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Title of Thesis/Project/Extended Essay

Accreditation: Privileging and Marginalizing of Shareholders

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June 28, 1996

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ABSTRACT

The inquiry looks at the B.C. Ministry of Education's revised accreditation process, entitled Building Partnerships (1994), and questions whether its dual aims, accountability and school improvement, can be attained within a single process. The thesis investigates whether meaningful evaluative partnerships can be established between shareholder groups when the likelihood to be brought to account may pre-determine shareholder relationships, vesting privilege in some and marginalizing others.

Conducted by a member of the teaching staff, the study was carried out at the researcher's school site during the year of its accreditation (1995-6). Data were gathered through extensive interviews, field notes, analysis of accreditation-related documents and reflective journal entries.

Analysis of accreditation evidence, of the decision-making process informing the School Growth Plan, and of the design of the internal report revealed an over-dependence on surveys and statistics. The promise of accountability, offered but not delivered by "number-crunching", contributed to the participants'
feeling that there was a "fill-in-the-blanks" approach: one which did not sufficiently include all shareholder voices. The inquiry found participants' confidence in the process to have been high during the initial phases of accreditation but to have dwindled significantly by its conclusion.

An afterword details how and why the External Team withheld full accreditation and required further work on the School Growth Plan. It documents how subsequent staff discussions resulted in two issues, leadership and community involvement, being brought into sharper focus.

Recommendations are included for schools in their implementation of the accreditation process and for the Ministry of Education as they fine-tune the policy. One recommendation is to change the name (and purpose) to a review process, with tacit recognition that no negative consequences devolve from a failed accreditation.

The researcher concludes that, although too cumbersome in all its phases, the accreditation process, when carried to its ultimate conclusion, has the potential to serve one of its intended aims: planning for school improvement.
To my dad,
who always discussed the value of a book with me.
Thank you.
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CHAPTER 1 - BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

In 1994 an updated form of accreditation became mandatory for all B.C. public schools on a six-year cycle. At the same time, the Accreditation Guide and Manual (to be used in K-12) were introduced; they are the product of revisions incorporating recent research on school effectiveness, organizational change and program evaluation (Guide 1). The new policy has also tried to address a concern of past accreditation policies -- the inordinate amount of time required for its completion (Lim 38). According to Lim the new policy appears to be gaining widespread acceptance based upon the positive response to the draft version (40).

Perhaps the most important change is the revision committee's efforts to bring school evaluation into the "fourth generation", a term coined by researchers, Guba and Lincoln. In their book Fourth Generation Evaluation they present a model which recognizes that evaluation outcomes, far from being objective or scientifically determined, are constructed both by
the values of the examiners and by the context in which evaluation occurs. The model also recognizes that because of the power of the evaluation exercise to enfranchise some groups and disenfranchise others a course of action must be negotiated through recognition of all the constituents' values (10). In espousing the Guba and Lincoln model a former assistant director in the Ministry of Education muses, "Hopefully, evaluation through this model will relegate the image of 'men in dark suits' to an artifact of the past" (Gray 11).

BRIEF HISTORY OF ACCREDITATION

Between 1926 and 1955 school evaluations were carried out by employees of the Ministry of Education itself. This changed in 1955 when provincial examinations were instituted. Exam marks were then tabulated and the results used to confer upon selected schools the right to "recommend" students, i.e., to allow the school mark to count as their final grade and waive their provincial exam requirement. This practice persisted until 1974 when provincial exams were abolished, effectively ending the
credentialling process (Gray and Maxwell 111) and shifting the emphasis of accreditation to school improvement. Even so, Kenneth Young, in a 1983 discussion of accreditation, asserts that public accountability has driven all accreditation policies to date (20-1).

CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESENT POLICY

The subtitle of the accreditation manual published by the Ministry is "Building Partnerships." By enshrining the importance of partnerships in the title the Ministry promotes the notion that evaluation is a negotiated process (Guba and Lincoln, Fourth) and that change cannot be initiated unless its meaning is shared (Fullan, New Meaning).

The Accreditation Guide outlines who the shareholders are and details the roles and responsibilities of each. The relationship between the roles and responsibilities as they were intended and the roles and responsibilities which were identified though the research process (the unintended outcomes) constituted the focus of my inquiry.
Of particular interest was the product of the accreditation process -- the "School Growth Plan" which the Guide directs be:

... broad in scope, flowing from the selected priorities ... realistic and attainable. Once the elements of the School Growth Plan have been agreed upon, the task of building specific Action Plans can begin (25).

My inquiry was concerned with the degree to which shareholders participated in the above goal. Their involvement (as outlined in the Accreditation Guide) is that each shareholder:

- understands the accreditation process
- understands possible ways to participate
- understands participatory roles with respect to other shareholders
- is willing to commit time and energy required by the process (6)

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH THE PRESENT POLICY

"Building Partnerships" reflects a substantial research base (see Appendix A). The vision is irresistible and I realize I risked taking on Grinch-like characteristics in challenging it. It is not the well-meaning nature of the vision that I challenged but the possibility of attaining meaningful evaluative partnerships
within a single policy attempting to both improve schools and ensure accountability. Can the collaborative partnerships required to achieve improvement be formed within a hierarchical institution being called to account? (Guba, Lincoln; Rosenholtz; Sarason).

At the heart of the new accreditation policy there appears a conundrum, namely, how can school staffs work to effect change when it is their 'natural' inclination not to change? (Rosenholtz). The revision committee itself is aware of the potential dilemma posed by the process (Gray and Maxwell) but have chosen to retain a definition which holds out both the possibility (school growth) and the impetus (accountability) for change:

Accreditation is a process for school improvement and accountability with an emphasis on school improvement. Such a process fosters continual positive growth, assists the school with setting direction, staff development and vision formulation and confirmation. Accreditation incorporates accountability whereby student outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes), parent/teacher satisfaction, and community satisfaction are assessed and reported (Guide 3).

The two aims present a challenge when dealt with by the same process. How do teachers and administrators, called to be accountable for their past performances, operate to influence the
results of what is supposed to be a quest for an authentic picture? Does the process give the tools and, more importantly, the permission to look beyond a merely flattering picture? Is there one picture to find or is the representation of a school's operation simply the reflection of those who "gaze" (Foucault, *Power*) upon it? In the case of conflicting representations would it not stand to reason that the more authoritative the stance from which the school is described, the more likely that picture will be the official one adopted?

In this policy the potential exists for one agenda to overtake the other. Although failed accreditations are reported to cast questions upon all, in reality it is most often the administrative officer who is called to account. Students continue to attend school, teachers come to work, the community accepts the judgement. No "natural consequences" (Glasser) devolve whether an accreditation passes or fails. It is the school's administration who must respond to the enquiries of local newspapers, speak at the Parent Advisory Council gatherings and attend with their colleagues subsequent principals' meetings.

The aims of the new policy combined with the process
outlined in the Guide, raise a number of interesting questions which I introduce in the next section.

**FOCUS OF INQUIRY**

The focus of my inquiry was the relationship between the School Growth Plan and the decisional involvement of its shareholders, i.e., the school's staff, parents and students (for definitions of Ministry terms see Appendix G). I investigated the possibility of an underlying set of constraints which may have pre-determined the relationship between the school's Growth Plan and its shareholders.

Briefly summarized, The B.C. Accreditation Guide directs schools to:

1) Collect evidence "which indicate[s] how well a school is functioning with respect to the criterion statements."
2) Conduct a survey called the "Levels of Participant Satisfaction." The Guide directs that "the comparison of evidence with the criteria leads to the judgement of satisfaction."
3) Add internal comments to "amplify or place in context the evidence or satisfaction columns."
4) Summarize strengths and weaknesses.
5) Identify items to "prioritize four or five most important . . . for Growth Plan."

6) Build school growth plan and action plans. (22-25)

It seemed important to this researcher that the process not only meet the standard set by the Accreditation Guide but that the process be felt to have overall significance to the participants. Eisner says, "If we value . . . work that displays ingenuity and complexity, we must look beyond standards for evidence of achievement . . . " (22).

LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The first limitation was the confining of the research to one research site. I hoped that by providing thick description of the process in a single context, as I do in Chapter 3, other schools may recognize their own actual or potential responses to the policy. A second boundary was the extremely limited inclusion of budget information. A cost-benefit analysis of financial resources dispensed on accreditation would be a fascinating study, but was outside the scope of this inquiry. The third limitation was the decision to consider only the policy as it is
designed. Although I end with recommendations for the fine-tuning of the policy, I do not attempt to speculate during the study how a different design might have achieved the stated goals. In addition, I make no claims that readers will find the conclusions of the study generalizable due to the intentional grounding of the analysis in the data gathered at this site.

CONCLUSION

The intended purpose of an accreditation is that by providing a process for self-assessment there will result, in honest self-reflection, growth plans approved by both internal and external teams and confidence on the part of both that the growth plan will effect positive changes for students. My question was whether self-reflection can be honest in a system where there is so much to gain by playing by the rules and so much to lose by questioning them.

I was prepared to be proven wrong in this scepticism. My colleagues and my administrative officers were perhaps going to be willing/capable of honest self-reflection by taking up the
invitation for a kind of guided self-exploration. The growth plan could be capable of providing a catalyst for change and for better meeting the goals of the B.C. Curriculum. If so, the accreditation process would be validated. If not, the viability of the policy merits questioning.
CHAPTER 2 - GOVERNING ASSUMPTIONS AND RELATED RESEARCH

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT PRESENTED IN THIS CHAPTER

The B.C. Ministry of Education's Long Term Working Committee on Accreditation has proposed a process for accreditation of schools. According to this researcher's review of their research base and of articles written by members of the Review Committee, the assumptions underlying their proposal are as follows:

1. Schools need to undergo renewal.

2. Schools need to be accountable.

3. The best process for evaluation of schools is a responsive-constructivist model; such models imply teamwork.

4. The tools provided in the policy, i.e., evaluation criteria, outline of roles and responsibilities, framework for completing stages of the process, etc., are consistent with a responsive-constructivist model.

In this chapter I have interspersed the committee's working assumptions (derived from their research - Appendix A) with
other findings which support the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of carrying out the accreditation as it is proposed.

INTRODUCTION

The team of teachers, administrators and politicians who worked to create the B.C. Ministry of Education's Accreditation Guide (1994) and the B.C. Accreditation Manual (1994) founded their work on five areas of research. These are:

- Learning Experiences
- Leadership
- Professional Attributes and Staff Development
- School Culture
- School and its Community
  (see Appendix A)

From their research they have made a number of assumptions. Let us deal with each assumption in turn.
1. **Schools need to undergo renewal.**

Christine Shea cites numerous researchers who have made the case that planning for school renewal is necessary in increasingly difficult economic times (Thurow; McKenzie; Philips) with new technologies and changed demographics influencing the opportunities for individual students to succeed (Lund and Hansen; Fiestritzer; Moynihan). Educational policy documents are an effort on the part of the government to accomplish this renewal.

It [The policy] takes into account British Columbia's changing social and cultural realities and the rapidly evolving demands of today's economy.

(B.C. Intermediate Program Policy)

Recent school renewal policies have borrowed heavily from the effective schools literature of the 1980's to which Goodlad is one contributor. This literature is characterized by attempts to define the attributes of an effective school, thereby encouraging all schools to try to implement the changes suggested by these criteria so that they too will increase their effectiveness.

Researchers Coleman and LaRocque have detailed how the school district plays a major role in pressuring, supporting and managing
change while others such as Sergiovanni and Tjosvold contend it is the school administrator who occupies the central role of educational leader. In addition, the effectiveness of individual teachers in the change process is enhanced by what Rosenholtz calls "learning enriched" habits, taking into account new ideas and knowing where to fit them into the old (80). The committee, in consulting this group of researchers (see Appendix A), points out the need for school renewal and charges district and school administrators and teachers with the responsibility for ensuring it occurs.

According to Sarason, unsuccessful attempts in the past to implement changes in schools have been due to a number of factors. He points out in *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* that often there is a failure to state clearly the intended outcome of the proposed change (2) and that the focus of the change is often much too broadly spread out (148). He further states that individual teachers' conceptions of the system of education often serve as the basis for "inaction and rigidity" (129) and cites the tendency to anticipate trouble in relation to the system as one of the most often reported obstacles to trying what
might be an atypical procedure (139). In addition, "inertia and unwillingness or inability to become aware of new alternatives often prevails" (148).

The fate of a single proposal may also rest upon attitudes toward previous change proposals and/or implementations. Sarason notes:

> the greater the relationship between the frequency of proposals for changes--and never implemented, and those made and implemented, the more likely implemented changes will lose their innovative characteristics. (220)

In British Columbia we have evidence of a widely touted proposal for change which was subsequently abandoned - the "Year 2000 initiatives." The implications of this change in direction are still being explored (Kuehn).

Added to the reasons within individuals to resist change, Rosenholtz and Lieberman write in The Ecology of School Renewal (ed. Goodlad) that there is a lack of a shared professional culture which is integral to the success of school growth plans (80-9).

Coleman and LaRoque's chapter on "Change" begins by stating "It is the most unhappy people who most fear change" (74), while Fullan argues in Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform that changes in evaluation methods proposed by
constructivist theory might do much to allow individuals (perhaps even those "unhappy people") to have their concerns met (vii). However, Sarason, among others contends that individuals operate within the constraints of the system (Culture 88), and Fullan notes: "Without significant mindset change we are continually juxtaposing the change theme on a conservative system" (3).

Sarason points out: "We are intellectually reared on a psychology of the individual . . . it is the existing structures or culture which define the permissible ways in which goals and problems will be approached" (88).

To summarize this section: the Accreditation Guide directs that schools need to undergo renewal (1). The assumption is drawn primarily from research on the "effective schools" movement of the 1980's (see Appendix A). Although their sources (Appendix A) acknowledge the difficulty of effecting school renewal (Lieberman; Rosenholtz; Sarason) the difficulties may be more problematic than is acknowledged in the Guide. The dual aim puts into question the possibility of effecting school improvement within the larger context of establishing accountability.
2. **Schools need to be accountable.**

The Oxford Dictionary defines accountability: *liable to be called to account; responsible* and adds *responsible for things, to people* (emph. added) (10). For what are schools responsible and to whom? While this may seem like one of those time-wasting and self-evident kinds of questions educators will ask of one another, I hold that it is of utmost importance in the matter of accreditation.

One answer is that schools are responsible for nurturing and protecting the young; Lieberman would say they are accountable to students and their families (her "ecology of the family" as a suitable metaphor for school). Another answer is that they are accountable for upholding educational standards; they are accountable to government and taxpayers (Lieberman's "corporate ecology" as a metaphor for school). How the shareholders understand the notion of "accountability", for what and to whom, or whether they even consider accountability to be a part of the process, is a key point on which I focus in my research.

One notion of accountability derives from measures taken of
school performance and reported to the public. These measures include but are not limited to: reporting, audits, teacher evaluations, school board elections, and the College of Teachers' professional regulatory system. The criteria in the Accreditation Manual constitute another set of measures of accountability (12) but whereas the above listed measures have been encoded in either the School Act or in contractual agreements between school boards and their employee groups, the criteria in the Manual have never been ratified by any professional body other than the Ministry Long Term Working Committee. Worthy as the criteria may be, their acceptance as an accountability measure has not received ratification by authorizing bodies of school trustees (B.C.S.T.A), school administrators (B.C.P.V.P.A.), teachers (B.C.T.F.), or parents (B.C.P.A.C.)

