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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses school violence, examining pertinent research, media, and policy documents. Section 1 examines the evolution of terminologies related to youth violence. Section 2 explains that when reviewing researchers' conclusions on school violence, it is important to consider the role perception had in determining those views. Section 3 examines the evolution of strategies for handling school violence. Between the mid-1970s and early 1990s, the problem of student misbehavior evolved from addressing discipline to emphasizing violence prevention. Researchers began to see violence as an outcome of disruptive behavior that had been ignored or attributed to inappropriate causes. Some believed that the swiftness and certainty of punishment was more influential than its severity. Blaming violence on student problems in need of fixing results in failure to accept an underlying pedagogy within schools based on power, dominance, control, and subservience that fosters the behaviors that educators feel pressured to handle. Research supports the benefit of addressing such issues by emphasizing causes (not symptoms), positive and preventive practices, and decision making that benefits students. However, little progress has been made toward organizing schools for the best interests of students. The paper concludes with a new agenda for addressing school violence. (Contains 65 references.) (SM)

Morphology of School Violence

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The Morphology of School Violence

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Introduction

Mawhinney (1995) suggested that the study of policy directions should consider societal influences which serve as a filter for defining social problems. If policy and program development is influenced by how a problem is perceived and delimited, then an understanding of the morphology of "school violence" can shed light on a problem that continues to dominate educational and political agendas. The motivation behind an evolution of terms is important to explore, as is an understanding of how the issue has been conceptualized and subsequently addressed.

Research Method

This paper provides an cursory examination of documents - research, media and policy- that have touched upon the issue of youth behaviour over the past decades. Since this is an on-going and preliminary study, the examples are certainly not exhaustive, nor are conclusions reached definitive. Rather, the intent of presenting this material is to generate dialogue and challenge readers to probe deeper into the permutations of an issue that has created adult angst for many generations. Researchers will hopefully be induced to critically question those assumptions that have played a pivotal role in the school violence agenda and by so doing, seize opportunities to examine those variables that have most influenced current directions in addressing the issue.

I would further add that it is the responsibility of every researcher to: (a) continually challenge the assumptions underlying the problem definition, (b) identify multiple conceptualizations of the problem and those definitions that influence how the problem is

framed, and (c) revisit the problem identified and accommodate new perspectives as required.

An Evolution of Terminologies

The phenomenon of youth violence, crime and delinquency is not new. For example, the Toronto police chief wrote in his Annual Report dated 1890: "Vagrant bands parading the streets at night have given the police a good deal of trouble, composed as they are, of rowdy youths belonging to no responsible society or organization" (cited in Onstad, 1997). After the local police received numerous complaints regarding the conduct of boys, in particular, the Chief Constable concluded that "juveniles are responsible for depredations of all kinds, and, as a class, are more difficult to deal with than the professional thief..." (p. 21).

Great Britain and the United States also agonized over youth delinquency. The *Picture Post* (1939), for example, wrote that "The great increase in juvenile crime is certainly one of the most horrible features of our time" (p.38). An article in the 1928 American *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* stated that "Not only have the concepts of "sin," "wickedness," "piety," and "righteousness" completely lost meaning for the modern young person, but the authority upon which the right and wrong standard is based - the authority of church, home, school, and state - is fast waning (Anderson & Dvorak, 1928). For many, the solution lay in "a stiff whopping" *(Picture Post*, 1939).

By its purest definition, a *delinquent* youth is one who "fails to perform a duty or commits a fault" (Funk and Wagnall, 1993). Using such a broad definition, it is not surprising that to the end of the 1970's youth *delinquency* continued to be a public issue of increasing proportions. An examination of documents on the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) by keyword search, showed a 205 percent increase in articles on "delinquency" between 1966 and 1976. During the same period, articles on violence in America jumped from three in 1966 to 147 a decade later. The most prevalent themes of the studies were TV violence, delinquent subcultural involvement, behavior modification and therapy for juvenile delinquents, vandalism, violence and disorder in American public schools (see Table 1).

Desegregation added a new dimension and led to growing racial tensions in the United States. Images of race riots and the Vietnam war were brought to millions of television viewing youth and the emerging pop culture depicted drug-influenced rock-and-rollers. Educators (e.g., Marvin, McCann, Connolly, Temkin, & Henning, 1976) were beginning to use "school violence" to describe criminal activities that occurred at school: gang wars, illicit drug use, vandalism, weapon possession, and personal assault. Indeed, these were criminal acts, often accompanied with violence.

