of getting an offer from a university were about a third of those for kids from white professional families. Less than one-third of those from low-income neighbourhoods even applied to university while over two-thirds of high-income school graduates from secondary income neighbourhoods did so. If you came from a low-income neighbourhood, you were more than five times as likely to be in Applied or Basics secondary school programs, and effectively denied access to university, as kids from high-income neighbourhoods.[1] These figures represent a very large waste of the talent of young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

The purpose of this book is to assess the extent to which people from different social backgrounds have equitable opportunities to fulfil their educational potential. University is now widely seen as the preferred path to a successful life in this country. University access and completion rates are now key indicators of inequities in

educational attainment and will be the primary focus of this opening chapter. But we should immediately stress, and will continually document throughout the book, that social inequities in educational opportunities begin early in our elementary and secondary schools. It should also be recognized that growing numbers of young people have been attending community colleges to enhance their life chances, that completion of apprenticeships can sometimes lead to relatively secure skilled trades jobs, and that many college and apprenticeship graduates come from working-class backgrounds.

Indeed, from a historical perspective, overall educational opportunities — at least from surface data — may be seen to be improving. Greater proportions of people from economically disadvantaged origins have been graduating from secondary school. Since the turn of this century, secondary school graduation rates in Ontario have improved from 68% to 82% within five years of initial enrolment (Ontario Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities, 2012). Increasing numbers have been completing community college and university programs. Ontario and Canada now have among the highest rates of formal educational attainment and access to higher education in the world, with over 60% of recent age cohorts completing some form of post-secondary program, including university, college and apprenticeship. In 2004, among Ontarians aged 25 to 44 — the most recent generational cohort likely to have completed most of their formal schooling — about a quarter had completed a university degree and around a third had a community college diploma.

But in terms of equality of educational outcomes, the much lower chances of working-class kids and those from some racially or ethnically identifiable groups for a university education suggests we still have some very serious problems on our hands — not only in university admissions, but also in what the future will bring for many of our graduates.

In order to develop alternative programs and strategies to address such apparent educational injustices, we need a critical analysis of their extent and the ways these inequities have been reproduced in our times. This chapter *begins* such analysis by providing general profiles of educational completion rates, with a focus on economic class origins.

Many studies of social class differences are actually status rankings of occupations in terms of estimates of required education

and imputed social prestige (e.g. Pineo *et al.*, 1977). The *economic class distinctions* used in the analysis in this chapter are based on *ownership* (employers, self-employed), *managerial authority* (manager, supervisor), *recognized specialized knowledge* (professional and semi-professional employees) and *wage labour* (service workers, industrial workers).[2] The term "working class" is generally used here to refer to those in service worker and industrial worker households, as well other marginalized workers. "Upper and upper middle class" refer to those in large employer and professional and managerial households; it includes both professional employees with modest incomes and extremely wealthy corporate executives. The "working class" includes both people living in destitution and wage workers in relatively secure unionized jobs.

Following presentation of these class-based profiles of educational attainment, we review the enduring effects of schooling and the persistence of the streaming patterns associated with these effects. We then consider dominant theories offered to explain these differences and outline an alternative theory of power that informs the discussion of specific aspects of streaming practices in the rest of the book.

While the primary focus in this chapter is on economic class-based differences, later chapters will focus on race, gender and disability-based differences. In addition to ever-present economic class differences, it will become clear that systemic patterns of racial and gender discrimination persist in our schools.

Racial discrimination is evident in several respects. Some scholars have distinguished between involuntary and immigrant minorities, in terms of whether people in a particular minority group arrived in their current society through slavery, conquest or colonization, or moved relatively freely because they felt the receiving society would provide better opportunities (e.g. Ogbu, 1990). In this perspective, involuntary minorities are considered to resent the loss of past freedom and see barriers against them as institutionalized discrimination to be changed mainly through collective struggle. Immigrant minorities may suffer from language and cultural belief differences but tend to regard these as obstacles to be overcome through individual efforts to realize the opportunities they have moved to seek. However, "race" and "minority" are vexed terms. There is a common tendency for dominant racial groups to characterize others as inferior and somehow

lacking comparable rights. For example, many white people take whiteness as the norm and regard other people as minorities with more marginalized capabilities or aspirations. Processes of racialization and minoritization are now understood to relegate many of those with discernible differences from whiteness to inferior positions regardless of actual abilities. These processes are evident in school and society alike (e.g. Solomon *et al.*, 2005).

The most persistent racial bias in our society is against Aboriginal peoples. A 2004 Ontario survey of adults who had completed their schooling found that less than 5% of those from Aboriginal origins had obtained a university degree, compared to around a quarter of the general population (WALL, 2005). The political mobilization of Aboriginal peoples and the widening documentation of their educational discrimination[3] are at least leading to growing recognition of the problem. Recent opinion surveys in Ontario have found that awareness of the poor chances of Aboriginal students to get a post-secondary education increased from around a third to over half of the general public during the past decade (Hart, 2012).

Among self-described minorities, bases for differences in educational attainments are now relatively complex and in some instances can be seen as expressions of institutionalized discrimination. Such discrimination is also evident towards those in recent immigrant groups. Some immigrant groups are, of course, doing well. Canadian immigration policies in recent generations have targeted highly educated, mostly non-white immigrants. Among Ontarians of Chinese and South-East Asian origins, over half now have university degrees compared to around a quarter of the general population (WALL, 2005). And in recent graduating cohorts from Toronto schools around three-quarters of students from these minorities have confirmed entry to Ontario universities (TDSB, 2012). However, other self-described minorities including both Canadian-born and recent immigrants continue to be streamed unequally into less advanced school programs with limited prospects for higher education (Cheng *et al.*, 1989; TDSB, 2012). For example, only a quarter of Blacks in general and less than a fifth of Black working-class boys in the most recent Toronto secondary school graduating cohort have confirmed entry to Ontario universities (TDSB, 2012). As a number of studies have now made clear, school practices discouraging Blacks and some other self-described

minorities can still be harsh and devastating in their consequences (e.g. James, 2012). The general Ontario public remains much less aware of educational discrimination against Blacks than against Aboriginal students (Hart, 2012). Some other immigrant groups such as Latino and Portuguese students have also continued to face discriminatory treatment in our schools. We will look at discriminatory effects of race and ethnic differences more closely in Chapter Five.

Gender continues to be a very significant factor in determining educational and economic opportunities in our society — opportunities most fundamentally limited by women's continuing assumption of most of the society's unpaid household and child care work (e.g. Livingstone, Pollock and Raykov, 2014). And while women's increasing economic power as they have approached parity with men in labour force partic-ipation has enabled impressive gains in their general educational attain-ments, this has had limited impact on their attainment of higher-paid jobs. Even though women's attainment rates now match or exceed male levels in terms of undergraduate university degrees, they are still serious-ly underrepresented in many science, technology, engineering and busi-ness programs as well as graduate schools at most university faculties (see Council of Canadian Academies, 2012). Women still earn signifi-cantly less than men with similar qualifications (Catalyst, 2012a). While women teachers outnumber men in our schools and have obtained ad-ministrative positions over the past generation, they are still underrepre-sented in these positions (Wees, 1990; Statistics Canada, 2006). There are many ways in which girls and women continue to be undervalued and considered to have less economic potential in our schools. We will look at discriminatory gender relations in schooling more closely in Chapter Six. Although it is beyond the scope of this particular study, we should also note here that students with gender identities as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ) also experience significant discrimination in schools (Brown & Parekh, 2013; pp. 39, 45).

Over and above these general class, race and gender based differences, some students have been identified by school systems as Exceptional, either gifted or having various intellectual and social disabilities. How schools treat these cases can be highly revealing of the extent of equity within the system. The analysis of streaming into such Special Education programs in the following chapters will find quite inequitable levels of class, race and gender representation in

these programs, which should not obscure issues of equity for people with disabilities in the same programs. This analysis is provided mainly by a general overview of Special Education in Chapter Four as well by a focus on race and Special Education in Chapter Six (pp. 214 ff.).

In the rest of this chapter we will focus primarily on profiling differences in educational attainment by family class origins and alternative explanations for such differences. It is not our intention in this book to rank inequalities. They are all oppressive. A working-class Aboriginal woman is triply oppressed in our White-dominated, patriarchal, capitalist society, in ways that no one book could hope to describe adequately. It is our view that discrimination in our schools has come about not randomly, but mainly as the cumulative effect of decisions made by those who have power over school systems, at the provincial, federal, school board and individual school levels. Teacher expectations also play a part. Our account tries to bring economic class, in conjunction with race and gender differences, back into the story of current Ontario education.

We should stress before proceeding that parents' educational aspirations for their children now generally involve a post-secondary education. A 2004 national survey large enough to estimate these views by economic class and racial background is summarized in Table 1.1. Respondents of all racial backgrounds and economic classes expressed clear majority views that young people need a post-secondary education today. Patterns were very similar for male and female respondents. A community college diploma was a more common response than a university degree, while university preference increased with parents' income level. Professional employees were in most instances marginally more likely than industrial workers to perceive a post-secondary education as necessary. But the most important point to underline is that post-secondary aspirations for young people are now common across all class, race and gender groups.

Table 1.1 Economic Class and Racial Background by Perceived Level of Education That Young People Need Today, Canada, 2004 (% post-secondary)[4]

Racial Background					
Economic Class	**White**	**Chinese**	**Black**	**Aboriginal**	**Total**
Professional employee	83	79	90	92	83
Industrial worker	65	77	73	67	66
Total number	4618	107	127	92	5059

Source: Special run for WALL (2005) survey data

So, how great are the actual differences in the kind and amount of schooling that children from different economic class backgrounds receive? What kinds of explanation are offered for these differences? What roles do political and economic powers in our society play in producing educational inequalities?

Class origins and school success

Schools have historically discriminated systematically on the basis of parental economic class. Working-class kids on average have fared much worse in school than upper-class (large employer) and upper-middle-class (professional-managerial) kids, with lower reading scores, higher grade failures, higher drop-out rates and much poorer employment opportunities.

These differences were generally confirmed by earlier studies covering Ontario and Canada as a whole (see Katz and Mattingly, 1975; Anisef *et al.*, 1980, 1987) and will be further examined in Chapter Three. Chapter Two will document how, since the creation of mass public schooling, students from working-class families chronically tended to receive less schooling and a different quality of schooling than students from upper-class and upper-middle-class families. Nevertheless, systemic economic class differences have been ignored, denied or underestimated in many studies of educational inequality, as well as in educational policy-making.

In response to sustained post-WWII economic growth, there was a major expansion of the Ontario educational system starting in the 1960s, including the construction of new commercial and technical

schools, the community college system and new universities. The WALL (2005) survey, conducted in 2004, compared the educational attainments of different generations of Ontarians. Most people over 65, who completed their schooling prior to 1960, did not graduate from secondary school. In sharp contrast, among those aged 25 to 44, who completed school after 1980, over 85% completed secondary school. Similarly, only a quarter of those over 65 completed either college or university, whereas around 60% of those aged 25 to 44 did so. Secondary school completion is no longer the distinction it used to be. Younger generations have been staying in school much longer than their parents did. Even so, as Chapter Three will document, even in elementary school, students in upper-middle-class neighborhoods continue to get a much higher quality education in their local public school than those attending "equivalent" public schools in working-class areas.

Clearly, younger people in Ontario generally receive much more schooling than their parents did. However, there is wide and widening public recognition that children from low-income families have worse chances of getting a post-secondary education than those from higher-income families. A 1996 survey found that two-thirds of Ontarians agreed this was so, and this proportion increased to three-quarters in 2012 (Hart, 2012). With increasing income polarization and escalating tuition fees, the huge cost barriers to poor children attending universities have become more obvious (Macdonald and Shaker, 2011). But the dependence of this attendance difference on enduring economic class origins rather than merely current income differences is much less recognized. The extent to which working-class kids still tend to receive less advanced schooling than do kids from upper and upper-middle-class backgrounds has been documented by the most recent Ontario survey of university completion by family class origins, conducted in 2004 (WALL, 2005). Table 1.2 and the following graphs summarize the basic results.

Table 1.2 University Completion by Father's Class, Total 25+ Population, Age Cohort and Sex, Ontario, 2004 (%)

	Large Employer	Manager	Professional Employee	Industrial Worker	Total Population
Total 25+ Population	39	31	53	11	21
Age Cohort					
25-44 cohort	43	34	63	16	26
45-64 cohort	35	32	42	8	20
65+ cohort	25	17	26	5	9
Sex					
Total male	36	32	53	11	23
Total female	41	30	54	11	19
Age Cohort and Sex					
25-44 Male	42	34	66	14	25
25-44 Female	42	33	61	18	26

Source: WALL (2005). (Ontario N=2,980)

As Table 1.2 shows, the general expansion of the educational system is reflected in increasing university completion rates. When we compare generational cohorts in 2004, we find that less than 10% of those over 65 completed a university degree while among those 25 to 44 the proportion had increased to over a quarter. Increases occurred across economic class origins. Whereas fewer than 5% of those now over 65 and born in industrial worker families completed a university degree, 16% of those aged 25 to 44 did so, three times as many. However, as this table also summarizes and the following graphs display, the economic class gap in chances for university degrees remains.

As Figure 1.1.shows, among the youngest age cohort that has had opportunities to complete a university education by 2004, the 25 to 44 cohort, those from professional family origins remain nearly four times as likely to have obtained a degree as those from industrial worker family origins. Those from large employer and managerial families

remain more than twice as likely to have a degree. The class gap in university completion may have narrowed in recent generations but it remains very large.

If we compare the class gap in university degrees by sex, the results of this survey are very similar. As Table 1.2 summarizes, both males and females from industrial worker family origins in the current 25 to 44-age cohort in Ontario still have half or less than half the chances of those from large employer, manager and professional employee families of getting a university degree.

Figure 1.1 University Completion by Father's Class by Age Cohort, Ontario, 2004 (odds ratios comparing industrial workers' children to other economic classes of origin)
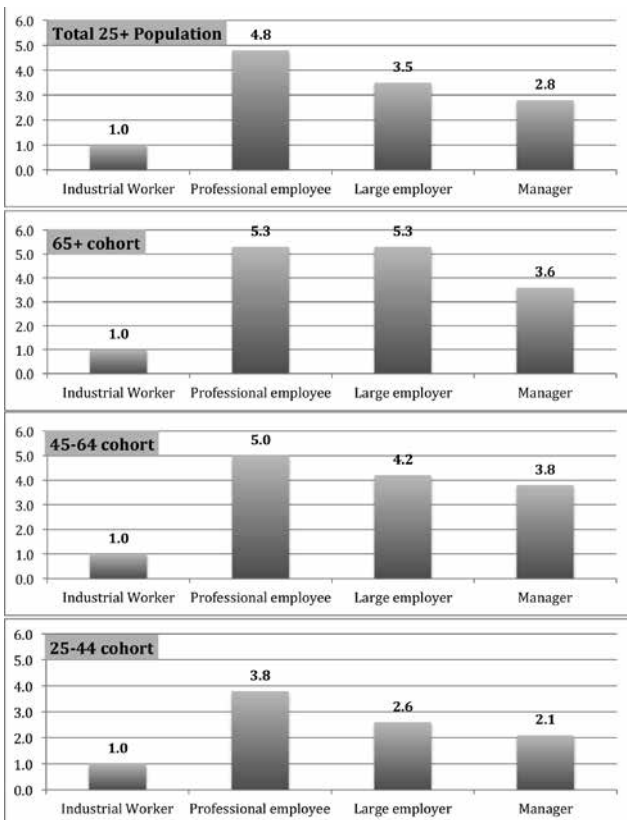
Source: WALL (2005)

In terms of racial differences, small sample sizes for some racial groups limit generalization. In Chinese and South-East Asian groups with relatively higher university completion rates, a class gap for those from working-class families persists.[5] For most other visible minorities, racial origins appear to compound the barriers for those from working-class families. Overall, specific gender and race effects have not overtaken the impact of class differences in educational opportunities.

Similarly, findings for the most recent graduating cohorts from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) indicate the persistence of class differences as well as differences by self-identified racial background and gender in current university offers. Table 1.3 summarizes these differences.

Table 1.3 University Acceptance by Race, Sex and Parental Occupation, TDSB, 2003-2006 Cohorts (% confirmed offers)

		Professional Parent	Unskilled Clerical Parent
Race	**Sex**	**%**	**%**
East Asian	Female	86	72
	Male	82	68
South Asian	Female	79	60
	Male	73	49
White	Female	67	30
	Male	58	22
Black	Female	51	32
	Male	32	18
Total		**65**	**37**

Within any given race and gender group, those from professional families are significantly more likely to receive university offers than those from working-class families, specifically from unskilled clerical worker families. Females are generally more likely to receive offers than males. East Asians and South Asians are more likely to receive offers than Whites, and Whites more likely to receive offers than Blacks. In terms of the combined effects of class, race and gender, the highest rates of university offers are among East Asian girls from professional

families, the lowest from Black boys from unskilled clerical worker families. Keep in mind that these are only offers of entry to university with no guarantees of completion, as well as the likelihood that familiar barriers of class and race will result in lower completion rates. In any case, with the exception of East and South Asian minorities, the low proportions of offers for working-class kids represent continuing exclusion from universities.

University completion may now be seen as the main class divider of life chances that secondary school graduation used to be. The fact that most young people from working-class origins continue to have such inequitable chances to fulfil their educational potential at university is a very serious challenge. Since the majority of working-class parents now have post-secondary aspirations for their children, they cannot be happy if they recognize that their children still have well under half the chance of children from more economically advantaged families to complete a university education. From the standpoint of an emerging "knowledge economy," this means significant underutilization of the capabilities of the present and future labour force. From the standpoint of the use of human potential more generally, this fact means that a very large proportion of our children who could benefit from the most advanced forms of education are not enabled to do so. This condition is simply indefensible, given the assumption that all social classes have an equal distribution of inherent ability.

Enduring effects of schooling

In pointing to the continued existence of inequalities in schooling, we are not interested in simple "school bashing." The point is that schools can make a difference in significantly reducing inequalities. A critical analysis of the extent of inequalities in our schools is much needed.

We are living in a "credential society" in the sense that more and more people have become dependent on obtaining advanced diplomas, certificates and degrees in order to get a job. Public investment in higher education has enabled general Ontario post-secondary completion rates to rival the highest in the world (OECD, 2011). Working-class students in Ontario and Canada have a better chance to obtain a higher education than those in many other advanced capitalist economies and that has been improving at a rate

comparable to that of Sweden and Finland (Corak, 2001). As working-class jobs declined and professional/managerial positions increased over the past generation, some prospects for upward mobility from working-class origins also increased in Ontario. But, as Figure 1.1 shows, the chances of working-class kids completing a university education remain much less than those of upper-middle-class kids, and the majority of those from working-class origins in the most recent generation have remained in working-class or closely related supervisory class positions (Livingstone and Stowe, 2007).

The relation between schooling and income becomes a vicious circle: schooling is used as a screen for well-paying jobs while both job holders and job seekers pursue more schooling to retain or compete for these jobs. Beyond the completion of formal schooling, participation in further adult education courses has also been closely associated with job requirements (see Livingstone, 2012). Those with higher levels of schooling have tended to participate more in further adult education and those in professional-managerial jobs with higher education requirements have been more highly supported in further education by their employers than those in working-class jobs. But as more people have completed post-secondary schooling, general participation in further education courses has also increased generally. In younger cohorts, the further education gap has narrowed; among the 25 to 44 age cohort in 2010 in Ontario, about two-thirds of professional employees took a further education course while over 40% of industrial workers did so (Livingstone, 2012).

Schooling should never be conflated with learning. In addition to formal schooling and further education courses, we engage in both informal education with mentors and self-directed informal learning. Series of empirical research studies have documented that we all participate in extensive intentional informal learning, that there is little difference in the extent of job-related informal learning in professional-managerial jobs and working-class jobs (Livingstone, 2010), and that those in organized working-class jobs can be involved in complex informal learning regardless of their formal credentials (Livingstone and Sawchuk, 2004).

But, as the use of schooling credentials has become more pervasive and more people have sought higher credentials to compete for jobs, the numbers of people with higher credentials

than current jobs require has increased, a condition that has been termed "underemployment," "overqualification" or "underutilization" (Livingstone, 1998, 2009). The condition has also been called "overeducation." But this is an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms. It is difficult to see how we could have too much education or knowledge, especially in a time when the emergence of a "knowledge economy" is so widely heralded and — even more pertinently — continual learning is needed to cope with our rapidly changing environment. The highest level of underemployment is among those in working-class jobs, who have taken advantage of increased access to post-secondary education but have not been able to find matching jobs. To ask those from working-class origins to reduce their educational and job aspirations is tantamount to turning back the clock. A better solution than trying to shut down schooling would be to act on sustainable economic reforms that could more effectively use these increasing knowledge and qualifications resources, along the lines of either "stakeholder capitalism" (e.g. profit-sharing, co-determination, reduced workweeks and guaranteed income) or "economic democracy" (e.g. socialized markets, worker self-management, full employment and green jobs).[6]

Whether or not serious economic reforms occur in the foreseeable future, serious educational discrimination against working-class kids in Ontario persists and there is evidence that it is probably *increasing again*. A Guelph University study found that, between 1987 and 1996, the proportion of students coming from families making less than $40,000 decreased sharply from 40% to 16% (Gilbert, McMillan, Quirke & Duncan-Robinson, 1999). Beyond that study, tuition fees have continued to rise dramatically since the early 1990s, while the average family income, adjusted for inflation, has been virtually static. Parental aspirations for their children to attend higher education have remained high in all economic groups despite affordability differences. A decade ago, about 80% of those earning less than $30,000 hoped their children would attend, but fewer than 20% were able to put aside any savings to assist their children, in contrast to over 60% of those making over $80,000 (Statistics Canada, 2001a). Today, the burden for kids from lower-income families is worse. In 1990, a family in the lowest income quintile supporting a child in university would have had to spend nine months of its entire after-tax income to afford tuition fees; by 2012, this support would take almost two years of household income, assuming

they didn't have to eat or pay rent during this period (Macdonald and Shaker, 2011)! This suggests a serious re-widening of the higher education gaps by economic class origins, and especially so as the relative costs for youths from poorer families have continued to rise.

Regardless of recent changes, two facts remain from this analysis: working-class parents' educational aspirations for their kids are now nearly as high as those of upper-class and upper-middle-class parents, and young people from working-class origins still have less than half the chance of upper-class and upper-middle-class youth to obtain a university degree. The latter fact represents both an exorbitant waste of talent and a persistently discriminatory educational system.

Streaming

Public schooling processes, especially streaming, have assisted in reproducing the kinds of economic class inequalities discussed above. For example, children from dominant (large employer and professional-managerial) class backgrounds have been disproportionately represented in elementary-level enrichment and second-language immersion programs, while working-class children have predominated in classes focussed on intellectual disabilities and behavioural exceptionalities. The current situation in Special Education will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

With regard to streaming in general, until the late 1990s, Ontario secondary schools streamed students into three explicitly different levels: Basic, General, and Advanced. Government policy specified teaching students in Basic level programs to want to work and to respect their employers. Students in General level, if they worked hard, could hope to go to a technical college programme and perhaps to get a skilled job. Students in Advanced programs were expected to go on to university to become professionals and managers. These aims appeared in official curriculum guidelines. They stressed: "a positive approach to employment" in Basic-level programs; sufficient "communication skills for success in the world of work" and, perhaps, community college for General-level programs; and the pursuit of academic interests enabling "contributions to society at large" and university entrance for Advanced level programs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987a, pp. 14-15; Radwanski, 1987).

This three-level form of secondary streaming was officially eliminated in Ontario with the introduction of the Ontario Secondary School (OSS) curriculum in 1999. Unofficially, however, these three streams — embedded in the earlier Ontario Schools Intermediate and Senior Divisions (OS:IS) curriculum — have been replicated through the types of courses taken. For example, of those students entering Grade 9 in Toronto in 2004, nearly three-quarters took mostly Academic courses and 86% graduated within five years; fewer than a quarter took mostly Applied courses and 54% graduated; about 4% took Locally Developed (Essentials) programs and only 40% graduated (Brown, 2010). The most recent figures for the 2006 Grade 9 cohort indicate that the high proportions enrolled in and graduating from Academic programs continued in 2011-12. But of the 22% in Applied programs only 40% graduated while of the 6% in Essentials programs only about 10% graduated.[7] A recent Ontario-wide survey found that students in Grade 9 Applied math had about a 58% chance of graduating in five years, while students in Grade 9 Academic math had an 86% chance of doing so. About 56% of students in Grade 9 Applied English graduated in five years, compared to 85% of students in Academic English. Similarly, 24% of students in Applied math were registered in university or college directly after secondary school, compared to 61% of students in Academic math (cited in People for Education, 2013c, p. 4). Graduation rates from the Applied and Essentials programs may have fluctuated recently but the graduation rates from both streams have remained much lower than those from Academic programs.

Representation in these streams has remained highly skewed by family-class background. In the 1980s in Ontario, about 90% of students from professional families were enrolled in Advanced level programs. About half of the students whose parents had unskilled occupations were enrolled in Advanced programs. Conversely, children whose parents had unskilled occupations were about ten times as likely as those from professional families to end up in Basic level programs (Anisef *et al.*, 1980; King, 1986; Cheng *et al.*, 1989). In the 2006 entering cohort in Toronto, over 90% of students from professional families again were enrolled in Academic programs while again just over half of students from working-class homes enrolled in these programs. Working-class students continue to be highly overrepresented in both Applied and Essentials programs, about five times as likely in each

instance as students from professional families. So in Ontario, children from professional families are still nearly twice as likely as those from working-class homes to be in academic programs, and working-class kids are still much more likely to be streamed into dead-end basic programs. A recent Canada-wide study similarly found that students' Academic placement in secondary school is strongly related to parents' education and family income, and suggested that because of this persistent social inequality in education, there is a continuing need to debate practices related to streaming (Taylor and Krahn, 2009).

Among the 2006 Grade 9 cohort in Toronto, over 60% in Academic level had confirmed university entry in 2011, compared to fewer than 10% of those at Applied program and only one% of Essentials program students (TDSB, 2012). The accumulated evidence shows that the secondary school system continues to stream people in keeping with their parents' economic class position. The under-representation of working-class students in Academic programs and their over-representation in Applied and Essentials programs clearly continues to be an important factor in their much lower secondary school graduation rates and much lower access to university.

Overall, as documented above, students from some working-class families are staying in school longer than in the past, are somewhat more likely to complete Academic programs oriented to post-secondary education and are more likely to complete university or community college. But their chances of attaining university degrees and good jobs remain relatively low, compared to students from large employer and professional-managerial classes. Good jobs increasingly require post-secondary credentials. The proportionately few working-class kids who do "make it" do so in spite of continuing streaming barriers in the schools and odds still heavily stacked against them in post-secondary education and labour markets.

As we will see in later chapters, in spite of official policy now discouraging segregation of Ontario elementary students by measured abilities, the vast majority of students are still placed in ability groups for various academic subjects. This practice has persisted despite the cumulative weight of evidence from generations of research that those placed in slow learner groups do much better in mixed-ability groups, while those from advanced groups do little worse in mixed groups (Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, 1988; Peterson

et al., 1984). Interest in ability grouping may have subsided in the early 1990s in response to this research. Increasing financial accountability standards for schools have more recently encouraged teachers and principals to rely once more on ability grouping to prepare for standardized tests (Yee, 2013). But the basic findings that students deemed to have lower ability achieve more in mixed-ability groups and high-ability students do equally well in mixed-ability groups or separate streams have continued to be confirmed (e.g. Saleh *et al.*, 2005; Mitchell, 2010). Ken Leithwood's conclusion (1991, p. 84), based on an extensive review of earlier relevant studies, endures: "The effects of ability grouping are the same as the effects of inflation — the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." The effects of early streaming can last a lifetime.

Why do working-class and minoritized children get less schooling?

So, recent empirical research continues to point to the existence of major disparities in schooling by family class origins. How we choose to explain these differences is decisive for what we can do about them. The most common scholarly explanations of the causes of class differences in school achievement point to *innate* differences in students or to differences in the environments in which students live. We will first look critically at such theories, and then consider some alternatives, including the class power perspective that will help to guide our analysis in the remainder of the book.

Innate difference theories

Socially powerful people tend to encourage the less powerful to blame themselves for their own misfortunes. A common argument holds that innate biological differences make some people rich and powerful, others poor and powerless. This kind of social evolutionary theory, or "Social Darwinism," emerged in the 19th century. As Schiff and Lewontin (1986, pp. 4-5) put it, "the precise mechanism claimed for individual differentiation has changed as ideas about human biology have altered, but the underlying theory has remained: the source of social inequality is the inequality in ability and temperament among individual human beings that arises from causes *internal* to the person."

The history of intelligence testing can be seen largely as an effort to devise more efficient means to sort people for their social destinies on the basis of supposedly fixed intrinsic capacities. The French psychologists, Binet and Simon, who invented intelligence tests early in this century, merely intended that they be used to teach more effectively those students who had difficulty with standard learning methods. Nevertheless, such tests quickly came to be used to infer the general intelligence of individual children and to label and stream them in schools. There will be more on this history in Chapter Four on Special Education for which such testing has served as a tool for the identification of intellectual disability and other anomalous intellectual capacities, effectively medicalizing exceptionality.

Genetic explanations of social inequality ebbed considerably during the post-1945 expansionary era, coincident with more people from lower-class origins being needed to replenish middle-class and upper-class positions in the economy. Meritocratic versions that recognized the possibility of upward mobility if one combined effort with innate ability, gained some currency (e.g., Young, 1959). But, with economic stagnation since the early 1970s, a new broad emphasis on innate causes of behaviour emerged, notably in socio-biological theories, which posit fixed genetic determinants for all things human. The work of Richard Hernstein (1973) still provides the clearest expression of the basic logic:

1. Social and economic success demands cognitive ability.
2. Intelligence quotient (I.Q.) tests measure cognitive ability.
3. I.Q. is highly hereditary.
4. Thus, social power and economic power are biologically hereditary.
5. What is hereditary is unchangeable.
6. So, class position necessarily runs in families because it runs in the genes.

The flaws in this logic are immense. First, I.Q. tests have long since been proven to be highly biased in favour of the White, upper-middle class culture. For this reason alone, they were banned by a large number of school boards in North America and in state legislation relating to the evaluation of students (e.g. Dent, 1987). Secondly, it

has been clearly demonstrated that I.Q. scores are not fixed measures (whether of genetic or acquired capacity), but rather often vary greatly over time and in response to environmental conditions (Snyderman and Rothman, 1988; Wicherts, 2008). There is also the "late bloomer" syndrome and the fact that many people score differently on the same tests from one week or month to the next. Thirdly, even psychologists who believe in such tests admit that they address only very partial measures of general intelligence or multiple intelligences and certainly do not provide a complete or overall picture of human ability (e.g. Luther and Quarter, 1988; Gardner, 1999). Finally, it is clear from the data that most of the difference in I.Q. scores occurs *within* any given social class group, as compared to the differences in scores between such groups — *roughly 80%*, in fact (Schiff and Lewontin, 1986; Garrison, 2009). Therefore, to suggest that Whites or upper classes have homogeneously higher scores than Blacks or the working class is patently false. The variations are much greater within than between such groups of people. These criticisms do not deny that there is some genetic basis to intelligence. But they definitely refute the long-standing claim that there is a primary biological basis for either class differences in schooling or the inter-generational reproduction of economic classes. These considerations also suggest that the continued use of I.Q. or other standardized test results to stream students or determine their progress should be abandoned.

Cultural deficit theories

During the post-WWII expansionary era, the notion of "equal educational opportunity" became a goal of educational reformers. Many social scientists studying educational inequalities came to reject explanations based on innate differences. They sought accounts of class disparities in schooling in terms of environmental conditions that could cause some people to be deprived of a fair chance for an education. Many of them came to believe that working-class people did less well at school because they suffered from some kind of "cultural deficit," a lack of social awareness and habits demanded by middle-class teachers and schools.

Three variants of cultural deficit theory have been influential in the literature: value deficiency, culture of poverty, and cultural capital.

During the 1950s, value deficiency explanations were common. The argument was essentially that working-class people shared the same abstract value orientations as the upper classes, but, because of their particular circumstances or traditions, they were not usually inclined to defer gratification of baser subsistence needs for nobler ones like formal schooling (e.g. Hyman, 1953). During the 1960s, the culture of poverty variant stressed that social disadvantages in terms of lack of acquired social skills and attitudes among working-class parents were typically handed down to children, thereby producing a self-sustaining culture of limited educational aspirations (Lewis, 1966; Valentine, 1968). An increasingly influential cultural capital version has subsequently focused on the general cultural knowledge, elaborated language codes, and information about how schools work that students from upper-class origins acquire from their families. The possession of these cultural tools is deemed to lead to greater returns from schooling than working-class kids are usually able to obtain (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bernstein, 1977).

While cultural deficit theories have sometimes dealt quite accurately with some of the discriminatory educational conditions faced by working-class and minoritized children, their prime intent has been to describe the cultural reproduction of inequality within fixed institutional forms. This makes them inadequate in three ways. First, they tend to discount the material conditions, such as inadequate food, housing and clothing that can limit learning potential of people living in poverty. Secondly, such theories deny or denigrate the continuing capacities of working-class people to create cultural forms and meanings for themselves, however submerged these may be within the dominant class culture (see Labov, 1972; Willis, 1990; Livingstone and Sawchuk, 2004). Thirdly, and most critically, they remain descriptions of the status quo rather than real explanations of it. Schiff and Lewontin (1986, p.4) note these cultural accounts do not:

> provide an explanation either for the origin of the environmental variation or for its continuance in the face of a claimed social commitment to equality. If people are simply the products of social circumstances, and if we all agree that freedom and equality are our ideals of social construction, then why have we failed to abolish privilege and poverty? Without a deeper analysis, the cultural

> explanation of inequality is simply a description and not a causal story. Such a deeper analysis, however, soon challenges the basic assumption that our society is indeed devoted to equality and ends by prescribing revolutionary social reorganization, a result not widely welcomed.

Both innate difference and cultural deficit theories of inequality ignore how schooling itself is shaped by political and economic relationships that lead to the production of educational differences.

For innate difference theorists, the major current problem with schools is not structured class or status inequalities per se but "declining standards" and pandering to cultural diversity. They claim that democracy in schooling degrades the quality of education. Their solution involves the restoration of competition and the reconstituting of meritocratic standards of excellence to select the best and the brightest individuals for enriched and advanced education regardless of socio-economic background (e.g. Bercuson *et al.*, 1984; Bloom, 1987; Lampert, 2013).

For cultural deficit theorists, the problem with schools is that they are not providing sufficient supplementary programs and resources to help disadvantaged individuals overcome their relative deprivation. A wide variety of reforms have been proposed, ranging from pre-school Head Start programs to sensitivity training for teachers in the world views of subordinate cultures (e.g. Bereiter and Engelmann, 1966; Tharp and Gallimore, 1989; Hurst, 2010). Perceptive ethnographic analyses inspired by cultural capital theory have documented class differences in schooling that are directly produced through parent-school interactions (e.g. Lareau, 1989; Winkle-Wagner, 2010). More representative insights into both the processes underlying inheritance of disadvantage and advantage and social mobility could be generated if such studies were able to locate the specificity of their small samples in relation to internal class diversity and cross-class complexities (Irwin, 2009). There is certainly some merit in related school reforms that would address such culturally-grounded learning differences. The merits and limits of specialized schools will be addressed later in the book.

But for both innate difference and cultural deficit theorists, a systematic scrutiny of the enduring structures of political dominance that frame and condition the reproduction of class differences in schooling remains safely beyond their terms of inquiry.

Dominance theories

In contrast to the "blaming the victim" tendencies of cultural deficit theorists, other critical scholars over the years have concentrated on exposing the connections between political dominance and class discrimination in public schooling (e.g. Nearing, 1922). More recent studies have pointed to the past success of working-class and popular self-education. During the formative years of industrial capitalism, autonomous workingmen's organizations offered very effective forms of education to working-class men, both through technical apprenticeships and broader programs for cultural and political literacy (Willensky, 1991). In rural areas, the children of self-employed farmers learned most of what they needed to know to pursue their livelihoods through informal education on the family farm and in small, locally controlled schools (Curtis, 1988). Since the rise of compulsory state schooling in the mid 1800s, however, political and technical control has largely been in the hands of representatives of the dominant employer, managerial and professional class groups (e.g. Hartnett, 1971; Barken and Pupo, 1978). Both how schooling is organized and what students learn have been shaped by the viewpoints of members of the dominant classes. This is why working-class children have persistently experienced a "cultural deficit," somewhat more accurately known as "upper-middle-class bias" (Connell, 1977).

Dominance theories of educational disparity became more common during the 1960s with the rise of poor people's movements. There have been two main tendencies in explanations of the production of educational inequalities through class domination, which can be termed "structures of dominance" and "elite politics" theories.[8]

Structural dominance theories have posited a correspondence of the organizational and ideological forms of schooling with capitalist dominance of society in general (Althusser, 1971). Major changes in forms of schooling are seen as responses to transformation of the economic structure (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). The limited success of lower-class kids in schools is determined by the continuing correspondence of the relations of production in schools with those occurring outside school in a hierarchically organized class structure (Baudelot and Establet, 1971).

"Elite politics" accounts of educational inequality focus on the powerful historical agents who have been most centrally involved in

promoting dominant forms of schooling, and opposing alternative forms of education. The basic claim here is that highly motivated leaders representing dominant class groups have played pivotal roles in gaining popular support for forms of schooling that primarily serve the interests of these groups, whereas subordinate groups have generally lacked either the resources or the voices to promote any alternative form effectively. This is clearly the case in the period of the origins of age-graded, hierarchically organized, compulsory, free public schools in general (Katz, 1971; Simon, 1974), and in Ontario under the ambitious leadership of men like Egerton Ryerson (Prentice, 1979). The influences of corporate elite leaders, through sponsoring research and conferences on the future of education and the economy and lobbying the Ontario cabinet, also appear to have been vital factors in the early 1960s (Arvay, 1984). Tracing the often informal and sometimes covert political influence of elites on schooling is always difficult, perhaps especially so when dealing with contemporary times. But the elite politics approach assumes that the views and actions of the leaders of dominant class groups are likely to be pivotal in educational change, and that attention to their role, however difficult it may be to detect, can provide the most valuable insights into the continuing social construction of educational programs favouring dominant class children.

Structural correspondence theories have been criticised for being overly abstract and so mechanical as to deny historical human agency, for reducing education to a tautological expression of narrow economic or ideological determinants, and for ignoring complexities and inconsistencies in actual educational change (e.g. Coles, 1988). On the other hand, a focus on corporate elites has been judged to ignore the constraints of both institutionalized practices and the political demands of an array of subordinate class groups, and thereby to overestimate elite influence on contemporary schooling (e.g. Useem, 1987). More recent approaches to developing explanations of the class inequalities in schooling outcomes in terms of power relations have attempted to respond to such criticisms, while retaining the fundamental insight of dominance theories that class oppression is being reproduced through schooling in capitalist societies (e.g. Liston, 1988; Lodge and Lynch, 2002).

Class power theory

The perspective we suggest here to inform later analyses in this book could be termed a class power approach. It combines some aspects of both the "structures of dominance" and "elite politics" theories. We certainly recognize that most major organizations, be they economic, political or cultural, have been developed on the basis of structural hierarchies, which most benefit the dominant class, gender and racial groups in our society. We also recognize that control of these structures, and especially schooling systems, seems to have become increasingly complex. Some would argue that schools, with their formal, informal and private lines of authority, regulation and accounting, have become "an organizational theorist's nightmare" (Tyack and Hansot, 1982). Whether schools as institutions continue to be reproduced as they presently exist or undergo significant change will depend upon the views and actions of many people, not only the corporate elite, but leaders and active members of many class, racial, ethnic and gender groups. In the Introduction, we have also registered a pivotal potential role of teachers, whether they push for change or maintain the status quo.

At the same time, the class power approach we posit pays more attention than abstract structural accounts to the *array* of actual class agents involved in the production and maintenance of institutionalized discriminatory schooling structures and practices, rather than imputing unconstrained power to the elites in our society (see Martell, 1974; Livingstone, 1983, 2009; Curtis, 1988). Dominant social classes have indeed shaped school institutions, but not merely in their own terms. Working-class resistance always counts, as well as that of other subordinate groups, particularly racial minorities and women. A completely adequate account would require descriptions of discriminatory structures and relations at all levels of the school system, from federal and provincial bodies to that of the interpersonal relationships in classrooms (Persell, 1977). However, given the space of one short collective work, our aim is much more modest. We do not intend to provide a thorough mapping of all the social forces involved either in the past or at present. We will attempt to identify some of the views and actions of major actors who have played significant public roles in promoting or opposing streaming programs in our schools.

Class leaders' and members' views on educational disparities

Economic class opinion leaders might be assumed to differ widely in their favoured explanations of the educational attainment gap, reflecting the interests of the groups they represent. However, there have been very few prior empirical studies that have directly investigated class leaders' views. Most of the following quotations are from a series of interviews we conducted prior to the publication of the previous book. We believe they still resonate with the more recent contending claims made around streaming issues in the remainder of this book.

Large employers

> [I]f you are taking the average person going to the average school, it doesn't matter where they come from. If they are willing to work hard and apply themselves, if they've got some ability, they can be whatever they want to be.

> Schools and teachers reflect the immediate community around them… Some children are not exposed to a lot of things at home, so when they go to school maybe they're not as fast.

> Canada is a dynamic economy where individuals can indeed make themselves better off by completing (and continuing) their education, acquiring job skills, and gaining work and life experience. People naturally move up (and down) the income ladder over time as their circumstances change. Ignoring these natural changes in people's life circumstances severely limits the usefulness and applicability of inequality studies. (Clemens and Veldhuis, 2012)

Professional/Managerial Leaders

> Schools do try to encourage kids to go where they think kids should go to be successful. Lack of parental value for education is the strongest thing that keeps people from becoming mobile, achieving more.

> Schools are middle class institutions. They assume a complicated support structure at home and don't adapt well to the lack of these structures in lower status families.

As educators in Ontario, we are dedicated to the education of all students, regardless of their background or their financial or social circumstances with a goal of making a difference. There are many external factors and conditions that affect a child's ability to learn and a teacher's ability to support that learning, but none as critical or complex as child poverty. (OTF, 2009)

Trade union leaders

It's very hard to break out of your economic circumstances… Since the 1950s, we have made the ability to go to school and get an education far easier. But now, with the growing control of free market forces over the economy and the political system, I think the window is going to start to close.

For people who come from working-class homes the expectation is that if they do as well as their parents in terms of jobs that's okay… Teachers think that children will do what their parents do and so they're not surprised by that and they lead the kids to expect to do that.

Families across Canada are struggling with record high debt and stagnant incomes. High tuition fees are driving people further into debt, because everyone knows that these days higher education is a necessity… So isn't it time that Ontario considered free and universal access to college and university in the same way it universalized secondary school education at the beginning of the last century?… [Quebecers']… street protests are evidence of a deeply felt conviction that accessible education is practical, fair and necessary. These are the voices of principle, not privilege. (Ryan, 2012)

"Marginalized class" leaders[11]

The schools stream kids according to background and neighbourhood. If you're in a public housing area, schools stream to non-university programs, and stress punctuality, etc. The educational system is set up to do this. (Welfare mothers' group)

> Streaming of low-income, immigrant children is obvious. More
> well-to-do parents… have much more proactive involvement in the
> school system. Poor working-class families don't have the time or
> wherewithal to fight. (Immigrant women's organization)

Virtually all employer spokespersons strongly espoused some version of either cultural deficit or innate difference theory to explain educational disparities and to insist that educational opportunities are as fairly distributed as possible. Most professional and managerial leaders accept cultural deficit theories, but some express sympathy to the barriers they represent for working-class kids. In contrast, working-class leaders generally have some sense of the relations of dominance and injustice preventing most of their children from obtaining an equal education. Underclass leaders express a more painful awareness of this dominance.

In the Ontario public at large, around the time *Stacking the Deck* was published (1992), there was widespread expression of faith in the individual and societal benefits of schooling (Livingstone *et al.*, 1991) and majority support across all economic classes for the notion that students from families of all economic class backgrounds should have an equal opportunity of getting a higher education (Reid, 1986; Livingstone *et al.*, 1989). In 2004, Ontarians in *all* economic classes had increased expectations for schooling, with about three-quarters saying that young people today *needed* a post-secondary education to get along in this society (Livingstone, 2009). However, three-quarters also now perceive that kids from lower-income families have a worse chance to get such education, an increase from the prior decade; public awareness of the worse chances of both Aboriginal and, to a lesser extent, Black students has also increased (Hart, 2012). Faith in the value of schooling is heightened but scepticism about educational equality grows, as financial barriers to post-secondary education become more evident and directly experienced by greater numbers of working-class aspirants.

Conclusion

Most people in Ontario from all family class, race and gender origins now value the importance of completing a post-secondary education, but increasing numbers perceive barriers to the chances of those

from lower-class and some minoritized origins. The inequities of the institutionalized schooling practices established under the initiative of dominant groups and alliances to serve their particular interests become more apparent as subordinated groups increase their expectations for post-secondary credentials, face serious blockages to getting them and, in some instances, mobilize to fight for greater educational equity. Creative thinking and action regarding preferable schooling practices requires a critical understanding of how the conflation between education per se and the dominant institutional form of schooling was constructed politically in the 19th century, a matter to which we turn in Chapter Two.

More education, in the generic sense of the term, surely remains better than less. But just as clearly, the level of advanced education to which most theorists, opinion leaders and people in general deem it worthy to aspire is impossible for most people to attain under the current hierarchically structured form of schooling. There is also strong evidence that the economy is becoming polarized into "good" and "bad" jobs; and most working-class kids are likely to get both relatively poor schooling and bad jobs (Livingstone, 2009). It is in the interest of the dominant classes both to believe in and espouse the existence of equal educational opportunity since their kids are much more likely to get it. But there is no reputable scientific evidence that working-class kids have less innate ability than their dominant class peers. Therefore, there is no social justification for children from upper-middle-class families to be twice as likely to be in the Academic stream in secondary school, and four times as likely to complete university, as working-class kids. So, working-class people have been "sold a bill of goods" about educational equality and increasingly they are not buying it.

What the dominance theory perspectives cited here have in common is a recognition that the basis of the educational advantage of the dominant classes lies in the ability to obscure the power relations involved in the creation and development of such social inequalities. As Lamont and Lareau (1986:11) put it:

> What makes a class dominant is partly its success in legitimating as *natural* and *authoritative* its particular cultural preferences and practices. These become standard through society, while shrouded in a cloak of neutrality. They become institutionalized as legitimate culture

in part by the educational system, which transmits these practices and tastes, and adopts them as standards for evaluating students.

A basic purpose of this book, informed by a class power perspective, is to try to make more transparent how the process of identifying working-class kids as inferior and legitimating their highly disproportionate selection into dead-end programs and relatively poor chances for access to university has happened in Ontario. The streaming of kids by racial background and gender will also be closely examined from a power perspective.

We will proceed to do this first in Chapter Two, by considering historical origins of the model of mass compulsory schooling in mid-19th century class struggles, particularly the initial development of streaming or ability grouping programs for Ontario schools. Then, in Chapter Three, we will review key actions in the current streaming situation in the schools in general, documenting the many ways that streaming occurs in elementary and secondary schools, classrooms and courses; the recent growth of "schools of choice" and their detrimental effects on working-class and some minoritized children are an important new dimension to continuing unequal streaming arrangements. Chapter Four reveals how efforts to extend special educational opportunities to children designated as Gifted or identified as having a range of disabilities have produced other forms of streaming. Special Education streaming has had the effect of highly privileging those who get into gifted programs while, at the same time, hardening definitions of other disabilities and restricting educational options for children so identified. In Chapter Five, major forms of streaming by racial origins are identified and inequitable outcomes summarized. In Chapter Six, significant forms of streaming by gender are recognized and estimated. In race and gender terms, some of these effects are difficult to measure but nonetheless persistently damaging to educational opportunities. The final chapter offers a summary of our analyses of present streaming conditions, identifies some of the essential features of de-streamed schools and suggests some practical strategies for diminishing persistent class, race and gender disparities.

ENDNOTES

1 The figures cited in this paragraph are drawn from WALL (2005) and TDSB (2012), respectively.

2 More detailed discussion of these class distinctions may be found in Livingstone (2009). When insufficient data sources are available, some of the analyses in the book are based on rougher occupational and income differences.

3 A recent report of the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (2011), drawing on a census-based study of the previous year, noted critically that in 2006 about 8% of Aboriginal peoples in Canada had university degrees compared to 23% of non-Aboriginals (Finnie *et al.* 2010).

4 https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?shva=1 - 141ebd18286af450__msocom_1

5 There are also data from the UK showing that students there of Chinese origin outperform their other ethno-racial peers, regardless of whether they are eligible for free school meals or not (the usual British indicator of poverty). This applies both to examination results (GCSE) and primary school test scores. University studies by both Becky Francis and Ramesh Kapadia seem to bear this out (Shepherd, 2010; Mansell, 2011).

6 For a detailed discussion of these economic alternatives in relation to more effective use of working people's skills and knowledge in present and future workplaces, see Livingstone (1998, 2009).

7 Special data runs from TDSB.

8 This account leaves aside *status*-based dominance theories of educational inequalities (see Collins, 1979; Murphy, 1983).

9 A notable Canadian exception is Taylor (2001).

10 Unless otherwise noted, these interviews were conducted in late 1988 and early 1989 with about 50 class opinion leaders residing in Ontario. They were selected on the basis of their formal leadership roles and prominence in public debates on a variety of major social issues.

11 "Marginalized Class" leaders were representative of social organizations comprised mainly of unemployed, on welfare or otherwise marginalized from the employed labour force.

2. THE ORIGINS OF EDUCATION INEQUALITY IN ONTARIO

Bruce Curtis

While many educational activists and reformers have worked to create a democratic and egalitarian system of education in Ontario, their success has been mixed. The model of a general, comprehensive, and freely accessible system of education is more closely approximated in Ontario than is the case in many parts of the world. Yet the limits to democracy in education remain all too real.

The educational system of the province has consistently promoted different kinds of education for people of different social classes and ethnic backgrounds, and for boys and girls, men and women. There have been periods in Ontario's educational development where arguments for educational democracy were particularly strong: Reformers argued in the 1840s for a `common schooling', an elementary education common to all citizens; the New Education Movement of the early twentieth century and the educational Progressives of the 1960s both envisaged the public school as a force for democracy. Ultimately, however, these movements foundered on the underlying and intransigent class differences in economic and political power that characterize our society.

Schooling in Upper Canada

When the province was still the colony of Upper Canada, its first government sought to `educate the people' and an Act of 1797 set aside 500,000 acres of the public lands as a fund for supporting schools. A political debate ensued almost immediately concerning

who the `people' in need of education were. The large landholders and government officials who dominated the colony were interested in devoting the public resources to the education of their own children. These people were quite able to provide elementary and some secondary schooling for their offspring, however, by hiring private tutors. For advanced secondary and college education, they complained, they were obliged to send their children either to the United States or to England. They therefore sought a system of elite grammar or secondary schools and a provincial university supported out of the public coffers.

To the argument that the land grant of 1797 had been intended for the support of elementary education, some members of the colonial elite repeated the argument common in English ruling class circles: the poor were not in need of any education beyond that which they received in the workplace. Teaching the poor anything other than to work hard and to obey their "natural superiors" was seen by some conservatives as dangerous both socially and politically: it would teach the common people to read politically subversive books (like Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*) and would encourage them to aspire to social positions for which they would never be fitted.

While simple opposition to popular elementary education was already in decline in conservative circles, the colonial parliament nonetheless passed a Grammar School Act in 1807-8 that endowed 10 secondary or grammar schools, one in each of the colonial districts, out of the school lands. The grammar schools were intended to be elite institutions, for they charged high fees and were situated in the main towns at a time when most people lived in the countryside. Complaints against the use of the public funds for elite education became com- mon. Furthermore, the lukewarm opposition offered by many Canadian farmers to the American invaders during the War of 1812 led members of the ruling groups to doubt the political loyalties of the population. In combination, these forces contributed to the passage of the first elementary school legislation in Ontario, the Upper Canadian School Act of 1816.

The Act of 1816 was authored by the Reverend John Strachan, the son of a Scottish quarryman who had come to Canada as a school- master at the turn of the 19th century. After conducting a celebrated grammar school at Cornwall where among his students were many

of the sons of the colonial elite, Strachan moved to York (Toronto) just before the outbreak of the War of 1812. His role as schoolmaster to the children of the elite provided an entry to the ruling circles and his actions in the defense of York during the American invasion of 1813 further advanced him. He was appointed to the governing Legislative and Executive Councils and advanced through the clerical hierarchy, eventually becoming the first Anglican Bishop of Toronto.

As someone who had himself risen through the Scottish educational system, Strachan did not share the reactionary views of many members of the colonial elite with respect to elementary education. On the contrary, he supported the education of what were called "the poor" or the "lower orders" in society. While, in the Scottish tradition, education might be the means whereby the exceptionally clever boy — the "lad o' pairts" [not the "lass o' pairts"] — could rise in society, the main interest of the church and the state in educating the people was to make them obey God and earthly authority, to make them appreciate the justice and rightness of their own subordinate social position. Popular education was political and moral regulation.

Strachan's School Act of 1816 enabled any group of property holders who built a school big enough to hold 25 students to appoint three elementary school trustees. Trustees were allowed to manage the main operations of the local elementary school, including hiring the teacher and maintaining the physical building itself. But regional Boards of Education appointed by the colonial governor were to examine all people wanting to teach, to regulate what was taught in the schools and how it was taught. In exchange for coming under this legislation, property holders could receive an annual grant towards the payment of their teacher's salary.[1]

In part, Strachan and other conservative educational activists saw this legislation as a means of giving the colonial government control over local elementary schooling. In the absence of legislation before 1816, people had organized their own elementary schools. Conservatives attributed the shaky defense of the colony during the War of 1812 to the fact that locally-run schools were encouraging "American" (which in this period really meant *democratic*) ideas among the people.

In fact, however, the Act of 1816 did not give the colonial elite effective control over popular education. On the one hand, as the

survey conducted by the radical democrat, Robert Gourlay, in 1818-9 demonstrated, most elementary schools did not receive any government subsidy, and hence were completely beyond any kind of government control. On the other hand, even subsidized schools usually had little contact with the regional Boards of Education supposedly supervising them, because Boards of Education were situated far away in the principal towns and acted haphazardly at best (Gourlay, 1974; Gidney, 1975).

Given this lack of success in controlling local schools, Strachan and other members of the colonial ruling clique, with the active support of the English governor, attempted to extend their control over popular elementary education by other means and to develop higher educational institutions for the children of the ruling class. A General Board of Education for the colony was created in the early 1820s and given control over the existing regional educational boards and over the School Lands. John Strachan was its president. The General Board sought to put in place a system of urban industrial schools for the training of working class-children under the control of the Anglican church. The Central School at York was created under this scheme and a second school at Kingston also offered industrial schooling. The General Board imported and distributed large numbers of English schoolbooks in an effort to combat the spread of American democratic ideas in the colony. In comparison to the miserable economic condition of most locally-supported elementary schools, the York Central School was lavishly funded (Spragge, 1937).

However, industrial schooling was impracticable for the vast majority of people living in the countryside. The provision of most elementary education remained under local community control, and schoolhouses were frequently used as community centres for education, religious services, political lectures and cultural events. What was taught, who studied and how they learned, were shaped by the labour cycle in agriculture, the availability of teachers and books, and the interests of people themselves. In many parts of the colony, itinerant teachers offered instruction in a broad range of subjects, from reading, writing and spelling, through algebra, trigonometry and geometry, to practical and popular subjects like navigation, surveying and dialling (making sundials) and instrumental music. But many teachers were dissatisfied with their conditions of work, the level of

pay, and the insecurity of employment they had to endure, and many people interested in sending their children to school were dissatisfied with the availability of schooling. Still, the local elementary schools created a population that was largely literate.

In the domain of higher education, the conservative ruling class was also active in the 1820s. John Strachan travelled to England in search of a charter for a Canadian university. Through a series of misrepresentations, he secured a charter for King's College as an exclusively Anglican institution.

The political opposition in this period was loosely grouped in a Reform party which joined together liberal landowners and professionals, artisans and small masters, and members of religious groups opposed to the semi-official status of the Church of England. Educational policy was a consistent source of political conflict, inseparable from the struggle of Reformers for decentralization, economic improvement and for greater elective control over governmental activity (Dunham, 1963).

Reformers understood educational policy to be about economic and political power. Radical (for their period) Reformers, like William Lyon Mackenzie and Charles Duncombe, argued that the freer development of people's intelligence through locally controlled educational institutions was the path to political and economic freedom. To this end they opposed control over elementary schools by appointed officials and elite control over the school curriculum. They opposed the exclusive character of the colony's grammar schools, and agitated for a system of `free places' whereby a certain number of intelligent boys would be admitted to secondary schools at public expense. They contested the attempt to make the provincial university an exclusive Anglican institution.

Reformers also urged the development of teacher-training institutions and, to a certain extent, greater opportunities for women as teachers. They proposed a system of elementary education in which educational policy would be under the control of male property holders at the local level.

Reformers, like their Tory opponents, saw education's importance primarily in the political and moral regulation of the people. But Reformers believed that the best kind of society was one in which intelligent, educated people (well, men anyway) could elect their own

political representatives and manage their own economic affairs. In this period of small-scale capitalist development and easy access to land, many Reformers also believed it possible to build a society in which every man would be — or could be — a small independent property owner. The development of capitalism has shown this belief to be naive.

In the late 1820s and early 1830s, Reform agitation managed to check attempts by the ruling elite to extend a class- and gender-segregated educational system. The charter to King's College was suspended, the operations of the York Central School were scrutinized, and the General Board of Education itself was disbanded in 1833. Reformers successfully argued to the English government that the General Board was acting as a propaganda agency for the Church of England and did not speak for the general educational interest. But Reform attempts to elaborate an alternative and less elitist educational system were consistently blocked during the 1830s. The British-appointed Executive Council, which exercised a veto over all legislation coming from the elected parliamentary assembly, consistently refused elementary educational bills that would have created a tax-supported and systematic elementary education under the control of male property holders at the local level. And while the development of an Anglican university was blocked, the English governor in 1830 created the Upper Canada College for elite boys' education beyond the grammar school level.

Education in Canada West

After the failure of the Rebellion of 1837, in which radical Reformers, small farmers and artisans attempted to overthrow the colonial ruling elite by force of arms in order to establish a democratic republic, educational policy changed dramatically. The colonial merchant/professional elite attempted to consolidate its control over educational resources, but the elite itself lost its stranglehold over parliament with the Union of the Canadas in 1840. Parliamentary parties and the colonial governors became the main protagonists over official educational policy.

Secondary and university education were not the main issues in the 1840s. The government grammar schools continued much as they had in the 1820s and 30s until 1853: they remained small, regionally-

centred and elite institutions for boys. People interested in and able to pay for secondary education patronized the growing numbers of private academies in towns and villages. These institutions provided most of the secondary education on offer, and almost all of the education available for girls.

Charters were granted to non-Anglican universities as well, notably to Victoria College (Methodist) and Queen's College (Presbyterian), but the number of young men attending university was extremely small. Women were not admitted: indeed, those who had been attending Victoria College were excluded in 1840 by the College's new principal, Egerton Ryerson, a man who came to head the provincial education office in 1844 and who led the push for state-directed elementary schooling.

Political struggle over education in the 1840s revolved around the content and organization of elementary education and a number of attempts were made to legislate a system of "common" schools throughout the colony. Conservatives saw the Rebellion of 1837 as the failure of existing schools to create a population loyal to English authority and to the power of established elites. They struggled for a highly centralized elementary education, in which officials appointed by the governor would determine what was taught in school, how and by whom. Conservatives were divided on questions of school finance, some favouring a system of compulsory property tax, others arguing for schools supported by user-fees.

Reformers, whose politics were moderated by the repression that followed the Rebellion, sought a system of elementary education in which local property owners would determine key matters of educational policy. Reformers supported the creation of a central educational authority that would collect information and disseminate the results of educational experiments, and they supported the establishment of teacher-training institutions under regional control. The imperial government itself attempted to impose a highly centralized elementary educational system on the colony, one modelled on the Irish school system. Reformers opposed this, but their attempt to organize a system controlled at the township level failed because of administrative confusion (Gidney and Lawr, 1978; Curtis, 1988).

With the active support of the imperial government and in the midst of extreme political conflict, a centralized educational system was put in place in the colony under the School Acts of 1846 and 1847. These

Acts created a province-wide Board of Education and an appointed Chief Superintendent who together controlled curriculum, teaching methods and teacher training as well as school rules and regulations. Compulsory property taxation for schools in cities was contained in the Act of 1847, against opposition from the Reform party and from many artisanal workers. Opponents maintained that if schools were entirely supported by property taxation, parents would lose one of their main sources of control over what went on in school — their payment of the teacher's salary through their fees.

Proponents of compulsory property taxation, of what was called "free schooling," argued that fees tended to exclude the poorest sections of the population, the very sections of the population for whom urban middle class reformers and capitalist farmers deemed schooling to be most necessary. Eventually, poorer voters in both the towns and the countryside came to support "free schooling."

While proponents of universal elementary schooling under state control frequently made arguments about the economic benefits it offered to society, political and moral arguments predominated in the educational debate. Schooling was primarily about political/moral order and schooling was seen to have the ability to make or undermine establishment regimes. Both conservative and liberal educational commentators shared this assumption, as did spokespeople for the growing movement of agrarian radicalism. Job training, or preparation for work, were minor considerations in the educational debates and in many occupations all but the most basic skills of literacy were deemed unnecessary. Even in the professions, medicine and law, people learned by apprenticeship. The political, moral and (to a lesser extent) economic consequences of different ways of organizing education were uppermost in debates among urban professionals, capitalists, farmers and artisanal workers.

Conservatives tended to argue that universal elementary education would produce both good citizens and workers: sober, reliable, religious and orderly people who would respect established authority and private property. Liberals stressed the same points, but also tended to see education as a means whereby individuals would be able to better themselves. Many of them also argued that public education could in some ways compensate working-class people and the poorer sectors of the farming population for their material

hardships, by offering them intellectual pleasure. Agrarian radicals, and progressive reformers from other classes, by contrast, were much more interested in educational institutions as agencies for the protection and advancement of "poor man's rights": for justice, political liberty and greater economic equality in society. The agrarian radical movement, crystallised in 1850 in the Clear Grit party, was much inspired by continental socialist movements, such as the English Chartists.

The School Act of 1850

An attempt by radical reformers in 1849 to decentralize the elementary educational system in the colony was defeated. The School Act of 1850, elements of which remain in force in today's Ontario, embodied the principle of centralized control over elementary education. A strong central and appointed educational office controlled curriculum, teacher training and school rules and regulations. Regional bodies managed educational inspection and teacher certification, and until 1964, practical, day-to-day school management was regulated by school trustees elected in individual school sections in the countryside, or in wards in some of the cities. In principle, the School Act of 1850 undercut the elementary school as a locally-controlled community institution. The central "Educational Department" attempted, against persistent, day-to-day opposition, to use the schools to produce "cheerful obedience" and industrial work habits, while equipping the population with fundamental skills of literacy (Curtis, 1988; Houston and Prentice, 1988).