Another notion of accountability is that the credibility of the profession and of individuals within it is ultimately conferred upon teachers by their students. Viewed through this lens teachers and schools must demonstrate to parents and students that their work serves children well. I argue this is different than demonstrating evidence of the Ministry's set of criteria to
an external regulating body. Myrna Cooper highlights the essence of this difference when she states:

If participation in the profession, in decision-making, in the rites of power and control helps children, then a professional culture will have meaning . . . [and] will not be self-serving. (ed. Lieberman 54)

Thus accountability may be seen to flow in at least two directions: the public expects value for their tax dollars and the teaching profession requires confidence in its members for them to perform their jobs. The Ministry's definition of accountability (see Appendix G), with its vague wording ("exchanges of information and explanations between schools and their various publics") raises the likelihood of shareholder groups working at cross-purposes to one another, depending on their view of what the accreditation process is for.

When the Ministry of Education directs the process of school accreditation to effect school renewal and also achieve accountability the shareholders are nowhere told to whom they are accountable. It is perhaps this oversight more than any other aspect of accreditation that precludes the partnership-building envisaged by the Ministry policy.
What sort of educational changes are wanted and why? The belief that schools play a vital role in the development of human capital which makes for increased productivity in world markets has always been a major motivator in school renewal and appears to have taken on a greater urgency during the last decade. Writing in *The New Servants of Power: a Critique of the 1980's School Reform Movement*, Berman states:

> Beyond the obligatory rhetoric paying lip service to the democratic ideal of optimizing educational opportunity for all, any real concern for the issues of 'participatory democracy' are noticeably absent. (57)

Various authors in this critique describe the primary influence upon public education, whether they be right wing or left wing influences, as having their underpinnings in the maintenance of the west as a dominant economic force. In this light the notion of accountability takes on a new relevance. Economic times have been harder of late in North America: who's responsible? The link between school accreditation, school renewal and the political motivation underlying both (Barlow and Robertson) needs further development and this inquiry does not intend to explore the inter-
relationship between outside forces of change and the school. It does, however, develop the notion of the constraints placed upon shareholders of the school to foster continued growth while other shareholders (both within and without the institution) may be seeking accountability (Barlow and Robertson; Shea et al).

3. The best model for evaluation of schools is the Responsive-Constructivist Model ...

Accreditation is a process of evaluation - with the school as the evaluand. The principles outlined by researchers Guba and Lincoln in their books Effective Evaluation and Fourth Generation Evaluation provide the underpinnings for the process of evaluation espoused in the current Accreditation Guide and Manual (see Appendix A). The next section sets out the rationale and phases of the responsive-constructivist model as explicated by researchers Guba and Lincoln. These researchers point out the deficiencies of evaluation methods employed until the early 1980's when they state categorically:
We believe . . . major flaws or defects [of these methods are] a tendency toward managerialism, a failure to accommodate value-pluralism and overcommitment to the scientific paradigm of inquiry. (Fourth 32)

The phases of their model may be summarized in the following steps:

1) shareholders in the evaluation are identified and solicited for claims, issues and concerns.
2) the claims, issues and concerns are submitted to all other groups for comment, refutation or agreement.
3) unresolved claims, issues and concerns become advance organizers for information collection by the evaluators.
4) negotiation occurs among the shareholders using the information collected (Fourth 42).

A comparison of evaluation guidelines, such as one carried out by Carrothers in 1939 with the present policy, reveals that while historically the objectives of these evaluations look strikingly similar, it is the process by which the evaluation is conducted which is under apparent transformation. In other words, before 1974 there was a congruency between the intent of accreditation and the result: accountability was sought on a series of criteria and it was established through a credentialling process. The
present policy, if it truly seeks accountability, is unmatched with consequences; if it seeks improvement, this may be impossible due to the conflicting motivations of shareholders.

Numerous researchers support the contention that an agenda for broad sustainable change can be conceived and implemented (Goodlad; Gray; Leithwood). Goodlad, in outlining the assumptions under which change can occur, critiques the conventional paradigm of improvement as:

someone in high authority exercising the power of that position in seeking to control the behaviour of persons perceived to have less authority and who, ironically, would be held responsible and accountable for complying with what was being imposed. (Ecology 3)

The preceding quote summarizes the conundrum of the present policy. Improvement of a school (one half of the aim), to be successful must be non-coercive. It presumes voluntary shared acceptance of the changes because they have been generated by the shareholders themselves. Accountability (the other half of the aim) implies assigning responsibility; in a hierarchical system the lines of authority preclude all shareholders from sharing equal responsibility.
The current Guide directs: "overall responsibility for accreditation rests with the head administrator of the school who must work closely with the district, the Internal Committee, the External Team and other staff" (9). The head administrator, it is clear, is assigned a challenging task; among nineteen roles delineated for the administrator a minimum of nine have to do with leadership of a team (9).

... and this model implies teamwork.

Researching new styles of leadership, Tjosvold observes that a team holds out the promise of continuous improvement and enhanced commitment. The book is revealingly sub-titled An Enduring Competitive Advantage, an indication of what this improvement is for. He and researcher Sergiovanni attribute the success of a well-managed team to the assumptions of shared conviction for the importance of the task, a common knowledge base, mutual work and continuous development of the team. The team approach argues that power is a not a 'zero-sum' entity, i.e., if one person has a lot of power their subordinate must have
correspondingly less. Instead Tjosvold contends that power augments as people assume it and enlarge their personal and collective vision (171-7).

Coleman and LaRocque muse that "administrative officers are offered the vital task of keeping the faith for the organization, and thereby, the opportunity for exercising control" (106). It is clear the control they are referring to is meant in the most altruistic of senses when they point out, "Leadership is after all for something, rather than being an end in itself" (142).

Perhaps to underscore the inter.. of a team approach, the new (1994) manual has been entitled, in a hopeful vein, Building Partnerships. At the same time it acknowledges that the leadership criterion statements "can be a challenging part . . . " and recommends that:

school administration and the Internal Committee meet and discuss how and by whom the responses should be made prior to responding to the Leadership section." [original emphasis]

The researchers I have consulted and to whom I refer in the next section underscore the difficulties encountered in using a
constructivist approach in a hierarchical system.

Sarason, when speaking of the administrative role, refers to the locus of control as being found within or without an individual and that although change more often occurs when administrators view themselves as the primary determiners of their actions, it is the ideas and values towards which the orientation is related that is of particular importance. A principal's knowledge and conception of children and their growing up problems, toward staff and their professional lives and toward the community and its concerns, need to be under constant discussion and surveillance otherwise the comforts of rituals replace the conflict and excitement involved in growing and changing (Culture 147).

Immediately again (and overlooking the generic "he"):

If he is not constantly confronting himself and others and if others cannot confront him with the world of competing ideas and values shaping life in a school, he is an educational administrator not an educational leader.

The role of the administrator, it seems, is both more and less powerful than is often described in the literature. Sarason points out one's viewpoint on his [sic] perceived authority depends upon where the observer stands in relation to the administrator (12). He points out administrators are part of a complex political
system with pressures for conformity or innovation operating on him/her:

The complexities, ambiguities and responsibilities of the [principal's] role are not only a result of individual factors or dynamics but rather of traditions colliding with changing conditions. (*Culture*148)

Foucault has more to say on the role of authority in hierarchical institutions. In *Discipline and Punish* he assigns to established social structures the power to determine evaluative outcomes. He contends that through "hierarchical observation", "normalizing judgement" and "the examination" individuals are trained/disciplined to perform in the ways expected by the authorizing body (170). Individuals within such systems become remarkable because of the "gaze" trained upon them. He alleges that these same individuals, prevented from operating as a collective, develop gaps between them which emphasize their individuality rather than uniting them by the similarities they may share:

In a disciplinary regime . . . as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly
individualized; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference . . . by 'gaps' rather than by deeds. (193)

The tendency of the observed to internalize the norms of the observer may be unwitting, as in Sarason's contention that "the outsider and the insider, both of whom want change, cooperate unwittingly in self-defeating efforts" (2). While recognizing the significant role of individuals in determining the fate of the change process Sarason acknowledges that "individuals within . . . [change initiatives] operate within the constraints of the system not as a function of personality" (12).

One administrator situates the leadership issue in a "culture of blame" and asks "What is strong leadership?" questioning whether strong leadership can mean "compassionate and caring?" (LaRocque). In this vein Sarason proposes a series of criteria for judging the performance of administrative officers: "How do problems surface and get resolved?" "How do teachers relate and utilize each other?" "How actively is parental or community involvement sought?" "Are there attempts to distinguish between pride in a student's knowledge and the quality of their thinking?" (148). Although my study looked only at the existing policy not at
alternate measures of accountability, a series of indicators such as Sarason suggests might have made for a dramatically different approach to the leadership component of school accreditation.

Guba and Lincoln state in *Effective Evaluation* that "evaluation is always disruptive of the prevailing political balance" (301). It follows then that an accreditation policy offers a process where such a disequilibrium is expected to occur and needs to build in the necessary protections for the invitation to be involved is accepted by all shareholders.

4. The tools provided are consistent with a responsive-constructivist model of evaluation.

$irotnik, writing in *The Ecology of School Renewal* states that "the biggest day-to-day repository of constructive power to improve schools is in the hearts, minds and hands of the people who work in them" (43). Although it may be argued that scientists, as much as anyone of another profession, have a great capacity for using their hearts, minds and hands, Guba and Lincoln state it has been the propensity of social scientists to follow "as
rigorously as possible the methodology that characterized their hard science counterparts" (Fourth 35). Guba and Lincoln recognize six key differences between their model and past models. These are that:

1. evaluation’s key dynamic is negotiation.
2. evaluation outcomes are meaningful constructions made by individuals to make sense of a situation.
3. constructions are shaped by the values of the constructors.
4. constructions are inextricably linked to particular physical, psychological, sociological and cultural contexts in which they are found.
5. evaluation outcomes can be shaped to enfranchise or disenfranchise different groups in a variety of ways.
6. the course of action must be arrived at through negotiation of all individual values involved (Fourth 8).

By utilizing Guba and Lincoln’s research to inform their accreditation revision, the Working Committee has created a process which purports to be firmly grounded in the Responsive Constructivist approach (see Appendix A).

In addition, Goodlad, another of the Committee’s cited sources, refutes a scientific approach when he refers to our "pathological emphasis on accountability" (4). Sirotnik, in critiquing the practice of controlling quality indicators by the use of computers says,
the programs don't reflect the construct of reality . . . they disenfranchise those willing to do the hard work of reflection . . . and they lend a degree of scientific credibility to accountability systems concerned more with symbols than substance. (43)

Guba and Lincoln's criticisms of the scientific paradigm of evaluation include all of the above. They do point out that there are trade-offs, however, in accepting the responsive constructivist model. These include a lack of certainty in the results, a lack of control over the process (both methodological and political) and the necessity to abandon hope of finding generalizable solutions to social problems (Fourth 31). These losses, significant as they appear however, may be themselves only illusions. As Guba and Lincoln point out, the trade-offs are all about the loss of absolutes but absolutes are themselves only constructions and our enamouredness of them blinds us to seeing their outmoded utility and the potential of those we would seek to control. (48)

SUMMARY OF ASSUMPTIONS IN THE ACCREDITATION POLICY

The Working Committee used the research from their
bibliography to create the following procedures:

1. espouse a theory of responsive constructivist evaluation which promises to overcome the flaws of previous methods (Appendix A).
2. present a set of guidelines (phases) for the accreditation using constructivist theory (Guide 21-26).
3. recognize the important leadership role of the administrator in accreditation (Guide 9).
4. assign role descriptions to the head administrative officer requiring extensive use of a team approach (Guide 9).
5. recognize the importance of all partners in accreditation by outlining their roles (Guide 6-16).

Note: it is possible the Working Committee came by these steps via another route or in addition to the research cited but their bibliography supports adoption of the above steps ( Appendix A).

In addition, the Accreditation Manual lists five broad areas further sub-divided into 88 criterion statements "applicable to all learners" (31). I could find no reference to research from which the 88 criteria were derived. Readers of the Manual are referred to the Program Goals as found in the three foundation documents, to the policy paper "Improving the Quality of Education in British Columbia" (1993) and to the "Mission Statement, Goals of Education, Attributes of the Public School System" and the
description of the "Educated Citizen." Checking these documents yields no bibliography.

CONCLUSION

It is not the intention of this researcher to cast doubts on the worthiness of the criteria presented in the Manual (political analysis above notwithstanding); however, it does seem fitting to include Rosenholtz and Lieberman's view of criteria: "Criteria only tell us what is working well when it works, not how to get there" (qtd. in Goodlad, Ecology 86).

The first step in the Accreditation Guide is the clarification of 88 criterion statements (21). The first step in Guba and Lincoln's model is "the solicitation of claims, issues and concerns from the shareholders" (Effective 25). The Guide directs schools to start from the criteria; its research base suggests starting from the shareholders' concerns. Quite possibly the degree of shareholder involvement is pre-determined from the disparity suggested between these first steps.
CHAPTER 3 - DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to generate grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss's term) on the relationship between one school's growth plan and the decisional involvement of its shareholders. By "grounded theory" Glaser and Strauss refer to the "discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research" (3). They distinguish between grounded theory and "theory generated by logical deduction from a priori assumptions" (3). To achieve the goal of grounding the theory in the data, I have tried to allow the voices of the participants, both those at the centre of the accreditation process and those at the margins, to tell the story of their involvement. Kirby and McKenna describe this style of research in their book *Experience Research Social Change Research from the Margins* from which I excerpt a description:

Part of what it means to live on the margins is that we are often required to perform a kind of doublethink/doublespeak in order to translate our experience into the concepts and language of the status quo. In an effort to comprehend and use the radical potential of research from the margins,
researchers need to maintain a focus on the world from the standpoint of the margins . . . (65)

CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH - THE RESEARCH SITE

I have included a detailed description of the research site to provide the physical context of the study and to distinguish the site from thousands of other accreditation sites across the province. Schools vary in size, experience of staff members, models of decision-making, as well as in an infinite number of other ways. My inquiry is not intended to lead readers to generalize the findings to other accreditation sites but rather to raise questions about the accreditation process as it is implemented in other sites. For that reason limits on the generalizability are noted and should be extended by the fuller knowledge of the reader.

The population at the time of the study is 511 students, making it one of the smallest secondary schools in the district (Enrollment Table). There are 130 French Immersion students and 370 English stream students in grades 8-10. The junior secondary format is rare in this district (the site is one of only three) and is being phased out as new secondary schools (gr. 8-12) are built.
The latter are generally very large -- between 1000 and 2000 students and are the preferred format due to reduced administrative costs (Administrative Memorandum).

The school is situated within walking distance of two rapid transit stations and is close to a huge urban re-development area which will soon encompass the school itself. A recent stroke of the municipal map-maker's pen erased the community's traditional name and replaced it with another which reflects its burgeoning urban status. The school is slated for demolition and replacement by a gr. 8-12 mega-school within the next 4-10 years and one assumes the name will disappear as well.