In Canada, a similar phenomenon was emerging. By 1981, the Canadian issue of *Today* alarmed its readers with statistics on the costs to taxpayers of vandalism in Vancouver schools. The article suggested that Canadian schools were in trouble, experiencing increased *delinquency* amongst their students. Within a decade of the publication of this article, vandalism was considered to be not only a delinquent behavior, but also a "violent" one (e.g., MacDougall, 1993). In 1993, the *Toronto Star* published results of an Environics poll which indicated that more respondents were concerned about violence in schools than academic standards (cited in MacDougall, 1993). One of the shortcomings of drawing conclusions from such a poll, was that the underlying causes for these perceptions were not explored. For example, it is not known if concerns over violence stemmed from: (a) an increase in the number of incidents, (b) increased intolerance for behaviors previously ignored or accepted, or (c) labeling what was previously considered delinquent behavior as "violent."

In their recent examination of the Canadian media's obsession with the topic, Doob, Marinos, and Varma (1995) attributed the public's concern over the sudden increase in youth offenses as stemming from the inclusion of 16 and 17 year olds in the data -- offenders who had been tracked under adult crime statistics prior to the *Young Offenders Act* (1982). They also suggest that the most recent wave of public concern over youth "crime" had also arisen from zero-tolerance policies in schools which delegated incidents of misbehavior and delinquency (e.g., throwing snowballs, mischief, playground fights) to police and the judicial system - incidents that were once dealt with within the confines of the school.

In Canada, the term "school violence" quickly evolved into a plethora of behaviours that were not limited to *Criminal Code* infractions. The nineties heralded a new vision of violence. From the point of view of teachers or school administrators, Wiseman (1993) suggested that school violence encompassed those behaviors which seriously disrupted the safe learning environment of a classroom or

school. It included "anything that affronts a child or teacher or staff member's ability to function in a safe, conductive learning environment" (p. 3). The following are a few examples of such all encompassing definitions:

> all physical and nonphysical acts that are seriously harmful to others, unjust and/or unlawful. (Alberta Education, 1993a)

> ...the threat or use of force that injures or intimidates a person [makes them feel afraid]. (British Columbia Teachers' Federation, 1994, p. 4)

Expanding the definition of violence resulted in a myriad of behaviors and activities that some researchers (e.g., Dolmage, 1996) considered "disruptive," but not necessarily "violent." Ten years ago, some American educators were expressing concerns regarding this issue, suggesting that grouping behavioral or discipline problems together with crime and violence would lead to public hysteria (Wayson, 1985). Schools would be viewed as "hotbeds" of violence, thus providing politicians and the media with tremendous opportunities to fuel public fears. The *Ontario Crime Control Commission Report* (1998) on Youth Crime provides a salient example of the increased politicization of troubled youth.

The Commission, appointed by the Premier of the Province, comprised three elected officials whose mandate was to liaise with top crime-fighters from around the world so as to "fight crime in Ontario." Included in the suggestions to "combat crime, violence and bad behaviours in schools were: (a) a standardized policy of zero tolerance for violent or disorderly behaviour for all schools, (b) short-term placement centres for disorderly students, (c) school response teams to recognize, manage and resolve conflict, and (d) tough and escalating sanctions for violence, sexual assault, weapons offences and verbal abuse - from detention to placement centres to expulsion.

The report justifies its mandate by assuring the electorate that:

Crime presents a serious threat to society. In Ontario, much of that crime is committed by young people. The Government of Ontario is committed to dealing aggressively with youth crime and the serious social and economic consequences . ... . In Canada, the majority of people perceive that crime is rising and one of their foremost concerns is youth crime (Ontario Crime Control Commission, 1998, p.6).

The empirical evidence presented to support a concern for youth crime indicated that young male adults between the ages of 18 and 34 make up the largest single sector of the population charged with violent and property offences in Canada. Male youths aged 12 to 17 years account for the next largest group accused of violent and property crimes. It should be noted that the average age of highschool completion in North America is typically 18. The authors of the report further suggest that "crime is caused by criminals, not by socio- economic factors . . . the root of youth crime is poor parenting . . . [and] there is broad support for schools taking a more aggressive role in dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour" (p.10).