Most people in the 19th century went to school in Ontario in the countryside, and in small, one-room schools. Attendance was regulated by the fact that most young people worked, either on the farm or in the broader village and town economies. Educational policy aimed to teach the general "moral" skills of a wage-labour force, such as punctuality, regularity of attendance, orderliness, but such policy could be only marginally successful where the economy demanded the participation of young people in the rhythms of agricultural work. For most people, the practical experience of schooling was what has come to be known today as "mixed ability grouping": people of quite different ages and educational attainments learned together under the direction of a single teacher. Until the 1870s there were no elementary school grades

as such and students were not segregated according to age. Students worked their way through the different school books prescribed by the central authority at a pace dictated by their aptitudes, interests and economic situations. Rural elementary schools often contained people ranging in age from five or six to 21 and older.

In the towns and villages, educational classification proceeded more rapidly. A Grammar School Act of 1853, which supported the formation of county, regional and urban grammar schools (all fee-paying institutions) allowed the creation of Union Schools, institutions containing both elementary and secondary departments, although the Education Office soon came to see this arrangement as unsatisfactory and began to push for two quite distinct educational courses (Gidney and Millar, 1990).

Faced with the growing numbers of students under the free school system, many Ontario towns and villages in the 1850s and early 1860s began to organize elementary students into uniform achievement classes. This initially was an economy move: school boards discovered they could hire fewer teachers and use less space if they divided students into groups according to achievement. A related development was the attempt by school boards in places like Dundas and Guelph to push advanced students out of elementary and into grammar schools. Many students and working-class parents objected to this attempt, arguing that the classical education offered in grammar school was both expensive and useless. It's worth underlining at this point that the classification of students at school originated as an economy move, as an efficient way for the system to process large numbers, not necessarily as something related to the needs or interests of students or school supporters (Curtis, 1988, pp.207-8).

Secondary schooling

While still extremely small, the numbers of students seeking and the numbers of parents able to pay for some degree of secondary schooling increased in the 1850s and 60s. The demand for secondary schooling was satisfied both by state grammar schools, which charged fees and which were managed by appointed trustees, and by private academies run for profit. With the solidification of the elementary sector under the School Act of 1850, and with the spread

of free schooling, the Education Office turned its attention to the reorganization of secondary schooling.

The Education Department attempted to put in place two parallel but distinct educational systems: elementary schooling for the mass of the population which would provide basic skills of literacy and moral discipline, and grammar schooling for the sons of the professional, large landowning and capitalist classes. The Education Department proposed secondary educational legislation that would have created a separate grammar school course, beginning in childhood and culminating in advanced training in the classics and mathematics. This stream would be reserved for boys and young men; in Egerton Ryerson's view, girls had no place in advanced secondary schools and certainly were not to be educated alongside boys. This plan was opposed successfully by middle-class parents and ratepayers who were interested in broadly accessible secondary schooling for their daughters as well as their sons. Pressure by the middle-class led to the development of public, tax-supported secondary schools under the School Act of 1871 (although user fees continued to be charged until 1921). This Act introduced compulsory school attendance, created the secondary school system, and joined elementary and secondary schools in a common administrative organization (Gidney and Millar, 1990).

Attempts were made to preserve two distinct classes of secondary schools and two distinct secondary courses through the creation of secondary schools and collegiate institutes. Secondary schools offered an English and commercial course, whose graduates were intended for the small white-collar sector of the economy. Collegiate institutes were intended to offer instruction in the classics for future university entrants. This distinction, in practice, was difficult to maintain. For many students, even those not intending to go to university (only about 25% of secondary graduates did go), the classics were popular. In the later part of the nineteenth century, the distinction between secondary schools and collegiate institutes became largely formal (collegiate institutes after 1883, for instance, had to have a gym).

Unsuccessful attempts were also made by the Education Department in the 1870s at standardized testing and at making the school course a direct preparation for work. From 1873 until 1882, students submitted to standardized secondary school entrance and later intermediate exams, with the standardized questions controlled largely by the

universities. This was an attempt to introduce the English system of payment-by-results into the province, a system that tied educational funding to student performance on province-wide tests. Such a system forced teachers to teach to the examination, rather than to student interests, and although opposition to it led to its abandonment in 1883, the experiment encouraged a privileged place for the written examination in the secondary school course.

Arguing that the schools could produce better farmers and workers if there were compulsory instruction in agriculture and the mechanical arts, the Education Department made these two subjects, with bookkeeping, mandatory in 1871. But these subjects proved extremely unpopular and were made optional in 1877. At no time did more than 5% of rural students enlist in optional agriculture courses. Farmers opposed textbook agriculture, preferring practical experience, and rural students were opposed to the school as a preparation for work. From the outset, students tended to see the school as a place which would be different from the world of work (Stamp, 1982; Curtis, 1990).

Most rural areas did not have the tax base or the numbers of students necessary for a secondary school in the late 19th century, but there was considerable demand for schooling beyond the elementary course. Rural and some village school boards began to offer "continuation" schooling in the 1890s, advanced education located in the elementary school. While school attendance remained irregular, enrolments were rising in this period, largely because the opportunities for employment for children and adolescents were declining. As young people were excluded from the paid labour force, attempts to make the elementary and secondary school course a "preparation for work" proliferated.

Globalization, 19th century style

Concerns about Canada's international economic position during the Great Depression, from the 1870s to the 1890s, led capitalists and politicians to agitate for the technical education of the working class through what was called "manual training." Organized labour, faced with the decline of many traditional crafts and with the undercutting of the apprenticeship system, was receptive to arguments about technical education as a path to economic security. With the cooperation of the labour movement, a business group established the Toronto Technical

School (later Central Technical School) in 1891 and promoted manual training in the schools.

The promotion of manual training in the Ontario school system in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a product of the intersection of a "New Education" movement with the activities of private capital. In part, the New Education movement was not particularly new; its suggestion that children learned by doing and its promotion of the manipulation of objects were common in the educational philosophy of a century earlier. In many ways, the "new" educators revived methods suggested by Johann Pestalozzi and others beginning in the late eighteenth century. In the methods proposed for manual training, careful examination of everyday objects was supposed to develop good habits of observation and judgement. Practical involvement in making things, so this philosophy of education held, would encourage all-round development. Children would develop the skills of their hands as well as those of their minds, and manual training would encourage exactitude. As the influential philosopher William James put it, manual training could produce "a habit of observation, a knowledge of the difference between accuracy and vagueness…because if you are doing a thing you must do it definitely right or definitely wrong."[2]

But many of the "new" educators added to these methods an explicit concern for education as a means to the democratic society. This concern was expressed in a period characterized by declining employment opportunities for young people and a related extension of the period of juvenile dependence. "Childhood" as a social stage was both getting longer and catching larger sections of the population. This gave a broader scope to education as practical training and created a greater interest among educators and educational administrators with plans to "catch" and retain greater numbers of young people in the schools. Attempts were also undertaken to begin formal education for much younger children. The first public kindergarten in Canada was opened in Toronto in 1883, and by 1893 there were 66 urban kindergartens in the province (Sutherland, 1976, p.174).

Manual training in practice

In its official Ontario version, the manual training curriculum of the 1890s included modelling and drawing for both boys and girls in the

elementary school curriculum, with boys proceeding to knife carving and girls to sewing. In the secondary school course, boys would study drafting and the use of hand tools to make household objects, while girls would learn sewing and cooking. The division along gender lines embodied assumptions about women's exclusion from and men's inclusion in the paid labour force, at a time when women's right to paid employment was hotly debated.

These curricular developments were opposed by some sections of the labour movement, which argued that the Education Department sought to undercut the existing apprenticeship program by teaching work skills at school. However, the progressive promise of manual training attracted other sections of the labour movement, as it seemed to promise to overcome the separation between manual and mental labour and to create workers with well-rounded skills. Urban school boards experimented with manual training courses in the 1890s.

The encouragement of manual training was subsidized by profits earned in the tobacco industry, an early form of industry-education partnership. With the sponsorship of the federal Minister of Agriculture, the MacDonald Manual Training Fund (MMTF) offered grants for staffing and maintaining manual training centres for a three-year period from 1899. Several cities instituted training centres, which offered manual training for boys. The MMTF also sponsored the teaching of domestic science for girls, and promoted rural school reform. One objective was the consolidation of small rural school sections so that manual training facilities could be placed in the countryside. When the Macdonald funds were exhausted, the provincial government continued to offer subsidies for manual training facilities.

This initiative by private capital and the federal and provincial governments tended to redefine the social purpose of schooling for most people in the province. Instead of labour's vision of manual training as the acquisition by workers of the scientific, technical and social skills that would lead them to an economically secure and culturally respectable position, capitalists and both provincial and federal government officials saw manual training more in terms of labour supply. For them, schooling was to be technical and social preparation for work.

These initiatives were not popular. In the countryside, the educational development with the broadest support was the

continuation school movement, which offered students post-elementary schooling in a familiar, local setting. Only about 10% of the population received any post-elementary schooling in Ontario in the first decade of the 1900s. Still, by the end of the decade, many continuation schools offered the entire secondary school course, and farm students voluntarily sought to study Latin and Greek, although there is little evidence to suggest they aimed to attend university. The educational institutions that attracted the most support from people in the countryside were those that allowed them flexibility and relatively open access to intellectual stimulation.

Towards social selection

By 1911, only 26 of 279 municipalities in the province offered manual training, and only one rural school did, despite federal and private encouragement. However, this was not through lack of government effort. In the first decade of the 20th century, the Education Department further differentiated the secondary school course, as the potential uses of secondary education became clearer in the province's developing industrial economy. Regulations passed in 1904 created seven distinct secondary school programs and loosened the connection between secondary school education and university entrance. Several of these programs were two-year diploma programs, the least popular of which was the agriculture program. The technical and commercial programs were more successful in the cities and expanded rapidly. They were seen by working-class parents and students as paths to employment in the developing clerical and technical sectors of the economy. In Toronto, the private Toronto Technical School was taken over by the Board of Education and both the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the Trades and Labour Congress pressed for comprehensive technical schooling. The 1911 Industrial Education Act allowed the creation of technical secondary schools, or technical departments in academic secondary schools, and remained in force until the 1960s.

In Toronto, the emergence of distinct secondary school courses was most completely developed, highlighted by the construction of Central Technical School in 1915 and the Central High School of Commerce in 1916. These developments have been said to mark the transition from the secondary school as an "equalizer" to the secondary school as an

agency of social selection, a function formerly performed outside this institution entirely (Stamp, 1984, p.84).

The role of the school as social selector was reinforced by the increasing exclusion of young people from the labour force and by laws and administrative activities which extended compulsory attendance during the 1920s. Amendments to the Factories Act made it illegal to employ people under the age of 16, while the school-leaving age was raised to 16 by the Adolescent School Attendance Act of 1921. The School Attendance Act of 1920 allowed local school boards to hire truant officers. At the same time, the continuing demand for juvenile labour led to a set of exemptions from the application of these regulations in many cases. But the role of the secondary school as an institution for retaining young people until they entered the labour force was solidified.

It wasn't just large technical and commercial secondary schools that were planned and built in Toronto (and other centres) in the early years following World War One; several "auxiliary", "Handicraft" and "Junior Vocational" classes and schools were also opened up. These smaller schools were set up to "train pupils to the utmost of their limited capacities" as the literature of the time put it. Enrolment here expanded from fewer than 100 students in 1923 to over 1,400 ten years later, but the popularity soon waned as many parents and students came to see that these schools led nowhere. By the early 1950s, enrolment had dropped to less than 700, and school officials fretted about how "to make sure that all appropriate pupils find their way into these [special] schools" (Toronto Board of Education, 1952). To judge from the continued ebb of enrolments for the rest of the decade, they were certainly not successful in convincing parents and students of the "benefits" of these special streamed classes. However, as we shall see, the post-Second World War "baby boom" and strong immigration not only kept these special classes in existence, but later led to much expanded streaming initiatives.

Between the Wars

By 1928, 25% of secondary school students were in full-time vocational schools, and a Training College for Technical Teachers was opened in Hamilton. Vocational guidance staff was also placed in schools in this decade to direct students to likely job preparation.

During the Depression of the 1930s (like the recessions of the early 1980s and 1990s), many people stayed in school longer as an alternative to unemployment. Secondary school enrolments increased by over 10% in 1932 and these increased enrolments took place mainly in the academic program, even for those students not intending to go to university. The academic course was seen to offer better opportunities for future employment, unlike the technical courses, which offered training in depressed branches of industry. Attempts were made in the late 1930s to offer a common Grade 9 and 10 curriculum to all Ontario students, but these foundered on the inability of many rural districts to offer shop and home economics courses. Attempts to abandon standardized testing of Grade 13 students failed in face of opposition from the universities. Similarly, attempts by progressive educators to revise the school course in the direction of social activism and social democracy were checked by the authoritarian political climate of the late 1930s.

By the late 1930s, 84% of enrolled students were completing elementary school, about 21% of all students were completing Grade 12, and 13% completed Grade 13. After World War Two, however, enrolments in secondary school increased enormously in absolute terms and substantially in relative terms. Many students attended small to medium size rural secondary schools with enrolments in the 3-400 range and 75% of all students enrolled in the general or academic courses. Despite the fact that the vast majority of students did not continue to Grade 13 or to university, only a small minority enrolled in either the technical or commercial secondary school course. Where students had a choice, even those destined for the wage labour market tended to select the academic secondary school course. School as direct preparation for work was relatively unpopular.

Preparing for the post-war economy

Even before the Second World War finished, officials in the Ontario government began looking towards the role that schools would play in the post-war era. In March of 1945 the government announced the formation of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario, chaired by Justice John Hope. Twenty-one members were appointed to this Commission by the provincial government, 17 men and four women.

While this group included a few representatives of the educational bureaucracy, the majority were members of the province's corporate elite. The mandate given the commission was extremely broad:

> … to inquire into and report upon the provincial education system … including courses of study, text books, examinations, financing, and the general system and scheme of elementary and secondary schools … as well as the selection and training of teachers, inspectors, and other officials of such schools, and the system of provincial and local school administration. (Report of the Royal Commission, 1950, pp.v-vi)

Much has been made about the lengthy deliberations of this commission (over five years), the size of the report (933 pages), the number of disagreements and minority reports in the final document, the provincial government's distancing of itself from the more controversial recommendations, and the fact that a number of proposals were never enacted (e.g. terminating financial support for separate schools at Grade 6, using English as the official language of instruction and communication in all schools, and amalgamating school districts into larger units of administration) (Silcox, 1952; Stewart, 1955). What has often been forgotten in all of this, however, are many of the other recommendations that were subsequently taken up in legislation, regulation, policy (written or otherwise) and programs for the province's school system.

In fact, the Hope Commission led to a number of significant changes, especially in relation to the increasing role of the school system in the area of preparing students for various levels and types of training and jobs. Compulsory attendance regulations were extended, with the exception of farm children and those 14-16 year olds requesting work certificates. In 1951, memoranda from the Department of Education drew on the Commission's findings to emphasize that Grade 10 "should be recognized as the end of a definite stage in the school education of the majority of pupils", thus emphasizing a curriculum mandate given two years earlier (under the advice of the Commission), requiring "a well-rounded course for pupils who leave school by the time they reach the age of sixteen years so that they may finish final schooling with a sense of achievement rather than failure" (quoted in Stewart, 1955, p.25-6). In 1954, following the Commission's explicit recommendations,

an Act was passed expanding the Education Department's role in technical training in the province.

Most specifically, the Hope Commission proved *instrumental* in initiating a number of policies relating directly to the increase of streaming practices and Special Education programs in the province's schools. Grouping by ability in elementary school classrooms was promoted through directives which described the new Primary Division (Grades 1-3) program as "offer[ing] a useful means of providing for individual differences and varying roles of attainment" and stating that "for subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic, the class may be organized into a small number of groups, each group of children having the same degree of attainment." In addition, programs in the senior elementary grades were to "provide for each individual those activities which are adapted to his [*sic*] particular capacities and in which he may participate with reasonable success and satisfaction", while further research was being undertaken "to maintain a challenging secondary school course for pupils of good ability and industrious habits [and] what means are used to fit [other] pupils into courses appropriate to their interests and abilities" (quoted in Stewart, 1955, p.33).

The implementation of these changes came first in the larger urban areas, so we begin this analysis with the public secondary schools of the City of Toronto after the Second World War. We will see that the change began with serious and legitimate debate by school officials, politicians and educators about how schooling should be structured in the city.

General school enrolments in Toronto rose so sharply that by the late 1950's it became clear that the overall secondary school system would have to be enlarged greatly. But rather than simply building more collegiates and technical/commercial schools, Board administrators instead began to advocate for a dramatic increase in special education programs. They urged trustees to add an entirely new level of secondary schools to the system, in addition to the "junior vocational schools" which had been in operation since the 1920's. School board officials said this new structure would cater to a newly identified class of students: "not-so-slow learners who now attend the normal type of Secondary School but who do not profit to any marked degree from their attendance" (Toronto Board of Education, 1952).

As compared to a true concern (however misplaced) for these "slow learners," other motives seemed to lie beneath the official concern for

"not-so-slow" students. This had to do with a growing apprehension in some quarters about the "declining quality" of schooling in the collegiates and technical schools. School officials claimed parents were putting pressure on them to "raise standards" in these programs. As an official report put it,

> there is a need to refine and intensify the "educational opportunities" offered in the "normal" secondary schools. From the official point of view, it was difficult to accomplish this task when those schools contained "an undue proportion of pupils of limited ability." (Toronto Board of Education, 1952, p.8)

It seemed clear that, in putting forward a new level of special education program for students, with lower expectations than those of the regular secondary school but "higher" than those of the junior vocational schools, school officials also had other objectives in mind. A prime factor here was the desire to "save" or "raise" the quality of the technical and commercial secondary schools.

As it turned out, board administrators initially experienced considerable difficulty in convincing the school trustees about the efficacy of this new stratum of segregated schools. In fact, the whole idea of segregating students at all was questioned. At the Metro Toronto Board of Education, an advisory council noted in 1959 that there was a "tendency in areas of Metro Toronto to move away from the idea of segregation" because, as it reported, the "retention of contacts with a normal school society" outweighed any possible advantages of a segregated program. Not only that, some were also concerned about the "stigma" attached to such "dead-end" programs, and the possibility that intelligence testing — the main criterion for admission to these programs — "may be misleading" (Metro Toronto Board, 1959). As a result of these findings, some Toronto school trustees balked at further streaming; they requested their director to report on these new views, "with special reference to existing schools" in the city (TBE Minutes, May 7, 1959).

That particular report came before the City of Toronto school board in the spring of 1960. However, despite these more progressive attitudes reflected in the Metro Board report, the Toronto director argued strongly for the continued segregation of students whom the system deemed less capable. He made no attempt to justify the

existing vocational programs on academic or vocational grounds. Rather, he asserted that "considerable success" had been noted "so far as the social and emotion [*sic*] adjustment of the pupils is concerned." Besides, his report continued, even if these programs were reintegrated into regular schools, "the so-called stigma attached to attendance at a junior vocational school would not necessarily be eliminated" (Toronto Board of Education Report, June 7, 1960).

Nevertheless, officials had to admit that there were problems in the vocational stream. Enrolments were declining, and it became clear that this was due mainly to increasing parental and student resistance to segregated programs. The Toronto Board did not have, as its officials put it, "the necessary authority to compel students to attend" such programs. However its Director of Education was optimistic that "the construction of modern facilities … might help reduce the reluctance of parents to send their children to such schools." He also expressed the hope in his report that a new level of Special Education schools would let the existing technical schools be "upgraded" in order to "make them more attractive to those pupils who are not achieving in the academic schools." Finally, he stated bluntly, and with true bureaucratic reasoning, that a decision about new directions for schooling "must be reached in the near future" because new building plans had to be finalized.

Some trustees were still not convinced by these arguments, so a number of meetings were held over the summer and fall of 1960. A bevy of "experts" was paraded past the trustees, ranging from board superintendents and principals of the special schools in the city to outside officials representing such diverse agencies as the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto at the local level, the federal Unemployment Insurance Commission and the federal Department of Labour. Their message was simple, clear and unanimous. Special new programs had to be developed in order to avoid the "dropout problem", and to provide training for "useful and satisfying occupations" (Toronto Board of Education, June 7, 1960).

It was no mere coincidence that, at the same time as these talks were going on at the local level in Toronto, federal and provincial government officials were laying the groundwork for what was to become the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act. These measures were being planned for several reasons. First, as the labour market for young people shrank immediately after World War Two with

the return of veterans, and further overall shrinkage with the onset of an economic recession in the late 1950s, increased educational attainment came to be perceived as necessary for economic success. Secondly, there were massive post-war increases in enrolment in the traditional school system, and plans had to be undertaken to deal with this fact. For example, between 1945 and 1963, the percentage of the population aged 15-19 enrolled in the Ontario school system would more than double, from 35.1 to 73.5%. Secondary education became increasingly important as a means of dealing with young people who would otherwise be unemployed.

Another factor also played heavily into decisions to stream secondary schooling in a new direction. In the late 1950s, under the impact of Cold War fears about Soviet technological superiority underlined by the launching of the Sputnik in 1958, federal government officials began to involve themselves more directly in policies relating to school-based work training programs. The fact that such matters were clearly under provincial jurisdiction mattered not, it would appear. For example, C.R. Ford, federal director of technical and vocational training, announced in a widely publicized speech that "the responsibility for the direction, administration and coordination of the programs for training manpower is much more important than some [provincial] Departments of Education realize." To make the point even more bluntly, he went on to say that the "federal branch thus had a clear interest in developing a programme which would produce change in provincial priorities" (Cameron, 1972, p.164).

In 1960 the Canada Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act was passed, in the midst of debate about the competitiveness of the Canadian economy internationally and debate over the lack of skilled labour in certain key trades in a period of rising unemployment. The resulting Federal-Provincial Technical and Vocational Training Agreement, in force from 1961 to 1967, provided federal finance for the construction of vocational and technical facilities, which would offer:

> courses, given as an integral part of a secondary school education, in which at least one half of the school time is devoted to technical, commercial and other vocational subjects or courses designed to prepare students for entry into employment by developing occupational qualifications. (Cameron, 1972, p.166)

The federal government, in other words, sought to orient secondary school education directly to employment, to make secondary school a form of direct job training.

The Robarts Plan

The consequences of this federal legislation for Ontario schooling directions were remarkable and rapid. Given the burgeoning secondary school student population that had to be accommodated and given the promise of "free" federal money to build the necessary schools, the Ontario government was anxious to comply with the conditions necessary to receive this funding. But the long-standing secondary school syllabus, with its emphasis on academic programs, stood as an obstacle to acquiring these funds. Accordingly, an entirely new provincial schooling program was, in the words of one observer of the time, "hastily conceived" and sprung on the educational community in the late summer of 1961 "like a bolt from the blue" (Arvay, 1984, p. 269). This new "Robarts Plan" (named after John Robarts, the Minister of Education at the time) was developed not through consulting or involving the secondary school community in the province, nor even many of the officials within the Department of Education. Rather, this new plan for revamping the secondary schools of Ontario was conceived and drawn up by a small but powerful committee, composed largely of management officials of the University of Toronto with close ties to corporate business and the provincial cabinet. In fact, this committee had been active for a number of years and was originally established in order to develop methods for controlling the number of potential applicants to the province's universities, given the demographic shifts caused by the post-war baby-boom (Arvay, 1984; Fleming, 1971; Stamp, 1973).

In late June of 1961, Robarts announced that the province had signed an agreement with the federal government for school construction funds under the new Act. Just two months later, he released the details of the new syllabus in a press release:

> Ontario's secondary school system will be re-organized on a three-branch basis… Commencing in September, 1962, pupils entering Grade 9 will be carefully interviewed and counselled, in close

consultation with the parents and they will chose one of three
branches in which to enrol… When he [sic] enters Grade 10, the
pupil will decide whether he wishes to proceed to higher education
via the five-year programme ending in Grade 13, or whether his
abilities and interests indicate that he should select the four-year
programme and finish school after Grade 12. (Arvay, 1984, p.272)[3]

While these three streams (Arts and Science, Business and Commerce,
and Science Technology and Trades) were given the rhetoric of equality,
each supposedly involving both four-year and five-year programs, the
reality turned out to be quite different. In practice, only Arts and Science
graduates were university bound, as university admittance policies soon
made clear. The rest of the students were left in the lower-streamed
commercial, technical and vocational programs and their numbers
soon burgeoned. In fact, the new curriculum doubled the percentage
of those enrolled in the vocational programs across the province, at
the expense of academic programs, to 46.4% of all secondary school
students in 1967, as compared to 23.7% in 1960. In terms of students,
this represented over a threefold absolute increase in the numbers
enrolled in the lower-streamed programs, from 72,000 in 1961 to over
232,000 students in 1967.

In addition to curricular changes, the Ontario government also
agreed to fund the other half of school construction costs, providing a
very welcome "cost free" approach for local boards and municipalities
struggling to deal with the costs of burgeoning post-war baby-
boom student enrolments. This approach, however, demanded that
increasing numbers of students attend lower stream programs.

These radical changes to secondary schooling in Toronto were
replicated across the province. As a result of the federal and provincial
provision of "free money" for building and equipping vocational
schools, 278 new vocational or composite schools were built in the
province during this time, along with major alterations or additions
undertaken to 55 other schools.

The streaming of secondary schools, propelled by the "free"
federal and provincial money and the province's Robarts Plan, spread
throughout Ontario during the 1960's, much as it had done in Toronto.
In many centres, especially in rural communities, the vocational and
technical programs were housed (if only for economic reasons) in

composite schools along with the academic stream. Some argued that this did eliminate some of the negative, outward perceptions of student segregation, allowing at least the perception of possible student mobility "upward" to a higher stream during a school career. However, others suggest that segregation and stigma within these schools still occurred, as different students, and teachers, occupied very clearly differentiated spaces and programs within the building. In addition, questions were also raised as to whether or not this purported possibility of upward mobility really did occur. In fact, at least one study indicated that by 1980, compared with students in the urban centres of the province, an even higher percentage of the rural student population had been streamed into the lower levels of secondary school programs (Anisef, 1980).

In the case of Toronto, as knowledge of these plans filtered down to the local level in 1960, along with the reports of "free money" to build such vocational schools, the resolve of the Toronto trustees shifted. By the end of the year, a majority was convinced of the officials' "wisdom" and they made formal decisions to build a new kind of school for "a program which will provide a new type of Secondary School to serve pupils in the slow learning group" (Toronto Board of Education, 1960). So completely had they shifted, in fact, that they turned aside a last-minute recommendation requiring that only one school of this type be built before an "assessment" was made. Instead, they threw open the floodgates to the federal and provincial largesse.

During the 1960's, trustees and administrators at the Toronto Board took full advantage of this new-found "free money" for capital expansion. Whatever their earlier reservations about the possible negative effects of the continued streaming of students, these concerns were soon lost in the flurry of new building plans. In very short order, eight new secondary schools — four "vocational" schools and four "special high schools" — were planned, built and opened. None of these schools was designed to offer higher level technical or commercial programs, even though schools of this type could have been built under the federal and provincial money. Instead, all eight were designed for the lowest levels of streaming, and all eight were built south of Bloor Street — a line historically dividing the working-class sector of the city from the more affluent north end. "The concentration of student population in the City proper," said

a board report at the time, (meaning, of course, the working-class population) "was such as to make the establishment of special schools for vocational training a practical arrangement" (Metropolitan Toronto School Board, 1963). Students in these schools were even segregated by gender. The four vocational schools were officially designated single-sex buildings, while most of the "special high schools" were gender-segregated by virtue of the programs they offered (e.g. automotive repair, plumbing, bricklaying on the one hand, and industrial sewing, nursing aides and typing on the other).

Not surprisingly, the construction of these eight schools soon led to a large increase in the number of students streamed into their Special Education programs. To be sure, the new school buildings themselves, complete with elaborately outfitted classrooms and shops, together with the bright promise (if not the reality) of training for "useful and satisfying occupations" during a time of economic recession, served to attract a sizeable clientele during the first few years. School board officials did their part to make this happen by promoting the new "multi-level" system and seeing to it that plenty of students got sent to these new schools. Yet they insisted that, before any placements were made, every student be properly evaluated and only those who fell within the low ability categories were admitted. One school official said at the time,

> Today no student is admitted to a vocational school in Toronto until he (*sic*) has been thoroughly examined by a variety of psychological devices to determine precisely what are his learning difficulties. In addition, his entire record in elementary school is reviewed and his former teachers provide further resource material about the child's learning experiences. The attitudes and aspirations of his parents are also taken into account and the aim is to provide each child with a program tailored to fit his own needs. (*Toronto Telegra*m, March 11, 1969)

The initial attraction of these new schools did not last long. Students were the first to raise questions, and voiced concerns about the programs and the way they were being treated in them. In the fall of 1968, students at one of the new low-streamed schools staged a walkout to protest against what they took to be repressive dress and

behavioural regulations. One principal responded by stating that these rules had been established to enhance "the school's image among employers." "It's the man who pays the piper who calls the tune," he said; "I want employers at the school to see our product." School officials blamed "outside agitators" for the student unrest; one school administrator commented, "I don't think any of the kids here have the intelligence to stage a protest march on their own" [*This Magazine is About Schools*, Fall 1968]. Such attitudes may well have added to the students' uneasiness about their treatment at school.

Students weren't alone in their concerns; many adults as well soon suspected that these schools did not represent the same class and ethnic mix of students and parents in the city at large. This growing concern was officially confirmed in 1970 when a newly elected group of reform-minded trustees instructed the research department of the board to conduct an "every student survey," one which compared each student's socio-economic background to the level of program in which he or she had been placed. The results were devastating (Wright, 1970). The study showed enrolment in these new schools to consist almost entirely of students from working-class, ethnic/racial minority, and single-parent families. The survey found that a working-class child ran a *10 times* greater chance of ending up in a vocational program, than did a child of the professional or managerial class. Similarly, over one third of all children from unemployed families, and well over half of those from families on welfare, ended up in these schools.

Inner-city parents didn't need official statistics to show them their children were being streamed at the bottom. The nature of the program and its effects on children became increasingly clear to them by what they saw themselves: their children's failure to learn the basic academic skills, the overall frustrations they felt, the stigma they carried, and the alarming dropout rates. Other Toronto school board studies during this time added to this concern. One, for example, found that only 15% of former students of these schools — among the 60% who could be located at all — held jobs in any way related to the program in which they had been enrolled. And 40% of those found held no jobs at all (Reich and Zeigler, 1972). Further schooling or training was beyond the realm of possibility for these former students. Even the small minority who actually "graduated" from these programs — fewer than 20%, according to a 1985 province-wide study (King and

Hughes, 1985) — held certificates that did not even admit them to many of the province's trade apprenticeship programs.

By 1970, opposition to these new structures had reached new heights. The brief to the School Board from working-class mothers in the Trefann Court area of the inner city sent a clear message: the vocational schools and the elementary level "Opportunity Classes" into which their children were channelled at a very early age were the "dead-end division" of the school system. The top officials and several trustees of the school board gave a response that was typical of these times: if there were problems in the system, students themselves were at fault, either because of "innate ability" or because they came from "deprived" family backgrounds (Martell, 1974).

Such remarks enraged parents even more, and the Trefann Court Mothers' brief became the focal point for a lengthy and heated debate between inner-city parents and the school system. The shifting of blame to students also appalled some inner-city teachers, who saw the problem in large class sizes, lack of resources, and the structure of streaming itself. In November 1971, parents and teachers at Park School prepared another lengthy brief that reiterated the concerns of the Trefann Court mothers and expanded on the information exposed in the Board's Every Student Survey. A large group of parents and teachers brought this brief to the management committee of the school board with demands for major changes to inner-city programs — as "an alternative to your expanding therapeutic services to downtown Toronto school children" (Martell, 1974, p.56).

The first reactions by the school board to these community attacks were simply to ignore them; when they become too pressing, they attempted to refute them in a flurry of publicity and official reports. By 1972, however, under pressure from students concerned about the stigma attached to attending the new vocational schools, the Board shifted its strategy to that of allowing, or even promoting, token change that was deemed useful. For example, after some debate, trustees agreed to drop the label "vocational" from the eight low-stream schools, and rename them instead "secondary schools." Such was the substance of change. But events quickened later in 1972, when a report condemning the program, written by a social worker assigned to one of the vocational schools, was leaked to the local media (Lind, p.61). With that publicity, reform trustees pushed the board to set up a

"work group" charged with examining the whole spectrum of special schools in the city and with recommending changes to the board.

This new "Vocational Schools Work Group" spent the next six months visiting schools to consult teachers and students, holding public meetings, hearing delegations, and examining programs in other jurisdictions. Not just concerned parents and community activists attended these hearings; so too did teachers and school officials who supported the system. The comments of this latter group provided even more clarification of the official views of streaming. One principal stated bluntly that he "didn't think that the investigation would bring about many significant changes … [because the system] had been refined about as far as it can be." For him, the trouble was clear-cut. "The inescapable problem is that parents will not accept the fact that their children have to go to vocational schools." Similarly, when questioned about the system's failure to give job skills to many students, a vocational school shop teacher was quoted as saying that it was not the school's responsibility to train students for particular jobs. Instead, he said, the school "teaches them to be good citizens. We teach them work ethics. They learn to open a door for a lady" (*Globe and Mail*, February 21, 1973).

As compared to these pro-streaming comments, representatives of immigrant and minority parent groups raised concerns at these meetings about the high number of their children who had been streamed into vocational programs. However, as often as not, school officials replied that the responsibility lay with the students, their families and the community at large. One school board trustee suggested that inner-city students ended up in the low-level school programs because their "intellectual potential" had been negatively affected by the lack of proper proteins at the pre-natal stage. The answer, said the trustee, was for the school board to encourage the Board of Health to provide proper "protein supplements" to needy pregnant women (*Toronto Citizen*, March 9, 1973).

In the end, the recommendations of the Work Group did little to change things across the vocational schools. Progressive trustees admitted what was already obvious, that it was mainly the poor who attended these schools, and the official rationale had "shifted to a model which is at least as much concerned with therapy as with efficiency … a kind of shelter house protecting students from the

complexities, difficulties and vitality which exist in the outside world" (Toronto Board of Education, 1973). The progressive trustees agreed with much of what the students had told them during their school visits — that the program imposed a stigma, that the students were patronized, and, to improve the situation, courses had to be made more challenging.

Ironically though, the most significant proposal in the Work Group's report — that of closing down at least one of the vocational schools — had already been considered by board officials, because enrolment at that school was at only one third of its capacity. In fact, by 1975, less than five years after the last school had opened, the overall enrolment in the five new vocational schools had dropped to about three-quarters of their actual capacity. Students and parents were voting with their feet, and, over the following decade, not one, but four, of the eight original vocational schools were abandoned. By 1980, with the exception of what was then a very small program for female students, every one of the eight schools had closed.

What were the overall results of the Robarts Plan? In terms of the kinds of students who ended up in each of the streams, an Ontario study published in 1980 proved extremely informative (Anisef, 1980). It found that only 50% of the students from families in the lowest socio-economic quarter of the population were put in academic streams, while more than 90% of students from the highest quartile landed there. Only about half of all rural students got into academic programs while almost 75% of students in larger urban centres did. Finally, more than 25% of students in the lowest socio-economic status were put into commercial programs, as compared to fewer than 4% of those in the highest socio-economic group.

Comparative Toronto Board data seemed to confirm the province-wide picture. According to a 1970 report, 58% of all secondary students were enrolled in what were called Advanced Level courses, while 26.9% were in General Level and 15.5% in Basic Level studies (Toronto Board of Education, 1970 [#91]). However, a similar survey of Grade 9 students only undertaken in the city twelve years later (1982) indicated negligible change: 56.9% were now in Advanced courses, as compared to 26.3% and 16.8% in General and Basic Levels respectively (Toronto Board of Education, 1982). In fact, since this later report surveyed Grade 9 students only, one could conclude that things had actually

gotten worse. Board data suggests that a significant number of students drop down a level during their secondary school career, as students who are not achieving to the satisfaction of school officials are encouraged to enrol in less challenging courses and programs. Therefore, if the entire secondary school population had been surveyed four years later, the "drop down" would probably have shown that streaming into lower-stream programs had become worse.

Across the province, given the rapidity and lack of consultation with which it was introduced, and especially the stark nature of its streaming agenda, the Robarts Plan came under heavy criticism almost from the day it was announced (Fleming, 1972). Therefore, there was little surprise when it was officially discarded less than a decade later in 1969, soon after the federal assistance plan itself ended. Eventually, it would be formally replaced by a new, seemingly more egalitarian, provincial secondary school syllabus. However, as we shall see, the legacy of several hundred specially built and equipped vocational school buildings in Ontario, intrinsically helped ensure the continuation of stark streaming outcomes across the province.

Hall-Dennis and beyond

By the early 1980s, a third post-War syllabus was unveiled, "Ontario Schools: Intermediate and Senior" (OS:IS). On the surface, it appeared to be more progressive, student-centred and egalitarian. Guided partly by the aftermath of the celebrated 1968 Hall-Dennis Report (resulting from an Ontario Royal Commission on Education), the three streams of the Robarts plan were replaced by a credit system in which secondary school diplomas were awarded upon the accumulation of set numbers of course credits. However, virtually all of these courses were to be organized and identified at one of three levels of "difficulty," Advanced, General or Basic. While lip service was given to labelling only the courses and not the students, the reality was often the opposite: students soon carried the labels; in addition, whole programs, school wings and even entire school buildings were designated as offering only one, or at most two, of the three levels of programs.

The range of choice open to students was initially large, but a number of outcomes, perhaps unintended, occurred as a result. First, the revised curriculum quickly spelled the death of some traditional academic

subjects in many schools: secondary school Latin, for instance. At the same time, enrolments in history, languages and literature courses declined markedly. Few secondary schools offered courses able to inspire the progressive energies of students freed from traditional course requirements, with the result that many selected (or were encouraged to select) the least challenging of traditional course offerings.

In addition, the purported "freedom of choice" for students in course selection was also accompanied by an increase in secondary school guidance and testing departments, whose aim was and is to ensure students' course selections were "appropriate." As a result, students from professional and employer-class families tended to be funnelled, nonetheless, towards those course credits necessary for university entrance. At the same time, bias against working-class and minority students, along with the continued existence of 278 school buildings, planned, built and equipped for vocational training, helped to ensure that vocational streaming would remain the reality across the province, with many of these students being "encouraged" to enroll in vocationally-oriented programs and courses. For example, one study of Ottawa secondary school guidance departments undertaken during this time (Russell, 1987) found that guidance personnel considered it "fitting" and "appropriate" that working-class girls not aspire to attend university, even where their academic performance suggested they were capable of it.

Did OS:IS change the streaming situation for Ontario's secondary school students during the 1980s? Official province-wide data are difficult to obtain, partly because the annual Ministry statistical reports did not provide information in this sensitive area. One independent province-wide study published in the mid-1980s found that little more than half of all students (57%) were in the Advanced-level programs, as compared to 36% in General and 7% in Basic Level (King, 1985). In addition, as a result of pressures from a number of sources, even the intent of a more egalitarian program was soon undermined. For a number of years, there had been increasing demand from employers' organizations for more direct work-oriented secondary school programs — a call which also resonated with many working-class parents, anxious that their daughters and sons escape unemployment (see, for example, Ontario Economic Council, 1980). In addition, with the implementation of OS:IS there was increasing pushback by those opposed to the

purported "frills" of progressive education. As a result, the Ministry of Education soon acted to increase the numbers of compulsory credits for secondary school graduation, and finally to limit severely the range of optional subjects (see, for example, O'Sullivan, 1999).

Hopes among advocates of destreaming were raised with the release of a highly-publicized study in early 1988. George Radwanski, a former newspaper editor had been commissioned by the Liberal government to study the schooling system in relation to the increasing numbers of dropouts. His report, while conservative in many other ways, did recommend destreaming the system. Acting on this study, an all-party committee of the Legislature met during 1988 and recommended that the government destream at least the Grade 9 classrooms of the province's secondary schools. Subsequently, the Liberal provincial premier, under pressure from the province's ethnic and racial minorities on which his party counted for electoral support, announced in the Throne Speech of May 1989 that this would happen.

However, there was little or no follow-up. Six local boards in the province undertook small pilot projects in this regard, aided by special provincial funding, during the 1990-91 academic year. The election of the New Democratic Party to power in September of 1990 would soon lead to an effort to extend destreaming to Grade Ten. This built upon a report of the Premier's Council published earlier in the same year with strong input from the labour movement. It recommended extending the unstreamed Transition Years of Grades 7-8-9 in the Government plan to include an unstreamed Grade 10 by the Year 2000 (Premiers Council, 1990, pp. 38-39). It cited research showing that this would lower dropout rates by taking the experience of a common curriculum up to school-leaving age (Goodlad, 1984, Carnegie Council 1989).[4] While Ministry officials continued work on the implementation of Grade 9 destreaming through the pilot projects, a Cabinet submission was prepared under Minister Tony Silipo, in which destreaming Grade 10 was proposed. When it reached the inner cabinet of the Rae Government in early 1993, it was abandoned on the direction of Premier Bob Rae, despite the party's long-standing policies against streaming of working-class children, reaffirmed at the 1992 NDP policy convention in Hamilton. Much of the opposition to destreaming had come from the public secondary school teachers union (OSSTF). The Federation opposed such "radical" changes in the school system and,

since the Premier was very much in debt to it for past electoral support, it got its way. A subsequent cabinet shuffle replaced Tony Silipo by Dave Cooke as Minister of Education. Cooke was kept on a much tighter leash by the Premier. In place of the Cabinet submission came a Royal Commission on Learning. Its report, published in December 1994, reiterated the Rae government's position to destream Grade 9 only, again citing the hostility of OSSTF. By June of the following year, the Rae government, having forfeited the support of all the teachers' federations through its Social Contract legislation, lost the election in a landslide to the Progressive Conservatives under Mike Harris. With this came the end of any hopes for further destreaming possibilities at the provincial level.

At the local level, experiences in Toronto may suggest how limited the possibilities were for effective change in streaming practices. In 1988, after several years of debate, much pressure from a lobby group of parents and teachers, and initial opposition from a number of more conservative trustees, the Toronto Board voted to open one non-streamed secondary school in 1990. During the 1988-89 school year, a Board-wide committee met to discuss and recommend plans for getting the project successfully off the ground. By the time the proposal had gone the rounds of school officials and trustees, and the recommendations had been voted on at the Board, major sections had been changed — to the point that the original lobby group felt obliged to condemn the entire project. In fact, a floundering vocational school was selected to become the "new" school — the name was changed, but virtually the same administration and staff was kept on, with little if any structured in-service staff development. Not surprisingly, the project collapsed soon afterwards.[5]

The history of education in Ontario demonstrates that popular educational institutions — ones that people wish to attend and to attend over the course of their lives — have been relatively small in scale, local in the population upon which they draw, responsive to that population's needs, and flexible in the conditions of access they offer. But before we consider alternatives, we shall look more closely at the current practices of educational streaming in Ontario.

ENDNOTES

1 See Henderson (1969) and James Strachan (1820). Read critically, Spragge's account of this period is still valuable (G.W. Spragge, 1941 and 1951) Also, Curtis (1983); Houston and Prentice (1988) and J.D. Wilson (1974)

2 See Pestalozzi (1915), Mayo (1851) and Dewey (1916). James is quoted in Corrigan, Curtis and Lanning (1987). For a general analysis of manual training, see Sutherland (1976), and Lanning (1991).

3 Not elaborated in his quote here was the third option — enrolment in a "vocational" stream which is described more fully below.

4 It should be noted that one of this volume's authors, David Clandfield, was a principal author of both the relevant chapter in the Premier's Council Report and the Cabinet submission that proposed a similar policy in 1992-93.

5 In contrast, when middle-class parents lobbied for a more progressive secondary school setting sometime later, the board readily provided an empty building, and selected a specially-identified principal and core staff who would spend an entire preliminary year planning for the program and then hire teachers considered suitable. Eighteen years later, this school remains today very successful, in such demand that a lottery is held each year to determine the Grade 9 entrance cohort.

3. STREAMING IN ONTARIO'S SCHOOLS

Harry Smaller

Introduction

As the previous chapter has shown, state schools in Ontario have streamed students since they were originally established in the 19th century. In this chapter, we will show the ways in which this streaming happens — formally and informally at the elementary school level, and in formally structured ways in high school. Secondary school streaming was open and blatant in the years following the introduction of the Robarts Plan in 1960. However, in recent years it has become more difficult to discern these streams, given the increasingly sophisticated ways in which programs and courses are now labelled and often masked. Regardless, once students enter these streams in their Grade 9 year, few students change channels, and fewer still move from a less to a more advanced stream.

The first part of this chapter examines the ways in which this powerful streaming process occurs in elementary schools, and the overall effect it has on our children. The second part of the chapter extends this analysis into the streaming that occurs in Ontario's traditional secondary schools. The third section examines the ways in which the definitions and structures of Ontario programs and schools (both elementary and secondary) are expanding beyond their traditional boundaries. Many of these new programs and schools are being touted as innovative, meeting the interests and needs of an increasingly diverse population. However, it is our view that many only add to the inequitable ways in which Ontario students are being

streamed. Finally, we will explore the role of teachers and parents in relation to issues of school streaming.

There are a couple of points we should note at the outset: First, Special Education programs also constitute a major streaming process within our school system; these programs will be dealt with separately, in Chapter Four. Second, it was often difficult for us to access schooling data from across the province, particularly in relation to success rates based on differences of race, ethnicity or social class. School boards are understandably not keen about providing information, that might point to their failures in this regard. Where available, we draw on province-wide data to explore issues of streaming in schools. In some instances, however, we were left only with data from the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) — a board that has been under some pressure from its diverse parental population to provide this kind of information.

Why is streaming bad?

Why is streaming a problem at all? The answer is clear: students' "life chances" are very much determined by the kind of high school program in which they are eventually placed. For virtually every student, this decision is made by the start of Grade 9, and is usually based on his/her achievement level at the end of Grade 8. This achievement level, which we will deal with later in this chapter, is very much affected by streaming processes in place throughout our elementary schools.

Students in the lower streams of secondary schools have always had far less of a chance of graduating. During the 1980s, almost 80% of all Ontario students in Basic, the lowest level program, did not graduate. By comparison, almost 80% of students in the Advanced level did graduate (King, 1985). One 1980 Toronto study of students aged 14 and 15, who had received "leaving school early" permits, indicated that over 80% of these young teenagers came from families in the lowest socio-economic groupings (Cheng *et al.*, 1980)

Recent studies suggest that things have not really changed much for the better. Since that time, while the terminology of the official "Basic level" programs has been phased out, the latest streaming structure (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999) requires students to choose a program of study that includes Grade 9 and 10 courses that

are classified as Academic (university-directed), Applied (college-directed), or Locally Developed Essentials (workplace-directed). One study undertaken in 2003 found that students in the lowest-income quartile were three times as likely to drop out as their counterparts in the highest quartile (Zeman , 2007). A more recent Toronto study published in 2012 found that, by the end of five years of secondary school (2006-2011), 25% of students had dropped out (TDSB, 2012). Within this group, there were more than three times as many dropouts from families in the lowest decile (tenth) of family income as those in the highest-income decile.

Those who don't drop out from these lower streams experience, on graduation, much lower levels of postsecondary education, steady employment, or jobs that support a quality lifestyle for themselves and their families. In comparison, the same study found that students in the highest socio-economic quartile were 40% more likely to engage in postsecondary programs than those in the lowest quartile (Zeman, 2007; Irwin , 2009). Overall, students' chances and choices for higher education, job training and well-paid employment are decided in large part by their Grade 9 placement.

How are those Grade 9 placements determined? How does it happen that, at the end of Grade 8, students end up in a hierarchy of secondary school programs and course levels? Just as importantly, how does it happen that there is a huge over-representation of White, middle-class students in the higher streams, with a corresponding plethora of working-class and some ethnic and racialized minority students in the lower streams? In some ways, this seems perplexing, given that at the elementary school level (with the obvious exception of those shunted to a wide variety of Special Education programs and given IEPs (Individual Education Programs)), there seems to be little formal streaming; indeed, official policy often suggests or insists that streaming is not allowed or does not exist in the elementary classroom. The answer lies in the distinct gap here between official streaming policy and reality. It turns out that very large numbers of elementary school students in Ontario are adversely affected by streaming. The differential outcomes they experience are a direct result of differential treatment in school. In many cases, such differential treatment is unintended, even unrecognized by classroom teachers. In other cases, however, it is quite explicit.

Ontario's elementary schools — how are they streamed?

In the first instance, explicit streaming in elementary education is carried out through the placement of many kids labelled as intellectually or socially damaged and placed in Special Education Programs for such exceptionalities as behaviour or intellectual and communication disabilities. Explicit streaming is also carried out by the placement of students deemed to be "at the top" in special programs for the gifted. In Chapter Four we will explore Special Education in our school system in greater depth.

A second method of streaming involves "specialty" programs and schools — French immersion, alternative schools, programs focusing on the arts, physical education, etc. These will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. More affluent parents, of course, always have another choice — paying to enrol their children in private schools. All in all, however, only a minority of students have been involved in these specialty programs or private schools.

The large majority of all public school elementary students (83% in Toronto in 2010) are enrolled in "regular" elementary schools and classrooms. These students also come to the end of their primary school years having experienced significantly differential treatment resulting in very different levels of achievement. They then find themselves streamed into various levels of secondary school programs. This streaming is strongly related to the occupational and class backgrounds of these students, along with other social factors. This was always the case and remains so today.

How does it happen that working-class and minority children end up, on average, disadvantaged by their elementary school education? How does this differential treatment effectively pre-select students for the streamed classrooms of the secondary school?

Affluent vs. working-class neighbourhoods — how are students treated differently?

Differences in culture, pedagogy and curriculum in schools located in lower-income as compared to higher-income neighbourhoods, have long been of interest to researchers. In the mid-1970's, Loren Lind, an education reporter for the *Globe and Mail*, spent a number of weeks

sitting in classrooms in two Toronto schools, one located in the inner city and the other in an affluent community. His findings, published in his book entitled *The Learning Machine*, were clear: students in these different kinds of schools were treated quite differently, even though both groups were in "regular" elementary classrooms. He noticed, for instance, that the teaching staffs in the two schools were quite different. In comparison to the experienced, long-term staff he found at the middle-class school, one third of all the teachers in the inner-city school were new to teaching that fall; in four out of the five previous years, at least 14 teachers had left the school at the end of each year, a considerable proportion of the overall staff.

Lind found a typical Grade 1 classroom in the middle-class neighbourhood to be a "hodgepodge of colour … book-racks, chalkboard designs, listening terminal and earphones, autumn centres and seed centres, a whole range of alcoves and tiny nooks — these are the surroundings for a small fleet of tables and chairs." Students were engaged in a number of different individual and group activities throughout the day, reading, writing, art, music, exercises and discussions. By comparison, pupils in the classroom in the inner city were kept "in tidy rows" and the class rules written on the blackboard ("1. We must be quiet in class …"). Discipline at this school "had a harder edge," Lind found, and the emphasis across the school was much more weighted to "proper" behaviour, obedience and order. He explained, "Whatever the reason, the primary tool of schooling was seldom used for anything beyond getting children to keep their places. Asking them to compete for achievement seemed somehow mean; these were, after all, 'inner-city' kids. But if they behaved themselves, they might make it" (Lind, 1974, p. 28).

During this same era of the 1970s, Jean Anyon, an American sociologist, spent two years observing in classrooms, interviewing teachers and school administrators, and assessing curricular materials in urban New Jersey. Her work involved all the Grade 2 and Grade 5 classes in five different schools, two predominantly "working-class" schools, a "middle-class school," an "affluent professional school" and an "executive elite school." Anyon was attempting to explain the differences in outcomes among students from these various schools and her findings resembled closely those of Lind's study. She found "profound differences in the [formal] curriculum and the curriculum-in-use" among these five schools (Anyon, 1981).

In the elite school, children had teachers who were polite to them, who made no nasty or sarcastic remarks, and who gave few direct orders. In this atmosphere, students were encouraged to work through problems analytically and to conceptualize rules in ways that they could apply to a range of problems. While they were expected to work hard, they also enjoyed considerable freedom of movement. When Anyon asked teachers in this school what knowledge it was important for students to learn, reasoning and problem-solving were high on the list. "They'll go to the best schools, and we have to prepare them," said one teacher. Another responded, "It's not just academics; they need to learn to think. They will have important jobs, and they need to think things through." The Grade 5 science course and the textbook in use, were based on a program designed to be "intellectually stimulating and scientifically authentic." The social studies program centred on a series entitled "Concepts and Inquiry Program" which "discussed at length such topics as social class, the power of dominant ideas, and "competing world views" and included a number of "individual study packets of research and writing activities" prepared by the local Board consultant.

The contrast between this school and those with working-class students was stark. In the latter, Anyon found that students were taught to follow rules, often in a mechanical manner and in the absence of choice. The teachers rarely explained the object of the work students were assigned, and students spent much of their time copying from the board. Students resisted teachers' attempts to make them learn in this way and teachers were at times content when students did not work, as long as they were quiet. Teachers, when asked what it was important for children to learn, gave very different answers than did their colleagues in the elite public school. In the working-class schools, the importance of facts and basic skills was stressed: "The three R's — simple skills," responded one teacher. Another explained that social studies were taught by writing on the board, which the students were then required to copy into their notebooks. This method was used because "children in this school don't know anything about the U.S., so you can't teach them much." In the words of a third teacher, "You can't teach these children anything. Their parents don't care about them, and they're not interested." The teachers' guide to the Grade 5 social studies textbook (designed for "low ability students…who often exhibit

environmental deficiencies…and social and emotional problems") justified the low level of information by explaining the importance of "eliminating extraneous subject matter and excessive details" so that students will "feel secure in doing routine tasks" and not have "great demands" placed on them.

These case studies by Lind and Anyon are not just isolated examples, nor do they pertain only to times gone by, or places far away. For example, a 1980 Toronto study showed that less than 5% of Grade 8 students from a number schools in the wealthy neighbourhoods of North Toronto schools went on to low streamed vocational schools; by comparison, many inner city schools sent 30%, 40%, 50%, and in one case, 60% of their students to such programs (Cheng, 1980).

Have things changed since then? Not very much, unfortunately. Similar studies undertaken recently make it clear that, while there has been some improvement in student access to better secondary programs, large discrepancies still exist. The most recent Toronto board survey available, for the student cohort entering grade 9 in 2006 reports that 92% of students in the highest income decile neighbourhoods were in Academic programs, whereas only 56% of students in the lowest income decile neighbourhoods were in Academic programs. Conversely, over a third of students in the lowest-income neighbourhoods were in Applied programs compared to only 6% in the highest-income neighbourhoods. Ten percent of students in the lowest-income neighbourhoods were in Locally Developed Essentials programs compared to only 1% of students in the highest-income neighbourhoods (data provided by TDSB Research Department).

Why do students in affluent areas continue to do better in school than students in working-class areas? As discussed in Chapter One, there have been many attempts to blame this situation on parents and students themselves by invoking invidious "deficit theories" against working-class and minority families. Numerous studies have shown that working-class and immigrant parents in Canada and elsewhere hold just as high hopes for their children (Glick and White, 2003; Krahn and Taylor, 2005; OECD, 2006). However, classroom participant observation studies, dating back many years, clearly show that there is a big difference in the treatment of students based on their backgrounds — whether or not teachers have intended, or even

been aware of this situation (see the discussion below on teachers' expectations). Earlier research in the United States (Sharp and Green, 1975) and Great Britain (Walkerdine, 1983) provided initial glimpses into the effects of deficit theory on elementary school classroom pedagogy. While similar, more recent Canadian research is sadly lacking, especially at the elementary school level, studies by Diane Farmer (2012) have examined teacher-effects in relation to programs relating to students in French immersion — typically students from higher-income families, as will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. At the secondary school level, Brenda Spencer's ethnographic study of the effects of the newly introduced province-wide literacy examination on students of varying backgrounds in an Ontario secondary school is particularly revealing of the ways in which government policy, along with its implementation at the school level, affects working-class and minority students differentially, to their disadvantage. Similarly, secondary school ethnographic studies by Tara Goldstein (2003), Bairu Siums (2011) and Ruben Gaztambide-Fernández and Guerrero (2011) demonstrate the ways in which Ontario schools are "stacked" against working-class, ethnic minority and immigrant students in particular.

The study of Toronto area Latino/a students undertaken by Gaztambide-Fernandez and Guerrero is especially insightful in assessing the reasons why these students in particular rank among the lowest in schooling success. Their numerous interviews and focus groups with a number of these young people revealed their concern over the significant discrimination that they believed they experienced in schools. As the authors point out, "[s]uch negative attitudes and behaviours of people, including teachers, can diminish the confidence of Latino/a students with respect to their prospects of succeeding in the Canadian school system. This lowered confidence can significantly impact both immigrant and Canadian-born Latino/as because they tend to be negatively perceived in the same manner" (p. 68).

To illustrate this phenomenon, they cite one Latina student who explained in a focus group how this pressure works against success, discouraging many from achieving "at their highest potential" and "internaliz[ing] the negative stereotypes" which had been inflicted upon them, leading some or many "to believe that they will not succeed despite their efforts."

> They [Latino/as] just get kind of discouraged and say that, you know, like, ummm, like, I don't know, they consider them stupid. And then they'll be like "There's no point of me to keep going, to keep going to school because, like, I'm not going to graduate with good marks, I'm not going to make it into college." (p.68)

We are not suggesting that every inner-city and working-class school classroom in Ontario mirrors these images of control and drudgery. In fact, a good many inner-city teachers now work hard to achieve — usually under the radar of provincial "expectations" and standardized testing — an open, child-centred, balanced-literacy, culturally-sensitive approach in their classrooms. And the TDSB officially uses a "culturally relevant and responsive program" as a strategy to combat low academic levels (to be discussed further in our concluding chapter). The extent to which this happens, however, is open to question. Furthermore, such good teaching is often overshadowed by working-class and minority children's entire experience of differential treatment in their education. The facts keep exposing whatever progressive rhetoric is left in our schools; kids from well-off homes are overwhelmingly privileged. During the 1980s, in the old Toronto Board of Education over 90% of students from wealthy North Toronto elementary schools went on to Academic secondary schools, as compared to fewer than 30% of students from many inner-city schools (Toronto Board of Education, 1980). A recent study using TDSB data suggests that things have not changed significantly. Researchers Gillian Parekh *et al.* (2011) found that

> low-income students, students whose parents lack university education, and students in special education have less access to socially valued educational programs. The research found a significant overrepresentation of low-income students receiving special education services and in other programs that offer few options for post-secondary education. Work-oriented programs were found to be most prominently available in the lowest-income neighbourhoods in Toronto. (p. 249)

Similarly, data from other sources seem to suggest that things have not changed much in the 30-year interval. In his article, "Why are youth

from lower-income families less likely to attend university?", Frenette (2007) accessed Statistics Canada records to show that social class plays a large part in determining who will be successful in school. Similarly, McAndrew *et al.*'s (2009) study of school achievement rates in three Canadian cities (Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto) found that neighbourhood income levels played a large part in predicting both Grade 12 achievement and dropout rates. Interestingly, even from the perspective of medical researchers studying Canadian schools, Ferguson *et al.*'s (2007) article "The impact of poverty on educational outcomes for children" once again demonstrates that school systems are relatively unsuccessful in ensuring that children from poor families benefit equally from their programs.

Streaming between classrooms

It is not only between schools that one finds differential treatment of "regular" students. Within individual schools, especially those in inner-city areas, students are often streamed into different classrooms, frequently without their knowledge. This happens as a direct result of local school practice (whether or not there is written policy on the matter), usually when students are distributed into the various classes for the school year. At this time, students are often divided up, not randomly by grade, but by "taking into consideration" a number of factors, which often include achievement levels, "abilities" (however perceived and measured), "personalities," "interests," and so on.

This is not a new practice. In 1963, a Toronto Board survey, undertaken by board administrators, found that

> all [elementary] schools utilized some form of streaming in one or more grades. The survey identified nine major types of organizational procedures through which streaming was accomplished. They varied from completely homogeneous classes to classes where the top and/or bottom were taken off with the remainder homogenous, and from mixed grades to a grade divided into units with each divided heterogeneously or homogeneously. (quoted in Cheng *et al.*, 1980, p. 5)

In 1980, another Toronto board study indicated that things had not changed much at all, at least for public school students in that city. If

anything, the streaming processes had become more sophisticated. A number of practices relating to streaming in schools were described in the report, including "the less overt forms of streaming in the elementary panel" such as "the creation of low classes for certain grades" which was described as "a separate class for the 'slow 7s' in addition to the normal Grade 7 class." Another common example of streaming involved the combining of "'more advanced' students of the lower grade with the 'lower' students of one higher grade in the same classes" (Cheng *et al.*, 1980, p.5).

Interviews with Toronto teachers and school administrators conducted both in the early 1990s for the first edition of this book, and repeated again in the Spring/Summer of 2013 for the second volume, seemed to yield conflicting statements concerning the existence and extent of in-class grouping practices. While everyone agreed that students used to be grouped within and between classes on the basis of their "ability" (the "turtles" and the "eagles" as one teacher described it), in both sets of interviews the responses about the contemporary situations were inconsistent. A common belief was expressed by a school administrator in the earlier study:

> I personally think that it happens less than it used to, that the way it used to be when we were in school, with the turtles as the reading group that nobody wanted to be in — those things generally don't exist… there are few teachers, I think, who deal with kids according to how they see their ability.

One administrator stated in the early 1990's that "generally, there is an understanding within the elementary panel that there should be a mixed grouping in determining classes … you don't have a 2-3 classroom for instance, with high Grade 2s and low Grade 3s." Similarly, a teacher in a middle school affirmed that "in this school there's very little grouping done in the homeroom classes."

The follow-up interviews in 2013 seemed to confirm these arrangements. Most respondents stated that, in making up classes for the fall, "staffing committees" ensure that classes are carefully balanced for gender, and a range of student personalities and perceived academic capacities. While it was suggested that particularly problematic students might be placed with teachers best judged to be

able to work with them, only one or two respondents suggested that, in fact, some classes might end up with an "extra" number of children in this category. While there appear to be no school board policy statements regarding the makeup of classes, it was generally felt that these more equitable sorting arrangements were more pedagogically sound, and/or occurred because classroom teachers are more involved in the process and take more care to ensure that the teaching loads were equitably divided.

In contrast to these opinions however, we did get other stories from teachers, certainly in the earlier set of interviews, who insisted that grouping on the basis of "intelligence" or achievement was still very much the practice. One teacher, when asked how students were placed in classes at her school, explained that "we thought that the easiest thing to do was go with general ability levels." Another teacher explained that she and her colleagues had lobbied for changes in the distribution of students in their classes because "I was up to my neck in groups of this and groups of that. I counted at least twelve different groups that I was working with." As it turned out, these particular teachers were successful in their efforts, and redistribution left each of them with fewer "students of different abilities to deal with," a situation that allowed them "to zero in on the ones that worked together, if they were compatible, personality-wise." As a result, one teacher's classroom ended up with "more or less high 4s, middle 5s, and they can sort of work together because they are more or less of the same ability levels." For this teacher, reading ability was the main criterion for grouping, so that "those who could read, understand together, could be in the [same] group." When asked whether her colleagues grouped as well, she replied "Oh they do groupings as well — we don't do it only for ability, we do it for interest's sake as well." Even those teachers and administrators who spoke out strongly against ability grouping and insisted that it didn't really happen in their own schools, often admitted, when pressed, that it prevailed across the system. Said one, "ability grouping still goes on, I'm sure." Another suggested that, even though the practice was "discouraged by the Toronto Board ... there are still principals who might have that view as well." A third said, "Well, I really don't know about how widespread it [ability grouping] is, but I know that it's not universal." Lacking any systematic research or official reporting on this matter, the answer is elusive.