The school building dates from 1947 and contains 24 standard classrooms on two levels as well as a gymnasium, cafeteria, band room, two industrial education shops and two home economics laboratories. Four alternate programs, BASES (for 10 mentally challenged students), CELD (for 9 learning disabled students), ESL (for about 20 designated students) and The Alternate Program (for 20 behaviorally-challenged students), are housed in renovated or sub-divided classrooms. Because of the tentativeness of the plans for reconstruction, upkeep on the building is irregular; the most
recent improvements were instigated by a newly-appointed administrator. These included interior painting, new staffroom furniture, new carpet in the upper hall, and upgrading of access facilities for physically challenged students.

Thirty-two teaching staff members, two administrators, three office clerks, three custodians, four supervisory aides and five student support staff (assigned to special needs students) make up the adult personnel in the school. Of the 32 teachers, 19 were new to the school one year prior to the study. Half of those new to the school were in their first year teaching (their second year at the time of the study). Both administrators were appointed to the school one year prior to the beginning of the study. The head administrative officer is in his first position as head administrator and the assistant administrative officer is in her second posting after being appointed an A.O. in 1991. None of the staff live in the catchment area.

The school, located in an older lower middle-class neighbourhood, had for many years the reputation of a tough street-wise school (G. Rowbothom, student body president 1966-7). The current urban renewal with its curved interlocking-brick
pathways ends two blocks from the school. The on-going transition has meant a significant number of houses in the community have been left unmaintained, possibly in anticipation of their imminent sale, razing and replacement. The majority of English track students walk or bike to school; the majority of the French Program students carpool or ride the bus from adjacent neighbourhoods.

During the late 1980's the school embarked on some curricular innovations designed to better accommodate the needs of its diverse population. It pioneered the Integrated Studies Program (Hampson) and created a Mission Statement which generally favoured student needs over curricular rigour and individual student progress over standardized test achievement (School Handbooks, 1988-90). During the past 5 years the nature of school-wide change has differed from the previous 5 years by placing an increasing emphasis on Honor Roll achievement, the separation of Humanities into its separate disciplines, the deletion of gr. 9 from the Integrated Studies program, the creation of a semestered timetable and the introduction of a job-shadowing program. At the same time individual teachers
continue to experiment with criterion-based assessment, reading/writing workshop approaches, portfolio assessment and cooperative planning.

A partial list of characteristics distinguishing the site from others of the reader’s experience is provided to limit the generalizability of the inquiry data and conclusions:

- **size** - significantly smaller than other secondary schools
- **grade composition** - junior secondary, a rare and diminishing entity
- **programs offered** - dual track, several alternate education programs
- **community** - “Inner City”, in transition due to urbanization
- **age** - 50 years old, among the oldest in the district
- **staff longevity** - 1/2 new to school in year before study
- **staff age/experience** - 1/4 in 1st year of teaching in year before study

**THE RESEARCHER - CONTEXT OF MY ROLE**

The question of my stance as the researcher will be raised as readers assess this study. How to clarify it and deal with it was a question I struggled with throughout the inquiry while at the same time taking consolation from Guba and Lincoln who maintain: "Researchers in a variety of disciplines in the social sciences have been and are grappling with social constructivist approaches"
The notion of "researcher bias" would seem to be rooted in the concept of an objective reality: "... tangible ... [so that] experience with it can result in knowing it fully" (82). Guba and Lincoln conclude from a series of examples and experiences representing similar phenomena but described from different points of view that "it is dubious whether there is one reality ... if there is we can never know it," and present the position that "there are multiple realities" (84). This is also my position. Researchers in the social sciences cannot uncover the truth for that would imply there is one truth to be uncovered. Researchers present a version of reality, one that possesses internal integrity and has been derived through methodological rigour. The means by which I ascertain a rigorous approach are explained more fully in the next two sections of Chapter 3.

From the above argument and from on-going discussion amongst teaching colleagues I surmise that concerns over researcher bias stem from the positivist stance (Oxford 930) that there is an objective reality to find (in itself a bias) and that researchers who allow their beliefs to interfere with the search
for that reality will unwittingly (or intentionally) contaminate the research. Contrary to this position, many qualitative researchers have maintained that although knowing the stance of the researcher is important, it is important for a different reason. Since the research investigation is a complex interplay between the context, the data derived from that context and the researcher, critical researchers strive to be fully conscious of their beliefs in order to try to ensure the places behind their blindspots are made visible (Meloy; Kirby, McKenna). In addition readers of the research who are made aware of the author's "conceptual baggage" (Kirby & McKenna 49) may compare their own stance and be able to determine a position in relation to the researcher's from which to judge the findings of the inquiry.

As a teacher of some twenty years' experience in the public school system I hold a set of beliefs. Those which were known to me at the time of writing I have tried to set out clearly below.

1) I believe Canadian schools have been doing a reasonably good job compared to that of both industrialized and less industrialized nations.

2) I believe the most qualified critics of public education are those who have taken the trouble to acquire intimate knowledge of it.

3) I frequently suspect that critics who write/speak from a position outside
the education system give evidence of its failings so as to augment their control over it.

4) I fear that persons in positions of authority within the education system rarely give evidence of its failings at the risk of diminishing their personal power.

In addition, as both researcher and participant, I operate under a set of constraints which has undoubtedly had a bearing on my approach to the inquiry:

1) As a staff member I have a vested interest in having my school accredited.
2) As a colleague I am expected to behave professionally, participating in school processes in a way which respects others' professionalism.
3) As a member of an accreditation sub-committee I am charged with collecting evidence that certain accreditation criteria are being met.
4) As a teacher in a profession under assault (Barlow & Robertson) I feel compelled to demonstrate that my profession is a worthy one.
5) As a researcher I have to produce a thoughtful critique for an exacting community of scholars.
6) As a woman in a society characterized by a history of patriarchal power relations (deBeauvoir; Friedan) I recognize I have internalized its hierarchical principles and seek to recognize and reduce their impact.

So there were beliefs and constraints to keep to the forefront throughout my research. A troubling consideration was my assumption of vested interests and a hidden agenda. I reasoned
that if, as Barlow and Robertson indicate in their book *Class Warfare: the Assault on Canadian Schools* there are vested interests operating from various factions outside the education system, those interests may or may not be more notable, more inherently problematic, than the vested interests of those charged with the task of accrediting the system from within. Perhaps the two operate in tandem? Political viewpoints and bureaucratic systems do not exist exclusive of one another. In any case, I saw the necessity of holding my biases and constraints as thorny questions to be kept front and centre throughout the inquiry.

An instance where I caught my bias and recorded it follows:

Having just gone back to check the bibliography of the Accreditation Guide to ensure I have looked at all the research their [the Long Term Working Committee in Accreditation] team used, I realize that out of 5 areas, I have covered [only] 4. The missing one - leadership! Does this mean anything? Have I consciously neglected to put its four references on hold [at the library] to re-look for the call numbers, to remember the names of these four researchers? Is my view of leadership one of such scepticism that I've stopped learning in this area? In any case it is a lapse and I will rectify it as soon as I can. (Journal Entry 02:05:96)
THE METHODS

In order to gather data on each phase of accreditation it was necessary for my research timelines to mirror the timelines of accreditation. While a little more flexibility is accorded the researcher than the school (in terms of preparation of a theoretical base and time at the end to analyze and report conclusions), in general, the time span of the Accreditation Process (about one year in duration) was the time span of the study. I have summarized the steps taken and then explained why I chose these methods in the following section.

**June, September-October:** 1st round of interviews. All staff contacted and requested to agree to a short 10-30 minute tape-recorded interview. Followed up with personal request to set an interview time. Asked 6 questions divided into 2 categories (see Appendix B).

**September-May:** Attended all staff meetings, the majority of Internal Steering Committee meetings and all the sub-committee and growth plan group meetings of which I was a member. Collected the agendas and minutes of all meetings, made notes on issues raised or tabled or discussed and also on the flow of the meetings, i.e. who talked, how long, on what issues, decisions made. Summarized the meetings in field notes filed in chronological order and wrote personal reflective entries in my
research journal.

**November** - Examined evidence folders and selected 3 folders to itemize and later analyse their contents.

**December**- Composed and distributed a questionnaire to staff on reasons for their choices of items to include in school growth plan.

**February-March**  Conducted three 2nd round interviews. All staff received a letter inviting them to contact me if they wished to be interviewed again (4 did). I also contacted another 4. These interviews took 1-1 1/2 hours each and were based on the issues I had identified from my earlier interviews (see Appendix C). Purpose was 1) to solicit their agreement that what I have identified as issues, they agree are issues 2) to identify further issues.

Participated in meetings of my Growth Plan Group and documented their progress from brainstorming through draft to ratification.

**March**  Interviewed two students and two parents who were on accreditation committees. Continued to attend meetings, take field notes, write in research journal.

**April-May** attended meetings, participated in interviews with External Team. Documented.

**May** submitted excerpts and/or draft of Chapter 4 (Analysis of the Data) to four staff members, one parent and one administrator as a member check. Submitted a draft of Chapter 4 to an administrator based at another site for comment.

Documented results of External Team visit and staff follow-up.
THE REASONS

The design of the study was intended to be evolutionary in nature (Meloy), reflecting my own growth as a researcher as well as the emergent issues of the inquiry.

Judith Meloy, who subtitles her investigation of qualitative research methods *Understanding by Doing*, writes about the necessity of growing comfortable with continual reformatting of the design (xiii). This view is reinforced by Guba and Lincoln who point out that uncovering the next question is as important as obtaining answers (*Naturalistic* 229). In qualitative research where one is continually discovering new questions the direction of the inquiry must be correspondingly responsive to allow answers to new questions to be sought. I appear to have taken note of the necessity to work this way according to a mid-year journal entry:

... the beginning of some real time devoted to this research. Fully present is the motivation and the time. Less apparent is the plan by which to proceed. I [have always]prefer[red] to have an idea well-mapped out in advance and qualitative research doesn't seem to work that way. A combination of discipline and confidence that each step taken will illuminate the next ...
(Journal Entry 01:29:96)

Equally important was my discovery of a classic work in the field of qualitative research -- *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. These authors distinguish between research done for the purpose of validating a theory (where the research steps are predictable) and research done for the purpose of generating theory (steps requiring the simultaneous and cyclical collection, coding and analysis of data).

Understanding the distinction between these approaches to and purposes of research was enormously helpful to me. Data had been constantly calling forth new questions and I had been struggling with how to find the answers to them. The reflexive approach ("constant comparison" in their terms) recommended by these two authors seemed to free the way for on-going researcher impact on the design rather than simply following a pre-set agenda.

The project [thesis] has worth and I'm going about it in an ethical measured way but there is so much more to consider, define, explain, justify, problematize etc. etc. than my brain/stamina could foretell. I feel to proceed I must say rooted/grounded in present data and also think . . . big. (Journal Entry 03:24:96)
I also learned from Glaser and Strauss a set of terminology for the kind of organisation and analysis which I had been doing on an intuitive basis. My style up to this point had been to type transcripts and file them, write notes and file them, write in and close up my journal because I was saving the work of analysis for Chapter 4! Understanding the necessity to collect and analyse and collect again in a cyclical pattern enabled me to be more purposeful in my interviews and note-taking. I could choose from among quantitative methods and well-established qualitative methods as needed, rather than feeling guilty that I was inventing my own ways around the lure of scientific methodology.

I like to think I'm in the final week of data-collection and ready to embark on serious coding and analysis stage. The method [Kirby and McKenna's 'bibbetts'] intrigues me . . . as a way to avoid 'impressionistic' theory-generation. It just amazes me I was never taught how to do any of this during my coursework [among the statistical manipulations] and had to discover it after the fact on my own! (Journal Entry 03:28:96)

Thus, during the second round of interviews I asked many more questions to get at issues for which I was looking for information. I checked on data revealed to me via one interview by verifying with other informants ("triangulation" -- Guba and Lincoln's term).
I chose not to interview people whom I felt represented a similar viewpoint for which I already had saturated (Glaser and Strauss's term) categories. The term "saturated" refers to the point at which no new information about the category is forthcoming (111).

I initially built up and worked with seven categories during the first round of interviews. These were:

1. evidence
2. surveys
3. time
4. resource allocation
5. personal pressure,
6. role of the External Team
7. tackling difficult issues (later re-named "Leadership" since this was virtually the only "difficult" issue mentioned by informants)

I merged the first two categories mid-way through the data-collection (October) since both represented responses about "obtaining a representative picture of the school" (interview question Appendix B) and then separated them again during the analysis phase (March) because participants' attitudes toward each and the use made of each differed dramatically, requiring separate treatment by the researcher. During the phase of describing the categories (April) I deleted the last two categories
because the analysis seemed to be pointing toward constraints reported by the participants and neither of these two was reported as a constraint. As I delved further into the analysis of why the reported constraints were present, subsequent analysis pointed to these last two categories as underlying the five others raised by informants.

One other category emerged in the late fall through observations of discussions at meetings. I entitled it "Involvement of all shareholders" but it might have been more accurately named "Lack of involvement of non-teacher shareholders." In retrospect, I believe I initially saw the inquiry's working title, "Decisional Involvement of Shareholders," as focusing on the nature and degree of staff involvement (covered by the first five categories) and on staff reports of non-staff involvement. As I became aware that non-staff involvement needed its own category it expanded to contain reports of all participants, both staff and non-staff, on their decision-making input. During the analysis phase (early April), I created another category, "Growth Plan Group Reports," to contain the second-round interview data on building the School Growth Plan.
In June of the school year preceding the inquiry I sought staff endorsement of the study by notifying my colleagues of my intention to do research on our accreditation process (working title: "Accreditation: One School's Attempt to Grapple with the Process." The notification was both a procedural imperative (S.F.U. Ethics Committee) and a moral imperative (to gain a position of trustworthiness in the eyes of my colleagues). Although the results of an accreditation process are in the public domain the extra dimension of researching the process required the full knowledge and cooperation of the staff. The staff endorsed my research project unanimously (one abstention --see Chapter 4).

To work collegially, and at the same time be engaged in the close observation of one's colleagues is to situate oneself at a dangerous intersection - that of participant-researcher. Rather than dwell on the potential duplicity of such a site I proceeded to assert the stance of researcher who realizes that continued efforts to build trustworthiness and conscious openness to ideas are required for such a position to be maintained (Agar, Glaser & Strauss). As a participant in accreditation my work on committees was informed by the reading and thinking I was doing
as a researcher. As a researcher, I was aware of choosing when and when not to enter the debate. In meetings I developed a working philosophy based largely on gut feeling: if I couldn't stand to remain silent on an issue I spoke up -- if I felt I could bite my tongue I did! Sometimes the dual role brought conflict:

Following the meeting to ratify our growth plan, the staff, about 20 of us, met for merriment in the staffroom. [I] took pains to chat with ___ who felt he'd been taken out of context by me in the discussion over . . . I had been pointed in my remarks and he had felt the sting. [Since he is] a willing and reflective subject I've selected for my interviews it was important to maintain my position as . . . listener. (Journal Entry 03:30:96)

I approached all staff members for an initial interview. The purpose for including the entire staff as informants was two-fold:
1) to build a trustworthy relationship with those whose views would serve as a major source of the data collected for the study.
2) to begin collecting evidence to expand upon the categories I had identified in my proposal. These were initially only two: the personal effect(s) of doing accreditation and their view of the potential of the evidence to accurately portray the school's operation. In these initial conversations I spoke to informants who appeared to share a large number of similarities, i.e., all were
teachers at the school, all had a vested interest in ensuring the school passed its accreditation and all were engaged in collecting evidence themselves. By concentrating at this point on the similarities I hoped to gain some insight into what categories would emerge and subsequently persist.