Following a successful re-election campaign that promised increased attention to youth violence, U.S. President Clinton convened the first White House Conference on School Safety in 1998. It was intended to provide a forum to identify the causes of school and community violence, as well as to seek strategies for preventing and improving school safety. This conference followed the announcement of a revamped safe and drug-free schools program that aimed to promote : (a) zero tolerance polices for guns and drugs; (b) school uniforms; (c) closed campus policies; (d) secure schools through measures such as metal detectors, and formal agreements with law enforcement or safety officials to patrol school grounds and pathways to school; (e) effective anti-drug and violence prevention programs, including programs that teach responsible decision making; and (f) mentoring, mediation, or other activities aimed at changing behaviors.

The Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention outlined an action plan in 1996, that would combat juvenile delinquency through sanctions and treatment. In the same

report the authors noted that juvenile property related crime represented a greater percentage than violent crimes. The State of Delaware's governor signed a School Discipline Bill in 1996, which was designed "to combat problems caused by chronic absenteeism and unruly students."

A review of recent Canadian literature suggests that, once again, schools are demonstrating a shift in attitudes regarding school violence. Delinquent behaviors that were considered "school discipline problems" in the 1970s, and "school violence" in the early 1990s, are now termed "disruptive." The Canadian Education Association's most recent report (1996) begins by stating that "both educators themselves and the general public see disruptive student behavior as a major concern in schools today" (p. 2). The authors used the following definition from Canter and Canter (1993) to explain this new perspective: "Difficult students are students who are continually disruptive, persistently defiant, demanding of attention or unmotivated" (p. 3). The report uses examples such as: breaking rules, lack of self-discipline, and disturbing classroom learning, to illustrate *disruptive* behaviors. The movement in some Canadian jurisdictions towards issues of student disruption, as opposed to school violence is perhaps due to the negative image of public education that the term "school violence" elicited, or the frustration some educators (e.g., Dolmage, 1996) publicly expressed regarding the media-hyped, overstated problem of violence in Canadian schools. As a political platform, however, youth crime and violence continues to play to a captive adult electorate.

The Role of Perception

Johnson (1987) identified several key questions to consider in educational research: "...(c) how accurately do perceptions portray reality? and (d) are perceptions shaped by identifiable and commonly occurring factors?" (p. 209). Reviewing conclusions researchers have drawn on the topic of school violence should therefore take into account the role perception had in determining those views. For example, not everyone is in agreement with expanding definitions of school violence to include name-calling or exclusio of others. West (1993) stated that such broad definitions of violence serve to distort and unduly escalate the "moral panic" associated with

school violence discussions. Wayson (1985) suggested that much of the hysteria has come from grouping behavioral or discipline problems together with crime and violence. Furthermore, he challenged the assumption that violence is a critical deterrent to effective learning in school.

In Kasian's 1992 survey of teachers, (with the exception of weapons possession) no observable differences were found in respondents' recollections of increases in school violence over the past five years. Kasian hypothesized that violent incident rates have remained unchanged over the years and only appear to have escalated due to heightened awareness and increased attention directed at the topic of school violence - premise supported by Gabor (1995) in his analysis of school violence coverage in the media.

The political platforms in the United States (e.g., White House Conference on School Safety, 1998), England (e.g., Home Office, 1997) and Canada (e.g., Ontario Crime Control Commission, 1998) have capitalized on the popularity of focusing on youth crime and violence. Unfortunately, as Jackson and Naureckas (1994) noted, the media especially, have largely ignored the high rates of child victimization at the hands of adults, that six out of every seven murders are committed by adults, and that 83 percent of murdered children are slain by adults over the age of 20. In the United States, they contend, half a million children and teenagers are victimized (mostly rape) by adults whose average age is 27. The authors conclude by noting the "short-term political and corporate profit from fixing kids, not the environment." Essentially, pointing the finger at youth is convenient and has contributed to intergenerational hostilities and a "safe" avenue for ignoring root problems that the adult society is responsible for.

The study of youth crime and violence has been scant until the recent decade. Although issues of delinquency and deviancy did find a place in educational research, they were predominantly within the realm of educational psychology. A keyword search of the ERIC databases is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. ERIC Keyword Search from 1966-1996.