While the same stark admissions of streaming were not apparent in the more recent round of interviews, overall, it was difficult to determine the degree to which these explicit streaming routines persist in the Ontario school system, and to what extent students are placed in different classrooms in September on the basis of their achievement or perceived ability levels.

Streaming within classrooms

As we will attempt to demonstrate in this section, within individual classrooms students are also treated in different ways, depending on a number of factors including their gender, race, ethnicity and social class membership. This streaming can result from both the intended and unintended actions of teachers. In fact, the streaming effects of these actions often occur without the conscious knowledge of the teachers involved, as will be discussed below. Regardless of intention or knowledge, however, it is a common phenomenon in many classrooms.

As noted by the teacher above who claimed she had "twelve different groups," one very overt method of streaming within classes occurs when teachers group students for purposes of instruction — actions, which, unfortunately, often result in longer-term streaming effects. Like other forms of streaming, this is often undertaken with the best of intentions — the belief that students with similar "abilities" or levels of achievement will best learn if they are taught in groups. Sometimes, this grouping is undertaken only for short periods of time, to teach specific subjects, or even a specific skill. However, like other forms of streaming, even these short-term groupings can have unfortunate consequences for students, particularly those in the "lower" groups. Having been grouped in this way, students can easily come to internalize their status, with the resulting poor self-image doing little to promote interest, motivation or success. It is certainly not surprising that "behaviour problems" result from such grouping practices, as frustration over lack of success increases. How often grouping happens, in what ways, and for what purposes, are difficult questions to answer authoritatively. Even an official 1980 Toronto Board research report on the topic had to admit that "the extent to which these forms of streaming are practised is not clear from existing information" (Cheng *et al.*, 1980, p. 5). Interestingly, it appears that

even the Ontario Ministry of Education, at least in earlier days, was somewhat cognizant of the inherent dangers of grouping, while at the same time promoting the use of grouping practices in classrooms. A 1975 elementary school syllabus stated that "children have individual needs and styles of learning an… [i]t follows that the teacher must plan a variety of groupings to meet these differing requirements." However, this was soon followed by the warning that "Groupings should be retained only as long as needed" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1975, pp. 22-23).

Certainly, teachers concerned about the possible negative effects of these forms of within-class streaming would not be heartened by more recent official dicta on the matter. By 2006, in the official "The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006) (still in force in 2013), the Ministry expressed no reservation whatsoever about implanting these streaming practices; "Teachers who provide quality instruction… differentiate instruction for individual students and small groups according to need" (p.22). This practice is now justified, with the following explanation:

> In any given classroom, students may demonstrate a wide range of learning styles and needs. Teachers plan programs that recognize this diversity and give students tasks that respect their particular abilities so that all students can derive the greatest benefits possible from the teaching and learning process. The use of flexible groupings for instruction and the provision of ongoing assessment are important elements of programs that accommodate a diversity of learning needs. (p. 24-5)

To be sure, terms such as "flexible," individual student "needs" and "interests," "diversity of learning styles," etc. sound like admirable aspects of a progressive pedagogy, as indeed they were for such European educators such as Decroly and Freinet earlier in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, the practice of grouping students based on these supposed qualities is a two-edged sword. "Needs" and "interests" are all too often equated (knowingly or otherwise) with "ability," "intelligence" and/or general White middle-class norms. As a result, working-class, immigrant and minority students are placed, all too often, in groups where it is possible that teachers' expectations for success are different.

(In this context, a recent instructional reform initiative widely cited is that of "differential instruction" — one, which is much touted by some, but seen as a two-edged sword by others. We will discuss this initiative in our concluding chapter.)

As with the ability grouping that takes place between classrooms, it is difficult to determine to what extent this takes place within Ontario classrooms. However, many of the earlier official reports quoted above on inter-classroom streaming also emphasized the historical presence of intra-classroom grouping (Cheng *et al.*, 1980). Judging from our initial set of interviews of teachers and school administrators in the early 1990s, these practices were still dominant in some, if not the majority, of cases. By comparison, the more recent 2013 interviews suggest that more teachers now claim to have students working collaboratively within classrooms in groups for pedagogical advantage. At the same time, some (even many) seem more conscious about the negative effects of long-term static groupings, particularly when these groups become more homogeneous — either intentionally by teacher design, or through student self-selection/exclusion. One classroom teacher explained that he used grouping extensively, but that groups were reconstituted every month ("Only in June do they get to pick their own groups"). At the same time, as one principal pointed out from his experience, some students "are in groups from the beginning, and never mixed — happens way too often."

Teacher expectations (the "Pygmalion Effect")

Teachers' beliefs (held knowingly or otherwise) about the academic capacity of individual students are very powerful determinants of student success (or lack thereof) in school. First researched by Robert Rosenthal in the 1960's, more recent replications and discussions of this phenomenon (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996; Ready and Wright, 2011; Chang, 2011; Draper, 2013) suggest that teachers form these opinions about individual students for a number of reasons. For example, studies have shown conclusively that boys and girls are treated quite differently in a number of ways, including the manner in which they are rewarded and punished. Many teachers have been found to reinforce (again, knowingly or unknowingly) an "independent and defiant spirit" in boys, while rewarding "femininity" in girls — something identified

by one researcher as a "passivity which results in lack of motivation and achievements" among girls in relation to certain subject areas. As discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Six, teachers have often censured girls much more harshly than boys for "improper" behaviour, part of the hidden curriculum's "double standard" (Clarricoates, 1989). In order to obtain "good grades and teacher praise, the grade school girl is pressured to bargain away her willingness to deal with challenging material and difficult problems" (Sears and Feldman, 1966). As a result, a Canadian study published in 1982 concluded that the gap in self-esteem between boys and girls in school in Canada actually increased, as they advanced in age (Porter *et al.*, 1982, p. 225).

More recent studies continue to equate self-esteem with teachers' expectations (see, for example, Prihadi *et al.*, 2012; Harbaugh and Cavanagh, 2012). While the overall academic achievement of girls has caught up to that of boys (and surpassed it in the Arts), there is no doubt that these accomplishments have been very much slanted away from the areas of math and sciences — a skewing maintained throughout their secondary and post-secondary schooling careers. Recent statistical studies (e.g. TDSB, 2012) suggest that girls' involvement in maths and sciences seem to be improving, along with their access to post-secondary programs in areas requiring these pre-requisites. There is still, however, a good deal of improvement to go, and more generally many aspects of gender discrimination in our schools that still need to be addressed — again to be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

Virtually every teacher and school administrator interviewed in 2013 for this volume expressed strong agreement with the view that teacher expectations played a powerful role in determining student success (even those who also espoused deficit theory in regard to parental influence). In the words of one school administrator recently interviewed, "how students are perceived [by their teacher] affects how they perform; when a child walks in the door, [if] the teacher has a big warm smile, it allows you to perform a certain way." Several teachers were quite critical of some of their colleagues, in this regard. As one explained it, student success or failure

> has to do with the perceptions and biases of the adults who work with them. Teachers who see certain groups of students as not capable, they therefore have lower expectations of those students.

> Those who view families in a certain way, the ways many talk
> about parents and families who live in low-income areas, [these]
> judgements of parents transfer to the child. They [the teachers]
> don't articulate it necessarily, but in the back of their minds, it affects
> the ways they work in the classrooms, what programs students get
> put into. [There is] no understanding [of] the impacts of systemic
> discrimination. When a kid acts out in a certain way, that kid is
> behavioural, has a behaviour problem. But, maybe they have an issue
> with the instructional power that's confronting them. They may not
> articulate it well, but [the system doesn't] notice … all the Black kids
> in special programs.

Teachers' expectations directly affect the success of students across a broad spectrum of social class, gender, race and ethnicity. Powerful judgements and expectations (often unconscious) are made by teachers during the first days and weeks of the school year as to the "ability" of each student in the room. As a result, continuing differential treatment (again, often carried out unknowingly) throughout the school year results in quite varied achievements by different students by the end of the year. Students live up to, or down to, the expectations, which are held out to them during the school year. In fact, some studies have found large differences in student achievement resulting solely from the differential expectations which teachers held out for this achievement. Beginning in the 1970s (Bursa, 1980; Bempachat, 1998), and continuing right up to the present (Dudley-Marling and Michaels, 2012; Delpit, 2012), a multitude of studies continue to portray in detail the ways in which the success rates of many working-class and minority students are deeply affected by the expectations held of them by their teachers.

There are other ways in which elementary schools and classrooms discriminate and "stream" students as well. A number of interviewees commented on the fact that the overwhelming dominance of White teachers and administrators in Ontario school classrooms and offices; many also noted the effects of the continuing traditional Eurocentric curriculum content. One teacher put it very simply: "kids don't see themselves reflected, either by their teachers or the curriculum. [Having] minority teachers speaks loudly to what's possible for them." Another noted that our "very Eurocentric pedagogy

… doesn't acknowledge other ways of knowing or being. [There is little] understanding of community in the educational context, … parents are not welcomed into the school, there is no sense of welcome, belonging." All of these negative effects, initially evidenced in elementary school classrooms, continue in force at the secondary school level, as we shall see in the following section.

Ontario's secondary schools — how are they streamed?

In Chapter Two we detailed the historical development of streaming in secondary schools in Ontario — leading up to the rise and fall of the Robarts Plan in the 1960s and 1970s, its replacement by more subtle form of streaming under OS:IS in the 1980s, and the heightening campaign to destream schools in the early 1990s. With the return of the Conservative Party to power in 1995, any hopes of destreaming were squashed. In 1999, the Ministry of Education announced the introduction of yet another new secondary school syllabus, entitled Ontario Secondary Schools — which was still in place as this book went to press. While this initiative was heralded as the end of streaming in Ontario, the changes were in name only. In reality, the new program consisted of a number of streamed "pathways" and "destinations", along with much effort taken in claiming that these were all "equal" choices for students to make. As already explained in Chapter One, the earlier labels of "Advanced" "General" and "Basic" courses were replaced with "Academic" "Applied" "Locally Developed" and "Open" levels, which would now apply to Grade 9 and 10 courses. At the senior Grades 11 and 12, these levels were expanded in number and directed to more explicit post-secondary futures. These senior levels are now described as "University Preparation" "University/College Preparation" "College Preparation" "Workplace Preparation" and "Transfer" courses. The Transfer courses were announced as opportunities for students, initially streamed into lower levels, to upgrade their credits in the hopes of expanding their options for post-secondary education, training, and job opportunities. To date, however, there have been no data to suggest any increase in upward mobility of students between levels during their secondary school careers.

This new discourse of "equity" through "pathways," suggesting significant change in traditional streaming practices, has been

pervasive. For example, even a major (purportedly independent) evaluation report on schools in Ontario seems to have taken up this new perception of change (Canadian Council for Learning, 2008). In this report, the word "streaming" appears only once, on page 83: "Streaming of students according to perceived ability was a long established practice in Ontario that was abandoned in the 1990s." In its place, the report continues,

> The secondary school program introduced in 1999 was built on destinations: workplace, college, university and apprenticeships. The document outlining the diploma requirements and the structure of the new secondary program … suggested that transfer courses would be available to enable students to bridge from one destination to another without having to start over again.

However, it is interesting to note that the authors of this report do go on to state that "the availability of transfer courses was rarely if ever mentioned in the field interviews and focus groups." Certainly, what data are available suggest that, once a student is placed in a program in Grade 9, there is still very little movement over the course of his/her secondary school career — and what movement does exist is overwhelmingly "down" in nature. The recommendation from the report that "Schools should accord equal respect to post-secondary destinations, including immediate post-secondary employment, apprenticeship and other forms of training, college study, and university attendance" (Ibid, p.84) rings hollow given the different realities of their destinations.

The elimination of vocational schools in the Toronto system (and perhaps other urban centres) by the 1980s, combined with the significant decrease in the number of students officially registered in the formerly "Basic", now "Locally Developed", programs (about 4% according to recent board data, as compared to 17% in 1982) has not worked out as progressive trustees at the time hoped it would. In fact, few if any alternatives have been provided for those who leave elementary school without the requisite academic skills to cope, let along flourish, in the new Applied and Academic level programs. The "booster" programs proposed never materialized, especially on the upgrading of reading and writing abilities. Classes are now larger

than they were in the former vocational schools, and teachers are increasingly pressured to carry on with their traditional course content, from which so many of these failing students are thoroughly alienated. And bottom-stream Locally Developed programs end up as the only alternative to the high dropout rate of Applied. This point seems to have been confirmed by a major report on Ontario's school programs produced in 2003, which stated that, in the years following the 1999 provincial edict,

> Concerns from educators and parents focused particularly on the mathematics component, and particularly on those students in the Applied program stream. Informally, teachers immediately began reporting that the mathematics content and standards were too difficult for many students. Over the years, evidence has accumulated that students, particularly in the Applied stream, are not yet faring as well under the curriculum." (Anderson and Jaafar, 2003, p. 25)

Unfortunately, hard statistical data comparing success rates for Ontario secondary school students across demographic differences are even more difficult to obtain in 2013 than they were 20 or 30 years ago. Recently, however, the organization "People for Education" released a significant report entitled *The trouble with course choices in Ontario secondary schools* (2013c). Using province-wide student enrolment in "Academic" vs. "Applied" mathematics courses at the Grade 9 and 10 levels, they found "some [schools] with more than half of students enrolled in grade 9 Applied mathematics, and others where as few as 10% took Applied math." Then, in comparing the "high Applied" with the "low Applied" schools, "the researchers uncovered startling differences in terms of students' average family incomes, Aboriginal identity, language needs and their parents' education." Suggesting that "the abolition of streaming in Ontario may have been more a matter of form than function," the report then goes on to note that:

> the findings are particularly worrying because of long-standing research showing that intergenerational cycles of disadvantage can be reproduced by students' course choices in secondary school. Equally worrying is the fact that students who choose applied courses in Grades 9 and 10 are less likely to be successful on Grade 9 EQAO

tests, less likely to have all their required credits by the end of Grade
10, and less likely to graduate from secondary school.

While graduation rates overall in Ontario have increased from
approximately 68% to 82% between 2007 and 2012, and while more
graduates are going on to university, college, or apprenticeship
programs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013a), several questions
still remain concerning the situation for working-class and minority
students. For example, how have they fared in regards to graduating
with diplomas reflecting "Academic" as compared to "Applied" program
engagement? Secondly, what are their post-secondary options, and
actual engagement? A recent study by King and Warren (2010), entitled
Who doesn't go to post-secondary education?, suggests that working-
class and minority students, even those who graduate, are far less
likely to participate in post-secondary studies of any kind, let alone in
university-level programs. (See also, Krahn and Taylor, 2007, and Taylor
and Krahn, 2013, for comparative national and provincial perspectives).
Recently, the TDSB released a series of "Fact Sheets" (TDSB, 2013e,
f, g) providing enrolment and graduation information for the five-year
tracking of the 2006 Grade 9 cohort (that is data up until the fall of
2011) — a total of 16,365 students. Of that group, 72% (11,857) were
registered in the Academic stream, 22% (3,573) in the Applied stream,
and 4% (696) in Locally Developed programs (239 were listed as "No
Program of Study"). Graduation rates (after five years of secondary
school) certainly differed — 88% of academic students, as compared
to 59% of Applied and 42% in Locally Developed programs. Dropout
data were even more pronounced — only 8% of Academic students,
as compared to 27% of Applied and 37% of those in Locally Developed
programs, failed to complete a secondary school diploma.
These fact sheets also provide some demographic data on students
in these various programs. In terms of self-reported racialized heritage,
students from White and many Asian backgrounds had 82% - 91%
graduation rates, while students who identified as Black, Latin, Mixed
or Middle Eastern had significantly less success — ranging from 65%
to 78% in graduation rates. Patterns of dropping out showed even
higher differences — ranging as high as 21% and 23% for Latin and
Black students, as compared to 12% for White-identified students.
Similar differences appear when parental education and occupation are

taken into consideration. Students with parents with only secondary school education were twice as likely to drop out, as compared to those with university graduation (17% vs. 8%). Similarly, those with "non-remunerative" parents were almost three times as likely to drop out, compared to those with parents in professional occupations (20% vs. 7%).[1] These outcomes certainly had a dramatic effect on students' post-secondary schooling chances. The same TDSB Fact Sheets reported that, as compared to White (30%) and Asian (10%-15%) students, 47% of Latin and 51% of Black students did not even apply to an Ontario post-secondary program. Similarly, while only 14% of students from professional families did not apply to any post-secondary program, 35% of those from families in unskilled/clerical, 32% in non-remunerative employment, failed even to seek out any continuation of education or training.

Perhaps most striking of all was the comparison of student outcomes matched with parental income, as determined by the Canadian census tracts (neighbourhoods) where the students lived. (While this is certainly not the most accurate method of determining individual family income, the data do, in many cases, closely align with the parental occupational categories which the students themselves provided, suggesting a good level of reliability). Forty percent of students from the lowest decile neighbourhood (lowest 10% of family income) did not apply to any post-secondary program, as compared to only 18% of their highest-income peer group. Most tellingly perhaps, students living in the lowest-income decile were *five times as likely* to be enrolled in Applied level courses (34%), and over *eight times as likely* to be enrolled in "Essentials" programs (10%), as their counterparts who lived in the highest income neighbourhoods (7% and 1% respectively). These figures remain virtually the same as those provided by the former Toronto Board of Education in its Every Student Surveys during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s (Wright, 1970; Reich and Zeigler, 1972; Wright and Tsuji, 1982; Cheng *et al.*, 1993)! In short, it would appear that student outcomes are still highly differentiated when social class and racialized backgrounds are taken into consideration, even 30 and 40 years after these differences were first officially recognized. For a comparison of these data, see Table 3.1 on the following page.

Ontario still has a long way to go, to ensure that streaming practices have really been abandoned in its regular secondary schools.

Table 3.1 TBE/TDSB Student Program Level by Parent Occupation, Gender and Race,1970-2011 (%)

	1970			1980			1991			1998			2006-11 cohort		
	A	G	B	A	G	B	A	G	B	A	A/G	B	A	G	B
Professional	90	9	2	89	8	2	92	7	1	89	6	3	92	7.3	0.6
Semi-prof/tech	68	24	8	81	14	3	83	15	2	81	12	7	83	15	2.1
Skill/semi-skill	56	29	15	70	21	7	71	24	5	69	16	13	73	23	4.3
Non-skilled	47	32	22	46	33	18	60	31	8	54	23	20	63	33	6.0
Non-remunerative	21	26	53	50	28	19	62	29	9	59	22	17	58	34	8.8
Overall	58	27	16	54	27	16	74	21	5				73	22	5.7
Total Male				48	31	22	71	24	5	68	17	14			
Total Female				57	26	16	79	17	4	74	14	10			
White							75	20	4						
Asian							80	16	4						
Black							55	39	9						
Aboriginal							53	41	6						

Sources: Toronto Board of Education and TDSB Research Reports.

A=Advanced; G=General; B=Basic (Note: As explained in the text, labels for these streams have been changed over time. In order to maintain comparability, the original labels have been employed throughout)

Table 3.2 TBE/TDSB Student Dropout Rate, by Parent Occupation, Race and Program Level, 1987-2012 (%)

	1970	1980	1987	1987-92 cohort	1993-98 cohort	2006-11 cohort
Professional				15		
Semi-prof/tech				29		6.8
Skill/semi-skill				29		11
Non-skilled				35		13
Non-remunerative				46		16
Overall				33	21	20
Total Male				37	23	11
Total Female				29	17	
White				31		
Asian				18		
Black				42		
Advanced/Academic				21	11	8.3
General/Applied				48	33	27
Basic/Essentials						39

Sources: Toronto Board of Education and TDSB Research Reports.

Other forms of streaming within the public school boards

In addition to regular elementary and secondary schools, school boards in Ontario offer an increasing number and variety of full-time "programs of choice" to students, as alternatives to enrolling in their "regular" programs. The trend began in the 1970s with French immersion programs and alternative schools (promoted mainly by progressive middle-class parents) recent decades have seen a proliferation of new specialized schools, and programs at all levels. Dedicated secondary school level programs focus on the arts, the humanities, sports, "advanced placement" courses and the International Baccalaureate,

while elementary school programs focus on a range of curricula. The Toronto District Board, for example, offers 18 alternative schools at the elementary school level, along with a number of "Academies" in the areas of Boys Leadership, Girls' Leadership, Vocal Music, Sports and Wellness, and Health and Wellness, as well as an Africentric program, three schools offering/developing International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programs and two offering IB Middle Years Programs, and "Specialized Programs" in the areas of the Arts and "High Performance Athletes." At the secondary school level, in addition to 22 alternative schools, this Board has six schools offering IB Diploma programs, 14 specialized schools and programs in the arts, and 4 special programs for "elite athletes."

French immersion continues to dominate among the "choice" programs taken up by students and parents. Since its initial introduction in the 1970s, enrolments have been increasing constantly throughout the province. As of 2006 (the last available data), over 200,000 Ontario students were participating in these programs, offered by public school boards in Ontario (Johnson, 2006). In Toronto alone, 56 elementary schools and 10 secondary schools provided these programs during the 2011-12 academic year.

All of these public school programs — alternative schools, Academies, French immersion, etc. — are presumably available to any student desiring them. There is also no question that at least some of these programs feature student-centred, progressive curricula and pedagogy, often with special attention to the arts, creativity, cooperative learning and issues of social justice. However, it is also clear that the student bodies of many or most of these programs are not representative of all public school students, but rather are disproportionately weighted to certain gender, racialized, ethnic and social class groupings. A recent TDSB research report illustrates this skewing very clearly: Many of the alternative schools have special application requirements — parental attendance at information meetings, along with student portfolios, interviews and/or tests, as well as in some cases requests for upfront payments for special equipment (e.g. laptops). Once enrolled, parents are often required to attend regular meetings, and/or commit to regular volunteer work at the school. With this kind of selection/attendance regime, it is certainly understandable why students from middle-class, more highly educated

backgrounds might well be favoured in the process (Sinay, 2010). In fact, as this TDSB report revealed, children with professional/senior management parents in the city (earning over $100,000) were twice as likely to be attending these programs as their percentage in the system overall would suggest. By comparison, children with parents in non-remunerative categories (under $30,000) only accounted for a third of what would be expected given their percentage in regular programs. Similar differentials were also found, in the racialized backgrounds of students in these programs, with White students much more highly represented than those from many racialized backgrounds.

Similarly, it is clear that students who attend French Immersion programs are not representative of the entire student population. In one of its recent reports, Statistics Canada states that "in general, parents of immersion students are from higher socio-economic backgrounds and are more likely to have a postsecondary education" (Statistics Canada, 2008). As a number of recent studies, reports and media articles have shown, Immersion French programs — whatever their original intent — are very much skewed to particular populations (see, for example, Gardner, 2008; Willms, 2008; Rushowy, 2009). According to the 2010 Toronto study, 23% of all immersion students came from families in the highest income decile, as compared to only 4% from the lowest decile. Similarly disproportionate enrolments are found when White students' involvement in French immersion programs is compared to that of their counterparts from some racialized groups (Sinay, 2010).

Streaming outside of the public school system

In addition to the increasing numbers of students in "gifted" and special programs in the province, many other elementary and secondary school pupils enrol in private schools of various descriptions across the province. Judging from government data alone, in the ten-year period from 1974 to 1984, the number of secondary school students in Ontario private schools rose from 27,318 to 49,836, an 82% increase (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987b). By 2012, there were 126,000 students enrolled in "independent schools" in addition to 20,000 others who were home-schooled, totalling about 6% of the entire provincial student population (Ontario Federation of Independent Schools,

2013). Being educated in a private school setting means, by definition, receiving different treatment. A number of these private schools exist on the basis of religious difference, while a few others emphasize a "progressive" curriculum or special subject areas (e.g. languages, arts, etc.). Many, however, exist simply as private, elite schools. Certainly, the families of these students are anything but the "average" Canadian families. One comprehensive report in 2007 found that Ontario private school parents were more than twice as likely to have attended university, twice as likely to work in white-collar employment (over 40% identified as being self-employed, as compared to only 7% of the general population), and twice as likely to report family incomes of over $120,000 (Van Pelt *et al.*, 2007).

Where do parents stand on streaming?

Many parents, students and teachers don't need official reports to tell them about the harmful effects of streaming. They have long since come to the same conclusions. They understand that not all children are equally served by the system, and this deeply troubling fact moves them to protest. But they differ dramatically in the power they have to change things. Who can deny that White, English-speaking, middle-class parents have been able to exert more influence on school administrators and politicians than have working-class and ethnic/racialized-minority fathers and mothers, in the face of overwhelming evidence (Lareau, 1989; Anyon, 1981; Noguera, 2008; Smith, 2000; Goulbourne, 2011)?

But since at least the 1960s, inner-city parents have become more vociferous about the negative aspects of streaming. As noted earlier (p.68), in 1969, a group of mothers from the Trefann Court housing project in downtown Toronto, in a brief to the Board of Education, raised a number of concerns about the treatment of their children in elementary schools, and about their unequal placement in low-stream secondary schools as a result. As they put it, the public school system "just isn't set up to be meaningful for our kids. It doesn't relate to the things they know about and care about" (Martell, 1974, p. 225). In 1971, parents and teachers from the inner-city Park School presented a lengthy petition to the Toronto Board, stating that they were "fed up" with the quality of schooling in their neighbourhood (Martell,

1974, p. 56). They pointed out that only 27% of the Grade 8 graduating class from Park School went on to the five-year Academic programs in secondary school (as compared to over 90% in a number of middle-class neighbourhood schools in Toronto), with the rest being sent to technical, commercial and special education vocational programs.

In 1980, streaming in Toronto schools was a major topic at a city-wide parents' conference attended by over a thousand delegates, including representatives of many local parent organizations. Several resolutions adopted at this convention called for more parental involvement in curriculum planning, for making more information available to parents about the success rates of elementary schools in teaching the basic skills. The convention asked that "every parent be informed of the level [streaming] system and what it means when his/her child enters the school system."

Parents of ethnic and racialized minorities have continued during the ensuing decades to organize in a number of ways to change things. In 1991, the Toronto-based Portuguese Parents' Association developed, published and disseminated a kit for parents, in order "to help parent groups talk about streaming in our schools and do something about it...to put pressure on those who control the schools to try some alternatives to streaming." Black parents, whose children were twice as likely as other students to end up in Basic level programs at secondary schools, forced the Toronto Board to establish a special committee in the mid-1980s to examine the situation of Black students in the system, and recommend changes. In North York, then a municipality distinct from Toronto, the Board of Education endorsed a comprehensive report in 1982, calling for changes to alleviate dropout rates and streaming among the large Black student population. Less than a decade later, Black parents found it necessary to mobilize and march on the Board offices, concerned because they perceived that little had changed in the way in which their children were being treated by the system (*Now Magazine*, October 31, 1991).

In the past two decades however, there has been a significant shift in the nature of community pressure for change. To be sure, some earlier organizations, such as the Toronto-based Organization of Parents of Black Children continue to lobby school boards and provincial politicians and administrators over the plight of many of their children, while other groups, such as the Somali parents groups "Positive

Change", "Women for Change," and the Somali Liaison Coalition at the TDSB, have recently emerged. In addition, a number of wider coalition organizations have formed. Education Action: Toronto, comprised of parents, teachers and community activists, works to disseminate relevant information about the continuation of streaming in schools today and related concerns. Similarly the Campaign for Public Education maintains an active news-oriented website providing up-to-date information on issues and events, particularly in relation to school funding matters. Although initiated and maintained mainly by middle-class parents, People for Education has been effective province-wide in raising schooling concerns which affect many students, including those of working-class, immigrant and minority backgrounds. Their 2013 public survey, which uncovered the vast discrepancy in private fundraising for schools in wealthier neighbourhoods helped make clear the gross inequities in school resources in working-class communities across the province (People for Education, 2013a; Lesley Johnston *et al.*, 2011). Even the monthly newsletter of the official Canadian Education Association often features studies and reports critical of the seeming lack of success of Canadian schools in relation to its outcomes for minority students (see, for example, "The Facts on Education: Should We Be Streaming Students?" in its December 2010 issue).[2]

At the same time, as many parents and education activists now note, there has been a marked decrease in the number, and activities, of local community and school-based parent groups raising their voices of concern over the continuing plight of many working-class and minority children. Where public concerns are raised over school matters, they are much more likely to concern financial issues involving widespread cutbacks of staff and resources and the closing down of neighbourhood schools. Any pointed emphasis focused on differential outcomes for students in the system has been put on the back burner. Why is this?

There are a number of reasons suggested for this apparent silence over the continuing issue of differential outcomes. First, as noted in the previous section, there is no question that there has been at least the appearance of change in relation to placement of students in the various streamed programs at the secondary school level. Much of this rhetorical shift can be attributed — from a "class power" perspective — to the mobilization of parents and community groups over the

previous decades. Because of this pressure, the provincial "Basic" program — the lowest program stream — was dropped in1999, and the vast majority of Ontario secondary students are now registered in either the newly labelled "Academic" and "General" streams (only about 4% remain in the former "Basic" level programs, now labelled "Locally Initiated Programs"). As well, there has been an increase in the number of students enrolled in the "Academic" level, as compared to former decades — 72% in 2009 according to a recent Toronto report (TDSB, 2013h) as compared to a provincial rate 22 years earlier of 57% (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1987b). In addition, since 1999, there has been some improvement in student graduation rates, and a concomitant lessening of dropout rates (see, for example, recent 2012 Fact Sheets publicly circulated by the Toronto District School Board). These seeming improvements may well contribute to diminishing public concerns expressed by parents and local communities.

There are, however, more critical explanations as to why there is less public outcry from parents and communities about the continuing differential outcomes for their children. First, it is clearly the case that school boards, and the provincial government, have become very adept over the past two decades at managing these dissident groups, and steering their concerns within more traditional and controllable spheres of activity. The prime example involves the Ontario Ministry of Education's 2000 decree that every school in the province must have an official school council. The officially stated purpose is that they "are advisory groups to their principals or to their boards; they have been established to provide one way for parents to express opinions about how to improve student achievement and to ensure that parents can actively participate in the education of their children at the local level" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001a). However, a number of recent studies have suggested a different reality — particularly in schools featuring significant percentages of working-class and minority families. In these cases, new top-down structures have been constructed, effectively under the control of school administrators and selected middle-class parents. Teachers have minimal representation and are discouraged from attending these councils. Under the guise of democratic participation, they have served primarily to maintain traditional administrative and curricular routines, while at the same time providing official contexts in which to further marginalize and

undercut concerned parents (see, for example, Pharis *et al.*, 2005; Preston, 2010; Pushor and Murphy, 2004).

This domination of School Council affairs by school administrators and selected middle-class parents has also served to enhance an ideology of the importance of individual student achievement over the interests of the student population as a whole. As a result, special programs for already advantaged students (French immersion, "gifted" classes, extra-curricular activities, etc.) are often promoted through the efforts of these councils. In addition, parents directly involved with these bodies often use their advantaged position to lobby on behalf of the interests of their own children, rather than pushing for more equitable treatment of students overall.

Where do teachers stand on streaming?

In undertaking the research for the first edition of this book, and again for this volume, the author interviewed a number of teachers, administrators and educators in the Toronto area. Each interview took the form of a semi-structured conversation, exploring schooling issues related to the overall purpose of this study. Earlier in this chapter, their opinions were reported on the extent to which grouping and streaming occurred in their schools. These interviews also surveyed teachers as to whether they believed certain groups of students were more successful in school, and if so, why. While these informants varied greatly in their description and analysis, they all agreed that by the end of elementary school, certain groups of students, defined by race, ethnicity, social class and family structure, were much more successful than others in their studies and received higher placement in secondary school (with a few individual exceptions, of course). When asked why they thought this occurred, their responses fell into two categories, very much in accord with the models of explanation discussed in Chapter One: The trouble lay either in the students and their families, or it was rooted more in the schools themselves. We will look here at both responses.

A number of respondents in both interview cohorts expressed their belief that the main reasons for the differential outcomes lay in the home, often as a result of "cultural" differences. No one we interviewed suggested that the causes of failure in school lay in genetic differences or in nutritional deficiencies in the pre- or post-natal stages or in

infancy. Many emphasized, however, what they saw as the benefit of good books in the homes of those students "fortunate" enough to be raised in "literate" settings. In addition, they often stressed the importance of parental expectations (even though research, cited earlier, suggests that there is very little difference in this regard across the social class, race and ethnic spectrum). Sometimes they linked those expectations to specific ethnic, racialized and/or socio-economic groups — variations on the "deficit theories" outlined in Chapter One. For example, Asian children were often identified as benefiting from "good" parental direction and supervision, while South European and Caribbean families were sometimes seen as less supportive in this regard. As one teacher put it:

> Kids from Vietnam, Hong Kong, did better because the expectations of the parents were higher to begin with. They demanded more from their children and got more from their children…they spend a lot more time with their children, and… try, if they can, to help with the homework, and at least supervise — the parents are more interested in what they are doing.

These perceived differences were sometimes related to the economic conditions of working-class families, and to their inability to devote more time with children because of heavy work schedules at low pay. However, none of those interviewed seemed to know about (or chose to consider) the many research studies undertaken over past decades, which have served to negate these arguments on two grounds. First, even within specific ethnic groups, it is clear that there is much variation in students' success at school — suggesting that something more than "ethnicity" was at play here. Secondly, and more importantly, there are many examples of innovative school programs which have demonstrated success for students, regardless of their backgrounds.[3] Finally, to the extent that material deprivation related to diet and general health issues in working-class homes does affect student achievement, it's clear that this is an area that schools and related social services should address directly, rather than continuing to use such deprivation as an excuse for continuing school failure.

By comparison, other teachers and administrators believed that the reasons for differential outcomes were rooted more in the schools.

Prime among their explanations for this belief was the issue of teacher expectations, the "Pygmalion Effect," as explored earlier in this chapter. In addition, as also noted above, they described schools as places where certain kinds of knowledge, values and skills are ignored, while other kinds are rewarded. One administrator summed it up by stating that "the kinds of things that the school system generally doesn't value are the kinds of strengths that kids have that come from [inner-city families]." Later in the interview he said

> I think that in most schools the curriculum and the kinds of programs that go on have nothing to do with the real lives of these kids. We all say that you learn by the things that are relevant to you, but in a lot of places the curricula that are followed have nothing to do with these kids' lives, so there's not going to be any connection.

In fact, throughout the interviews, an overwhelming majority — even those holding to the more traditional "deficit theories"— agreed that schools could do much more for students, regardless of student and family background. One guidance teacher emphasized this by pointing out how big an effect early school success has on later school experience: "if they've had some successes early on…that goes a long way."

Ironically, more than one respondent remarked on how the negative effects that inner-city schools had on earlier generations continue to haunt possibilities for achieving good schooling today. One teacher strongly believed that

> the parents of kids at AB [an inner-city school located next to a large subsidized housing complex] care, but they never had a great experience at grade school themselves. And as long as their experiences at school continue to turn people off and make them think that people don't want to be there, they're never going to have an impact on their kids in terms of school AB being a positive place.

It is certainly understandable why working-class and minority parents, who themselves did not have good experiences in school, might well feel very frustrated and/or immobilized in terms of possible solutions for their children.

In summary, many teachers and administrators interviewed said that schools and school systems could be a lot more successful for working-class and minority-group children than they have been. In the words of one:

> It's the school's responsibility to find ways to meet those kids' needs … and at the same time recognizing that the whole system has to change. . . There are all kinds of things that schools do that make a difference, and some that we have done that have made a difference. But it is done by being prepared to be flexible about what school means and what programs are, and also reaching out to parents.

Being "flexible" did not mean, for this person, "watering down" programs or standards. Quite the contrary.

> There are questions of skills that kids need to learn, you know, literacy skills that are important. Being able to read and write are important. But the only way you are going to get those kids to read and write… is by making the curriculum relevant to [them]. It's not a question of not reading and not writing, it's a question of what you're reading about, what you're writing about: are you there, are you reflected in the curriculum?

Conclusion

Students are streamed in elementary and secondary schools in a number of ways (in addition to those placed in Special Education programs). Some of these methods are overt and intentional, while others are developed through unconscious biases. In "regular" schools students are often assigned to classrooms based on their "interests," "ability," and personality (read: behaviour). Within those classes they are often grouped for instruction based on these same criteria. Many other students are enrolled in alternative schools, language immersion classes and special "academies" for the arts, etc. At the secondary level, courses, programs and schools are identified by "levels of difficulty" — Academic, Applied, and Locally Developed. In addition, streaming and differential treatment of students also happens in unintended, but still powerful ways — through expectations held out by teachers and

school administrators. This streaming does not occur randomly among students. Rather, as we have attempted to demonstrate, working-class and some minority students are much more likely to end up in the lower-stream programs, much less likely to be enrolled in special "enriched" schools and programs, and much more likely to be treated as intellectually or socially deficient by teachers who (often unknowingly) hold lower expectations for their capacity to succeed.

While there has been, over the past three or four decades, some general improvement in secondary school graduation rates and post-secondary enrolment rates, these improvements have not benefited all students equally. A great many students from the working class and specific minority groups continue to suffer from the discriminatory streaming practices that remain powerfully in place.

ENDNOTES

1 It should be noted that only 10,473 of 16,365 students were reported in the occupational table.

2 These groups may have differing perspectives on the streaming issue. However, they all invite participation, and therefore provide opportunity for ardent "de-streamers" to make the case within the organizations.

3 Some educational researchers have also suggested other reasons for the differences in success rates among immigrant groups, based on the level of congruence of family authority relations with those of schools, or on the difference between "voluntary" and "involuntary" reasons for immigration (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Matute-Bianchi, 1991; Ogbu, 1991, 1994).

4. SPECIAL EDUCATION AND STREAMING

David Clandfield

The streaming mechanisms used in Special Education are different from the regular forms of streaming described so far. In this context, intricate processes designate children as having special needs prior to any school intervention. For the most part, these processes brand them as being at risk of failure in school in the absence of any specialized intervention. One of the outcomes of the identification of these special needs is placement in a special class or even a special school, but such a placement is not required for identification to have a similar effect to streaming. For one thing, there are many less formal examples of specialized programming both outside and within a classroom in the company of unlabeled peers, and these act as less obtrusive forms of streaming. More to the point, the label itself and the increasing recourse to special interventions through the assignment of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) without labels seem to be just as effective, if not more so, in steering and narrowing expectations, options and outcomes as regular streaming.

In this chapter, we begin with the troubling questions of definition as well as some of the theorization of Special Needs and how these have changed since the first edition of *Stacking the Deck*. A brief history of Special Education follows in order to flesh out these definitions and theories and explain what is happening now. We then focus in on the labelling and streaming processes themselves to show how they serve in part to reproduce inequalities of class, race and gender, while aiming or claiming to do the opposite. These processes include classification, the use of various specialized sciences, a complex sequence of decision-

making stages, and outcomes in terms of placement and program adjustments. The chief sources of data used in the report are those from the Ministry that have been reported in successive editions of *Special Education in Ontario Schools* (Bennett *et al.*, 2008 and 2013), the Special Education Plans submitted annually by all the anglophone School Boards in Ontario, and the remarkable work of the Research Division in Ontario's largest board, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), especially by Rob Brown and Gillian Parekh from 2010 to 2013.

Underlying all these processes, there is the deeper reality of the designation of disability as a separating condition at all. If we want to halt the use of disability labels to consolidate streams that repeat cycles of class, racial and gender disadvantage and discrimination, we should also want prevent the use of disability as a category that re-inforces disadvantage and discrimination for anyone.

~

The use of the terms Special Needs and Special Education themselves implies that they are distinct from regular education, abnormal in some way. It is very easy to think of them as leading to the accommodation of various kinds of disabilities, something that characterizes a humanitarian society in which all are included and all can prosper. But as we reach into sociological definitions and then the history of Special Education, we find a more complex reality. That is where we begin.

1. The sociology and politics of Special Education

The theory of normative and non-normative conditions

In the first edition of *Stacking the Deck*, we used Sally Tomlinson's analysis of Special Education from her sociological research in Great Britain (Tomlinson, 1982) as a starting definition. We described two distinctive types of special education classes or categories that she proposed as the basis for analysis:

> First, there are those, which deal with students who are truly handicapped in such a way that few would deny that special services are appropriate. In this group [Tomlinson] included, for example,

blind children, those with significant or total hearing loss, those who are severely physically handicapped, and those who are seriously or profoundly retarded. She called this a "normative" group, because children were diagnosed and placed in these programmes on the basis of norms or criteria that were objectively developed and universally applied. (In making these distinctions, Tomlinson did not argue that such children should necessarily be excluded from regular classrooms.)

By contrast, Tomlinson used the term 'non-normative' for classrooms and programmes of children diagnosed and placed not on the basis of universally agreed-upon physical criteria, but rather on the basis of observations and evaluations of their classroom behaviour, in some cases supplemented by psychological reports and standardized "aptitude" or "intelligence" tests. This second group contained students labeled as "behavioural," "slow learners,'" "learning disabled," "overemotional," minimal brain dysfunctional,'attention deficit disorder,"and so forth.

In comparing these two groups in England, Tomlinson noted two disturbing facts. First, she found three times as many special-education students in non-normative programmes as in normative classes. Second, and perhaps even more disturbing, while the numbers of students in the normative group were proportionate to the numbers of families of all racial, ethnic and various class backgrounds, students in the non-normative special-education programmes came overwhelmingly from working-class and ethnic minority families. (Curtis, Livingstone & Smaller, 1992)

This normative/non-normative distinction works to show how streaming through Special Education operates along class and race lines. But this binary model, however, does not really capture what has happened since then. The boundaries between medically-diagnosed mental disorders and educational exceptionalities qualifying for special educational measures have been progressively blurred, both by the medical (mainly psychiatric) professions and educational psychologists. Some non-normative categories have explicitly excluded from consideration students whose class and ethnocultural background is thought to be a better reason for their difficulties in school than a clinically de-

fined condition. So Tomlinson's binary model is not as clear as it might have been two decades or more ago. The blurring of the distinction is keenly felt in the spectrum of conditions accommodated under such labels as learning disability, intellectual disabilities, behaviour or autism.

More seriously, the effect of this model is to focus attention on those categories of exceptionality that open themselves to discrimination along race, class and gender lines. The risk is that the equity issues associated with the labelling and placement of students designated as having disabilities or exceptional characteristics that do not reinforce class, race and gender disparities may disappear from view.

Disability, difficulty and disadvantage

As a new millennium dawned, the OECD began comparing funding regimes for Special Education across nations. Faced with a varied package of measures to accommodate different kinds of special needs, it abandoned Tomlinson's binary model in favour of three kinds of special needs. These were Disabilities, Difficulties and Disadvantages. They were presented in two mid-decade studies in which slight but significant differences can be detected (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2007).

Disabilities in both studies align with Tomlinson's normative category, referring to conditions that are "(t)ypically considered in medical terms to be organic disorders attributable to organic pathologies (e.g. in relation to sensory, motor or neurological defects)." In the 2004 study of *Equity in Education*, the OECD also pointed out the "(t)hese conditions affect students from all social classes and occupations." In the 2007 cross-national policy analysis, the reference to social class was dropped.

The non-normative category was displaced by two categories and included far more students. In both reports, **Disadvantages** included the "educational needs of students, which are considered to arise primarily from socio-economic, cultural and/or linguistic factors," while the 2004 definition of **Difficulties** captured the leftovers, the "educational needs of students who have difficulties in learning" that didn't fit into the other two definitions.

In 2004, the "educational needs" of poor and working-class students as well as ethnocultural and linguistic minorities were separated from other special needs, at least for the purpose of

disentangling specialized funding streams for public education. The various compensatory education grants — the one in Ontario is currently called the Learning Opportunities Grant — could now be placed alongside spending on the Special Education populations in countries that had developed programs and funding streams for them. Populations targeted by Special Education had joined the broader Special Needs spectrum, now in upper case.

This did not take the question of overrepresentation or disproportionality out of Special Education policy analysis. Separate funds may target the needs of disadvantaged students as distinct from those for students designated with disabilities or exceptionalities, but that did not end social stratification in the narrower field of Special Education. Ontario's Learning Opportunities Grants have not led to greater social equity in the labeling and streaming practices of Special Education as this chapter will show.

Three years later, in its 2007 cross-national policy analysis, the OECD dropped its "left-overs" definition of **Difficulties**. Distinctness from other categories was no longer the sole defining characteristic. Students with difficulties were to be those

> …with behavioural or emotional disorders, or specific difficulties in learning. The educational need is considered to arise primarily from problems in the interaction between the student and the educational context. (OECD, 2007)

This version of the category does not exclude those whose educational difficulties could be thought to spring from disadvantage. Those difficulties were now to be attributed to a mismatch between the individual student and "the educational context" (i.e. schooling). The mismatch would account for behavioural disorders or learning difficulties. It does not say where change has to occur to remedy this mismatch, but it is not hard to guess.

These programs rest on the deficit theory that we described in Chapter One (pp. 28-30). It locates the problem and the challenge within the individual learner. The response is treatment to bring all those who deviate from narrowly defined norms into line with expectations. Deviation from these norms is a risk for a finely ordered society. The advent of risk into the calculus of special needs is the key

that locks Special Education and its streaming effects into the neo-liberal policies of human capital production as the following section will now argue.

"Students at risk" and the neo-liberal imagination

The analysis of educational risk, most famously articulated in *A Nation At Risk* (1983), from the Reagan years in the U.S., focuses on the failure of many students to achieve success through graduation from secondary school. Failure to graduate is failure to reach the sanctioned norms of learning for a successful entry into a stratified labour market, whether immediately following compulsory school attendance years or after an extended education. Success and failure in these terms were linked to the competitiveness of the nation conceived along neo-liberal lines. Educational failure coincided with the failure to provide the human capital needed in a market economy. The neo-liberal world view, in its efforts to avert this failure, borrowed the concepts and vocabulary circulating in the worlds of private insurance, investment banking, and corporate planning (Berthelot, 2009).

At the same time, the invention of the term "students at risk" soothingly appears to soften the stigmatizing effects of earlier names for unsuccessful learners. As Lindsay Kerr put it in a recent doctoral thesis,

> The slippage of risk from the nation to education coincides with the replacement of earlier derogatory terms (such as delinquents, dropouts, deviants, or disadvantaged students) by students "at risk." The shift in terminology, on the one hand, continues to carry earlier connotations of deviance and danger, but on the other, lends a deceptively beneficent connotation of "vulnerability" in which elitist concessions to frailty invoke paternalistic protection…. (Kerr, 2011)

The psycho-medical classifications of disability used in the sociological analysis of an earlier generation were thus incorporated into a neo-liberal economic analysis. All Special Needs programming requires the prior identification of inherent deviation from learning norms. Managing this risk to human capital development is a subset of economic development. The representation by class, gender, race or ethno-linguistic grouping may vary in extent from one kind of Special

Need or category of Special Education to another. The determination of special need as a risk factor is an artifact of human judgment, whether by specialized professionals or not. But once a decision is made to designate students as "at risk," any demographic imbalances or invidious social discrimination implied in that original selection carry over into everything the school system does to manage it. As a result, students "at risk" are placed apart from peers deemed to be free from risk, sometimes in the physical locations they occupy, but also in the minds of those asked to educate them. Moreover, if the risk is considered inherent, as a disability or exceptionality usually is, the imbalances and discrimination once incurred are likely to continue.[1]

These variations in perspective, with their varying degrees of emphasis on medical diagnosis, equity and economic value, have emerged from the very specific history of Special Education, with all its ironies and contradictions.

2. A short history of streaming through Special Education

2.1. Emancipation and containment

The politics of Special Education debates are complicated by two opposing impulses that governed its origins towards the end of the European Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. They continued with its development through the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, as more and more countries legislated compulsory education for all children.

The first impulse opened up access to organized learning for children once identified as "handicapped", who would otherwise have been abandoned in an unaccommodating classroom in a regular school or excluded from school altogether, even from the mainstream of society. This is an emancipatory impulse, based on the conviction that schooling offers a negotiable gateway to self-fulfilling participation in society even for its most marginalized members. The institutional recognition and accommodation of difference conforms to a universalizing principle of human rights. Pioneers of progressive education (Decroly, Montessori, Bakule, Makarenko) spent part of their careers teaching children then called "defective" or "retarded", as well as other categories of abandoned children such as residents of orphanages (Pestalozzi, Paul Robin,

Janusz Korczak), or victims of war and oppression (Célestin Freinet and Korczak again). In the early forms of education for children with special needs and conditions, educators deliberately removed themselves from the prejudices and constraints of the conforming public system. Their solution was the refuge-community, often co-operative and organic within itself. It provided a framework for the freedom of individual children to develop in the company of other children who were subject to exclusion on similar grounds. These schools protected the children from society's prejudices.

We can trace the institutional origins of special schools in Ontario to the same time. The first one opened in Toronto for the deaf in 1858 and for the blind in 1872. Residential schools opened in Belleville for the deaf in 1870, in Brantford for the blind in 1872, and in Orillia for the developmentally disabled in 1876 (Bennett *et al.*, 2013, p.3). Although these Ontario educators may not have achieved the same stature and reputation as their European counterparts, they were taking the first steps away from abandonment. At the same time, it must be recognized that some of these schools were enacting a conflicting impulse as disposal sites for the embarrassing children of society's elites.

This conflicting impulse is that of control — the channelling of young people deemed ill-adjusted to the norms of school life or society generally. Compulsory universal education in the course of the nineteenth century brought with it the challenge of coping with the nonconforming or unreceptive young. Some forms of nonconformity were labeled as handicaps and disabilities that needed specialized treatment in specialized locations. From this perspective, treatment and containment were the solutions. The available model was the re-adaptive and isolating institution, such as the hospital, the asylum and the House of Industry. It placed restrictions on freedom and, in doing so, aimed to protect society from such children.

In the early 20th century, the sinister side of this approach was expressed in the eugenics movement, which, through the newly-formed Canadian National Committee on Mental Hygiene in 1918, lobbied the government for institutions that would segregate the "feeble-minded" children of "degenerate stock." The culmination of such efforts was reached later in Alberta with the Sexual Sterilization Act that remained in effect from 1928 to 1972. A recent thesis has documented the central

role played by eugenicists in the establishment of Special Education Classes in Toronto in the decades leading to the 1930s (Ellis, 2011).

Both these impulses, the emancipatory and the restrictive, lie at the origins of Special Education. While the more extreme forms that they sometimes took may have now abated in Canada at least, the less aggressive manifestations are constantly at work in the education of children deemed to be exceptional or to have special needs. The segregation or labelling of exceptional children for special attention is seen as both the antidote to abandonment, a way of providing access to curriculum in the jargon of today (i.e. emancipation), and the means to control deviance (i.e. containment), a way to prevent disruptions in the smoothly functioning classroom. When such differentiation narrows the future options and prospects of marginalized populations, the same issues of exclusion and social justice recur in Special Needs education that we see elsewhere in this book. Some are related to the subsets of class, race and gender. That is our focus here. But disability as a basis for any form of exclusion is an overarching consideration also. This is what makes an equity-based analysis of Special Education so complex, the embedding of one form of discrimination within another. This complexity is rendered more impenetrable to the general public by the presence of the specialized fields of science, both pathological and developmental.

2.2. The interactions with science

From its beginnings over two hundred years ago, leadership in the education of those children who were described as handicapped came from physicians such as Itard and Séguin in France, and in the subsequent century from scientists in the related disciplines of psychology, genetics, and neurology.[2] Again, both impulses were visibly at work. From the interventions of scientists came such emancipatory outcomes of scientific observation as support for child-centred pedagogies, comprehensive schooling, and early childhood education.[3] But along with these came restrictive outcomes such as isolation in special schools and classes, and more extreme doctrines such as eugenics and the widespread use of medication.

The classification and diagnosis of mental disease may have been standardized in the course of the 19th century, but its current

manifestation can be traced back to 1949 when mental disorders were added to the sixth edition of the *International Classification of Diseases*, which had just come under the aegis of the World Health Organization. At the same time, U.S. psychiatrists returning from active medical duties with the Armed Forces in WWII brought with them a new set of clinical categories they intended to apply uniformly. The result was the publication by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) of its own *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1952. This publication has undergone multiple revisions and its fifth edition, DSM-5, was published in May of 2013.

For a medical manual, the various editions of DSM have stirred a remarkable degree of political controversy. Until 1973, for example, the manuals included homosexuality as a defined mental disorder, and even as late as DSM-IV-TR (2000) it still included "persistent and marked distress about sexual orientation" as a Sexual Disorder (APA, 2000).

More generally, the whole enterprise of establishing boundaries between normality and abnormality on the basis of observed behaviour and professional consensus rather than physiological or neurological data has left it open to the charge of pathologizing the world we live in. The critical objection is that everyday life is being increasingly subjected to professional scrutiny and control, and deviation from a narrowing sense of acceptability is deemed to arise from disorders located within individuals that require diagnosis and treatment. Although the DSM manuals limit themselves to labels and descriptors, they are intricately connected to psychiatric treatment and the prescription of medications. For an absolutely devastating denunciation of the encroachment of mental disorder diagnosis into everyday life, this author recommends watching an online video of a speech at the University of Toronto for TV Ontario by psychiatrist Allen J. Francis on the Overdiagnosis of Mental Illness in 2012 (http://ww3. tvo.org/video/177352/allen-j-frances-overdiagnosis-mental-illness).

This process lies at the heart of Special Education, too. Ever since the 1970s, the overlap of psychiatric and educational assessment has grown persistently. Many of the DSM disorders coincide with the Special Education exceptionalities listed by the Ontario Ministry of Education. School boards in Ontario refer to DSM-IV directly in their Special Education Plans (see p. 150 below and note 18, p.182). Many of the concerns with DSM-IV and DSM-5 are identical with those of Special

Education: the pathologizing of everyday life, the adverse effects of labelling, misdiagnosis and overdiagnosis, biases with respect to class, race and gender, displacement of social problems to the individual, and professional boundary control with its tendency to undervalue the knowledge of laypersons, including parents and students.

Although the biological and psychological sciences have had a significant impact upon the education of the young, another form of science has assumed an even greater and perhaps decisive role. That is the science of measurement, the systematic application of statistical calculations to human characteristics on a grand scale.

Once again we must acknowledge that this innovation has been aligned with the emancipatory impulse as an effort to free educational assessment from the vagaries and prejudices of the examiner. Standardization is a way to bypass individual judgement, with all its potential for unexamined prejudices. Harry Smaller remembers a Black student explaining to a teacher education class that these tests were the only hope for minorities in the face of teacher bias.

In the early twentieth century, French psychologist Alfred Binet worked with Théodore Simon to develop an intelligence scale with test items that would match an individual child's own mental age with norms empirically derived from a large sample of children year by year. Children with "retarded" development, i.e. children whose demonstration of intelligence fell below what was expected for their age, could then receive extra help and attention. As a developmental psychologist, Binet was seen at the time as an integral part of the various progressive educational movements of the early twentieth century.[4] What Binet brought was a vigorous rebuttal of the 19th century pseudoscience of craniometry, measuring brain size and cranial shapes in order to distinguish criminal and cretinous types by their appearance alone (Blum, 1978; Gould, 1981).

But this new science of measurement demonstrated its restrictive force through the imposition of norms upon disparate populations. In this way the history of measurement evolved hand in hand with that of psychiatry. This restrictive outcome was not Alfred Binet's original goal, since he believed that the child's environment was critically important and that mental capacity might actually change as that environment changed. But when the Binet-Simon scale based on children's age, first published in French over a number of years from 1905 to 1911,

was translated into English and crossed the Atlantic, the idea of using a simple formula to convert this into a number seemed irresistible (Blum, 1978).[5] It was only four years earlier that Charles Spearman first published his theory of a general factor of intelligence, an allegedly innate condition that could be statistically derived from results on a whole battery of tests (Spearman, 1904).

The product of the formula was the Intelligence Quotient (IQ). The U.S. version of the Binet-Simon scale would eventually come to be the Stanford-Binet test after its first publication by a Stanford University psychologist in 1916. Binet scales were used in intelligence and achievement tests around the time of the First World War for the screening of immigrants at Ellis Island for mental disorders (Gould, 1981, pp. 165-171) and for the mental testing of prospective recruits to the U.S. Army (*ibid.* pp.192-195). A simple score on the I.Q. Scale appealed to the same desire for metric simplicity that had in an earlier and quite different era embraced phrenology and craniometry. This would be adopted by prominent members of the Eugenics movement as a ready-made index for use in the claim that intelligence was hereditary. The "feeble-minded" and the "extremely gifted" could now be identified early and measures adopted to separate those who would weaken the gene pool from those could enrich it (Siegler, 1992; Boake, 2002; Ellis, 2011).

The increasing interventions by various sciences in the early twentieth century meant that responsibility for judgements about the learning capacity and needs of a substantial number of students would no longer rest solely with the teacher, who spent her days in the classroom with them, and the parents who raised them. Much of it would pass to the specializing scientist supported by graduated test data. Cold hard numbers, reducible to one number, could define mental capacity as a constant, embedded in heredity, and serve as the basis for segregated education. Although eugenics as a driving force for Special Education in Ontario may have begun to fade during the 1920s, the reliance on testing data did not (Ellis, 2011).

2.3. The social justice dimension

The new science of intelligence measurement made its entry into public education systems in Western Europe and North America in the first decade of the 20th century. Almost immediately, Binet and

others began to recognize that working-class children and children of ethnocultural minorities were present in far greater numbers in the "sub-normal" population than their percentage in the population as a whole. Binet attributed this at least in part to the impoverished living conditions and low education levels of the parents of the children in the Parisian working-class district of Belleville where he conducted his early intelligence testing.

By the time intelligence scales had crossed the Atlantic and been adopted as evidence of innate intelligence by eugenicists in the second decade, the response to the finding changed. As long as a low IQ could be thought of as a product of the children's environment, poverty relief strategies and remedial education could logically provide a response. Children whose development had been delayed would be helped to catch up with their developing peers. In time, subsidized school meals programs and even the provision of free milk could be seen as helpful. But once it was thought that low intelligence was innate, that the measured evidence for it was fixed in a single number derived from a single test, remedial education could yield ground to an education tailored to the reduced expectations for such children. Segregation through streaming could now claim a basis in science.

This is exactly what happened in Toronto in the course of the 1920s. "Sub-normal" children were to be educated in auxiliary classes within elementary schools and in the junior vocational schools that followed these. Jason Ellis's research into the class and ethnoracial backgrounds of students in three elementary schools over a twenty-year period showed that the auxiliary classes were dominated by students from poor and working-class backgrounds on the one hand and by Italian, Chinese and Roma (then called "Gipsy") children on the other (Ellis, 2011).

Acknowledging the need to accommodate differences that arose from intellectual disabilities was an important step along the road to emancipation for such individuals within the broader society. But, as we shall see in this chapter, the reproduction of social inequality through the separation of poor, racialized children into special classes and the application of a range of labels connoting measurable deficiencies has proceeded throughout the century following the first Special Education initiatives in public education. As these initiatives eventually evolved into a law guaranteeing access to these services as though this were a matter of human rights, nothing seemed to halt this.

2.4. Mandatory Special Education: accommodation and marginalization for all?

Special Education spread slowly and unevenly through Ontario between the wars. Eventually, the Hope Commission, which did its work from 1945 to 1950, would recommend full support by government. The Commission recognized that many "handicapped" children were not in school. Some school boards had been offering special classes, ever since the Auxiliary Classes Act made this possible in 1914, and indeed by the end of the Great War in 1918, there were 17,000 children registered in them. However, the responsibility for enrolling children in such classes did not rest with the education system but with their families. And so the Hope Commission included in its "practicable" response to the growing awareness of the diversity of children's intellectual development and right to education, the recommendation that

> markedly atypical children *must* receive special educational treatment in schools and classes separate from those of the regular school system. There must also be remedial instruction in the classroom or, if need be, temporarily in special groups, in order that an unnecessarily fine classification of pupils may be avoided. (Emphasis added; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1950, pages 77-78)

Special Education was to be arranged as a streamed continuum of services, extending from complete segregation by school or by classroom to in-class groupings or remedial instruction in the regular classroom. This system of cascading placements is essentially the one in place today. Until the 1940s, boards were within their rights to exclude students with profound handicaps from school altogether, and so Hope was proposing a clear, if modest, move towards the integration of all children into the public system regardless of their condition.

At the same time, it has to be remembered that, between the 1940s and 1985 (when Bill 82 was implemented), for students with an IQ under 50, the classes did not need to be taught in schools. Although they received public funding, the school boards did not have to operate the classes anywhere on board property. Many classes were organized and run by parent groups themselves. Kirkland Lake in 1947 was the

first board to open a provincial day class, followed two years later by Toronto. But it would only be in 1969 that boards began operating classes for the "mentally retarded" in any numbers. This had become the case when this author joined the Toronto Board of Education (TBE) as a School Trustee in 1980. Two programs operated as self-contained classes, one for the "Educably Retarded" (originally IQ 50-70) run by the TBE and one for the "Trainably Retarded" (originally IQ under 50) run by the regional Metropolitan Toronto School Board in special schools. These had already undergone name changes in the effort to escape or conceal the stigma that came to be associated with them. Educably Retarded programs had been euphemistically named "Opportunity Classes" before being reclassified with the blandest of names as Special Programs-Primary, Junior, and Senior.

That year (1980) saw the passage of Bill 82, a series of amendments to the Ontario Education Act. They mandated almost all Special Education as a responsibility of school boards, requiring that identified children be taught in schools in all jurisdictions. The only exception would be a handful of residential schools operated by the province. Bill 82 drew its inspiration from legislation passed into law in the U.S. in 1975, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, sometimes called Public Law 94-142. This U.S. law had defined and named the range of exceptionalities that made up the spectrum of Special Education populations. It laid out the range of placements and services that public funds would support. It provided a detailed quasi-judicial process for the identification, placement and review of children subsequently deemed to be exceptional. And it described a document called the Individual Education Plan (IEP) that would provide a framework for the modified learning and accommodations that each identified child would receive as a result. Bill 82 essentially enshrined that same model of policies and procedures in the Ontario school system.

To be sure, both in Ontario and south of the border, the model has subsequently undergone many changes in its vocabulary and definitions, its placement choices, its processes, and the orientation of the Individual Education Plans that informed the prescribed treatment program. In this respect, Special Education has also reflected the evolution of the DSM in its classifications of mental disorders. But the overall framework is still intact and can be studied for both the emancipatory and restrictive impacts of a detailed labelling and

streaming regime. It has shaped much of the politics of schooling in North America with well-documented negative effects on the education of children from poor, racialized backgrounds, as well as children whose differences have been essentialized as disabilities, as a pretext for either exclusion or equally invidious forms of "othering."