Within ten interviews the seven categories mentioned above were identified for further investigation. Within a further five interviews I judged these categories to be saturated. The persistence of the categories, of course, did not imply agreement of viewpoints within the categories and I utilized the emerging differences (both among staff and between my and their points of view) to add questions to the original interview schedule. The entire first round of interviews served as an excellent tool for developing my ability to really listen to the issues participants were raising, a quality Glaser and Strauss call "theoretical sensitivity" (46). For example, I noted the perception among informants that "evidence has to be gathered on every criterion statement" (Field notes 04:04:96) which differed from my perception that although we had gathered evidence on all statements this was not a requirement of the process. When I
checked the Internal Steering Committee minutes and then the Accreditation Guide I realized that this is indeed how the process is structured. I subsequently noted the need to:

re-examine my [tentative] conclusion i.e. the process is a good one but is misunderstood when put into practice . . . . Instead I must look to the document [the Accreditation Guide] . . . (Field notes 04:04:96)

The interview questions were comprised of two parts. Part 1 asked four questions based on the four accreditation criteria for which I was responsible as a participant. Part 2 asked two questions about the process of accreditation itself (see Appendix B). One reason for combining the two sets of questions, i.e., as a participant asking about the accreditation criteria and as a researcher asking about the accreditation process, was to avoid "survey fatigue" (for a more complete discussion of this issue see Chapter 4). One interview could serve both purposes, thereby saving time for me and the informant.

Combining the two sets of questions, while permitting me to gather evidence for accreditation, also had the unintended outcome of encouraging colleagues to talk to me at length about their programs, their teaching and their students' achievements.
By obtaining very full accounts of their daily interactions with students, the transition to examining the process of accreditation occurred without my directly interrogating my informant but rather allowed them to take the lead (Agar 84-93). The fact that I took time to document even a small piece of my colleagues' daily work lives through the interview questions on the criteria seemed to lead to their fuller explication of their views on the accreditation process (Agar's one-down position) and possibly my more well-rounded understanding of their views. The External Team commented later on my interview data for the four criterion statements. They noted the large amount of work involved and remarked on the fullness of the evidence revealed by the interviews. I interpret from the External Team's encouragement that the use of personal interviews, a standard tool of qualitative research, constitutes acceptable evidence in an accreditation process, something which wasn't clear to our staff at the outset (Field notes 09:21:95).

Transcripts for each interview were separated into Part 1 (the 4 accreditation questions), which I inserted into the evidence folders for later summarizing and reviewing by staff and Part 2
(the two process questions), filed for later analysis by me. Teachers were offered their transcript along with the reassurance that their anonymity on the process questions was assured as was their right to withdraw should they wish.

As I typed the transcripts I kept a running list of the issues (categories) raised and how many people referred to each one. Arising from the first question "How is Accreditation affecting you?" there emerged four categories: Time, Resource allocation, Personal pressure, Role of the External Team. From the second question "Will the evidence gathered reflect how our school operates?" there emerged three more categories: Evidence, Surveys, Tackling difficult questions. I also tallied the answers to the second question into a 'yes' or a 'no' category. Throughout the first set of interviews I kept these seven categories (I called them issues) separate, although the overlap between Evidence and Surveys and between Personal Pressure, Time and Resource Allocation was always present. It was only while coding (done in early March) that the distinctions and the relationships between categories began to emerge in a more coherent way (see Chapter 4). The initial drafts of Chapter 4 - Analysis of the Data,
generated rudimentary hypotheses organized around participant responses to the phases of accreditation. i.e., evidence collection, the levels of satisfaction survey and formulation of the School Growth Plan.

My initial hypothesis focussed on how key personnel may have over-involved themselves in the process due to their positioning at the centre of decision-making. I also hypothesized that other personnel, those not at the centre of the decision-making, may have under-involved themselves in the decision-making because of constraints such as lack of time and/or resources. This analysis was essentially based upon the nature of the power relations between the groups of shareholders, which although a factor in my subsequent theorizing, was judged insufficient to describe the tensions of the accreditation process. Further analysis of the data led to the articulation of a more integrated explanation of the school's experience with the accreditation process, namely the difficulty and implications of attempting to achieve both aims of accreditation within one process.

In September I began attending meetings of the Internal Steering Committee. The I.S.C. was the committee consisting of
two staff co-chairs, ten teacher volunteers, the two administrative officers, a parent representative, and a student representative. The I.S.C. is directed to take "a leading role in facilitating, coordinating and managing the school self-assessment" (Guide 11). At the meetings I noted who was present, the issues discussed, the general tenor of the discussion and who advocated for which issues. Having asked and received permission from the I.S.C. to attend their meetings, my role was that of observer, although I did ask the occasional question of clarification and was asked my opinion when matters of my accreditation sub-committee arose. Clearly I was aware of the dual role from an early date.

As the weeks go by I see where my effect as researcher is impacting on the process itself - in a small way - but there nonetheless. eg. the co-chair seeks me out to ask if I need more information...offers twice to give me computer assistance... [I am aware] my reaction in staff meetings [is probably observed more carefully]. (Journal Entry 10:25:95)

Further refinement of the categories was possible upon comparing field notes from these meetings, another "slice of data" (Glaser's term) with the interview data. In other words, verification of the preliminary findings through triangulation by
the field notes was partially provided by a second set of data. A further category also emerged from these meetings. It was Involvement of shareholders, an issue which had not been raised by any of the staff during first round interviews (more on this development in the next section).

I attended meetings of my sub-committee and noted who was present and the issues discussed. At these meetings my role was significantly weighted toward that of participant rather than researcher. As committee members, we worked to clarify the meaning of criteria statements, reported our progress in gathering evidence, made suggestions to others on the committee for sources of evidence, summarized our findings and made preliminary suggestions for the School Growth Plan. During these meetings I endeavoured to immerse myself fully as a participant; we were a team of equals -- all teachers working together to accomplish a task. I saved any written reflection on the process until I got home and recorded the event in my journal.

Commenting on the dual role of participant/researcher, it is clear that as a participant in accreditation, I found the imperative of looming timelines/deadlines to be significant and noted how
the researcher is under a contradictory imperative -- to take whatever time is necessary to explore a question fully (Meloy, Glaser & Strauss). In Chapter 4 I argue that there are immense and conflicting pressures experienced by shareholders to get the job done in the time allotted and at the same time to get the job done in a way that links personal meaning to professional usefulness (Eisner; Fullan; Sarason). This finding, raised here as my individual concern, was a key issue for most participants in accreditation (see Chapter 4).

I attended monthly staff meetings and took notes as "Accreditation," a regular agenda item, was discussed. The meetings, like the I.S.C.meetings, were held in the school library immediately after school, from 2:45 until approximately 4:30 p.m. At the end of the teaching day, staff often showed signs of weariness and/or pressure to complete marking or organizational tasks. People sat quietly, some working on paper-work that could be accomplished while the meeting progressed. The agenda was set by the administrative team and the general format was presentation of information by the A.O.'s. Agenda items which called for discussion were less frequent; however questions were
encouraged at any and all times.

My role was as observer of the meetings but also as participant in the discussion. Agar discusses the relationship between a researcher and his/her field of informants describing a 3-stage evolution beginning with the researcher in a "one-down" position, followed by "symmetry", and finally a "one-up" position (69-70). I felt my position to be one-down during most of the inquiry since it never seemed to get any easier (in my mind) to prevail upon busy people to give their time and attention to my questions. During the second round interviews I felt my questions had a better chance of being understood and appeared to be welcomed as useful exercises in clarification. Perhaps only at the end of the accreditation process, when the staff felt particularly vulnerable at the advent of the External Team's arrival, was there a brief period when I felt in a one-up position:

attendance at these meetings [I.S.C.] has outlived its purpose...it remains with me now to compile, analyse, synthesize the results. I'll... be checking ... this group again but the cyclical nature of evaluation must be interrupted at some point for reporting out. (Journal Entry 02:08:96)
In reflecting on my role as researcher I consider the findings of the External Team (see Afterword), while not strictly part of my inquiry into the internal process of accreditation, to have validated my findings and left me with a modest sense of affirmation (Agar's "one-up" description). At the time however, I know I was never truly certain whether my questions in a whole-staff forum were construed as time-wasting or as important to the underlying meaning of the process in which we were all engaged. I just had to go with that old gut feeling and ask the questions if I couldn't bite my tongue.

As the evidence-collection phase of the accreditation process ended, I, along with all staff, perused the contents of the evidence folders for the purpose of filling out the Levels of Satisfaction survey (see Appendix D). Evidence folders were organized by each of the 88 criterion statements, in a 4-drawer file cabinet. Evidence for some statements comprised several bulging file folders while others contained just a few sheets. For purposes of the research I chose three criteria and itemized each folder's contents for later analysis. The three chosen were from the leadership section and were chosen because of my initial interest
in the role which authority might play in the process of accreditation (see Chapter 1). It was possible the files might contain data intended to demonstrate the presence of that criterion in our school but which when examined more closely might merit problematizing. I address this in Chapter 4.

My purpose in selecting any file and these three in particular was to understand the sources of evidence, to note how the sub-committee made sense of the raw data and to comprehend the immense workload undertaken by staff members. Some further questions were suggested during this perusal -- how would the evidence files be used during the Growth Plan phase and during the External Team visit? The first question I deal with in Chapter 4; the second is touched upon in the Afterword.

A key event of the accreditation process was an all-day meeting of the Internal Steering Committee held on the 5th of December. The purpose of the meeting was:

1) to identify and list strengths and areas in need of growth,

2) create a list of broad growth plan areas that we can present to the staff at the Dec. 18th meeting. (Internal Team Meeting Agenda 12:05:95)

Foreseeing myself as an observer, I arranged for an unpaid leave-of-absence to attend. Due to the limited number of people (8)
attending, the closeness of the setting (a comfortable but rather cramped apartment rec. room) and the sheer volume of paperwork the Internal Team had to consider, I quickly saw my role would be as a participant. Afterwards I wrote about how and what decisions were made during this day. I extract this quote to give a flavour of the task...

the day flew like the wind. Mindful of the stacks of paper and figures to 'get through' we made decisions on cut-off levels and just did it. Quick and dirty!

(Field notes, 12:05:95)

In Chapter 4 I address the issue of the decisions made on this day and how they were made. I argue that the decision to include some areas of concern and exclude others was made primarily on the basis of statistics. The statistics were ratings of satisfaction/dissatisfaction derived from three sources -- staff, students and parents. These decisions, based as they were on statistics, presented a number of questions for me both as researcher and as participant and I knew I needed other people's viewpoints in an attempt to make sense of the decisions made and of the process. To try and satisfy this emergent set of questions I
took what I now judge to be an ill-considered turn down the measurement path (see Chapter 4 for an analysis of the role of surveys).

The ill-considered step was taken immediately after the presentation of the issues list to staff for them to winnow down from 19 to approximately 7. In an effort to follow up on the questions with which I was left after the Dec. 5th day I composed and distributed a questionnaire to staff. The questionnaire listed possible reasons why staff may have chosen or rejected a particular criterion statement for the Growth Plan. The reasons (categories) on the questionnaire represented several hypotheses I had generated from comparing the data and now wished to test. These hypotheses included: choice made because of the ease or difficulty of effecting change, choice made due to the influence of one's colleagues and choice made with the possibility individuals foresaw to help with the proposed change. These hypotheses were either abandoned as being beyond the scope of the inquiry, or were dealt with in the second round interviews (see Appendix C).

In retrospect the questionnaire was unproductive and showed me how futile the search for quick answers to complex questions
can be. The error was in choosing a questionnaire as a tool. In
the following section I analyse why this most certainly was an
error since it has a bearing on my findings on the use of surveys in
the process of accreditation.

The questionnaire seemed to present a short-cut to finding out
why staff made the decisions they did. However, as Robert Linn
points out in his review of the "feasibility . . . of making causal
inferences" there is a need for general causal statements to be
qualified by an indication of frequency (qtd. in Wittrock 93) and
there is a need for an analysis of alternative conditions (107).
Also for a questionnaire on the decision-making process to have
been useful I would have had to control for a number of variables.
These include but are not limited to: presage (the pre-existing
conditions of participants), context, process and product variables
(107). I had none of these qualifiers built into the design of the
survey. Beyond the design of the survey however, lie other
questions. Linn points out that

the person using quantitative methods must make many qualitative decisions
regarding the questions to pose, the design to implement, the measures to use,
the analytical procedures to employ and the interpretation to stress. (92)
I wanted definitive answers (choose among these 8 reasons) in a short amount of time (3 days) and I wanted to be able to reduce a complex issue (decision-making) to that which could be quantified (count the responses) and then analysed (add the totals). Although I included an invitation at the end of each section for respondents to give an anecdotal example some staff members chose to accept this invitation and others didn't. Consequently the questionnaire "results" were virtually worthless. Would a better designed questionnaire have elicited more useful data? Certainly, providing the conditions indicated by Linn and others were in place. Surveys have their place and a well-designed one is a better tool than a poorly designed one. This example has a bearing on my analysis of the school's reliance on surveys.

In Chapter 4 I compare my survey's purpose and usefulness to the school's use of Accreditation surveys. I look at their design, their source and the use made of the results.

One positive outcome of my questionnaire was the high rate of return (57% when a return of 10% is reported average) which, although a small sample, I interpreted as evidence that a degree of trustworthiness was being established. In a year when
accreditation surveys added to the usual round of forms requiring teachers' written feedback, many colleagues reportedly were depositing all non-classroom-specific information in the round filing cabinet, therefore I was pleased with the response. Even so, I look back on the decision to create and employ this quasi-scientific tool, as evidence that I was "tempted into compulsive scientism" as Glaser and Strauss put it (226). Remembering the feeling of how hard it would be to identify and record my colleagues' opinions and how little time I had to try is what keeps me in touch with the motivations of those who worked with surveys to try and collect the accreditation data required. Although in Chapter 4 I argue that quick and easy certainty is a false hope it is an understandable one given the impossible timelines, broad range of evidence necessitated and most importantly the accountability measures required by the Accreditation process.

Throughout the fall and early spring, I developed a system of coding for the data which enabled the beginnings of an analysis. I placed the seven (later eight) categories in grid form, with each category at the head of a column and each informant (35 in all) at
the end of a row. This resulted in a certain ability to quantify the qualitative data, a useful tool which I was careful to use only in combination with other forms of analysis. Appearing in each intersecting box were the paragraph numbers of the transcript in which the category was mentioned. By totalling the columns one could see how many times each category was mentioned e.g., 9 for Personal pressure, 20 for Evidence collection. By totalling the rows one could see who had concerns or claims and how many they had (from 0 concerns through 7). Paying attention to who was mentioning each category enabled some broader groupings to be identified for further comparative analysis. In choosing to conduct further interviews from these broader groups I was doing two things: grouping categories into concepts from which hypotheses were emerging and testing hypotheses by comparing them against further data (Glaser & Strauss).