Year	"Violence"	"Delinquency"	"Bullying"	Examples of Subtopics Covered
1966	7	56	1	desegregation, police, prevention and control of the anti-social behavior of youth, psychotherapy for adolescent delinquent boys, social maladjustment
1976	147	171	0	TV violence, delinquent subcultural involvement, behavior modification and therapy with juvenile delinquents, vandalism, violence and disorder in American public schools
1986	173	153	1	Domestic violence, effects of terrorism, media violence, child abuse, drugs and alcohol, the bullying of Japanese youth, social cognition and aggression in delinquent adolescent males.
1996	501	212	33	relationship between learning disabilities and delinquency, risk models for juvenile delinquency, school violence, schoolyard bullies, emotional and behavioral disorders, peer abuse

An Evolution of Strategies

Between the mid-seventies and early nineties, the problem of student misbehavior had evolved from issues of addressing "discipline" to issues of "violence prevention." In 1975, the growing concern in Alberta about school vandalism, poor standards of behavior and the belief by many teachers that lack of discipline was interfering with teaching, led to a study sponsored by the Alberta Ministry of Education, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and the Provincial Trustees Association. Over 5,000 people participated in the study, including parents, trustees, support staff, and students from across the province. The results suggested that there

were mixed views regarding the adequacy of school discipline, the use of corporal punishment, and the underlying reasons for discipline problems among students (Clarke, 1977). Large class sizes, large schools, lack of extra-curricular activities, uninteresting work, and heavy teacher workloads were considered by many participants to be factors which influenced student behavior. Underlying causes for lack of discipline were described as: (a) lack of respect for authority, (b) poor attitudes among young people, (c) lack of discipline at home, and (d) poor student-teacher relations.

Four years later the New Brunswick Teachers' Federation (1979) collected data from provincial teachers' associations across Canada on the issue of school violence and discipline. The submission from Alberta stated:

> There is no evidence of any such increase [in school violence]. We believe that if there has been any significant increase more teachers would have been complaining to us on this topic. Such has not happened. In addition, the Alberta Teachers' Association has no evidence that student violence directed at students is a serious problem. (p. 20)

Similarly, the government of Alberta's response was that "it would appear that the matter of violence in schools may be dealt with quite appropriately under the *Criminal Code*" (New Brunswick Teachers' Federation, 1979, p.20).

In the years that followed, public forums across Canada (e.g., Alberta Education, 1993, 1994; British Columbia Teachers' Federation, 1994; New Brunswick Teachers' Federation, 1979) were held to understand the phenomenon of school violence and to identify potential strategies that would ensure safe schools. The federal government also became more involved by funding research on youth violence through the Solicitor General's *Brighter Futures Initiative*. The earlier work was primarily focused on better understanding the nature and extent of the problem. The data that were collected from teachers, parents, and police pointed to a broad spectrum of "violent" behaviors that were causing concern within and outside of Canadian

schools (Mathews, 1994; Pepler & Craig, 1994; Ryan, Mathews, & Banner, 1993; Walker, 1994).

Teachers became increasingly vocal about what they perceived to be a dramatic increase in aggressive behaviors in schools. In 1992, the Alberta Teachers' Association suggested policies for dealing with violence in schools. Of the ten recommendations for action, eight addressed response to student behavior, and two encouraged the communication of discipline policies to parents and students. Neither violence-prevention, nor the teaching of pro-social behaviors to students were offered as measures to address violence in schools (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1992). One year later, the Association urged the Ministry of Education to establish a task force that would investigate the issue of violence in schools (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1994).

In 1995, Wall's study of 29 schools, 2 junior high, 2 senior high, 9 elem/junior high, 14 elem/junior/senior high, 77 elementary, in Alberta concluded that rates of school violence were low. His work focused on only those incidents which were reported to principals of participant schools over a two-week period. In Wall's study, data were not gathered on the basis of either observation or student reporting. His conclusion, like that of Dolmage (1996), was that school-based violence had been largely exaggerated and precipitated by "self-serving research such as teacher opinion polls" (p. 22).