In recent years, partly as a response to legal decisions in the U.S. and partly as a response to pressure from equity-seeking parent groups, the emphasis in public policy has been on increasing inclusion; that is to say the placement of exceptional pupils in "regular" classes alongside non-exceptional pupils of the same age with accommodations that recognize their particular needs.

Any emancipatory value of inclusion in the early 21st century has been complicated by the demands of the neo-liberal ascendancy. The reduction of public expenditures by ministries and local boards began under Peterson and Rae (Gagnon and Rath, 1991; Clandfield, 1993) but galloped ahead under Harris and did not significantly slow down under McGuinty's Liberals. The monitoring of student performance by standardized measures followed the Rae government's Royal Commission on Learning (1995), which had been given the mandate to begin this process when established in May 1993. The centralized regulation of all processes and provisions accompanied the assault of the Harris Government on school boards in the late 1990s.

The result has been the development of a competitive rush by families to achieve advantage through access to certain specialized programs and by schools to improve their ranking in the test score tables that emerge from EQAO results (see previous chapters).

In this rush, more privileged families have developed powerful associations to retain the option of special treatment in small segregated classes (e.g. Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario and the Association for Bright Children), in contrast to those that tend to prefer more regular classroom placements with accommodations (e.g. Down Syndrome Association of Ontario, Autism Ontario, and Community Living Ontario). In the shadow of this organized competition for improved prospects are the children of poor and racialized families who discover that the labeling and streaming system of Special Education and Special Needs does not seem to be improving their prospects at all. These families do not have the same resources to take on the tightly controlled regime of sorting and sidelining that they

experience, although this does not mean that there is no resistance to it.[6]

The publicly-funded schools, now caught within a competitive ethos arising from high-stakes standardized testing and the publication of school test scores, are subject to the demands of monitored compliance and continuous improvement. The pressure to raise test scores and move up the ladder of performing schools means that a substantial amount of energy is directed to this end. A new role for Special Education under neo-liberalism has been embedded within the provisions of the Individual Education Plan (IEP), as we shall see later. But IEPs were originally assigned after the student had been assessed and declared exceptional by means of a complex sifting and decision-making process. We shall need to examine this process before showing how it has been progressively by-passed to the detriment of the underprivileged and increasingly voiceless segments of our society.

3. The prevalence and classification of exceptionality

3.1. How many children are in Special Education?

In the first edition of *Stacking the Deck*, available data had shown a fourfold increase in the number of elementary students in Special Education from the era of the Hope Commission Report (1955) to the time of full implementation of Bill 82 in 1987. By that time, 27,493 or 4.2% of all elementary students had been identified as "exceptional" and were receiving Special Education assistance of one kind or another. Lest that should seem like a modest number of students singled out as having difficulties in "regular" school programs, a further group of students in "Remedial and Speech Correction" programs was reported by the Ministry of Education. This group brought the numbers of elementary school students receiving special assistance up by another 81,203 to 108,696, i.e. 16.4% or about one in six of the elementary school population. It is important to keep this particular "Remedial and Speech Correction" group in mind, unidentified with any single exceptionality and yet receiving specialized help. As Special Education evolved, that unidentified group would eventually be absorbed.

So what has happened to the enrolments of exceptional students in the intervening decades?

Table 4.1 Students identified as exceptional in Ontario, 2009-10

	Elementary	Secondary	All Special Education
2009-10 identified	94,364	98,166	192,530
2009-10 % of all	7.74%	14.36%	9.94%

Source: Ministry of Education, as quoted in Bennett *et al.*, 2013, in Tables 3B, 3C.

For elementary schools, the proportion of identified students has doubled from just over the 4% reported in *Stacking the Deck* to almost 8% by 2009-10. The secondary figures have gone up one and a half times from about 10% reported in *Stacking the Deck* to just under 15% in the same period. The percentages are higher in secondary schools because many students in the elementary panel are not identified in the lower grades. Indeed, research at the TDSB shows that 40% of all new exceptionality identifications occur in Grades 5-8 (Brown/Parekh, 2010, p.15). As this book was going to press, TDSB Research reports that the proportion of students identified with Special Education Needs in Ontario had reached 13.7% (Brown *et al.*, 2013, p. 3)

These proportions are not identical in all school boards. Five school boards have reported figures in their most recently posted annual Special Education Plans:

Table 4.2 Percentage of students identified as exceptional by selected Ontario school boards

Halton DSB (2011-12)	9.6%
Hastings Prince Edward DSB (2011-12)	10.9%
Peterborough Victoria . . . CDSB (2011-12)	12.5%
Eastern Ontario, i.e. CDSBEO (2011-12)	16.0%
Ontario (2012-13)	**9.1%**
Toronto DSB (2012-13)	8.8%
Greater Toronto Area (GTA) not TDSB (2012-13)	10.1%
Outside GTA (2012-13)	8.7%

Sources: Special Education Plans for each District School Board (DSB) or Catholic District School Board (CDSB) as posted on each one's respective website, latest information available; and for TDSB, the GTA and outside the GTA, Brown *et al.*, 2013.

However, since the year 2000, a growing number of students have received IEPs and Special Education Services without being

"identified" with an exceptionality through the IPRC process, of which more later. This number swells the ranks of pupils receiving Special Education services considerably. We may think of them as comparable with (though certainly not the same as) the "Remedial and Speech Correction" group mentioned in our 1992 edition. The new figures represent what we would now call Ontario's Special Needs population.

Table 4.3 Students with Special Needs in Ontario 2001-02, 2005-06 and 2007-08

	Elementary	Secondary	All Special Education
2001-02 Special Needs	176,352	100,506	276,858
2001-02 % of all	13.36%	14.89%	13.88%
2005-06 Special Needs	175,587	115,138	290,725
2005-06 % of all	12.64%	16.13%	13.82%
2009-10 Special Needs	176,228	130,792	307,020
2009-10 % of all	14.46%	19.13%	13.80%
2012-13 Special Needs	N.A.	N.A.	306,115
2012-13 % of all	N.A.	N.A.	15.2%

Source: Ministry of Education, as quoted in Bennett *et al.*, 2008, in Tables 3B, 3C, 4A; and Brown *et al.*, 2013, Table 1.

These may be compared to those of three Boards that included the non-identified Special Education figures in their Special Education Plans.

Table 4.4 Special Needs Students as % of all students in selected school boards

Ontario (2012-13)	15.2%
Toronto DSB (2012-13)	16.8%
Halton DSB (2011-12)	16.4%
Eastern Ontario CDSB (2011-12)	30.2%

Sources: Special Education Plans for each District School Board (DSB) or Catholic District School Board (CDSB) as posted on each respective website, latest available, and Brown *et al.*, 2013, Table 1.

These figures include all exceptionalities. It is time to see whether the prevalence has increased for all categories uniformly.

3.2. What kinds of exceptionalities are there?

The Ontario Ministry of Education classifies exceptionalities for Special Education purposes in four broad categories, three of which include more specific ones:

- Behaviour
- Communication (Autism, Deaf, Language Impairment, Speech, Learning Disability)
- Intellectual (Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability)
- Physical (Physical Disability, Blind and Low Vision)

To these the composite rubric of Multiple Exceptionalities is added.

In a preliminary analysis, we shall briefly adopt for comparative purposes the Tomlinson binary model of normative and non-normative categories, after moving what we now call Mild Intellectual Disabilities to the non-normative group.

Table 4.5 Students identified by exceptionality, Ontario, 1988-89 and 2009-10, as % of all students identified as exceptional

Normative	1988-89	%	2012-13	%
Autistic	393	0.4%	17,275	9.4%
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	1,517	1.7%	2,114	1.2%
Speech and Language Impaired	689	0.8%	9,879	5.4%
Physical Disability	983	1.1%	2,592	1.4%
Developmental Disability	not included		9,222	5.0%
Other (Blind, Multiple, etc.)	3.576	3.4%	11,451	6.2%
Subtotal	**7,158**	**8.0%**	**52,533**	**28.6%**
Non-normative				
Behaviour	8,714	9.72%	8,576	4.7%
Mild Intellectual Disability	11,943	13.32%	15,951	8.7%
Learning Disability	43,334	48.34%	77,698	42.3%
Giftedness	18,494	20.63%	28,860	15.7%
Subtotal	**82,485**	**92.1%**	**131,085**	**71.4%**

Sources: Ministry of Education, cited in *Stacking the Deck*, p.56; Brown *et al.*, 2013, Table 2.

In *Stacking the Deck (STD)*, we remarked that Tomlinson's division was born out in Ontario. The four non-normative exceptionalities massively outnumbered the normative ones, more than tenfold. In 2012-13 the ratio has sunk to about three to one. Is the balance shifting back towards the normative? Even when we factor in the non-inclusion of Developmentally Disabled in *STD* and the significant rise of Autism over the two decades, it may look like it. However, Special Education services are now extended to students with unidentified exceptionalities. Once these are added to the non-normative group, the percentages change markedly. Note the variations among the three reporting boards:

Table 4.7 Percentages of Special Needs students with normative and non-normative exceptionalities in Ontario and selected school boards (latest available data)

	Normative	Non-Normative plus Unidentified
Toronto DSB (2012-13)	6.0%	94.0%
Halton DSB (2011-12)	10.6%	89.4%
Ontario (2012-13)	16.2%	82.8%
Eastern Ontario CDSB (2011-12)	19.7%	80.3%

Sources: Special Education Plans for each District School Board (DSB) or Catholic District School Board (CDSB) as posted on each respective website, latest available, and Brown *et al.*, 2013, extrapolated from Table 2.

So in fact, the ratio of the so-called normative to non-normative exceptionalities has remained pretty much the same from the late 1980s to now. Now that the comparison between the previous edition and this one is complete, we shall now drop the normative/non-normative distinction.

It is time to look at the demographic composition of exceptional students. In *Stacking the Deck*, we quoted data from both research studies and the Every Student Surveys at the old Toronto Board of Education (TBE) that showed that 4.1% of all students from the families of unskilled workers were in special classes for slow learners in 1970, while only 0.2% of students from families of professionals were. In other words, students from the poor and working class were 20 times more likely to end up in the slow learners' classes. In 1980, a Toronto Grade 8 study showed that 11.5% low-SES students were in these special classes but only 3.1% of high-SES students (STD, p. 59).

So what has happened since then?

Again we only have data for one Board, this time the amalgamated TDSB, much larger than the old TBE. Data are not available for Ontario, but we shall see a little later that the ministry does not expect it to be any different throughout the province.

The most recent study on the demographic characteristics of students in Special Education in the TDSB was published in December 2010 (Brown and Parekh, 2010). It provided data related to income levels for the different non-gifted exceptionalities for the 2009-10 student population:

Table 4.8 Key non-Gifted Exceptionalities and Neighbourhood Income, TDSB, 2009-10

	Autism	Deaf HH	LD	Language	MID	DD	Physical	Behavior
Lowest	9.5%	7.6%	9.7%	17.1%	16.3%	12.8%	11.7%	17.1%
2	7.7%	13.5%	8.9%	11.0%	14.9%	9.6%	8.1%	13.4%
3	9.2%	14.5%	8.3%	12.2%	12.2%	13.3%	7.4%	13.1%
4	9.8%	7.6%	9.3%	10.3%	11.4%	11.5%	12.0%	11.0%
5	9.4%	12.7%	10.7%	10.6%	11.6%	11.5%	12.0%	9.3%
6	9.8%	9.5%	10.1%	12.2%	9.3%	9.8%	11.7%	8.6%
7	12.6%	9.8%	10.6%	12.2%	9.1%	9.8%	9.6%	11.5%
8	10.5%	6.9%	10.25%	7.2%	7.5%	9.1%	8.4%	7.6%
9	11.5%	9.8%	11.7%	3.8%	5.3%	8.1%	11.0%	5.4%
Highest	10.0%	8.0%	10.4%	3.4%	2.5%	4.4%	8.1%	3.1%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 5, p.19

A perfect fit of income groups to exceptionalities would produce 10% in each cell. The greatest discrepancies between the lowest and highest deciles occur for Language Impairment (17.1% and 3.4%), Mild Intellectual Disability (16.3% and 2.5%) and Behavioural (17.1% and 3.1%). The figures become starker still when we isolate these three exceptionalities and take only the bottom three deciles (30%) and the top three (30%) for neighbourhood income.

Table 4.9 Select Exceptionalities by Broad Neighbourhood Income Bands, TDSB, 2009-10

	Language Impairment	Mild Intellectual Disability	Behaviour
Lowest 30% income	40.3%	43.4%	43.6%
Highest 30% income	14.4%	15.3%	16.1%

Source: Brown/Parekh, *loc.cit*.

In all these cases, we must remember that the figures show overrepresentation. There are far more poorer students in Language Impairment, MID and Behavioural than we would expect from a random distribution and far fewer students from wealthier neighbourhoods. Even so, we should also recognize that some students from every income range do end up in every category.

As for race and special needs designation, the Brown/Parekh report shows data from the 2006 Student Census for students enrolled in Grades 7 to 10. So we do not have the system-wide view that we had for family income, but the figures present just as stark a picture for race as the earlier ones did for income.

Here the figures are for Non-Gifted Exceptionalities. They are not broken into the smaller categories. They are taken from a census in which 54,721 students self-identified by race. Recent immigrants have been excluded from the count since they may have been deemed ineligible for Special Needs status. Although these are not system-wide data, more than 90% of the numbers across the Board were from those categories that provide evidence of disproportionality by socio-economic status. We can take them as a pretty good guide.

Table 4.10 Select Exceptionalities by Self-Declared Race

Self-declared Racial Groups	Population in Survey	% of total enrolment	% non-Gifted
Unknown	120	0.2%	0.3%
Aboriginal	177	0.3%	0.9%
Black	7,882	**14.4%**	**22.2%**
East Asian	8,102	14.8%	6.3%
Latin	1,017	1.9%	2.6%
Middle East	2,077	3.8%	3.7%
Mixed	3,574	6.5%	7.5%
South Asian	10,120	18.5%	10.5%
SE Asian	2,168	4.0%	2.8%
White	19,475	**35.6%**	**43.2%**
TOTAL	54,721	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 9, p.36.

The figures as presented in the Brown/Parekh report do not allow for the same kinds of calculation used in STD for the whole system. But they do suggest that while the White and Black students are the most disproportionately overrepresented racial groups in the Non-Gifted exceptionalities identified, the Black students are more so than the White students. Viewed in isolation, these figures may not allow firm conclusions about systemic racial bias, but once we see them alongside our findings in Chapters 1 and 5, there can be little doubt.[7] We would need to control for social class and gender in each racial group for that to emerge more clearly. And to account for the under-representation of the Asian groups, we would also need to control for another predictor of educational advancement — parental education — since immigration policy has favoured the highly educated and the wealthier applicants from Asia.

In order to complete our understanding of inequalities of identification by class and race, we must look at other categories of Special Needs students, including those identified as Gifted, and those with an IEP who did not go through the formal identification process.

3.3 Learning Disability (LD)

As we have already seen, Learning Disabilities (LD) now constitute the Special Education exceptionality with the largest number of students of *all* the exceptionalities. In 2012-13 across Ontario, this amounted to 42% of all exceptional students (Brown *et al.*, 2013). But unlike Language Impairment, Mild Intellectual Disability and Behavioural, LD does not show the same disproportionality by class and race. The Brown/Parekh Report for 2010 shows the following distributions for the top and bottom deciles at the TDSB, followed by the top three and bottom three deciles of neighbourhood income levels:

Table 4.11 Students with LD by Neighbourhood Income Level Band, TDSB, 2012-13

Neighbourhood Income Levels	Learning Disability
Lowest 10% income	9.7%
Highest 10% income	10.4%
Lowest 30% income	26.9%
Highest 30% income	32.3%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 5.

The difference is not great but the figures do confirm overrepresentation of children from upper-income neighbourhoods in the LD category, regardless of subsequent placement.

Part of the explanation is found in the history of LD, or more specifically, the history of its definitions. These evolved on both sides of the U.S./Canada border from 1975 onward with the passage of legislation in Washington and Ontario. The new laws regulated the definition and means for identifying LD. Before then, conditions that interfered with the normal acquisition of reading, writing and mathematical skills (dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia) were often called *perceptual* handicaps. The programs dealing with a constellation of these learning difficulties had the revealing name Rehabilitation "O" — the "O" standing for Organic (Toronto Board of Education, 1982). As they merged into the Learning Disability exceptionality for Special Education purposes, important characteristics were transferred into the definition and new ones added.

Firstly, we should note the adoption of the term "Disability" in English-speaking North America. In the UK, France, and elsewhere in Europe, the preferred term was Learning Difficulty, as recognized in the OECD categories of Special Needs referred to above. The distinction is important. Difficulties are implicitly remediable, responsive to "Rehabilitation." Disabilities require accommodation, since remedy is presumed not to be available. A learning difficulty can be overcome; a learning disability is life-long (LDAO, s.d.).[8] The former is like a mild fear of water for someone who would like to learn to swim; the latter is like paraplegia for someone who would like to learn to swim. The difference may appear subtle, but it does count when barrier-free entitlements are sought within a human rights framework.

Secondly, a lot of care was taken to distinguish these learning disabilities from "mental retardation" or "slow learners," that is, intellectual disabilities. The difficulties encountered as a result of the learning disability did not by definition extend to all or even most cognitive functioning. You could be really smart but still have a tendency to confuse similar symbols on a page. Disentangling them from each other took longer, but not the understanding of the meaning and argument behind them. Nowadays we would think of this as a neurological condition or a case of "inefficient processing" in computer parlance. Different teaching techniques and adaptive technologies may improve the situation, but the pre-eminent accommodation is extra time on task — a vital consideration in such timed activities as tests and examinations.

The definition of LD then was based on a distinction between reasoning and communication. The assessment process consisted in a comparison between the result of an individual IQ test of powers of inference, logical progression and other reasoning processes, and the results on achievement tests measuring performance on specific reading, writing and/or mathematical tasks. If there was a discrepancy between the cognitive potential implied by the IQ and the actual achievement in the recognition and manipulation of symbols — if the child was smart but found it hard to read, write or calculate — then Learning Disability was the finding. This discrepancy model proved to be very controversial.

Thirdly, a huge debate swirled around the causes of Learning Disabilities as they began to achieve recognition. The range of medical explanations, direct or indirect, was enormous. They included genetic

transmission, hypoglycemia, lymphatic disorders, brain lesions, eye disorders, vitamin deficiencies, food additives, lead poisoning, low-level radiation, and fetal alcohol syndrome. Medical explanations came with both medical and pseudo-medical remedies, from megavitamin doses and dietary modifications to hot castor-oil poultices and balance-beam exercises (Toronto Board of Education, 1982). But the dominant one was hyperactivity. The prevailing medical treatment for hyperactivity, from 1960 on, has been the prescribed use of the stimulant drug methylphenidate, most commonly known as Ritalin. As successive editions of DSM refined the definition of hyperactivity into ADHD, its diagnosis took off, especially in the 1990s, and the prescription of methylphenidate reached epidemic proportions, particularly in the U.S. But we need to remember that LD has long been enveloped in the complexities of psychiatric diagnosis and big pharmaceutical companies (Sulzbacher, 1975, Silver, 1981).

While the debate over causes raged, certain possible causes or predispositions were explicitly ruled out. If the poor achievement of otherwise bright students could be explained by a disadvantaged background (i.e. poverty) or by linguistic and ethnocultural difference, then LD was ruled out. The disadvantaged children could be accommodated in classes and programs designed for slow or behaviourally disturbed learners, for all or part of the day, and the evidence strongly suggests that they were. LD came to be viewed as the special education exceptionality for children of wealthier neighbourhoods. The programs were located first and foremost in their schools and the demographic distribution was correspondingly skewed. Middle-class and upper-class students were significantly overrepresented. This was certainly the case for the old Perceptual Classes as shown by the Toronto Board of Education's Every Student Survey of 1975 (Toronto Board of Education, 1983). Then, a study of students entering the Toronto Board's self-contained LD classes in 1981-82 suggested that as LD classes spread to more schools in the system, the composition of the students also changed and that working-class students were accounting for almost half of this new LD population (Winter *et al.*, 1983). At first this seems anomalous, since recent data show that the upper income skew has clearly returned to LD since then. But there are grounds to be cautious in interpreting these data.[9]

In this context, we are entitled to ask what happened to the exclusion clause in the definition. The U.S. government's definition of LD continued to exclude socially and environmentally disadvantaged children, while Ontario changed direction and dropped this exclusion in 1981 when it revised its definitions after adopting Bill 82 (Clandfield, 2012). To understand this difference, we can compare the exclusionary clause of the influential advocacy groups for Learning Disabilities on both sides of the border:

The U.S.-based Learning Disabilities Association is quite specific.

> Learning disabilities should not be confused with learning problems that are primarily the result of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages.[10]

Its Canadian counterpart is more nuanced in its view, ruling out disadvantage as a cause but not as an exacerbating factor:

> These disorders are not due primarily to socio-economic factors, cultural or linguistic differences, lack of motivation or ineffective teaching, although these factors may further complicate the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities.[11]

As a result of this, we might then expect the overrepresentation of children from wealthier backgrounds in LD to have gone away in Ontario. But it has not. If LD had become a receptacle for children doing badly in school from poor and racialized families, then we would expect it to have been reflected more clearly in the figures from the Brown/Parekh study. So are the students from these backgrounds being left unidentified or are they being singled out in some other way? The answer lies in the growing numbers of students who receive IEPs without identification (see below pp. 152-7).

Income level is by no means the only disproportionality. Where race is concerned, White students in the 2006 census of students in Grades 7-10 at the TDSB amounted to 32% of the population but 50% of the LD group. No other racial groups of any significant size were overrepresented. The explanation for this lies in the discounting of cultural and linguistic difference in the LD definition. For gender, however, a large disparity is observed and has been recognized from the beginning:

Table 4.12 Students with Learning Disabilities by Gender, TDSB, 2009-10

Gender	% of Total Enrolment	% LD
Female	48.0%	33.7%
Male	52.0%	67.3%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 4, p. 12.

This is by no means a Toronto phenomenon. Indeed, DSM-5 identifies the gender ratio for Specific Learning Disorder as 2:1 in favour of males, the same as TDSB, and discards any notion that this is due to ascertainment bias and definitional or measurement variation (p.73), another way of referring to prejudices and confusion among the clinicians. That denial is interesting because the earlier DSM-IV-TR had attributed the male bias of 4:1 in what it called Reading Disorder to just these biases. The proportions are also similar for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD (DSM-5, p. 63), a condition that often overlaps with LD. The research consensus in this case seems to be that the LD skew comes from referral bias. Boys encountering academic difficulties are more likely to act out negatively and express themselves in physical and verbal outbursts, while most girls are socialized to remain silent and are more likely to be at risk of depression, a condition where females outnumber males. So teachers are more likely to refer the rambunctious boys than the demure girls.[12] Further ethnographic study would be needed to show just how referral bias works in classroom settings and its consequences for both boys and girls. But once that particular bias is understood, for gender, race or class, it does not really matter how scientific and bias-free all the specialized assessments are. The demographic distribution has already been skewed before it begins.

3.4. The rapid rise of autism

Autism is another exceptionality whose prevalence in Special Education is on the rise, especially in the last decade and a half.

Prevalence statistics in Ontario from 2005-06 to 2009-10 show an increase of pupils being identified with Autism of about 43% at the elementary level and a giddy 156% at the secondary level and

since 2009-10, the overall rates have risen by another 32% (Bennett *et al.*, 2013; Brown *et al.*, 2013). Indeed, since 1998-99, the prevalence of Autism among children in Ontario's publicly-funded schools has tripled.[13] All of this occurred in a system with declining enrolment. Where does this increase come from?

Once again, the American Psychiatric Association may have had a role to play in this. Changes to the equivalent category of Pervasive Developmental Disorders in DSM-IV-TR (pp. 69-84) expanded the range of conditions associated with Autism and by DSM-5 (pp. 50-59) was grouping them under the rubric Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). From 2000 to 2012, the reported prevalence for Autism in the U.S. rose from **5** cases per 10,000 individuals of all ages to **100** cases per 10,000 individuals. For children enrolled in Ontario publicly funded schools in 2012-13, the prevalence appears to be about **93** per 10,000 (Brown *et al.*). Whether this comes from differences in diagnostic methodology and referral practices or from a rise in the frequency of this disorder, it is difficult for a layperson to discern with any certainty. But there is a mounting concern that this marks a trend towards an encroachment of mental disorder diagnoses into more and more of the population. That concern is coming from the profession itself, spearheaded by Allen J. Frances, the leader of the DSM-IV editorial team:

> The diagnosis of Autism is already badly muddled. There has been a forty-fold increase in rates in just 20 years. Some of this is due to the introduction of Asperger's in DSM-IV, some to improved case finding and reduced stigma, but a significant portion comes from loose and inaccurate diagnosis. DSM-5 turns the current confusion into a complete Babel. The impossibly vague and confusing DSM-5 definition of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is essentially useless for clinical or research purposes and is not a trustworthy guide for determining school services. (Frances, 2013)

However, as with LD, there is no evidence that students of poor and racialized backgrounds are overrepresented among students diagnosed with ASD. Once again, the reverse is true, if anything. The Brown/Parekh data for the TDSB show the following distributions for the top and bottom deciles, followed by the top three and bottom three deciles of neighbourhood income levels:

Table 4.13 Students with Autism by Neighbourhood Income Level Band, TDSB, 2009-10

Neighbourhood Income Levels	Autism
Lowest 10% income	9.5%
Highest 10% income	11.5%
Lowest 30% income	26.4%
Highest 30% income	32.0%

Source: Brown/Parekh, *loc.cit*.

The skew towards the wealthier neighbourhoods is almost identical with that of LD. Most studies that have found and commented on this skew have agreed that this is not borne out epidemiologically. Over time a consensus has emerged that the skew reflects "factors affecting referral and diagnosis" and "differential access to paediatric and developmental services." (Ritvo *et al.*, 1971, Wing, 1980, Thomas *et al.*, 2012).

The TDSB figures show a much greater disparity between male and female students with autism than for those with LD.

Table 4.14 Students with autism by Gender, TDSB, 2009-10

Gender	% of Total Enrolment	% Autism
Female	48.0%	16.8%
Male	52.0%	84.2%

Source: Brown/Parekh 2010, Table 4, p. 12.

The four to one ratio is also noted in the psychiatric literature, where it excites the comment that "females tend to be more likely to show accompanying intellectual impairments, suggesting that girls without accompanying intellectual impairments or language delays may go unrecognized, perhaps because of subtler manifestation of social and communication difficulties" (DSM-5, p.57). In other words, if there are no intellectual impairments, females are less likely to be diagnosed as autistic, because their passivity may be thought of as "normal" in females.

Both LD and autism, then, are marked by the overrepresentation of White, high-SES boys. Privileged families are more likely to seek out a diagnosis for poor performance by their intelligent child, especially if it is accompanied by rebellious "boyish" behaviour. As a result,

they gain access to the treatment, curriculum modifications and accommodations that promise their children the likelihood of a better educational outcome. LD and ASD do not have the same level of stigma associated with intellectual disabilities and behavioural disturbance, categories where poorer and racialized children are overrepresented. To be sure, this effect may have been exaggerated in the case of LD by the explicit or implicit exclusion of low-SES and racial minority children in the definition. But these programs show tendencies not boundaries. They are not blatant examples of class-based stratification that favours upper-income levels. For that, we should turn to programs for Giftedness.

3.5. Giftedness: the top stream

The TDSB data show that the prevalence of several exceptionalities increased in the five years from 2005-06 to 2009-10 inclusively (Brown/Parekh, 2010). This occurred despite a decline in overall enrolment of somewhat more than 5%. But the figures in the report draw attention to each exceptionality as a percentage of all exceptionalities only. A starker picture is painted when the change for each exceptionality is compared with what the number would have been if the decline in overall enrolment were reflected in that category.

Table 4.15. Percentage Change in Number of Students by Selected Exceptionality, TDSB, 2005-06 to 2009-10, expected vs. actual

	2005-06 actual	2009-10 expected	2009-10 actual	% raw increase	% adjusted increase
Learning Disability	8,436	8,002	9,054	7%	**13%**
Gifted	3,689	3,499	5,296	44%	**51%**
Behavioural	1,020	968	1,235	21%	**28%**
Autism	930	882	1,376	48%	**56%**

Source: Brown/Parekh, extrapolated from Table 3, page 11.

Although Autism registered the highest percentage increases, what makes Gifted stand out is the much larger base figure in 2005-06. There is no sudden demographic change in the population of Toronto to

explain this huge leap. One explanation provided to the author by TDSB officials lay in the consequences of amalgamation of six smaller public Boards of Education into the TDSB in 1998. Different cut-off scores on the IQ tests had been used in the area boards for the identification of Giftedness. They were subsequently re-aligned into one standard by adopting the lower score, hence the increase in prevalence. As a result, the prevalence of children identified as Gifted rose from 1.3% to 2% of the total TDSB enrolment. At an Inner City Advisory Committee meeting in 2011, TDSB officials were quick to point out that this kept the TDSB well within the norms of Gifted prevalence. In a similar five-year period (from 2006-07 on), the prevalence of Giftedness in Ontario rose from 1.2% to 1.5% (Ministry figures published in Auditor-General Reports). In the five other Boards whose most recently published Special Education plans included data on exceptionalities — public boards in Algoma and Halton; Catholic boards in East Ontario, London, and the Peterborough region — the prevalence varies between 0.3% and 2.5% (the latter being Halton for reasons spelt out below p.149). The advocacy and research groups that support giftedness claim the percentages should be much higher, with the most widely cited definition of Giftedness suggesting 10% (Gagné, 1998; Bélanger and Gagné, 2006).

We should resist being drawn into an argument about the appropriate prevalence of Giftedness. Whether a student is classified as Gifted or not depends to a large degree on the score achieved on an I.Q. test. But Giftedness is not like handedness in writing. Handedness can be decided by a True-False answer on whether an individual writes exclusively with the right hand, for example. Giftedness is regularly determined in relation to a scale, something that strongly suggests there are degrees of Giftedness. But once you have achieved a score above an arbitrarily decided cutoff point on the scale for the purposes of a committee decision, you are treated as if this has been settled by a True-False answer, as unarguable as the handedness one. You are in or you are out. And all of this is argued as though we knew that there was only one kind of giftedness and only one way to measure it. And we all know that this is not the case either.[14]

What particularly makes the Gifted category stand out is its demographic distribution, with marked disproportionality in income level, race and gender (Brown and Parekh, 2010). These data are derived from Grades 7-10 in the TDSB's 2006-07 Student Census.

Table 4.16 Students identified as Gifted by Broad Income Level Band

Neighbourhood Income Levels	Gifted
Lowest 10% income	3.3%
Highest 10% income	27.7%
Lowest 30% income	10.3%
Highest 30% income	57.6%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 12, page 39.

Table 4.17 Students identified as Gifted by Self-Identified Racial Group, Grades 7-10, TDSB, 2006-07

Self-identified Racial[15]	Number identified as Gifted	% of TDSB Enrolment	% of Gifted
Unknown	120	0.2%	0.2%
Aboriginal	117	0.3%	0.0%
Black	7,882	14.4%	2.7%
East Asian	8,102	14.8%	26.5%
Latin	1,017	1.9%	0.2%
Middle East	2,077	3.8%	0.6%
Mixed	3,574	6.5%	6.4%
South Asian	10,120	18.5%	8.7%
SE Asian	2,168	4.0%	2.0%
White	19,475	35.6%	52.7%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 9, page 36.

Table 4.18 Students identified as Gifted by Gender, TDSB

Gender	% of Total Enrolment	% of Gifted
Female	48.0%	37.6%
Male	52.0%	62.4%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 7, page 33.

It is clear who are under-represented in the Gifted category: the poor, all non-white racial groups except mixed and East Asian, and females. Overrepresented are: the wealthy, Whites, East

Asians and males. This is a familiar pattern in the demographics of disproportionate school achievement as countless studies have shown but two features stand out.

While we know that girls now are more successful than boys by many of the standard measures (see Chapter Six and p. 235 in particular), boys are easily overrepresented in many Special Education categories. Why are girls outnumbered? There are several explanations. One has to do with the age at which the identification occurs. Since most school boards begin the referral and screening process in Grade 3, it is argued, the huge intellectual advance over boys that girls typically showed in early childhood is already receding. This is partly because the boys' cognitive development is catching up naturally, and partly because the girls have increasingly been socialized into submissiveness, not pushing themselves forward, and yielding to the pushiness of boys as well as to social expectations that boys will do better. This does have a certain ring of truth because there is plenty of evidence showing that the gender gap works the other way when giftedness is identified in kindergarten as in New York. The difference is not huge — 55% girls where girls make up 51% of the overall population (Otterman, 2010). But male advantage is readily visible in the Grade 7 population at the TDSB – 62%. It would be interesting to see the gender figures for boards that practice early identification of giftedness in Ontario.

The other overrepresented group of children identified as Gifted and talented are those of East Asian background. The literature on why this should be so in this particular diasporic community is rife with speculation, from Confucianism to the submissive learning styles that favour cram schools in those countries. But it is the case throughout the English-speaking world. Interesting research in the UK showed that this was one of the few diasporic communities in which school success and Giftedness was not affected by low income. The same values that attached the family's future prospects to hard work and education, to supervision and encouragement of their children's efforts, progress and results, seemed to spread across economic boundaries. Working-class and otherwise poor Chinese families were just as likely to pay for extra tutoring and Saturday classes (Mansell, 2011). It is hard to know what weight to give this kind of analysis. It is difficult sometimes to separate cultural stereotyping and circular arguments from the pursuit of an answer. Why, for example, wouldn't we expect all immigrant

communities to subscribe to such views and to react similarly to prejudices that act as barriers to progress? Certainly the resilience and initiative shown by refugee families has led to their success as documented in other studies (Laurens, 1992).

Why the push to have children identified as Gifted? What explains the dramatic increase in Gifted numbers? The answer is that the identification of Giftedness, usually at the end of Grade 3, is not only prestigious in its own right, but has been shown to be the royal road to subsequent admission to university nine years later (see page p.174). So referral bias is a large factor for the overrepresentation of children from White and upper-income families anxious to ensure the maintenance of educational advantage, although for somewhat different reasons than for LD and Autism. In fact, such is the pressure exerted by some families to achieve the competitive advantage offered by the Gifted designation, that parents who can afford it are turning to psychologists in private practice to get the IQ test result they need. Increasingly, school boards are agreeing to accept such results without recourse to re-assessment[16], and so ability to pay is actually being built into the public system as an accelerant.

Not surprisingly, the pressure on school boards is mounting to increase the provision for Gifted programs. Some boards have a full-system screening process for Giftedness each spring so that waiting lists only exist for late transferring students. This is unlike the screening process for other exceptionalities. A minority report from the Association for Bright Children (ABC) to the Special Education Advisory Committee of the London Catholic District School Board (London CDSB, Special Education Plan, 2010-11) identifies gaps in Special Education service in that Board and lets us in on the specific pressures boards face to improve the provision of Gifted programs. Here are the problems this London ABC chapter focused on:

- Parents using private assessments owing to wait times and lack of early identification.
- "Range of placements" not offered to gifted students despite ministry regulations.
- "Inclusionary philosophy" taking precedence over evidence-based research on gifted education, meaning some students' needs are not being met, leaving them at risk.
- ABC supports Inclusion only if it places the student in the

> most enabling learning environment or zone of proximal development.
> • Gifted students may be surrendering a Catholic Education by seeking gifted placements at the coterminous board.

Indeed, the rationale for the expansion of Gifted programs most commonly voiced by trustees and officials, who are all too aware of the privileged treatment of this sector, is that competition from the private sector or from another public system would accelerate upper-class flight from their own board.

The extreme case may be the Halton District School Board. Most boards that offer special classes for the Gifted (and not all of them do) screen their students for the program at the end of Grade 3. Part of the rationale is that developmental elasticity in younger children is too great for IQ and other assessments to be considered reliable earlier than Grade 3. Furthermore, it's judged that the range of development within the age range of any one class prior to Grade 3 is too great for accurate comparisons of sustainable "ability" (Bennett *et al*. 7th edition, p. 150). Despite these problems, Halton DSB recently introduced screening for Giftedness at Senior Kindergarten for special classes beginning in Grade 1, first in Burlington and then throughout the Board. The implementation of this expansion, however, was unclear as this book went to press.[17]

All in all, for LD, ASD and Gifted, the evidence for referral bias on the part of parents is widely acknowledged now. The extent of teacher referral bias in these areas is less clear. For other non-gifted exceptionalities, the referral bias may lie primarily with the teaching staff. We should now consider how such referral bias is reinforced by bias in the diagnostic process.

3.6. Disproportionality and the influence of mental disorder diagnostics

We have already remarked on the influence of Diagnostic and Statistical Manuals for Mental Disorders, in particular DSM-IV (1994) and its revision DSM-IV-TR (2000). DSM is the medical arm of Special Education, particularly for such exceptionalities as LD, ASD, MID and DD. The Ministry of Education periodically distances itself from DSM definitions

of the exceptionalities used in Special Education, perhaps recognizing the hardening of exclusionary profiling implied in the "medical model."

> The determining factor for the provision of special education programs or services is not any specific diagnosed or undiagnosed medical condition, but rather the needs of individual students based on the individual assessment of strengths and needs. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2011)

But this distance is difficult to sustain because of the range of conditions that are "first usually diagnosed in infancy, childhood, or adolescence" as opposed to adulthood in DSM-IV: mental retardation, learning disorders, communication disorders, pervasive developmental disorders (now ASD), attention-deficit disorders, and disruptive behaviour disorders. A glance at recent Special Education Plans of school boards around Ontario reveals the extent to which some overtly rely on DSM IV diagnoses.[18]

DSM-IV and now DSM-5 both claim in their introduction to distinguish mental disorders from "socially deviant behavior (e.g., political, religious, or sexual)" and "conflicts that are primarily between the individual and society." But while DSM-5 adds an extended chapter on Cultural Formulation (pp. 745-759), emphasizing the importance of sensitivity in issues of cultural difference, the overriding perspective that continues over from DSM-IV is that of upper-class White males.

The charge against DSM bias has been led by a number of prominent psychologists including, most surprisingly in the third case below, the chair of the team that put together DSM-IV in 1994.

> An undeserved aura of scientific precision surrounds the manual: It has "statistical" in its title and includes a precise-seeming three- to five-digit code for every diagnostic category and subcategory, as well as lists of symptoms a patient must have to receive a diagnosis. But what it does is simply connect certain dots, or symptoms — such as sadness, fear or insomnia — to construct diagnostic categories that lack scientific grounding. Many therapists see patients through the DSM prism, trying to shoehorn a human being into a category. (Dr. Paula Caplan, member of the original DSM-IV team who resigned in protest over the direction it was taking, see Caplan, 2012)

The DSM tends to pathologize several groups whose civil rights have historically been marginalized in the culture at large. The bias is clear in regard to race, social class, age, physical disability, gender and sexual orientation. Symptoms are a call for corrected balance. Rather than labeling the symptoms of a sick society, when appropriate, the client is too often diagnosed and medicated to adapt to the disease of the system. (Dr. Ofer Zur, psychotherapist specializing in therapeutic boundaries, see Zur and Nordmarken, 2013)

Painful experience with previous DSM's teaches that if anything in the diagnostic system can be misused and turned into a fad, it will be. Many millions of people with normal grief, gluttony, distractibility, worries, reactions to stress, the temper tantrums of childhood, the forgetting of old age, and 'behavioral addictions' will soon be mislabeled as psychiatrically sick and given inappropriate treatment. … People with real psychiatric problems that can be reliably diagnosed and effectively treated are already badly shortchanged. DSM 5 will make this worse by diverting attention and scarce resources away from the really ill and toward people with the everyday problems of life who will be harmed, not helped, when they are mislabeled as mentally ill. (Dr. Allen J. Frances, psychiatrist and chair of the DSM-IV team, see Frances, 2013)

Such concerns with arbitrary boundaries, bias, and the pathologization of everyday life match similar concerns with Special Education. Even if we were not concerned about demographic skews, we are reminded that over-identification means that the effort to bring much-needed help to students with undeniable disabilities is being diluted if not deflected by the provision of services to those who should not have been diagnosed in the first place.

We should also not discount the close relationship between the identification and treatment of mental disorders and their interconnection with everyday school life in Ontario as elsewhere in North America. The diagnosis of ADHD, for example, routinely requires the explicit co-operation of a teacher who is asked to complete a questionnaire on the type and frequency of particular symptomatic behaviours in a school setting for a pupil-patient, because the behaviours have to be demonstrated in more than one setting (DSM-IV-TR, pp. 85-93, and

DSM-5, pp. 59-66). This can go even further. Such is the prevalence of the prescription of psychotropic drugs for ADHD, that school boards have developed a procedure with a form to be "completed when the school agrees with the parental request to administer medication." To be sure, the range of medications also includes short-term treatments such as antibiotics and painkillers after injury or emergency treatment for anaphylaxis. The Operational Procedure PR.536 SCH of the TDSB, however, gives examples of only two targets for "long-term medication." These are hyperactivity and seizures (TDSB, 2007). So we should not be surprised to hear from time to time of parents objecting to being pressured to put their child on Ritalin by a classroom teacher (Abraham, 2010a and 2010b; Weeks and Hammer, 2012; Schultz, c2012)

We may conclude that the Special Education classification system overlaps with a diagnostic system that has not overcome the imputation of class, racial and gender biases of its own.

3.7. The rise of undefined Special Needs

As we have seen, Behavioural, Mild Intellectual Disabilities and Language Disabilities are the exceptionalities where poor, racialized students are overrepresented. The high-prestige Gifted exceptionality has become overwhelmingly the identified exceptionality of wealthier and highly-educated families. LD and ASD do not have the prestige of Giftedness, but they also show evidence of the overrepresentation of privileged social groups. There is literature to suggest that part of the popularity of such designations as LD lies in the extra time and help that may be granted for high-stakes tests such as the Grade 10 Literacy test in Ontario. The apparent inequity of not allowing sufficient time or assistance for students with exceptionalities, declared or not, has led to a growing demand in some legal circles that tests with rigidly enforced time limits be abandoned as a form of assessment for all students (Colker, 2011). But any expectation that these two exceptionalities might have evolved into another label of convenience for special treatment for the underprivileged must be discarded. This raises the question of whether Special Education labeling is actually losing its proclivity to stratify along lines of class and race.

The answer lies in the evolution of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). In 1998, the Ministry issued Regulation 181/98, which formalized

many of the procedures already in place for the identification and placement of exceptional pupils (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000). Central to this was the need to develop an IEP for each pupil who had been identified as exceptional by the formal Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). This had to be done within 30 school days of the IPRC decision and the responsibility for doing this lay with the principal of the school where the student was due to be placed for a Special Education program. To this end, the principal was expected to collaborate with the educational and professional staff involved in the assessment and in the eventual delivery of the program. The principal also had a responsibility to consult the individual student's parents/ guardians (and the student when 14 or above), and to provide them with a copy of the Plan when it was complete. There are questions about the true nature and exercise of parental and student rights to which we shall return later. But as of 1998, the IEP was the formal document that defined the student's exceptionality and dictated how it was to be accommodated by specialized programming. This extended to placement, whether full-time or part-time withdrawal from a regular classroom or specialized assistance while remaining for most or all of the time in the regular classroom. There could be modifications to the curriculum (what was learnt and at what speed) and accommodations with respect to the conditions in which tests were administered or assignments were completed. But in all cases, this came at the end of a complex process of referral, assessment, report writing and judgment by a quasi-judicial panel of administrative staff (the IPRC).

The process was labour-intensive and costly, and as the number of students being referred for identification continued to grow, various jurisdictions in North America began looking at alternatives. In the course of the 1990s, a combination of factors led to changes in the process for identifying LD students in many U.S. states.[19] Educational research was showing just how arbitrary and even misleading the intelligence-achievement disparity definition was for LD. Faith in the relevance of IQ tests in particular was low. Specialists voiced the concern that many pupils were being misidentified or left unidentified. Time was being lost for pupils who really did need specialized help while help was being provided to pupils who could learn without recourse to Special Education. The alternative to an assessment-driven LD definition came to be known as Response to Intervention (RTI). It was fully articulated at

the LD Initiative Summit in 2001 held in Washington DC. But the notion had been circulating in the years preceding this and shows similarities to the way in which the use of the IEP was expanded:

> The basic RTI model has been conceptualized as a three-tiered prevention model, with primary intervention consisting of the general education program; secondary intervention involving fixed duration, targeted, evidence-based small group interventions; and tertiary intervention involving individualized and intensive services that may or may not be similar to traditional special education services. (Bradley *et al.*, 2005)

In Ontario, at about the same time, a parallel to this approach was introduced for *all* students who might be referred for Special Education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000 p. 5)

> An IEP *must* be developed for every student who has been identified as an "exceptional pupil" by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), in accordance with Regulation 181/98.

> An IEP *may* be developed for a student who has not been formally identified as exceptional, but who has been deemed by the board to require special education programs or services in order to attend school or to achieve curriculum expectations and/or whose learning expectations are modified from or alternative to the expectations set out for a particular grade level or course in a provincial curriculum policy document.

> An IEP *must* be developed, as supporting documentation, if an Intensive Support Amount (ISA) funding claim is submitted by a school board on behalf of a student who has not been identified as exceptional by an IPRC, but who is receiving a special education program and services.

The process as described in the Ministry document was justified as part of an efficiency drive, reducing the time and costs of the cumbersome IPRC process while requiring Boards to show just cause for any expenditures on special education programming funded by the Ministry. There is no suggestion that this came about because of

a weakening of faith in the assessment process as was the case in the U.S. for LD among the educators. Neo-liberal state and provincial level politicians on both sides of the border welcomed an opportunity to cut public costs and rein in the powers of local jurisdictions.

In 2005, the Ministry document *Education for All* outlined the three-tier process for IEP development throughout the province. However, the tiered nature of the IEP development process prior to or instead of an IPRC has not been developed uniformly in all boards (Bennett *et al.*, 2008, p. 62, and local Board Special Education Plans). The TDSB's Special Education Plans (e.g. 2013) do give a particularly clear example of this process at work, however, and it is worth examining for a moment. It is termed the IST/SST system and is claimed to provide a "consistent process to address the needs of our most vulnerable students" (p.21).

The In-School Support Team (IST) brings together the school's own teaching staff to review pupils' progress and come up with strategies for meeting the needs of a pupil having difficulty meeting grade-level expectations. When this does not seem to be providing enough support, the pupil is referred to the School Support Team (SST). This brings the full weight of the Special Education and Professional Support Services to the table, along with parents/guardians and even outside agencies. If the strength of all this expertise still does not seem sufficient to meet the vulnerable pupil's apparent needs, the pupil may then be referred to an IPRC with a view to being identified as exceptional and an appropriate placement recommended.

At each level of the process, an IEP may be assigned for students who are:

- in need of specific accommodations, modifications, and/or alternative programming to address their needs (i.e., physical, academic, emotional/behavioural)
- not exceptional but deemed to need regular (several times per week) special education programming
- awaiting an IPRC, except where a gifted exceptionality is being sought or possibly when a parent(s)/guardian(s) has made a request

The parallel to the three tiers of RTI is evident.

When Brown and Parekh came to consider the category of students who were on IEPs but were not identified, they divided them into two categories: Non-Identified and Local IEPs. The Non-Identified were receiving Special Education support and may be assumed to be associated with an SST decision; the Local IEPs were receiving classroom assistance arising, it may be assumed, from an IST decision.

Only the Non-Identified students on IEPs (as opposed to the Local ones) are tallied along with exceptionalities in the prevalence statistics available for the province. In 2006-07, they accounted for 34% of all the Ontario students receiving Special Education support, more than any specific exceptionality (Bennett *et al.*, 2008, pp. 37-38). By 2012-13, that level had risen to 40%. In the TDSB for the same year, they accounted for just over 48%, while for other Boards in the Greater Toronto Area the percentage was considerably lower at 24% (Brown *et al.*, 2013). In more remote Boards such as the northern Algoma District School Board this group accounted for fewer than 20% of the students with Special Education Needs.

From one perspective, students on IEPs without the formal identification of any exceptionality could be viewed as evidence of the de-medicalization of student needs. The concern is that the IEPs still entail differentiation of treatment in the school and there are potentially damaging consequences for those students who receive them. The IEP is added to the OSR card that accompanies the student wherever she goes, unless a parent objects to this in writing. It provides a profile of strengths and weaknesses and it singles the student out for special attention as one who is struggling to keep up and should be accommodated in some visible way. Brown and Parekh have given us valuable data on the demographic characteristics of this group of Special Needs/Special Education children in the TDSB. The biggest range of demographic data comes from the Grades 7-10 population of 2006-07.

Table 4.19. Percentage of Students in various categories by Self-Identified Racial Group, TDSB, Grades 7-10, 2006-07

Race	All TDSB	IPRC Gifted	No Special Needs	IPRC Non-Gifted	IEP only
Black	14.4%	2.7%	12.4%	22.2%	28.7%
East Asian	14.8%	26.5%	16.2%	6.3%	7.1%
South Asian	18.5%	8.7%	20.1%	10.5%	15.0%
White	35.6%	52.7%	34.6%	43.2%	31.5%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 9, p. 36.

Table 4.20. Percentage of Students in various categories by Broad Income Level Band, TDSB, Grades 7-10, 2006-07

Income	All TDSB	IPRC Gifted	No Special Needs	IPRC Non-Gifted	IEP only
Highest 10%	10.0%	27.7%	9.9%	8.9%	7.0%
Lowest 10%	10.0%	3.3%	9.5%	12.4%	14.1%
Highest 30%	30.0%	57.6%	30.5%	27.1%	21.6%
Lowest 30%	30.0%	10.3%	29.3%	33.7%	38.2%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Table 12, p. 39.

With these tables, the picture of disproportionality is now complete. The poorer the children, the less likely they are to be considered gifted, the more likely they are to be considered as exceptional underperformers. The new IEP-only group seems to exaggerate that skew. The more local and informal the labelling process, it turns out, the greater the percentage of poor and black children to be singled out as having special problems. This is naturally considered by those with decision-making power in education as either an unintended consequence of such labelling or, preferably, as a way of identifying those in need of extra help in order to provide it. The possibility of an emancipatory rather than a restrictive outcome from the IEP experience has not yet been ruled out in this analysis. This is where the argument takes us now.

3.8 So what happens next? The Individual Education Plan

It is hard to disagree with the idea of setting down in writing what needs to be done to take full account of a student's disability or exceptionality and help that student to get the most out of an education. Barriers can be removed; doors to greater opportunities can be opened. Full recognition can be given to what that student knows and can do, it is argued, and that can be built on. The IEP can suggest ways to advance the education of a future citizen and contributor to society. Is this what happens?

Well, the problem with a written plan is that it can so easily turn into a straitjacket on a constantly evolving pupil-teacher relationship, denying the creative versatility of the teacher who will change direction as the original blueprint turns out to be unhelpful or as unexpected progress is made when the student engages with learning in previously untried circumstances. The attentive teacher, the reflective practitioner, the public educator will respond and allow such epiphanies to lead in new directions for the greater benefit of the learner. That living process is harder to maintain when bound by an official document telling you what to do. In its Special Education Guide of 2001, the Ministry attempted to allay that concern by stressing that the IEP was a "working document":

> … through the mutual efforts of, and close communication among, the student, the student's parent, the school, the community, and other professionals involved with the student. It must be constantly revisited with every reporting period and can be changed by "developing new expectations … breaking expectations into smaller steps … or altering the teaching strategies, resources, or level of support." (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. E4)

Is this an emancipatory impulse? It certainly looks like it. But of course this does not tell the whole story.

Over the last decade and a half, the Ministry has been updating and standardizing its descriptions and examples of IEPs. A comparison of two documents, barely four years apart will show this (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000 and 2004). The relationship of the IEP with the outcomes-based curriculum of the Ministry has been hardened. For example, the 2000 document includes a mention of the student's

interests in the IEP; the 2004 document leaves them out. A key characteristic of good pedagogy, the consideration of what students brings to their learning experience, what motivates them, what they use to move to the next level, is gone. The Ministry emphasizes student strengths and needs above all, and it turns out that they require measurement by specialized and standardized assessment tools. The student's agency has to give way to a level of conformity with a standard model of expectations as spelt out specifically in Ministry curriculum. The emphasis on the student's ability to "demonstrate learning" has moved up from page E19 of the IEP section (2000) to the definitions page (2004, page 6). IEPs now hold the key to those accommodations that lead to better performance on the Province's standardized tests and any other standardized tests designed to demonstrate conformity with learning standards. Accountability has changed, too. No longer is it "for helping the student meet his or her goals and expectations." Now it is "for helping the student meet the stated goals and learning expectations as the student progresses through the Ontario curriculum." Self-realization has given way to hoop-jumping.

As the decade wore on, the format of the IEP moved from a lengthy description of the standards to a template and then to the posting of samples of completed forms for all exceptionalities on the Ministry website. An electronic IEP template has been added for voluntary use.

The flavour of ISO thinking and quality control is unmistakable. Restriction is edging out the possibilities for emancipation in the planning stage.

4. Placement and restrictive environments

Until now, we have been concerned with the labelling process that attaches a name and a description of disabilities or difficulties to individual students and may, except in the case of Giftedness, serve to lower expectations as students' programs are modified and their educational course reset according to an IEP. The act of labelling per se is a characteristic or condition of streaming, inasmuch as it narrows the range of educational options and differentiates learning hierarchically. But the segregation of students into separate classes for all or part of the day is the most visible manifestation of streaming at work.

The Ontario Ministry of Education likes to refer to a range of placements and expects this range to be available throughout the province. These extend from the most restrictive to the least restrictive:

4.1 Provincial schools and Special Schools in boards

Five provincial residential schools are scattered around the province, offering day programs for local residents also. They serve students who are deaf and/or blind, or with profound learning disabilities. There are special day schools run by some school boards too. Toronto has seven such schools for students (for a total enrolment of 500 or so) with severe developmental, physical, hearing and multiple disabilities. The numbers are small and only a detailed study of their selection processes, demographic characteristics, and the possible social or individual benefits of their pupils' transition to neighbourhood schools would frame them within a discussion of streaming.

4.2 Contained placements in regular board schools

This is where the most evident forms of streaming take place within the Special Education framework. Fully Self-Contained placements mean that students attend special classes for all or almost all instructional purposes in board schools that may or may not be their home or neighbourhood schools. Partially Integrated placements take various forms from board to board, but essentially they mean that the student spends a large part of the day in a self-contained class and spends the rest of the time in a regular classroom. In both cases, and in accordance with Ministry recommendations, these placements do allow students to spend time with the rest of their peers in the school, whether in general activities in all cases, or for part of their instructional program regardless of the placement designation (Bennett *et al.*, 2013, p.45).

In 1998, Regulation 181 concerning Special Education required boards to consider regular classroom placement as the first option. In recent years, there has been an emphasis on inclusion at the provincial policy level (Bennett and Wynne, 2006; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). The regular classroom placement is declared to be the first option and every effort is made to secure all the appropriate accommodations within that classroom. However, as we have argued,

the act of labelling children with an exceptionality or designating them as Special Needs (through an IEP without exceptionality) leads to the same kinds of reduced expectations and narrowing of options as streaming them into separate classes or groups but not as aggressively. So the reduction or phasing out of special classes may help reduce inequities, even if not actually end them. We can agree it is an important step towards the genuine inclusion of many more students.

But is this happening? A look at the data for the three years beginning in 2001, 2005 and 2009 (latest readily available) suggests otherwise.

Table 4.21 Exceptional students in fully self-contained and partially integrated classes as percentage of all Ontario public school enrolments 2001-02, 2005-06, 2009-10

	Elementary		Secondary		All	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2001-02	37,528	2.8%	16,379	2.4%	53,907	2.7%
2005-06	39,276	3.1%	15,942	2.4%	55,218	2.8%
2009-10	36,380	3.0%	18,389	2.7%	54,769	2.9%

Source: Bennett *et al.*, 2008 and 2013, 6th and 7th eds.

During a time when overall enrolments declined steadily by over 90,000, the number of students being placed in separate classes has fluctuated numerically but has actually increased in percentage terms. We need to look at the percentages of students with Special Needs, both those identified as exceptional and those receiving IEPs without an exceptionality.

Table 4.22 Exceptional students in fully self-contained and partially integrated classes as percentage of all Special Needs students in Ontario 2001-02, 2005-06, 2009-10

	Elementary	Secondary	All
	%	%	%
2001-02	21.3%	9.3%	15.3%
2005-06	22.4%	13.8%	19.0%
2009-10	20.6%	14.1%	17.8%

Source: Bennett *et al.*, 2008 and 2013, 6th and 7th eds.

This is the picture for students placed in Self-Contained and Partially Integrated special classes over the first decade of this century. There is fluctuation overall in percentage terms for the elementary panel and the system as a whole and a steady increase in the secondary panel. There is not enough by way of data to allow us to detect a clear trend, but we are entitled to expect more by way of change over those ten years when Ministry statements were regularly calling for an increase in regular classroom placements. What the data show is that the number of Special Education students being streamed into separate classes has remained between 50,000 and 55,000 across the province.

The self-contained classes are not evenly distributed across all exceptionalities. Since these classes are intended to receive students with the greatest need for specialized support and instruction, we should not be surprised to find the greatest percentage of students in certain high needs categories:

Table 4.23 Percentage of exceptional students in fully self-contained or partly integrated classes, for select categories, Ontario, 2005-06 and 2009-10

	Elementary		Secondary	
	2005-06	2009-10	2005-06	2009-10
Developmental (DD)	68.8%	68.8%	81.6%	80.8%
Mild Intellectual (MID)	48.2%	50.3%	29.9%	27.5%
Multiple	41.8%	35.6%	40.0%	43.1%
Autism	36.1%	32.7%	36.1%	32.7%
Behavioural	30.6%	32.9%	10.0%	9.1%
Learning Disability (LD)	24.9%	22.8%	5.9%	5.2%
Gifted	45.2%	49.3%	18.9%	19.7%

Source: Bennett *et al.*, 2008 and 2013, 6th and 7th eds.

Over the five-year period 2005-2010, the percentages for each panel show consistency overall in each of the exceptionalities listed. The dips for Multiple Disabilities and Autism in the elementary panel may be accounted for as fluctuations related to the instability or inconsistency of IPRC decisions across Boards or even within boards. Whether students are identified by their most salient exceptional characteristics or lumped into the Multiple Disabilities category varies, as research at

the TDSB has shown (Brown and Parekh, 2010, p. 56). Where Autism is concerned the rapidly increasing numbers would be sufficient to explain fluctuations in placement there.

But the changes as students move from elementary to secondary school are more relevant to our study here. In the case of LD, the more extensive use of Resource Room assistance is enough to account for the drop in special class placements. But with Gifted, MID, and Behavioural, it is reasonable to suppose that something else is going on. The opening up of the Academic, Applied and Locally Developed Essentials programs may provide scope enough to deal with many of these students without recourse to self-contained placements. A greater number of the Gifted students will enter the regular academic level classes with in-class enrichment. More of the MID and Behavioural students will be accommodated in workplace-directed programs (Locally Developed Essentials) or Applied level courses.[20] These are the findings that show how streaming through Special Education in elementary school dovetails into streaming through course levels at the secondary school. For those students who cannot be so easily accommodated by course streaming, in DD for example, recourse to self-contained placements appears to climb, from just under 70% to over 80%.

This may not be the case in the TDSB. Indeed the Brown/Parekh research shows that, on the one hand, the percentage of non-gifted exceptional students in self-contained classes (full-time and part-time) remains at about 80% from Grade 1 to Grade 8 and then plummets to under 40%. This confirms some of the effects observed in the provincial data and may be understood as the transformation of streaming mechanisms mentioned above. But Brown and Parekh speculate that it may also result from a steering effect of Ministry of Education's Special Education Funding Model, which provides a Special Education Per-Pupil Amount to boards specifically for Special Education purposes based on the total enrolment at the Board according to a sliding scale: $924.62 per JK to Grade 3 student; $710.22 per Grade 4 to 8 student; $468.70 per Grade 9 to 12 student (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013b, p. 27). It is worth noting that the requirements of the grant are simply that it be spent on Special Education services. There is no requirement to spend equivalent percentages of that sum in each of the three curriculum divisions for which money is allocated as above.

It is in the Gifted programs where the TDSB data differs so markedly. Beginning in Grade 4, the percentage in self-contained Gifted classes is in the mid to low 70s for Grades 4-8, remains close to 60% in Grades 9-11, and dips to 44% in Grade 12. The comparison with provincial figures is difficult to assess because the same grade-specific information is not available. However, over the five year period outlined in Table 4:23 (above) elementary self-contained classes are the placement for 45-50% of all students identified as Gifted and this drops off spectacularly to 19% across all secondary grades across the province. In Toronto, however, it would seem most of the students who enter a self-contained class Gifted class around age 9 embark on a continuous isolated trajectory that almost guarantees admission to university as we shall see below. For them, the deck is certainly stacked and privilege is secured. And there is no sign of a steering effect from the funding formula.

A glance at the Special Education Plans for several school boards shows that boards differ significantly in how they serve the students designated as Gifted. Indeed, at least one Board (East Ontario Catholic DSB) claims to have identified no Gifted students at all in an enrolment of almost 13,000. Most Boards do not include detailed exceptionality statistics. But they usually do list staff figures for self-contained classes. Among those, two more Catholic boards, Algonquin-Lakeshore (11,000+) and Simcoe-Muskoka (almost 20,000) list none at all, meaning that self-contained placement is not available for Gifted there either. The website of the Catholic board in London (18,000+ students) explains that "there are no system self-contained special education classes" in its elementary schools and it lists no teachers for self-contained classes. So while large urban public boards identify an increasing number of Gifted students and place half or more of them in segregated settings, smaller Catholic boards are going in a different direction. The unusual percentage distribution may be accounted for by differences in inclusion policy between Boards.

There is not a great deal of evidence of the demographic distribution of students in self-contained classes for exceptionalities other than Gifted. For the TDSB, Brown and Parekh summarize their data for Grades 7-10 students with non-Gifted exceptionalities briefly on page 53 of the 2010 Report. There they point out that students from the lowest income neighbourhoods were more likely in 2006

to be placed in non-gifted congregated classes, while students from the highest income neighbourhoods were more likely to be placed in regular classes. It should be said that the TDSB has tried to soften the segregative impact of its special classes by placing alongside its Intensive Support Program (fully self-contained and requiring bussing), a Home School Program that attempts to provide part-time withdrawal in the student's neighbourhood school with what it calls a Community-Based Resource model (TDSB, 2013a). How this will affect disproportionality in IEP assignment, identification and placement is as yet not clear.

Interestingly, the Ontario Ministry of Education indirectly lets Boards know who it expects to populate the special education programs and services in school boards. Among its various grants in support of Special Education, is the High Needs Amount (HNA) Allocation that addresses the cost of providing intensive staff support required by a small number of students with high needs (Ministry of Education, 2013b, pp. 33-34). The Ministry evidently wants to avoid giving Boards a financial incentive to increase costly services on demand. So it has devised various ways to calculate the cost more objectively. One of those is the Special Education Statistical Prediction Model Amount. In the words of the Technical Paper:

> The board-specific prediction value for each school board reflects the relationship between the actual percent of students reported to be receiving special education programs and/or services in the school board and the average level of socioeconomic status of all students enrolled in the school board. (p. 33)

The factors used to calculate the probability that students will need special education are: occupational structure, median income, parental education level, families below the poverty line, parental unemployment, percentage of Aboriginal families and recent immigrants, and recent household movement. In other words, disproportionality is not only acknowledged and expected, it is also institutionally entrenched in grant calculations. It is important to remember that this has nothing to do with the Learning Opportunities Grant that supports programs for students with a "higher risk of academic difficulties" as a result of similar social and economic indicators

(pp. 57-58). Here the blurring of the distinctions between disabilities, difficulties and disadvantages is central to government planning.