An example of grouping of categories was the placing of time, resource allocation and personal pressure under the concept of "constraints on shareholders." I hypothesized that committed professionals would want to do a good job of accreditation but were possibly constrained from doing so by limitation due to the
three categories mentioned. I then proceeded to test this hypothesis as part of my second round interviews.

I invited all staff to contact me if they wished to be interviewed at greater length and here was my second mistake, albeit a temporary one (and I take comfort it was before my discovery of Glaser and Strauss in early February). Relying on self-volunteered sampling (which I naively hoped would result in randomness) as the sampling method of choice, I placed my faith in the participants to identify whether they had something to contribute to the study. Instead I needed to have chosen the participants I required to obtain answers to the specific questions I was posing. Although I was prepared to reject some offers of interviews (based on my judgement that a category was saturated and based on the larger group to which the volunteer belonged), I realised fairly quickly that I was giving over control of where the data was to originate to the participants, rather than exercising my right/responsibility as a researcher to seek out the groups I needed to test my ideas. A few weeks during the month of February were lost when I realised I had to correct for too many offers (of interviews) in one group and too few in others. The
timely reading of Glaser and Strauss during this month encouraged me to select interview candidates more carefully and helped me reshape a more meaningful qualitative research design.

The challenge is to make defensible choices, be prepared to argue them and proceed with confidence that in qualitative research there are few fixed procedures and rigour in the work comes about through my application of rigour not though a super-imposed order. (Journal Entry 01:02:96)

Three second round interviews began with an invitation to informants to voice their opinions on the accreditation process to date and their aspirations for what it might ultimately accomplish. Then I asked informants if each issue I had identified was an issue in their estimation and to give their views on those they identified as being issues (see Appendix C). This enabled me to gather data for comparative analysis specifically for the concepts under consideration and also against previous groups. Rigour was achieved through constant comparison -- Glaser and Strauss's term for the simultaneous coding, analysis and testing of the categories (101-115).

At this point, I realized I could not compare data about one of
the categories -- the involvement of all shareholders -- without consulting the students and parents whose involvement was under discussion by the Internal Steering Committee. I needed to expand the number of groups from which data were being gathered, thus addressing the feature of on-going inclusion of new groups (Glaser & Strauss 49). Slices of data taken from these additional groups would allow further "constant comparison." The choice of groups, committee members who were students or parents, was important given the central focus of the inquiry -- the relationship of shareholders and their decisional involvement in the Growth Plan. The Accreditation Guide supports this their involvement by defining who the shareholders shall be (6) and directing they be allotted a role on the Internal Steering Committee (11).

Here I emphasize that the interviewing of students and the interviewing of parents was not part of my original research design. Neither was the decision (to include them as informants) derived from interviews with staff members (there was no file folder for this category at the end of the Round One interviews). The category emerged from discussions at the Internal Steering Committee meetings. In Chapter 4 I analyse how the committee
and its members dealt with the issue of student and parent involvement, but having some intimation that I did not want my inquiry to marginalize parents and students, I made the decision mid-year to incorporate their voices.

I feel the decision to include all shareholders in my inquiry was important for two reasons. First, I was incorporating a principle of the accreditation process into my own work and testing out its workability. There was some risk involved for with their inclusion there was no certainty I was allowing myself the time to reach my chapter and defence date goals! Secondly, I might have to totally reexamine my tentative conclusions of mid-year, a possibility again influenced by timelines but also at a more elemental level of relinquishing some measure of control for what the inquiry might reveal (Guba & Lincoln). The reluctance with which I came to this decision (to include parents and students as informants) again gives me some insight into the difficulty experienced by our staff of reaching out to the margins to include all shareholders. Accreditation timelines are rigid and the task is huge. Each voice added jeopardizes the time and the energy of well-meaning but busy teachers. Having said that, it is
still up to each of us to live inclusively by involving those on our margins. In Coleman and LaRocque's words, "leadership is after all for something, rather than being an end in itself" (142). In fact the interviews and subsequent member check among the non-staff participants added much new data and enriched the inquiry enormously.

I requested and received approval for a revision to my original proposal from the Ethics Committee so that I could seek permission to interview students who had taken part in accreditation committees. The purpose of these interviews was to check their understanding of the process, to find out if their expectations had been met, and to honour the spirit of the Accreditation Guide which directs evaluators to inform and solicit concerns from all shareholders. The same interview protocol was used for both students and parents (see Appendix E).

In May I did a number of member checks (Guba & Lincoln, Naturalistic 248). Two were conducted by extracting pieces of Chapter 4 for specific participants to read and comment upon. Four were done by submitting the entire preliminary draft chapter (38 pages) for the staff member's or parent's perusal and
These checks resulted in my taking another look at, in one case the emphasis I had placed/not placed on staff turnover from the previous year, and in another case what caused me to delete the discussion of an issue since the facts from two informants were contradictory. A further verification was done by submitting the chapter to an administrator outside the school for comment on the chapter's tone and implications. I then incorporated comments and interpretations of all the member checks into a second draft of Chapter 4.

The better part of the design was pre-planned in my proposal with the exception of the questionnaire and the student and parent interviews. What was not pre-planned was how the categories would fade in and out of importance, who among the shareholders would be interviewed and how the interview schedule would expand and contract with each successive addition to and analysis of the data. In my research proposal I mention on-going revision to the research design as part of the plan of the research but I think I did not fully comprehend what this would mean until I was in the middle of executing the plan, another example of Judith Meloy's observation that:
Doing qualitative research requires a conscious internal awareness within the external structural, political and human context . . . because [it is] the . . . focus of intense personal interaction and ambiguity. (xiii)

Some additional tools were useful. I used my journal to record and later access primary data, such as the records of events from which no agendae, minutes, transcripts etc could be saved. Many such events occurred: conversations with colleagues, conversations with administrative officers, conversations with colleagues in other schools undergoing accreditation, observation of proceedings, my thoughts as I worked on a task, my thoughts as I reflected upon a completed task etc. The journal also functioned as a source of analytical data for the further generation of rudimentary hypotheses as I went along (Meloy).

[Today I] began to play with pared down more focussed concept of categories. To my surprise [the category] "Involvement of Shareholders" (from working title) had become "Involvement of all Shareholders" as my category file name. This tells me my focus had shifted from "what decisional involvement?" to "who's decisional involvement?" Both are important . . . I am looking at view from the margins and view of the margins -- 2 separate questions. So which direction to proceed? . . . I think I want the whole thing. Who is involved and who isn't? For those who are, what constraints or privileges determine the extent of their involvement? (Journal Entry 04:17:96)
When coupled with other forms of comparative analysis the journal data helped to ground the theory in a very personal way. The question of how much of my personal voice to include in the analysis persisted. A first draft of Chapter 4 contained a considerable number of journal entries (approx. 22) which I intended to be a reminder to the reader of my stance as the researcher as I considered the data and was influenced by it in turn. After showing the draft to a colleague and discussing the analysis with members of my thesis committee I re-drafted the chapter and deleted over half of the journal entries, leaving the participants' voices to be heard more clearly and my own impact to be discerned through the structuring of the analysis.

CONCLUSION

The methodology described in this chapter emerged piece by hard won piece to this researcher. As late as five weeks before its submission to the Graduate Studies Committee I was still struggling over the analysis of the data. I read and re-read the transcripts of my colleagues' voices as they agonized over the
time involved, time they felt had been "robbed" (Judith) from students. I re-read the interviews with students and parents who hesitantly agreed to be a part of the accreditation process and who found they were not really part of it. I heard my administrator's concern that staff not "feel soured" by the process after all their hard work (04:26:96). Ultimately what I kept uppermost in my mind was by grounding the analysis in the data, I was remaining true to the principle espoused in Kirby and McKenna's work that "the destination of the research information is critical to people in the margins" (164).
CHAPTER 4 - ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 1 I referred to the twofold aim of accreditation and offered the possibility that each aim might only be attainable at the expense of the other. School accountability and school improvement are different goals (see definitions next section). The data gathered in the inquiry reveal that the dual aims and the differences between them were not well-understood by the shareholders. I argue in this chapter that it is difficult to build meaningful partnerships in evaluation when some shareholders, believing accreditation is for the pursuit of accountability, find other shareholder groups focusing on school improvement. Conversely, groups who saw school improvement as the primary goal did not try to build partnerships with those seeking accountability.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO AIMS

Participants who were asked to speculate on the meaning and
importance of the two aims had difficulty responding to my questions (Peter, Donna, Grant, Judith, Jim). Be they community or staff members, respondents to the question inevitably brought on furrowed brows, sighs, requests to re-read the definition and ultimately a lack of consensus as to what accreditation was for or even an ability to distinguish clearly between the two aims.

Judith, a teacher, says, "I hadn't even considered that accreditation was part of accountability or that accountability was an outcome of accreditation," while Peter, a parent, reveals the opposite perception: "They're just looking for someone to burn at the stake." These two opinions, one disavowing the notion that accreditation was for the purpose of accountability and the other for establishing individual accountability, highlight the differences in perception of one goal between two groups of shareholders.

When the subject of school improvement was discussed with teachers they were optimistic this could happen through the accreditation process. Margaret says, "It's great, and being a first year teacher it's opened my eyes to all sorts of areas". Elizabeth, a department head says, "It focuses everybody . . . there's good
communication among the staff," and Malcolm, an experienced teacher, says, "It's ensuring that I see what other teachers are doing . . . the innovative things . . . where I wouldn't normally see that." Pat, one of the administrators, reports, "If I can do some things personally to become a better administrator . . . then I will be happy . . ." Although all these informants also spoke about the extra work load brought on by accreditation they balanced their comments as Andrea did: "The changes that we suggest are going to benefit the school."

Funk and Wagnell define improvement as:

1) the act of making better or state of becoming better 2) modification or addition by some means of which a thing's excellence or value is increased 3) person, thing or process that constitutes an advance in progress or an increase in excellence over another. (676)

In contrast, accountability is defined as "liable to be called to account: responsible" (10) and Oxford adds "responsible for things to people" [emph. added] (10).

These definitions represent quite different points of departure for the process. Ian saw accreditation as an accountability exercise, "What we have here are teachers doing administrators'
jobs . . . [It is an administrator's] job to find out what we're doing, find out if we're meeting the criteria . . . ". Ian declined to participate in my inquiry for the reason given above and contributed only minimally in the committee work of accreditation.

Even where there is a willingness, as in Jim's case, to embrace the notion of accountability, "We [teachers] have to be the focus of any kind of accountability," his comments on the notion of accountability are phrased in terms of professional development where the word improvement could easily substitute for his use of "accountability". He says, "Accreditation should help out in that respect [wanting to 'find out if I'm doing well']; it should but it doesn't." While comfortable with accreditation's stated aim, Jim doesn't feel the process accomplishes this aim. I argue this is because he is talking about improving teacher "accountability" to parents and students while accreditation "accountability" is talking about establishing "accountability" for eighty-eight criterion statements to the External Team.
THE PROMISE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Two avenues are offered by the accreditation process for schools to build an accurate picture of their strengths and weaknesses. One is through the collection of evidence and the other is through a survey of the "Levels of Participant Satisfaction." Each is intended to be a check on the other (Guide 24); however, the ultimate importance placed upon surveys and the comparative unimportance of the evidence collected, demonstrated the unequal worth vested in each tool by the school. The privileging of surveys over evidence in the selection of issues for the Growth Plan was due, I argue, to the perceived subjectivity of the nature of the evidence vs. the perceived scientific validity of the survey results.

1. The promise of accountability through evidence-collection.

Although the majority of respondents (22/28) believed the evidence collected would represent an accurate picture of the
school, there were numerous comments which indicate how subjective teachers felt the evidence collected would be. They mentioned the tendency for "rosy-picture-painting" (Grant, Ken, Janet), for collecting evidence after having "taught to the test" (Joyce) and for ascribing high achievement to school factors rather than "the result of demographics" (Janet, Judith, Malcolm). Added to concerns about the subjectivity of the evidence was the uncertainty of its worth in the external team's eyes (Pat, Lorna) and of the impossibility of photocopying and filing "the day to day work that is unseen and not written down" (Norm, Deborah). The difficulty of documenting phenomenological evidence as compared to the relative ease of gathering statistics sometimes resulted in a skewed emphasis toward what was possible to collect:

In a search of my files for specific documents . . . it appears the less controversial issues (number of parent contacts, computer availability etc.) require more documentation that the more controversial issues (leadership, inter-staff communication) which are merely asking for an A/D [agree/disagree] or a Y/N. Quelle ironie! (Journal Entry 10:28:95)

I selected three accreditation criteria from the evidence files on "leadership" because of my interest in the potential role of authority to pre-determine shareholder involvement in
accreditation. These were:

- The school's direction has been developed through broad collaborative input (#55).
- Leadership is provided to ensure that planned and coherent change results from ongoing review and evaluation of educational services (#62).
- There is leadership to ensure that broadly based collaboration and consultation are part of the school's decision-making process (#63).

I have selected one of these for further examination here. The evidence file for #55 contained:

- the minutes of several staff meetings, PAC meetings and Department Head meetings.
- documentation from Students' Council, an annual Community Interaction Day at the local mall, the Internal Steering Committee and seven other "working sub-committees."
- evidence that the staff had input in the selection of the new principal in 1994.

From this list I observed three things: the list of evidence fills up the space allotted, the existence of the committees mentioned does not necessarily translate into a "broad collaborative effort," as suggested in Criterion #55 and the Staff Committee has been listed in the same category ("working sub-committees") as, for example, the awards and computer committees.

The third observation bears a closer look. The school Staff Committee is elected each year by teachers' union members and is mandated by contract to represent staff members' interests in
decisions which affect their learning and working conditions. I argue that juxtaposition (in the evidence) of the Staff Committee with volunteer ad hoc committees relegated the elected group to a category of volunteerism, possibly implying a judgement on its importance.

To check on the accuracy of the above observation I interviewed the head A.O. (04:26:96) and recorded his remark that, "Two models for decision-making exist in the school: they are Staff Committee and Department Heads." He distinguishes between the "almost underutilized" role the Staff Committee plays while pointing out the "leading role" given to Department Heads; and his preference to "seek a bigger role for them [Department Heads]". A clear bias was shown for the Department Head model of decision-making over the Staff Committee model (field notes 04:26:96).

Staff dissatisfaction level for criterion #55 was 30%. Although the statement exactly met the cut-off requirement for inclusion of 30% and was ultimately included on the Growth Plan issues list, my field notes indicate discussion on Dec. 5th leaned toward excluding it and the summary would have supported its
exclusion.

The two other criteria concerning leadership (#62 and #63 listed above) revealed a similar contradiction between the anecdotal summary of the evidence (positive) and the 41% and 56% respectively, dissatisfaction ratings from the survey (Internal Report 72-3). In considering the Internal Team's comments on the evidence indicating a positive presence of collaboration and consultation in the school, I wonder that my analysis contradicting this position could be so different from theirs -- subjective analysis indeed!

Although the final Growth Plan includes strategies to "define", "involve" and "create" decision-making processes in the school the administrator responded to my query on decision-making in the Growth Plan by saying, "the growth will be in awareness and understanding of the present process not on changing the process."