Interestingly, Webber's (1995) study of issues facing 76 of Alberta's superintendents found that school violence, vandalism, and racism were of a low priority. Rather, their primary concerns focused on future planning requirements and decreased funding for education. Johnson and Holdaway's (1991) work with Alberta principals found that of the 29 effectiveness dimensions provided to participants (n=196), "adapting policies and procedures to respond to external changes and expectations" was listed as 27th in importance. "Enlisting support of the non-parental community" was last (29th). Within a span of six years, Alberta's principals were expressing a great interest in obtaining any information or resources possible from its member association, to deal with violence in schools (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1997). Of the 275

principals who responded, 63 percent were "very interested" in violence issues in schools, and 47 percent indicated that they used some form of violence prevention programs. Sixty percent stated that they did not have a violence prevention policy in their schools.

The province of Ontario's Ministry of Education and Training (1994) introduced a *Violence-free Schools Policy*, and several districts responded by adopting zero tolerance practices, which effectively suspended or expelled students for acts of violence (e.g., possession of a weapon). The policy document outlined provisions in the *Education Act* for the suspension and expulsion of students, adding that: "Specific disciplinary action by the principal or the school board resulting from a violent incident is therefore not dealt with in this document" (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1994, p. 32). To add to the confusion, Ontario also amended the *Education Act* to stipulate that all school boards report annually to the Ministry all incidents of violence which resulted in a student's suspension or expulsion. The only criteria for determining whether an incident was violent, was whether it led to a suspension, or expulsion, or a call to the police. No definitions of "extortion" or "assault" were ever provided. Students were suspended for pushing in the hallways, snowball fights and walking out of class in protest - all recorded as "violent" incidents. Although they were not always considered violent, Dupper and Bosch (1996) found similar patterns of student suspensions for minor infractions termed "other" in the official statistics.

In Alberta, Section 19(1.1) of *Bill 19* (1994) provided principals with a high degree of discretionary authority. Seen as a response to the growing demands by school boards to broaden their powers to effectively respond to violent students, Bill 19 amended the Alberta *School Act* to allow principals to "suspend or expel a student for any reason considered appropriate." With no provision for appeal, child advocates quickly urged the government to reconsider this ammendment. Five years later, Bill 20 (1999) is intended to remove the all encompasing clause.

A shift in terminologies has not necessarily implied a move towards consensus regarding effective strategies to prevent or respond to school violence. Criminologists and police, for

example, believe that the swiftness and certainty of punishment are more influential than the severity of the punishment (Gabor, 1995). In line with this thinking, zero tolerance policies - which seek to punish or suppress serious disruptive or violent behaviors - gained popularity in the early nineties (e.g., Alberta School Boards Association, 1993; British Columbia Teachers' Federation, 1994). Recently, concerns have been raised as to whether such policies deny student perpetrators their legal right to a fair and judicious hearing, and send the wrong message to young people (i.e., there is a quick and easy solution to conflict).

In the United States, a number of researchers (e.g., Shostak, 1986; Yonker, 1983) began to link violence as an outcome of disruptive behavior that had been ignored, or attributed to inappropriate causes. They accused schools of failing to deal with the underlying causes for disruptive behaviors, choosing to reprimand or remove such students, rather than take the time to identify what caused the disruption: "The factors of fear, threat, negative attitudes, bored students and the power struggle between students and school staff have directly contributed to disruptive behavior in the classroom" (Yonker, 1983, p. 126). Hargreaves, Earl, and Ryan (1996) suggested that factors such as the inability of schools to adapt to the unique needs of adolescents have resulted in a failure to address either their emotional or academic needs:

> When young teenagers yearn for greater independence, we tighten the screws of classroom control. When they are most in need of care and support to guide them through the turbulent years leading to adulthood, we focus on teaching subject matter. . . and leave students' emotional needs to the peer group and gang (p. 159).

In his text on ethics, Peters (1966) offered a similar observation, suggesting that boredom was the most prevalent cause of disorder, fueled by students feeling more as spectators than active participants in a shared endeavor (p. 279). Coulby and Harper (1985) stated that "there is no such thing as a disruptive child. Certain pupils behave disruptively in some lessons, with some

teachers, in some environments at certain times" (p. 3). This is a belief that is perhaps not shared by all principals. If, for example, only the behavior was considered to be disruptive, Coulby and Harper suggested that through a concerted effort on the part of school staff to encourage pro-social behaviors, such disruptions could be eliminated. In contrast, a belief that students in and of themselves are disruptive, results in increased control, regimentation, and ultimately, the belief that schools can do little to remedy such behaviors, short of removal of the student from school. Interestingly, everyday school violence is attributed by some (e.g., Toby, 1993) to be caused, at least in part, by the educational policies and practices of schools which are under the leadership of the school principal.