We can conclude that a relatively small Special Education upper stream (Gifted) and a somewhat larger lower stream (Non-Gifted) on either side of the mainstream majority in regular classes are both clearly in place, and they correlate with income stratification in the broader society.

4.3 Inclusion and emancipation

The emancipatory impulse that brought children with disabilities into the education system has now come to favour what is called inclusion. This has been a rocky path. When Special Education was first fully accepted as a public responsibility, many opposed the segregation of exceptional children and favoured mainstreaming. If all children were admitted to the public school system, this was interpreted as an emancipatory gesture only if this meant admission to the same classroom, the mainstream, alongside the unexceptional peers.

Some jurisdictions sought to prepare the way for mainstreaming by bringing an understanding of handicapped children and required accommodations into the curriculum as units of study (Saskatoon Board of Education, 1974). The exceptional child's risk of stigmatization and rejection by the peer group could be part of what every young person should know to build a more welcoming, tolerant society.

In Ontario, one peak of this approach was reached in the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board under the powerful leadership of Jim Hansen during his long career as superintendent from 1969 to 1991. His philosophy of education was clearly out of step with the current neo-liberal agenda. It was based on a belief that education is growth, and that the "job of the school is to foster growth … not just the three R's."

These he articulated as five basic needs:

- the need to belong,
- the need to be accepted — affirmed,
- the need to have success,
- the need to be challenged to excellence, and,
- the need to offer service.

Hansen attributed all of these needs to all pupils regardless of ability or disability, and was convinced that they could only be met if all students learned together in a spirit of community (Hansen 2006 and Hansen s.d.).

This author became aware of Jim Hansen's approach and legacy upon joining the Minister of Education's staff in 1991. At the same time, the challenges of simple mainstreaming into regular classrooms without Hansen's spirit of community and accommodation became clear in 1992. It happened during a meeting between the Minister of Education Tony Silipo and representatives from the Down Syndrome Association and Community Living who were making a strong appeal for the full participation of students with intellectual disabilities in regular classrooms. Sitting behind them in a corner, a young woman we shall call Amy was busying herself over some paper. At the end of the presentations, Amy came forward and was presented to the Minister. As a person with an intellectual disability, Amy preferred to make her presentation through a series of questions and answers with the leader of the delegation. The conversation went something like this:

> *"Amy, do you remember being in elementary school?"*
> *"Yes."*
> *"In a classroom with the other children?"*
> *"Yes."*
> *"What did you do?"*
> *"I cleaned the board, picked up things, put them away, that sort of thing."*
> *"What did you want to do?"*
> *"I wanted to read."*
> *"Did you?"*
> *"No."*
> *"How did that make you feel?"*
> *"Angry."*

The same litany was repeated for her secondary school years, almost word for word. We sat there solemnly as the image formed of a constantly frustrated and desperate young person whose education had been blighted. But our image was tinged with fatalism, the resignation we might feel for the blind child who wanted to paint. But then the interview concluded:

"When you turned sixteen, what did you do, Amy?"
"I left school."
"And then what did you do?"
"I learnt to read."

Amy then unfolded the paper and read a poem about her predicament that she had composed and written out in the corner earlier. The Minister was emotionally overcome at this evidence of the utter failure of the education system he now had in his charge. The meeting came to an end with promises to pursue the issue further. But the Minister would not survive a subsequent cabinet shuffle to make good on these promises, and the Rae government did little to advance the cause of meaningful education for students like Amy.[21]

So awareness of the urgent need for the emancipation of excluded children came with a realization that the gesture of putting children with developmental disabilities, for example, in a regular classroom required a great deal more than simple mainstreaming. To be sure, other children can come to accept diversity in their peers through the knowledge and experiences that demystify the various forms disability may take. Everyday contact is vital for the construction of inclusive communities, even when that occurs within the setting of a system that is in other respects quite exclusionary. But such contact is still not enough for the child who wants to learn and is sidelined into other tasks and other forms of learning.

It was easier then for this author to understand the call for special classes from the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario when they came calling to the Ministry of Education. They had little faith in the ability of the school system to help LD students acquire in regular classrooms the communication tools our society considers to be the mark of an educated citizen. The key to progress, they argued, would require more than tolerance and understanding. Whatever the setting was to be, the learning difficulties would have to be acknowledged, the disabilities would have to be accommodated, and the ability to communicate well would have to be a central goal of that learning. So any inclusion policy was going to have to take such things into account.

That has been a feature of the legal framework within which public policy has evolved in the last 20 years. The Ontario Human Rights Commission laid this out in consultation papers and reports from the

late 90s onward. It is well illustrated in October 2003 with the publication of *The Opportunity to Succeed, Achieving Barrier-Free Education for Students with Disabilities*. In it, the Commission acknowledges that many respondents expressed a preference for the inclusion in regular classrooms and not just for narrow academic reasons. Community Living Ontario expressed the broader rationale well:

> If a child with a disability begins life with an expectation of inclusion, she is much more likely to seek out, and be accepted in, inclusive environments and activities later in life. It is equally true, that when a student that does not have a disability is educated in an inclusive environment, inclusion will most likely remain her cultural expectation throughout life. (p. 38-39)

And a parent wrote in:

> School is a training ground for life. Students learn academics and skills, but they also learn about people, all kinds of people, and how to relate to them. If students are 'different,' do we include them by having a place for them at the back of the school, perhaps with a separate lunch schedule? Have them arrive after school begins and depart before school officially ends? Have them enter and exit in their own separate door? Have them travel exclusively on their own segregated buses? How can other students gain understanding and acceptance if students with exceptionalities are treated in such a separate fashion? (pp. 38-9)

A contrary position is quoted from Autism Ontario:

> [S]egregated classes can offer the opportunity to complete high school or learn skills that are not taught in typical classrooms but will allow [students] to function more fully in the community as adults. If integration during the school years is not the best way to produce adults who can meaningfully participate in the community, then it is not in the best interest of the child. (p. 39)

So the Human Rights Commission did not take sides, but rather insisted that inclusion be the preferred approach, that appropriate

accommodations be developed for each student with a disability, and that placement data be collected, analyzed and published annually by the Ministry.

On November 9, 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down its decision in the Moore vs. British Columbia (Education). For our purposes, the key finding was that districts (i.e. school boards) must "have a range of services to meet the needs of Severe Learning Disabilities students" and that the Province ensure that the districts do this. It meant that if integration or inclusion were a chosen option, it must provide all the accommodations that a student with severe Learning Disability needs.

The Ontario Government's hesitant moves in this area need to be understood in this context.

When all is said and done, the question remains: has the growth of the least restrictive environment or first-choice inclusive placement laid out in policy statements and memoranda worked? Has stratification through segregated placements declined?

Jason Ellis (2011) expresses the concern that it has not:

> Optimism and momentum gained in the 1980s and 1990s have given way in the twenty-first century to a sense amongst reformers that inclusion is stalled, and that the goal of full inclusion stubbornly remains just beyond the grasp of educational reformers and the children they wish to serve. (p. 436)

The very latest data from the TDSB gives us pause too. Over the past five years to 2012-13, the number of students with exceptionalities (excluding Gifted) in Special Education classes has declined from about 10,000 to about 9,000, with a corresponding increase from about 6,000 to about 7,000 in regular classes. All the same, the proportion of such students in Special classes out of the total enrolment at the Board is almost double what it is for the province as a whole (3.6% as against 1.9%). What is more noteworthy is that the proportion of all TDSB students who are in Special classes for the Gifted is two and a half times the rate for the province (1.5% as against 0.6%) and seven times what it is in boards outside the GTA (0.2%).

As this book was in its final stages, the TDSB issued a Board Improvement Plan in which it set a number of targets to achieve

by 2017. Among these were a 50% reduction of students placed in congregated Special Education classes, an increase of 50% of the current proportion of students in the three lowest income deciles (but not under-represented ethnoracial and language groups) in Gifted programs, and an undertaking that "the proportion of students as having Special Education Needs will be more reflective of the racial and language proportions of students across the board," though not of the family income levels apparently (TDSB, 2013j). It has been pointed out that even with a 50% reduction in special class placements, the TDSB will still have a higher proportion of its students in special classes than the rest of the province. And it will be politically interesting to see whether the students in special classes for the Gifted are included in the 50% reduction. There are many questions to be answered before we can say whether the TDSB will become a leader in inclusion policies and the effort to reduce disproportionality in Special Education, and indeed, whether real progress will be made in bringing all students with disabilities into everyday school life and learning on a level comparable to inclusive education systems elsewhere.

Those systems include New Brunswick, the Yukon Department of Education, and Syracuse City (NY) that have moved to fully inclusive models (Parekh, 2013). As Parekh's timely literature search has shown, the research supports inclusive models, which are also well-aligned with international human rights principles. There are plenty of evidence-based strategies for making it work in the classroom, and there are exemplars that can be used as models. Finally, "although costs associated with transitioning to an inclusive model were not found, overall, inclusive systems are less costly to implement and sustain than models that support students within a special education model" (*op. cit.* p.17).

Parent and student rights and the experience of Special Education

What strikes parents making first contact with the world of Special Education is the complexity and opacity of its processes. We have already alluded to the multi-tier processes leading to the establishment of IEPs and identifications of exceptionality and placement. The place that parents and guardians of children under the age of majority occupy within this framework varies from tier to tier. Parents have the power to refuse the sharing of their children's medical records and

can refuse psychological assessments (though not, naturally enough, educational assessments). Consultation of parents and guardians and the sharing of information are officially built into the process that leads to the establishment of an IEP, and they must sign off to show that this consultation has happened. But no parental permission is required for an IEP, nor can the particular contents of the IEP be overruled. Parents and guardians must be given every opportunity to attend and participate in the IPRC meeting that can decide on identification and placement of their children. But they have no veto power over those decisions, although there is a complex two-tier appeal structure for those who disagree and are willing to challenge those decisions.

It takes very determined parents, or students themselves if over 14, to navigate this system and to take it on should they feel that its decisions are mistaken or unfair. They face an imposing array of professional advice-givers (teachers, principal, psychologists, social workers, guidance counsellors, and health professionals) who play the twin roles of guide and gatekeeper. In such a professional framework, it is easy for parents and students to feel frustrated and fatalistic. The weight of specialized training, scientific research, standardized procedure, and legal constraints hardens the decisions that label and segregate children with disabilities and difficulties. They come with multiply sanctioned authority. The result is that appeals are few and far between, and senior officials are encouraged to use whatever persuasive powers they can muster to mediate an outcome that avoids this. We should not be surprised that very few appeals are ever lodged, let alone successful. In 34 of the most recently posted Special Education Plans from English-language School Boards that reported appeal data, only three Boards reported any appeals at all, amounting to four altogether. The Ontario Special Education Tribunal (OSET), which operates as the province-wide upper tier of the appeals process, recorded only 69 decisions over twenty-seven years following its establishment in 1984 (OSET, 2011). Low rates of appeal are often interpreted by staff as evidence of the effective justice of the decision-making process. One Board recorded its clean slate with the words: "The ongoing consultation with the parents whom we respect as partners in understanding and addressing their child's learning needs has resulted in no appeals." (Toronto Catholic DSB, Special Education Plan, 2011).

For most families, the apparatus of Special Education is like City Hall. You can't fight it. As one of many Somali parents in Toronto put it: "They pressured me because they say you have to do (it) and I might have a problem. There is no choice. I have to put my child in special education." (Mahamed, p.61) Of course, in many cases, parents will hope for a net improvement in their children's educational prospects in the provision of Special Education Services — to get a child out of an oppressive regular classroom or as the only alternative to languishing in Amy's undeserved obscurity as a peon in an overcrowded regular classroom.

Overall, the system manufactures consent through "white coat" authority figures and an infrastructure of medical research and intricate diagnostic technologies that lie beyond the grasp of almost all who come in contact with it. Moreover, a genuine understanding of the risks of prematurely lowered expectations and restricted options may not figure into informed consent. Nor should we disregard the part played by the assessment waiting lists that stoke the sense of restricted access to needed diagnosis. The agendas of Special Education Advisory Boards across Ontario regularly indicate the numbers of students on such lists and an organization like People for Education has made this aspect of Special Education a major concern of its advocacy for non-Gifted exceptionalities. Increasingly, Boards are accepting private psychological assessments for fees as high as $2,500 (People for Education, 2012, p.11). The consequences of a two-tier system extend beyond obvious inequalities to an exaggerated aura of desirability.

But it is in the context of high-stakes testing that the impact is felt most highly.

5. Outcomes

Among the many outcomes that can be tabulated for students with Special Needs as determined above, only those that affect or reflect academic progress will be considered here. A much longer study would be needed to consider the ramifications of other institutional outcomes, such as disciplinary sanctions, participation in extra-curricular activities, engagement in responsible tasks or student governance, etc.

The Brown/Parekh Report gives achievement outcomes for TDSB secondary school students in the years 2005-06, 2007-08 and 2008-09,

among them Grade 9 credit accumulation and the Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), as well as graduation and post-secondary education pathways.

Table 4.24 Proportion of TDSB Students with fewer than 7 credits by program Grade 9 cohorts of 2005-06, 2007-08 and 2008-09

	All TDSB	Gifted self-contained	Gifted regular class	Non-Gifted self-contained	Non-Gifted regular class	Non-identified IEP	Local IEP	No Special Needs
2005-06	15%	2%	1%	50%	29%	30%	31%	11%
2007-08	13%	1%	2%	54%	24%	28%	28%	10%
2008-09	12%	2%	1%	52%	25%	27%	23%	8%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Fig.10.

Table 4.24 shows that the percentage of TDSB students falling behind on credit accumulation in secondary school fluctuates between 12 and 15% for the whole board over the three years measured here. That falls to almost zero for students identified as Gifted, regardless of whether they are in self-contained classes or not. For students who fall into the Non-Gifted categories, about one half of those in self-contained classes have fallen behind and just under one third of those in regular classrooms, and a similar percentage of students placed on IEPs without the identification of an exceptionality.

Table 4.25. Proportion of TDSB Students Passing the OSSLT
First Time Eligible Students 2006, 2008, 2009

	All TDSB	Gifted self-contained	Gifted regular class	Non-Gifted self-contained	Non-Gifted regular class	Non-identified IEP	Local IEP	No Special Needs
2006	72%	97%	93%	14%	47%	53%	53%	77%
2008	72%	97%	96%	17%	50%	45%	50%	77%
2009	73%	99%	98%	14%	49%	50%	53%	79%

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010,Fig.11.

The same pattern is repeated in Table 4.25. Gifted students almost all pass the literacy test regardless of placement. Non-gifted in special classes do worst — about 15% pass. About one half of the Non-Gifted in regular classes pass along with students on IEP only.

What makes these figures difficult to interpret for the Non-Gifted is the dominance of LD within them. It would be interesting to know the percentage of students with Behavioural, Language and Mild Intellectual Disability Exceptionalities, where disproportionality by neighbourhood income, race and gender is much more pronounced.

That information is published for graduation and drop out rates:

Table 4.26. Five-Year outcomes for TDSB Students by Exceptionality Grade 9 Cohorts at 2003 and 2004

(2003 italic 2004 bold)	Gifted		Behavioural		LD		MID	
Graduated	94%	**92%**	30%	**15%**	58%	**59%**	42%	**44%**
Continuing	3%	**1%**	24%	**23%**	13%	**13%**	23%	**26%**
Dropout	4%	**7%**	46%	**62%**	28%	**28%**	35%	**30%**

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Figs.13-14.

Table 4.27 Postsecondary Confirmations for TDSB Students by Exceptionality Grade 9 Cohorts of 2003 and 2004

(2003 italic 2004 bold)	Gifted		Behavioural		LD		MID	
Confirmed University	70%	**69%**	5%	**0%**	9%	**11%**	2%	**3%**
Confirmed College	3%	**5%**	9%	**3%**	22%	**22%**	17%	**19%**
Applied Post-secondary	19%	**15%**	5%	**4%**	7%	**9%**	7%	**7%**
Did not apply	7%	**11%**	80%	**93%**	61%	**58%**	74%	**72%**

Source: Brown/Parekh, 2010, Figs.17-18

Rare is the student, once classified as Behavioural, who even contemplates application to post-secondary education (5%), since almost two-thirds drop out of secondary school within five years of entering it. Almost 60% of the students with LD and 44% with Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) do make it through to graduation, but substantially fewer will make it through to university or college admission (33% and 22% respectively). Socio-economic disproportionality, at its highest in Behavioural and MID groups, extends from identification and placement to outcomes.

We must be wary of circularity in outcome analysis. It could argued that the identification of a non-Gifted exceptionality is the discovery

of a condition that makes graduation or post-secondary education an unlikely outcome. But there is ample evidence to show that the identification is actually a contributing factor or even a primary cause of the failure to achieve such outcomes, a self-fulfilling prophecy as the label affects everybody's expectations and consequent actions (Mitchell, 2010; Kerr, 2011). We must never forget that a child designated as having Special Needs is not a defective instrument but a living person, and needs to be treated as such.

5. Summary and conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to recall the limitations of this chapter. Its major pre-occupation is with a particular kind of labelling and streaming of children, one that is dependent on highly specialized diagnosis and treatment — the medical metaphor is used intentionally — and conducted by highly trained professionals. It affects a little under 20% of children in Ontario, but not consistently since there are significant differences between boards. We have primarily focused on the systemic injustices that allow young children from low-income neighbourhoods to be singled out and separated from their peers, especially as their experience compares with that of privileged children from high-income neighbourhoods.

We have not investigated the issues surrounding the education of the 2-3% of children with physical and developmental disabilities, and impairments of hearing and vision. The process for identifying them and accommodating them in restrictive and non-restrictive environments deserves critical analysis elsewhere. There are significant human rights issues for these children, which go beyond demographic disproportionality. As anyone who has lived and worked with adults with developmental disabilities or those with the above-mentioned challenges knows, it is often a surprise and delight to see their faces light up and discover what they can accomplish once other people start listening to them and affording them the opportunity and right to make their own choices. It is also infuriating to discover that these choices were not made available to them in schools as a matter of right and that they have had to struggle to acquire the knowledge and abilities in adult life that they could have acquired much younger.

It is difficult to balance two competing rights among those with

severe disabilities. One is the right to be included as an integral part of the mainstream of society. That means enjoying the respect of one's able peers on a daily basis. It means being fully accommodated by the provision of additional adult assistance and by principles of universal design both in the physical plant and facilities and in the curriculum and pedagogical methods that can help accomplish that inclusive ambition in a meaningful and sustainable way. The other right is to live in a safe and healthy environment in which one does not experience others as a threat and is not perceived by others as a threat to them. It is easy to see how this may entail restrictions in the right of access to a mainstream community until that health and safety can be reasonably guaranteed. But the two rights must be balanced more in favour of the former than the latter, if we are to avoid falling back into some of the darker recesses of social engineering and to aim for the emancipation that inspired many of the early practitioners in the field of Special Education.

We have focused on the disabilities and Special Needs categories that rely for their identification on the contestable opinions of a professional class buttressed by complex instruments of their own design.

Confronted with the evidence that many children do not meet the performance standards set by a central authority, or, in other words, that there is a mismatch between the expectations of the system and the performance of many of those who enter it, educational policymakers and practitioners have gradually extended the notion of disability and exceptionality over the last five or six decades to include a much larger segment of the population than before.

In Special Education in Ontario, the labelling and streaming of those most likely to succeed (the Gifted) and those least likely to succeed (the non-Gifted students with Special Needs) has now become the responsibility of the evolving and expanding sciences of psychological assessment and psychiatric diagnosis. In order to preserve the legitimacy of this kind of streaming, public policymakers have progressively surrounded it with complex rituals of decision-making. These complex rituals may be open to the influence of parents and carers with the necessary education, experience and expectations to engage with them. But they are impenetrable to those whose expectations have been shaped by the countless injuries of class, racial and gender discrimination at the hands of powerful institutions.

Informed consent may be more of a dream than a reality when the explanations of implications, risks and alternatives are all being offered by those who have sanctioned knowledge and power.

That the specialist opinions and the instruments designed to support the special educational needs industry discriminate consistently, if not uniformly, by gender and against certain ethnocultural or racial minorities and social classes should no longer come as a surprise. They have done so from their beginnings a century or so ago; this was known or suspected from the outset. Very little has changed in the countries that have adopted this system.

What has changed in Special Education since *Stacking the Deck* was published in 1992 to cause a review of the situation? The major change is the advent of neo-liberal thinking and management practices into the labelling and streaming processes as these have evolved through Special Education. This thinking has partly been driven by the desire to reduce the size of the public sector by massive cuts in government spending. Accompanying that are incentives to the private sector to fill the gap left by government, an approach, which works in favour of those who can afford the services previously free or affordable to all through taxation revenues. Government has increasingly taken on a business perspective, aimed at improving customer service through the adoption of quality controls, statistical indicators and accountability mechanisms.

The massive reductions of public funding in Ontario that characterized the Harris years (1995-2003), and have continued under the Liberals since then, have squeezed the public system so that boards have found it impossible to keep up with the demand for psychological assessments. One immediate result was the growth of the famous waiting lists that have occasioned the dismay of parent organizations such as People for Education. Some of this demand has been resolved by the increasing recourse, with the agreement of the Ministry, to the assignment of Individual Education Plans before or instead of a psychological assessment that would lead to an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meeting. This parallels the alternative approach to Learning Disabilities in the U.S. called Response to Intervention, and it has had the huge advantage of saving money on the public Psychological Services bill.

How much government had initially thought through the impact of this shift to IEPs on disadvantaged students is hard to say. When this

shift began, Ministry officials may not have expected it would come with reduced expectations and narrowed outcomes for the students affected, along with a significant increase in workload for teachers in high-risk neighbourhood schools who have to prepare the IEPs at the beginning of every year. These officials know it now, however, and it remains to be seen whether they will rest content with the increased sidelining of many children from disadvantaged backgrounds particularly now that they no longer need the level of parental approval needed for psychological assessment or for a placement arising from an IPRC decision.

The neo-liberal emphasis on privatization is evident. Private special schools exist and may be growing in numbers. Autism Ontario lists eighteen of these schools across the Province on its website; LDAO lists seventeen; and various websites list a similar number of private schools specifically for gifted children in Ontario, including several in Toronto. Contracting out is another form of privatization. Smaller school boards contract out psychological services and some have been contracting with private companies for digital IEP production. In Special Education, the greatest threat to equity in the provision of services is coming from the recourse to private psychological assessments. As Boards come to accept such assessments, a two-tier system of access to programs for the Gifted, LD and Autism is gradually taking shape.

While neo-liberal government policy reduces public funding and encourages recourse by those who can afford it to the private sector, such policy also adopts the principles of cost-saving efficiency and quality control through the standardization of processes and accountability for continuous improvement and compliance. Special Education is certainly no exception here either. Over the last decade, the Ontario Ministry of Education has been issuing memoranda and directives designed to standardize the format of IEPs, the informal mediation processes for settling disputes without the appeal process, Boards' annual Special Education Plans, the conduct of Boards' Special Education Advisory Committees. Along with these has come a sequence of measures on inclusion (regular classroom placement) and the provision of a range of placements (including withdrawal and self-contained classes).

The tug of these seemingly contrary impulses is well expressed in a 2006 report from the Ontario Government's Working Table by Sheila

Bennett and Kathleen Wynne (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education at the time):

> We have attempted to capture the common ground in the Working Table discussions, recognizing that there continue to be philosophical differences among many of the stakeholder groups. Those differences are most pronounced on the issue of inclusion of students with special education needs in the regular classroom. There is a school of thought that would move the system as quickly as possible to a pure inclusion model — a model that would still allow for transitional congregated placements and withdrawals. Another school of thought argues that for the foreseeable future and perhaps, ideally, there would continue to be a range of placements for students with special education needs. The Working Table acknowledges that the regular classroom should continue to be the placement of first choice but that a range of placements may at times be necessary for practical reasons. (Bennett and Wynne, 2006)

This is not all that much of an advance on the least restrictive environment provisions of the US legislation in the 1960s. But while the intent may be to move Boards with a strong commitment to streaming towards a more inclusive approach, the need for a range of placements may put a brake on Boards with almost total inclusion policies.

But the most significant standardization directive has come in the increasing alignment of Special Education programming directives with the provincial outcomes-based curriculum and the standardized testing that polices it. Emphasis is now placed on improving standardized test scores and monitoring the qualifications of teachers and other Special Education staff. The IEP form has been standardized to allow for accommodations on EQAO tests, and consequent raising of test scores. The Ministry makes it a point to send to schools the EQAO results on the Grade 10 Literacy Test for Special Needs students, carefully distinguishing those whose IEPs include accommodations and those who do not.

Overall, Special Education uses labeling and streaming to meet privileged class expectations to the detriment of the underprivileged. The parental role is promoted officially but informed consent for many decisions is either debatable or, in the case of the provision of IEPs, not required. Along with the creeping straitjacket of Ministry

directives and the inadequacy of funding to meet the growing demand comes a variety of negative outcomes (People for Education, 2012). Cynicism spreads among frontline special educators, who feel that the time they spend in committees and on filling forms is being taken away from their primary focus on teaching. The disillusionment of wealthier families means more and more opt out of the public system altogether, as the rapid growth in private special education schools in large cities can testify. Many middle-class parents in Toronto have expressed concerns in public forums about the insensitivity of a large system to their own child's needs. And in some cases, parent groups resist more vocally; the example of Somali parents in Toronto has been documented (Mahamed, 2010).

So what is to be done? We need to be aware that some of the responsiveness of recent U.S. legislation has leaked into Ontario. The emphasis on mediated settlements of disputes between families and Board specialists is one such example instead of the unwieldy appeals process (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b), although it may more often work to the advantage of those who feel most comfortable challenging highly educated professionals.

The idea of independent Board facilitators or complaints officers to assist parents to a better understanding of their rights and how to exercise these rights has been raised in the TDSB but not adopted. In the UK, over 2,000 Parent Support Advisors work to serve over 8,000 schools (Mitchell, 2010, p.192). Ontario recommends recourse to parent advocates to help them navigate a complex decision-making process and facilitators to resolve disputes but without suggesting how these would be funded (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007b).

The insistence on reporting overrepresentation as a prelude to action to overcome it has not caught on in Ontario. The Ministry has responded to the Ontario Human Rights Commission concerns over inclusion and accommodations by requiring boards to report on the numbers of exceptional students in each of the five levels of placement. Very few Boards publicly report the numbers of Special Needs students by exceptionality or placement in their Annual Plans, let alone by income, race or gender. Only the TDSB has done so, but through Research reports rather than the published annual reports and plans. Anything as detailed as Wisconsin's Annotated Checklist for Addressing Racial Disproportionality is not on the radar.

It is difficult to assess the use in Ontario of universal design or evidence-based teaching strategies that are gaining momentum in other parts of the world as ways of changing the regular classroom to accommodate children with mixed abilities and needs. Incorporating such principles into the pre-service and in-service training of all teachers would also be needed (Mitchell, 2010).

But all of these moves towards reform fail to address the central issue. The educational labelling and/or segregation of children according to medical and quasi-medical criteria is as much a part of the streaming system in Ontario as the academic issues raised in Chapter Three. A few students confidently expected to do well are singled out for special attention and a larger group thought to be struggling or at risk are also singled out for special attention. The result is inequality of opportunity for all students who pass through the school system, whatever their condition or level of "ableness." That there is intersectionality with other forms of social inequality, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, should not really surprise us. That such inequalities appear to be on the rise as part and parcel of the assault on public education under the neo-liberal ascendancy should not surprise us.

In the end we must push back against the incursions of medical models into the education of our young — the disproportionality, the professional exclusiveness, and their expansionist tendencies. Standing up for the education of students from poor and racialized backgrounds, disaffected boys, students with serious disabilities, we have to act on principles of Really Useful Knowledge (Johnson, 1979), not only respect for racial and cultural difference, freedom from gender bias and straitjacketing categories, shared responsibility for learning with communities, but also the belief that learning together how to achieve equity and social justice is constructive of a better society for all.

ENDNOTES

1 The literature on the social construction of "at risk" students is reviewed at greater length in Chapter Five of this volume.

2 Leadership also came from asylum directors, clinical psychologists, and from frontline educators, especially remedial educators. I am grateful to Jason Ellis for this reminder.

3 Not only G. Stanley Hall at Clark University but also the Geneva Institute of Education Science where Claparède, Piaget, Bovet and Ferrière all worked.

4 L'Education Nouvelle and Montessori, Claparède, Decroly, Freinet, Cousinet and Ferrière in Europe, and the Progressive Education movement of Francis Parker and John Dewey in the U.S. (Avanzini, 1969; Raillon, 1990; Wagnon and Le Boucher-Clarinval, 2011, *passim*).

5 Stephen Jay Gould has an excellent summary of Binet's own progressive contribution and the "dismantling of his intentions" in the U.S. "If Binet's principles had been followed, and his tests consistently used as he intended, we would have been spared a major misuse of science in our century" (Gould, 1981, p.155).

6 Over the last few years, the Somali community in Toronto's Rexdale, for example, has approached the TDSB with their concerns about the bottom-streaming of their children within Special Education and related Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The editor George Martell has first-hand knowledge of this struggle.

7 See Table 1.3 University Acceptance by Race, Sex and Parental Occupation, TDSB, 2003-2006, p.19 above and in Chapter Five, p. 213.

8 LDAO adds: Learning disabilities are due to genetic, other congenital and/or acquired neuro-biological factors.

9 The sample size was small (255) and socio-economic status data was missing for a fifth of them. The report limited itself to self-contained classes, where poorer children were more likely to end up on pp. 164-5. The study omitted the much larger group of LD students who spent part of the day in Learning Centres or with itinerant Special Education teachers who came to the regular classroom.

10 See http://www.ldaamerica.us/aboutld/parents/ld_basics/ld.asp, consulted Nov. 10, 2013

11 See http://www.ldacacta.ca/en/learn-more/ld-defined.html, consulted Nov. 10, 2013

12 This socialization of males and females is explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

13 Ontario Ministry of Education (2007) and Bennett *et al.* (2008 and 2013).

14 Several Ontario Boards, including the TDSB, do consider additional criteria both for referral and in their consideration but the professional IQ assessment is the clincher (TDSBa, 2013, p.51).

15 Race figures do not include the 120 students who did not identify.

16 See recent Special Education Plans of Durham DSB (Section B-5), Sudbury CDSB, Eastern Ontario CDSB, as well as People for Education (2012, p.11). The Ministry's view is that "Boards develop their own policies and procedures to address issues such as accepting private assessments" (Ministry of Education, Spring 2011, p. 12).

17 As this book goes into production, news has come to light that the Halton expansion is being delayed for another year, because of concerns over the screening process.

18 A quick check of the most recent Special Education Plans of anglophone School Boards showed seven referencing DSM of which five were for Behavioural identification, two for Mild Intellectual Disabilities, two for Developmental Disabilities, one for Autism and one for Learning Disability.

19 Interestingly, this was also discussed in the Ontario Royal Commission on Learning, where it formed the basis for Recommendation 33 (pages 215-16).

20 This is the opinion of TDSB researchers whom I have consulted on the issue although the research that shows this has yet to be published as of this writing.

21 Interestingly, the Royal Commission on Learning established by the Rae Government had a lot to say on Special Education (pp. 213-224). It denounced the lack of clear definitions for exceptionalities, evidence that disproportionality gave of the misidentification and misplacement of males and of students from poor and racialized backgrounds. It spoke in favour of providing assistance to students who needed it without recourse to an IPRC, and promoted what it called "integration", while at the same time recommending a "continuum of services" (now called a range of placements), see Recommendations 35-39 (p. 224).

5. RACE AND THE STREAMING OF ONTARIO'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Grace-Edward Galabuzi

Introduction

In this chapter, we take up the discussion about contemporary modes of streaming from the point of view of colonial and racialized experiences with education in Ontario. We are interested in how processes of racialization and colonization are mobilized to enable the practice of streaming, and how it manifests within schools and across the education system to deny Aboriginal and racialized students the full benefit of the learning experience.

We consider four key ways in which streaming is operationalized, leading to differential educational outcomes for particular racialized groups[1]: the racial disproportionality of Applied and Academic streams and outcomes; the expansive use of Special Education to designate "learner" identities"; the deployment of "youth at-risk" discourses and interventions; and the safe schools discourse and the zero tolerance policies that structure differential learning opportunities through safe school transfers and safe school programs, and school to prison pipelines (Meiners and Winn, 2010; Hatt, 2011). These four processes structure different pathways for Aboriginal and racialized youth and lead to a diminished educational experience, and destructive outcomes.

A key part of this streaming process is the constitution of distinctive identities based on racial and religious differences that become the basis for differential treatment in the system. Identity formation becomes an essential part of the practice of streaming, especially for Aboriginal and racialized students. For our schools, these identities

are formed primarily out of the intersection of race and social class and particularly out of racialized poverty. It is an identification process that leads to the well-discussed achievement gap between racialized and non-racialized students. These key identities also intersect with the "youth at-risk" identity to harden the streaming process. Such identification is, finally, an act of social construction that seeks to maintain the dominance of the White power structure, underpinning an ideology of meritocracy that helps keep in place the current hierarchy of globalizing capitalism.

We use data from Ontario and in some cases the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) to show the racially defined nature of streaming processes for Aboriginal and racialized youth, the intersection of race and class, and the implications of the growing polarization between the rich and poor on education in Ontario. Given the long established connection between poverty and poor educational outcomes, the current intensification of racialized poverty disproportionately exposes Aboriginal and racialized youth to the class-based streaming discussed in Chapter Three of this volume, see also Curtis *et al.* (1992). They are now facing declining labour market opportunities and lower socio-economic status. Their integration into society has become more difficult, their citizenship more fragile.

Race, streaming and education exclusion in a neo-liberal context

The first part of this chapter provides a brief historical overview of educational exclusion in Ontario in relation to racialized and Aboriginal populations. A key part of this exclusion is found in those forms of segregation in and out of school that have historically defined the education experience of Aboriginal and racialized populations. Such exclusion is especially evident today given the role these populations play in our growing reserve army of the unemployed (or marginally employed) — a key labour formation used by Capital to discipline labour and undermine labour power generally.

In the second part, we explore the ways in which streaming has been operationalized in the context of racialization and its outcomes. With few exceptions, in Ontario, Aboriginal, racialized and immigrant students, have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education (Willms, 2002; TDSB, 2010a; Harper, 1997). They often have more

restricted access to quality education, are less likely to participate in early childhood education, are more prone to drop out before completing secondary education, have lower academic scores, and are more likely to attend schools with other youth from less advantaged backgrounds (Levin, 2012; Spence, 2002; Auditor General of Ontario, 2012). We consider the racial disproportionality of Applied and Academic streams and outcomes and the expansive use of Special Education to designate 'learner' identities as excuses to stream under the guise of empathetic responses to social deficits associated with Aboriginal and racialized learners. We use some data from Ontario's largest board, the TDSB, to illuminate these exclusionary practices. These practices are reflected in the persistent achievement gap and poor educational outcomes of those subject to them, not to mention the school to prison pipeline and poor intergenerational socio-economic status (Solomon and Palmer, 2004; Noguera, 2008).

We then discuss the construction and proliferation of 'at-risk youth' identities as a phenomenon of paternalistic school segmentation and a response to moral panics. We particularly focus on the intersections of racialized and Aboriginal identities with these "at-risk" identities and the resulting stigmatization of young women and men from these communities. How these identities are deployed in the contemporary context of school streaming and educational segregation as a whole is now the subject of some literature that we review briefly (James, 2012; Johnson, 1997; Solomon and Levine-Rasky, 1998; Ferguson, 2000). The literature considers the dangers arising from the contradictions of normalizing "youth at-risk" discourse in public education and the construction of "youth at-risk" identities, which are at once rendered both dangerous and seemingly open to an empathetic response.

In the fourth part, we explore a concept related to this construction of risk among youth, — the disciplinary regimes of 'zero tolerance' and 'safe school' regulations that are mobilized to regulate 'danger and se-curity risk' in schools. Within the current neo-liberal context, the appli-cation of these regimes promotes a differentiated level of educational intention and ability on the part of racialized and Aboriginal children and youth, and justifies streaming that privileges the efficient sorting of "human capital" over socially just outcomes. These disciplinary regimes are rooted in long-standing racial subtexts that assume social deficits on the part of the Aboriginal and racialized child, based on biological,

cultural or sociological logic. Elsewhere in this volume, we discuss some recommendations that may be a basis for progressive policies to alter the terrain of streaming and the futures of its victims.

Colonial and racialized experiences of education in Ontario

Canada and Ontario are becoming increasingly diverse both racially and ethnically. The data show that Aboriginal and racialized populations are the fastest growing segments of Canada's and Ontario's population. By 2030, it is projected that they will compose fully one third of Canada's population (Malenfant *et al.*, 2010). But these developments are occurring within the context of an ongoing challenge to the ability of the society to provide equitable educational opportunities for all its young, but particularly for its poor, its Aboriginal and its racialized young. In this globalizing economy they face intense labour market competition and the reduction of their quality of life and future hopes that goes with such competition. These hard realities are foregrounded by persistent forms of racial education exclusion that have defined the experiences of Aboriginal and racialized populations historically. From the beginnings of French and British settlement and the colonization of Canada's First Nations, differential pathways for the children of racialized newcomers and Aboriginal communities have led to poorer educational outcomes and potentially lifelong disadvantages in socio-economic status.

These modes of streaming have evolved with time and taken on different (often disguised) forms but they have always been directed to the same outcome — securing educational advantages for youth from the dominant group (male, middle class, White and straight) by separating subordinate groups of youth from the mainstream experience of education and its benefits. Today, in the early twenty-first century, these processes are presented as neutral and colour-blind, but they continue to privilege majority students by concentrating scarce system resources, curriculum and instructional attention to their education while focusing on the deficits and lack of promise among race, class and disability identified groups (Gillborn, 2008).

Overall, streaming has acted historically to deny subordinate youth access to key educational opportunities, to undermine their self-esteem and school engagement, and to perpetuate variou stereotypes about their (in)abilities, leading to lower expectations, poor educational

outcomes and, in current terms, the reproduction of the achievement gap (Dei, 1997; Solomon, 1992). In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries there has been both an extension and intensification of streaming, as a response to the labour market needs of globalizing capitalism and its requirements for a stable socio-political order (Livingstone, 2003). It reinforces the neo-liberal public management tendency to prioritize economic efficiencies over social justice outcomes. This expansion and intensification of streaming is pressed forward by the public discourse of 'at-risk youth' and the deployment of zero tolerance regimes. These seek to contain what are described as disruptive elements in our schools whose abilities are as suspect as are their 'educational intentions' (Kelly, 2001). The language of 'at-risk youth' ends up as a euphemism for racialization and marginalization, particularly of Aboriginal and racialized boys who become an assumed 'threat' to the schools, to society and to the economy (Wotherspoon and Schissel, 2001).

Aboriginal education

In Ontario, Aboriginal students experience significant educational disparities when compared to their peers. According to the Ontario Auditor General's Report on Aboriginal Education (2012), only 62% of Aboriginal adults had graduated from secondary school in 2006 compared to 78% in the rest of the Ontario population. Only 39% of those living on-reserve are high school graduates. Moreover, because the Aboriginal population is younger than the rest of the population (with 46% under age 25 as compared to 32% for the rest of the population) the fact that among those Aboriginal students aged 20-24, the achievement gap was as high as 50% is a real cause for concern.

Table 1: Figure 3: Comparison of Student Achievement Data, 2010/11 (%)

Measure	All Students	Aboriginal Students	Gap
Grade 3 EQAO Level 3	69	52	17
Grade 6: EQAO Level 3	68	49	19
Grade 9: 8 or more credits earned	83	63	20
Grade 10: 16 or more credits earned	74	45	29

Source: 2012 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

The ongoing achievement gap is demonstrated by the EQAO test results (see table 1 above), as well as Grades 9 and 10 credit accumulation. Only 45% of Grade 10 Aboriginal students were on track to graduate in terms of credit accumulation compared to 74% in the total Grade 10 population in 2011. Moreover, this gap tends to increase as they make their way through the school system and are further subjected to streaming.[2]

Table 2: The Gap in Aboriginal High School Graduation Rates for Adults and Young Adults, Ontario, 2006

	All Adults % Graduated	Age 20-24 % Graduated
All Ontario	**78**	**89**
First Nations on-reserve	44	39
First Nations off-reserve	64	66
Inuit	59	66
Métis	70	81
All Aboriginal	62	66

Note: The percentage graduated is the percentage of the population group with a high school diploma.

Source: 2012 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

Provincial funding for Aboriginal students lags significantly behind that of non-Aboriginal students. The Ontario Auditor General reported that the Boards with the fewest Aboriginal students received far more overall funding than those with the highest numbers. On a per-student basis, this worked out to a ratio of 4.75 to 1 (Auditor General, 2012, p. 142). It is also worth noting that this ratio has been partly determined by the undercounting of Aboriginal students in urban areas.

According to People for Education, among Ontario's publicly funded elementary schools where 7.5% or more of the students are Aboriginal, an average of 22% of students have special needs, compared with the provincial average of 18%. The per-pupil funding on-reserve is approximately $2,000 lower than per-pupil funding in publicly-funded schools. And 17% of on-reserve schools report that they never connect with Aboriginal organizations (People for Education, 2013e).

According to a report by Susan Dion (2010) titled *Decolonizing Our Schools: Aboriginal Education in the Toronto District School Board*, First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) students in urban settings confront particular challenges in attempting to access or share their cultural knowledge. They are not represented in the curriculum or the teaching population. They have long experiences of negative, hurtful relationships with schools. They are dispersed geographically, their status is not recognized, there is little if any indigenous content in the material taught in class, and most teachers and administrators lack the requisite knowledge to teach Aboriginal subject matter or to engage their families and communities. This sets up a situation where Indigenous students identify education with failure and pain (Dion, 2010).

Many of these experiences arise out of a history of exclusion, which includes the legacy of the residential schools, and which continues to have a profound impact on Aboriginal students and their families. Dion's Report argues for the need to decolonize and indigenize school communities and the education system to ensure that teachers are well versed in the cultural learning ways and knowledge systems of Aboriginal peoples. Quoting Indigenous scholar Taiaike Alfred, Dion argues that in order to indigenize education, schools have to change to become places where the:

> Values, principles, and modes of organization and behavior of our people are respected in and hopefully even integrated into, the larger system of structures and processes that make up the school itself. (Alfred, 2004, p. 88)

Dion argues that indigenization involves the "integration of Indigenous thought and perspectives across the curriculum and throughout all grade levels. Rather than limiting the Aboriginal content to the Ontario Grade 3 curriculum unit on "Aboriginal People and Pioneers" and the Grade Six curriculum unit on "Aboriginal People and Explorers", Aboriginal subject material should be integrated across the curriculum at all levels" (Dion, 2010, 12). In addition, decolonizing education involves interrogating the colonialism and the institutions of formal learning. It includes critiquing Eurocentric world views and challenging oppressive power structures that sustain them. Quoting Maori scholar Linda Smith, decolonizing:

> … once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long term process involving bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power. (Smith, 1999, p. 98)

Racialized education

Depending on the indicators you use and which groups you study, it is easy to conclude that the racialized experience within the public school system has been markedly improved. Yet, there are continuities that tell us clearly that our educational structures and processes still militate against a fulfilling school experience for most racialized youth.

We know that when race and class intersect in our schools to structure an experience of segregation, it is partly because the system is relying on stereotypes of underachievement for some racialized groups and overachievement for others. Yet in both cases, the sense of belonging is seriously undercut and the emotional and psychological benefits of public schooling profoundly elusive for many of these students, no matter the ethnic group. For instance, test score data show that South Asian, East Asian students tend to outperform their peers while Blacks, Latin Americans and Arabs underperform their cohorts significantly. At the same time, in repeated surveys, students of South Asian and East Asian backgrounds complain about being subjected to racial stereotyping, accused of not being assertive, confident and outspoken. This has the effect of making them uncomfortable about participating in class and unable to develop socially and psychologically to the full. They express a low sense of belonging and a high level of social exclusion. It impacts their ability to engage in school activities or build trusting relationships with adults and other students (TDSB, 2010, pp. 9-10).

Table 3: High School Graduates by Race, Sex and Parental Occupation TDSB 2003-06 Cohort (%)

Race and Sex	Professional Parent	Unskilled/Clerical Parent
East Asian Female	98	95
East Asian Male	96	91
South Asian Female	96	91
South Asian Male	92	81
White Female	94	73
White Male	91	65
Black Female	86	75
Black male	73	62

Source: TDSB.

Table 3 shows some of the social class differentiation effect in graduation rates, but it also raises questions about the gap in graduation rates within racialized groups. This is particularly the case for East Asian and South Asian students versus Black students. The gap — a reflection of very complex circumstances — is a source of some difficulty for researchers. There are, as you would expect, a number of explanations relating to different socio-economic circumstances and historical/cultural factors. It turns out, for example, that African Canadian communities underperform their Asian counterparts on a number of socio-economic indicators but not all (Block and Galabuzi, 2011). It's hard to get a clear fix on a full explanation. The nature of the relationships at home and in school may differ and lead to different forms of engagement, resilience and academic outcomes (Suarez-Orozco, Pimentel & Martin, 2009). It may well be the case that the impact of racialization is somewhat different in the education system because of the differing intensity of stigmas attached to different groups as well as the socially and psychologically disaffirming phenomena of the racialized experience the current Eurocentric curriculum. Because different histories of slavery and colonization have generated different stigmas and traumas, it is quite likely that different racialized identities draw different penalties in North American society. These structural legacies are etched into everyday life experiences

and the racial consciousness on the part of both racialized and non-racialized populations.

The differential impacts are reflected in the program of study data for race-identified groups in the TDSB. As Table 4 shows, particular groups are under-represented in the academic program of study while significantly over-represented in the Applied, Essentials and Undefined streams whose pathways to university and college admissions are substantially lower. For example, Black students are significantly over-represented in Applied, Essential and Undefined programs. While 12.6% of the student population, they make up 23% of students in Applied courses and close to 30% in Essentials. They are also over-represented in Undefined classes, though not as dramatically. The implications are that they have much lower post-secondary education application rates (Applied, 39.2%; Essentials, 20.3%; Undefined, 41.4% compared to Academic, 81.6% and overall 67.5%).

Table 4: Program of study by self-identified race

Race across POS	Aboriginal	Black	East Asian	Latin American	Middle Eastern	Mixed	South Asian	South East Asian	White
Academic	0.1%	8.8%	20.5	1.7%	4.9%	6.6%	22.7%	4.7%	29.9%
Applied	0.7%	22.7%	10.5%	3.8%	7.9%	7.9%	16.9%	5.8%	23.8%
Essentials	1.2%	29.3%	5.1%	3.5%	7.6%	7%	15.9%	4%	26.5%
Undefined	0.4%	16.1%	21.6%	2.9%	8.1%	5.5%	16.7%	5.4%	23.3%
Total	0.3%	12.6%	17.9%	2.2%	5.8%	6.9%	21%	4.9%	28.3%

Source: TDSB.

One other possible explanation of the different outcomes in school comes from the work of Claude Steele (1995). He has posited the notion of the 'stereotype threat' as a way of understanding why students are subject to diverging stereotypes — negative and positive — and can experience such varied outcomes (Steele and Aronson, 1995).

Steele argues that the fact certain minorities experience a lower stereotype threat than others may explain their better educational performance. Stereotype threat is a situation in which individuals are concerned that they are being judged based on a dominant stereotype rather than on their own merit and so act in a manner that may

lead to their replicating the stereotype. Stereotype threat has been demonstrated to interfere with the intellectual performance of African-American students and children of low socio-economic status in the United States (Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002; Kang and Inzlicht 2012; Inzlicht *et al.* (in press); Schmader *et al.*, 2008). According to that body of evidence, and some studies in the Canadian context, stereotype threats exact a powerful toll on the targeted individuals. Steele (1997) makes the point that society has deeply embedded stereotypes that connect racial identity to academic ability. Children and youth become aware of these stereotypes as they navigate the school environment. These include strong assumptions, prevalent in the education system, that if you are Black you will not do well, but if you are White or Asian you will do better. These assumptions affect both teachers' expectations of students as well as students' expectations of themselves. Over time, students perform accordingly. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy (Steele, 1997; McIntyre *et al.*, 2003; Fairlie *et al.*, 2011; Gonzales *et al.*, 2002; Carell *et al.*, 2010.) According to Kang and Inzlicht (2012), stereotype threats impose a different kind of pressure on various minorities depending on the nature of the dominant stereotype. Children learn about their social devaluation differently depending on the stigma or stereotype attached to their identity. As such, students are likely to perform in a manner consistent with the stereotype. They argue on the basis of their Canadian studies that there is a demonstrable relationship between social identities and achievement domains due to stereotype threat (Kang and Inzlicht, 2012).

In Ontario, the predominant stereotypes are that East Asian and South Asian students are gifted, inherently smart, have a good work ethic, have a passive and deferential attitude towards authority, and do not complain about discrimination. According to Lee (1996) the notion of the "Model Minority Stereotype" applies even to Asian students doing poorly in a context where Asian students are seen as the smartest kids in school. On the basis of the (positive) stereotype, teachers are more likely to regard poor performing Asian students as the exception but that of Blacks as the rule. Because these stereotypes influence what people see and expect of students, educators are more likely to reinforce these stereotypes than to destabilize them. In other words, students are impacted both internally and externally by stereotype threats. Claude Steele (1997) concludes that:

> The susceptibility of the stereotype threat derives not from internal doubts about their ability but from their identification with the domain and the resulting concern they have about being stereotyped in it. (Steele, 1997, p620)

Given these challenges, educators have been exploring ways to effectively address these internal and external threats to the self-concept of Black students. One recent response has been an attempt to create an environment that affirms the Africentric identity of Black students and diminishes the impact of conditions that undermine the self-concept of Black students. The Africentric school movement has advocated for a culturally affirming and socially relevant curriculum and school environment as part of the effort to mitigate the harm done to Black students in a school system where the curriculum and operating assumptions exalt Eurocentic world views over others and a white supremacist standpoint. Africentric pedagogy seeks to empower Black students to address their condition of social, economic, political and cultural marginality, and to centre their education experience as human subjects, as opposed to marginalizing it as happens in the dominant education paradigm (Dei, 1994; Asante, 1991; Ladson-Billings and Henry, 1990; Lee, Lomotey and Shujaa, 1990). It represents a critical race pedagogy that fits in well with the contemporary advocacy for the culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Dei, 1996). As Dei (1996) has argued, "the educational experiences of Black students demonstrate the need for a very different approach to both curricular offerings and pedagogical practices." Not only is Africentric education essential to 'the intellectual and social growth of Black students, it plays a key part in the multi-centric education of all students' (Dei, 1996, p. 170). In 2008, the TDSB authorized the opening of an Africentric Alternative Elementary School and in 2011 opened an Africentric high school program at Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute in Scarborough. In the Toronto context, the concept of a safe learning environment also applies to Aboriginal students and LGBTQ students who have been the focus of similar programs in the TDSB.

Considered overall, the experience of a racialized education covers a wide spectrum of minority students. In the TDSB, of the 25% of students who do not graduate, proportionally the largest number are Aboriginal, Black, Latin American, Portuguese and those of

Middle Eastern background. These student groups are also the ones most likely to have the lowest EQAO test scores, the lowest credit accumulation through secondary school and the highest dropout rates. They also tend to have the lowest rates of school attendance and the highest suspension rates. On average, these students also have lower family incomes and are most likely to live in socio-economically disadvantaged areas of the city. All this translates into low levels of school engagement and the proverbial achievement gap that defines their educational experience (TDSB, 2010).

In the TDSB, the largest in the province, we have some disaggregated data to help define the experience of some groups among the racialized students. Using data on test scores (EQAO), school dropouts, and pathways to post secondary education, we can sketch a profile of the racialized experience and outcomes. While the data suggest some complexity in the experience, more racialized groups score poorly or are at risk of non-completion than non-racialized groups. However, as noted earlier, we also have a number of racialized groups performing strongly and staying the course. This does not in and of itself negate the proposition that there is a racial effect in the processes and the outcomes we document here.

Students of Caribbean (50.8), East African (69.2), and Latin American (70%) backgrounds are less likely to graduate from secondary school than other Canadian students generally (77%) or students of East Asian (88.8), South Asian (84.9), and Eastern European (82.9) backgrounds.

These students are also the most likely to disengage entirely and drop out of school at higher rates. The dropout rate for Whites (12%), East Asians (6.3%), South Asians (10) is considerably lower than that of Blacks (22%), Latin American (20%) Mixed (18%) and Middle Eastern (16.1%).

Data on suspensions help fill out the profile of marginalization and exclusion. One of the ways the student experience of racialized students is compromised is by the amount of time they stay out of the classroom as a result of suspensions. Disproportionate rates of suspension not only represent a differential administration of discipline but they also structure differential levels of engagement with schools and, ultimately, outcomes. Below, the table shows the differential rates of suspension, with Black, Middle Eastern, Latin American and Mixed students incurring significantly higher rates that others. For Black students the rate is twice as high as any other group and three times higher than for the most populous group in the system, Whites.

Table 5: Suspension rate by Student background , TDSB, 2007-08 and 2011-12

Suspension Rate by Student Racial Background						
Racial Background	JK-Gr. 6		Gr.7-8		Gr. 9-12	
	2007-08	2011-12	2006-07	2011-12	2006-07	2011-12
Black	2.2%	1.5%	13.7%	7.6%	12.7%	8.6%
East Asian	0.3%	0.2%	2.0%	0.8%	1.2%	0.7%
Latin American	1.0%	0.8%	8.2%	4.5%	5.7%	3.6%
Middle Eastern	0.4%	0.5%	6.2%	2.7%	6.9%	4.1%
Mixed	1.1%	0.6%	8.2%	4.1%	8.1%	4.8%
South Asian	0.3%	0.2%	2.7%	1.4%	3.5%	2.1%
Southeast Asian	0.2%	0.4%	3.8%	1.2%	2.7%	1.9%
White	0.6%	0.5%	4.8%	2.4%	4.3%	2.9%

Source: TDSB, 2013i, Table 1.

We explore the issue of differential discipline in more detail later in the chapter.

Immigrant education

The size and the composition of the immigrant share of the student population in schools is constantly changing in Ontario challenging the education system to try to meet the learning needs of immigrant students. On average, immigrant students face greater difficulties in accessing quality education than their Canadian-born counterparts. On average, their performance in reading, science and mathematics is comparatively lower than that of their Canadian-born counterparts. But, as we would expect from our earlier discussion of different levels of school success among different racialized groups, the experience among immigrant groups is varied. Some immigrant students are less likely to attend early childhood education and childcare institutions and more likely to attend vocational schools and drop out from secondary education. They are more likely to attend schools that are located in big cities and schools that serve students who are on average from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds and are often immigrants themselves. (Abada and Lin, 2011; Abada *et al.* (2009); Aydemir *et al.*, 2008). Recent immigrants also face a substantially higher incidence of poverty, which in turn means that they may face poverty-related obstacles to academic achievement (Ornstein, 2006; Galabuzi,

2006). Because over 75% of Canada's new immigrants are racialized, the experience of racialization and the reality of racialized poverty also play a role in the experience of immigrant education. Many of these gaps in achievement are in place before school has even begun.

Students who speak a language at home other than the language of instruction face different problems from those who do not. In some cases, older immigrant students arriving at a later stage in their education do not have the same language experience as younger immigrants and suffer in school because of it. And among some groups, "second-generation" immigrant students, though born in this country, still face particular challenges and are subject to a performance gap between themselves and other Canadian-born students (OECD, 2010).

Because of these issues of language and socio-economic background, it's clear that immigrant students would benefit from language-centric policies and policies targeting less socio-economically advantaged students. These two factors, however, don't entirely explain the performance gaps we have indicated. The racialization of these students is also part of the explanation and highlights the need for targeted support measures for immigrant students as part of a larger equity scheme that addresses both racism and the need for an inclusive curriculum. In this context, we should remember that students born in the English-speaking Caribbean, Central America and South America, Eastern Africa, Western Africa and Western Asia have comparatively low levels of achievement.

In Ontario more than half of Ontario's English-language elementary schools (60%) and secondary schools (54%) have English as a Second Language (ESL) students, also referred to as English Language Learners (ELL). In the Greater Toronto Area, the figure increases to 85% in elementary schools. Since 2000, there has been a 29% increase in the percentage of elementary schools with ESL/ELL students. Over the same period, the percentage of schools with ESL teachers declined 23%. In some schools in urban centres, as many as 94% of the students are English Language Learners. However, 21% of elementary schools and 5% of secondary schools with 10 or more ELL students do not have a designated English as a Second Language/English Literacy Development (ESL/ELD) teacher to support their ELL students. In fact, most ELL students in elementary schools learn in a regular classroom without any special support. Even schools with a high number of ELL

students may not have a specialist teacher (People for Education, 2012; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a).

That said, some immigrant youth have shown significant resilience and, in some cases, have outperformed their cohorts. Some groups of immigrant children do as well as or better than children of Canadian-born parents in terms of test scores, high school completion and participation in post-secondary education. While in recent years, steady progress has been made in raising the achievement of ELL students, their average scores on Grade 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) reading, writing and mathematics tests are still significantly below the provincial average (People for Education, 2012). It is common practice that ESL students are "demitted" from ESL programs when the funding to the school runs out. In 2005, the Provincial Auditor General called for an end to this practice, and recommended that every ESL student continue to receive support until he or she has achieved a standard level of English proficiency. The Auditor also recommended differentiated funding because of refugee students' needs for substantial literacy support. How much the Auditor General's recommendations have been adhered to is hard to judge. Other ESL students may have strong literacy skills and only require limited support to learn the language (People for Education, 2012). All these challenges converge with a curriculum that is rigidly Eurocentric and make the experience of negotiating their racialized identity in the education system a trying one for immigrant students (Dei, 1997; Harper, 1997).

Race, streaming and education exclusion: A brief historical perspective

The logic of streaming in a liberal democratic society is complex and contradictory. It is both a protective response to human difference as well as an acknowledgement of its varied dimensions of difference. It represents contending claims to power and to the resources of the society. It responds to moral panics about education, security, and the national project. Streaming occurs on the axes of gender, race, class, disability, ethnic and identity differences. Streaming requires the defining of difference among the student population either within a school or across an educational jurisdiction. It also requires the 'universalization' of a particular experience as a standard against

which the "others" are denormalized and their interests rendered invisible. In this context, the social construction of race serves a specific purpose: To normalize and naturalize racial inequality by making racial distinctions among groups significant for the purpose of producing and reproducing structural privilege for dominant groups. Once racially defined and accorded privilege or disadvantage, these dominant and subordinate groups seek to assert their interests in their interactions through key societal institutions.

Canada maintains an international reputation and self-understanding as a tolerant, culturally pluralist, multi-ethnic and colour-blind society. The myth of "racelessness" is rooted in Canada's "historical narrative" as a place that escaped the blight of slavery and racial oppression. Yet, as Smith (2003) has remarked, race does matter plenty in Canada. In the Post 9/11 period it has come to the forefront again, with the racial profiling of Arabs and Muslims under the banner of the 'war on terror,' now codified under federal anti-terror legislation, Bill 36. This bill has had a widespread impact on racialized and religious groups. In response, Peake and Ray have suggested that we are not sufficiently attuned to the ways in which 'whiteness produces Other spaces and identities via racism, rendering people of colour "simultaneously invisible and over-exposed"' (Peake and Ray, 2001, p.180, with quotation from Mukherjee (1981, 36). Institutionalized processes of whiteness may come off as non-threatening and not malicious, but they create implicit norms around which key values that inform practices in institutions such as the education system are constructed. These then transform into institutional rules with assumptions and expectations of decision-making processes that are generalized through society with collective consequences.

While race is a key organizing principle of social and economic life in most liberal democracies, it is largely unacknowledged and often frowned upon. It is understood through constantly shifting parameters that are politically and socially contingent, in time and space (Omi and Winant, 1994). This makes race hard to grasp as a concept and its victims subject to disregard, even as it structures particular outcomes for Aboriginal and racialized groups in society (Raby, 2004). However, racial identity and educational outcomes are linked by a process of whiteness that universalizes Eurocentric values, curriculum and practices. Whiteness was normalized and institutionalized in Canadian education as part of the Canadian national project from the very

beginning of European contact in the 16th century. It became central to policy-making, curriculum development, school administration and classroom instruction. Henry and Tator (2009) have suggested that whiteness is a location of structural advantage, power and privilege that is deployed by those in a dominant position. It is also a "standpoint" from which a dominant White society views itself and its experience as universal, while diminishing the experiences of the 'other'. It enables the participation and reproduction of unmarked and unnamed cultural and political practices that adversely impact minority populations but which the majority, in turn, can deny as insignificant. These practices are invisible to those who impose them as burdens on others and naturalized for those they benefit. The normativity of whiteness affords members of the dominant group benefits that are assumed to be entitlements by right, even as they are denied the "others" (Mills, 1997). This is manifest in the educational system that focuses on the learning needs of middle-class, able-bodied, White students as the human standard, at the expense of girls, working-class youth, Aboriginal and racialized boys and girls, children with disabilities and immigrant children.

As Dei (1997) has remarked, "whiteness is the visual image of normalcy for most people" in Canada. What occurs outside of that conception of normalcy is considered deviant.

From a critical race theory perspective, we take an intersectional approach to the topic because we appreciate the extent to which varied systems of domination work together to impose significant disadvantages in the educational process that become lifelong burdens for individuals and communities. Collins (1993) has argued that a matrix of domination and subordination makes racism, sexism and classism interactive, interlocking and mutually reinforcing systems of oppression. Critical race theory focuses on how these intersecting webs of domination act to maintain the status quo and in the process disenfranchise particular groups in society. The processes of racialization serve to categorize groups on the basis of socially constructed characteristics and attributed abilities, values, morals and behavioral patterns that come to be related to those characteristics. The process serves to then essentialize, homogenize, generalize the experiences of minority groups and to de-emphasize intergroup differences in a manner that dehistoricizes and decontextualizes their

experiences. In the 21st century, modes of racialization have morphed into what Balibar (1991) has termed new racisms, one whose "dominant theme is not biological heredity but the 'insurmountability of cultural differences', a racism which at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but only the harmlessness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions." It's an old theme revisited.

Historical trajectories of racialized exclusions in education

Harper (1997) has located the trajectory of education exclusion in Canada within the context of provincial struggles to put together a many-sided approach to difference in building the country's educational project. She argues that there have been five essential approaches to the management of difference in education: suppressing difference; insisting on difference; denying difference; inviting difference; and critiquing difference. These approaches have changed over time, but within them they have evolved a hard-edged conception of minority identity and difference in the educational project.