In other words the role of staff committee ("underutilized") represents the status quo and staff members, through the process outlined in the Growth Plan will become "aware. . . and understand" the present level of utilization (verified 04:29:96). While the A.O. felt it was a question of staff's lack of understanding of decision-
making in the school, my analysis shows the evidence and the survey concur and that changes are needed in how the teachers, students, parents and administration achieve "broad collaborative input."

To summarize: the evidence on three leadership criteria was judged in the Internal Report as supporting each statement while the survey revealed 30% or more dissatisfaction with each. My analysis of the evidence led to a different conclusion, one matched on the survey. From these contradictions I draw two conclusions:

1) Subjectivity of the evidence (collection, classification and analysis) enables proof for or against the criterion's presence. The decisions will likely depend who is doing the analysis.

2) Survey results are helpful as a check on the evidence.

It was clear to many that the leadership criteria were "the touchiest ones," . . . the ones "nobody wanted to take on" (Lorna, Jim). Long after the other sub-committees were active the leadership committee had to be urged to meet (field notes 10:25:95), "had difficulty meeting with all members"(10:04:95)
and were "working individually" (10:18:95). Although the Accreditation Guide acknowledges that the "leadership section can be a challenging part" (12) and advises schools to take steps to deal with its complexities, it would seem there is a gap between acknowledging the difficulty and dealing with potentially negative evidence on the school's leadership as the process is operationalized.

The degree to which the collection of evidence was seen to be a value-laden process (distinct as I argue in the next section from the perception of surveys as value-free) is captured by Judith's comment, who, when asked about the aim of achieving accountability through the accreditation process says, "It's an odd way to be accountable to our community considering how very subjective the whole process was."

2. The promise of accountability through surveys.

Many problems were perceived by participants concerning the use of surveys but, interestingly, their subjectivity was never among the problems mentioned. Concerns were expressed about
the overuse (Joyce, Grant), their misuse (Donna, Rebecca), what
they simply couldn't or didn't measure (Judith, Doug, Lorna,
James).

There were surveys of students, teachers, returning students,
support staff, parents, as well as two surveys on computer use,
one on school culture and three on leadership issues. "Survey
fatigue" with its potential to invalidate the results was noted by
a group of grade 10 students who worked to transfer
questionnaire results onto computer cards for electronic
"crunching". The students noted (and I confirmed) the first one or
two pages of each questionnaire were quite diverse in their
responses. That is, the answers ranged from "Very Satisfied" to
"Very Dissatisfied" with no apparent pattern. In contrast the
middle though to the end of the six-page questionnaires revealed
a majority with a "flat" profile of answers - usually all S or all D
down the page. Judith dismisses the lengthy surveys as "a
ridiculous number of questions . . . [so that] each one becomes
meaningless."

An error in numbering in the parent survey and a mid-survey
change from a 5 point Likert scale to 3 point scale, "agree",

90
"disagree" or "no opinion," was reported by Donna to have "raised hackles". Distributing the English-language-only survey made her "feel especially bad because of the nature of the school [dual-track]". She notes sadly, "We'll take your kids but your language is not that important," and comments further on the exclusion of other parents from the survey: "... [We] don't have to cater to every language group but it would have been nice to see something go home [in languages other than English]. ... and we want to know what they think."

Surveys ask what their creators want to know. Doug notes, "Questions were asked ... but not about special needs students," and Judith questions the assumptions teachers made in polling students: "What about the issues the kids wanted to raise?" while James felt the "questions guide[d] the answers," commenting, "You don't lead the witness, O.J."

Staff were critical of the main source of the surveys which was from other schools (James, Lorna), but justified their use by mentioning time and budget constraints, "We don't have the time or the resources to establish really good surveys" (Lorna, Lee). Most often surveys, borrowed or created, were used because they
reflected the criteria in the Accreditation Manual. This made it handy for the collectors (James, Jim) but occasionally resulted in a problem for the respondents: "I think some people found the language a bit difficult. . . when you're not familiar with the buzzwords then it makes it really difficult" (Donna). The other problem in using the criteria statements to generate the survey questions was that of double polling. Evidence was derived from short surveys (the criterion put into question form) and the evidence gleaned was then supposed to inform a subsequent (identical but longer) survey; this feels like a practice I liken to "paying your Visa with your Mastercard" (Journal Entry 01:02:96).

In spite of extensive concerns over the use of surveys, efficiency was most often cited as the reason for employing them. As a researcher I observed that the strongest advocates for the use of surveys (co-chairs of the Steering Committee and administrative officers) were those in positions required to be most accountable, while it was those with the least control over the design and implementation of surveys who were most concerned about their use. I offer the following "tracking of a pedagogical issue" as support for the contention that the promise
of accountability obtainable from statistical results took precedence over the perceived lack of accountability from the evidence.

**TRACKING OF A PEDAGOGICAL ISSUE**

With transcript data from twenty-six interviews one sub-committee noted their evidence revealed a:

generalized perception that . . . specialized programs . . . [are] accommodating different rates of learning, but the accommodation is only for designated students. What about the rest?" (Minutes 10:12:95)

This sub-committee summary resided in the evidence file, ready to inform those who consulted it. It is clear that like most of the summaries, it was probably read by only a handful of teachers (Judith, Lorna, Ken).

The above criterion statement, that the school accommodates students' differing rates of learning, received a modest 72% rating of "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on the staff satisfaction survey. Effectively teachers were being asked the same question as I had asked them in an interview but were responding without
the benefit of the sub-committee clarification (that staff were referring to designated special needs students, rather than considering the accommodation of regular program students' differing rates of learning). The satisfaction rating was sufficiently high to miss the cut-off for inclusion as an issue on the Growth Plan (field notes 12:05:95).

Although this researcher participated in the decision to use survey results for the selection of issues for the School Growth Plan (Journal entry 12:03:95), I took comfort from the fact that the caution implied in the summary of evidence would remain as part of the Internal Report. How surprising then to read in the final report, released after the ratification of the Growth Plan, to see the summary changed to: "the evidence suggests through specialized programs and various teaching strategies we are working toward accommodating different learning rates" (Internal Assessment 46).

Here is a case where numbers predominated even though two kinds of anecdotal evidence synthesized from the actual evidence were available. The anecdotal summary began to reflect the numbers! Apparently the Internal Steering Committee concluded
that the issue, not having made it onto the shortlist of issues for the Growth Plan, must be in reasonable shape (Journal entry 04:24:96)! One of the writers of the report agrees this was a case of an issue being "air-brushed out of history" (Jim, Marian).

The above sequence of events has several implications for the findings of the inquiry. Numbers took precedence over the hard reflective work of individuals. The rationality of numbers resulted in the deletion of more "subjective" evidence. The individual (me), who collected and helped analyse the evidence felt marginalized by the power of "objective" results to wipe out many hours of careful work. One wonders how often this tale could be told from the points of view of other collectors of evidence who looked at the Growth Plan issues and wondered where the work of their sub-committee had gone.

**CONSTRAINTS ON SHAREHOLDERS**

1. **Time**

   A clear majority of staff members invested many hours, adding
up to days of additional work, on the tasks associated with accreditation. Many teachers worked in their sub-committees one or more Friday nights, one or more Saturdays, in addition to the collection of evidence individuals undertook before during and after their teaching day. Meetings of various accreditation committees averaged one every two weeks over an eight month period and these meetings were in addition to contractual commitments such as staff and/or department head meetings and voluntary commitments such as school committees, extra-curricular sports, practices, excursions, etc.

Complaints about the amount of time spent on accreditation persisted but the tenor of the comments during the course of the process changed. Part way through the evidence-collection phase David reported, "I'm tired. . . I've had it. . . I can't believe people would give up half their Saturdays to come in and work [on accreditation]," but in the next sentence he does "find good things about it. . . some good will come . . .". Marlene, interviewed a month earlier, also balances between "almost stressed out" and "feeling pretty good about it . . .". This ability to see the benefits as well as the cost in terms of time and energy contrasts sharply
with comments, largely negative, made later both during and after the building of the Growth Plans:

What I saw happening in my little group and I felt the same way was just getting things down on paper to fill in the columns to satisfy whoever's coming in to look over our head... (Judith)

Grant also observed a fill-in-the-blanks approach:

People have no time. They're just throwing whatever they have on their minds out there... There are some great ideas but that's not a whole plan. That's a piece of a plan..."

Teachers commented the work of collecting evidence was done for a good reason (Andrea, Rebecca) using words like "rewarding" and "necessary". They placed confidence in the process to "benefit the school" and talked about improvements which the collection of evidence would suggest. In contrast, the ability to see a good reason for the workload had all but disappeared during interviews conducted during the Growth Plan phase. Participants referred to "going through the motions" and "not wanting to come across as totally cynical" but wondering whether the Growth Plans will have "any carryover" (Judith). Many felt as Leo did that the potential
was for everyone to "shuffle it aside like so many things". The emphasis appeared to have shifted from cautious optimism during the evidence collection phase that school improvement could be effected, to skepticism that "we just have to get this little stamp that says we pass" and then "no one knows what we do afterwards" (Judith). The day after my own Growth Plan Group finished their work I noted:

I wonder if others feels as I do, as ___ so aptly puts it '... [It's] a bonsai growth plan'. The objectives and action plans are all filled in but there's a lack of certainty or even hopefulness that these plans will change anything.

(Journal entry 03:05:96)

A diminishing level of confidence in the Growth Plans is revealed by the data. I argue this stems from the realization that the kind of meaningful changes many hoped would occur might not occur and perhaps did not even constitute the real goal. Given the time constraints and the need to just "fill in the blanks", accountability (to a format, an external authority, a process) became the primary aim and staff members demonstrated their tacit understanding of the shift in emphasis through rote participation in the exercise.
Participants solved the time crunch in a number of ways. Some people foresaw the workload and made decisions to teach less time (Renee, Lorna). As a part-time worker Lorna felt a rueful annoyance over the exploitation of her non-paid working time: "It's part of the reason I went 86% which I think the government should pay me back [laughter]. . . and I don't know how I would be coping with it if I didn't have 86%." Judith questions the value of the process when it is "all volunteer time," effectively negating the possibility of teachers doing a really meaningful job while feeling "My job is to teach".

Time constraints dictated the impossibility of establishing a clear link between the evidence collection and the Levels of Satisfaction survey, the link advised on p. 24 of the Guide, as revealed in the following observation:

I did [intend to use the evidence to fill in the survey]! I started sitting there with the stacks of folders all around me trying to understand what was there and it was taking me 20 minutes per folder. I just didn't have the time and at the end it became 'Well I just have to get through this . . . [and filled it in without using the majority of the evidence]. (Judith)

The implications of a weak link between the evidence collection and the levels of satisfaction survey go beyond the question of
time constraints and are explored in more depth in the section entitled "Alienation of Shareholders."

Decisions to put off or cancel school events were made due to the workload of accreditation. Grant reveals the effect of these cancellations or postponements on school life and on him personally:

People haven't taken on the things they ordinarily would have because of accreditation. It's irksome cutting back on students' time. We've had two chances cancelled; we've also had a coffee-house [postponed] all at the administrative level because people are too busy. It's affecting... things... and it's taking my will away.

The cancellations extended beyond student events. Parent teacher interview hours were halved in the fall and again in the spring. Staff meetings were shortened four times out of seven with the second hour or hour-and-a-half devoted to accreditation. Doris refers to this process as "stealing days" and notes that "if there were days set aside specifically the whole staff would be more likely to get involved. . . " Numerous teachers also disagreed with the dedication of all their professional days to accreditation (David, Lorna, Suzanne) saying, "There are some other parts of my profession that I would like to work on" (Lorna). Those who have
changed schools and are doing an accreditation two or three years consecutively reported their "pro d. is suffering" (Suzanne).

It is tempting to simply say the process is too time-consuming and recommend ways to either narrow its scope or make it more efficient. Although the data reveal the process is too time-consuming this conclusion does not probe the issue deeply enough when looked at from the point of view of the shareholders. Researchers have observed that people often do their best work under difficult conditions but only if they feel there is meaning to what they are doing (Fullan) and they feel supported in their task (Tjosvold). During the evidence collection phase there were numerous reports of the heavy workload but few that the task was meaningless. The focus was perceived to be on providing a representative picture of the school so that we'd "have fodder for the growth plan" (Grant, John). Staff members saw the goal they were pursuing as school improvement. I argue that when the focus shifted away from the evidence and onto the survey results staff members sensed they were no longer pursuing improvement but were meeting the need for external accountability measures.

The period during which the focus shifted most dramatically
was the day the Internal Steering Committee met to shortlist issues for staff to include in the Growth Plan. My field notes from this day observe that the day "flew by. Faced with . . . a mountain of information and looming deadlines any reasonable suggestion to streamline the process was embraced." I noted "the cut-off level was set the first 10 minutes of the morning at 35%" and "such troublesome questions as . . . the comments . . . or what to do when the evidence summary indicated a problem but the statistics didn't. . . " were "never again referred to and the pesky discrepancies weren't either."

As a participant in the decisions taken this day I share responsibility for having consigned to numbers the rationale for our school growth plan. The lure of "rational" statistics lies in the speed with which they can be processed and the audit trail of accountability they provide. I question whether any of us were aware we were enabling a shift in focus away from the goal of school improvement by our emphasis on expediency.
2. BUDGET

Problems of budget (do more with less) while common to many organizations were found to be exacerbated in this inquiry by two negative perceptions. It was felt by a number of staff members that the funds that were available for accreditation were unequally distributed and secondly, that school funds were used to underwrite a limited accreditation budget.

One example was the use of "leadership days," that is, days granted by the district to a school's departments for accomplishing department/curriculum business. During the year of accreditation, leadership days were granted by the administration for accreditation business "on a first come first served basis" (A.O.). Although only 2/3 of the allotted days had been used in previous years and all demands for the days (both regular and accreditation) were granted up until the end of March this practice was poorly understood by participants.

Who controlled the allocation was an issue: "Well... I don't agree... but the principal basically controls [the distribution]... there probably could be another way of allocating them" (James).
Possible negative consequences for classes where the teacher was absent on a leadership day were noted: "Given extra time . . . I really disagree with that . . . If it's changing the way we teach then it's really doing the opposite of what it intends" (Grant).

There was differential privilege perceived in awarding of the days: "When I think of the three hours spent doing similar work alone on a Saturday afternoon, I wonder why our committee didn't pursue the same route" (Journal entry 11:15:95). Although it is true a policy of 'first come first served' was in place (conversation with A.O. 04:26:96) not everyone on staff was aware of the policy or felt a sense of entitlement to it.

A laptop computer was purchased with some of the accreditation budget on the strength of the Internal Steering Committee's rationale: "We can all use [it] in the school afterwards" (Jim). Since production of the accreditation documents was the responsibility of one member of the Internal Committee the laptop became his constant companion. Overall not much was said about the laptop computer excepting "a computer for one person? I don't have access to it!" (Grant) and now, two months after the document is finished it does occur to this staff
member to wonder where it is presently stored and whether its availability shouldn't be discussed and formalized?

The allocation of a block of teaching time to one co-chair of the accreditation committee was mentioned as an issue. Although no contractual violations resulted, the perception that everyone else's teaching load was thereby increased persisted:

People have been given this extra time to work on Accreditation. They've made time within the timetable for those people to work . . . [and it] takes time away from what's available to the ordinary teacher . . . " (Grant)

When in the second semester, the same teacher received an additional block of teaching time to run a specialized program, one which was perceived to have a lesser workload than a regular class, the staffroom teasing picked up (field notes 02:16:96). Although the banter was good-natured the sense that some staff members "were in privileged positions and were heard more than others because of this privileged position" (Grant) was confirmed in subsequent member checks (Suzanne, Doug).