Unfortunately, the political reality is that the adult voting public responds more positively to "get tough" strategies such as those espoused recently by the Ontario Crime Control Commission (1998):

> For initial discipline problems, where numbers permit, the Board of Education shall establish short-term placement centers where students can be sent for a period of one day to three weeks. These centers should have small cubicles or small rooms that will isolate students (p.40).

In Great Britain and the United States, similar political documents have been released addressing the issue of youth crime and justice -some of which have highlighted the need for a more holistic approach to the issue. The Home Office Report (1997) *No more excuses - A new approach to tackling youth crime in England and Wales* conceded that " Crime does not happen in a social vacuum. It is correlated with social disadvantage and poverty." The recommendations include: (a) policies to help children achieve at school; (b) higher school standards, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy skills in primary schools; (c) strategies to reduce truancy; (d) support for after-school programs; and (e) better links between schools and

business to help young people make the transition to adult working life.

Conclusions and Reflections

Schools can neither solve nor ignore the realities of children's lives. Unfortunately, efforts directed at defining and recasting behaviors as delinquent, disruptive, or violent, have perpetuated the notion that students have problems in need of "fixing." The result is a failure to concede that there may be an underlying pedagogy, within schools, based on power, dominance, control, and subservience that fosters the very behaviors that educators feel unduly pressured to deal with. This view has been supported, if not perpetuated by media representations of "youth out of control."

Research (e.g., Wayson et al., 1982) supports the benefit of addressing school issues by focusing on causes not symptoms, positive and preventative practices, not punitive; and making decisions for the benefit of the students. Despite such indications, little progress has been made towards organizing schools for the best interests of students (Postman, 1995). We continue to grapple with the notion of schooling and who is responsible for the emotional development of young people at a time when the family and other social institutions (e.g., the church) are no longer meeting that need. Whether we feel it is within the mandate of schools and teachers to look after the emotional and social needs of students, it is only when we redefine what is it to school and to educate that we will provide the skills, knowledge and environment that nurtures the whole person.

In 1973, Willower, Eidell, and Hoy published seminal work on the central role that pupil control plays in influencing the climate of schools. According to their findings, schools that were more humanistic in their approach to pupil behavior were more likely to create environments where students want to be, and not just have to be (p. 42). Humanistic schools focused on establishing positive relationships between students and teachers leading to self-disciplined, not controlled students. They concluded with the foresight that movement of schools towards a more

humanistic ideology, in particular junior high or middle schools, would likely be painful and slow in coming. The recent wave of zero tolerance policies and increased sanctions for student disruption suggest that Willower, Eidell, and Hoy were not overly pessimistic in their predictions.

Public education has received mixed reviews of late, and the proliferation of books on the failure of schools suggests that we are still grappling with the objectives and outcomes of the entire enterprise. On the one hand, government is trying to compete internationally in such areas as math proficiency, while, on the other hand, corporations exact pressure for schools to graduate students with more relevant work skills. The socio-economic disparity amongst families has also pressured schools to address the physical and emotional needs of children, ranging from providing hot lunches to establishing mentorship programs.

At a time when schools are criticized for their failure to impart relevant knowledge and skills, the public laments the lack of morality in today's youth. In the midst of such competing notions of what is in the "best interests" of children, the voice of pupils is often silenced. From 1989 to 1992, the Alberta government supported a three-year collaborative initiative with 12 school districts to develop an indicator system for measuring the success of education in the province. Five of those projects explored alternative means by which to assess student success. Of those, three projects addressed student behavior. A number of instruments were developed, that would measure the character as well as academic growth of students. Suggestions as to how to applaud the positive behaviors of students were provided. Despite the fact that emotions, attitudes, and socialization were considered an integral part of the teacher-student relationship, teachers in the junior and senior high school divisions were not enthusiastic about the area of "affective learning." They believed that there was insufficient time for "add-ons" to the current curriculum, especially since the outcomes were difficult to measure. Sadly, the final educational indicators that the government adopted were devoid of any aspects related to the milieu of the school and the development of pro-social behaviors in students. The affective domain is

interwoven with every other aspect of teaching and learning and thus impossible to ignore. It is not an add-on if one wishes to established a meaningful relationship with students (Alberta Education, 1993b, p. 140).