Suppressing difference

The early encounters with difference elicited hostile official efforts to eliminate difference in education through the suppression of indigenous cultures and to impose dominant cultures as exclusively civilized. This was the response to First Nations' assertion of their cultural distinctiveness. Aboriginal peoples in Ontario (and Canada) experienced the imposition of powerful colonial institutions and systems that were to take the place of their sovereign institutions, leading to the disruption and, in many cases, the dismantling of their traditional ways of living. The contemporary outcome of the colonial process is manifest in political, social and economic marginalization of aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal peoples have lost most of their land, their language and their socio-cultural resources and exist in a condition of social exclusion from the rest of the Canadian population (Trigger, 1985; Maaka and Anderson, 2006).

The European civilizing mission made no room for diverse ways of learning or curriculum content. It was a policy that eventually

led to the separation of Aboriginal children from their parents and communities in what has come to be known as the Residential Schools Project (Mackey, 2002; Harper, 1997). This project began in the 1840s and operated well into the 20th century, providing the basis for a much more intensive colonial project — erasing cultural distinctiveness by removing children from their families, forcing them to learn English, adopt Christianity, and culturally neutering them (Baptiste, 1995). Informed by White supremacy at every level, these Eurocentric educational practices rejected Indigenous world views, languages and values in favour of a singular European world-view and set of values. It also inflicted profound psychological, emotional and physical abuse on the Aboriginal children (Miller, 1996). These historical injuries and their legacy continue to impact Aboriginal students and also inform their relationships with institutions of formal school. According to Schissel and Wotherspoon (2003), there are significant issues of trust that remain unaddressed and so shape key relations in Aboriginal education.

The suppression of linguistic, cultural, and social differences was also deployed against other immigrants from outside of Great Britain, from the Irish in the nineteenth century to the Italians and Poles in the early twentieth century to the South Asians, Chinese, Africans, Arabs and Caribbeans who are our most recent immigrants. As Prentice has documented, Egerton Ryerson, chief architect of the public system understood clearly that "only the diffusion of education among the immigrants could counteract what was becoming an unfortunate influence on provincial affairs" (Prentice, 1977, p. 56). The demands for New Canadians to be forcibly 'Canadianized' were supported across the ideological spectrum by Ministries of Education, by school trustees and teacher associations alike. New Canadians were to conform to dominant "Anglo-Saxon" culture and its "superior" civilization and human ideals. The prevailing and normalized sentiment was that education should eliminate difference as a way of improving the non-Anglo population for their benefit and that of the nation. Such a narrow conception of civilization and "Canadianness" also increased the possibility of deviance and resistance as well as the imperative to use coercion to achieve the objective of assimilation.

Insisting on difference
Another response was to accept that difference was natural, predeter-

mined and unassailable. It required a condescending accommodation not elimination. This was the approach taken towards the education of women, based on an understanding that a woman's nature, character and capabilities were unique and education should prepare her for a unique role in society. This led to a distinct and separate form of schooling for girls to prepare them for roles as wives and homemakers (Davey, 1991). Post-secondary education, it was understood, was not a necessity or appropriate for women. Sex segregation determined a great deal of access to schools, curriculum, rewards, school libraries and other educational resources (Prentice, 1977). The separation approach based on the unassailability of difference was also used to manage Black students' education. As early as 1828, Black immigrants from the United States were denied admission to common schools precipitating a Negro Separate Schools Act in 1849 and a Common Schools Act in 1850 that enshrined a separate but equal logic in Ontario legislation that remained on the books until the 1960s.

The Common Schools Act, 1850, included conditions for the legal establishment of separate public schools for Blacks. The act allowed " …on the application, in writing, of twelve, or more, resident heads of families, to authorize the establishment of one, or more, Separate Schools for Protestants, Roman Catholics or Colored people" (Cooper, 2007)

Where such separate schools did not exist, it said, Black students had to attend school at a separate time of day from White students, or be seated in separate arrangements.

According to Benjamin Drew:

> Many of the whites objected to having their children sit in the same forms with the colored pupils; and some of the lower classes would not send their children to schools where the blacks are admitted. (Hill, 1992, p. 149)

These processes of separation were also extended to students with disabilities and working-class students on the basis of "disability" and class difference. Class distinctions were responsible for the creation of vocational schools to train working-class students in manual and technical labour while the professional pathways were reserved for mostly white, able-bodied middle-class students (Harper, 1997). In the

second chapter of this volume it is argued that the creation of Central Technical School and Central High School of Commerce "marked the transition from the high school as an equalizer to the high school as an agent of social selection". The underlying assumption was that race, gender, class or ability represented predetermined limits to education based on the identity in question. The social construction of a particular identity served to determine the limits of the educational endeavour based on the normalized stereotype of that identity.

Denying difference

Yet another position that reflected the evolution of the dominant thinking on education was an approach that sought to erase difference as inconsequential rather than non-existent. In a time when society was moving beyond notions of innate differences and embracing the international consensus on human rights as articulated through the International Declaration for Human Rights (IDHR) passed by the United Nations in 1948, educational experts sought to embrace the idea of a colour-blind, gender-blind educational project on the basis of the understanding of equality as sameness. This liberal humanist approach is rooted in what Richard Wasserstrom (1987) describes as the emanipation that comes in building a society in which "racial, gender or sexual identity are the social equivalent of one's eye colour" — in essence removing socially significant differences altogether to achieve a form of assimilation that can be described as "total equality." With this approach to liberation, the ruling and governing classes can then avoid responsibility for the limits imposed on individuals in the society because of their gender, sex, race, ethnicity, ability, age, etc. People with power have no need to notice inequality on the ground or interrogate the outcomes of unequal power relations.

From this perspective, human identity is unified, transcending race and gender distinctions. The official distinguishing factor is merit. Meritocracy is assumed to guarantee equal treatment for all given equal inputs (Mazurek, 1987). This leads to the re-examination of official streaming policies as inconsistent with the ideology of equal treatment and the advocacy for colour-blind and gender-blind policies. In this construct, the teacher is assumed to be a neutral arbiter of a universalized curriculum. In practice, however, it's an abstract

idealization that valorizes the experience of the dominant group and its most powerful agents — White able-bodied heterosexual males — as the standard of human identity (Harper, 1997). The resulting denial of difference and differential experience undercuts the ability of racialized groups and other minoritized groups to achieve educational equity.

Inviting difference

The fourth approach encourages the society to acknowledge and celebrate difference, rather than deny it or accept it grudgingly. This is the approach that shaped multiculturalism and considers Canadian society a cultural mosaic. Within this context, multicultural education became a mainstream discourse. The opportunity to retain one's cultural or racial identity, explore its roots and celebrate it gained license. Schools introduced multicultural celebrations as it became acceptable to discuss the hyphenated nature of Canadian identities. Education ministries introduced heritage languages programs, published resource guides to help teachers introduce multiculturalism, hired experts in multicultural education and attempted to create multicultural curriculum. Underlying this proliferation of multicultural governmentality was the belief that cultural diversity was not inimical to student's needs or school goals. Instead, in a multiracial and multicultural society, it was essential to achieving educational objectives. The federal government passed legislation making multiculturalism official and it was included in the 1982 Canadian Constitution Act. Canadian Multiculturalism also embraced Alport's contact hypothesis that a common or shared understanding of diverse cultures leads to social harmony and inter-group cohesion (1956).

For all its progressive dimensions and recognition of cultural pluralism this approach has had its critics. They argue that multiculturalism essentializes cultures in a way that presents them as fixed not dynamic, that it operates on the assumption that teachers can be a neutral conduit of multicultural information unbiased by their own racial or cultural identities, that it is largely symbolic with its focus on song, food and dance while neglecting the realities of dominant power relations, and that the multicultural curriculum developed was not integral to the central education project but was simply an add-on; the essential curriculum remained unchanged (Tator and Henry, 1991; Thomas, 1987;

Kehoe and Mansfield, 1993). Moreover, it turned out, the emphasis on multicultural knowledge did not result in better behavior or more tolerant attitudes towards different cultures. In fact, ignoring issues of power tended to undermine the ability of minority groups to present their grievances publicly — to genuinely open up the realities they lived — and to make real communication possible. As central partners in school-based multiculturalism, teachers did not become self-critical scholars, but remained simply performers with a different script (Kehoe and Mansfield, 1993).

Critiquing difference

This approach is critical of the preceding approaches to difference in two ways: First, by acknowledging the inequalities structured by the previous approaches to difference and, second, by recognizing the need to acknowledge the existence of racism, sexism and classism as modes of domination that should be confronted. Anti-racism education represents the essence of this approach. It operates on the understanding that racism is a reality of Canadian society and its schools. It seeks to move beyond the superficial aspects of multiculturalism that make it comfortable for dominant society members, particularly the food and the festivals. It calls for the examination of the more contentious aspects of cultural encounter. It focuses not on how schools name and define cultural and racial difference but on educational processes and policies that reproduce inequalities based on class, race, gender, disability, sexual minority status and Aboriginal status. It demands an end to the production of specific racial identities and related stereotypes and pathologies (Dei, 1995).

Anti-racism looks at how racial differences are reproduced in the overall curriculum, in various school subjects, policies and practices. And this approach led to a number of government actions to investigate the conditions of racialized and Aboriginal populations. In the mid-1980s, a race relations unit was established in the Multiculturalism Directorate at the federal level. In the early 1990s Ontario set up the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate along with an Anti-racism office in the Ministry of Education in Ontario, and amended the Education Act to require all school boards to develop and implement anti-racism and ethnocultural equity policies. These initiatives were

supported by the Supreme Court of Canada in a case called *Andrews V. Law Society of British Columbia* (1989), which concluded that discrimination does not have to be intentional to be real. As long as a policy or a practice has a discriminatory impact or effect, it becomes the duty of the relevant authority to address it. More recently, the Ontario government has issued an Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009) to address questions of diversity in the schools. There have been some critiques of the anti-racism framework, challenging it for not acknowledging the complexity of identity formation and the multiplicity of identities, including race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Walcott (1994) has suggested that "one cannot understand the full social effects of race without a comprehension of the ways in which other forms of social oppression intersect (race, gender, sexuality)" (Walcott, 1994). Scott (1992) has also suggested that:

> The project of history is not to reify identity but to understand its production as an ongoing process of differentiation, relentless in its repetition, but also — and this seems to me the important political point — subject to redefinition, resistance and change. (1992, p.19)

Racialization of poverty and education

In 2011, over 400,000 Ontario children and youth were living below the poverty line by Statistics Canada's widely accepted measure of poverty. That translates to one in six children. But the vulnerability to poverty is not equally shared. The highest rates of poverty are seen amongst people with disabilities, Aboriginal populations, lone parents, racialized people and immigrants. For instance, almost half of Ontario children whose families recently immigrated to Canada experience poverty (Campaign 2000, 2013). As we indicated earlier, the connection between poverty and educational outcomes is well established (Frempong and Willms, 2002). A related phenomenon is the extent to which poverty is increasingly racialized and with dire implications for the education opportunities of racialized students.

In its 2013 Annual Report, People for Education looked at the connection between the income of students' families and the resources and supports available in their schools (pp. 8-9). Using surveys of families and school-by-school data, which they matched with data from

the Ministry of Education's School Information Finder, they were able to demonstrate the impact of the distribution of income and poverty on schools and learning in Ontario.

According to the School Information Finder, the average percentage of students living below the low-income cut-off (approximately $30,000 for a family of four) is 16.5%. While almost every Ontario school has some of these students, some schools have a much higher proportion of low-income students, which means, as indicated earlier, that students in these schools are less likely to overcome the impact of poverty because of the economic segregation they experience.

Using average per-school demographic data based on the 2006 census from the Education Quality and Accountability Office, People for Education were able to report the average family income for students enrolled in low-income schools is $44,455, compared to $152,773 in high-income schools (2013b). In the high-poverty schools, an average of 42% of the students come from low-income families. In the low-poverty schools, the average is 0.6%. High-poverty schools also had an above-average percentage of immigrant students. This represents a system-wide process of streaming by neighbourhood. This is especially evident when we consider that among low-income families, 14% of parents do not have a high school diploma, compared to 2% of parents in high-income schools. Low-income parents are half as likely to have a university degree. And low-income students are more than twice as likely to be living in single parent households. The students in low-income schools are four times as likely to be recent immigrants and racialized, and five times as likely to be of Aboriginal identity.

On average, 46% of students in low-income schools speak a first language other than English, compared to only 5% in high-income schools, and the proportion of students in low-income schools who need support because they are English Language Learners is twice the provincial average. The People for Education survey results also indicated that lower-income schools have higher than average numbers of English as a Second Language, English Language Development and Special Education programs (2013a, p.6). There are also differences between overall rates of Special Education services, based on school-level income factors. While 25% of students in low-income elementary schools are classified as having Special Education needs, that compares with 13% in high-income schools.

The Ministry of Education provides funding to school boards to support students whose socio-economic status puts them at risk of not performing in school. Known as the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG), it was originally intended to be used for programs and resources such as increased numbers of counselors and social workers, more educational assistants, smaller class sizes, mentoring programs, breakfast and lunch programs, free access to extracurricular activities and recreation and before- and after-school programs (People for Education, 2013a, b; Mackenzie, 2009). In 2002, the government review of the funding formula recommended an increase in the amount of the grant and better analysis of the programs and services being provided to students at risk. In spite of this official concern for poor children as a key part of the Ontario government's Poverty Reduction Strategy, two things have happened: The number of programs the LOG is intended to cover has expanded, and the funding has been reduced. Since 2005, the per-pupil amount in the LOG has been reduced by 9%, and the mandate of the grant has been expanded to cover the costs of not only programs based on demographic needs, but also a range of literacy and numeracy programs, the Specialist High Skills Major program, the K-12 School Effectiveness Framework and more that focus, destructively, on test score production. While the grant now gives more weight to boards' poverty demographics, it has not overcome the loss of funding and the expansion of its mandate. Added to this decrease in funding is the propensity for Boards, pressed by provincial cutbacks, to bury LOG funding in parts of the budget than have nothing directly to do with poor children.

Table 6: Poverty and unequal Educational Outcomes

Demographics of Ontario Elementary Schools			
	Ontario Average	**Low-Income Schools**	**High-Income Schools**
Average Family income	$75,716	$48,331	$94,647
Students in low-income families	17%	45%	3%
Parents without a high school diploma	7%	13%	5%
Lone-parent households	19%	32%	11%
Recent immigrants	5%	15%	0%
Aboriginals	3%	2%	3%
Percentage of students with special educational needs	19%	22%	18%
English Language Learners	7%	14%	1%
First language other than English or French	19%	46%	5%

Source: Education Quality and Accountability Office.

Demographic data from 2006 Canadian Census.

Table 6 shows the distinctive disadvantage students from low-income families face with regard to access to education. Compared to high-income schools, they are more likely to be grouped together, more likely to go to school with English as a Second Language students, and a high proportion of the students in Special Education, those from single-parent homes, and those from immigrant backgrounds. So, as we have argued previously, while high-income neighbourhoods have better quality education in the classroom, the accumulation of factors that reduce access to quality in education such

as immigration status, low income, Special Education, ESL, all play out with effect in low-income neighbourhoods (Portelli *et al.*, 2007).

Table 7: Racialization of poverty in Toronto: By minority group

Chart 2: Child Poverty Among Selected Social Groups in Ontario, 2006

Recent Immigrants	All Immigrants	Racialized	Aboriginal Identity	With Disability	All Children
47.%	39.%	33.%	30.%	27.%	18.%

Source: Toronto Community Social Research and Data Consortium, using 2006 Census. Based on LICO Before Tax
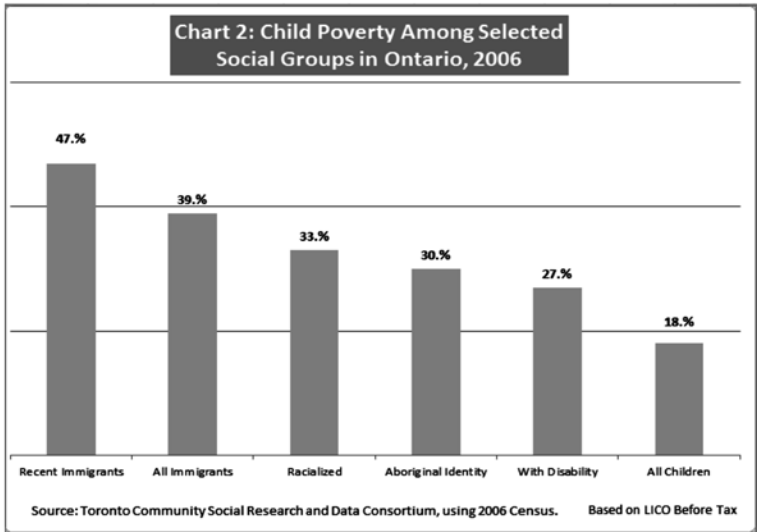
Special Education: Constructing "youth at-risk" identities

Special Education lies at the centre of the streaming system in the public schools. As we have seen in Chapter Four, its designations cover a wide range of medicalized and social construction. On the one hand, it identifies Special Needs in the form of such exceptionalities as Autism, Learning Disability, Language Impairment, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability, Physical Disability, Deaf, Blind and Behavioural. On the other hand, there is the privileged category of Giftedness. The construction of Special Education subjectivity is an important part of the story of streaming in Ontario, having developed over the last half-century an effective form of government control over low-income and minority kids that masks the failings of the education system to meet their needs. Designation with these exceptionalities, whether Gifted or not, leads in some cases to placement in special classes for part or all of the day and all such students are assigned an Individual

Education Plan (IEP). We have also seen how the labeling, the placement and the IEP all identify these students as having problems or, in the case of Gifted, as overwhelmingly likely to go to university after graduating.

Those with Non-Gifted exceptionalities are far more likely to be from low-income families than their Gifted peers. They are also more likely to be racialized (Brown and Parekh, 2010 and see Chapter Four above). For instance, Black students, at 12.6% of the student population, were over-represented in the categories of Language Impairment (24.1), Learning Disabilities (17.9), Developmental Disabilities (29.5), Mild Intellectual Disability (33.3), Behavioural (35.5) and students with exceptionalities (22.1), compared to their percentage (13.5) in the Board (Brown and Parekh, 2010). In the TDSB, students in this pathway also have much lower graduation rates and lower post-secondary education applications and admissions.

Looming over these Special Education categories for youngsters from subordinate groups is the larger designation of "at risk."

The term "at-risk" refers to a range of concerns about youth, from learning deficits to disengagement and dropping out, to potential criminality and vulnerability to the school-prison pipeline. A variety of school, home, community and societal factors account for the risks associated with those outcomes. The literature on risk identifies a litany of risk factors including: school truancy, poverty, suspension, expulsion, lack of curriculum involvement, poor home-school relations, ethnic / racial minority status, transience, inadequate familial environments, residing in the inner-city, English as a second language, substance abuse, illegal activities (Manning and Baruth, 1995). Johnson (1997) suggests that the ultimate risk is that students become disconnected from economic productivity and from participation in society. Risk and youth are increasingly synonymous in the literature, with youth either considered at risk (victims) or posing a risk (perpetrators). These conceptions of youth at risk are based on particular constructions of the subject "youth at risk" consistent with dominant understandings of the characteristics that these youth embody. Race and Aboriginal status are key aspects of this construction.

Kelly (2001) has argued that the "at-risk" discourse represents attempts to regulate and recode institutionally structured relations of race, class and gender. This shifts responsibility for the circumstances of disadvantage to the youth, their families and communities, in the era of

neo-liberalism. Withers and Batten's (1995) review of the literature on youth at risk identifies two essential but competing rationalizations for the construction of the "youth at-risk" identity. There is what they refer to as the "humanistic intention" that structures the identification and intervention processes that leading to identity construction (Withers and Batten, 1995, pp. 5-6). It is grounded in the "concerns about danger, harm, care and support for the youth" (Kelly, 2000, p. 464). The second is the 'economic intention or imperative' that rationalizes the construction and regulation of youth identities for the "benefit" of the youth and society. This imperative foregrounds the costs and benefits of identifying the risk factors associated with the transition to adulthood of kids from at-risk populations, thereby mobilizing key interventions to address these risks (Withers and Batten, 1995, pp. 5-6). Fine (1993) has argued that risk is not just an abstract or rhetorical construct but an ideological one. It involves modes of assessment that are rooted in social, political and ideological values that determine the nature of relations in society. Race is a critical factor in the assessment of risk. She contends that the

> …cultural construction of a group defined through a discourse of risk represents a quite partial image, typically strengthening those institutions and groups that have carved out, severed, denied connection to, and then promised to "save" those who will undoubtedly remain "at risk". (Fine, 1993, p. 91)

Further she argues that, the 'popular and promiscuous deployment of discourses of "youth at risk" beginning with the 1980s represents a turn towards neo-liberal problematizations of the welfare state. They seek to make young people, their families and communities responsible for the "generalized risk" of child development. The individuation of such risks allows for the racialization of the problem and concept of risk in a manner that reinforces racial hierarchies and differential outcomes. Consistent with this reading of risk is work by Leslie Roman (1996) who argues that the discourse of "youth at-risk" seeks to create a moral panic that allows for the manufacturing of crisis in the dominant social order represented by the deviant, dangerous, threatening and risky behaviour and disposition of particular populations — working-class youth, Aboriginal and racialized youth. Their behaviour is presented as

a threat to the very working of the society and its institutions. In the case of the education system, it mobilizes a "common-sense" response in the form of zero tolerance policies and Special Education programs, approaches that rely heavily on separation and removal of the problem and guarantee differential educational experiences and outcomes for the targeted populations as Noguera (2008) has argued.

For Roman the use of moral panics explains the unstable and contradictory processes that reflect the "articulations of a range of conflicting interests within and across diverse sites as family, national policies, the welfare state and lived cultural formations of particular groups" (1996, p. 3). The use of moral panics is not new but Roman sees neo-liberalism informing the ways in which representations of certainty and risk in national and global settings are articulated along with notions of 'caring' in the twenty-first century. Canada's concern about a prosperous future with economic certainty requires that attention be paid to the students whose prosperity is at risk in that future. So Roman sums this up by suggesting that the moral panic can be "seen as a metaphor for a nation at risk in a global economy" (1996, p. 14). The greater the threat posed by the neo-liberal restructuring of the economy on a global scale, the more likely it is that scapegoats are necessary to explain the anxiety and vulnerability that dominant populations feel, particularly with regard to their youth.

The threat to the nation represented by youth at risk of dropping out of high school, being functionally illiterate, untrainable and unemployable, triggers two responses as presented by Withers and Batten (1995) — humanistic (support) and economic (regulation). They could be mapped on to what Clandfield calls emancipation and containment in his discussion of Special Education (Chapter Four in this volume).

Roman takes a political economy approach to the problem of the educational project as a process of risk management. On the one hand, she deals with the economic imperatives of globalizing capitalism and its constitution of disparities in economic outcomes that can be rationalized through the discourses of risks to society posed by particular youth. On the other hand, she explores the construction of the key identities that sustain the moral panics because they are rooted in a white supremacist and classist society. These identities legitimize the use of Special Education and zero tolerance policies as a response to the crisis of underachieving youth and 'threat to safety' youth that

disrupt the harmonious learning environment for the dominant group
on whose needs the educational project seems to be focused. Roman
sums it up this way:

> Talk of youth putting the nation at risk for losing its competitive edge
> in the global economy or failing the nation's moral expectations is
> emblematic not only of the appeal of the new corporatist state and
> the authoritarian populism of the Right, but also the failure of the Left
> to offer what Hall and Jacques call a "popular modernizing rhetoric"
> that can capture public disenchantment with some aspects of the
> social democratic welfare state in order to inaugurate a new phase
> of socialist (and I would add, feminist) development and alternative
> economic and political strategies. (Roman, 1996, p. 22)

Neo-liberal critiques of youth employ an at-risk identity for their
legitimacy (Wotherspoon and Schissel, 2001). The most important reason
for this is to subordinate group subjectivities and impose the costs of
their actions on these subjects, among them, racialized and Aboriginal
youth and their families. The rhetoric of at-risk youth effectively mobilizes
race and ethnic identity because of deep-rooted assumptions of
dangerous otherness that are widely held in Canadian society.

Constructing racialized identities

For many racialized and Aboriginal youth, the construction of identities
of "youth at-risk" intersects directly with their racialized identities and
intensifies the alienation, marginalization and segregation that arise
from this complex web of intersecting dominations. The infantilization
of the youth through the "at-risk" identity bears some of the same
characteristics associated with racialization. It is at once the subject
of paternalism and also moral panic. These form the rational basis for
their exclusion and separation from the common education project
and the justification for streaming through a variety of voluntary and
involuntary mechanisms such as Special Education, Basic and General
courses, and in some cases removal from the school through safe
school transfers or assignment to the Safe Schools Program.

The persistence of Eurocentric norms and values in the school
system means that racialized immigrants are cast as socio-cultural

deviants who are culturally and socially dislocated and dysfunctional in the school community. In one way or another, they are always "at risk." Youth from many racialized communities are presented as a group to be feared, monitored, and channeled into restrictive environments (Solomon and Palmer, 2004). While Black youth have historically been constructed as fearsome, deviant, socially dysfunctional, non-conformist and a threat to the safety and smooth running of the school, in the post-September 11, 2001 period, Muslim and Muslim-identified students have increasingly been subjected to the same "at risk" descriptions (Solomon and Palmer, 2004; Ferber, 2007).

Black Masculinities

To demonstrate the phenomenon of stigmatized identity formation, I want to draw on the experience of the Black student population. Earlier, I referenced a report of the TDSB, which identified Black students, along with Aboriginal students, as experiencing the most failure in the school system. I want to suggest that the process of "negative identity construction" is related to those outcomes. This is even more so the case for male students, subject to a particular construction of their masculinity. The African-Canadian population, is made up of people from a range of ethnicities and varied source countries, but in Canada their school experience and stigmatized identities tend to converge. African-Canadian or Black youth endure a confluence of stereotypes that undermine their educational experience and marginalize them in school, creating a negative impact on their learning experience, social opportunities, educational outcomes and life chances (Smith *et al.*, 2005).

The stigmatization of Black male youth and the reconfiguration of their masculinity is mostly a top-down process that has roots in a history of enslavement and structural racism that defined African humanity in particular ways and for particular purposes (Walcott, 2009). What emerges is a contradictory set of images and impulses that reflect stereotypes from the top and resistance from the bottom. These appear anti-social in some contexts but ultimately are a defensive reaction. They include not only images of fatherlessness, underachievers, and troublemakers but also of immigrants and migrants. All of these images are coded to represent deviance and truancy in a manner that leads to placement in Special Education or Applied and Essentials programs.

The images deny the possibility of university education. In deciphering the complexity of Black masculinity, Walcott emphasizes its existence under constant social and cultural surveillance — a condition in which Black humanity is continuously doubted, continuously seen in need of or under repair, continuously associated with lawlessness, defiance, deviance, truancy, violence and lack of moral control.

James (2012) has argued that these stereotypes serve to reinforce a disposition in our schools that Black youth cannot be effectively educated in the common stream without disrupting the normal processes of learning for other students or with the same success as other students. It is here that the concept of stereotype threat that we discussed earlier seems to apply, in setting expectations for authorities and for the students. At the same time, students are internalizing these threats even as they are externally acted upon on by the prevailing assumptions about their abilities. Race (and gender and class) mediate students' interaction with the education system and their outcomes and are used to "notice, identify, regulate, and even distort individuals" points of order, making situations "dangerous enough to require constant vigilance" (James, 2012, p. 468). The requirement to monitor and regulate is consistent with the paternalist logic of streaming even as the threat of disorder confirms the neo-liberal need to separate, through safe schools policies, to ensure a pacified environment for the rest of the education project (James, 2009).

The construction of the fearsome Black youth becomes a basis for close policing and teacher distancing, creating an inhospitable climate for learning and triggering disengagement, Behavioural designation and Special Education assignment (Sewell, 1997). Behaviours displayed in school hallways, cafeterias, parking lots and staircases are routinely labelled hyper-aggressive, scary and gang-like by administrators and teachers. Solomon and Brown report on an interview with a White female teacher in a Canadian school who articulates this sentiment:

> At times, I'm literally scared of them (Black youth). Going down the hallways, especially near the exits to the rear of the school building, and running into a group of six or more, you get a real eerie feeling; and I've known female teachers who simply turn around instead of passing that group. (Solomon and Brown, 1998, p. 111)

The impact of these interactions is to further alienate stigmatized students and confirm the self-fulfilling prophesy of the defiant behaviour they are characterized as possessing. It makes them targets for forms of evaluation that confine them to narrowing pathways, in many cases 'medicalizing' the problem, assigning them a behavioural disorder, leading to Special Education as an intervention (Ferguson, 2000; Sewell, 1997).

The charts below are representative of the 'crisis' in Black education that correlates to the negative identity construction of the Black student, particularly the male subject, as "incompliant, lawless, defiance, deviance, truant, violent and lacking in moral control," making him particularly vulnerable to marginalization (Solomon and Brown, 1998). These data demonstrate the severity of the achievement gap between Black students and other TDSB students. The suspension rates show an escalation of the effect of marginalization and disengagement as the students make their way through the system, from JK to Grade 12. By the high school years, the rates are double those of other student groups and the differences even more pronounced for subgroups. Other indicators also show significant gaps against general TDSB averages.

Table 8: Suspension rates for Black students by region of origin, TDSB, 2006-07
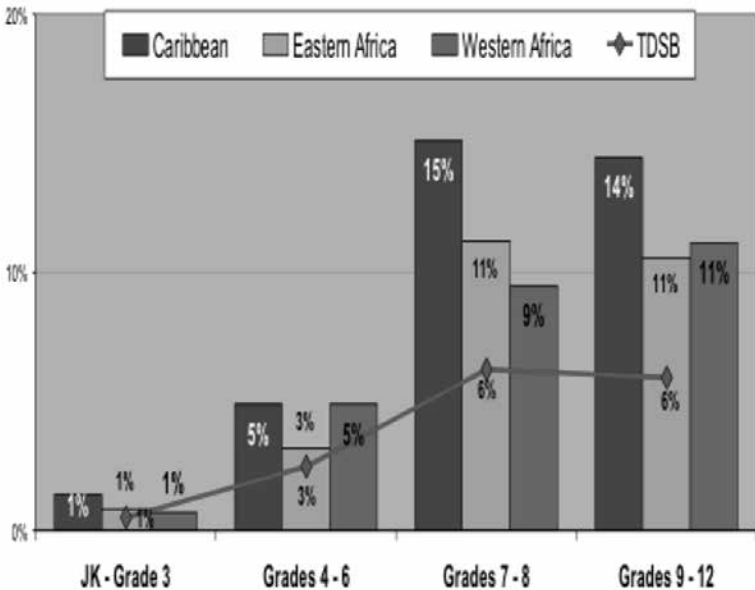
Table 9:OSSLT Results and credit accumulation for Black students by region of origin, TDSB, 2006-07
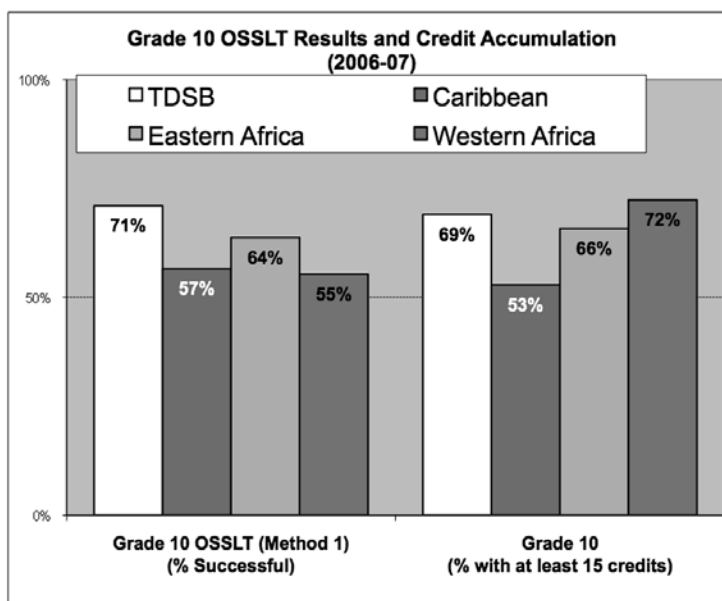
Table 10: Grade 6 EQAO Results for Black students by region of origin, TDSB, 2007-08
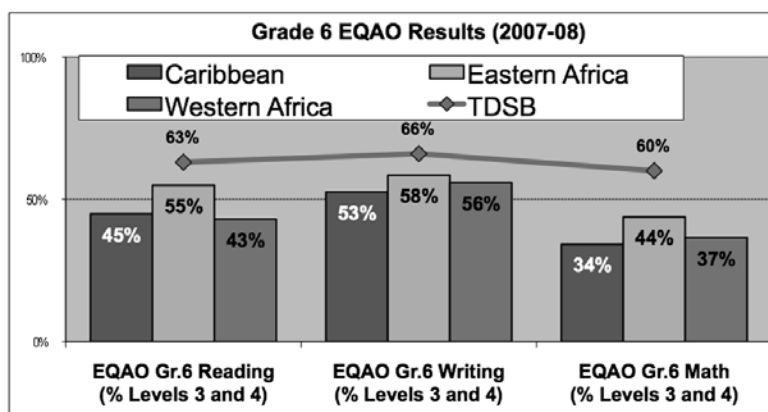
Source: TDSC.

Zero tolerance policies

Zero tolerance policies arise out of a concern about perceived increase in violence in schools. Perceived because there is research (admittedly limited) to suggest that such 'increased' violence actually coincided with the promulgation of these policies at the provincial level. Nor has there been subsequent data to show that they have resulted in safer school environments (Ayers, 2001; Jull, 2000; Raby, 2005; Shannon and McCall (2003); Skiba *et al.*, 2003). Zero tolerance policies were introduced in Ontario and other provinces in the late 1990s, on the grounds that they would improve school safety (Safe Schools Task Force, 2003). The Safe Schools Act, 2000, included a zero tolerance policy that required suspensions and expulsions for such infractions as fighting, with no discretion on the part of the school administration. School boards in the province also enacted codes of conduct to assist students with developing a sense of self-control.

They are rooted in what Raby (2005) has referred to as "essentialist notions of childhood incompetence" — assumptions rooted in social deficit models. Conceived as rigid disciplinary regime policies these often include codes of conduct at the school level but rise to system-wide or provincially-mandated policies that seek to manage the school behaviour of students (Evans and Lester, 2012). They have been criticized for being applied unfairly and disproportionately to students with disabilities and racialized students, leading to their stigmatization and marginalization in school. In particular, the Ontario Human Rights Commission Report on the Ontario Safe Schools Act concludes that zero tolerance policies disproportionately targeted particular populations of students, naming racialized students and students with disability as most affected (OHRC, 2005):

> This report finds that in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and other parts of Ontario there is a strong perception, which is supported by some independent evidence, that the Act and school board policies are having a disproportionate impact on racial minority students, particularly Black students, and students with disabilities. (OHRC, 2003)

These policies have also been critiqued for contributing to the intensification of the school-prison pipeline — by criminalizing

behaviour that previously was adjudicated within the school as normal teenage behaviour (Solomon and Palmer, 2004; Ruck and Wortley, 2002; Raby, 2005).

Over the last decade, the police have increasingly become a major presence in Canadian schools. They deal with a variety of student behaviours and often lay criminal charges (Ministry of Education and Training, 1994). When minority students respond to school disciplinary action, including the use of police to control student behaviours, they describe arbitrary modes of disciplinary practices. A study by Ruck and Wortley (2002) indicates that racialized students are more likely than White students to perceive discrimination with respect to the administration of zero tolerance policies by teachers, administrations and police. Black students showed particular awareness of this discrimination. In fact, Kelly (2003) has argued that the inequalities manifest in the application of these policies compromise the sense of citizenship among those students most affected.

A number of other critiques have been leveled at zero tolerance policies. Jull (2000) has argued that: "school discipline policies based on the principles of zero tolerance reinforce Anglo-Eurocentric sensibilities of right and wrong and the authoritative structures with public education." Moreover, she suggests that zero tolerance policies tend to assume that one size fits all, an approach based on the erroneous conviction that such an approach is not discriminatory because it treats all the same, without appreciating the position of disadvantage affecting many minority students (Jull, 2000; Cole, 1999).

According to Ayers *et al.* (2001), zero tolerance policies have proliferated as a result of political manipulations, the sensationalization of violence discourse and the misuse of statistics that vilify particular youth and their cultural identities. Furthermore, through suspension and expulsion, these policies act to displace troubled youth from the controlled social learning environment of the school to less controlled neighbourhoods where they are more likely to commit more serious offenses. According to Solomon (2004), school administrators tend to abdicate their primary responsibilities for student discipline, education and safety to security officials, law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system.

Conclusion

We have presented four key ways in which streaming is operationalized, leading to differential educational outcomes for some racialized groups: these are racial disproportionality of Academic Applied and Essentials streams and outcomes, the expansive use of Special Education services to designate and single out "learner" identities, the deployment of "youth at-risk" discourses and interventions, and the safe schools discourse and the zero tolerance policies that structure differential learning opportunities through safe school transfers and safe school programs, and school to prison pipelines. These modes of streaming produce different pathways for Aboriginal and racialized youth and to diminished educational experiences and outcomes.

A key part of the process of streaming is the constitution of distinctive racially and religiously defined identities that become the basis for differential treatment in the system. To that end, we have suggested that the process of identity formation is an essential part of the practice of streaming. In particular, this has adverse implications for Aboriginal and racialized "education" identities arising out of the intersection of race and class social relations that structure racialized poverty and its influence on educational outcomes. It leads to the well-discussed achievement gap between racialized and non-racialized students. It is clear that we must remove the kinds of racial hierarchies and barriers that still today define the education project and layer access to quality education for those subject to these hierarchies and barriers. We have to realize the potential of all our children. We have seen some attempts at addressing these challenges through the Ontario government's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the emergence of discourses and practices of decolonization focused on Aboriginal students and Africentric pedagogy aimed at recentring the agency and cultural affirmation of Black students in the education project. These efforts are limited in many ways but target the very processes that create conditions of streaming and education exclusion in the school system.

ENDNOTES

1 It is important to make clear at the outset that the experience of racialization in education is not singular but varied. Racialization impacts different racial groups differently and compromises different aspects of the educational experience. While Aboriginal youth, Blacks and Latin American youth have the lowest test scores, low credit accumulation and high levels of disengagement, South Asian and East Asian students have high test scores but report being subjected to racial stereotypes that make them uncomfortable participating in class discussion and school activities. The educational experience is diminished for both sets of students. (See TDSB, 2010).
2 Auditor General of Ontario (2012), Section 3.05 The Education of Aboriginal Students.

6. ANOTHER DIMENSION TO STREAMING — GENDER

Alison Gaymes San Vicente

Introduction

Sexism is a reality in our society, but where does this begin and what role does school play in its development? How might sexism in schools impact the funneling, or streaming, of children in education? This chapter explores the relationship between sexism and streaming by considering the implications of gender with respect to how children are moulded, directed and channeled within the structure of schooling. The conversation about streaming, its repercussions and its relationship with sexism and gender is complex and multi-layered. One of the layers in this dialogue revolves around gender as a social construct and how education streams girls and boys according to this construct. This process of social construction lies at the heart of this chapter. It has been made clear in previous chapters that despite changing terminology ("streams" to "course types", "General" to "Applied," etc.), streaming is alive and well. And nowhere is this truer than in the social construction of females and males and the streaming that results. This streaming is complicit in maintaining a social structure where females often do very well academically in school, but are under-represented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields as well as high level business positions. At the same time, males as a group are over-represented in many Special Education programs, General/Applied course types, as well as the dropout rate, yet, on average, are likely to earn more money than females as teenagers and adults.

When we consider the intersection of biological sex with other identities such as race, social class, sexual orientation and ability for example, the conversation evolves and more layers are added to the streaming picture. Certain girls and boys consistently fare better than others in their schooling. It is important to note that we do not address the complexities of gender identity. Instead we will refer directly to 'girls' and 'boys' based on normative assumptions predominant in education today and explore how education often mobilizes such a binary to stream students. Those who identify outside of this gender binary meet with particular challenges and obstacles as they move to find a space of their own within the walls of a school. This chapter, however, is limited to a discussion of the implications of streaming in response to how students become socialized as 'boys' and 'girls'

This chapter is broken into five sections; the first section makes the case that notions of gender are imposed from birth and a manifestation of such notions takes place through streaming in schools and beyond. The second section begins with a discussion of why it is important to focus on gender, in tandem with education, and then moves into a conversation about the socialization of girls and boys. This conversation invokes a broader discussion about classroom expectations, how social constructs shape both the female and male schooling experience and how gendered perceptions of children create a "natural" stream — a stream that is often not contested and maintains a system of inequities. The third section broadens the scope of gender to include implications of race as it relates to gender. The fourth part of this chapter highlights the paradox mentioned earlier that school success for females does not necessarily mean economic success. Despite the academic success or failure of either sex, generally speaking men continue to earn more money, perpetuating a patriarchal culture. The final section of the chapter shows how the social construction of the sexes leads to gendered streaming in two concrete ways: first, the streaming of specific males into applied/*lower*[1] course types and, second, the general streaming of females, intentionally or not, away from STEM subjects and high-level business positions. Both forms of streaming are congruent with accepted notions of males and females and serve to support the predominance of sexism in schools and society.

We cannot discuss the educational attainment or schooling experience of males and females by considering them simply as

homogeneous groups. The intersectionality of gender with race, class and ability is evident on many fronts. This intersectionality is particularly evident when we consider which boys are more likely to be streamed into *lower* course types as well as which females are more likely to be steered away from STEM fields and high-level business positions. As discussed in previous chapters, when achievement data is disaggregated by a variety of identities, we discover that students from low-income households, Black students, Latino students, Portuguese students, Aboriginal students, and students who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ) are among those who are less likely to achieve the same academic or economic success as students from high-income households, with primarily European backgrounds. Of these groups, Black students — both boys and girls — repeatedly come up in the data as the most marginalized. They provide the clearest example of the power of the intersect of identity (Black in this case) and gender on the students who experience it.

Why should we pay attention to gender at all?

In our experience the discussion of gender in our schools often takes a backseat to both race and social class. It is frequently and destructively silenced. When, for example, we think about who should be placed in certain streams/course types and programs, the decisions that often come to mind are based on a child's "ability." As is evident in proceeding chapters, this is highly problematic; "ability" levels are categories misshaped by profound social-class, racial and disability perspectives (or biases). To these perspectives it is essential to consider the construction of powerful gender biases embedded in the culture and its schools.

Consider, for example, how educators use gender to "balance" classes, to create gendered classes, to delineate mentorship programs, to define sports teams and to assign leadership roles. In all of these activities, the perceived construction of gender (girls act one way and boys another) is often a key determinant of the action that is taken. In this way, gender construction is continually acknowledged and propagated. Even though gender is often highlighted for the appearance of equity (i.e., ensuring there is a female on the school Audio-Visual committee or males in the reading club), gender is not

often utilized to interrogate and contest social norms or to challenge the social structure to achieve equity for the sexes. For example, while we all might agree that there should be girls in AV and boys in reading clubs and even make attempts to make it so, do we ask the critical question of why girls are not in AV or boys in reading clubs and what needs to be done to change this reality? Why do we have such evident disproportions of girls or boys in the science club, the robotics club, Special Education classes, math contests, French immersion programs, chess clubs, the spelling bee, arts and crafts clubs, intramural sports and school teams? Toglia (2013) suggests that children as young as six years old already have well-defined expectations about gender and are beginning to determine for themselves which career paths are not meant for them by virtue of their sex alone.

Complicating this fundamental question of gender construction is the recent tendency to question why education should have any particular focus on girls. When, for example, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) was about to launch its mentorship program *Young Women on the Move* (YWM)[2] in January 2010, a CBC reporter thought to ask "Why a girls' group?" (CBC, 2010). It's worth noting that the need for the longstanding board-wide boys' group, *Boys to Men*, had not been questioned in the same fashion. Indeed, most of the current conversation about girls in public education relates to a "female advantage" that inherently disadvantages boys (Francis and Skelton, 2005; Buchmann, 2013). There is now a powerful notion out there that girls fare well in school and in life, with a resounding echo that states "*My goodness, look how far women have come!*" In *Reality Check*, a document outlining the Canadian government's promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls from 2004 to 2009, we are reminded that what is missing is an understanding that our supposed gender-neutral policies and programs often serve to privilege boys and devalue girls (Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action and Canadian Labour Congress, (FAFIA/CLC, 2010.)

In that CBC interview, the reporter made it clear that of course we need boys' groups because boys are underperforming, especially racialized boys. But there is also a need to focus on girls, as we shall see. It's a focus that is undercut, however, by extensive media reporting on the subject. Girls are often portrayed as routinely outperforming the boys in academics, less frequently suspended in public schools, under-

represented in certain Special Education[4] programs, applying to post-secondary institutions at a higher rate, having the same rights as males in a "Post-sexist" Canada, and in many ways achieving or surpassing gender parity. At the same time, the question of boys in education among academics and teachers is often centred on the failure of boys in public education and their inability to focus as well as females. By comparison to girls, boys are often seen as struggling to achieve academic parity — particularly in reading, having difficulty meeting behavioural expectations in class, and declining in post-secondary applications when measured against the girls. We can see why that CBC reporter asked why we should have a girls' as well as a boys' focus.

It would appear, then, that girls are doing just fine and that the need for a focus on girls is marginal at best, whereas boys are not doing so well and we must maintain or increase the focus on boys. However, a critical examination of the state of both sexes paints quite a different picture; a more complex perspective materializes that does not support the "doing just fine" depiction of girls and women. Sometimes the media gets it right. The *Toronto Star*, for example, opened up this reality with a February 23, 2010 article headlined, "Women's Rights in Decline." This article was speaking to the above-mentioned report on the status of women and girls in Canada called *Reality Check* (FAFIA/CLC, 2010). The report indicated that from 2004 to 2009 "there has been a sharp decrease in institutional and political support by the Government of Canada for the promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls" (p.1). The paper proceeded to describe a "systematic erosion" of the rights of both girls and women in Canada (p.2). Girls and boys continue to be up against a masculine culture of schooling, which articulates and reinforces *acceptable* notions of "being a girl." These notions are often oppressive, oversexualizing feminity and undercutting girls' sense that they are as capable as males in all areas of life. At the same time, boys are also measured against this heterosexual masculine culture of schooling and asked to comply. If they don't, their maleness is in question as well as their acceptance in the broader society.

If educators do not intervene, they become complicit in maintaining the same social norms that have served to oppress both boys and girls. Without intervention, we retain a naturalized perception of males in professions like engineering and females in such caring professions as nursing or teaching. At another level, as we shall see later on, the result

of the masculine culture of schooling is that some girls, more than others, are being streamed away from particular fields of study and occupations. And some boys, more than others, are being streamed into Special Education programs and *lower* course types while other males are funneled directly to prestigious engineering and other STEM fields.

To begin to understand the streaming of both genders, we must first consider how children are socialized, how such socializations might differ for marginalized populations, and the implications of such socializations in the context of public education.

Socialization: How do we construct boys and girls?

The power of gender socialization and its implications came home to me most powerfully in a conversation with my three-year-old son two years ago. As we drove to the store, just the two of us, I excitedly told him that his preschool was offering two programs, a dance program and a soccer program and I intended to enrol him in both.

"What? Not dance, that's for girls and soccer is for boys," he instantly replied. He paused as if to consider his next protest before he spoke "I don't like dance."

"No he didn't really just say that," I attempted to convince myself. We arrived at the store so I thought we could talk more about this later. My son jumped out of the van and held my hand as we entered the store. Our task was simple, to get him and his new sister a pair of pyjamas. He went straight to the pyjamas with sports balls all over them.

"Okay," I thought. "Well, he does have a passion for sports. This doesn't mean much." Then it was time to pick out his little sister's pyjamas. I strategized to myself: "Let me put him to the test, I know that my son can't be a victim of gender socialization already — right? He's only three." We were still standing in the boys' section when I pointed to a pair of "boy's" pyjamas that were his sister's size.

"These will fit her, which one should we get her?" I said. Without saying a word, my son walked out of the boy's section, directly to the "girl's" section and selected a pink sleeper.

"This one is so cute, let's get it!" he said.

"How can this be?" I thought. "So soon." We spent much of the summer watching the Canadian Women's soccer team fighting for gold in the Olympics and I was his soccer coach, yet he believed

soccer was for boys? He has danced in the kitchen, family room and at social events numerous times with his father, yet dancing is for girls and he doesn't like it all of a sudden? He has blue, brown and pink stuffed animals on his bed, his sister wears his blue hand-me-down dinosaur sleepers, and yet pink is for girls? I thought back to the few days after my daughter was born and before we named her — he would only call her princess. He was quite adamant about it and he calls her princess to this day. Where did he get that from? When we arrived home that day and I nursed my almost three-month old baby to sleep, I wondered at what age she would begin to grapple with the need to like pink, to be like a princess and to select which sports, if any, were for girls? At the time, I knew this was only the beginning of the gender stereotyping because at some point she might ask questions if she was not as good at mathematics as the boys in her class, if certain professions were designated for men only and if she had to have a certain appearance to be successful or to be liked. I knew, too, that the fact that she is a girl of colour would add many more challenging dimensions to her journey towards understanding identity. And now, if my son was barely three and had already internalized complicated gendered notions, when would it begin for her or had it begun already? My son and daughter have been constantly receiving messages from the media and the greater community (family, preschool etc…) — messages that I thought they were sheltered from and that we, as parents, had combated when they were very young. We may be their parents, but we have only two voices. Teachers face the same reality when they choose to work with girls and boys around issues of gender construction. Despite what we teach our children, the world will teach them something else. We're stuck with staying vigilant.

Almost two years later, I had another revealing conversation with my son. By that time, he had played on three co-ed soccer teams (all coached by his mother), completed Junior Kindergarten and knew that his aunt was well on her way to completing her medical degree. Had his initial thoughts on gender been contested or reinforced over this time? It was a hot summer day as we travelled on the same road.

"So, what do you like to do at school?" I asked.

"Cars, Beyblades[4] and numbers," was the response.

"Who do you play cars with?" He began to list the same group of boys that are constantly in his life.

"Do you ever play with the girls?" I asked nonchalantly.

"No" was the loud and resounding retort. "They play with the ponies and the dolls. They don't like cars."

"Do they like math? Are they good at math just like you?" I couldn't resist asking these questions.

"Well boys are good at math and girls at letters and writing" was his very quick and matter-of-fact response. "What? Are you serious?" I thought. But I maintained my composure. If he had truly internalized what he was good at (and by extension not good at), had my daughter, who was two by then, internalized the same notions? Did she stay away from the building blocks at pre-school and only play with dolls and books? Was she more directed to the dolls because this was the belief system of the teachers? If my son at such a young age believed for some unknown reason that he was good at "numbers" and by default not as good at reading and writing, how would he do in subjects focused on these areas? Not because of his ability but because of his self-perception. Conversely, if girls also internalized the notion that they were not as good at math, then how might they fare in these areas? Naturally I asked the critical question:

"So, why do you think that boys are better at math?"

"I don't know, just because," was his swift response, which hinged on boredom. Clearly he was done with this conversation.

While it is no secret that gender roles and values are communicated to children right from birth, how this communication negatively affects a girl's and a boy's life both in school and outside is increasingly being discussed in educational circles. Girls often receive the proverbial pink while boys often receive the proverbial blue; boys tend to get trucks and action heroes while girls tend to get dolls and adore princesses. Alongside these stereotypes, girls learn through adult reactions to play nicely (quietly and cooperatively) while boys indirectly learn from tacit or explicit approval that playing roughly is okay. Girls are conditioned at young ages to be attentive when playing, while boys are conditioned to be impulsive and inattentive. Furthermore, girls are socialized to be silent while boys are socialized to be loud and girls are socialized to be submissive while boys are socialized to dominate (Kerr, 2010).

While this normalized binary varies among different cultures, generalized boy and girl construction is pervasive in society and begins a path to streaming in education by gender. For example, on

the first day of school while visiting a Full Day Kindergarten class, I noticed a boy who was not on task. The teacher noticed my gaze and commented "He has got two strikes against him; he is a boy and is born in December." It is important that we question the implications of perceptions. If, on the first day of school, the teacher already carried very strong preconceived notions of gender, how would that affect her interactions with this child and in turn his educational experience? A study of children in the primary grades indicates that "females scored higher than males… in their ability to control impulse behaviour… [and] paying attention, but males received higher scores in their curiosity level" (Kerr, 2010, p. 12). Diprete and Buchmann (2013) suggest that as early as pre-school and kindergarten boys exhibit the inability to pay attention in class. They cite a report indicating that "boys are five times as likely to be expelled from pre-kindergarten" (p. 102). In 2011, the TDSB administered the Early Development Index (EDI). This tool is directed at kindergarten children to assess children's readiness to learn in five key areas: physical well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language/cognitive development and communications skills/general knowledge. In all five areas girls scored with a higher readiness than boys, with the largest gaps seen in social competence and emotional maturity. It follows that in response to such early differential understanding of their natures, girls and boys have traditionally been socialized to perform their role in particular ways. The social construction of "good girls" (although it may look different today) includes being docile, looking pretty and being liked by the boys. The social construction of boys defines them as more aggressive, exhibiting antisocial behaviour, acting as the class clown and of course needing to be "cool" at all times (Diprete and Buchmann, 2013). Within the schooling context, girls have learned early that you do not challenge the teacher, you do what you are told, you can be smart, but not too smart, and at all times, for goodness sake, be nice. Subsequently, boys have learned that they can challenge the teacher and other peers, they can be more assertive, they have to be physical, and that being too smart or too nice is not truly masculine.

The socialization of girls to listen, to be nice and most of all to be complicit can serve them well on tests and evaluations. Their social and behavioural skills give them a perceived advantage in the classroom, not only with respect to test performance but also as being easy pupils

for a teacher to manage (Diprete and Buchmann, 2013). However, it is this same socialization that serves to hold them back. Girls receive less attention from their teachers and are less assertive, which ultimately disadvantages them in both school and in life.

> Numerous studies have found that boys, because they are generally more assertive in the classroom, tend to get more attention from teachers. The attention may be positive or negative, but in most cases it does tend to give boys more choice and presence in the classroom, and teachers tend to push boys further. Boys, for example, speak out more than girls without raising their hands and get considerably more feedback from teachers who often follow up boys' comments with further questions, sending the subtle message that their opinions are more interesting. (Ginsberg *et. al.*, 2004, p 4)

It is important to note here, to be discussed later in the chapter, that although girls might perform better on tests and assignments, this does not give them an advantage in economic positioning once they leave school.

The socialization of males is, perhaps, more complicated. On one hand, there is the "boys will be boys" adage, where it is socially acceptable and "boy-like" to be rambunctious, get negative attention and not to be too smart for fear of appearing "nerdy." This gives boys an automatic disadvantage in the classroom setting where there is an expectation to sit still and listen — an expectation, which, in life prior to school, they have not necessarily been asked to meet. A boy's performance can suffer as a result of his everyday behaviour born from social norms. For certain males, more than others, it can lead to their becoming primary candidates for entering lower streams and Special Education programs. On the other hand, there is a prevalent notion that boys are good at building and investigating and that it is okay for some boys to achieve high standards in mathematics and science or even to read, as long as they are reading graphic novels and adventure books. This gives certain boys an advantage in particular subjects and activities, the same boys who might pursue STEM and high-level business careers.

From a social perspective this framework for girls and boys is at play when we consider which subjects girls typically perform well in, how

females are sexually objectified within school walls by the boys, how girls often choose to engage in social bullying along with other girls, and how they choose to perform their gender in front of their teachers. Simultaneously, it is at play when we consider which subjects boys typically perform well in, how boys engage in physical play with one another, how they choose to resolve conflict and how they perform their gender in front of teachers. Traditional gendered roles, such as women being flexible and the empathic caregivers and males being traditional breadwinners, have seeped in through the walls of school as well as the home. With these roles come the stereotypes of irrational, emotional women in contrast to logical, emotionless and driven men. These stereotypes foster the notion among young girls and boys that abstract and tough fields such as mathematics and upper-level management are meant for males, and caring careers such as primary teachers and nurses are for girls. Compounding this is the societal expectation that women should be the primary caregivers and men the primary breadwinners, thus providing another layer which contributes to the under-representation of women in STEM fields (Farinde and Lewis, 2012) and the advantage that males experience in employment. It is this construction of females and males, which partly explains why boys are suspended more than girls, why girls are under-represented in behavioural programs when compared to their male counterparts, and why males earn more money than females and are over-represented in STEM fields. It is this same social construction that can be called into question when we consider the streaming of girls away from particular subjects within a male-centric world, as well as the streaming of males into lower course types when their socialization clashes with the expectations of the classroom.

What happens when we consider race with gender?

In the previous section we have primarily been talking about boys and girls in general terms. However, in reality there exists great diversity within each normative category. This section explores this diversity and allows us to be mindful of how education might differ for a specific population. As mentioned earlier, we cannot look at girls or boys as one homogeneous group because the assumption that girls are doing well and even better than boys in most subject areas is not true for all

girls. In addition, the notion that more males populate STEM fields and high-level business positions than females is also not true for all males. Socialization, and consequently the streaming of children, differ when multiple identities are at play. There are many identities of any child which include, but are not limited to race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity etc. When any of these identities is examined alongside gender, the implication for the educational and economic level of success, or the opportunities afforded to that child, are far-reaching. For example, both girls and boys of racialized and economically disadvantaged backgrounds have completely different schooling experiences when compared to their White middle-class male or female counterparts. In fact, a middle-class racialized girl might have more in common with a middle-class non-racialized child than with a low-income female of the same racialized background; similarly a low-income White child might have more in common with a low-income Black child than with a middle-class White child (see Table 1.3 in chapter 1).

Although a thorough exploration of all the intricate intersections of identities is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth highlighting one example of how our multiple identities intersect and shape our schooling experiences. The example used in this chapter will take a closer look at the intersection of race and gender through exploring some of the schooling experiences of Black female and male students. As a background to the analysis of these experiences, it is important to first understand how Black females are positioned in relation to their male counterparts.

With respect to academic success, Black girls represent an endangered group, yet they are under-represented in marginalization discourse (Rollock, 2007). In fact, they are often disregarded when placed beside minoritized male students; yet in urban centres girls are doing only slightly better than boys (Barnett and Rivers, 2006) and according to one British study, Caribbean girls are likely to achieve at lower academic levels than White males, White females, Indian males and Indian females (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). Toronto data suggest that the British and U.S. experiences are echoed here. In Table 1.3 (p.19 above), TDSB figures for university acceptance by race, sex and parental occupation for its 2003-2006 cohort, show Black females from professional backgrounds as the least likely female group to confirm a university acceptance, well behind East Asian, South Asian and White

students of both genders. Similarly, Black girls from working-class backgrounds trail East Asian and South Asians of both genders also.

Henry (1998) points out that her own inner-city research finds echoes in the experience of many Black Canadian girls who "settle" for academic inadequacy or become disruptive, reducing their chances of graduation. She argues that Black females are encouraged less by teachers and are assessed for social skills rather than academic skills. Her findings are supported by Farinde and Lewis (2012) who explain that, because Black females are doing better than Black males, they become invisible. They go on to say that "rather than cultivating a passion for math and science exploration, African American female students are taught the fundamentals, but are not further challenged academically in regular math and science courses" (p. 423).

Overall, we can assume that Black females in the Canadian context populate various realms of the 'at-risk' category.[7] When statements are made about girls outperforming males in reading, writing and in most elementary and secondary subjects, they largely don't apply to Black females and other racialized populations. And, when we consider the gender gap between males and females with respect to dropout rate and the streaming of males into lower course types, we can be pretty certain that if we looked just at Black females compared to the male category, the gap may not be as large.

Given the direct link between gendered socialization and streaming, we need to look more closely at how Black girls have been socialized in Canada. In the 1960s and 1970s when Black women migrated to Canada from the Caribbean as domestic servants for housework, they were defined as girls, unskilled workers, mules and less intelligent human beings (Bristow *et al.*, 1994). Calling these Black women "girls" signalled that society could treat them as children and rob them of their adult and intellectual status (Collins, 2004). Similarly, when Black males began to immigrate to Canada in the trades and blue collar positions, they too were referred to as boys who were considered aggressive, designed for physical labour and who would act like "predators" (San Vicente, 2006, p. 99). These controlling images continue to permeate the walls of public education and shape the schooling experiences of Black girls and boys within schools and beyond (Collins, 2004; Wane *et al.* 2002).

Given the extensive discussion of Black male social constructs in the prior chapter, the remainder of this section will focus on the Black

female to illustrate how her socialization impacts her schooling and her experience of streaming.

Simmons (2002) suggests it is important to consider how Black females may be socialized differently by parents who have viewed the world through a different lens than the one provided by the dominant culture. She asserts that Black mothers' parenting aims to ensure that Black females are prepared for the realities of a harsh racialized and patri-archal world with the hope that they become self-actualizing individuals. From this perspective, there are two marked differences in how Black girls are socialized. First, Black females are encouraged to avoid romanticized (inevitably patriarchal) relationships — an avoidance which protects their independent selves and their capacity for self-directed behaviour. Second, a Black girls' understanding and internalization of racism and in-equitable treatment undercuts an idealized notion of girls being "nice" to everyone. Black girls have figured out that being nice to everyone simply does not pay off, though there are significant differences in how "not be-ing nice" is expressed. This is in stark contrast to dominant notions of girls being overtly and enthusiastically nice. In an effort to negotiate school-ing, Black girls have acted in such a way as to produce two dichotomous profiles: the silent, compliant Black girl and the loud, disruptive Black girl.

The silent Black girl

Henry (1998) contends that a frequent Black female image in the Canadian context is the silent and compliant type. These girls do their best to fit into the dominant culture by disappearing into the shadows of the classroom. The silent Black female is generally more successful in public education and well-liked by teachers (Gaymes San Vicente, 2006; Fordham, 1993). She has the ability to dissociate psychologically and become silent in her attempt to infiltrate White mainstream culture and avoid those who will resent her academic success (Simmons, 2002). Although the silent Black female attains higher academic achievement when compared to loud Black females, she still falls short in comparison to South Asian, East Asian and White females ((Table 1.3, p.19 above; Rollock, 2007; Fordham, 1993). This denotes a lack of success because she is not on a par with the dominant groups. However, for the school system, she is successful relative to other Blacks and relative to her assumed intellectual racial inferiority.

Silent Black females acquire an automatic advantage in public education and stand a better chance of performing well in the academic setting than the loud Black females simply because they fit an acceptable profile. They perform their Black femaleness in socially acceptable ways; within a sexist, White, middle-class framework they do not unsettle the societal balance. Teachers often view silent Black females as socially mature but academically less developed than White females, and therefore they are understood as having fewer chances of high academic achievement (Evans-Winters, 2005). Because the silent Black girl is not perceived as intelligent and is more often perceived as suited to a helpful/supportive role, she is more likely than non-racialized females to be streamed into low-course types and away from STEM subjects (Pringle *et al.*, 2012).