Accreditation information production generates an enormous amount of paper. My personal collection of accreditation-related documents: agendae, minutes, drafts, surveys, results of surveys,
summaries, evidence transcripts etc., stacked approximately 15 cm high, cover the entire half of a 4x6 dining room table. Multiply this amount by 35 staff members and add the accumulated survey forms of 240 parents, 500 students, 35 teachers and 4 file drawers of evidence and there exists a huge amount of documentation.

The issue of overuse of the photocopy machine was raised twice in meetings (01:15:96, 01:29:96) with the warning, "let's cut back... be conservative... May have to freeze xerox use."

Attempts to verify the source of "overuse" and the extent to which accreditation might be a factor in the mid-year budget overrun were confusing. The photocopier account set up for accreditation stood at only 750 clicks seven months into the process (Lucy)!

Although some staff who were over their projected budget allowed they had been overusing the photocopier other staff who would normally be responsible for photocopying documents were not over budget on their accounts (conversation with A.O. 04:26:96). So the disappearing clicks remain a mystery. Staff who were conservative users and yet were threatened with a photocopy freeze felt annoyed (Journal entry 01:29:96) and the
incident certainly added to "accreditation stress."

Space to store accreditation materials and do accreditation work was at a premium. In September a room was assigned Students' Council for lunchtime and after school use but in November the room was needed for accreditation business and the issue came before the Internal Steering Committee. The issues were "confidentiality" of the evidence, "liability" of teachers and "commitment to students" (minutes 11:15:95). A decision was made in favour of teacher use with a recommendation for "a sign-up sheet [to be] placed on the door for before and after school times." I looked for a sign-up sheet some months later and was told "there's never been one" (Susan). Lindsay, a student council member says, "Teachers have their staff room for the staff... we need a... centre kind of a thing." In fact Students' Council never did fully occupy the room again, a clear case of the marginalization of one of our most important shareholder groups, a group elected by the student body at large in whose name all this work is apparently being undertaken (Guide 14).
3. ALIENATION

MARGINALIZATION OF TEACHER GROUPS

Decisions made were often a result of looming time-lines without concern for their potential to affect the attitude and involvement of shareholders. One example was the decision to use a bar-code scanning device to electronically encode and analyse the responses to the staff Levels of Satisfaction survey. The intended outcomes of using the device were: increased speed, the ability to eliminate duplicate answers, and provision of a technological diversion for what might be a tedious task (Jim, Peter). The unintended outcome was the potential loss of anonymity to staff members since the data-base for user entry was intended to be our library card bar codes. Using this data base would have potentially allowed matching of individuals' names to specific survey forms raising the possibility that those who responded critically to practices within the school could be subject to identification.

The potential loss of anonymity was raised in four meetings
(Nov. 9, 13, 15 and 21) before the issue was recognized as sufficiently important for the planners to change course. Each time there were reassurances such as "back to the drawing board" or "bar codes will be given randomly" or "no one will bother looking once the answers are in," given by the co-chairs. In the training session for the scanning device, it was clear the issue of anonymity had not been attended to. Our own library cards remained the data base upon which the satisfaction survey would be conducted. A somewhat rancorous discussion ensued with the result that new cards with untraceable numbers were promised for the next day; however, the resolution was not achieved without tension (field notes 11:21:95).

The casual treatment of this important issue can be seen as an example of expediency overriding the concerns "of individuals about the human-ness of the process and [its] inclusiveness . . . " (Journal entry, 11:16:95) which if important for me, a staff member with many years of seniority, is of even more significance to "younger staff members . . . still intimidated . . . [who] feel they could be identified" (Journal entry 11:28:95).

Participants in a process which purports to build partnerships
have a responsibility to ensure their individual voices do not marginalize those with whom they are trying to establish a collaborative relationship (Giroux). My own committee experience was instructive. We met, sheaves of ideas in hand, to find its chair had already drawn up the advance organizers under which we would do our planning. As Elizabeth Ellsworth did, I noted the potential for tension between a senior male chairperson and a group of women committee members who were motivated to get the job done, preserve good relations and produce a plan that would be professionally useful (98). Concerning the advance organizer I wrote:

Even though ___ was proposing bigger questions [than the advance organizer suggested] . . . it was a full one and a quarter hours before this tack [the organizer] was abandoned . . . I want tentativeness in how to proceed, let's create here not scribe for a pre-determined order. This is the guts of the process; let's do it well. (Journal entry 02:01:96)

The pressure inherent in "getting something down on paper" (Judith) by which the External Team would judge the school was a powerful factor with which to cope when all were equally interested but were not equally accountable. I argue that from the outset we were working toward different aims on this committee.
The teacher members, enjoying a fairly low individual level of responsibility for the process, were focusing on students' unique needs and how we might meet them; in other words, working toward the school improvement goal. The chair, faced with a high degree of responsibility (perceived or actual) was focusing on the action plans as a means of achieving a measure of accountability. Of course cross-over of the two goals was present but I argue that the tension devolved from a fundamental difference in the premise under which teachers and the chair were approaching the task: school improvement vs. accountability.

Elsewhere I have tracked a pedagogical issue from its identification in the evidence to its ultimate exclusion from the shortlist and argue this was due to an arbitrary statistical cut-off in the level of satisfaction. In addition I have described how the evidence purported to support a criterion statement but a different analysis corroborated by the survey results revealed otherwise. From these examples it is difficult to see how the two processes inform one other; in fact they appear to operate independently of one another. The uncoupling of the suggested link between the evidence and the surveys had a bearing on staff
members' negative feelings that their time was ill-spent on the
collection of evidence, that numbers were really all that counted
and consequently their feeling of alienation from the process.

MARGINALIZATION OF STUDENTS

As a researcher, I became aware of the issue of
marginalization of students and parents through discussions of
the Internal Steering Committee. When teachers had been asked in
my first round of interviews, "Will the collection of evidence
represent an accurate picture of our school?" staff members
presented concerns that showed them thinking on behalf of
students, empathising with students' probable concerns, but none
questioned the extent to which we, the staff, were failing to
involve students or parents themselves. The issue of student
involvement (or wider community involvement) was raised at five
Steering Committee meetings (Oct. 4, Nov. 15, 27, Jan. 6 and Feb.
21) and while tasks were initially envisaged for them, these were
never followed though:
We had plans in those meetings that people would be taking time off to do focus
groups with students. I'm sure we said that, but I didn't hear any feedback
with what happened with those meetings. Did they even occur? (Grant)

Focus groups with students were held, but it is doubtful their
discussions or results had any bearing on the accreditation
process. The purpose was reported to be "follow-up to the student
survey . . . to find out if the dissatisfaction was because they had
misunderstood the point of the original . . . question" (Rebecca). If
the intended outcome was to clear up areas of dissatisfaction, the
data are contradictory since in anecdotal evidence the
dissatisfactions were still reported to be quite high among the
students (John, Deborah) while the statistics do show an
ameliorating effect after the groups were held (Internal Report,
86, 91).

If the intended outcome of the focus groups was to elicit
student feedback for the Growth Plan (John, Judith) this objective
was unmet since no one remembers hearing a reporting out of the
single session (John, Judith, Grant, Rebecca) and the one issue
that remained with a high enough dissatisfaction rating by
students ("Staff models positive, caring and respectful
interactions with students") was left off the Growth Plan.
A student who was invited to be part of the Internal Steering Committee reportedly felt "like a token student" (Suzanne) and says, "I was quite confused . . . I didn't know how I was going to respond to anything if I didn't understand" (Lindsay). Anne couldn't remember the name of the committee she had been on, nor how many meetings she had attended. Her understanding of accreditation was limited to "checking up on how the school's doing" and even with four attempts at clarifying questions was stuck as to how her committee was trying to accomplish that. Lindsay, on the other hand, demonstrated a clear understanding of the purpose but says, "I didn't feel like I was doing anything . . . [the committee] didn't seem to need me." It seems Students Council didn't require any reports from her either: "We're not so involved in the process," and Gram, an I.S.C. member, questions the sincerity of the attempt to involve them: "You need to give them not only the opportunity but also the tools to get involved." Both maintain that a way to involve students could have been found "that would be good . . . a lot of students have things to say," but recognize that sitting on a committee with their teachers is "a pretty foreign environment" (Judith) where students "are too shy . . ."
[or might] get judged because their history is not so good . . . "

(Lindsay).

MARGINALIZATION OF PARENTS

The alienation of various parent groups has been referred to in
the section on the use of surveys but the parents who were invited
to be part of the process also reported a sense of marginalization.
Peter wondered "why I'm here. . ." and was critical of the lack of
clarity about his role, saying, "They wanted a community member,
but what . . . for?" Donna echoes his disappointment in her level of
participation, saying, "I thought I was going to be able to
participate, that my opinion would. . .[count]," and then comments
on the lack of preparation she felt she had for the task. While
both were understanding of the time it would take a staff person
to acquaint them with the process, they felt being given the main
preparation they had, their manuals, were "only good when you're
actually in the process of using [it]. . .otherwise would you sit and
read your manual?" The last word on parent involvement should be
Peter's whose feelings as a visitor in the school are revealing.
Although he is at the school a great deal as a volunteer coach he says:

When you come into a school you always feel like a student. It's the authority figures you remember from when you were a student. Even as a parent, a community member, an adult, you feel that way.

CONCLUSION

The attempt to achieve accountability through accreditation helps to explain the overreliance on pseudo-scientific surveys and the exhaustive evidence collection observed in the school's process. The reported constraints of time, budget and shareholder alienation reflect the impossibility of conducting a meaningful review of the school for the goal of school improvement within the larger context of striving for accountability. The "hidden agenda" referred to in Chapter 1 is not really hidden; it is one half of the dual aim taking precedence over the other. Attempts to achieve accountability resulted in over-involvement of the administration (who saw the primary goal as accountability) in the process and underinvolvement of all other shareholder groups effectively negating the model promoted by the writers of the
policy: "Building Partnerships".

In Chapter 5 I draw on the analysis presented in this chapter to suggest some conclusions about the relationship between the dual airs and the resulting privileging of some and marginalization of other shareholders.

Although this inquiry's conclusion coincided with the end of the internal process, readers are invited to turn to the Afterword for a report on the External Team's findings.
CHAPTER 5 - IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Since the data analysed in Chapter 4 were primarily phenomenological in nature and limited in scope it is important to note that the following conclusions are offered as representative of one school's experience only. Decisions on the meaningfulness of these comments for other contexts is left to the reader.

FINDINGS

1. All teachers reported they had insufficient time to adequately address the tasks. They solved the time shortage in a variety of ways, none of which were very satisfactory to themselves e.g. working less time, using school release days, cutting back on school commitments and taking shortcuts in the accreditation tasks.

2. Teacher responses to the Levels of Satisfaction survey were made, by and large, without benefit of either the specifics of the
evidence or the summary statements contained in the evidence files. This resulted in a weak linkage between the evidence and the staff satisfaction survey.

3. Staff awareness of the difficulties of collecting representative evidence encouraged them to correct for unrepresentative evidence. This was done in a variety of ways, most notably in the sub-committee summaries. At the sub-committee/draft report level individuals felt the summaries to be an accurate representation of both what they had found out and of how the school operated.

5. Evidence-collection, while it formed a major part of the workload of accreditation, played only a minor role in the selection of growth plan items. The suspicion that the evidence and the summaries were too subjective was one factor in the low level of importance placed upon the evidence during the selection of issues for inclusion in the Growth Plan.

6. Surveys were overused among populations easily reached.
Some surveys contained errors in numbering or scale so that results were inconclusive. There was a failure to survey some populations and some groups were surveyed without the benefit of disqualifying questions so that the results were of questionable validity. The surveys were based upon questions developed at other schools (therefore an imprecise tool for this school) and were largely paired to the criteria. Issues were thus pre-scribed; no new issues could be raised through such a format. The questions while they didn't pre-determine the answers, did pre-determine the scope of the answers.

7. Issues were selected for inclusion in the school's Growth Plan primarily on the basis of their statistical performance on the Levels of Satisfaction survey and on other surveys. The decision to use statistical cut-offs as the basis for inclusion or exclusion of issues resulted in the inclusion of issues which might have been better dealt with by another process and/or the possible exclusion of issues for which there was evidence of weakness but insufficient numerical dissatisfaction.
8. Questioning the decision-making process in a school is acknowledged to be "challenging" (Guide 11) but the school took no particular measures to deal with the challenge. This is not to say it was not an issue. The risk to individuals of speaking their mind was publicly discounted, e.g., the issue of anonymity in bar-coding. Member checks confirmed that feelings of not wanting to step on toes, uncertainty about consequences of speaking up etc. were constant throughout the process but remained unacknowledged by those in a position to influence wider shareholder involvement.

10. Reports from participants indicate a certain lack of confidence in the Growth Plan. Key members of staff who might be expected to take on a leadership role in its implementation next year are saying they will not be doing so.

11. This is not to say no changes resulted. In fact those changes which could be made quickly and easily were made almost as soon as they were identified, before or outside of their inclusion in the Growth Plan, e.g., communication between Department Heads and their departments, particularly on budget matters.
12. The dual aim of school improvement and accountability complicated demands on the shareholders. Administrative officers, inexperienced teachers and co-chairs of the Internal Steering Committee reported a reasonably high degree of pressure due to accreditation and these were also the shareholders most vulnerable to be held responsible for an unsuccessful accreditation. Students and those experienced teachers who reported a low commitment to the process, reported little pressure and they are the shareholders unlikely to be held responsible for a failed accreditation. A tacit emphasis on accountability may have put the school staff in a vulnerable position with respect to its community, pre-determining their willingness to forego meaningful community involvement.

13. Negative staff attitudes toward the use of leadership days, professional days and the timetabling of a spare block to assist with accreditation business persisted. Although no infractions of the contract resulted, nor was there denial of requested leadership days for regular school business for the majority of the
school year, the sense of there having been privileged entitlement vested in some staff members was a factor in this negative feeling.

14. It seems clear the staff took itself for granted in the implementation of the process. Decisions on all facets of the process were made within the confines of the staff and although student and parent representation occurred it was by no means representative or effective. All shareholders agree this was so and yet the intention of changing the nature of the collaboration between various shareholder groups does not form a part of the Growth Plan. Rather, the emphasis in the Plan is one of better communication/acceptance of the existing process of collaboration: to retain the status quo but communicate it more effectively.

REFLECTIONS

Looking back on some notes made early on in this inquiry I re-read Lincoln and Guba who quote Stake in their book Effective
Evaluation:

The ultimate test of validity for an evaluation is an increase in the audience's understanding of the entity that was being evaluated. A generally useful operational measure for this increase is a reduction of the number and level of concerns held by the audience and in the resolution of issues or the level of concerns. (37)

The importance of this measure will never be tested through use of the present set of accreditation guidelines. The Manual directs that evidence be gathered on all the criteria contained in the Manual (12), an impossible job given the time and budget constraints at work in the school. The pressure to meet timelines and the perceived expectations of the External Team predisposed internal teams to the use of pseudo-scientific tools to try and provide the evidence. By tying accreditation to evidence collected on 88 criterion statements rather than allowing key issues to emerge from the shareholders themselves and then doing some real analysis of how these issues relate to the criteria (this would take time and money) the process risks turning into a hollow version of what its writers likely envisioned it to be.