Over a decade ago, Nelsen (1985) argued that "schooling is socialization that standardizes, and often eliminates emotions to fit the bureaucratic routine of corporate workplaces" (p. 136). In their study of "delinquents," Stewart et al., (1985), (cited in Nelsen, 1985) concluded that their group of students exhibited "a liking for adventure, and tended to be socially bold, thick-skinned and compulsive" (p. 143); characteristics of many successful entrepreneurs and the principals in my own study. If Nelsen is right in suggesting that schools provide a training ground to enable future employees to function in a bureaucratic workplace, what happens when the workplace demands something else?

Zaleznik (1977) offered an insightful distinction between managers and leaders: managers seek stability, leaders advocate for change; managers avoid conflict and interpersonal working relationships, leaders do not; leaders seek creative solutions, managers avoid risk and innovation. Further to the differentiation between leadership and management, Zaleznik (1990) later suggested that bureaucracies were structured in such a way as to produce managers, not leaders. Applied to the setting of schools, leaders could be labeled as "disrupters" or "troublemakers" and thus constitute an unwanted challenge to the established routines of a bureaucratic organization.

Although I agree that socio-economic factors, negative peer influences, lack of parental supervision, are variables that can influence youth violence, I would suggest that the increase in primarily disruptive behaviors seen in schools could also be attributed to the conflict arising from schools which continue to prepare students for a bureaucratic workplace that is slowly disappearing. Students are exposed to daily examples of people (often their own parents) who have found success by challenging the status quo, taking risks and controlling their own destiny. They are encouraged, through corporate messages, to enhance their emotional intelligence,

become creative problem solvers, and self-actualized learners. A custodial model of schools, wherein students are (a) controlled through punitive sanctions, (b) expected to follow rules without question, (c) passive learners, and (d) not empowered to influence decisions that affect them, no longer prepares students for the demands of the corporate world.

If positive relationships are integral to creating a climate which rejects violence, is there a linkage between the perceived increase in school violence and the lack of "relationship skills" in today's adolescents? The adolscent students who are currently attending schools in were born between 1982 and 1987. These young people, more than any previous generation, have been exposed to a pervasive viewing of television. A 1990 Statistics Canada report (cited in Bibby & Posterski, 1992, p. 274) found that teenagers spend over 18 hours a week watching television. Images of violence constitute a significant portion of this viewing time. By the time children complete elementary school, television viewing has shown them 8,000 murders and over 100,000 acts of violence (Campbell, 1993).

Compounding the influence of media content is the relationship established between the viewer and the television. Channel changers provide children with the ability to be in control, to effect a "quick fix" to a program that does not interest them (i.e., change the channel). Skills necessary for positive interpersonal relationships (e.g., negotiation, compromise, commitment) are unessential for children who watch television or play video games. The increased need, that principals in this study expressed, for pro-social skill development may be related to the lack of opportunities for children to practice the "art" of human relationships - an "art" that is not required by television sets or video machines.

Bibby and Posterski (1992) suggested that "the source and stimulus of the violence that occurs in schools flows out of the culture that cradles the school" (p.229). If school culture influences student behavior, why are so many school violence prevention initiatives targeting students? I believe that this stems, in part, from: (a) the tremendous pressure schools have been under to deal with school violence, (b) a perpetuated myth that punishment acts as an effective

deterrent (e.g., *spare the rod and spoil the child*), (c) the disinclination of professionals (e.g., teachers) to engage in critical reflection of practice, (d) the general view that wisdom comes with age and experience, so that adults are more infallibility than children, and (e) the political play of "get tough on youth" strategies.

This hierarchical positioning of adults' knowledge and wisdom above children's is also reflected by the insufficient progress made in understanding how educational decisions and youth reforms have shaped student attitudes, behaviors and perceptions of the effectiveness of their school and community environments. Moreover, the ease by which youth can be targeted as the cause for society's ills is as Wilson and Tomlinson (1986) suggested that "it is the rare elected body or bureaucracy that acts only in the interests of an economically powerless, non-voting, and essentially silent constituency" (p. 2).