The loud Black girl

Weis and Fine (2005) observe that many Black females refuse to assimilate to the dominant culture that hopes to mould them. They will push the limits of the rules, and adopt a loud persona (Blake *et al.*, 2011). Loud, in your face, at-risk, resistant and rude can describe their image in the Canadian context. Weis and Fine (2005) also indicate that although the loud girl persona can be seen as a powerful shield from the loss of identity, it is also "said to place them at academic risk" (p.165). This is supported by Blake *et al.*, (2011) who make the point that loud Black female students, are "perceived by teachers and peers as exhibiting elevated levels of relational and physical aggression… teacher bias rather than students' actual behaviour is associated with disproportionate discipline…" (p. 92). Teachers often end up formulating an image, which is often inaccurate and serves to marginalize young Black women further (Fine, 1990). This image has detrimental effects on graduation rates and limits future opportunities and job acquisition. Within the school the resulting labels lead to streaming to lower-course types in secondary school and eventually to lower paying jobs and away from STEM careers.

We must not underestimate the impact of pejorative labels on Black girls — "silent" or "loud." In their study on elementary teachers' positioning of low-income African-American girls, Pringle *et al.* (2012) discovered:

… there were no positive expectations of these girls as science and mathematics learners beyond the fifth grade level. We found that across all three schools, when asked if any of the girls were potential mathematics/science students, most teachers struggled to give an affirmative response. The teachers clearly did not conceptualize the African American schoolgirls from these low-resourced schools as mathematics and science achievers … the teachers all held widely known stereotypical beliefs that boys were more skilled in science and mathematics, and girls were more skilled in subjects such as reading, writing and social studies. These beliefs were then exacerbated for low-income African American girls who were also perceived as bringing limited knowledge and skills, as well as numerous social challenges to the learning environment. The girls were also viewed as having limited academic futures even though a popular notion in education is that all students should have fair and equitable opportunities to develop to their full potential. (pp. 225-6)

What is the education and economic paradox for girls?

In a global education context, as we've indicated, there is a prevailing notion that girls are outperforming boys in terms of achievement in almost all academic areas (Francis and Skelton, 2005). Many interpret this notion to mean that because of boys' underachievement in school (when compared to their female counterparts) economic parity has probably been reached. As young women with high credentials spend more time in the labour force they may continue to improve their economic well-being. Despite this, a large gap with respect to pay equity still exists.

Addressing the assumption that there is economic parity between the sexes, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released a report in 2009 titled *Equally Prepared for Life? How 15-Year-Old Boys and Girls Perform in School*. This report explored gender differences within particular subjects as well as financial outcomes in Canada. One of the report's findings was that with few exceptions males earned more than females despite a similar level of education. The report made clear that:

> Women often excel at school, however men often earn more and
> are more likely to hold positions of power in political and economic
> life. Looking at these inequalities, government policies cannot afford
> to be 'gender-blind' and must aim to develop policies for parity.
> If governments wish to create growth, employment and a better
> standard of living, policy advice reflecting gender differences is needed,
> and education could play a major role in this. (OECD, 2009, p. 3)

In Canada, although the gap has closed somewhat, females continue to earn less than males, and some scholars theorize that this is a long-term tendency likely to continue (Drolet, 2007; Kerr, 2010). Women are also more likely to live in poverty than males around the world (FAFIA/CLC, 2010). And minoritized female populations have a higher poverty rate than non-minoritized women (*Ibid*).

How is streaming by gender manifested?

In this section, we want to explore further two forms of gendered streaming. First, we will examine the streaming of females, either intentionally or not, away from STEM subjects and fields regardless of the girl's academic level. This contests, as we have indicated, the commonly held belief that females are just as successful as males in attaining high-level positions and occupations within all fields. Second, we will take another look at the streaming of males into course types such as Essentials and Applied, leading to lower success rates in school and in their post-secondary futures.

The streaming of females

> Girls' diligence in school may pay off in better grades, but does it come
> at the cost of reinforcing a stereotypical femininity that works against
> them once they are out of the school system? (Lipkin, 2009, p. 33)

By the 1980's, females began to achieve equal status with their male counterparts with respect to general levels of educational attainment. From this, we might assume such success has brought girls academic parity with males in all areas. But, as the quote above tells us, they haven't reached parity. It turns out that both genders have the ability

to outperform the other in terms of academic success, though females achieve higher grades in more subject areas than boys. According to a study titled *Equally Prepared for Life* (by the OECD which collaborated with countries participating in PISA), on a global level female students are excelling in reading, but males continue to have an advantage in subjects such as mathematics (2009). This is supported by Ontario's Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) data. Standardized testing may be highly problematic in all kinds of ways, but it is a snapshot of the kind of academic success currently favoured by the Ministry of Education. 2010-11 data indicates that girls outperform boys in reading, writing and mathematics at the elementary level; the same is true of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). But girls' higher performance in mathematics doesn't last past elementary school. According to the same data, boys have consistently outperformed girls in the EQAO Grade 9 assessment of mathematics and continue to do so in their post-secondary education. In university, girls are still under-represented in mathematics, engineering, architecture and computer programs (Catalyst, 2013; Toglia, 2013; Leaper *et al.*, 2012). This under-representation in STEM fields is noted by numerous sources. The 2009 OECD report states, "while the number of female students in tertiary education has increased more rapidly than that of males, the proportion of women choosing science and technology studies is still lower than that of men … the choice of discipline appears to be highly gender-dependent. In most countries women constitute less than 25% of computing and engineering students." (p.12). This is supported by Toglia (2013), who indicates that according to a study in 2007, women made up about 50% of the workforce, but "only comprise 20% of the nation's scientific and technological workers" (p. 15). This situation is further substantiated by Statistics Canada's National Household Statistics Canada's National Household Survey, which looked at the education of women across Canada and found that women in the 25-64 age range represented 32.6% of those with a university STEM degree, with engineering seeing the least amount of growth (2011). Considering again the intersection of race, we find that Black females are under-represented in careers such as mathematicians, engineers and scientists (Farinde and Lewis, 2012; West-Olatunji and Shure, 2010).[6] Overall, women are few and far between in the STEM fields of study and occupations (Catalyst, 2013;

Leaper *et al.*, 2012; Statistics Canada, 2011; West-Olatunji and Shure, 2010).

A variety of sources indicate that another area of under-representation for females beyond school is in political leadership, business and management. Women make up 52% of the population; however, only 22% of members in parliament are women (Plan Canada, 2012). In fact, Canada has proportionally fewer women in parliament than Rwanda, Iraq, Afghanistan and most countries in Europe. If we consider women in the business world, we find their presence on boards of directors is limited despite evidence that women on such boards increase the success of the company (World Development Report, 2012). In the sphere of business education, women in the United States earned 36.8% of the MBAs and in Canada women earned 34.5% of the MBAs in 2010-11 (Catalyst, 2013).[7] Catalyst research also indicates that in 2012, only 16.6% of board seats in Fortune 500 companies were held by women.

In Canada, 35.4% of management positions were held by women. In the area of senior management, 22.9% of the positions were held by women. While these numbers leave significant room for improvement, especially with respect to executive jobs, they nevertheless represent statistically significant gains in generational terms (Livingstone *et al.*, 2014). Many studies suggest that the barriers that remain in addition to on-going patriarchy, include the additional work that women face in their management of family obligations. Livingstone *et al.* suggests:

> … the most fundamental barrier to gender equity in the upper managerial hierarchy remains the sexual division of labours with highly inequitable responsibility for household and childcare work by women. In addition, in spite of women's rapid increase in participation in paid labour and in spite of the emergence of "knowledge economies" based on intellectual rather than manual labour, we expect that women managers continue to be occupationally segregated so that they still only manage other women. (p. 3)

Livingstone *et al.* stress the need for us to acknowledge the rapid gains women have made with respect to participation in the labour force even as household and childcare responsibilities continue to be a barrier.

When we add race — another important layer of identity for the corporate world — only 7% of visible minority women held management positions, according to a 2006 study by Catalyst. This is further supported by a study of women on boards of directors, which indicated that women held 15.7 % of the board seats. Of that 15.7% only 3% were held by women of colour (Catalyst, 2011). If we consider the two constructs discussed earlier of "silent" or "loud" Black girls, it is not surprising that we rarely see them on boards of directors or in executive positions. The loud Black girl is routinely directed away from business programs by society as well as educational "gatekeepers," she would be lucky to arrive at a business school let alone occupy a space in line for a high-level position. The silent Black girl is often not seen as a leader by society or educators and finds herself described as "better-suited" for middle management at best.

Throughout our society and our schools, gender socialization remains powerful. The message remains surprisingly clear: girls should listen; boys should be curious; girls should be pretty and get married to a financially stable man; boys should earn more than their wives (who should be beautiful) and provide for their family; and boys are more suited for high-end careers where it is acceptable to work long hours away from the family whereas girls are more suited for caregiving professions that leave room for raising a family (Brown, 2003). This messaging is strong and it greatly affects the kind of work in which children feel they can be successful as well as the decisions that girls and boys make (or the decisions that are made for them) when planning their future. We must keep on countering these messages directly, strengthening a child's self-perception and pressing for equality among the sexes. With growing numbers of women in the labour force and as men take on more of the child rearing and family obligations, it's clear that such sexism requires and is meeting increased resistance. Perhaps the counter-messages of parents and educators, coupled with expanding labour markets and the need for a dual income, are creating a tipping point for women that must not be lost.

Another conversation with my son, perhaps one that produces more hope, speaks to the power of interrupting societal norms. After months of intentionally countering gender notions, as informally as I could manage, I asked my son if soccer was for boys or girls?

"Anyone who likes it." He responded while I smiled. I think he was telling me what he believed, and not just trying to please me. For me,

it was clear that he thought the answer was obvious. Okay, I thought, let me push this conversation. So then I asked him if he was better at numbers or letters.

"I'm good at everything" he said quickly. Hmm, things are looking up I said to myself, let's go for the big-ticket item.

"What about the girls in your class, are they good at numbers or letters?" I asked.

"They are good at everything too." He replied in a tone, which suggested that he thought my questions were a little ridiculous.

Of course the reasons for this change in perception are by no means clear. I also have no idea how long his new perspective would last. I can assume that his changed perspective is in part due to what he is being told regularly at home by his parents. For example, every week he watches me (a female) coach soccer, push the girls on his co-ed team and praise them for their athletic ability. Regularly, when he reads and writes with me, I quite deliberately remind him that he is an incredible reader and writer. I can only guess that if he continually receives messages that contest social norms, it will create a new norm for him. However, we must remember how frequently a child's perception of who they are is subject to external messages. The day following this inspiring conversation with my son, I was hosting a family diner. My brother threw my son up in the air and play-wrestled with him stating: "We gotta toughen you up!" I was deep in thought knowing two distinct things. First, my son was internalizing the message/expectation of "needing to be tough" and second, that my brother would never throw my daughter in the air with the hope of toughening her up. Although my daughter, just shy of two, was incredibly tough and independent, she would never be perceived this way, at least not by my brothers. She was affectionately referred to by her uncles as a beautiful "dolly" who always received gentle hugs, kisses and was treated very much like a princess.

Watching my brother interact with the children reminded me that although my son's gendered thoughts were in a good space now, I knew I would not be his soccer coach forever nor would someone remind him on a daily basis that he was just as good in the languages as he is in mathematics. As both the children grow and develop, they will be bombarded with sexism and make choices about what to absorb. They will always have to listen to the loudest voice. What they

will take in is hard to say. If education as a system consistently offers an alternate perspective then there is some hope of changing the status quo. However, the absence of this perspective is detrimental to both girls and boys.

If we consider a variety of theories such as an expectancy-value model of motivation or positionality,[8] there is a clear picture of why a female might outperform males in elementary school, begin to fall behind in secondary school, and then not persist in these fields at a post-secondary level or in a professional capacity. The perception by a child, parent, educator or guidance counsellor, either consciously or not, that boys are simply better in STEM fields and that it is not quite feminine to excel or pursue such areas, make it difficult for a girl to deviate from this "truth." Girls' knowledge that they are not expected to excel in such areas, causes them to question their ability and they begin to devalue those subjects for themselves. Adding the layer of race to a positionality framework, West-Oatunji and Shure (2010) suggest that one of the factors pointing to the consistent underachievement of Black females is girls' self-perception.

Both of these theories are congruent with a relationship between ability and belief. For example, in my experience, among educators there is a prevailing notion that girls are confident and will likely continue as confident young women in the future. However, recent data released from the TDSB (2013b, c) indicates two significant findings that are worthy of serious consideration and that ultimately challenge this notion. According to the Grades 7-12 student census of 2011-2012 (TDSB, 2013b, c), girls' overall self-perceived emotional well-being is significantly lower than that of boys. Among other things, girls were less likely to feel good about themselves, to like how they looked, and were more likely to feel down and experience difficulty making decisions. In terms of class participation, girls were less likely to feel comfortable answering questions, giving an opinion or participating in a class discussion. This all points to the fact that girls are given less power to speak up and have a voice. If, generally speaking, a girl feels this way in the relatively safe spaces that school offers, how might she feel alongside males in post-secondary schooling or in the business world? Secondly, the census clearly demonstrates that girls are more likely to be anxiety-ridden and that their perceived abilities in STEM subjects are lower than their actual ability. According to the census,

girls felt less capable than boys in communication, maths, computer use, athletic skills, hands-on skills, money management and physical health.[10] Leaper *et al.* (2012) support this and argue that even when girls fare as well as boys in math and science, boys generally score higher with respect to their belief in themselves and are more prone to value math and science. The belief that boys are simply better at STEM subjects persists, even though this is in stark contrast with achievement data at the elementary level. This further begs the question, how do such notions of males performing better at particular subjects and girls at others continue to be propagated? We have examined how social and cultural constructions contribute to the under-representation of females, and more so racialized females, in STEM subjects. Added to these constructions, there is also a body of academic work which attempts to substantiate and normalize such detrimental notions of females. Much of this thinking is supported by what is often described as biological gender differences found in the brain. This notion provides another path for sexism to make its way into the schools.

Brain research has been gaining much traction in academic discourse as well as in educational circles. Teachers in staff meetings, additional qualification courses and in other settings are receiving professional development on this topic. This professional development often alludes to the fact that males and females have a have different brain sizes and that the development of the brain occurs at different rates. The implication is that boys and girls are naturally different and therefore there are different ways in which we should teach the genders. The research suggests, in very kind terms, that a girl's spatial sense in not as developed as a boy's and, conversely, that a boy's verbal sense is not as developed as a girl's. Therefore, we should implement specific strategies to support them (James, 2009). We agree wholeheartedly that we should implement a range of strategies to accommodate the various learning styles in the classroom. But brain research can be interpreted by some to mean that girls cannot be as good as boys in their spatial sense and/or boys cannot be as good verbally as girls. This thinking has the potential to essentialize, or even pathologize, children in ways that they may not be able to overcome, despite their real ability levels.

Lise Eliot, a neuroscientist, contends that very few reliable differences have actually been identified when comparing the male and female brains. She also contends that, despite the fact

that boys' brains are larger and finish growing a year or two later, these differences affect physical development more than mental development. She is very clear about solutions for addressing the gender gap and that such solutions have little to do with the brain:

> So if we want to tackle academic gaps between boys and girls, we need to start early, nurturing skills and attitudes that will better prepare both genders for the modern classroom. We also need to make sure that the classroom remains a place where students' potential is broadened, rather than narrowed through misguided beliefs. As always, the best way to do this is to focus on each child's cognitive and emotional challenges. (2010, p. 34)

The slight differences between the male and female brain and the inconclusive evidence that this difference has any real impact on the academic difference or inherent propensities (Eliot, 2010; OECD, 2009) are in line with our belief that it is a social-cultural context (perceptions of the dominant culture and perceptions of self), coupled with the differential access to opportunities that explain why there are fewer females and racialized groups in STEM fields.

In relation to how girls and boys are streamed, imagine a "neuro-scientific rationale" for gendered differences in the hands of a teacher who is not inclined to apply various learning strategies to ensure academic success of each child in the classroom. Not only might that teacher assume that girls are just not good at completing labs or challenging mathematics, but also that she need not worry about that responsibility; when a girl or boy underperforms she can easily think "children are naturally wired a certain way." More generally, if the educators interpret biological difference to mean that boys' brains give them an edge in math and science while girls' brains give them an edge in languages, this can easily encourage the streaming of children toward what "science" tells us they're good at. Couple these propensities with self-perception and dominant societal norms, and girls are faced with an even more inequitable uphill battle. Views such as these must be contested, with all educators, most specifically guidance counsellors, serve as gatekeepers in the movement to secondary and post-secondary schooling (Toglia, 2013; West-Olatunji and Shure, 2010).

The streaming of boys

Educational data on a global scale suggest that there is an alarming decline in boys taking academic/higher level courses (Farinde and Lewis, 2012). Why is this alarming? In Ontario, Applied course types are positioned to be equally valued to Academic course types; officially, each is to provide a different way of learning and another pathway. The language from *Choices For Nine* (2013-14), a TDSB document to support the transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9, explains the difference in courses as follows:[10]

> **Academic Courses** focus on the essential concepts of the discipline, and also explore related concepts. Course work develops students' knowledge and skills by emphasizing theoretical and abstract applications of the essential concepts and incorporating practical applications as appropriate. The emphasis is on theory and abstract thinking as a basis for future learning and problem solving.

> **Applied Courses** focus on the essential concepts of the discipline. Course work develops students' knowledge and skills by emphasizing practical, concrete applications of these concepts and incorporating theoretical applications as appropriate. Course work relates to familiar real-life situations and provides students with the opportunity for extensive hands-on applications of the concepts they study.

Both course types sound quite appealing. It now appears that instead of streaming children under the old Advanced, General and Basic programs, children are now given equal opportunities to access knowledge and gainful positions in society equally, regardless of the path they choose.

This "all course types are created equal" positioning, as we have pointed out earlier, is a misleading idealization; the reality is very different. If a student chooses to take an Applied program, the chances of dropping out of secondary schooling are significantly higher than if they had taken an Academic program, the chances of attending post- secondary school are significantly lower, and the possibilities of gainful employment providing a decent quality of life are substantially lower. Recent publications reveal that the TDSB also has concerns

with respect to academic and applied course types. In the 2013-14 Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement (BIPSA), released in November 2013, some of the board's "targets" are specific to course types, "By June 2017, the proportion of students enrolled in the Grades 9-10 Academic Program of Study will increase by 5%." In addition, "Students' absenteeism in Grades 9-10 enrolled in the Applied Program of Study will be comparable to students' absenteeism in the Academic Program of Study by reducing the absenteeism rate among the Applied students from 15.3% to 6.5%" (2013, p.4). It's clear the Board understands there are serious problems for students in Applied as compared to the Academic stream.

An analysis of data indicating the higher probability of males entering lower course types as well as being at risk for lower credit accumulation rates highlights the need to intervene with respect to the streaming of our male students. Recent data from the TDSB (2013e) show how many male and female students achieved fewer than eight credits before the end of Grade 9 from 2006-07 to 2011-12. Credit completion by the end of a first year in secondary school is a strong indicator of whether or not a child will apply to post-secondary education. Over half (54.7%) of the students who dropped just one credit out of eight by the end of Grade 9 did not apply for admission to post-secondary education. When that drop increased to two — only six credits were earned by the end of Grade 9 instead of eight — the percentage of students who did not apply climbed to an astounding 84.6 % (TDSB, 2012).

Figure 1: Year 1 (Grade 9) Female and Male Students with Fewer Than 8 Credits (from 2006-07 to 2011-12)
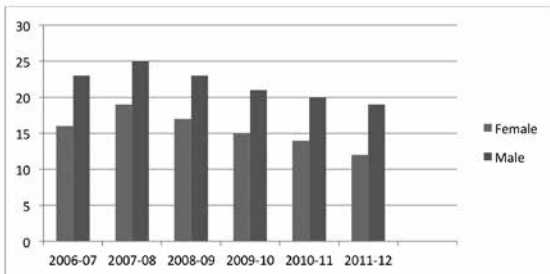
Source: TDSB FACTS (June 2013) *Secondary Success Indicators.*

Figure 1 above demonstrates that the number of students with fewer than 8 credits has decreased over time. However, it also demonstrates that, over the last six years, males were consistently more likely to achieve fewer than eight credits than females. This supports our earlier contention that boys (some more than others) as young as six begin to believe they are not meant for classroom success — not smart enough or too restless to pay much attention to what is going on. It starts them off on a path to underperforming, "at risk" categorization, Applied course types, poor credit accumulation and failure to go on to post-secondary schooling.

We must also consider the intersection of race and gender in order to know more specifically which boys populate the group with fewer than eight credits by the end of Grade 9. We can do this by considering Figure 1 above and Figure 2 below in tandem. Nineteen percent of males overall in 2011-12 did not achieve eight credits. Twenty-nine percent of the students not achieving eight credits were Black students compared with 5% of East Asian students. So the inference is clear that Black males were highly over-represented in the group falling short. This finding is supported by Farinde and Lewis (2012) in their discussion of the underrepresentation of African-American students in high-level advanced placement courses. It is not surprising that, according to TDSB's Secondary Success Indicators (2013e): "In 2011-12, Year 4 (Grade 12) students self-identifying as Black, Latin American, and Southeast Asian were least likely to apply to post-secondary (55%, 60%, 43% respectively). Comparing ethno-racial groups, students who self-identified as East Asian, South Asian, and White were the most likely to apply to university only (72%, 67%, 54% respectively)." This trend is not a TDSB, or Ontario phenomenon; this is happening internationally. When we look at the category of females, among the 12% of girls achieving fewer than eight credits, there is a much higher percentage of Black female students (Pringle et al., 2012). It is also worth noting in Figure 2 that 22% of students self-identifying as LGBTQ had fewer than 8 credits in the 2011-12 academic school year (TDSB, 2013h). This number is higher than the isolated male and female categories respectively.

Figure 2: Year 1 (Grade 9) Students With Fewer Than 8 Credits and Students' Ethno-racial Background (2006-07 and 2011-12)
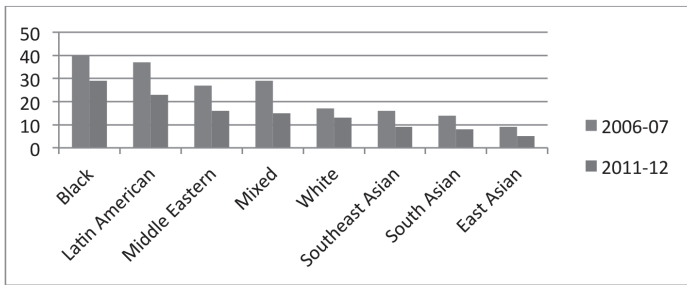
Source: TDSB, *op.cit.*

Finally, as we would expect, boys who are not achieving eight credits by the end of Grade 9 are largely the same students who populate the Applied and Essentials course types and who will eventually drop out of school in disproportionately high numbers.

Let's look at some additional data showing the representation of males in lower course types. Figure 3 below (from the TDSB) shows significantly more males in Applied course types and a much wider gap in the Essential course type.

Figure 3: Grade 9 and 10 Program Enrolments by Gender, TDSB, 2011-12

		Female	Male
Academic	Count	6461	6082
	Percent in Academic program in 2011-12	51.50%	48.50%
Applied	Count	1399	2190
	Percent in Applied program in 2011-12	39%	61%
Essentials	Count	166	416
	Percent in Essentials program in 2011-12	28.50%	71.50%
No program study	Count	88	143
	Percent with No Program in 2011-12	38.10%	61.90%
	Percent in Grades 9 and 10 in 2011-12	47.90%	52.1%

Source: TDSB.

This brings us back to the main point of this section: boys are taking lower/applied course types at an alarmingly high rate. And we do need to be alarmed. The implications for boys, specific populations more than others, means a foreclosed future in comparison to those more privileged. These data along with the streaming of male students ask us to consider the very real and enduring impact of the socialization that young males face. If males, again some identities more than others, are routinely pathologized as poorly behaved, less inclined to do well in reading and writing, less studious, not wired for university, and in the case of racialized populations such as Black males, to be feared and seen as less intelligent (San Vicente, 2006), their streaming into particular course types, subjects and economic opportunities will continue uncontested. As an educator, I see this on a regular basis.

Jermaine was an intermediate student who came to the school, bussed from across the city, to be a part of the Intensive Support Behaviour program. Jermaine was also a Black, male student with a Learning Disability. During an interaction with him at the beginning of the year it was abundantly clear to me that he was highly intelligent and that his challenging life — a low-income dwelling and a deep desire to create an authentic identity — were contributing factors to his identification and placement in a Behavioural class. To me he was not Behavioural at all. In fact, I suspected that if he had experienced a more thoughtful and supportive educational pedagogy, he would not be sitting in a segregated class with multiple labels. After many conversations with Jermaine, I decided to remove him from the behaviour class and put him into a regular class. I knew that if he was integrated into the regular class and all labels removed before he left for secondary school, his chances of success would be significantly higher.

For his new class, I hand-picked a highly capable and caring teacher who I knew would connect with him, support him, believe in him and relate the curriculum to his world. He did not have a single behaviour problem. I was not surprised. His potential was so clear. Despite an IEP that indicated a need for modification many grade levels below his grade, he flowed easily into his new class. How is it that a child who was "Behavioural" and officially many years behind academically, could, in 24 hours, no longer exhibit behavioural issues and jump four academic grades? Of course this question is facetious; clearly Jermaine was not Behavioural nor was he many grades behind. The broader question for

us is what are the factors which allowed this injustice to take place and how do we prevent it from recurring?

Conclusion: persistence overrides resistance

A by-product of sexism in society comes in the form of a gendered socialization, which must be contested. This socialization dictates what a boy and girl should be like and serves to create a specific set of often destructive expectations that are difficult to challenge. This continued presence of sexism in society has infiltrated classrooms in many forms, with gender-based streaming as perhaps its major social production. It is not by accident that boys are over-represented in non-normative Special Education classes[3] or in lower streams. Nor is it an accident that girls are underrepresented in STEM post-secondary degrees and careers. Both of these realities have been influenced by notions and perceptions that support the status quo and perpetuate systemic inequities. Although those who work in the field of education are also victimized by these same social constructs, educators have the capacity to either support or interrupt this funneling of children. It is a choice: either we choose to contest social norms or we choose to be complicit in creating inequities.

While the choice should be simple, the task is complex, as it requires us to take a strong stand against what has been made normal in our schools as well as to think about how various identities (e.g. gender, race, class and sexual orientation) complicate the schooling experiences of children. Before we even enter classrooms and other educational spaces, we must come to terms with the fact that education continues to work better for some populations than for others, and we must choose to contest this injustice. Within the context of the classroom, we must make a consistent effort to understand the lived realities of children and be a part of removing the barriers that society has created. We must also be cognizant of our own biases and choose to set the same expectations for all children regardless of perceived barriers such as poverty, race and gender.

We must believe that each child sitting in front of us is potentially gifted in every subject; that the purpose of curriculum is to support and help develop a child's understanding of the world and relate it to that child's personal existence; and that the purpose of education is to

teach each child to use their knowledge to challenge the injustices they face in the society around them. We must work to help them become agents who can transform their world into a just place to be.

Take for example the Roma children now present in a number of Toronto schools and in danger of deportation. They are often experienced as one of the most challenging groups within a school, and there are even teachers who comment that they would be happier without them. "If we are lucky, they will get deported," one teacher was overheard saying in frustration. While I acknowledge that many of the Roma students (just like many other students) do not follow the rules and routines of the school — arriving late, accumulating high numbers of absences, exhibiting defiant behaviour, and disappearing between classes, we also have to acknowledge the progress that these students have actually made. Although there are many outstanding teachers who genuinely engage these students, they are the exception. It needs to become common practice for teachers to attempt to understand their reality and figure out a way to communicate with their parents (in spite of the language barrier) and to understand the impact of their poverty and their immersion into a completely different world. If all teachers of Roma students chose to do what it takes to connect with these students, engage them in schooling, and relate the curriculum to their reality, our teachers might start to enjoy the Roma presence in our schools. They can also provide these students with a broader understanding of their own marginalization in their country of origin and why they continue to be marginalized in Canada. This type of teaching gives students an opportunity to be critical about the world around them; it holds the power to unsettle the status quo and affect change. This kind of teaching isn't easy or straightforward. It is challenging.

Richard Shaull, drawing on Freire (2003) in the foreword of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, states that "Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (p. 34). All educators must decide for themselves if embedding 'the practice of freedom' into their programming has occurred. It is imperative that, as

educators and as an entire system, we think through our educational purpose and carefully assess whether education in its current form is meeting this purpose. Is it possible for both males and females to flourish outside the boundaries imposed by socialization and to overcome the oppressive norms placed on genders, races, classes, abilities and sexual orientations? The answer is an emphatic yes, but it should not be the child's role to overcome such institutional barriers. It is the role of educators to help create a new norm.

ENDNOTES

1 As prior chapters make clear the current course types in Ontario are not officially designated as streams. Because of this, terms such as "lower" are italicized because, despite their presentation as equal opportunity course types, the data indicates that Applied and Essentials courses relegate children to lower paying jobs in later life and have a higher likelihood of student dropout.

2 Young Women on the Move is a girl's mentorship initiative launched by the TDSB in January 2010 which aims to develop a socially conscious network of young females.

3 Non-normative is the term mentioned in Chapter Four (pp. 114-116 above), that once was used to define exceptionalities based on observation and evaluation, e.g. Behaviour and Learning Disability.

4 Beyblades are a brand name for a spinning toy, introduced in 2000. Most often this toy is found in the "Boys" section and is played with by boys.

5 See Chapter Six (pp. 214-217) and Chapter Four (pp. 118-119) in this volume for further discussion of the "at-risk" category.

6 The female representation varied depending on the STEM area. For example younger females (25-35) hold 64% of the biological sciences degrees where the older generation of women (55-65) hold 40%; in the physical sciences, younger women hold 41.3% of the degrees compared with older women at 21.5%; in engineering younger women hold 23.1% and older women 8.5%; and finally, in mathematics and computer science, there has been the least amount of progress with younger women at 30.4% and older women at 29.3%, respectively.

7 Catalyst is an organization with a focus on increasing opportunities for women with offices in the United States, Canada, Europe and India.

8 Diprete and Buchmann (2013) explain that an expectancy-value model is about the choices that one makes in line with the values that one holds. Positionality has been described by West-Olatunji (2007) as "an individual's self-perceived social location that informs that individual's world-view. According to positionality theory, an individual's position in relationship networks defines that individual and also determines the amount of individual power" (p. 220).

9 It should be noted that girls self-perceived abilities were higher than males in the following areas: reading, writing, creativity, conflict mediation and empathy.

10 These follow closely the Ministry's instructions in *Ontario Curriculum Grades 9 to 12*.

CONCLUSION
UNSTACKING THE DECK:
A NEW DEAL FOR OUR SCHOOLS

All of the chapters in this book have pointed to the inherent problems of streaming. In this concluding chapter, we will first review the current conditions of educational streaming and then suggest seven essential features of destreamed schools and the ways in which educators and others can assist in promoting each of them. The chapter will conclude with an overall democratic destreaming strategy. Ending the curse of streaming in education will require everyone's participation. It means that each of us, within our circle of influence, must acknowledge the reality before us and choose to act. An appendix with recommendations for key actors is provided at the end of the book.

Current conditions

The various chapters of this book have demonstrated that streaming is a form of institutionalized violence that works to convince many working-class[1] and racialized students, as well as their parents, that they belong in dead-end programmes with stunted curricula, which almost always lead to insecure, low-paid employment. The extent to which students end up in these lower streams, and suffer high dropout rates, is not a result of their own or their parents' biological or cultural "deficiencies." The main causes have been the construction and institutionalization of socially discriminatory forms of schooling practices, and the false promise of competition for success in a system, which requires that many people fail.

Public schooling has become a privileged place for abstract (and largely dissociated) forms of knowledge and for narrow, pseudo-objective criteria of student selection. The academic curriculum is most relevant to members of the large employer and professional-managerial classes, who look to extend the privileged position of their children. As a result, the public educational system continues to exclude highly disproportionate numbers of working-class and racialized children as well as those with disabilities from the more advanced types of formal education. While there is evidence that, over the past decades, more people stay in school longer, at the same time, more and more schooling is needed to acquire a "basic education." The educational potential of many people continues to be wasted needlessly by the practice of streaming.

At some level, *we all know this*. We have glimpses, at least from our own experience, that working-class and racialized children have not received equal treatment in our schools. We know of working-class children who are bright yet are streamed into Applied and Essentials courses because their school performance has been diminished by the physical challenges of their home lives or the heavy demands of after-school jobs. Working-class and immigrant children are often slotted into lower streamed programs, because their accents and vocabularies are undervalued or misinterpreted by school officials. Students end up enrolling in particular secondary school (and post-secondary) courses and programs because of their gender. We are familiar with active working-class children distracted by family problems or angered by arbitrary school discipline who have been transferred to special behavioural classes, and "late bloomers" who were only turned on to intentional learning after they left school. Nearly all of us know many capable people who have been effectively discouraged from post-secondary education by school authorities who didn't see higher education as natural or appropriate for working-class or racialized children.

Our individual experiences of streaming are mirrored in the systematic development of streaming arrangements in Ontario's schools since the start of compulsory state schooling in the mid-nineteenth century. Since that time, as outlined in Chapter Two, these arrangements have expanded and changed, but always in the same direction — ensuring that only a limited percentage of students end up

in academic-level secondary school programs leading to higher-level education and well-paid, prestigious employment.

When the first edition of this book was published in 1992, streaming was being seriously questioned by many in Ontario — parents, students, teachers, educators, racialized and other community groups, and labour unions. Destreaming was being discussed and debated in the popular media, in school staffrooms and in School Community Councils. In the Throne Speech of May 1989, the then governing provincial Liberal party had responded to increasing pressure on this issue from immigrant and racialized groups, on which it counted for electoral support, by announcing the possibility of streaming changes. In 1990, the Premier's Council published a Report entitled *People and Skills in the New Global Economy* in which, under the influence of participating labour unions and a number of organizations representing working-class and racialized families, it was recommended that schools delay streaming until the end of Grade 10 and then reduce the range of options to two in place of the former three. During the 1990-91 school year, aided by provincial funding, a number of local boards undertook pilot destreaming projects for Grade 9. With the election of a New Democratic Party government in September of 1990, and despite continuing heavy oppositional lobbying by the public secondary teachers' union and business and middle-class parent organizations, the Ministry of Education announced plans in 1992 to destream Grade 9 programs across the province. The NDP policy convention in Hamilton of that year passed a resolution endorsing an extension of destreaming to Grade 10, but that's as far as it went. The Rae government set up a Royal Commission to study schooling overall, where the issue was buried. The Commission's report, *For the Love of Learning*, published in December 1994, bemoaned the controversy that had surrounding the destreaming of Grade 9 and decided against recommending any extension of a Common Core Curriculum in unstreamed classrooms to Grade 10 (p.179). With the election of a Conservative government in 1995, talk of destreaming came to an end. From that time until the present, "destreaming" has virtually disappeared from public discussion of Ontario schools.

The official — and dominant — discussion has shifted to credit accumulation, improving graduation rates, decreasing dropout rates,

and improving post-secondary enrolments. However, as we have documented, both official and unofficial streaming practices are still very much in evidence within the province's elementary schools and classrooms. Indeed, programs in "regular" secondary schools have ended up even more differentiated than they were three decades ago. While overall school graduation and post-secondary enrolment rates have improved, students from working-class and some racialized groups continue to be over-represented in lower-stream secondary school programs, and under-represented in school graduation and post-secondary enrolment and completion rates.

There has been a very significant increase in the number of "schools and programs of choice" in boards across the province. As noted in Chapter Three, these began in the 1970s with French immersion programs, as well as alternative schools promoted mainly by middle-class parents wanting a more progressive, child-centred educational environment for their children. These programs have continued to expand in the past two decades with middle-class pressure. Alongside this expansion, school boards have initiated a plethora of other programs. For the most part, these "programs of choice" at both the elementary and secondary school levels are marketed as offering specific disciplinary foci — languages, athletics, arts, music, "leadership," International Baccalaureate, etc. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB), for example, now boasts not only 41 alternative schools, but also 9 elementary "Academies" (music, wellness, leadership, etc.), along with approximately 40 specialized secondary schools and programs (arts, International Baccalaureate, elite athletics, etc.). While in theory these programs are open to any students, their enrolments are highly skewed to middle-class families (Sinay, 2010). These programs are largely seen by TDSB officials as a way to encourage privileged sectors of the population to remain in the public school system, rather than enrolling their children in the Catholic system or private schools. This proliferation of "programs of choice" generally promotes further streaming in the school system in favour of already powerful social class interests.

Some school boards have experimented with specialized programs which, by their intent at least, are aimed at improving educational opportunities for groups seen as not benefitting from regular schooling. There has been, for example, the creation of "culturally

specific" programs. For a number of years the Toronto Board has supported the First Nations School of Toronto. This elementary school was originally established in the 1970s by the Aboriginal community, and then, at their request, funded and operated by the Board. Another example in Toronto is found in the TDSB's recent efforts to establish what it calls an Africentric elementary school in 2009, and the more recent extension of this program to at least one Africentric secondary school. In each case, the argument is made that allowing racialized students to engage in programs that reflect their own cultural backgrounds will assist in motivating them to achieve success in school.

Establishing "single-sex" classes, programs and most recently entire schools has been another way in which attempts are being made to reach out to specific students who are seen as not successful in regular schooling. For a number of years, girls-only classes have been organized, particularly in maths, sciences and technology, in the belief that girls will engage in these subjects more successfully when freed from what is seen as male dominance in co-educational classrooms. In addition, in fields where girls have not been as successful as boys, a female teacher is seen as providing a positive role-model for success. Recently, in Toronto, experimental boys-only programs have also been initiated — based on the premise that boys somehow learn differently than girls and that, at certain age levels, they are disadvantaged by what is claimed to be a tradition of girl-dominant pedagogy and/or curriculum in our schools. As discussed in Chapter Six, much of how the genders are streamed is a direct result of socialization that feeds male and female dominant norms.

In general, there is much to be admired in these attempts to enhance opportunity for students and families who have traditionally experienced (much) less success in school, and/or have been streamed into lower-level programs. Long-standing programs in other jurisdictions (particularly the U.S. and Britain) have proven that provision of specific culturally-supportive settings for specific racialized racial groups can be successful (Comer, 1998; Arrastia and Hoffman, 2012). A fuller discussion is found in Chapter Five. Similarly, studies undertaken of girls-only classes in the maths and sciences have shown that they can be successful in stimulating girls' interest in, and success at, these particular subject areas (Curtis, 2009). At the

same time, such targeted programs remain controversial, even among the groups for whom they have been intended. Black parents, and the Black community at large, continue to be divided on the concept of Africentric programs, some citing concerns about the possible negative aspects of continuing "segregation" in the larger society (Auguste, 2012). While these programs in the Toronto area are still in the developmental stage, even some of those who support the concept are now raising questions about their ability to attract students across all social-class backgrounds. And, as Alison Gaymes San Vicente points out in Chapter Six, while single-sex programs may well assist students to meet specific educational objectives, larger academic and social outcomes may well be affected negatively by these gender-specific engagements.

Critics have also made clear that, however well-intentioned and successful these "compensatory" programs may be for those who attend them, they do little or nothing for the mass of students who remain disadvantaged in our regular, streamed schools. In fact, a strong argument is made that such target programs act as "safety-valves" for the system, allowing regular schools and programs to carry on in their traditional discriminatory ways. While it is true that some of these initiatives were and are seen as pilot projects, with the hopes that they will influence mainstream practices for the better, unfortunately there is little evidence that this has actually occurred.

Given the concern for all students across the system, other school reformers have focused instead on interventions that could target the school system as a whole, with the intention of providing more egalitarian, non-discriminatory, equitable, non-streamed experiences for all students, especially those of working-class and racialized backgrounds. These initiatives, however, have typically been undertaken with little by way of critique of the existing system and the ways in which the traditional structures of schooling might work against progress based on these reforms.

For example, in Ontario in the past two decades, we have seen serious attempts to establish board and province-wide initiatives to promote anti-discriminatory, anti-racist, anti-sexist curricula and pedagogy. In 1992, the newly elected provincial NDP government passed legislation that required school boards across the province to develop and implement ethno-cultural, equity and anti-racism

policies. At the same time, it established a new department of "Anti-Racism, Access and Equity" within the Ministry of Education to develop province-wide policies and to support and promote this province-wide initiative (Wright and Allingham, 1994; Bonnet and Carrington, 2010). The mandatory aspects of these new regulations certainly generated discussion across the province, and resulted in the development of policies and procedures within individual school boards. However, implementation of these new approaches varied greatly across regions, boards, and individual schools. Even in those (few) jurisdictions where there was some evidence of support "at the top" for change, inertia and outright resistance resulted in few improvements for working-class and racialized students. The defeat of the NDP government after only one term also undermined support. With the return of the Conservative party to power in the 1995 provincial election, the new government soon announced the closure of the anti-racism department and cancelled virtually all of the policies, regulations and memoranda that had been developed and disseminated during the NDP's term.

The old Toronto Board of Education (TBE) provides an instructive view of serious attempts to enhance an equity agenda within its schools during this time. The TBE had a generally supportive board of trustees (many of whom represented areas of the city composed of working-class, and racially and ethnically diverse populations) and was supported by the rise of increasingly politicized and active parental organizations across the city. The Board's Equity Department had sufficient staff, resources, and mandates to recommend and implement new anti-racist policies and guidelines in curriculum, pedagogy, student and employee disciplinary codes, hiring practices, etc. Equity staff were also hired to work directly with teachers and students in schools to initiate and run professional development and student programs, which promoted an equity agenda. As Tim McCaskell (2005) points out in his analysis of the program, there was considerable success at the time in working with student groups in some schools that were receptive to these initiatives. However, it soon became clear to those involved that, given the traditional school structures and cultures, there was a clear limit to what could be accomplished by way of changes to curriculum and pedagogy within schools. At best, the Board could encourage a relatively modest number of more progressive teachers willing to try new things within their own classrooms. Even attempts by individual

board employees to intervene in cases of blatant discriminatory behaviour proved to be highly problematic, given the long-standing traditions of ignoring such cases, or at most, administering only inconsequential penalties for the behaviour. McCaskell (2005) notes, in assessing his efforts over two decades working within the Equity Department of the Toronto School Board, that while there were "dramatic example[s] of how popular mobilizing in conjunction with progressive forces inside an institution … could force a conservative bureaucracy to bend to community demands [these efforts] once again demonstrate[d] the limits of such factors in bringing about true institutional transformation in a hostile climate" (p.272).

Based on this history of successes and failures at both the provincial and school board levels, is it even feasible to expect significant change across an entire school system — based on curricular and/or pedagogical interventions — while leaving in place, and attempting to work within, traditional schooling structures and dominant cultures? Leaders in the TDSB Equity Department believe that it is, through a combination of changing school structures and a critical and relevant approach to teaching. For the latter, a number of teachers and educators in the Toronto area have been working on curriculum and pedagogy initiatives based on the importance of culturally responsive and relevant teaching. This program is based on a fusion of two related approaches — that of "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy" and "Culturally Responsive Teaching" — into an initiative entitled "Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy" (CRRP) (see panel below, which provides a more complete description of this initiative as operationalized by the TDSB equity department). Similar to dialogical teaching, which is discussed below, it is a critical approach to teaching.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT PEDAGOGY (CRRP)

A nuanced approach to challenging the power and privilege that remain within our school walls can be seen in the fusion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings) and Culturally Responsive Teaching (Geneva Gay). These two distinct bodies of research (building on the work of Paulo Freire and his dialogic teaching, discussed more fully below) have recently been fused together by curriculum activists at the Centre for Urban Schooling at OISE/University of Toronto, into what has become

known as Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP). This new methodology has been the leading professional development approach by the TDSB equity department for the last four years. In a recent report from the TDSB equity department, CRP has been described as follows:

> "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is one way to create and maintain relationships that reflect inclusion and a culture of respect in order to create an environment conducive to student engagement and achievement. CRP is generally described as teaching that uses the cultural knowledges, prior experiences, and learning styles of diverse students in order to make learning more effective for them. It involves a blending of high expectations for all students, strong relationships, high yield teaching strategies, intercultural understanding, and the fostering of critical thinking that addresses existing societal issues of equity and social justice in order to ensure that all students succeed" (2013).

Equity instructional leaders and equity-minded administrators have led school board staff through collaborative inquiry projects to find ways to reengage the most marginalized students in the classroom. Many families of schools in the TDSB have used CRRP as the theoretic framework for professional development for the last three years, finding that: "Overall, teachers agreed that their involvement in the project enhanced the engagement and achievement of their focus students, as well as the engagement and achievement of other students in their classrooms. Teachers also agreed that their involvement had a positive impact on their practice and growth as teachers." (Giambrone, 2013)

The diagram on the following page demonstrates three key components to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. These three tenets are all seated within a teacher's ability to form caring relationships. While each tenet is complex, in short, the first tenet, academic success, includes high expectations supported by specific instructional strategies and support. Secondly, cultural competence involves acknowledging and engaging students and their families, taking stock of their assets rather than their deficits. The third tenet is critical consciousness by means of which

teachers discuss power and privilege with children and then use this knowledge to challenge oppression. While this approach does not always succeed in fulfilling its intentions, it has, in the hands of critical pedagogues, the capacity to increase engagement and achievement while enabling children to understand and challenge inequities in schools and beyond.
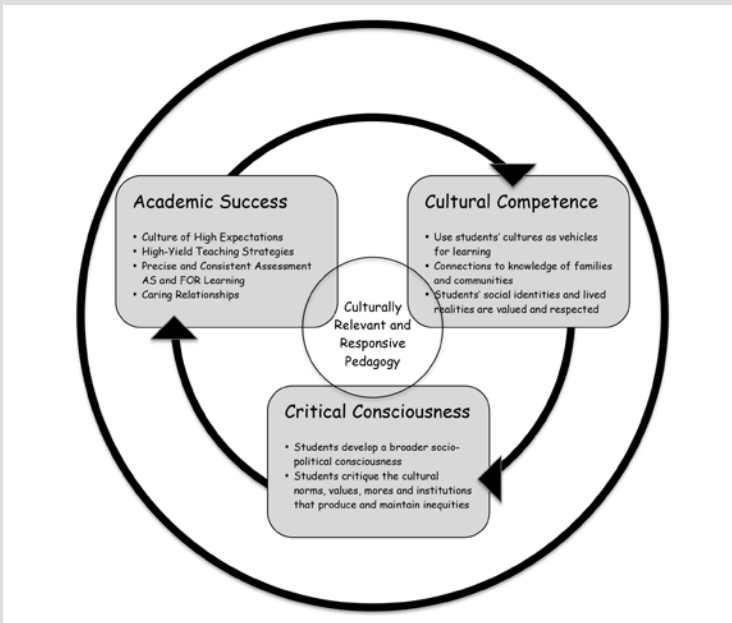
Two critiques have been raised in relation to this "cultural" approach to change. The first relates to the sense that "culture" here is being limited to the celebration of diverse ethnicities and/or racialized groups, as is often the case with Multicultural policy. Proponents of CRRP, however, insist that being "culturally responsive" relates to all sectors of those historically oppressed — by class, race, gender, ethnicity, ability, and so on. The second critique, discussed in Chapter One and evidenced in the data presented in Chapter Three, suggests that student outcome differences are really based on socio-economic class origins, and that this fact must continue to be foregrounded,

not embedded or hidden within a broad "cultural" view. "Cultural sensitivity", this critique argues, fits with relative comfort into the current school order. Attempts to promote meaningful changes to curriculum based on issues of socio-economic class would likely evoke a very different response from powerful interests, inside and outside of the school system. That said, it is still possible that frameworks like CRRP will provide more support for working-class and racialized children, and may, in the end, help to induce more structural change in the system over time, if aligned with popular forces pressing for the same ends. Many working with CRRP strongly subscribe to this belief on the basis that identities such as those based on race and class are not mutually inclusive but intersecting identities.

In the long run, if all students, and especially those from working-class and racialized backgrounds, are to have access to equitable opportunities for secondary school and post-secondary completion, as well as fair life chances after schooling, schools and programs must be more fully destreamed. What would these schools look like? How would they be organized, and governed? How would students be taught, and learn, in them? How would their learning be assessed?

Essential features of destreamed schools

We propose seven principles for constructing and sustaining destreamed school programmes. These principles are not meant to be a precise blueprint for change, but should be understood as directions to be taken on and developed democratically. We suggest:

1. Co-operative management by educators, parents, learners, and other community members.
2. Integration of intellectual and practical activities.
3. A common curriculum accessible to all students with space for locally based learning.
4. Flexible mixed-ability grouping.
5. Dialogical teaching: critical approaches to teaching.
6. Genuine interactions between schools and communities for social change.
7. Equity-based assessment alternatives.

In the Appendix, for each of these "Essential Features" we have listed a number of suggested activities to be considered by all levels of those in the school system — trustees/superintendents, school administrators, teachers, learners, parents, community members — actions which can be initiated now, and which might enhance possibilities for achieving a more equitable schooling system.

1. Co-operative management by educators, parents, learners, and other community members

The most effective way of ensuring that the interests and sensibilities of different social groups are taken into account is to give them all a voice and a vote in any significant decision. In practice, this may often translate into the election of delegates to various committees with specified responsibilities. Student representatives and community and family members as well as professional educators should constitute any decision-making body, and the composition should guarantee equitable representation by class, gender, sexual difference and ethno-racial identity. Rotational membership rules should prevent particular individuals from monopolizing either knowledge or power. Most importantly, all participants should retain the right to be informed about and to contribute to decisions affecting policies and procedures.

These co-operative criteria must be applied at every level of decision-making, including central governments, school boards and local schools. A key element in our current streaming system is the fact that dominant social groups control the design of school programmes. Subordinated groups must be guaranteed a significant role in shaping student selection policies so that these practices are sensitive to the needs and desires of working people.

There are numerous working models of co-operative decision-making in Canada and elsewhere that can be drawn on for guidance. One of the best examples of co-operative organization in schools was initiated in France by Célestin Freinet (1896-1966) in the 1920s and is known as Freinet pedagogy. It is still alive today and is one of the few examples of co-operative learning that is linked both to the co-operative operation of the school and to a program of change for

social justice. The empowerment of working-class people and the shared management of school experience by teachers, learners and community, through such techniques as weekly co-op meetings, collective editing of individual spontaneous writing, student journalism and school magazines circulated in the neighbourhood community, inter-school exchanges both within France and internationally and learner-based schedules are features of this approach. It has also been a strong proponent of de-streaming in French schools. The Freinet movement gained influence in continental Europe, Central and South America, and East Asia, but until recently has remained virtually unknown in the English-speaking world (Clandfield and Sivell, 1990; Chamberlin, 1994; Lee and Sivell, 2000; Beattie, 2002; Davis, 2004; Castles and Wustenberg, 1981). One of its European spin-offs was the Co-operative Education Movement in Italy, founded in 1951, whose most eloquent advocate has been Mario Lodi (born 1922), equally untranslated and unknown in the insular Anglo-Saxon world of education (Cummins and Sayers, 1995). In the digital age, some of the Freinet schools were the first to mount school websites, complete with pupils' photographs, audio tracks and even videos.

As for more comprehensive models of co-operative societies, the best-documented cases are probably the kibbutzim movement in Israel and the Mondragon Co-operatives in the Basque region of Spain (Lavi, 1990; Oakeshott, 1990), both areas in which Freinet pedagogy has found a response.

The most relevant examples for Canadians come from the extensive history of co-operativism in this country. Social enterprises based on co-operative principles range from early agrarian co-ops to a surprisingly large number of modern ones, such as Quebec's caisses populaires and housing co-ops (Quarter, 1991). Freinet's co-operative pedagogy did reach into francophone Quebec, notably with a teachers' curriculum collective in Montreal called La Maîtresse d'École (Clandfield, 1989). The International Association for the Study of Co-operation in Education was founded in 1979 "for educators who research and practice co-operative learning in order to promote student academic improvement and democratic, social processes" (http://www.iasce.net). It has chapters throughout the world, including GLACIE in the Great Lakes area whose activities including annual conferences may be followed online at http://www.glacie.ca. One of

the most notable efforts to link a critical adult education with economic co-operatives was the Antigonish movement in Nova Scotia (Coady, 1939). Later experiments with participatory democracy in Canadian free schools, alternative schools, community schools and labour movement education programs (Davis, 1990; Levin, 1987; Arnold *et al.*, 1991) also offer some valuable lessons in organizational problems and possibilities. There are many co-operative organizations in Canada today in many sectors of the economy that work effectively on similar principles (www.coopscanada.coop).

Generations of mainstream research on educational innovations (e.g. Fullan, 1991) have made it clear that those at the top of existing educational hierarchies are not prepared to eliminate discriminatory streaming practices. More recent reviews (e.g. Mulford, 2008) have concluded that more fully empowering the educators in the system — providing the time for reflection on effective change and serious support for creativity — is a better way for schools and school systems to move forward. Canada's rich tradition of co-operativism provides plenty of organizational resources for those who want to make sure the design of new educational programmes is grounded in decisions by those directly involved in schools — and especially parents, students, teachers, as well as principals.

Since *Stacking the Deck* was published, the Ministry has required that School Councils be established in all Ontario schools, and Parent Involvement Committees in all School Boards (http://www.edu.gov. on.ca/eng/teachers/PIC_EN.pdf). In 2000-01, new regulations were created that confirm the limited advisory role of school councils and a public purpose to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability to parents, which, in practice, has meant a focus on test score production (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). Under these circumstances, it's no surprise that a recent survey has found that few school councils actually engage their parent communities (People for Education, 2013c). Fund-raising vehicles in more affluent communities tends to be their major activity. Most of the time, these councils are there to consult a limited number of unrepresentative parents on minor issues outside core organizational and teaching policies and practices. Working-class and racialized parents are largely excluded from these consultations (Kozak, 2009). The OISE Survey of Educational Issues has found that a majority of Ontario citizens has consistently thought

that the public does not have enough say in school decision-making. Furthermore, the survey continues, parental interest in playing a significant role in local school councils is now substantial across most social groups, including working-class and racialized parents (Hart, 2013, p. 14). Similarly, teachers are generally ready and willing to play greater roles in the co-operative management of schools. Recent surveys and case studies have found that teachers, when given greater organizational decision-making roles in their schools, have been more effectively involved in professional development activities (Clarke, Livingstone and Smaller, 2012). Currently, teachers are expressing interest in greater roles in school governance and alliances with community representatives, as centralized accountability measures penetrate their classrooms. The potential for expansion of co-operative management is evident in most schools and communities. The greatest barrier to genuine co-operative management is the widespread assumption that people from lower-class or racialized origins are less able to participate in school decisions — an assumption that is demonstrably false to any who would carefully examine it.

2. Integration of intellectual and practical activities

One of the most destructive social distinctions in modern societies is that between those who are presumed to work with their heads and those presumed to work with their hands. On the one side, we have the "architects" who plan and design production activities, including employers, managers and professional employees. On the other side are the "bees", including most other workers, who are directed merely to execute these activities routinely according to preconceived designs. This is clearly a false dichotomy but its construction remains highly discriminatory.

This disparaging dichotomy between mental and manual labour bears little resemblance either to the labour capacities of the vast majority of people or to the actual performance requirements of most jobs. The active promotion of a profound distinction between intellectual and manual labour can be traced to the priestly castes of early historical class societies (Sohn-Rethel,1978), and it has continued to legitimate the reproduction of the class hierarchy in contemporary "post-industrial societies" (Bell, 1973; Brown, 1981) and "knowledge-based economies"

(Florida, 2002). The distinction is so ingrained among professional and managerial workers that they have great difficulty seeing any of their work as manual; in contrast, "manual" (industrial and service) workers, can usually identify an array of intellectual tasks in their jobs and recognize themselves as able to plan aspects of their own work better than their bosses can (Kusterer, 1978; Cooley, 1987; Livingstone, 2009).

School streaming systems typically serve to reproduce this degrading dichotomy. Academic streams for university-bound students emphasize abstract conceptual forms of knowledge but provide little opportunity to develop practical applications. Lower streams stress clearly defined practical activities but offer few chances for students to develop more conceptual forms of knowledge (see Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Lehman, 2009). The possibility of integrating intellectual and practical knowledge, and the consequent potential dissolution of the mental/manual worker division, is not seriously raised in conventional schooling. Consequently, students in both Academic and Applied/ Essentials streams complain frequently about the irrelevance of what they're supposed to be learning.

Any progressive proposal to end discriminatory streaming must insist upon the integration of theory and practice at all levels of educational activity. Liberal reformers of the past century often espoused the principle of teaching through practical experience (e.g. Dewey, 1926). What distinguishes a democratic agenda from this approach is a call for a "polytechnical" education that produces human beings who can both work and think. Students should be prepared to hold responsible jobs but also participate in controlling production and running society (Castles and Wustenberg, 1981; Osborne, 1988). Freinet's co-operative pedagogy linked conceptual learning with productive work for all students; they did everything from gardening and carpentry to printing school magazines on their own printing presses in the classroom. There is even a photograph of Freinet rebuilding part of the lab school that he founded in the 1930s and which received refugees from the Spanish Civil War (Clandfield and Sivell, 1990; Freinet, 1993). European countries such as Germany have had highly developed vocational training systems in which a major portion of their youth is streamed into apprenticeship programs that effectively deny most working-class and racialized youths access to higher academic education, but do provide significant integration of

academic training with sustained practical job experience. In the wake of European Union harmonization programs, the extent of integration may be weakening (Jones *et al.*, 2008). In any case, Ontario and Canada sorely need a more fully developed apprenticeship system integrating academic and practical training, but without the current streaming arrangements. Many working-class and racialized students should go on to higher education, and there are middle-class students who would be much happier in a good apprenticeship program.

The central point here is that virtually every child is capable of learning enough about the general character of our society to be able to participate in planning and decision-making. Virtually all adults are engaged in continual learning activities and growing numbers of those in working-class conditions find their abilities underemployed and express the desire to participate more fully in decision-making in their workplaces and communities (Livingstone, 2009). It should be obvious that the more people who develop societal knowledge and planning abilities, the more "checks and balances" there will be to make sure everyone is considered. To deny working-class and racialized people any effective chance to participate in school management on the basis of imputed mental skill deficits is to diminish the prospects for a productive and democratic society. There are large variations in competency within all classes and ethno-racial groups. But the assumption among dominant groups that the working class and minorities are less well-equipped to participate in school decisions is self-serving and wrong.

3. A common curriculum accessible to all students with space for locally-based learning

We live in a world that is increasingly segmented into paid workplace, household and community spheres, and we are immersed in highly fragmented subcultures of working knowledge and leisure pursuits. But we also live in a world that operates on the basis of increasingly standardized and pervasive commodity relations, typified by international financial consortia, computerized production systems and automated telecommunications networks. School curricula have been differentiated into highly specialized bodies of knowledge, often presented through arcane vocabularies and piecemeal examples. Few

students, therefore, choose their futures with a clear grasp of the big societal picture. As Ken Osborne (1988) put it:

> At the moment we are preparing a tiny minority of students (to contribute to social debates), while excluding the majority from any participation, preparing them instead for subordination and non-involvement. This will always be the case while we retain separate programmes for the academic minority and the allegedly non-academic majority, which inevitably in our current society, broadly divide students along class lines and give them not only a separate curriculum but also a separate pedagogy. (pp. 48-49)

If we are really committed to achieving equal educational opportunities for children from all social origins, then a common curriculum for much of their schooling years is essential. It should enable all children to understand the social, economic, political and environmental processes operating in their society and to make informed choices for themselves. The basic purpose of such a curriculum is to allow all students to gain control of their lives through learning to think for themselves and learning to make critical decisions. The contents of a common curriculum have been issues of great debate among progressive educators (Williams, 1961; Lawton 1989), but there is considerable agreement on some of the criteria. The polytechnical education outlined in the 1866 Geneva Resolution of the International Workingmen's Association (Castles and Wustenberg, 1981, pp. 38-40) called for "mental education" (developing basic cultural capabilities in reading, writing, etc., and getting a grounding in the natural and social sciences), "bodily education" (developing gymnastic and sporting abilities), and "technological training" (learning how to use tools and comprehending the general scientific knowledge necessary to control the production process). Development of math skills should also be identified, and today we would probably add computer literacy. Much of the common core curriculum would be based in recognized disciplines and combined with increasing special interests in the latter years of secondary schooling.

In 1984, the New Zealand social democratic government of the time issued guidelines for curriculum development, which offered specific, relevant criteria (see accompanying panel). They may appear somewhat

dated, and they have since been altered significantly by subsequent New Zealand governments, which have retreated from such equitable practices (Higgins *et al.*, 2008). But they remain generally relevant today. Inventories of possible intellectual, citizenship, personal development, moral and vocational goals may be useful as entry points into debate over content (Osborne, 1988, pp. 25-27). Communities may use lists of general educational goals to assert their priorities at both the local community and state levels (Clandfield and Sivell, 1990, pp. 119-124; Livingstone, Hart and Davie, 1985). But any specific curriculum proposals must be subjected to co-operative development criteria in order to prevent a centralized bureaucracy from setting up arbitrary and exclusionary forms of knowledge in our schools.

GUIDE TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

1. The curriculum must be common for all students and schools.
2. The curriculum must be accessible to all students, regardless of gender, class race, ethnic background, or perceived ability and aptitude.
3. The curriculum must be non-racist.
4. The curriculum must be non-sexist.
5. The curriculum must be designed so that all students enjoy significant success.
6. The curriculum should reflect the need to make education a life-long process, especially through helping students learn how to learn.
7. The curriculum must be seen as a totality, not simply a collection of isolated subjects and experiences.
8. The curriculum must be broad and general, rather than narrowly vocational.
9. The curriculum for every student must be of the highest quality.
10. The curriculum must be planned so that all its components are consistent and serve the intended goals.
11. The curriculum must be co-operatively designed by those who comprise the school and its community.
12. The curriculum must be continually reviewed by those who designed it in order to ensure that it is both worthwhile and appropriate.
13. The curriculum must be user-friendly and must not exclude or alienate students.

14. The curriculum must be aimed at empowering students to take control over their own lives.

15. The curriculum must ensure that students enjoy learning. (Department of Education, New Zealand, 1984, cited in Osborne, 1988, pp. 24-25).

In the wake of the explosive spread of the Internet since the early 1990s, accessibility to many forms of information has increased exponentially. Outside of schools, working-class and racialized children are gaining impressive computer literacy and unprecedented amounts of fragmentary knowledge (Livingstone, 2010). The challenge and promise for public schools is to ensure that a basic common curriculum is available to all students to enable their effective navigation in this "knowledge society."

4. Flexible mixed-ability grouping

The evidence is undeniable that if classes in elementary schools are streamed according to standardized measures of presumed ability, students placed in the academic classes generally do little or no better work than if they remained in mixed-ability classes. However, those put in non-academic classes do much worse than their counterparts who were enrolled in mixed "ability" classes (Leithwood, 1991; Saleh *et al.*, 2005; Berthelot, 2008; Jones *et al.*, 2008; Mitchell, 2010; Parekh, 2013). As we have shown in prior chapters, even where there seems to be no formal segregation or streaming of students by measured "abilities" in elementary schools, students have continued to be largely sorted into streams and levels by the start of secondary school in Ontario. Students from working-class and racialized origins continue to end up in lower level streams of secondary schools in highly disproportionate numbers, and many of these children drop out before finishing secondary school. Even without any other progressive reforms, the most obvious needed change to overcome this wastage of human potential is, therefore, to implement mixed "ability" grouping throughout the school system.