A really courageous school could conceivably launch an open-ended solicitation of concerns among its shareholders, match the
feedback to the criteria and still be lacking evidence on many criteria. In the absence of reported concerns or issues, one could argue there is no need to gather evidence on these criteria. I subscribe to this approach; however, the counter argument is that all shareholders may be simply complacent about certain aspects of the school. Thus one is left with a dilemma between approaches: a meaningful job done on a partial list of criteria - or as in the case of the study: overreliance on questionable results that are all-inclusive!

Guba and Lincoln also state, "Evaluation is always disruptive of the prevailing political balance" (Eff. Eval. 301) to which I have added the corollary...if no disruption occurs to the political balance then an inadequate evaluation has taken place.

Did this happen to the school in question? The question was never posed. Readers are directed to the Epilogue for a discussion of events following the visit of the External team.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To schools:

1. Clarification of the purpose of accreditation so that the
contradictions inherent in the dual aim, if both are to be retained, are made evident to the shareholders.

2. Early inclusion of the staff in decisions related to the use of professional days, the allocation of leadership days, any adjustment of the timetable for accreditation business etc. -- all to be done through Staff Committee.

3. Early preparation of Students' Council and of the PAC group for their full involvement.

4. Use the results of the surveys in conjunction with the evidence summaries to shortlist Growth Plan issues. No decision to include or eliminate growth plan issues should be made on the basis of statistics alone.

To the Accreditation Services Branch:

1. Uncouple the requirement of providing evidence for every criterion statement. Limit the collection of evidence to criterion statements or areas where shareholders have identified a concern.

2. Retain the Levels of Satisfaction survey and provide direction that schools ensure its anonymity. The survey does provide a check on the evidence.
3. Acknowledge that accountability to the public cannot be achieved through the accreditation process. Alternate procedures exist for accountability (reporting, audits, contract, teacher evaluations, school board elections etc.) Re-name the exercise "A review process" and emphasize school improvement as the aim.

4. Provide a minimum of five days to be called "Accreditation Days" for any school undergoing its accreditation year. Ensure parent and student participation on these days.

5. Provide a compendium of methods by which schools have collected evidence and include the templates, grids, organizational tools etc. for schools embarking on the process.

6. Concurrently, provide training for schools in the use of qualitative methods of gathering evidence -- interviews, focus groups etc.

For further study:

1. Similar study in a much larger school to investigate to what extent these finding were identifiable due to the relatively small size of the school.
2. Similar inquiry in a school with average staff longevity of a greater length than the school studied.

3. Research a school which interpreted the collection of evidence and its subsequent linking with the criterion statements as different than a one-to-one pairing.

4. Follow up with a study of this school to find out if its Growth Plan was implemented in a meaningful way.

CONCLUSION

Each stage of this work had its fascination for this researcher. I loved hearing the voices of my colleagues in my ears as I transcribed our interviews. I remained fascinated by the twists and turns of events at meetings. I am full of admiration for my colleagues who committed to the process with their time and their best hopes for students; at the same time I understand the point of view of those colleagues who distanced themselves from the process concluding that their time and energies were best spent in doing what they trained to do -- teach. I conclude that next time I am involved in an accreditation, contrary to Jim's
resolve to "just muck around on a sub-committee," I'll likely be more involved!!
The accreditation and my inquiry have an intertwining plotline. Although the research was primarily concerned with the school's internal process (the rising action), not the climax and dénouement offered by the visit of the External Team, I would be remiss in leaving readers without a sense of the story's resolution.

The External Team withheld full accreditation until revisions to the Growth Plan were made. For this we were given sixty days, at which time the district superintendent would evaluate and approve the plan. The grade was a "2", not the hoped for "1". I recorded our staff's response:

It's a conditional pass. The [External] Team mentioned a long list of strengths but couldn't accept the growth plan as it is. We are to... [details of revisions]. Then the thank you gifts and cards and speeches were presented and accepted. [the A.O.] thanked one and all and wished everyone a good weekend "as best you can". People filed out a bit baffled, feeling I think, as though we'd had our wrists slapped with a velvet lash. (Journal entry 05:05:96)

An emergency staff meeting was called and staff were requested by the administrative team team and the Pro-D.
chairperson to change the agenda of an upcoming professional development day so that we might address the growth plan.

Attendance was low at the meeting, about 60%; acceptance of the proposal was "grudging" (Field notes 05:09:96).

In my journal I noted the feelings I experienced and heard reported in the two or three days preceding the Pro-day . . . [what] could help our staff take the revision of the Growth Plan seriously? The talk . . . disturbed me. [I heard people saying] 'leave the tinkering with timelines to a small committee'. [I heard] anger at the External Team for 'failing to understand us' or for 'using the tools of accreditation too rigidly' or for 'punishing our ambitiousness.' (Journal entry 05:18:96)

The resentment expressed seemed to show us "off-load[ing] the responsibility" onto the External Team whereas, as a researcher and a participant, I felt the External Team probably "wanted the school to take responsibility for itself" (Journal entry 05:18:96).

Although some central issues had been included in the Growth Plan (as determined by the survey results) the External Team's opinion was they were unlikely to be given proper (or prompt) attention in a plan that needed to "establish a more realistic time line" and "focus on a few major directions" (External Report 12).
On the ensuing pro-day:

Issues were brought out . . . at minimal risk . . . The decision-making process in the school -- what I ha[d] seen in my inquiry as intimately linked with questions of power relations . . . will be examined . . . has been brought into sharp focus. (Journal entry 05:18:96)

So I can conclude on a note of cautious optimism: "the process, tough as it is, ragged as it feels in its implementation -- WORKS!!" (Journal entry 05:18:06). As a researcher I only arrive at this further conclusion in light of the decision of the External Team which parallels the findings of this inquiry. The success of next year's implementation of the action plans will be an interesting test of whether the shareholders can join together to build partnerships for school improvement.
APPENDIX A

SOURCES FOR ACCREDITATION MANUAL (1994)

Learning Experiences
- Primary Foundation Document (1992)
- Intermediate Program Policy (1993)
- Graduation Program Policy (1993)

Leadership
- Thomas Sergiovanni: Moral Leadership (1992)
- Dean Tjosvold: Team Organization (1991)
- I.M. Burns: Leadership (1978)

Professional Attributes and Staff Development
- Susan Rosenholtz: Teachers' Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools (1989)
- Anne Lieberman (ed.) Building a Professional Culture in Schools (1988)

School Culture
- Seymour Sarason: The Predictable Failure of School Reform (1990)
- E.H. Schein: Organizational Culture and Leadership (1985)
- John Goodlad: A Place Called School

School And its Community
- Peter Coleman and Linda LaRocque: Struggling to be Good Enough (1990)
- Susan Rosenholtz: Teachers' Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools (1989)

provided by Educom., 1995
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - 1st round

Criterion statements: To what extent are...

37. different learning rates accommodated?
38. different learning styles accommodated?
39. students provided with opportunities for active learning?
40. both individual and group learning strategies utilized?

Process of accreditation

1. How is accreditation affecting you?

2. Will the gathered evidence reflect how things operate in our school?

3. May I come back and talk to you further along in the process?
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - 2nd round

You've agreed/volunteered to talk with me about the Accreditation process. I have some specific questions to ask you but I wonder if you would like to begin with your own view of how accreditation is going?

From the earlier interview and from my observations I've identified several issues which I'd like to present to you. I'd like you to read them though and indicate yes or no if you agree they are issues. Then I'd like to know what your view is on as many of the items listed as you care to address.

1. how the evidence was gathered
2. distribution of resources
3. whether it can solve the problems identified
4. the role of the External Team
5. involvement of all shareholders
6. time involved

Is each an issue in your view?

To conclude I'd like you to take a look at the definition of accreditation given in the 1994 Accreditation Guide. The word 'improvement' is highlighted in this definition. Do you hope the accreditation process improves anything in particular in our school? Did you consider the other aim as equally important?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Don't Know/No Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55. The school's direction has been developed through broad collaborative effort.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>56. The school's direction has been widely communicated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>57. Leadership has been provided to ensure that the school's internal and external communications are effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>58. There is a safe and orderly school environment which emphasizes personal and social responsibility.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. School organizational procedures (e.g., schedules and timetables) maximize student learning opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. The school budget and learning resources are allocated to enhance the learning opportunities for students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Leadership is provided to ensure that human resources are well utilized to enable student learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62. Leadership is provided to ensure that planned and coherent change results from ongoing review and evaluation of educational services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. There is leadership to ensure that broadly based collaboration and consultation are part of the school's decision making process.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. The school provides opportunities for students to demonstrate leadership.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. The school provides opportunities for parents to demonstrate leadership.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT MEMBERS OF ACCREDITATION COMMITTEES

Preamble: I think you know me as a teacher in the school - Ms. Lowery? I know you have been a member of an Accreditation Committee. My research at Simon Fraser University is trying to find out how the accreditation process is working here so I'd like to ask you a few questions. Your parents have agreed and they wish you to make your own decision. You should know that your name will not be used in the writing and that if you wish to withdraw your consent at a future time you can. If you'd like to read what I write about accreditation you can ask me for a copy later.

QUESTIONS

1. What committee are you on? How did you come to be on the committee?

3. How is accreditation affecting you?

4. What is your understanding of how accreditation works? Has your thinking - about what accreditation is- changed from this past fall until now?

5. Did you have any jobs to do as part of accreditation?

6. Do you think the evidence gathered reflects how things operate in our school?

7. Do you hope the accreditation process changes anything in particular in the school?

Note: questions 3 and 6 are the same questions asked in the teacher interviews. The remainder of the questions are designed to 1) clarify and elicit thoughtful responses from a younger person. 2) elicit changes their thinking may have undergone since the beginning of the process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years Experience in Public Education System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anne, student</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lindsey, student</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Donna, parent</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Peter, parent</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Suzanne, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ken, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Murray, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Doris, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Norm, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Doug, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. James, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. John, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Deborah, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Judith, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Leo, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Joyce, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Carla, teacher</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Janet, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. David, teacher</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Elizabeth, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Marlene, teacher</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Kathleen, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Lorna, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Jim, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Renee, teacher</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Malcolm, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Neil, teacher</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Grant, teacher</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Andrea, teacher</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Ian, teacher</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Margaret, teacher</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Rebecca, teacher</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Pat, A.O.</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Lee, A.O.</td>
<td>&gt;10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Lucy, clerical staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Susan, clerical staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACCOUNTABILITY • The responsibility for carrying out an obligation or trust. Accountability in a school system implies exchanges of information and explanations between schools and their various publics.

ACCREDITATION • Accreditation is a process for school improvement and accountability with emphasis on school improvement. Such a process fosters continual positive growth, assists the school with setting direction, staff development and vision formulation and confirmation. Accreditation incorporates accountability whereby student outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes), parent/teacher satisfaction, and community satisfaction are assessed and reported.

ACTION PLAN • The specific strategy developed for each chosen objective in the School Growth Plan.

ADMINISTRATION TEAM • Administrative officer(s), principal, vice-principal and others designated as part of the administration team.

AREAS NEEDING CHANGE • When there are differences between the stated ideal in the criteria statement and the reality of the school situation.

ASSESSMENT • The systematic process of gathering evidence.

COMMUNITY • All members of the community in which the school is located.

CONSTITUENTS/SHAREHOLDERS • The students, teachers, para-professional and support staff, parents, and others directly involved in the school’s operation.

CREATIVE THINKING • The capacity to deal with a problematic situation not previously encountered by drawing on methods and knowledge of problem solving and making appropriate modifications to them. (Adapted from Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives)

CRITICAL THINKING • The capacity of dealing with a problematic situation by selecting an appropriate technique for attacking it and bringing to bear the necessary information, both facts and principles. (Adapted from Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives)
## APPENDIX G CONT'D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS</th>
<th>A series of operations that are intended to lead to a desired educational outcome.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROBLEM SOLVING/DECISION MAKING</td>
<td>- Defining a problem; questioning and gathering information, options, and ideas; and organizing, analyzing and arriving at a solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPORTING</td>
<td>In the context of student achievement, is the communication of what has been taught or what is to be taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL GROWTH PLAN</td>
<td>- A developmental plan for school initiatives over a period from three to five years. This plan should identify several key areas which are broad in scope, yet provide focus for school emphasis in the enhancement of student learning. The School Growth Plan should be seen as a &quot;means&quot; not an &quot;end&quot;, and should remain an open-system which reflects ongoing collaboration by the school's shareholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHAREHOLDERS</td>
<td>- Those in the community and beyond who have a stake in or responsibility for the school and the learning opportunities it provides for students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAFF</td>
<td>- Includes administrative team, teachers, para-professional and support staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRENGTHS</td>
<td>- When the reality of the school situation and the ideal of the criteria statement are the same or very similar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT SERVICES</td>
<td>- Services which are provided to students to support them in attaining their educational goals, such as: learning assistance, counselling, aide provision, services by Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Services and Housing, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS</td>
<td>- For the purposes of accreditation, students with special needs are those who are identified through appropriate assessment procedures as having handicaps, disabilities, disorders and/or gifted abilities which require individualized planning and enhanced levels of support. Such supports may include curricular and instructional adaptations, involvement of specialist teachers, support from teacher assistants, specialized services (e.g., interpreter and mobility orientation training) assistive technologies and/or access to specialized programs. This definition should be interpreted in the context of the Manual of Policies and Procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT STAFF</td>
<td>- Secretarial and custodial staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEACHERS</td>
<td>- Professional education staff with specific teaching assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATION  • The ongoing process of making judgments and decisions based on the interpretation of evidence gathered through assessment.

EVIDENCE  • Key indicators of performance or key pieces of information regarding, in respect to a criteria statement: (i) the key strategies, programs and processes being used to address it; and (ii) the key indicators by which success is judged relative to the goal contained in the criteria statement.

GOAL  • A broad educational direction. The province’s goals are the Intellectual, Human/Social and Career development of students. In referring to the learning opportunities provided for students in attaining the provincial educational goals, schools are directed to refer to the most current editions of the Primary, Intermediate and Graduation programs for further descriptions and specific definitions.

INSTITUTIONALIZED  • The strength has a long history of success and has been incorporated into the procedures of the school.

INTERNALIZED  • The staff is highly committed to the strength.

LEADERSHIP  • The ability to lead, guide, direct, motivate, influence, initiate, etc. Administrators are expected to provide individual leadership, as well as empowering others to offer leadership through collaborative decision making and problem solving.

MISSION STATEMENT  • A brief statement of purpose focusing on students. The province’s Mission Statement is found at the front of this Manual.

OBJECTIVE  • A desired result which can be expressed in measurable terms.

OUTCOME  • That which follows as a result or consequence.

PARA-PROFESSIONAL STAFF  • School personnel, other than teaching staff, trained to provide the additional services required by students with special needs.

PARENTS  • Throughout the document “parents” refers to guardians and other home care-givers as well as parents.

PRACTICE  • The actual performance or application of what is advocated in principle.
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