A New Agenda

In his graduation address, one principal had the following comment to make to the student assembly:

> If you haven't learned something about leaving the world a better place and turning it into a better place, all the excellence in academics is valueless. What matters when you come out of here is how we treat people and what you've learned here as to treating people. . . (cited in MacDonald, 1998)

The question is: what have we as adults learned about how to treat people? Have politicians, educators parents and the adult community embraced this value-based vision of schooling and the socialization of youth? In the new millennium we will see an evolution of work, and the workplace that demands new competencies and aptitudes. The rapid pace of change will likely impede the ability of schools to adequately prepare students for the careers choices they will have to make. The central role of schools in particular, will be to actively plan, inspire, direct, and motivate school communities to address new visions and goals of education.

If these goals do not take into account the influence schools have in (a) shaping the moral fabric of society, (b) elevating the status of children, and (c) inspiring young minds, then the current disenchantment with schools and negative attitudes towards youth will only intensify.As causal is the largely unchallenged acceptance of the media and politicians' battle cry to "combat youth crime."

The way in which school violence has been conceptualized and addressed in many schools is a telling sign that, as adults, we are not always prepared to relinquish power, authority, and control to adolescents. Adolescents are rarely asked to contribute in a meaningful way to the decisions that affect them. Their boredom, disruptive, and often violent, behaviors in schools are rarely identified as symptoms of adult-imposed policy solutions that alienate, frustrate, and "turn off" the very minds that schools are supposed to engage and inspire. The thrust in violence prevention initiatives in schools has been the assumption that violence is the problem, and that the only decisions remaining are: by what means should schools achieve "the end" - a reduction in violence? I prefer to position "the end" as creating a climate of caring that nourishes positive relationships notwithstanding the challenges of schooling and co-existing with today's teenagers.

The study of school violence is important and it will remain so if positioned as a study of schooling, of intergenerational tensions, of societal values, and human relationships. Although there is value in research which evaluates violence prevention programs, or quantifies the nature and extent of delinquent behaviors amongst students, more salient questions would ask:

1. What skills, attitudes and values would a teacher need to engage and inspire students so that few would want to disrupt the teaching and learning process?
2. What assumptions, biases and prejudices influence current educational reforms that purport to be in "the best interests of children"?
3. If we believe, as the African proverb suggests, that: "It takes an entire village to raise a child," how do we ensure that the "village" has the values, attitudes, and skills to accomplish this? Moreover, why should our young people trust the village?

Agger (1991) wrote, of an "ability to view the world in terms of its potential for being changed in the future, a hard-won ability in a world that promotes positivist habits of mind acquiescing to the status quo" (p. 109). What of these positivist habits, as they relate to the topic of school violence and youth crime? A cause-effect positivist theory would suggest that: (a) school violence is simply a mirror of societal violence, (b) that zero tolerance of violent behaviors by schools will eliminate these behaviors, (c) that undisciplined students, media violence and poor parenting have a causal relationship to the nature and extent of school violence. The challenge is to consider new areas of study that cast a more critical lense on the aspect of how and why adults have made assumptions about these issues, often without the benefit of empirical evidence.

Changing societal attitudes and the overall climate in schools is a more difficult task. As Lieber and Roger noted, "teachers wanted crops without the plowing and rain, without thunder and lightening" (1994, p. 57). Moreover, few adults are prepared to reflect on the behaviours that they are modelling? As Bibby and Posterski (1992) challenged: "Does [your] behaviour deserve to be duplicated" (p. 320) ?

Thankfully, in the past five years, more researchers are encouraging the development of strategies which address positive and preventative practices, not just punitive responses (e.g., Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1994). For example, how and under what conditions schools can provide a safe and caring environment is becoming more the question, than revamping the mechanisms of maintaining discipline and order. Issues of fairness, and effectiveness are also being re-examined as the rights of the offenders compete with those of the majority of students who are not directly engaged in violent acts. The sustainability of systemic change and concerted efforts to advocate on behalf of "student friendly environments" presents a great challenge to adults, especially educators, for "in a system where the gap between the stars and everyone else is immense, 5 days of training is not going to give teachers a new personality" (p. 60).

In order to address school violence, there is a need to build common understandings of: (a) what schools are *trying* to achieve, (b) what they *are* achieving, (c) to what extent, (d) by what measure, and (e) using what means. Is the sudden resurgence of resources motivated by a perceived need or political pressures? Are schools exercising leadership in this area, or followership of media hype and political posturing? What role do researchers play in supporting conclusions that are based on unchallenged assumptions and age-old paradigms? Have we ever sought to ask such questions, and if not - why?

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