Uncritical acceptance of what now exists in public schooling seriously limits our thinking about alternative possibilities. We too

easily take for granted the rigid structuring of our school systems into age-normed grades, compartmentalized elementary and secondary programmes, and specialized subject instruction, with the overall objective of segregating and selecting people. Consider, in contrast, the model proposed by the Freinet-inspired Co-operative Institute for the Modern School in France. School learning would be organized into cycles consisting of several years, with instruction conducted by teams of teachers and combining co-operative group with individualized study. As this Institute states (Clandfield and Sivell, 1990) (p. 139):

> Abolishing the practice of compartmentalizing school life into classes and programmes will allow for varied groupings, for children of different ages and abilities to be brought together all the time or else for specific projects. Within a framework of cycles and co-operative pedagogy, mixed classes constitute one of the solutions to school failure because they bring about a blending of abilities, skills, interests and thereby encourage an attitude of mutual cooperation.

Such proposed mixed groupings take into account the wide range of rates and levels at which learners actually acquire knowledge and allow for greater flexibility in learning patterns than current organizational forms. Students with extraordinary abilities would be encouraged to develop them, but they would also be encouraged to develop the communicative skills that enable them to exchange their knowledge with others in mixed groups rather than being segregated into elite enclaves. The notion that giving exclusive privileges to the "highly intelligent" will somehow result in knowledge benefits "trickling down" to disadvantaged learners is just as misleading a myth as neo-conservative economists' faith that more tax incentives for the rich lead to greater benefits for the poor. It just does not happen (Braun, 1991; Yalnizan, 2013).

Any serious argument that is made against mixed-ability grouping can be shown to serve the interests of dominant class groups in our society. It is little wonder that elite groups strive to preserve their privileges in education as in other spheres of life. Yet, as we have already shown in the previous chapters, mixed-ability grouping is a potential benefit to the vast majority of students in the elementary and secondary schools of Ontario. As we have also shown earlier,

secondary school streaming was structured by representatives of the dominant class groups in our society, precisely to ensure that only very limited numbers and kinds of students could proceed to university-bound programs, while the rest would be diverted to lower-level schools and classes. The expansion of the university and community college system over the past generation has certainly allowed greater absolute numbers of students from working-class and racialized origins to enter post-secondary education. But their serious under-representation, especially in universities, still reflects the persistence of streaming structures in our elementary and secondary schools. We should increase mixed grouping to enhance the learning chances of all students while reducing discrimination against working-class and racialized children. Teachers must receive the support they need to make mixed-ability groupings work, through relevant pre-service and in-service teacher training programs, curricular resources based on a common curriculum, opportunities for peer mentoring by more advanced students, and other comparable strategies.

5. Dialogical teaching: critical approaches to teaching

Much controversy about schooling continues to be focused on appropriate teaching methods. The main debate has been between defenders of child-centred pedagogy and advocates of a teacher-driven standardized curriculum. However, both methods can be insensitive, in quite contrasting ways, to the class, race and gender-based cultural differences among children. Both methods can end up reproducing the inequities they profess to overcome.

The child-centred approach acknowledges that different students learn in different ways, an important aspect of good pedagogy. The danger is teachers will profess "blindness" to children's diverse identities- race, social class, gender, etc. When teachers do not recognize those differences in interests and abilities that are rooted in students' backgrounds, as a crucial point of departure in their learning, many of them are inadvertently abandoned — particularly those not already attuned to the White, middle-class bias of many of our schools and classrooms. When this "blindness" is linked to a "laissez-faire" pedagogy allowing students to engage entirely "as they please," rather than challenging their potential through concerted discipline-based

learning projects, this magnifies the possibilities for racialized and working-class children to be left behind.

Conversely, teacher-driven approaches are typically preoccupied with imposing "universal" standards that can be shown to be Eurocentric as well as carrying the dominant class and male gender biases we have described in this book. The result is that they identify children's learning only in terms of these criteria. Cultural diversity and learner initiative are largely denigrated as bases for learning projects.

The alternative — now beginning to be accepted by some school officials and occasionally in the mass media — is an interaction-driven, project-oriented teaching method called "dialogical pedagogy."

Without sustained dialogue among teachers and learners centred in projects, any educational process can degenerate either into an anarchic "survival of the fittest" or the imposition and regurgitation of bits of information and opinion.

Classrooms in homogenous dominant-class communities are often characterized by extensive dialogue about learning projects between teachers and students, albeit within the comfortable confines of generally shared cultural sensibilities and world views. The research we have referred to in prior chapters has shown that in classrooms in working-class communities, teachers frequently lecture didactically and students respond routinely. There is little opportunity to identify or reflectively discuss any contradictions between the contents of curricular packages and students' and teachers' own everyday experiences. It is from dialogue about such contradictions that a genuinely critical pedagogy emerges, a pedagogy that allows marginalized students to break out of the oppression of dominant culture forms.

Effective dialogical teaching must be committed to *equal esteem* for the different cultures represented in a mixed learning group, reciprocity with students in deciding classroom issues, *openness* to experimentation in teaching methodology, continuing *problematization* of conventional interpretations of the events of daily life, and *exposure of power relations* involved in such "common sense" interpretations of social reality. The fundamental basis of this pedagogy is well expressed by Paulo Freire, one of its most well known contemporary practitioners (Shor and Freire, 1987):

> My position is not to deny the directive and necessary role of the educator. But, I am not the kind of educator who owns the objects I study with the students. I am extremely interested in the objects for study. They stimulate my curiosity and I bring this enthusiasm to the students. Then both of us can illuminate the object together. (p.101)

Thus, the good teacher sometimes instructs, sometimes listens, but always strives to balance his/her authority with the genuine needs of all students. The difficulties of adhering to this approach should never be underestimated. An example of this is Ira Shor's (1980) account of his experience at a U.S. community college during the 1970s, one that could apply equally well to elementary and secondary school settings:

> This is a very demanding way to teach and to learn. You have to listen carefully all the time. The teacher does not routinely lecture… You cannot do one preparation for several classes, because the same process rarely reproduces itself in different groups of students. This milieu demands that the teacher surrender her or his authoritarian supports. I needed to come down from the pedestal and out from behind my tie and my desk. It was my responsibility to initiate the process and to keep it going, by setting problems for a critical excursion. I knew where we started from, and knew when we were moving, stagnating or regressing, but I rarely knew where we would wind up. Each class was a surprise, some happy, some not, a learning process itself in-process. (p. xxv)

There is already a tradition of dialogical teaching methods in adult education settings in this country. Much of the recent popular education practice within trade unions in English-speaking Canada (Martin, 1994) and more broadly among social movements in Quebec (Ampleman *et al.*, 1983) has been inspired by Freire's particular approach. We recognize that, in many ways, pedagogical challenge is all the more difficult within the context of elementary and secondary schools as they currently exist. More often than not, teachers and students are driven by an externally imposed syllabus, and standardized, product-oriented assessments. Large classes, rotary timetables and students with a wide variety of achievement levels and interests often make dialogical teaching difficult to achieve; so

do school administrations that value quiet, order and conformity over creative, expressive interaction. But some teachers have overcome at least some of these barriers. They have transformed their classrooms into supportive, process-oriented learning centres, where differences in students' interests and abilities are used as assets to the group, not as liabilities. Some of these practitioners of dialogical teaching have published insightful accounts of their efforts (Sawyer, 1979; Davis, 1990). Dialogical teaching has also proven successful in fields of math and science (Mangan, 1988).

The culturally responsive and relevant approach currently used within the Toronto Board is based on the work of Ladson-Billings (1995), which is inspired by Freire's approach. It is important to understand that like dialogical teaching, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is not an instructional strategy but rather a framework that can be engaged to disrupt current trajectories of marginalized populations. Within this framework, more mainstream strategies/approaches such as inquiry and differentiated instruction can also be adopted in critical ways to challenge the status quo.

Such critical teaching frameworks in our schools will not be sustainable without many of the other organizational changes noted here. But the prospects for thoroughgoing elimination of streaming in our schools will ultimately depend on teachers who will take up different forms of pedagogy, including a critical approach in their classrooms, while linking with student, parent and community groups to demand structural changes in our schools.

6. Genuine interactions between schools and communities for social change

Most school premises are daytime enclaves that most students and teachers only leave for lunches or special outings. Community members rarely enter. Our schools permit few opportunities for students to engage in community interaction through which they can learn from and contribute to the society beyond school walls, even though work placements for Applied-level students are increasing. To provide all students with community interaction experiences would broaden their sense of community and to build their capacity to participate. This represents a first step toward a disposition for

lifelong learning for many students (see Dave *et al*., 1988). It also begins the process of embedding the school as a vital node or hub in its neighbourhood or broader community, both benefiting from local knowledge and contributing to it (Clandfield and Martell, 2010; Smith and Sobel, 2010; Cummings, Dyson and Todd, 2011).

A crucial step in this process is the recognition of many potentially useful learning resources within the community. For a long time, the most underused learning resource in most of our communities was their senior population. Older people from varied walks of life working with student teams on oral histories, or in group discussions of social issues in prior generations, represent a rich source of useful knowledge about such matters as how institutions have changed, and how theory relates to practice. Older people have also mastered mechanical, technical, intellectual and domestic skills, which they can share with the young. One good example of the recognition of the mutual benefits of inter-generational partnerships can be found in the 1930s, when in Depression-era Michigan, the Mott Foundation helped set up Seniors' Centers in the Community Schools of Flint (Clandfield and Martell, 2010, pp. 34-35), involving after-hours recreational opportunities, the matching of young children to adopted "grandmothers" living alone, and joint classes. Other examples include the United Senior Citizens of Ontario (www.uscont.ca), which represents retired trade unionists and others in communities throughout the province and reaches out to local schools, and the Toronto Intergenerational Partnerships, an NGO which, since 1983, interacts with schools and daycare centres, sharing their knowledge, their leisure activities, and their talents with youngsters of every age. It now operates in over 100 schools in Toronto.

Student interaction with such groups can simultaneously offer not just education but genuine school-community interactions productive of real change through student engagement and community development. These services may often vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Just a few of the many other possibilities are:

- participating in local environmental clean-up and regeneration campaigns;
- participating in the operation of a jointly-operated school community food garden;

- running extension programmes of public libraries;
- using photography and video to celebrate local communities;
- using photovoice and poster art to promote public health causes, like the Aboriginal poster campaign against smoking on Manitoulin Island;
- making inventories or surveys of current community issues;
- using performed ethnography to reach out to disaffected community members about AIDS and the dangers of other infectious diseases;
- researching and conducting tours of local heritage sites, such as the Jane's walks;
- preparing of briefs on current social issues to local municipal councils, advisory bodies, community associations and other local agencies.

Community school advocates have suggested several specific criteria, which offer a checklist for identifying appropriate community service projects:

1. Students should have some responsibility for making their own decisions;
2. They should have other people depend on their actions;
3. They should work on tasks that extend their thinking, both cognitively and ethically;
4. They should work with age groups other than their own;
5. They should reflect systematically on their experience.
   (Cited in Osborne, 1988, pp. 31-32)

Most importantly for destreaming purposes, these experiences break down stereotyped thinking by letting subordinate class, race and gender perspectives be seen and heard. This is an essential pre-condition to making school experience relevant to children from disadvantaged origins.

In 1999, the Conservative government legislated a requirement of 40 hours of community service during the secondary school years as a condition to graduate (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1999). Such a measure may appear to be consistent with the notions of provision of useful community service as well as learning from practical experience.

So far, however, the community work involved appears to have been an extremely ad hoc smorgasbord of voluntary activities with little integration of learning activities, especially for students from low-income families (Schwarz, 2013). Even so, this formal requirement could represent a usable structure for the development of community service learning of sustainable value.

We like to see this as the first stage in a sequence that can evolve into building communities through schools and schools through communities. Community service with its flavour of philanthropy and the provision of youthful volunteer labour provides one form of social responsibility. Further along the scale comes the community use of schools which opens up the school premises for use by community groups after hours (evening, weekends and vacations) on a permit basis, and parallel use of schools in which part of the school is shared for longer periods of time by contract. The programs usually take the form of sports and recreation or adult education or community meetings. This is the market version of school-community interaction, in which the school responds to community demand for space and facilities, often charging fees for the permits. Then comes the public policy version in which multiple services operated by different public authorities are based in and around the schools. These can be specific services for children and their families, such as daycare, family services, settlement workers, or can extend to public health clinics, screening programs for dental care, vision, hearing, and so on.

But all of these do little to integrate the community and the school in a reciprocal relationship to the benefit of both and out of which new knowledge and change can come. That is how the notion of the school as a community hub can become a progressive force for all and fulfil its institutional responsibility to its public. All activities in the school must work to provide the opportunity for mutual learning. A public health program becomes an object of study, like the measles vaccination program that was successfully implemented in a poor area of Brooklyn by El Puente Academy in its heart. The school had been opened by two physician educators fed up with praying for rain on Friday nights so that they would have fewer gunshot wounds to tend.[2]

Anyone interested in how valuable such programs can be should view the independently made documentary film *Schools that Change Communities* (Bob Gliner, 2012). It shows five community schools in

disadvantaged or endangered communities, urban and rural, white and racially diverse. All undertook whole school projects that helped turn around faltering communities. The initiatives came either from the students themselves or were such that the students conducted the essential research, mobilized support and passed on their findings and solutions to the community.

To see the relevance of such educational initiatives, we would also recommend *Beyond the School Gates*, a British research project report that attempts to answer the question "Can Full Service and Extended Schools Overcome Disadvantage?" (Cummings, Dyson and Todd, 2011). The answer is cautiously optimistic but immensely practical.

7. Equity-based assessment alternatives

Standardized competitive tests based on dominant class cultural codes and content have long been major means of legitimating and producing unjust labelling and streaming in our schools. As good full-time jobs have become scarcer and structural unemployment has become chronic, corporate and government leaders have increasingly criticised what they claim are declining educational standards and called for more centralized testing to improve educational quality and ensure greater accountability. But *Whose standards? Accountability to whom?* Particularly in the wake of the destructive "outcomes-based" standardized testing now being implemented globally by neo-liberal governments (Allais, 2014), what we need as soon as possible are alternative, democratically-controlled means of assessment to end discriminatory streaming.

It is important to recognize that most assessment actually done in schools is quite informal and should remain so. As an Australian study (Connell *et al.*, 1991) observes:

> Teaching is a necessarily improvised social practice, and practical assessment of students' reactions and performances is a central part of how it is improvised… Such assessment is constantly done on the run, and is immediately fed back into the teaching and to the learner. Experienced teachers do this automatically and are quite flexible in adjusting their teaching according to what they learn from minute to minute about their classes. This is so organic a part of teaching

> that it is often not seen as assessment, and the immediate informal
> feedback to students is not seen as "reporting." (p. 79)

With the notable exception of corporate executives' strong insistence on centralized standardized testing, most of the public has consistently supported the primacy of teacher-based assessment of student progress. Most Ontario citizens, unfortunately, see some value in standardized tests that allow rough comparisons of different schools and regions, but, at the same time, they want their children's performance and promotions based mainly on teachers' more personal evaluations (Hart, 2013). The key political question remains: what formal assessment procedures and tools are actually going to prevail in determining students' progression through the school programme and into the job market and post-secondary education?

Most alternative assessment regimes that have been attempted to date have ultimately been undermined by recourse to the same old standardized competitive test criteria that reproduce the old dominant biases. Destreamed schools will have to emphasize the mastery by all students of the key elements of a common curriculum. Almost all children are capable of becoming literate, informed citizens, and all children have something important to contribute to their community and to the larger society. Assessment procedures must clearly set out transparent criteria of competence and require students to show their abilities through the work they do, while, at the same time, remaining sensitive to particular individual and community experience. For example, Freinet pedagogues prefer certificates of attainment (brevets) akin to drivers' licences or first-aid certificates such as CPR. A set of interlocking competencies, including basic skills of literacy and numeracy, is harnessed to a particular kind of work or study (drama production or appreciation, community gardening, school accounts reporting, water analysis, local history, tracking library book circulation, comparative baseball statistics, etc.) and the certificate is awarded once the required standard of competency has been demonstrated. There is no limit on the number of times such a certificate can be sought. And the product of such work is put on display for others in the school, their families and the community at large every Friday in a Freinet classroom or school. Evidence of achievement is provided by experience of the work done.

Co-operative management principles must be applied just as thoroughly to assessment as to any other area of educational practice. Working-class and racialized social groups at all levels of the educational system, as well as local teachers, need much greater power over formal assessment criteria. This country has rich experience in the evaluation of adult education programs, based on participatory research approaches. These can be adapted as guides for the democratization of school assessment (see Arnold *et al.*, 1985, 1991).

Democratic destreaming strategy

Any proposal for substantial progressive social change will be immediately confronted by dominant interest groups who try to dismiss it as utopian and impractical, both on the ground or in dealing with resistant governments.

The first point to this charge is that all of the essential features of destreamed schools discussed above are *already being practised* in various places; this cumulative experience provides useful guidance for our own destreaming initiatives. We can build from a number of positive experiments with family groupings of grades, mixed-ability classrooms, interdisciplinary subject offerings and project-centred pedagogies. Educational democracy may be partial and rare to date, but it is definitely not impractical. A distinguished futurist, Arthur C. Clarke (1962), observed that two of the largest obstacles to progressive social change are a failure of imagination and failure of nerve to experiment with alternatives. A destreamed school system will not be achieved overnight. But without exploring such a vision of a feasible alternative, it will not be achieved at all.

The second point to make is that established public policy and government policy commitments — currently hostile to destreaming — can be changed with determined action. As we have documented in detail in previous chapters, in the decades prior to the publication of *Stacking the Deck* in 1992, discussions of destreaming were everywhere. There were several significant official reports advocating destreaming — the Radwanski report of 1987, the Select Parliamentary Committee on Education recommendations the following year, and the Premier's Council report on education and training two years later. At the same time, attempts to implement destreaming were half-hearted at best

and beset by opposition from a number of quarters. Those in support of destreaming did not have the organized power available to effect its adoption and implementation.

To make progress toward implementing practical models of destreaming at least three specific actions should be part of any effective democratic strategy for destreaming:

1. Build on current public perceptions and preferences regarding educational equality.
2. Debunk the dominant ideology of streaming.
3. Work collaboratively and democratically with working-class and racially-based organizations, advocacy groups and other like-minded organizations to press for change.

1. Building on public perceptions and preferences for educational equality

A democratic change initiative should build from existing public perceptions and preferences, as opposed to either ignoring or trying to manipulate public opinion. Opinion surveys, focus groups and community meetings can be used to raise collective awareness of the public's attitudes on key issues. Such readings can also help ensure that major policy changes are made in the interests of the majority, rather than in response to the most powerful interests. There are now effective low-cost methods to take fairly sensitive readings of views on important issues even among large social groups (e.g. Fishkin, 1995). In Ontario, the OISE/UT Survey of Educational Issues has published regular readings of the views of the general public on major policy questions since 1978, as well as surveying corporate executives' views over much of this period, along with a representative sample of Ontario teachers in 2000. The survey covers issues of education funding, governance of schools, organizational reforms and equity questions, as well as analyses by respondents' social background.[3]

People of all liberal democratic countries have a deep-seated belief in the principle of equal educational opportunity. The vast majority of respondents to current surveys indicate that achieving a post-secondary education is needed to get along in the context of today's "knowledge society" (Livingstone, 2009). It's not surprising, however,

that when the 1996 OISE/UT Survey asked corporate executives, other employers and upper-income people what value they thought low-income parents put on education compared to upper-income parents, they generally said they thought low-income parents put less value on education. At the same time, strong majorities of industrial and service workers and low-income people said they put the same or more value on education compared to upper-income parents (Livingstone, Hart and Davie, 1997, p. 38). In a fusion of their own beliefs in the cultural or biological deficiencies of the working class and their own vested interests, dominant classes have tended to underestimate the abilities and denigrate the aspirations of the more disadvantaged.

In terms of perceptions of the actual extent of equal educational opportunities, the people of Ontario have shown greater and somewhat increasing awareness since the 1980s of the inequities embedded in the Ontario school system. In 1980, a near majority of all respondents (and also of working-class respondents) indicated they thought there was a bias against students from working-class families in Ontario schools. Corporate executives were most likely to disagree with this judgment. (Livingstone and Hart, 1981, pp. 18-19). In a time series from 1996 to 2012 on the chances of students from low-income families achieving post-secondary education, two-thirds perceived in 1996 that they had worse chances, increasing to three-quarters by 2012 (Hart, 2013, 26). In 2000, only a third perceived that Aboriginal students had worse chances for achieving post-secondary education than White students; this figure increased to a majority by 2012 (Hart, 2013, 26). With regard to Black students, public perceptions remain more limited. In 2000, only one in seven respondents recognized that Black students had worse chances for post-secondary education than White students; by 2012, this figure increased to about one-quarter (Hart, 2013, 26).

Public views on streaming in secondary school were tracked by the OISE/UT Survey from 1980 to 2004 (see Livingstone and Hart, 2005, p. 8). In 1980, 60% supported streaming students into different programs for vocational, college and university entrance at or before Grade 10; by 1992, 60% supported *deferring* streaming until *after* Grade 10. This significant shift in public opinion occurred during a period of intense debate when the Radwanski report appeared in 1988 recommending the destreaming of Grade 9, when the Liberal government initiated a policy to do so in 1989 and when the subsequent NDP government

began implementing it after election in 1990. The implementation process, it should be noted, generated considerable criticism, particularly from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), while elementary school and Catholic unions supported it in principle. This criticism may have had some effect. Subsequent OISE/UT surveys found support for streaming before Grade 10 increased again to a near majority in 2004. As noted previously, streaming issues have not been a visible part of public discourse about education since the 1990s.The question has not been asked in recent OISE/UT Surveys. The large fluctuations in views on streaming up to 2004, plus increasing public perceptions of inequitable access to post-secondary education on income and ethnicity criteria, suggest that public sentiments could again shift quickly in support of policies intended to enhance equality of opportunity to higher education for disadvantaged groups. The fact that some countries that have recently abandoned or moved sharply away from streaming and selection have seen significant improvements of student scores in standardized tests (Saunders, 2013, p. A19) may also help to convince even those who still believe in such tests to see the merits of destreaming.

2. Debunking streaming ideology

Some dominant business groups continue to promote a streaming system based on centralized standardized testing. They suggest that this form of testing should be used to rate the performance of our schools and children to identify the best and encourage the rest to contend, nearer the bottom of the society, with global economic competition — a perspective found, for example, in the Fraser Institute's annual report cards based on standardized testing in Ontario and several other provinces. Two major flaws in such a perspective should be exposed at every opportunity. The first is that it results in a "waste of learning potential." The second is that it forecloses any hope for more effective "workplace engagement and democratization."

With regard to waste of learning potential, it's clear that established streaming practices have left many hundreds of thousands of capable working-class and racialized students in Ontario without access to a post-secondary education. It's generally understood that standardized tests tell you very little about a student's intelligence or creativity.

Middle-class parents simply find a way around these tests, if their child is judged too harshly by them. Working-class parents don't have these options, but they know the assessment processes are unfair. The "waste of potential" just needs to be stated, again and again in public arenas. It is also obvious — but needing continued re-statement — that if a very large proportion of capable working-class and racialized students are being excluded from advanced educational programs, the most effective and just solution is to reorganize such programs so that many more of these highly talented people can realize their educational potential. Even in terms of conventional human capital theory, it makes more sense to respond to global economic competition by maximizing human learning capacity — as the most productive resource in a technological knowledge-based society — rather than to screen and limit it artificially.

The second flaw in the business argument above is the contradiction between school streaming and workplace involvement. Corporate spokespersons often stress the need for workers to increase their involvement in production processes to meet global competition. The Canadian Council of Corporate Executives (CCCE) continually suggests that economic competitiveness depends on innovation, creativity, flexibility, skill development and lifelong learning (see www.ceocouncil.ca). More generally, with the shift from dominance of material goods production to information processing, there is greater need for intellectual skills of workers to be engaged in their labour processes (Livingstone, 2010). But CCCE strategies don't put this into practice; they are long on tax reductions and short on support for measures to encourage previously excluded people to fully develop and apply their talents. We have world-leading rates of skill underutilization/underemployment and low levels of employer support for further worker education. Most workers do want more influence in their jobs and workplaces; they want more opportunities to contribute their ideas. Yet rigid rules, narrow job descriptions and top-down command structures continue to stifle these aspirations. Employers often discourage workers from actively contributing their ideas on the job (Lowe, 2000).

To call simultaneously for employees to "work smarter" and for educational systems to be narrowly selective and thus highly arbitrary in picking the most capable students is to play with a huge contradiction: *workplace engagement and democratization built on educational elit-*

ism. It is a senseless contradiction, because economic democracy and educational democracy are compatible and can be mutually reinforcing. Greater employee participation in design decisions across mental/manual divisions generally has led to higher productivity in corporate enterprises (Rothschild and Whitt, 1986; Zwick, 2004). Greater community and student participation in school program design can also lead to more effective learning (Freinet, 1964; Johnson *et al.*, 2000; Jeynes, 2007). A more fully educated student gains the capacity to be both a more productive worker and a more fully informed citizen; the one area of democratic activity is highly complementary to the other. Only the most pallid and limited sorts of workplace democratization can be sustained if educational democratization is denied. Conversely, destreamed models of schooling, including co-operative work-based projects, will be undermined if not linked to a movement for genuine economic democracy (Clandfield and Sivell, 1990, p. 129; Livingstone, 2004).

The ideology supporting a streamed system is still dominant. Business leaders and others call for a lean competitive school system, the mass media present us with individual "success stories" of poor children who have made it, and school policies obscure reality by pretending that equal educational opportunities exist and streaming does not. This propaganda must be countered. We must speak out against the claims of employers' groups like the Canadian Council of Corporate Executives and the Chamber of Commerce, along with conservative politicians, who confuse "excellence" with ruthless competition; against the propaganda that treats as "too expensive" attempts to improve the quality of our schools from more substantive curriculum to more engaged and more democratic decision-making; and against the arguments that portray general education as merely consumer preparation and job-training. We must halt appeals for individuals to continue chasing credentials in an educational arms race and supplying more intellectual surplus labour, while actual workplace democratization fails to keep pace with the real skills of the labour force — especially industrial and service workers and minorities — who are increasingly underemployed and marked by growing precarious employment conditions (Livingstone, 2009). We must call into question the fundamental principles of the business community's future vision, which calls for greater personal investment in education, while wasting the talents of so many of our students in schools and in the workplaces they will eventually enter. This vision is a dead end.

But we must also learn from the failures of the educational criticism that came from the left over the past several decades. We cannot simply denounce public education as an instrument for the reproduction of inequality. Such a denunciation demoralizes teachers and parents and creates openings for conservative politicians to promote further public education cuts. We have to promote practical alternatives.

We cannot claim that the school should have no direct connection to the world of work; the separation of school from work tends to denigrate what most people in our society have to do to earn a living. As noted above, the separation of manual from mental work both supports class privilege in our society and encourages the one-sided development of people. And we can hardly expect our schools to create full employment in an economy whose very nature demands a large and permanent pool of unemployed people. But we can press public education to incorporate the best, most sophisticated workplace training available, which, at the same time, promotes the strongest possible individual autonomy.

We must push public schools to make good the claim to be just and fair to members of all social classes and minorities regardless of gender. We cannot claim that giving students the choice of what to study will overcome the disdain that many experience in school. In past attempts at creating free choice for secondary school students, middle-class students were encouraged to choose university entrance, while guidance counsellors and other school officials, feeling compelled by the highly competitive structure of schooling, funnelled working-class students into dead-end programs. Instead, we must advocate a public school system that challenges and develops the abilities of all students on an equal basis, one that has the resources to awaken the interests of all students and to allow these interests to flourish.

The dominance of the business community and the professional-managerial classes over the content of the school curriculum must be challenged, but we should not fall into the trap of believing that a simple curriculum rewrite can satisfy the needs and interests of all groups. A pluralistic approach which simply adds more programmes aimed at "disadvantaged" learners to the curriculum allows powerful groups and classes to continue their dominance, while encouraging a false sense of privilege among less powerful groups. We must articulate the principles and values at the core of a democratic and egalitarian

society, values such as co-operation and the all-round development of each person, and insist that these be realized in the curriculum.

The contradiction we have to face in our schools is that between the dominant class's restriction of access to advanced forms of knowledge for its own power and privilege and an ever-growing demand by most people for more useful and widely distributed knowledge to cope with the challenges of a changing society. Streaming is one way the public educational system serves to restrict access to some advanced forms of knowledge and legitimates political and economic inequality. It is also a way in which the system responds to working-class student demands for "really useful knowledge" with therapeutic and narrowly contained lower-streamed programs, as well as limited access to more advanced programs.

In thinking about reform, we need to cut through the dominant victim-blaming implicit in rhetorical phrases about "the need to stress citizenship training to prevent social disorder" or "the need to raise standards in response to global competition." We know, both from the experience of working-class people and from social research, that the public educational system does not create "equal educational opportunity" for working-class and racialized people. But we do not expect a reformed public school system alone to be able to create a better world. The school system cannot overcome differences in wealth, property ownership, and political power, nor on its own can it erase racism or sexism. It did not create these conditions in the first place, though it certainly contributes to them. What we expect from our school system, in concert with reforming social policies in other areas, is a challenge to currently disadvantaged people to develop their abilities and the encouragement to seek democracy.

A genuinely democratic destreaming of our schools requires careful development of concrete alternative forms of education and practical strategies that will gain broad popular support.

3. Working together to press for change

Change is still possible! We've seen from many prior examples — from the mobilisation of farmers' and artisans to fight for more relevant curriculum in late 19th century schooling to the protests of poor people's organizations and immigrant groups in the late 1960s — that

when groups including those most directly affected come together, they can make discernible gains in relevant school programming and more advanced-level accessibility. To date, however, dominant class groups have managed to control the public agenda of educational policy so that no alternative to the established educational structure has gained serious public attention, at least for long enough to effect significant systemic change. The model of destreamed schooling sketched above surely needs further development. But even the most intellectually compelling proposal for social change still requires an effective organization of social forces to press for its implementation. Where do we go from here?

First, it is important to identify both those who will be supportive of destreaming, and those who will not. As indicated in the struggles of the 1980s and early 1990s in Ontario, interest group leaders were deeply divided over the issue of destreaming. Judging from the briefs presented to the Select Committee on Education (Porter and Gardner, 1988), the corporate establishment remained solidly opposed to democratizing policies that ran counter to established hierarchies of ownership and control in private enterprise. Other elite associations representing private schools and gifted children expressed similar opposition. For their part, professional associations of doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. in general espoused equality of opportunity principles, but only within the context of restrictive occupational hierarchies that would maintain their own status; they were, therefore, typically ambivalent about destreaming. As we have seen throughout this book, dominant class politics have continually aided and abetted the construction of harsh and destructive streaming practices in schooling.

Ontario teachers' organizations also took diverse stands on destreaming. For example, after conducting its own extensive review of the research literature on the subject, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (1987) came out in favour of destreaming, a position that generally appears to have been supported by Catholic school teachers. The former elementary teacher federations, Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) and the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF), also expressed some support for destreaming at the time. In contrast, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) established a policy that schools should provide "a variety of levels of instruction" with

"appropriate groupings of students", although with "safeguards which ensure that working class and immigrant students are not penalized by being disproportionately streamed into lower levels of academic instruction." In the context of severe budget restraints and the NDP provincial government's declaration of full implementation of Grade 9 destreaming by September 1993, the Ontario Teachers' Federation pressed its opposition to destreaming by focusing its objections on "simplistic solutions such as course label changes imposed with unrealistic deadlines" (OSSTF memo, April 29, 1992). Most other interest groups at the time were either supportive of destreaming or ambivalent on the issue. With specific reference to destreaming Grade 9, there was much broader, though careful, positive support. In a review of a number of submissions, Rutledge (1991, p. 35) noted that " The bulk of the responses indicated a willingness to go with the proposed arrangement, feeling that it is desirable but difficult…Everybody stressed teacher-designed in-service [training] as vital."

The labour movement at the time and many grassroots community groups came out more clearly in favour of destreaming (Ontario Federation of Labour, 1989; Turk, 1989). Many ethnic parents' groups played a major role in putting destreaming on the public agenda early in the 1980s.

What about today? Presently, it is clear that general destreaming is low on or absent from the agenda of most broad-based interest groups, even of those groups that historically struggled to achieve it. There has been continuing advocacy for inclusion of more students with Special Educational Needs in regular classrooms. But no political party represented in our provincial legislature gives any attention to destreaming as an important issue. The term was not used or seen in the dominant press for years, and there was little, if any, evidence of community groups or organizations, or teacher unions, taking up the cause. The strong support previously provided by the provincial labour movement has seemingly disappeared. As previous chapters have noted, this sea change has occurred for a number of reasons — the success of the schooling system in drawing some of those concerned into the normalizing structures and processes of the system itself (e.g. School Councils); the manner in which the new "schools and programs of choice" work to provide the appearance of liberalization of the system; the increasing struggles, in a time of financial cutbacks,

just to maintain the functioning aspects of the system as they are; and, last but not least, the increasing secondary school completion rates and post-secondary enrolments that disguise the continuing underrepresentation of working-class and racialized children.

What are the possibilities for structural change in schools given these conditions? One source of support — if only to assist in keeping the evils of streaming and its social consequences in public view — are present-day public interest organizations devoted to critical examination of our schooling system. Even the Canadian Education Association (CEA) — whose membership rests mainly among education ministry and school board officials and academics — has recently become more critical in its examination of the state schooling system. It has lately disseminated reports on the negative consequences of streaming in our system (CEA 2010). People for Education, an Ontario organization backed mainly by middle-class parents, has similarly commented on the effects of streaming (People for Education, 2013a; 2013b). However, given the focus of and sources of support for these organizations, there is little chance that either would be in the forefront of political activity demanding structural change in streaming practices.

To put destreaming back on the provincial and municipal agendas, we continue to believe that only democratically constituted groups, especially those groups representing families who continue to be adversely affected by streaming, can plausibly and effectively sustain action for these changes. In addition, support for these renewed campaigns must be provided by strategic alliances with other parents, teachers, students, educators, and social groups and organizations who understand that genuine equity and genuinely equitable outcomes will never be achieved until structural destreaming is implemented in our public school system.

There are many small groups that are actively fighting for destreaming now. For example, Education Action: Toronto is a network of activists committed to achieving educational equity policies through organizing people from a wide variety of backgrounds starting at the local community level and aiming to move these goals forward at local boards and the provincial government level (www. educationactiontoronto.com). This network — just getting off the ground — has recently played a useful role in assisting the Somali

community in Toronto to fight for their educational rights, providing extensive critiques of funding inequities and increasingly serving as a clearing house for resource materials that can be used in a movement toward destreaming. Community organizing in favour of establishing fairer conditions for school completion, relevant vocational education and living wages is occurring in many communities (e.g. Anti-Poverty Community Organizing and Learning. www.apcol.ca). Most of these groups receive virtually no mass media coverage.

There are valuable curricular resources available to teachers and community groups today to aid in moving toward destreaming. For example:

Antonelli, F. (2003). *Learning Labour: Ideas for Secondary Schools*. Toronto: OSSTF/CSEW. Focuses on the world of work, workers' rights and labour equity. Available from: www.csew.ca.

Baxter, D. (2006-07) *Aboriginal Presence in Our Schools: A Guide for Staff. Thunder Bay: Lakehead Public Schools*. Available at http://www.lakeheadschools.ca/aboriginaleducation/main

Delpit, L. (1988). The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating other people's Children. *Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 58 No. 3. Available at: http://faculty.washington.edu/rikitiki/tcxg464sp08/Silenced%20Dialogue%20by%20L%20Delpit.pdf

Eigenbrod, R., G. Kakegamic & J. Fiddler (2003) *Aboriginal Literatures in Canada: A Teacher's Resource Guide*. Available at: www.curriculum.org/tcf/teachers/projects/aboriginal.shtml

Ontario Government (2009). *Aboriginal Perspectives. A Guide to the Teacher's Toolkit. Teaching Resources and Strategies for Elementary/ Secondary Classrooms*. Available at: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/toolkit.html

Ontario Ministry of Education:

- *Anti Islamophobia Resource Kit Secondary*
- *Anti-Racism Resource toolkit*
- *Safe and Inclusive schools toolkit*

All three available at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/registry.html

Play It Fair. Developed by the Montreal-based organization Equitas to promote inclusion, human rights, anti-discrimination, harmonious intercultural relations, and peaceful conflict resolution for youth, ages 6 to 12. Games and activities focusing on a rights-based approach to anti-discrimination. Available at: http://www.equitas.org

Rice, C. and V. Russell (2004). *Embodying Equity: Body Image as an Equity Issue*. Toronto: Green Dragon Press. A manual for teachers, and other youth workers with exercises for different age groups (from children to adults), adaptable to various classes and groups, including girls who are or think they may be lesbian or bisexual, girls who have a disability or physical difference, or girls of colour. A short article by the authors is available at: http://www.carlarice.ca/Embody_Equity_Orbit_Art.pdf

San Vicente, Ramon (February 2014). *From Rhymes to Re-Education*. A hip-hop curriculum. A five-minute descriptive video is here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q26wDtN4ovc

Toronto District School Board (2011). *Challenging Heterosexism and Homophobia. A K-12 Curriculum Resource Guide*. Available at: http://www.canadianvalues.ca/SCC/TDSB_Equity%20_%20InclusiveCurriculum_Seepage%2010%20_.pdf

Upping the Antiracism: Chinese Canadian Youth Against Racism. A bilingual (English and Chinese) publication, written and designed by Chinese Canadian youth, with articles and images that examine racism within the context of the Chinese Canadian experience in Toronto. Available at www.ccnctoronto.ca/mkc.

Zoric, T. (2005). *Challenging Class Bias*. Toronto: TDSB/Centre for the Study of Education and Work, OISE/UT. Offers lesson plans that deal effectively with most of the issues discussed in this book. Available from: www.csew.ca

Some of these were selected from *Equity and Inclusive Education: A Resource Compendium* for Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in Ontario that has many more downloadable curricular resources. It comes from the Ontario Education Services Corporation, a non-profit corporation owned by all the School Boards of Ontario. Resource available at: http://www.oesc-cseo.org/English/Downloads/equityInclusivity/CompendiumOfResourcesFinalSep-12.pdf.

Concluding thoughts

Progressive educators and members of the labour movement and other social movements have frequently promoted public schooling as a social "equalizer" and a means of empowerment for working people, as well as a path to secure employment. These expectations, as this book makes evident, are routinely undercut by the ongoing relationship between the public schools and the labour market — a relationship that insists our schools prepare "human capital" for capitalist employers, which, in turn, requires a streaming system for a job hierarchy awaiting a wide spectrum of graduates and dropouts. "Global restructuring" and the movement for "competitive excellence" has intensified these streaming requirements. The "triumph" of capitalism over old-fashioned totalitarian regimes has encouraged many business leaders and politicians to claim that the "only" way forward is for governments and citizens to remake themselves and their relations with one another in the image of the "free" market. Competitiveness is assumed to reign everywhere and the public school is to be redefined even more as the training ground for market "excellence," incorporating a rhetoric of moral commitment to capitalism and practical instruction in competing with others.

The other side of capitalism's triumph has been a massive transfer of wealth since the 1980s away from workers and immigrants and racialized populations and towards the capitalist class. Wages and working conditions are increasingly under assault as are "social wages," the health, education and social benefits that make all the difference to working people in building a better life. The ideology and practice of deficit reduction — the new "austerity" agenda — is intensifying this assault and the growing gap between the rich (with fewer taxes and smaller wage bills) and the rest of us.

The public education system does not, and cannot, guarantee jobs to graduates. To pretend that schooling is primarily a preparation for paid work is a lie for the growing numbers of people chronically un- or underemployed. We must look elsewhere for a model of democratic education. The model outline above presents a real alternative for those prepared to act for educational equity.

Tim McCaskell (2005), summarized his insightful analysis of the rise and fall of two decades of struggle for equity within the Toronto school

system by drawing on Stephen J. Gould's observation in *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory* (2005) that change, even in institutions, must rely both on internal and external pressures, and that it may occur either "as a slow, almost imperceptible process" or "as periods of relatively rapid change that punctuate long periods of stability" (p. 280). In the equity struggles in which McCaskell played a part, strong pressures were applied both internally by progressive teachers in the Board, and from external sources such as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). However, many of the progressive changes that were made at that time have since been undercut or have simply melted away. Those of us who continue to work for the destreaming of our school system can learn from these experiences to encourage new sources of struggle, both internal and external, and to hope that a new beginning for destreaming will soon come.

APPENDIX
WHAT WE CAN DO RIGHT NOW

In line with the essential features of destreamed schools on pages page 271 above, we propose the following as actions or activities to be considered by all levels of those in the school system — trustees/ superintendents, school administrators, teachers, students, parents and community members.

This ideas file is designed for schools and school boards throughout Ontario. We know that some of these policies and practices existed in boards that disappeared in the great consolidations and amalgamations of the late 1990s. Others may have been adopted in one or two boards or schools but not others. This list is intended as a trigger for discussion and policy development in the effort to achieve a more equitable schooling system.

It is impossible to envisage taking on all these ideas at any one time. Some may seem unimaginable or too difficult. Select those that appear either achievable or exciting and begin discussion! These are actions that can be initiated now.

1. Co-operative management by educators, parents, learners, and other community members

Trustees:

- Develop policy to ensure equitable representation with respect to class, race and gender on all Board committees, workgroups and task forces;

- Develop policy to ensure equitable representation with respect to class, race and gender on all school-based councils and decision-making bodies;
- Develop policy to ensure equitable representation with respect to class, race and gender on provincially mandated advisory committees: notably SEAC (Special Education Advisory Committees) and PICs (Parent Involvement Committees)
- Include student trustees as full-voting members of the board;
- Expand the range of advisory committees that include parent, student and community representatives;
- Ensure that all such committees have the opportunity to make recommendations to the Board periodically;
- Develop policies that engage parents in such activities as the selection of principals, vice-principals and senior staff positions;
- Ensure the provision of translation at all public consultation meetings as and when needed;
- Develop policy concerning all Board-sponsored meetings involving parents and community members to set times that accommodate the largest numbers possible and to provide free child care to meet needs in every case;
- Establish a School Community Relations policy and framework that would bring together translation service providers, settlement workers, outreach and community support workers, and other community organizers to facilitate a greater level of involvement for marginalized communities — all accountable both to the Board and to the communities they serve;
- Strengthen the role of School Councils to engage parents, students and local community members in discussions of ways to develop schools as community hubs and interactive learning communities;
- Develop a formula for the allocation of funds to school budgets that recognizes the different levels of fundraising capacity by school neighbourhood.

Superintendents:

- Work with local school administrators to ensure that parent councils are inclusive of the identities (class, race, faith-based, etc.) of all parents and community members;

- Where "Family of Schools" structures exist, establish Family of Schools Equity Committees that monitor and report to school councils and the board on the progress of curriculum initiatives and other school policies and practices in the achievement of broad equity objectives with respect to student life and learning for all;
- Work in accordance with Board policies to ensure that Family of Schools committees have parent, community and student representatives from diverse (race, class, gender, and sexual diversity etc.) populations;
- Provide educational programs for parents on how to run school councils democratically and effectively;
- Require local school administrators to report on the representative mix of members on school councils;
- Ask administrators to include the goal of equitable representation among stakeholders as a topic in the preparation of school improvement plans.

Local school administrators:

- Identify specific barriers for groups who are not typically represented in the parent council and challenge these barriers;
- Use different forms of meeting organization and timing to promote inclusion and participation;
- Use school demographic data to actively recruit parents for the school council who are representative of as wide a range of school community members as possible;
- Ensure there is real power-sharing (all voices are heard) on advisory committees such as the Safe and Caring Committee, etc.;
- Ensure that school councils are informed and involved in decisions relating to fundraising, staffing, budget allocation, codes of behaviour, inclusion, mixed-ability classrooms, schools as community hubs etc.;
- Ensure greater communication through electronic and social media in addition to transmission through print, using translation as needed, to promote achievement of these goals;
- Ensure there are student leadership groups actively addressing equity and inclusion issues within the school;
- Establish in-school models of inclusive and community-focused

teaching through encouraging peer support, team teaching and collaborative practice.

Teachers:

- Involve students in decision-making about the structures and curriculum that exist in their classroom using a dialogic and inquiry-based approach;
- Create opportunities for student-created and student-led initiatives in the school and classroom;
- Create school leadership/parliament groups that have a voice in the school, with representation in as many decision-making processes as possible, bringing concerns to the school council and to the principal at least once per term in each case.

Students:

- Engage in student governance not only to improve student life in extracurricular activities but in order to take a leadership role in the pursuit of equity objectives within all aspects of student life both within classrooms and beyond;
- Consider and recommend ways to improve the fairness of the school's code of conduct and disciplinary measures;
- Develop good lines of communcation with the teaching staff and school administration through joint decision-making processes and consultations;
- Take an active interest in aspects of student governance and issues of common concern that will create and strengthen links with student bodies in other schools or student umbrella organizations, both through digital and social media and in face-to-face meetings.

Parents:

- Make sure that teachers are aware of both things that are going well for a child and of areas of doubt or concern whenever the opportunity arises;
- Ensure that some portion near the beginning of all ward councils or schoolwide meetings is available for parents to ask questions

and share concerns rather than simply listening to presentations by Board officials;
- Always reach out to include parents from all the communities in your school neighbourhood and ensure that the diversity of the school community is both represented and heard within all school consultations and decision-making bodies at the school;
- Work to ensure that parent groups and their elected representatives reflect the composition of the parent group as a whole and that structures are developed to give as many people as possible a say in the decisions that affect all aspects of school life.

Community members:

- Take an interest in initiatives that affect the neighbourhood and community surrounding a school and make sure that the school authorities know how the community at large feels about it;
- Where a community organization has an interest in changes to school facilities or community access to school premises or the safety and well-being of the community, make sure that teachers and other members of the school including student leaders can participate in community discussion in order to achieve outcomes co-operatively.

2. Integration of intellectual and practical activities

Trustees/Superintendents:

- Encourage and work with supportive principals and teachers to pilot destreamed courses in Grades 9 and 10 that incorporate both intellectual and practical activities;
- Monitor and report both to the school community and the Board on progress and success of these pilots;
- Enhance and closely monitor Board and School Improvement Plans to ensure that equity goals are pursued and achieved in all schools;
- Require Grade 9 teachers of Applied level courses to increase the proportion of students within their class who make the transition into Academic level courses year by year;
- Provide Professional Development funds to work with Grade 9 teachers on strategies, such as dialogic/inquiry teaching, that

effectively engage the interest and active participation of students in Applied-level courses.

School administrators:

- Ensure that strong subject specialist teachers are assigned to the students in Applied Grades 9 and 10, with a view to enhancing student transitions to Academic level courses;
- Work with grade 9 teachers on specific "High Yield" strategies to effectively teach and engage students in Applied courses;
- Ensure there are supports in place for students to make the transition from Grade 9 Applied to grade 10 Academic.

Teachers:

- Adapt Inquiry-based and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) — see below — to include both intellectual and practical hands-on learning;
- Engage in education projects that integrate an intellectual dimension harnessing literacy/numeracy skills, creativity and critical judgment with a practical hands-on dimension leading to the production of presentation material or other objects that can be of use and/or help communicate knowledge to others, such as:

  - reviewing school field trip choices to see how they reflect the diversity of cultures within the school and showing results in graphic or pictorial form;
  - documenting school library book use by gender and producing statistical tables;
  - planning and executing the layout of a school food garden or extension to one;
  - estimating the degree of shade in the schoolyard at different times of the day and year, illustrating this pictorially or through animation;
  - documenting the use of computing and communications technologies in school by gender or ethnoracial background and preparing a CD illustrating this for parents, the board or other schools;

- conducting a survey of language rituals among your peers (ways of saying hello, thank you, or, sorry, etc.) by age, culture, and gender, and making a DVD;
- analysing the nutritional content and cultural diversity of food preferences among peers and making suggestions for new and healthier choices that peers would actually love to eat;
- planning and implementing an advertising campaign against smoking, on AIDS awareness or on conflict resolution using popular youth culture.

Students:

- Make the integration of intellectual and practical learning an important subject of discussion in your school;
- Ask for guest speakers to come and give exciting examples of such initiatives;
- Discover and document the numbers of students successfully transferring from Applied to Academic courses in Grades 9 and 10 and press for changes that will improve that transfer rate;
- Form or join clubs that combine the making of things with sciences of measurement and calculation: designing games, developing and displaying collector items, various forms of animation.

Parents:

- Encourage and propose school initiatives that will integrate both intellectual and practical skills into all learning and unmake the use of these distinctions to stream children and narrow their future options.

Community members:

- Offer to share demonstrations of your own practical skills at a neighbouring school or through field trips to your own workplace. Insist that students of every level of achievement be in the group you meet.

3. A common curriculum accessible to all students with space for locally-based learning

School administrators and teachers:

- (Use the "Guide to Curriculum Development" (pp. 279-280 above), and the detailed description of CRRP (pp. 268-270 above) as reference guides in developing and implementing progressive common curriculum and pedagogy for all students;
- Refer to and take advantage of the list of "Curriculum Resources" on pages 302-303 above;
- Engage in whole-school projects such as Eco-Schools using either the Toronto District School Board model (http://www.tdsb.on.ca/AboutUs/Innovation/EcoSchools.aspx) or the provincial guideline (http://ontarioecoschools.org).

Students:

- Find out from young people that you meet elsewhere or communicate with through the web about whole-school projects that they may have engaged in and, if they seem interesting, propose similar ones in your own school;
- Look out especially for projects that are reflective of the cultural diversity of your school and that allow for equal participation by male and female students.

Parents:

- Familiarize yourself as much as possible with the curriculum materials used in your child's school and satisfy yourself that it is relevant and responsive to your own cultural background and the daily life of your children. Discuss this with both your child's teachers and with other parents.

Community members:

- Ensure that all local events suitable for children's participation or educational purposes are well-known to local schools and that

special arrangements can be made for school participation;

- Contact your local school to find ways to co-ordinate and improve the use of or access to local facilities, programs and events by the school.

4. Flexible mixed-ability grouping

Trustees/Superintendents:

- Support all initiatives to increase inclusion and mixed-ability grouping both with respect to Special Education and in all regular classroom teaching and learning;
- Make the move towards greater inclusion and mixed-ability grouping a board priority;
- Report to the general public on progress towards greater inclusion and mixed-ability grouping every two years;
- Require School Improvement Plans to include a section on inclusion and mixed-ability grouping every year.

School administrators:

- Promote a culture of inclusion within LD, Behavioural and resource classes, so that the goal of these programs is to help students return to their regular class within a fixed period;
- Create a culture of shared teaching, support and collaborative planning;
- Treat congregated classes as a temporary placement;
- Create timetables which promote the inclusion and integration of students;
- Work toward and phase out placements in congregated classes.

Teachers:

- Build a strong relationship with each child in the class;
- Understand the ability level of each child and move all students forward;
- Develop a belief that all children can achieve and all are geniuses in their own right;

- Emphasize strategies of support for every student rather placing emphasis on labelling and assignment of IEPs;
- Employ dialogical approaches and differentiated strategies to teaching.

Students:

- Ensure that there is a place within student governance and student-run activities for school members who may otherwise be marginalized by ability/disability --- inclusion can only work if students themselves also make such moves spontaneously;
- Work to ensure that students who feel excluded by virtue of school decisions, peer behaviour or any other unreasonable demands can find support in the struggle to improve their inclusion.

Parents:

- Discover what special measures your school is undertaking to improve inclusive practices and help multiple-ability grouping work for the benefit of all students;
- If you have concerns about inclusive education for your child, visit the Ontario Coalition for Inclusive Education for contact information at http://www.inclusive-education.ca/ contact/ contact_index.php);
- If a child is being considered for Special Education Services, be aware of parent rights:

  - Proper consultation before an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is put in place;
  - Right to be part of discussions concerning future changes to the IEP;
  - Right to require in writing that the IEP not be included in the Ontario Student Record, if you are concerned about its contents;
  - Right to withhold consent to release of any medical records to school board staff, but seek the advice of your physician before doing so;
  - Right and duty to protest against any suggestion that a

teacher may make concerning the prescription of drug treatments for your child;

- Informed consent is required from you before your child undergoes any psychological assessments;
- Right to participate in the proceedings of an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) following a psychological assessment;
- Right to refuse a particular placement for your child, as in a Special class;
- Right to appeal decisions of the IPRC, or to seek mediation.

Community members:

- Inform local schools of all events that include special accommodations for students with disabilities beyond barrier-free access;
- Encourage local agencies providing health services and disability services for children to work with local schoolteachers on developing age-appropriate curriculum units that explain the nature of their work and how to remove barriers to people with health challenges and disabilities in everyday life.

5. Dialogical teaching: critical approaches to teaching

Trustees/Superindendents:

- Provide professional development at administrator meetings about CRRP and Inquiry-Based Learning as part of a school vision within local community-based education;
- Mandate administrators to implement CRRP and Inquiry-Based Learning as part of School Improvement Plans in concrete and tangible ways.

Local school administrators:

- Be a curriculum leader in your school by sharing with staff how to implement dialogical practices such as CRRP and Inquiry-Based Learning;
- Ask teachers to include elements of CRRP, and Inquiry-Based

Teaching in their Annual Learning Plan;
- In small schools, consult with parents, students and other community members about whole-school projects such as school grounds development, environmental audits, local/oral histories, or Jane's Walks (http://www.janeswalk.net).

Teachers:

- Continually ask questions such as: How does this decision challenge historical and current barriers for marginalized groups that I work with?
- Help develop cultural competence through activities that mobilize the knowledge and identities that students and their families bring with them;
- Create a classroom that demonstrates critical awareness through the identification and analysis of inequities and ways in which these can be contested and remedied;
- If ethical review is required prior to the use of surveys or student interviews in student projects, discuss its rationale with the class and see how it balances freedom of information in the search for equity and social justice against freedom from unwarranted interference, stereotyping or stigmatization by gender, race or socio-economic status.

Students:

- If your school has a debating society, encourage it to include in its topics pressing issues that affect local students' lives with the goal of pursuing this beyond the closed circle of a debating exercise;
- In student governance circles develop proposals for inquiry-based learning that can be taken to classrooms where this is practised.

Parents:

- Make sure that the school presents to parent meetings and posts on its website examples of how it is implementing CRRP and Inquiry-Based Learning and ask how parents can play a role in

such work in order to connect the school more closely with their community and concerns.

Community members:

- Offer to allow inquiry-based learning projects to make use of your knowledge and that of your immediate neighbourhood.

6. Genuine interactions between schools and communities for social change

Trustees/Superintendents:

- Encourage school administrators to include social action initiatives as part of their school plan;
- Expand the Community Use of Schools policy in conjunction with the Board's Parent Involvement Committee in order to co-locate and co-ordinate community services in ways that can enrich the school curriculum as well as enhance access to such services as daycare, health clinics, settlement advice, road safety training;
- Develop learning partnerships with local neighbourhood agencies and organizations, especially those that use the school premises or are closely located to the school;
- Mobilize support to create a school-community food garden in every school;
- Multiply opportunities for intergenerational learning.

Local school administrators:

- Encourage staff to engage students in social action initiatives in the community that are related to their academic programming;
- Develop a school fund to pay for the cost of police checks and transportation for prospective volunteers and senior participants from low-income communities.

Teachers:

- Engage in your own critical inquiry projects — for example, assessing the placement and outcomes data for your own school, and exploring reasons for, and solutions to, possible discriminatory practices and outcomes;
- Include community social action projects as part of the curriculum for your students;
- Where possible,encourage students to make their community projects also a research endeavour — to take up pressing social issues in their community, and to explore why these issues exist and what might be done to alleviate them;
- Try to spend more time in the school's neighbourhood, if you do not live there — doing shopping, participating in local community events, activities and groups, visiting parks and recreational areas, and so on.

Students:

- Learn to connect the activities that you engage in beyond school, whether recreational, sports, cultural or in ways related to health, with your school activities, by proposing inquiry projects or writing topics or even math problems that bring both educational and community experiences together;
- Discover what opportunities might be available for the after-hours use of the school premises by the school community and its neighbourhood groups and make them known to families and friends;
- Explore ways to incorporate seniors in various student activities and clubs either as advice-givers and coaches or as full participants in such activities as board games, computer activities, etc.

Parents:

- Sponsor local community groups that could make use of the school after hours, on weekdays and during holidays;
- Encourage your school to develop a list of student activities, clubs, etc. in which retired family members might participate and ensure that such an initiative would be welcomed by the students themselves;

- Encourage retired family members to volunteer at your school in order to engage in intergenerational education opportunities;
- Encourage retired family members to participate at your school in order to engage in intergenerational education opportunities.

Community members:

- Encourage the community around you to consider and advocate for ways to integrate community services and educational programs in schools;
- Insist that your councillor and school trustee work together to co-ordinate the provision of educational and municipal services, through parallel use agreements, co-location of services, interactions of schools, public libraries, public health, parks and recreation, etc.;
- Insist that your councillor and school trustee work together to improve school board-municipality interactions, establishing better channels of communication and institutional support;
- Take every public opportunity offered to volunteer to help in a local school, whether as a senior citizen helping youngsters with their reading or homework, as a liaison between schools and their community institutions, or in activities that make special knowledge available to teachers and students in learning activities that bring communities and schools together.

7. Equity-based assessment alternatives

Trustees/Superindendents:

- Review and continually monitor referral practices and assessment instruments in order to identify those that have as their outcome disproportionality of representation by class, race or gender in the assignment of IEPs, exceptionalities, or Special Education placements;
- Phase out the acceptance of private assessments in the assignment of IEPs, exceptionalities, or Special Education placements;
- Form a committee in each Family of Schools to review all testing instruments and evaluation practices for cultural sensitivity and

bias, with representation from administrators, parents, community members and students (from Grade 7 up);

- Work to unyoke classroom teaching from preparation for EQAO tests and the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test;
- Give consideration to local school community involvement in the observation and determination of student progress through innovations like the Class Councils used in all middle and secondary schools in France, with representation from parents and students in the process.

School administrators and teachers:

- Create classrooms where students are highly motivated for intellectual and practical learning by engaging all students in the creation of new criteria, learning goals, and the increasing use of descriptive feedback alongside or in place of numerical measurement;
- Help students to develop accredited portfolios of their accomplishments as a preferable complement to test scores, school grades and report cards to demonstrate what they are capable of to other educators or prospective employers;
- Find ways to be accountable to parents and the community for the quality of students' learning that go beyond a dependence on numerical grades, for example:

  • Demonstrate the quality of students' work as much as possible to both student's families and the broader neighbourhood through periodic use of open houses with displays of work such as science fairs, school-community newspapers, community research, poster campaigns, arts and crafts, films and videos, food from the school garden, garbage items recycled into useful or decorative household items, etc.;

  • Ensure that all such displays of work are photographed or recorded on video by students and made available for the general public on school websites, Youtube, SlideShare, Flicker and other digital media;

  • Ensure that every single student's work be thus validated and demonstrated in public at least once every year, whether

individually or through participation in group projects;

- Ensure that any selection of such work for display be conducted by the students themselves, at least in part, and that such work for public display be conducted as much as possible cooperatively rather than competitively;
- Help develop projects to include and demonstrate the achievements of students that have special challenges or are marginalized for whatever reason;
- Multiply opportunities for students to see the fruits of their work, intellectual and practical, as being of genuine use or benefit to others both within the school and within the community.

Students:

- Propose the introduction of student-written course evaluations (not teacher evaluations) in your school, ones that are designed to prepare future students for both the demands and workload of each course and with the kinds of evaluation that are used within it.

Parents:

- Arrange through the school office to visit the school on other occasions to see the work that is on display or is being done by different classes;
- Propose an open forum on evaluation with the goal of finding and promoting alternatives to the reliance on numerical grades or standardized testing as a guide to student achievement.

Community members:

- In order to understand what student applicants for positions of any kind are capable of doing ask to see portfolios of their work (accredited by their school), rather than report cards or grades, and let local schools know that you are doing this.

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Ally (*verb*) To place in a friendly association, to connect in a personal relationship, band together, combine, come aboard, come together, consolidate, cooperate, fuse, hook up, join together, meld, merge, mingle, network, plug into, pool, relate, stand behind, sympathize, team up, tie in, unite

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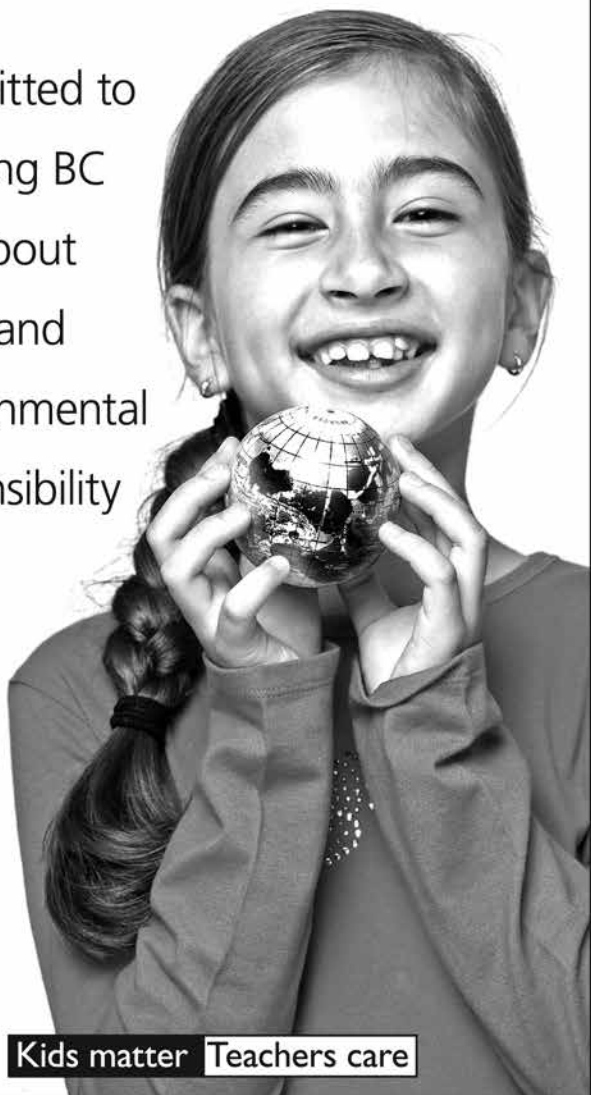
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"Will we waste another generation?" This is the question posed in *Stacking the Deck: The Streaming of Working Class Kids in Ontario Schools*, published more than 20 years ago in 1992. Now, with this follow-up volume, the same question remains: Will we waste another generation over the next two decades? The same destructive, if somewhat more hidden, streaming arrangements are still at work in Ontario schools. They are still based on class, race, gender and imputed special needs and bring with them substantial discriminatory treatment. And, as the evidence shows, streaming has no redeeming features: it hurts poor and racialized students, and it doesn't improve the performance of students from wealthier homes. In this neo-liberal era in education, serious resistance to streaming is going to require a sustained alliance of working-class and progressive middle-class parents and students, alongside teacher unions and labour and community organizations. This book is intended to support that effort.

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